

Checklist of Social Emotional Development Milestones



Social and emotional development are crucial aspects of human growth and overall well-being. Whether you are a parent, teacher, or caregiver, understanding and monitoring a child's social and emotional development is vital. In this guide, we offer a simple and modern checklist of social emotional development to help you keep track of your child's progress.

Using this checklist, you can easily track your child's progress and identify areas of strength and areas that need improvement. Remember, social and emotional development is an ongoing process, and every child develops at their own pace. By monitoring your child's progress with this checklist, you can help them develop into confident, empathetic, and well-rounded individuals.

Birth to 6 months

- Social Smile occurs around 6 weeks of age-smiling in reaction to someone.
- Within 72 hours of birth, mirror neurons form teaching a child to respond with emotion based on the emotion in a caregiver's facial expression.
- Recognizes and responds to familiar faces.
- Begins to form emotional attachments, especially with caregivers.
- Smiles and engages in cooing and babbling.
- Demonstrates basic emotional responses (e.g., joy, distress, and contentment).

Ways to Improve Emotional Intelligence:

- Provide a secure and nurturing environment.
- Respond promptly to your baby's needs and cues. Comfort the baby when they are upset. Do not ignore or avoid an upset infant.
- Make lots of face and communicate with your baby. Babies are programmed to focus on faces for social and emotional development.
- Engage in loving interactions, like cuddling, singing, and talking to your baby.
- Encourage social interactions with family and caregivers.

6 Months to 2 Years

- Develops a range of emotions (e.g., happiness, anger, fear).
- Begins to understand and express basic emotions.
- Forms strong emotional bonds with caregivers.
- Engages in parallel play with other children.
- Shows empathy towards others' emotions.
- Begins to develop object permanence, understanding caregivers are still alive even when out of site.
- At six months your baby is anxious around new people. Wariness indicates cognitive growth and can last until a baby is a year old.
- They begin to bring you objects in an attempt to explore, learn, and communicate.
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Ways to Improve Emotional Intelligence:

- Label and discuss emotions aloud with your child.
- Encourage playdates and social interactions with other children. Model empathy by showing care and concern for others.
- Communicate even when they are too young to respond back.

2 to 5 Years

- Explores a wide range of emotions and their causes.
- Develops self-regulation skills.
- Forms friendships and learns to share and take turns.
- Begins to recognize and respond to social cues and norms.

Ways to Improve Emotional Intelligence:

- Emotion Recognition: Help your child identify and label their emotions. Use stories, books, and play to explore different feelings.
- Emotion Regulation: Teach coping strategies like deep breathing or counting to calm down when upset.
- Positive Discipline: Use discipline methods that focus on teaching rather than punishing. Explain consequences and encourage empathy.
- Play and Socialization: Encourage playdates and group activities to develop social skills and empathy.

6 to 12 Years

- Shows more complex emotions, including empathy and guilt.
- Develops self-awareness and self-esteem.
- Forms deeper, more meaningful friendships.
- Begins to understand and manage social dynamics and expectations.

Ways to Improve Emotional Intelligence:

- Emotional Expression: Create an open environment where your child feels safe expressing their feelings and concerns.
- Problem Solving: Encourage your child to brainstorm solutions to their problems, fostering independence and resilience.
- Empathy Development: Discuss the feelings and perspectives of others in various situations.
- Routine and Responsibility: Assign age-appropriate chores and responsibilities to instill a sense of competence and achievement.

Adolescence (12 Years and Older)

- Experiences a wide range of emotions related to identity, independence, and relationships.
- Gains a deeper understanding of empathy, compassion, and self-reflection.
- Forms more mature and complex relationships with peers.
- Develops a sense of responsibility and moral reasoning.

Ways to Improve Emotional Intelligence:

- Maintain open communication and support during this period of emotional upheaval.
- Encourage self-reflection and emotional regulation strategies.
- Discuss healthy relationships, boundaries, and consent.
- Engage in conversations about ethical decision-making and values.