

Developmental Milestones & Widely Held Expectations at 4-5 Years

(Taken from the Quebec Minister of the Family Educational Program for CPE's, as well as

Child Development: A Primer by Ingrid Crowther & NAEYC's Developmentally Appropriate Practice)

Note: Experts say every child develops differently. These Developmental Milestones are designed to give a general idea of how a child of this age may develop.

Affective Dimension

- Building secure relationships with educators
- Making and expressing choices, plans and decisions with respect to favorite toys/activities
- Integration/learning the routines

Physical and Motor Dimension

A) Fine Motor Development (small muscles of thumb & fingers)

- **Manipulation**—cuts out simple shapes using scissors, uses tripod grasp (thumb & 2 fingers); draws simple shapes; makes some letters; writes all or part of own name
- **Artwork**—draws geometric shapes; draws human figures (not all parts of body may be present); generally draws only one view of objects (eg: front view of house or person and side view of vehicles)
- **Hand-Eye Coordination**—threads small beads onto gimp; sews around outside of sewing card; increased complexity in construction with Lego, magna-tiles, etc.

B) Gross Motor Development (large muscles of the legs and arms)

- **Balancing**—walks on circular line; walks confidently/quickly across balance beam; can balance on one foot for about 10 seconds
- **Walking/Running**—runs with increased speed & agility; skips; walks backwards
- **Climbing**—uses alternating feet to ascend/descend stairs; climbs up & down all parts of playground equipment (ladders, ropes, poles, monkey bars)
- **Jumping**—jumps down from higher heights; hops on 1 foot for short time
- **Ball skills**—throws ball overhand; uses just hands to catch ball; has better control when throwing/kicking ball

C) Development of sensory perception from the five senses (sight, hearing, smell, touch & taste), as well as the development of a healthy lifestyle

- Seems to hear and see well; willing to participate in sensory experiences such as water-play, shaving cream, finger-painting; willing to try new foods
- Washes hands with soap & water; enjoys being active and has age appropriate strength, balance, coordination and stamina; learning to cough/sneeze into upper arm and request or use tissues rather than sleeve/hand to wipe nose; eats a balanced diet

Cognitive Dimension (thinking skills)

- A) **Attention**—increased attention span for areas of interest; may return to an activity over several days
- B) **Memory**-- remembers words/people/events as demonstrated by rapid vocabulary growth and the naming of familiar adults, peers and objects; repeats sequences of familiar routines and retells events that have occurred in the past; memorizes favorite books, songs, etc.
- C) **Symbolic Function**-- chooses one object to represent another in pretend play
- D) **Ability to Categorize and Conceptualize**-- increasingly sorts using 2 criteria (out of color, size & shape); sorts a variety of objects into groups that share a characteristic (eg: all vehicles, all farm animals)
- E) **Reasoning & Problem Solving**-- enjoys more complex puzzles & games; begins to focus on more than one aspect of a problem or situation (called decentration; for example, will figure out if a tall thin glass holds more than a short fat glass by pouring the water from one glass to the other.)
- F) **Awakening to Mathematics and Science**
 - **Curious and enjoys exploring the world**
 - **Concept Development**—*size*: can identify smallest & largest or shortest & longest objects; *quantity*: can identify more and less in both volume and number; *seriation*: arranges objects from smallest to largest; identifies first, second and last; *time*: understands daily routine; *differences*: can identify what is missing from a picture or puzzle; *similarities*: matches things that are the same
 - **Numbers**—rote counts to 20+ but may miss numbers or insert incorrect numbers; identifies concept of “half”

Communication & Language Dimension

- A) **Pre-linguistic Language**-- understands complex words & phrases with increasing comprehension as exposed to the daily routines, and through songs, books, and play activities
- B) **Oral Language Development**
 - **Language Usage**—creates more complex sentences; puts more than one sentence together to tell a story or relate an experience; asks and answers questions involving who, what, why; changes voice in role playing to imitate different individuals; remembers an increasing repertoire of songs or rhymes; states full name
 - **Grammar**—uses prepositions (eg: on, in ,under); uses possessive pronouns & nouns (eg: his, hers, theirs, Mommy’s); uses the past tense
 - **Vocabulary**— by end of period employs 5,000- 8,000+ words
- C) **Awakening to Reading and Writing**
 - **Reading**—recognizes some words (own name and other meaningful words); names most of the letters of the alphabet in both upper & lower case
 - **Writing**—prints part or all of own name; may print names of significant others; uses invented spelling and/or may like to copy words; dictates stories
- D) **Second (or 3rd) Language Development to Foster English/French Bilingualism**
 - **Receptive Language (Phase 1)**-- develops an ear for the sounds common to the language; begins to understand frequently used words & phrases; gradually moves towards more comprehension as the child accumulates many hours of exposure in the course of the daily routines, and through songs, books, and engaging play activities.

- **Expressive Language (Phase 2)**—the ability to speak a new language comes much more slowly, at first by simple repetition of common words & phrases; mixing of languages is typical as children search for the right word and substitute the word they know; As concentration, memory, confidence and desire to communicate increases—which varies by individual-- the ability to express an ever increasing amount in the target language results in eventual fluency.
- **Reading & Written Language (Phase 3)**—begins in earnest only around age 7, however, the foundation for later school learning is laid down at the preschool age by learning the letters of the alphabet in both languages through use of the ABC song, various alphabet books, discussion of letters that start names, and a print rich environment.

Self Expression & Creative Dimension

- **Water, Sand & Playdough/Clay**—creates increasingly complex structures/objects; experiments to make connections (eg: sink/float) and weight/volume comparisons
- **Music & Movement**—reproduces sounds, tones and rhythmic patterns using instruments; demonstrates an understanding of using tempo, volume & pitch with voice & instruments; coordinates two movements (marching & keeping a steady beat); greater repertoire of songs; more self-expressive in dance & movement
- **Art**—enjoys different art mediums; produces three-dimensional art
- **Blocks/Construction Toys**—builds combinations of rows, towers, enclosures, bridges; creates more complex structures/objects & uses for imaginative play
- **Dramatic Play**—uses more symbolic representations to support play; creates own props such as menus, tickets, money; dramatic play can extend over several days/weeks; takes on roles of non-familiar people (eg: police officers or fire fighters); enjoys adventure play (super-heroes, princesses, monsters) but understands that this is pretend play; re-enacts experiences (train trip, etc)

Social & Emotional Dimension

- A) **Self Confidence & Self Esteem**-- develops as children explore, follow their interests, and are supplied with age appropriate challenges which they are able to master
 - **Pride in Accomplishments**—asks to have efforts displayed; asks adults/peers for approval of accomplishments
- B) **Autonomy & Self-Help Skills**—generally quite independent in toileting & eating with spoon/fork; pours milk into cup; able to dress/undress (possibly needing help only with starting zippers, doing buttons or tying shoes); cleans up toys & belongings
- C) **Construction of Identity**-- gender identity is generally understood to be permanent
- D) **Emotional & Social Skills Development**
 - **Emotional Control**—shares ideas & materials but not consistently; empathetic towards children or animals who are hurt; has difficulty dealing with frustration; may sulk if left out of activity; understands the power of rejecting others; understands the concept of fairness (but may still want to apply it to their benefit); may attempt to resolve negative interactions on their own
 - **Peer Interaction**—forms friendships; may call peers names or disown a friend because of a disagreement; may use humor inappropriately (“bathroom talk”)

- **Making of Choices**—makes appropriate choices from a wide range of materials & activities; focuses for increased length of time; often interacts with peers to make group decisions & collaborative efforts
- **Self Regulation/Coping Skills**—able, with advanced warning, to change activities or adjust to changes in the regular routine; able to lie quietly on bed for duration of nap