

# Social-Emotional Development Guide

36  
Months

Learn what types of behaviors to expect from your growing child.

## Your child:

is more independent and can do many things for herself. Your child will tell you, "I can do it myself!"

is still learning to follow simple rules, although he sometimes needs gentle reminders.

now plays briefly *with* other children. She is still learning about sharing and taking turns.

likely has a special friend that he prefers playing with. Boys may prefer playing with boys, and girls with girls.

is becoming more independent. When you go on outings, she will not always hold your hand or stay by your side.

has emotions that may shift suddenly, from happy to sad or from mad to silly. He's learning how to handle his emotions.

can sometimes use words to express her feelings.

is beginning to think about other people's feelings and learning to identify their feelings, too.

sometimes bosses people around and makes demands. This shows that he is independent and values himself. He might do something that he is asked to do, but he is more willing if he thinks it is his idea.

uses imagination to create stories through pretend play with dolls, toy telephones, and action figures.

may be fearful and sometimes has nightmares. Scary images and sounds, even cartoons, can give her nightmares.

has an increasing attention span. She often stays with an activity for at least 5 minutes.





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## Your child:

likes to play with other children and has favorite games and playmates.

is beginning to share. He takes turns but is possessive of favorite toys.

expresses extreme emotions at times—happiness, sadness, anger, silliness. She may be able to label her own feelings.

often uses real-life situations when he plays, such as going to the store, school, and gas station.

may have imaginary friends when playing games, sleeping at night, and going to preschool.

now understands short and simple rules at home.

is starting to understand danger. She knows when to stay away from dangerous things.

is beginning to control his feelings of frustration.

loves silly jokes and has a sense of humor.

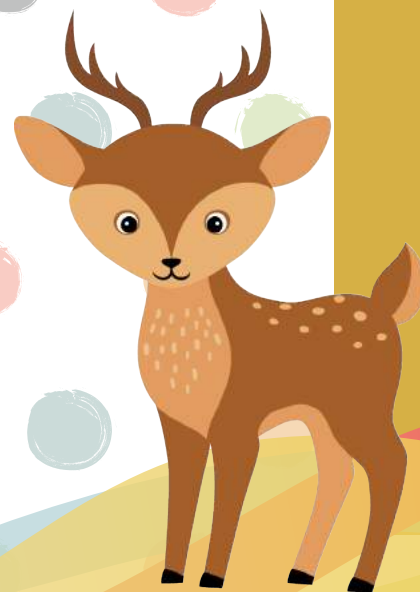
may use her imagination a lot, and she can be very creative.

is becoming more independent and adventurous. He may like to try new things.

can be boastful and bossy at times with her new independence.

shows concern and sympathy for younger siblings and playmates when they are hurt or upset. His ability to empathize—to put himself in someone else's shoes—is increasing.

has an increasing attention span. She often stays with an activity for at least 10 minutes.





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## Your child:

likes to play best with one or two other children at a time.

likes to choose his own friends and may have a best friend.

now plays simple games such as Candy Land and Go Fish.

may play with small groups of children at the park or at school.

likes to talk with familiar adults and children.

understands and can follow simple rules at home and at school.

is now very independent and likes to make his own choices about clothes to wear, foods to eat, and activities in which to be involved.

is sensitive to other children's feelings. She can identify other people's feelings: "She's sad."

understands how to take turns and share at home and at school, but he may not want to all of the time.

shows a variety of emotions. She may be jealous of other children at times, especially of a younger brother or sister who is getting attention.

feels adult approval is very important. Your child looks to adults for attention and praise.

is showing some self-control in group situations and can wait for his turn or stand in a line.

is usually able to respond to requests such as "Use your quiet voice" or "Inside is for walking."

is beginning to understand the meaning of right and wrong. She does not always do what is right, though.

has an increasing attention span. She is able to focus her attention for a necessary length of time, such as listening to directions or a story.

