

## 2-3 Year Old Social and Emotional Milestones

Two-year-olds start to be more independent and more interested in other kids. But not having the words to express themselves can be frustrating. By the end of this year, kids will likely do things like this:

- Mimic what other kids and adults do and say, as well as how they say it
- Be happy to play near, if not with, other kids
- Start to realize she can do things without your help
- Disobey more than before, doing things she's told not to do, just to test what happens
- Have tantrums when frustrated
- Show increasing separation anxiety by 18 months, which typically eases considerably by 24 months; become *increasingly independent and aware of herself as her own person between 24 and 36 months*

## 3-4 Year Old Social and Emotional Milestones

Three-year-olds are an interesting mix of independent, playful and fearful. By the end of their fourth year, most 3-year-olds do these things:

- Be interested—although hesitant—about going new places and trying new things
- Start to play with children (as opposed to only playing side-by-side)
- Start being able to comfort and show concern for an unhappy friend without prompting
- Take turns while playing (even if they don't like to)
- Play “real life” with toys like play kitchens
- Start finding simple ways to solve arguments and disagreements
- Show (but maybe not name) a variety of emotions beyond happy, sad and mad.

## 4-5 Year Old Social and Emotional Milestones

Your child may be starting to develop his own unique personality. He may be more able to get along with peers and work out things that bother him through play. Most children can also:

- Share, cooperate, be helpful and take turns
- Start acting a little bossy and start tattling
- Enjoy telling silly jokes and find other things funny
- Begin telling small lies to get out of trouble, even though he knows it's wrong
- Do or say things he shouldn't to see what the reaction will be
- Have imaginary friends and play the same imaginary games over and over

## 5-6 Year Old Social and Emotional Milestones

During the kindergarten school year, children's social and emotional development tends to go beyond making friends and expressing feelings. They start understanding more complicated things like right and wrong. Many 5-year-olds are also likely to do these things:

- Have an interest in behaving like their friends and wanting their approval
- Begin to prefer same-gender friendships; become jealous of other people spending time with "their" friends
- Follow the rules most of the time; may criticize kids who don't follow the rules
- Enjoy being on display; will sing, dance or be silly to get attention
- Want your approval and to be taken seriously; may throw a tantrum or get angry if they think they're not being listened to
- Start to see why it's helpful to share and get along with other kids