

Developmental Milestones for Three and Four-Year-Old Children

The Office of Early Learning’s updated Preschool Planning Guide now titled, *Planning for High-Quality Prekindergarten Programs* is available on the [OEL website](#). The guide has useful resources for teachers and administrators including how to design environments and plan curriculum experiences for prekindergarten children. The guide includes charts similar to the one below on developmental milestones.

Domain Area	Three-Year-Old	Four-Year -Old
Social/ Emotional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Copies actions of adults and friends • Shows affection for friends • Understands “mine,” “his,” and “hers” • Shows wide range of emotions • May be upset by changes in routine • Starts taking turns when playing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plays “mom” and “dad” • Cooperates with other children • Is more creative with make believe play • Enjoys doing new things • Talks about what she likes and what she is interested in • Would rather play with other children than alone
Communication/ Language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talks well enough for strangers to understand him most of the time • Asks many questions • Can name most things familiar to him • Carries on a conversation, using 2 to 3 sentences • Follows instructions with 2 or 3 steps • Answers simple questions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tells stories • Knows some basic rules of grammar, such as using pronouns like “he” and “she” • Knows first and last name and can tell you • Sings songs or says a poem from memory (Like “Wheels on the Bus” or “Itsy Bitsy Spider”) • Participates in stories about a variety of topics
Cognition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Builds towers of 6 or more blocks • Understands what “two” means • Copies a circle with a crayon or pencil • Can work toys with buttons, levers, and moving parts • Turns pages of a book one at a time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plays board and/or card games • Understands the idea of counting • Draws a person with some body parts • Starts to copy some shapes and letters • Tells you what is going to happen next in a story or book • Understands the idea of “same” and “different”
Physical Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climbs well • Runs easily • Walks up and down stairs one foot on each step • Has basic ability to kick and throw a ball • Stacks, sorts, and strings items 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hops and stands on one foot up to 2 seconds • Catches a bounced ball most of the time • Pours, cuts with supervision, and mashes own food • Eats with utensils • Pedals consistently when riding a tricycle
Approaches to Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pretends and uses imagination during play • Wants to do favorite activities over and over again • Can remain engaged in an activity for at least 5 minutes • Chooses one activity over another 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attempts multiple ways to solve a problem • Demonstrates willingness to try new experiences • Seeks assistance when something seems unclear • Maintains lengthened focus on a task for up to 10 minutes.