



**PHOENIX CENTRE**

# Developmental Milestones

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## Contents

Developmental Milestones - 18 months to 10 years.....	2
Regentröpfchen Children (18-36 months).....	2
Kindergarten years/pre-school (3-6 years old).....	3
Junior primary school-age children/ Grundschule (7-10 years old) .....	4
Developmental Milestones - 10 to 18 years .....	5
Secondary school I (Grade 5-9) 10-14 years .....	5
Secondary school II (Grade 10-12) 15-18 years .....	6
How the Phoenix Centre can support learners, parents, teachers and staff.....	7

## Developmental Milestones - 18 months to 10 years

Children grow and develop at different rates. However, most pass through an identifiable skill set along the way. Below are some broad guidelines (taken from the National Resource Centre for Permanency and Family Connection) that summarize the most important Developmental Milestones that you can expect for: Regentröpfchen Children, for Pre-School Children (Kindergarten 0, Kindergarten 1 and Vorschule) and for Primary School Children (Grade One to Grade Four).

Useful Positive Parenting Tips are given in each section.

### Regentröpfchen Children (18-36 months)

#### Physical:

- Enjoy physical activities such as running, kicking, climbing, jumping, etc.
- Beginnings of bladder and bowel control towards latter part of this stage
- Are increasingly able to manipulate small objects with hands

#### Emotional/Social:

- Becoming aware of limits, says no often
- Establishing a positive, distinct sense of self through continuous exploration of the world
- Continuing to develop communication skills and experiencing the responsiveness of others
- Need to develop a sense of self and to do some things for him/herself
- Making simple choices such as what to eat, what to wear and what activity to do

#### Intellectual/Cognitive:

- Limited vocabulary of 500 to 3 000 words and only able to form three to four word sentences
- No understanding of pronouns (he, she) and only a basic grasp of prepositions (in, on, off, out, away)
- Can count, but from memory, without a true understanding of what the numbers represent
- Cognitively, children in this age are very egocentric and concrete in their thinking, and believe that adults know everything. This means that they look at everything from their own perspective.
- Assumption that everyone else sees, acts, and feels the same way they do, and belief that adults already know everything. This results in their feeling that they don't need to explain an event in detail.
- Ability to relate their experiences, in detail, when specifically and appropriately questioned
- Learning to use memory and acquiring the basics of self-control

#### POSITIVE PARENTING TIPS:

- Set up a special time to read books with your toddler
- Ask your toddler to find object for you or name body parts and objects
- Play matching games with your toddler, like shape sorting and simple puzzles
- Encourage your child to take part in pretend play
- Play parade or follow the leader with your toddler
- Help your child to explore things around her by taking her on a walk, outings, etc
- Encourage your child to tell you his name and age
- Help to develop your toddler's language by talking with him/her in full sentences

- Teach your child simple songs like Itsy Bitsy Spider, or other cultural childhood rhymes
- Encourage your child's growing independence by letting him help with dressing and feeding, etc
- Give your child attention and praise when he/she follows instructions and shows positive behaviour and limit attention for defiant behaviour like tantrums.
- Teach your child acceptable ways to show that he/she's upset
- Respond consistently to certain behaviours

## **Kindergarten years/pre-school (3-6 years old)**

### **Developmental Milestones:**

#### **Physical:**

- Is able to dress and undress self
- Has refined coordination and is learning many new skills
- Is very active and likes to do things like climb, hop, skip and do stunts
- At the start of early childhood the brain has attained about 50% of its adult weight. By the time children are 6, it has grown to 90% of its full weights (Cole, et.al, 2005; Huttenlocher, 1994)

#### **Emotional/Social:**

- Develops capacity to share and take turns
- Plays cooperatively with peers
- Is developing some independence and self-reliance
- Is developing ethnic and gender identities
- Learning to distinguish between reality and fantasy
- Learning to make connections and distinctions between feelings, thoughts and actions.

#### **Intellectual/Cognitive:**

- Ability to understand language usually develops ahead of their speech
- By age 6, vocabulary will have increased to between 8 000 and 14 000 words but it is important to remember that children in this age group often repeat words without fully understanding their meaning
- They have learned the use of most prepositions (up/down, ahead/behind, beside) and some basic possessive pronouns (mine, his, ours), and have started to master adjectives.
- Between 2 to 6, children begin to use many new constructions that conform to grammatical rules. Language is the medium through which children learn about their roles in the world, acceptable behaviour and their culture's assumptions about how the world works. Simultaneously language enables children to ask questions, to explain thoughts and desires, and to make more effective demands on the people around them.
- Pre-School children continue to be egocentric and concrete in their thinking. They are still unable to see things from another's perspective
- When questioned, they can generally express who, what, where and sometimes how, but not when or how many. They are able to provide a fair amount of detail about a situation
- Children in this age range continue to have trouble with the concepts of sequence and time. As a result, they may seem inconsistent when telling a story because they hardly follow a beginning-middle-end approach.

## **POSITIVE PARENTING TIPS**

- Read to your child. Nurture his/her love for books by taking him/her to the library or bookstore
- Let your child help with simple chores
- Encourage your child to play with other children. This helps him/her to learn the value of sharing and friendships
- Be clear and consistent when disciplining your child. Explain and show the behaviour that you expect from him/her. Whenever you tell your child no, follow up with what he/she should be doing instead.
- Help your child develop good language skills by speaking to him/her in complete sentences and using grown up words. Help him/her to use correct words and phrases
- Help your child through the steps to solve problems when he/she is upset
- Give your child a limited number of simple choices (for example deciding what to wear, when to play and what to eat)
- Stimulate gross motor activities through outdoor play; fine motor activities through creativity, cutting and drawing; language through role play, fantasy play and reading

## **Junior primary school-age children/ Grundschule (7-10 years old)**

### **Developmental Milestones:**

#### **Physical:**

- Have increased coordination and strength
- Enjoy using new skills, both gross and fine motor
- Are increasing in height and weight at steady rates

#### **Emotional/Social:**

- Increased ability to interact with peers
- Have more same-sex friends
- Increased ability to engage in competition
- Developing and testing values and beliefs that will guide present and future behaviours
- Has a strong group identity, increasingly defines self through peers
- Need to develop a sense of mastery and accomplishment based upon physical strength, self-control and school performance

#### **Intellectual/Cognitive:**

- Children start logical thinking, which means that rather than accepting what they see as true, they begin to apply their personal knowledge and experience to a particular situation to determine whether it makes sense or not
- Temporal concepts greatly improve in this age range. A child attending Grade One is already starting to understand the passage of time, as well as day, date and time as a concept as opposed to a number
- Children attending Grade One have acquired the basic cognitive and linguistic concepts necessary to sufficiently communicate any event that has transpired
- They can also copy adult speech patterns

## **POSTIVE PARENTING TIPS**

- Show affection for your child. Recognize his/her accomplishments
- Help your child develop a sense of responsibility- ask him to help with household tasks such as setting the table, making his/her bed, feeding the dog, etc.
- Talk with your child about respecting others. Encourage him/her to help people in need.
- Help your child set his/her own achievable goals. Your child will learn to take pride in him/herself and rely less on approval or reward from others.
- Help your child learn patience by letting others go first or by finishing a task before going out to play. Encourage him/her to think about possible consequences before acting.
- Make clear rules and stick to them, such as how long your child can watch TV or when he/she has to go to bed. Be clear about what behaviour is okay and what is not okay.
- Do fun things together as a family, such as playing games, reading and going on outing together.
- Get involved with the school. Speak to your child's teacher to understand their goals and how you and the school can work together to help your child do well.
- Continue reading to your child (Grade One). As your child learns to read, take turns reading to each other. Once your child is able to read well have joint reading times
- Use discipline to guide and protect your child, rather than punishment to make him/her feel bad about him/herself. Follow up any discussion about what not to do with a discussion of what to do instead
- Praise your child for good behaviour. It's best to focus praise more on what your child does (ie. "you worked hard to figure this out") than on traits he/she can't change ("you are smart")
- Support your child in taking on new challenges. Encourage him/her to solve problems on his/her own (ie. such as disagreement with another child)
- Encourage your child to do team sports

## **Developmental Milestones - 10 to 18 years**

You may ask yourselves if what you are experiencing in your family is "normal". Below are some developmental milestones that you can expect from grade 5 - 12 to help you understand what is happening or to help prepare you for what is to come. Additionally, some pointers are mentioned on how you can help promote healthy development during those years.

### **Secondary school I (Grade 5-9) 10-14 years**

What to expect:

- Growth spurt with girls is common
- Puberty starts
- Planning improves and they are able to understand consequences
- Frustration tolerance improves
- Thinking is concrete and gradually develops into abstract thinking
- Increased ability to learn
- Conflict between peers and parents is common
- Strong group identity

What to do to promote healthy development:

- Allow them to voice their opinions in a respectful manner
- Listen when they share information about their day

- Ask them how they are feeling and validate these feelings
- Consider consequences together when there is misbehaviour
- Explain why inappropriate behaviour was inappropriate
- Rather encourage good marks, than punish bad marks
- Model respect
- Hug your child often

## **Secondary school II (Grade 10-12) 15-18 years**

### What to expect:

- Growth spurt with boys is common
- Ability to think abstractly increases
- Introspection increases
- Often feel self-conscious
- Form individual identity, beliefs and values
- Prefer spending time with peers
- Conflict with parents is common
- Interest in romantic relationships increases
- Experimentation and risk-taking behaviour may occur
- Having a plan for the future becomes important

### What to do to promote healthy development:

- Encourage hobbies and talents
- State your expectations clearly
- Encourage part-time work
- Acknowledge feelings
- Respect their need for privacy
- Listen, don't judge
- Keep the communication open
- Encourage the exploration of a future career
- Hug your child often

## How the Phoenix Centre can support learners, parents, teachers and staff

- Courses to support
  - School subjects and performance
    - school subjects
    - Study-Skills
  - Emotional skills (e.g. how to cope with feelings of anxiety or anger)
  - Social skills (e.g. to say one's opinion, having confidence in giving speeches, how to find solutions...)
- Enrichment of the school curriculum through extra classes (e.g. Maths, Computer Programming)
- In cases of acting out behaviour in class
- Counselling and guidance for learners by psychologist at school
  - A recent bereavement that the learner is struggling with
  - A traumatic event
  - A sudden, unexplainable drop in academic performance
  - Suspecting emotional, physical or sexual abuse of the learner
  - Inappropriate behaviour with classmates or teachers
  - Sudden changes in the home environment (divorce, remarriage, birth of a sibling, etc.)
  - Feelings of depression or suicidal thoughts
- Diagnostic to enable an individualised support plan
- Training for learners with difficulties in spelling and reading, calculating
- Skills, knowledge and training to support a balanced life (e.g. Mindfulness, Life Coaching)
- Specific school and family relevant topics for parents (e.g. Parenting course, ADHD-Seminar)
- Talks for school relevant topics (e.g. difficult behaviour in the classroom)
- Individual support through speech and occupational therapy

**Parents are always welcome to contact the Phoenix Learning Support Centre or the Psychologists working at the German School, should they wish to discuss their child's development or seek advice on useful positive parenting tips.**

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