

Social & Emotional Developmental Milestones

The following are general developmental milestones that often happen at the specified ages. In reality, children will reach these milestones at a variety of ages. While developmental milestone guides for early childhood are prevalent, this information is less accessible for middle childhood in Aotearoa.

Developmental Domain

AGES 5, 6, 7, 8

AGES 9, 10, 11, 12

Developmental Domain	AGES 5, 6, 7, 8	AGES 9, 10, 11, 12
Generalisations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Beginning of formal education "5-7 Shift" - the increased ability to reason 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Active contributors to family life Transition from early to middle childhood
Hormonal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Onset of adrenarche 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Onset of puberty
Cognitive development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grouping information and make links between groups e.g. sorting animals into groups based on physical attributes Apply reasoning in more and more complex ways in relation to the physical and social world Begin to learn and gain independence in reading, writing and numeracy Begin to connect actions with their consequences Can draw in 2D and increasingly in 3D Curious about how things work and able to seek out, interpret and discuss information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Begin to connect actions with their consequences Make plans and set goals Can think about the meaning of information they hear or read Gain understanding of complex forms of false-belief around 7-8 years (e.g. such as that another person might believe something untrue about another person or thing) Can understand and give directions Gain understanding of time e.g. tomorrow/ yesterday/this afternoon
Moral development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Form views about right and wrong Consider rules to be fairly concrete 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Value and typically follow rules
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Tweens" or "Pre-teens" Transition from childhood to early adolescence
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased reliance on peers Increased independence from family
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learn to tell time Able to think more logically and abstractly and express thoughts and ideas Ability to generalise, problem-solve and reason increases Testing of assumptions and ideas
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Able to analyse risks Able to read and write independently, and apply mathematical skills in real world situations Better able to think of the consequences of an action or situation, and be better prepared to respond
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Able to think more abstractly about morality Understand that rules exist, but also that they can be flexible

Developmental Domain (cont.)

AGES 5, 6, 7, 8

AGES 9, 10, 11, 12

Attention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attention and cognition improve due to maturing of the prefrontal cortex Can focus attention on something and ignore irrelevant information or events happening around them Different aspects of attention (alertness, set, spatial attention, sustained attention and interference control) develop between 6 years and 9 years Impulsivity considered a normal for this age group 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attention functions mature around 12 years Focus increases between ages 8-12
Friendship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> May seek a "best friend" Children tend to form friendships with children of the same gender Children are developing friendships based on shared interests 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Friendships grow in importance Friendship groups become more mix gendered again Seeking greater independence from family
Social	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify and recognise other people's emotions based on body language and vocal cues Begin to understand different viewpoints and consider others' feelings and perspectives Develop awareness of feeling embarrassed Increased sense of empathy Enjoy role play and being dramatic Enjoy playing games and participating in group activities Develop their own games, rules and competitiveness Social hierarchies emerge 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hierarchies/popularity beginning to form, and gain in importance Greater communication skills enable increased cooperation with others and ability to handle conflict Able to feel multiple and conflicting emotions about the same person, e.g. can be angry at someone they care about Learning self-control for their emotions, and closeness and distance within relationships May experience greater sense of awkwardness as they navigate social norms in relation to increased peer influences and pressure Prefer to play with others than alone Developing ability to manage own emotional expressions in relationships, and increase in competitiveness, joking and aggression
Gender	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stereotypical gender roles reflected in children's play (e.g. nurturing games, playfighting) More likely to play with peers of the same gender 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> May become more interested in socialising with children of other gender May question gender identity, or identify with a gender that does not align with sex identified at birth

Developmental Domain (cont.)

AGES 5, 6, 7, 8

AGES 9, 10, 11, 12

Language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Language is processed musically up to age 7 Vocabulary expands Understanding of how language is used increases Able to follow instructions that involve multiple steps Children begin to use slang 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use language more abstractly around age 8, including using and understanding jokes Ability to tell stories – both real and imaginary – develops Able to learn a second language most easily before the age of 7 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Language processing speed and fluency increases significantly between ages 9-10 and 11-12 Use of humour develops as they grow in understanding of social norms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Best chance of becoming fluent in a second language prior to age 10
Memory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developments in the pre-frontal cortex see working memory grow, adding to skills like the ability to follow directions Children use memory strategies such as rehearsal and organisation 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children's working memory is developed by ages 10-12 	
Self-concept	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More influenced by comparisons to others from age 7 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrate pride in their abilities and achievements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More awareness of others opinions May become more competitive, aggressive and sarcastic Growing awareness of own values 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> May become more egocentric May experience a drop in self-esteem around ages 9-10 due to increased self-awareness
Self-Control/ Self-Regulation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Beginning to develop their own strategies for coping in social situations and resolving problems, but still like support from parents and other trusted adults More able to self-regulate and manage their own behaviours Can identify and name a range of emotions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can generally express feelings but may become frustrated or aggressive when upset – but are generally able to manage this better than during early years Behaviour regulation is reinforced by expectations and responses from others around them 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emotional regulation impacted by onset of adolescence Understand behavioural norms and social expectations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Able to develop a range of solutions to manage stressful situations Able to identify mixed or multiple emotions
Responsibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> May begin helping with chores around the home Increasingly able to self-organise and take care of possessions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can dress themselves and take on more responsibility for their daily routines e.g. eating, washing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Better at handling responsibilities on their own 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Moving away from reliance on parents

These milestones have been identified through a range of sources which can be found in the bibliography.