

## Early Identification - Cognitive Milestones

By: Learning Disabilities Association of America (1999)

### Developmental Milestones

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The course of children's development is mapped using a chart of developmental milestones.

These milestones are behaviors that emerge over time, forming the building blocks for growth and continued learning. Some of the categories within which these behaviors are seen include:

- **Language** (expressive and receptive abilities)
- **Motor coordination** (gross/fine motor, jumping, hopping, throwing/catching, drawing, stacking)
- **Social interaction** (initiating peer contact, group play)
- **Adaptive** (dressing, eating, washing)

### Cognitive Milestones

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- By one:
  - follows moving object with eyes
  - recognizes differences among people; responds to strangers by crying or staring
  - responds to and imitates facial expressions of others
  - responds to very simple directions
  - imitates gestures and actions
  - puts small objects in and out of container with intention
- Between one and two:
  - imitates actions and words of adults
  - understands and follows simple, familiar directions
  - responds to words or commands with appropriate action
  - is able to match two similar objects
  - looks at storybook pictures with an adult, naming or pointing to familiar objects on request
  - recognizes difference between you and me
  - has very limited attention span
  - accomplishes primary learning through own exploration
- Between two and three:

- responds to simple directions
- selects and looks at picture books, names pictured objects, and identifies several objects within one picture
- matches and uses associated objects meaningfully
- stacks rings on peg in order of size
- recognized self in mirror, saying baby, or own name
- can talk briefly about what he/she is doing; imitates adult actions
- has limited attention span; learning is through exploration and adult direction
- is beginning to understand functional concepts of familiar objects and part/whole concepts
- Between three and four:
  - recognizes and matches six colors
  - intentionally stacks blocks or rings in order of size
  - draws somewhat recognizable picture that is meaningful to child if not to adult; names and briefly explains picture
  - asks questions for information: why and how questions requiring simple answers
  - knows own age
  - knows own name
  - has short attention span; learns through observing and imitating adults and by adult instruction and explanation; is very easily distracted
  - has increased understanding of concepts of the functions and grouping of objects and part/whole
  - begins to be aware of past and present
- Between four and five:
  - plays with words: creates own rhyming words, says or makes up words having similar sounds
  - points and names four to six colors
  - matches pictures of familiar objects
  - draws a person with two to six recognizable parts, such as head, arms, and legs; can name or match drawn parts to own body
  - draws, names, and describes recognizable pictures
  - rote counts to five, imitating adult
  - knows own street and town
  - has more extended attention span; learns through observing and listening to adults, as well as through exploration; is easily distracted
  - has increased understanding of concepts of function, time, part/whole relationships; function

or use of objects may be stated in addition to names of objects

- time concepts are expanding; can talk about yesterday or last week, about today, and about what will happen tomorrow
  - Between five and six:
    - retells story from picture book with reasonable accuracy
    - names some letters and numerals
    - rote counts to ten
    - sorts objects by single characteristics
    - is beginning to use accurately time concepts of tomorrow and yesterday
    - uses classroom tools meaningfully and purposefully
    - begins to relate clock time to daily schedule
    - attention span increases noticeably; learns through adult instruction; when interested, can ignore distractions
    - concepts of function increase as well as understanding of why things happen; time concepts are expanding into an understanding of the future in terms of major events
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