

# Social Emotional Developmental Milestones

\*Please note that these milestones are intended as basic guidelines and will not apply to many neurodivergent children.

## Birth to 6 Months

- Calms down when spoken to or picked up
- Looks and smiles when talked to or smiled at
- Self soothes via sensory experiences like sucking thumb or fingers
- Attends to and tries to imitate adults' facial expressions

## 9 to 12 Months

- Recognizes familiar faces
- May be nervous around unfamiliar individuals and in new situations
- Cries when separated from familiar caregivers
- Imitates playful actions

## 12 to 18 months

- Enjoys reciprocal games (e.g. peekaboo)
- Shows affection with hugs or kisses
- Looks to caregivers for cues about how to react in a new situation

## 18 months to 2 years

- Demonstrates temper tantrums to express frustration
- Prefers to have familiar adult nearby in unfamiliar situations
- Notices when someone is sad (e.g. hurt or crying)
- Has limited control over emotions and needs adult support to manage strong emotions

## 3 to 4 Years

- Follows simple routines
- Takes turns with peers
- Separates from caregiver more easily
- Needs help to slow down and problem-solve conflicts
- Comforts others when they are sad
- Is aware of danger

## 5 to 6 years

- Changes behavior to fit the context and situation
- Follows rules in games
- Pays attention to structured activities for 5 to 10 minutes
- Plays cooperatively with peers

## 6 to 10 Years

- Navigates more complex social interactions but may need adult support to do so
- Uses internalized self-talk for self control
- Demonstrates more flexibility, inhibition, and better management of emotions

## 11 to 14 years

- May have extreme reactions to stress or emotional situations
- Impulse control can be decreased and emotions can impact executive functioning
- Needs guidance from adults to explore coping skills and to manage emotions

## 15 to 17 Years

- Can set longer-term goals with organized plans to achieve them
- Needs guidance to monitor potential risky behavior and support decision-making
- Desires independence and exploration
- Values deeper connections with peers