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Department
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Early Support

for children, young people and families

Early Years Developmental Journal

Child's name: _____

Date of birth: _____



The Developmental Profile

Enter the date in the corresponding box when you have filled out the more detailed charts in the Journal and have ticked 'Achieved' for nearly all the items in a Step. Children are likely to be achieving new things in different Steps at any one time, so check backwards and forwards as well.

Child's name: _____

Date of birth: _____

Area of Development	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 4	Step 5	Step 6	Step 7
Personal, social and emotional							
Communication							
Physical							
Thinking							

Area of Development	Step 8	Step 9	Step 10	Step 11	Step 12	Step 13	Step 14
Personal, social and emotional							
Communication							
Physical							
Thinking							

Step 10 is highlighted because this will be of particular relevance for developmental progress and health assessments when a child is 2 – 2 ½ years old.

Step 14 is highlighted because this will be of particular relevance to the Foundation Stage profile that is completed when children start school.

Key Indicator Table

This table shows all the Key Indicators for each Area of Development and in each Developmental Step.

	Personal, social and emotional	Communication	Physical	Thinking
Step 1	Holds eye contact briefly (5 seconds or more)	Turns eyes and or head towards you when you speak	Makes smooth movements with arms and legs, which gradually become more controlled	Shows interest in new experiences – for example, when you show a new toy
Step 2	Recognises and is most responsive to main carer; face brightens, activity increases when familiar carer appears	Reacts by smiling, looking and moving when you interact	Explores hands and fingers – for example, watches them, presses hands together, clasps and unclasps hands	Repeats actions that have an effect – for example, kicking or batting a mobile to create movement including actions to make a sound again, for example, shaking a rattle
Step 3	Shows emotional responses to other people's emotions – for example, smiles when smiled at and becomes distressed if hears another child crying	Vocalises back when talked to (making own sounds) especially to familiar adult and when a smiling face is used	Picks up and explores objects e.g. by holding to mouth	Shows anticipation and enjoyment of familiar caring routines and simple games – for example, sucks or licks lips in response to sounds of preparation for feeding or gets excited upon seeing spoon or familiar toy
Step 4	Shows attachment to special people, e.g. by being distressed when they are separated, staying close and showing affection	Begins to babble by repeating a series of the same sounds – for example, 'ba-ba-ba', 'ma-ma-ma'	When sitting, can lean forward to pick up small toys	Watches toy being hidden and tries to find it

	Personal, social and emotional	Communication	Physical	Thinking
Step 5	Follows with gaze when an adult directs attention to an object by looking and pointing – for example, when an adult points to a dog and says “Look at the dog” and your child looks at the dog	Begins to point to objects and people, using index finger	Actively cooperates with nappy changing (lies still, helps hold legs up)	Struggles to get objects that are out of reach and pulls a mat towards them to make a toy or object come closer
Step 6	Uses other person to help achieve a goal – for example, to get an object that’s out of reach or activate a wind-up toy	Uses approximately five different words without any help	Takes first few steps; feet wide apart, uneven steps, arms raised for balance	Engages in simple pretend play with soft toys – for example, hugs and kisses teddy or pretends to be asleep (covers self with a blanket and closes eyes)
Step 7	Is aware of other people’s feelings – for example, looks concerned if hears crying, or looks excited if hears a familiar happy voice	Recognises and will identify many objects and pictures (by pointing) when asked questions – for example, “Where’s the ball?”	Clearly communicates wet or soiled nappy or pants	Matches shape of piece to hole – for example in a shape sorter
Step 8	Uses a familiar adult as a secure base from which to explore independently in new environments – for example, ventures away to play and interact with others, but returns for a cuddle if becomes anxious	Begins to combine words into simple sentences, usually two words at first	Starts to help with dress and hygiene routines	Can organise and categorise objects – for example, putting all red things and all blue things in separate piles
Step 9	Demonstrates sense of self as an individual – for example, wants to do things independently, says “No” to adult, and so on	Recognises and joins in with songs and actions – for example, ‘The Wheels on the Bus’	Holds pencil between thumb and two fingers no longer using whole hand grasp	Operates mechanical toys – for example, turns the knob on a wind-up toy, pulls back on a friction car, pushes button to open flap

	Personal, social and emotional	Communication	Physical	Thinking
Step 10	Shows understanding of some rules and routines	Begins to make little 'sentences' by joining three words together – for example, 'Daddy gone work'	Shows control in holding and using hammers, books and mark-making tools	Completes simple puzzle board
Step 11	Recognises self in mirror or photo – for example, if looks in mirror and sees dirt or food on face, tries to wipe it off, or points to self in photo when asked	Listens eagerly to stories and requests favourites over and over again	Can catch a large ball	Is more organised, gathering together the toys they want to play with before starting play – for example, getting the doll and the tea set before starting to play tea-parties or getting the train and tracks and setting them out before playing trains
Step 12	Shows independence in selecting and carrying out activities	Uses a range of tenses – for example, 'play', 'playing', 'will play' and 'played'	Wash and dry hands	Draws person with head and one or two other features or parts
Step 13	Is curious about others and can adapt behaviour to fit in with different events and social situations – for example, removing shoes and socks before going on slide after seeing others doing this	Uses language to connect ideas, explain what is happening and anticipate what might happen next in a familiar situation	Reliably dry and clean during the day	Concentrates and listens for more than ten minutes in adult-led activities that they enjoy
Step 14	Works as part of a group or class, taking turns and sharing fairly, understanding that there need to be agreed values and codes of behaviour for groups of people, including adults and children, to work together harmoniously	Can pick out the first sound in a word	Dresses and undresses independently	Shows flexibility in trying different ways of tackling problems

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Step 1



Developmental Journal

Summary of development during Step 1

Personal, social and emotional

Close, affectionate relationships with parents/carers and other members of the family are just as important for babies as their basic needs for warmth, food and physical care. Cuddling, stroking and massage are all important ways of comforting, soothing, reassuring and showing love.

Feeling emotionally secure is crucial for development. Responding sensitively to your child helps them feel secure and learn to manage their own emotional state. These 'self-regulation' skills are important, because they help children to calm themselves or settle themselves to sleep.

Touch is an important way of communicating, and touch games like 'pat-a-cake' can be a good way of playing with babies. A few babies are very sensitive to touch, so you need to watch for your baby's reactions and use touch in a way that's pleasing to both of you.

Communication

Babies communicate a lot – they just do it in their own way. They start to use different sorts of cries to tell you whether they're hungry, tired or uncomfortable. Babies are especially interested in faces and familiar voices, so will listen and watch when you are close to them. It's important to talk with your baby right from the start of life, because it is one of the main ways they learn to communicate and interact. It is easier for babies to listen when you use 'baby-talk', when you talk in short simple sentences, using a lively tone of voice and lots of facial expression and gesture.

Talk to your baby about what they're doing, what they might be thinking and things that they can see or hear – it helps the two of you to develop your relationship and encourages your baby to communicate. When you are talking to your baby, remember to leave a space for them to join in – watch out for the way they are communicating – it might be a noise, movement or facial expression. Try to have some quiet time when the TV or radio is turned off as babies can find it quite difficult to listen and communicate with lots of background noise. This will help them to concentrate on you and make your time together even more special.

Developmental Journal

Summary of development during Step 1 continued

Physical

Children learn through different senses – for example, touch, vision, hearing, smell and taste. You may see how your baby responds to different forms of stimulation – for example, look for signs that your baby is hearing different sounds. Babies respond to sound in different ways and it's fun to look out for this – some get more active, wave their arms about or widen their eyes, while others quieten down and stop what they're doing.

Holding your baby in different positions, while you support their head and neck, can be a fun way of giving them an early experience of using their muscles. You can also lie your baby on different textures such as a fur rug, a foil blanket, a plastic mat, and watch for movements and response. Try wrist or ankle bangles that make a noise to encourage your child to move their arms and legs. Whilst you sing songs and rhymes, you can play gentle rocking games. Give praise and encouragement if the child responds with any movement to the sound of your voice, or to your touch.

Thinking

It may seem as if all that newborn babies do is take food, sleep and cry, but they're learning and developing skills from the moment they're born, and beginning to think about what's going on around them and how what they do has an effect. Even very young babies have a beginning understanding of simple differences in the world, like the difference between one thing and two things.


Learning about predictable events helps babies feel secure. Established and regular sleeping, feeding and bathing routines help them predict what's going to happen next.

To avoid difficulties with settling and sleeping later on, it can be helpful to lay babies down when they are awake at least once a day.





Moving on

Babies don't necessarily achieve all the things in Step 1 before they start doing things in Step 2. Everyone is different and some make progress in one area much more quickly than in others. This applies to all the Steps in this Journal. Every child is an individual, with their own unique set of needs. If illness or other setbacks slow progress down and your baby seems to forget things they've already learned, it doesn't mean that you're not doing enough – you can help them to make progress once these other issues have been resolved.




Personal, social and emotional

	Emerging Seen for the first time	Developing Seen sometimes	Achieved Seen often	Notes
Enjoys the company of others 				
Looks at faces 				
Copies facial expressions and mouth shapes – for example, sticking out tongue, opening mouth and widening eyes 				
Is comforted by touch 				
Is comforted by people's faces 				
Smiles at people 				
Holds eye contact briefly (5 seconds or more) 				


Communication

	Emerging Seen for the first time	Developing Seen sometimes	Achieved Seen often	Notes
Cries to express needs – for example, when hungry, or in discomfort 				
Uses sounds – for example, gurgling and cooing to communicate when relaxed 				
Turns eyes and/or head towards you when you speak 				

Physical

	Emerging Seen for the first time	Developing Seen sometimes	Achieved Seen often	Notes
Turns head to the side when placed on tummy				
Opens mouth to feed when corner of mouth is touched				
Sucking is strong and rhythmic with coordinated swallowing				
Lifts head clear of ground 				
Looks steadily at things for short periods (5 seconds or more)				
Presses down foot/straightens body when held standing on a hard surface				
Makes smooth movements with arms and legs, which gradually become more controlled 				

Thinking

	Emerging Seen for the first time	Developing Seen sometimes	Achieved Seen often	Notes
Moves hanging rattle or soft toy while moving arms or legs				
When lying on back or propped up, moves eyes to follow face or toy moving slowly from side to side, close to face				
Turns eyes and or head towards new sounds				
Is startled by sudden noise				
Shows interest in new experiences – for example, when you show a new toy				

Special events and achievements:

Developmental Journal • Step 1

Need more sheets? Add as many as you want

Questions we want to ask:

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Step 2



Developmental Journal

Summary of development during Step 2

Personal, social and emotional

Babies passing through Step 2 begin to express a wider range of emotions. They find ways to show you they're happy or sad, hungry or tired, excited or bored.

Helping babies to settle themselves to sleep so that they can enjoy their cots or sleeping places, can prevent difficulties later. Some babies settle to sleep more easily at this stage, but many still have unsettled sleeping patterns and wake up in the night. If you would like some help with this, ask someone – for example, your health visitor, or doctor.

Respond to and name the emotional signals your child gives – positive and negative. This helps them learn to trust you as a source of affection, comfort and security and to soothe themselves.

Communication

At this stage, babies are starting to learn that words relate to people, objects and actions. They will start to 'talk' in a number of different ways. They're beginning to experiment and use different sounds to express different things. They start to blow raspberries, to squeal, squeak and grunt, and to chuckle and laugh.

Talk to your baby about everything you're doing together. Repeat the names for familiar objects and talk about regular routines, such as bath time and dinner time. This helps them to understand and anticipate events in their world. You can encourage communication by imitating and responding to what they do. Take time for face to face interaction, down at your baby's level, pulling faces, and finding out what you do that your baby enjoys.

Most babies love to join in simple 'conversations' – you can help by leaving pauses for your baby to use when they 'reply' to you. Use lots of repetition in these 'conversations' – babies learn how to take turns from this early communication, which is really important for understanding how to communicate and have conversations later on.

Developmental Journal

Summary of development during Step 2 continued

Physical







Babies gradually learn to have better control over their bodies. One of the first things they can control is their neck muscles, so they begin to hold their head steady and turn it to follow sights and sounds. They can also use their hands and arms more purposefully and will start to reach for objects and grasp them. Careful positioning of favourite toys can encourage a child to turn their head, look up and reach out to touch the toy.

You can help and encourage development by playing with your child using toys, like rattles, that fit their grasp and make interesting sounds when shaken. Try exploring different textures with both hands – for example, water, dough, sand, dry rice. Water play in the bath is a fun way to encourage movement and splashing. Take time to play because your child is learning to control and move their body whilst splashing! At this stage, babies love physical contact so use rhymes and songs to rock, pat and dance with them.




Thinking

As well as reacting to the different sounds you make, babies are also learning about other sounds and noises. They start to show an interest in familiar sounds in the home and show they're beginning to understand what they mean. Making these sorts of connections forms the basis of reasoning about the world. Another way that babies in Step 2 explore the world is to look around more at their surroundings.

Try to give your child plenty of opportunity for different experiences, such as listening to different sounds around home. Use brightly coloured pictures, mobiles and other things to catch their attention.

	Emerging Seen for the first time	Developing Seen sometimes	Achieved Seen often	Notes
Gains physical and emotional comfort from 'snuggling in' 				
Makes sounds and movements to initiate interaction with another person 				
Calms from being upset when held, rocked, spoken or sung to with soothing voice 				
Holds eye contact during interactions with a familiar person 				
Recognises and is most responsive to main carer; face brightens, activity increases when familiar carer appears 				






Communication

	Emerging Seen for the first time	Developing Seen sometimes	Achieved Seen often	Notes
Makes sounds in response when you talk 				
Turns quickly to your voice across the room				
Shows excitement at approaching voices, footsteps or other familiar sounds				
Reacts by smiling, looking and moving when you interact 				

Physical

	Emerging Seen for the first time	Developing Seen sometimes	Achieved Seen often	Notes
Able to control head when supported in an upright position; head does not flop forwards or backwards 				
When lying on tummy, lifts head up and uses forearms to support 				
Uses movement and senses to focus on, reach for and grasp objects 				
Closes hand firmly around objects placed in palm 				
Sits with support 				
Explores hands and fingers – for example, watches them, presses hands together, clasps and unclasps hands  				

Thinking

	Emerging Seen for the first time	Developing Seen sometimes	Achieved Seen often	Notes
Shows interest in small objects or the detail of a toy – for example, will gaze at small beads in a rattle				
Reacts with sudden behaviour change when a face or object disappears suddenly from view 				
Looks around a room with interest; visually scans environment for new and interesting objects and events 				
Smiles with pleasure at recognisable playthings 				
Shows interest in moving pictures and sound – for example, on television				
Can shift visual attention by looking from one object to another and back again				
Repeats actions that have an effect – for example, kicking or batting a mobile to create movement, shaking a rattle so it makes a sound again 				

Special events and achievements:

Developmental Journal • Step 2

Need more sheets? Add as many as you want

Questions we want to ask:

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Step 3



Developmental Journal

Summary of development during Step 3

Personal, social and emotional

Children begin to show more signs of picking up on other people's behaviour. They respond more clearly to facial expressions and how you talk, and respond more to other people's emotions. Your child may begin to indicate they recognise you by 'greeting' you and by behaving differently when they're with strangers. Children become more active about trying to get your attention and in general they explore the world more.

It's easy for children to get frustrated when their wish to do things is out of step with what they are able to do. Children passing through this Step learn a lot when you help them to do things they can't easily do by themselves, but can manage with a little support from you. As well as giving them experience of success, this helps them to prepare for new and different challenges in the future.

You can help your child by matching the activities around them to their ability level, and reassuring them and giving them something easier to do if they get frustrated.

Communication

Children begin to show more signs of wanting things and express their needs more purposefully. Often, children in this Step begin to use sounds or gestures more consistently to tell you what they want. These sounds or gestures will eventually turn into words, especially if children are rewarded with successful communication or more interaction.

This is when children can begin to associate words with real objects and people. Children need to learn what words mean so that they can use them in early conversations; this is really the foundation for language. Even though they are not yet speaking, children are learning a lot about language and communication.

Children have already learnt a lot about the sounds of language by listening to people talking. They have worked out which sounds are about communication and which are just background noise. As they move through Step 3, they begin to use more speech-like sounds themselves.

Talk about things and people that your child is showing an interest in, and use simple picture books and stories to talk about what is in the pictures. Use lots of repetition and clear simple words and sentences. It's important to link words with the real world as listening on its own is quite tricky for young children.

If your child shows they want something, either by showing you or by using sounds or gestures, it is important to respond to show you understand and to encourage them to communicate. This is where children begin to realise how powerful communication can be. For some children, using gestures or simple signs is a good way to encourage communication; use whatever works best for your child, but lots of repetition in lots of different situations is good, with time for you both to listen and talk.

Developmental Journal

Summary of development during Step 3 continued

Physical

Children at this point in development are gaining more control over their hands, arms, legs and feet. They may enjoy making lots of the same movements, e.g. kicking their legs, bouncing up and down.

Children are using their developing movement and senses to explore their environment, for example they are able to hold objects and turn them round while they look at them. They're more precise when they reach for things and grasp them and may be able to start putting pieces of food in their mouth. They may also use their mouth to deliberately explore objects. This is a good way for children to find out about things but make sure they can't swallow the objects!






Encourage your child to explore their environment by putting interesting things beside them such as brightly coloured toys. You may need to give your child physical support – for example, they're finding it hard to stay sitting upright, they won't be able to concentrate on anything else.

Thinking





Children passing through Step 3 become more active and begin to explore their world. They're more confident about reaching out and grasping things and take more interest in their surroundings. They also begin to recognise objects and people, and to understand how things go together. For example, they may begin to associate a spoon with feeding.






Although children are making sense of the world about them right from the moment they are born, it's more obvious now that they're noticing things and people and thinking about them. You may see your baby staring intently at something interesting, like a television programme or an unfamiliar person.

Share experiences with your child by pointing to things, talking about what they're doing and talking while you play with a toy together. This helps the two of you focus attention on the same things. Once your child can follow your pointing or look where you're looking, encourage this.



	Emerging Seen for the first time	Developing Seen sometimes	Achieved Seen often	Notes
Shows pleasure at being tickled and other physical games 				
Laughs and gurgles 				
Likes cuddles and being held – for example, calms, snuggles in, smiles, gazes at carer’s face or strokes carer’s skin 				
Shows pleasure at return of familiar carer				
Shows emotional responses to other people’s emotions – for example, smiles when smiled at and becomes distressed if hears another child crying 				

Communication

	Emerging Seen for the first time	Developing Seen sometimes	Achieved Seen often	Notes
Looks carefully at person talking 				
Stops communicating if speaker turns away 				
Enjoys listening to nursery rhymes				
Responds to changes in tone of voice				
Vocalises back when talked to (making own sounds) especially to familiar adult and when a smiling face is used 				

	Emerging Seen for the first time	Developing Seen sometimes	Achieved Seen often	Notes
Rolls over from front to back, from back to front 				
When lying on back, lifts legs into vertical position and grasps feet 				
Can lift head and chest and support self with straight arms and flat hands when lying on tummy 				
Picks up and explores objects – for example, by holding to mouth 				

Thinking

	Emerging Seen for the first time	Developing Seen sometimes	Achieved Seen often	Notes
Plays with and explores objects by touching them, looking at them, bringing them to the mouth and listening to the sounds they make				
Persistently and deliberately reaches out for toys				
Notices changes in groupings of objects, pictures and sounds – for example they may look puzzled, unsettled or stop what they are doing				
Shows anticipation and enjoyment of familiar caring routines and simple games – for example, sucks or licks lips in response to sounds of preparation for feeding or gets excited upon seeing spoon or other eating utensil or familiar toy				

Special events and achievements:

Developmental Journal • Step 3

Need more sheets? Add as many as you want

Questions we want to ask:

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Step 4



Developmental Journal

Summary of development during Step 4

Personal, social and emotional

Children start joining in more with games that you play together – for example, bouncing on your knees to favourite songs or rhymes. Games, songs and rhymes help children to learn about routines and to anticipate what might happen next.

A key part of building a secure relationship is good emotional communication. Your child needs to learn that you can be relied on as a 'special person' for comfort, for sympathy and general understanding of their ups and downs. Being sensitive and responsive to your child's needs and how they express them is central to this.

It's important in building a secure attachment to respond appropriately to your child's negative feelings as well as to their positive ones. Naming these feelings will help your child to develop emotionally. Because of their interest in you and what you think, this is also an important time to show your child how pleased you are whenever they learn something new.

Communication

Children are keener to communicate and they're on the way to learning to talk, as well as understanding more of the words they hear day to day. As well as using more recognisable speech sounds, they point, nod and shake their heads. They make more effort to communicate and if they're not understood straight away, they repeat what they 'say' to get their message across. For some children, this is a frustrating time as they often understand more than they can say and can struggle to get their messages across.

Children begin to combine sounds, too – they string sounds together and make short 'sentences' of sounds or longer strings of babble that begin to sound more like speech. Your child may start to use particular sounds to mean particular things – for example, when they want a drink. These 'sounds for things' are the first steps towards words and are a great achievement.

Your child is also likely to start copying sounds and movements that you make and this can be the basis of fun games together. You'll find they enjoy watching your face and can copy lip movements. Remember that any games using speech sounds help children to hear the sounds in words and this in turn helps them to learn to talk, and lays foundations for reading and writing.

Try to work out what your child is saying before they get frustrated or give up. Sometimes asking your child to show you what they mean or take you to what they want can help. Children learn a lot about language from adults, so using clear words in short sentences can help them tune into what different words mean. Children often love to copy at this age, so play games that have with sounds and actions, such as singing songs and rhymes, which are good foundations to build communication.

Developmental Journal

Summary of development during Step 4 continued

Physical

Around this time, children can get around more efficiently on the floor by wriggling and they start to pull themselves up to stand. As your child becomes more mobile, making your home safe and 'child-friendly' is a priority.

Your child is likely to begin to use their increasing ability to move around to explore their environment. They may lean forwards from sitting to pick up toys. They may become particularly interested in passing toys from hand to hand and playing with them in new ways.

By putting favourite toys at different levels, in boxes and bags you can encourage your child to 'search' for the toy and explore new concepts of 'in', 'on' and 'under'. Introduce 'treasure baskets' of interesting objects, for example brushes, balls, fabrics and textures to encourage exploration and new discoveries. Make sure you are there to hold your child and support them whilst they're trying to crawl or move around on their feet.

Thinking




One of the reasons why children want to communicate more is that their thinking and understanding have developed. Remember that young children need things that stretch them a bit, but not too much. Giving plenty of success and praise encourages children to develop their abilities and to be adventurous in tackling new things. You may also notice that your child's memory is improving and that they're recognising people and things.



As well as staying awake for longer periods, children become able to sustain attention on activities for longer. They're able to concentrate on things and are more observant of the people and events around them. Your child will probably start to look at you to see how you react to things like sudden noises, or the things that they do, like banging a toy on a table.

Children are learning a lot about the wider world and about the things in it. They're beginning to understand that objects exist even when they can't be seen. Before, it may have seemed as if 'out of sight' was 'out of mind', but now children start to find objects that are hidden. Peek-a-boo and hiding games are especially interesting to children at this stage in their development.






In this Step, children often benefit from repetition; so you may need to repeat activities lots of times. What seems boring to us is new learning for them, and repetition helps to consolidate learning. Children learn a surprising amount through observation as well, so give your child plenty of opportunity to watch you and other people going about your everyday lives. Talk to your child about the things you are both looking at or doing together. This helps your child develop an awareness of other people's thoughts and feelings, as well as learning new words and making connections between events and consequences.

[This Step links with Early Years Foundation Stage \(EYFS\) age/stage bands 1 and 2](#)



	Emerging Seen for the first time	Developing Seen sometimes	Achieved Seen often	Notes
Smiles at image of self in mirror; shows a developing understanding and awareness of themselves				
Takes turns in interactions with others; quietyens when other person talks				
Makes own sounds when talked to, especially when a smiling face is used by parent				
Uses voice or gesture to refuse – for example by pushing object away, shaking head				
Lifts arms in anticipation of being picked up				
Shows attachment to special people – for example by being distressed when they are separated, staying close and showing affection				

	Emerging Seen for the first time	Developing Seen sometimes	Achieved Seen often	Notes
Begins to develop and use some consonant sounds – for example, ‘g’, ‘m’, ‘p’, ‘d’				
Begins to develop and use vowel sounds – for example, ‘aa’				
Understands words they hear a lot and that are said with gestures – for example, “all gone” and “bye bye”				
Uses simple sounds or gestures to mean a particular thing – for example, “da” for ‘daddy’				
Uses voice or gesture to attract attention				
Babbles by repeating a series of the same sounds – for example, “ba-ba-ba”, “ma-ma-ma” 				

Physical

	Emerging Seen for the first time	Developing Seen sometimes	Achieved Seen often	Notes
Sits unsupported on the floor 				
Passes toys from one hand to the other 				
Pulls to standing, holding on to furniture or person for support 				
Can move from a sitting position to hands and knees (crawl position)				
Moves around on the floor by wiggling				
When sitting, can lean forward to pick up small toys 				

Thinking

	Emerging Seen for the first time	Developing Seen sometimes	Achieved Seen often	Notes
Plays with objects, by banging, shaking, turning them around in their hands				
Reacts to familiar sounds or sights by changes in behaviour – for example, extends arms and legs, smiles, searches with eyes when hears the vacuum cleaner, running bath, footsteps				
Shows interest in toys and other things that incorporate technology				
Can release toy from grasp if attention disturbed				
Watches toy being hidden and tries to find it 				

Special events and achievements:

Developmental Journal • Step 4

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Step 5



Developmental Journal

Summary of development during Step 5

Personal, social and emotional

Your child's attachment to you is likely to move forward. You'll begin to notice that they behave differently towards strangers and may even show anxiety when strangers appear or when you have to leave them for a while. Giving your child comfort and support helps them to cope with these new feelings. It also helps them to learn that you can be relied on to return, even if you're out of sight for a while.

Your child will probably also start to be more expressive, using different tones of voice to call you and to ask, tell or refuse. This may make daily life more challenging, but it's also a positive sign that they're now ready to take some control over their life. Children in this Step can sometimes be 'difficult', and get frustrated by things that they want to do but can't or shouldn't do.

Try not to let your child get too distressed if you have to leave them for a while; this can make it more difficult for them to become more independent later on.

Have interesting toys and activities available to use as distractions in case your child becomes frustrated!

Communication

Children passing through Step 5 understand an increasing number of words and will use a consistent set of sounds or a gesture to mean a particular thing.

Your child will continue to learn a lot from hearing you and other people talking about what they're experiencing; what they're seeing, hearing, feeling and doing.

Children at this Step can point to pictures of objects that you name, which is a good way to build their understanding as well as their talking.

It is really helpful to try and work out what your child means and either show or tell them what you have understood. This way, they will learn that they are communicating something and that what they say has an effect on their world. This is also a good time to introduce simple picture books, if you haven't already done so. Continue using listening games, singing songs and using nursery or action rhymes, they really do help.

Developmental Journal

Summary of development during Step 5 continued

Physical

Children are now becoming much more mobile and active. They will make purposeful movements from one place to another, often from where you put them down to somewhere else! It's important to make their play spaces safe and to provide a stimulating environment that encourages them to explore.

Fine motor skills involve smaller parts of the body, such as fingers, and hand-eye co-ordination. In this Step, you'll notice developments in this area, with the way your child grasps, pats and pinches at things.

Your child is beginning to help with caring routines, such as feeding and nappy changing. They are becoming a little more independent and may be able to hold their bottle, a book or picture card.











You can play with making marks in sand, dough or paint. Encourage your child to do this in different ways, using different brushes and tools. Play alongside your child by patting, swirling and brushing it. Multi-sensory play helps your child to use their hands and fingers in different ways, strengthening fine motor skills. You can help your child strengthen their muscles and develop their physical skills by playing active ball games with them. Finger or gentle tickling games such as 'This Little Piggy' can be fitted into your feeding, changing and bathing routines.




Thinking

Children in this Step think about more than just what's in front of them. They're aware when something is missing or when they want something that's not in sight.











Picture books are enjoyed by most children at this stage of development, especially when you look at them together. Books can help your child to learn the names for categories of things as well as objects and people. Picture books are also a good way for your child to realise that other children have similar experiences to them, such as losing their favourite comfort object.

Respond to what your child is trying to express – for example, when they want something. This shows them how useful it is to communicate. Sharing books with children is a great way for them to learn, as they remember things that they see and hear more easily than things that they just hear.






	Emerging Seen for the first time	Developing Seen sometimes	Achieved Seen often	Notes
Seeks to gain attention in a variety of ways, drawing others into social interaction 				
Likes to be close to adult and may cry and try to follow (by looking, reaching or crawling) when familiar adult leaves room 				
Is wary of strangers 				
Builds relationships with special people – for example, by showing affection or holding your attention by vocalising  				
Points to draw other people’s attention to things of interest 				
Shows interest in the activities of others and responds differently to children and adults – for example, may be more interested in watching children than adults or may pay more attention when children talk to them 				
Enjoys finding their nose, eyes or tummy as part of naming games 				
Follows with gaze when an adult directs attention to an object by looking and pointing – for example, when an adult points to a bus and says “Look at the bus” and the child looks at the bus 				

	Emerging Seen for the first time	Developing Seen sometimes	Achieved Seen often	Notes
Responds to own name by turning or looking up at whoever said their name				
Recognises some family names such as Mummy, Daddy, names of other carers, brothers and sisters, or pets, and will turn to look when the name is said				
Asks for favourite games using sounds or gestures – for example, playing peek-a-boo, saying “Boo” or hiding face in hands				
Copies the speech of others, especially the vowels and ‘ups and downs’ (intonation)				
Babbles, using varied consonants and vowels – for example, “baga”, “maba”				
Points to objects and people, using first finger				

Physical

	Emerging Seen for the first time	Developing Seen sometimes	Achieved Seen often	Notes
Crawls, bottom shuffles or rolls continuously to move around  				
Holds own bottle or sipper cup 				
Picks up small objects between thumb and fingers  				
Enjoys making marks in damp sand, paste or paint 				
Throws toys or objects deliberately				
Stretches out with one hand to grasp toy if offered				
Opens mouth for spoon 				
Can let go of things – for example, to drop something or give it to you 				
Can reach and grasp a moving object by moving towards where the object will go				
Actively cooperates with nappy changing – for example lies still, holds legs up 				

Thinking

	Emerging Seen for the first time	Developing Seen sometimes	Achieved Seen often	Notes
Shows excitement during turn-taking games such as peek-a-boo – for example, claps hands as their turn gets closer				
Looks towards the floor when object is dropped by other people and looks for objects they drop themselves				
Explores new objects in an orderly way to investigate cause and effect – for example can pull on a string to get the connected toy				
Understands the meaning of some sounds – for example, hears a telephone ring and looks at the telephone				
Anticipates what will happen next – for example, expects to be fed if placed in high chair and may become distressed if the expected routine doesn't happen				
Stays absorbed in activities and can ignore distractions for at least 30 seconds				
Imitates and improvises actions they have observed – for example, clapping or waving				
Struggles to get objects that are out of reach and pulls a mat towards them to make a toy or object come closer				

Special events and achievements:

Developmental Journal • Step 5

Need more sheets? Add as many as you want

Questions we want to ask:

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Step 6



Developmental Journal

Summary of development during Step 6

Personal, social and emotional

Children become more sociable towards other children and begin to show interest in what they're doing and try to join in. There's a lot of new learning involved here – how to be gentle with other people, how to take turns and so on. You'll probably need to keep a close eye on your child during first encounters, to help them learn the rules of playing together.

Many children develop a strong attachment to a particular soft toy or blanket and cuddle it when then they feel tired or unhappy. This is their way of learning to comfort themselves, without relying on you to do it. Don't take such signs as rejection – your child will still need you to be there for them when they get really upset!

Your child's growing independence may also mean they become more wilful. They may 'play up' at mealtimes and sleeping difficulties can become a real issue.

Help your child to learn to communicate with their playmates – for example, by showing them how to ask for things, rather than grabbing them. Try to create and stick to regular routines and clear boundaries. This can help your child to continue to learn that life is predictable and that there are particular times when particular things happen. It can also help children learn to behave in ways that are socially acceptable.

Communication

Children are beginning to learn how to put words together into short phrases and sentences. They are not talking in sentences, but are listening to other people and working out how it is done. Soon children will begin to use these new skills to express more complicated ideas and wishes. Children need to learn what words mean before they can use them properly, so it will help if you try to match what you say to what your child can understand. At this stage, children still understand simple, short sentences best.

As well as starting to use a few recognizable words, children use gestures and particular sounds to communicate. Although helping and encouraging them to learn to talk is important, it's communication, getting the message across, that's the key thing. Use whatever works best for you and your child – words, signs or gestures – and continue to praise their efforts and successes.

Respond to your child's attempts to use their words, gestures or signs. First words often do not sound like adult words yet, so you can help by saying the word back to them and including it in a simple sentence. This will help them learn how to say the words more clearly. When spending time with your child, comment on what they are doing. This helps them to link the things around them and their actions to words. Routines are really useful ways to link words with meaning, using the same words and phrases during day to day routines helps children make the connection. Looking at picture books together, encouraging your child to point to pictures and playing picture-matching games continue to be good ways to help children learn words.

Developmental Journal

Summary of development during Step 6 continued

Physical

Children begin to feed themselves with a spoon or other utensil – they may make a mess, but it is very important for their self-confidence. They may also want to try and feed themselves with finger foods like carrot sticks, toast sticks or chopped up pieces of banana. It's time, as well, to introduce your child to other practical skills like brushing teeth, washing and dressing.

Children also become more independent in moving around. They can use furniture to 'walk' around the room and to lower themselves to the floor rather than just falling back down. During this Step, many children also take their first steps. Starting to walk can be a source of great delight for children as it brings more freedom and more opportunities to explore.






Arrange your house so that your child has plenty of opportunities to walk about and explore safely, so they can make the most of their new skills. Time outside to exercise is good too and helps children learn more about the world. Encourage movement across different surfaces and slopes and using different moving trucks and carts.





Thinking

Learning by watching other people is becoming more important and children begin to learn about language by listening to you talking with other people. Playing with another child who is at a similar level of development and ability can also be very helpful.










Children are beginning to understand what it means to pretend. They are learning that toys can represent real objects, just as words can.

You can help your child develop their thinking by 'scaffolding' their play – this is when you support your child to extend what they are already doing and show them what they could do next. Play 'pretend' games with your child, such as 'feeding teddy' together. These sorts of games help them to learn more about caring for themselves and other people.





	Emerging Seen for the first time	Developing Seen sometimes	Achieved Seen often	Notes
Looks to familiar adult to check if not sure about something – for example, looks at you to check your reaction if a stranger tries to pick them up 				
Uses familiar adult for ‘emotional refuelling’ when feeling tired, stressed or frustrated – for example, stops playing to have a cuddle or sits quietly snuggled in on your lap for a few minutes 				
Clings to special person and hides face when feeling scared or overwhelmed				
Gets distressed and anxious if left somewhere without their familiar adult				
Uses comfort toy or object to calm self 				
Uses other person to help achieve a goal – for example, to get an object that’s out of reach or activate a wind-up toy 				

	Emerging Seen for the first time	Developing Seen sometimes	Achieved Seen often	Notes
Takes part in a simple 'conversation' with an adult, focusing on things happening in the here and now or frequent events that are about to happen – for example, meals or bath time				
Uses sounds instead of words to represent different objects – for example "brmm" for 'car', "yum" for 'dinner', "dodi" for 'dummy'				
Voice has the 'ups and downs' (intonation) of the language spoken at home even though individual words may not be clear				
Responds to familiar words and short sentences based on familiar routines – for example, runs to the door when an adult holds their keys and says "It's time to go"				
Uses approximately five different words without any help				

Physical

	Emerging Seen for the first time	Developing Seen sometimes	Achieved Seen often	Notes
Starts to communicate urination and bowel movements 				
Pulls self up to standing against furniture and can lower self back down again				
Walks around furniture lifting one foot and stepping sideways (cruising) 				
Walks with one or both hands held by adult 				
Grasps finger foods and brings them to mouth 				
Attempts to use spoon or other utensil; can guide towards mouth but food often falls off 				
Holds an object in each hand and brings them together in the middle – for example, holds two blocks and bangs them together 				
Holds pen or crayon using a whole hand (palmar) grasp and scribbles with different strokes 				
Takes first few steps; feet wide apart, uneven steps, arms raised for balance 				

Thinking

	Emerging Seen for the first time	Developing Seen sometimes	Achieved Seen often	Notes
Knows there are different ways to play with different toys – for example, that a ball is for rolling or throwing and a car is for pushing 				
Realises one object can act as a container for another – for example, puts smaller objects inside bigger ones and removes them again 				
Interested in things that go together – for example, cup and saucer				
Recognises favourite toys, games and activities – for example, sees character in favourite book and brings same toy for you to play with				
Experiments – for example, if two things don't fit together one way then tries another way				
Engages in simple pretend play with soft toys – for example, hugs and kisses teddy or pretends to be asleep by covering self with a blanket and closing eyes 				

Special events and achievements:

Developmental Journal • Step 6

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Step 7



Developmental Journal

Summary of development during Step 7

Personal, social and emotional

Children at this stage of development express their emotions and needs more clearly in words. It's important to respond, showing that you understand what they're thinking and feeling, as this helps children manage what are sometimes strong new feelings.

Children are learning to play games with other people, so this is an important time for them to learn about consideration for other people. Games are a good way for children to learn about, and get used to, teamwork, taking turns and sharing.

Relationships with other children in the family become more important now, because children learn from and with other children a lot more from this point forward.

If you don't understand what your child is trying to express, then encourage them to help you understand, for example by using gestures or signs. Picture games that involve matching like dominoes or snap can be fun and get children used to taking turns and help them learn the names for things as well. Encourage co-operation with other children by providing plenty of toys and other things to play with and showing how to give and take. Sharing is a difficult idea for children to learn and having two of a favourite toy helps to avoid squabbles!

Communication

Children have now got the idea that things have names and so this is the time you may see a 'vocabulary spurt' when children are learning the names for many things. Not all children show this sudden progress and for some, it may happen a bit later, in Step 8 or 9, or just more slowly. As well as learning lots of new names for things, children also learn a few action words.

Once your child has learnt a name like 'cat', you may find they start to call all furry, four-legged animals 'cat'. This is a good sign – they're thinking about things that go together, and if you help them, they'll soon sort out which animals are cats and which are hamsters!

Children's early words aren't always very clear and they may find it tricky to produce certain speech sounds. This is completely normal as there is an order in which children learn to say sounds.

To help with children's speech, it is best to repeat words back to them clearly. They then hear the word as it should sound. Children pick up a lot from adults giving them a clear 'model' in this way. In fact it is one of the main ways children learn to talk. You can also help children develop their language by expanding what they say and repeating it back to them as part of your conversation. For example, if your child says "all gone" you might say "Yes, the milk has all gone" or if they say "sleepy" you could say "That's right, dolly's sleepy". This helps children to understand that individual words can be joined up to make short sentences. If your child isn't using spoken words, but is using a range of individual signs or gestures, you can respond with two signs or gestures in the same way.

Developmental Journal

Summary of development during Step 7 continued

Physical

When your child has learned to walk, they can go on to learn new things like climbing stairs and running. There are likely to be times when your child is not very co-operative because of their growing independence, or sometimes because they are frustrated. Sometimes a favourite, familiar activity can head off these difficulties before they become issues.

As your child experiences a wider range of food and becomes more independent, they may start showing their own preferences for certain food and drink. They may do this in different ways. For example, if they like something, they may reach or turn towards it, smile, laugh or sound excited. If they don't like something, they push it away, cry or say/sign "no". It's important at these early stages to help children to enjoy their food and appreciate healthier choices by combining favourites with new tastes and textures.

Playing outside in different kinds of weathers provides children with new opportunities to explore their environment. Splashing in a puddle, looking at a frosty spider's web or playing with shadows can provide lots of opportunities for investigation and discovery. Space to run freely over different surfaces and slopes will help your child to develop their movement skills. When adults join in the game – for example, playing stop/start games or 'Hunt the bear' – this will encourage interaction and communication alongside the physical play.

Thinking





As well as starting to put words together, children get better at putting actions together. For example, they start to learn the order in which to get dressed, or they may be able to copy you when you show them how to put different parts of a toy together. As they get more able to use their hands and fingers, children enjoy playing with toys that have smaller parts, and pieces that fit together. They still use their mouths sometimes to explore things, so you still need to watch what they're doing carefully.






Children are also interested in objects that make sounds or react in different ways. Because of all the new things they can do, children's play becomes more complicated and you can introduce new ideas for them to build in.









Attention spans are improving, giving more scope for activities that last a bit longer. You may also notice that your child's memory is developing – they begin to recognise things and remember what to do with them.


Books with flaps to lift up and textures to feel as you share them together become particularly interesting. You can expand your child's pretend play, for example feeding dolly turns into getting dolly out of bed, getting her washed and dressed, and then giving her breakfast. This is an important way for children to learn more about taking care of themselves. You can begin to use simple instructions to help your child learn. At first, link telling with showing them how to do things – this makes it easier for them to understand.

This Step links with Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) age/stage bands 2 and 3

	Emerging Seen for the first time	Developing Seen sometimes	Achieved Seen often	Notes
Starts interaction with, and plays alongside, other children				
Explores new toys and environments, but looks back to you regularly to 'check in'				
Responds to a small number of boundaries, with encouragement and support				
Reacts to an audience – for example, repeats an activity or action which is received positively by a smile, or which is laughed at, applauded or cheered				
Is aware of other people's feelings – for example, looks concerned if hears crying, or looks excited if hears a familiar happy voice				

	Emerging Seen for the first time	Developing Seen sometimes	Achieved Seen often	Notes
Understands and follows simple instructions in context – for example, “Give me the ball” or “Kiss Daddy night-night” 				
When asked, can show simple body parts on self by pointing at them on self or others – for example, hair, eyes, ears and nose				
Copies expressions they hear a lot – for example, “Oh dear” or “All fall down” 				
Enjoys nursery rhymes and shows they are listening by trying to join in with actions or sounds 				
Uses different single words to comment on what’s happening – for example, says “Bird” if they see one in the garden				
Recognises and will identify many objects and pictures (by pointing) when asked questions – for example, “Where’s the ball?” 				

	Emerging Seen for the first time	Developing Seen sometimes	Achieved Seen often	Notes
Builds tower of two blocks				
Walks with shorter steps and legs closer together, no longer needs to hold arms up for balance				
Walks up steps holding hand of adult				
Comes downstairs backwards on knees (crawling)				
Accepts new textures and tastes – for example, larger pieces of food and different types				
Shows awareness of what a potty or toilet is used for				
Develops own likes and dislikes in food and drink and may refuse disliked food or drink				
Takes off easily removed clothes – for example, socks				
Turns knobs and removes easy screw lids				
Signals wet or soiled nappy or pants				

	Emerging Seen for the first time	Developing Seen sometimes	Achieved Seen often	Notes
Remembers where objects belong 				
Actively explores objects using different senses – for example, links together different ways of handling objects; shaking, hitting, looking, feeling, tasting, mouthing, pulling, turning and poking 				
Shows understanding that things exist, even when out of sight; will refer to, request or search for objects that are not currently in sight 				
Enjoys playing with objects of different sizes that go together – for example, stacking cups				
Matches shape of piece to hole – for example, in a shape sorter				

Special events and achievements:

Developmental Journal • Step 7

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Step 8



Developmental Journal

Summary of development during Step 8

Personal, social and emotional

Children now have much more of a sense of their separate identity as people and they begin to recognise the different people in their life – they may recognise familiar faces in photographs and know their own name. They are increasing their sense of being part of a group that includes families, friends and acquaintances.

Your child may often show a lot of positive affection towards the people they love. However, this goes along with growing independence and so it can be a difficult time. Children sometimes find it very hard to deal with life when they can't do things for themselves, or can't have what they want, and these sorts of frustrations bring strong emotion. Sometimes this may be expressed as hostility towards other people. It's important that you help your child to learn how to handle these powerful feelings in an acceptable way. You'll need to give comfort and emotional support at such times, as well as clear messages about what is and what is not acceptable.

Your child may now be ready to play with other children in a toddler group or some other kind of pre-school group. This will help them learn social skills and give them more chances to learn by watching other children play. Your child may be clingy for the first few times in a new setting, but this is part of learning that you can be trusted to go away and return for them later. If you're considering leaving your child in the care of someone else for the first time, don't rush into leaving them until they're ready. Children need you there at first, for reassurance. Then try leaving for a short time, to get your child used to the idea and to learn that you will come back.

Communication

As children's understanding of words and sentences increases, they begin to put words together into short, two word 'sentences', like "milk all gone" or "dolly sleepy", often using signs or gestures as well. Sometimes it can be hard to understand what they mean, because they're just starting to learn how sentences are built.

It helps if you continue to match the level of what you say to what your child can understand, using short simple sentences. Remember to make your voice interesting and get down to their level to talk. You can help your child learn the rules by repeating back to them what they say in a more 'adult' or complete way. For example, if your child says "Put dere", you could say "Yes, put it in there", stressing the different words. Use a positive tone – confirming that you agree with what they've said and you're giving them an opportunity to learn from hearing you say it.

Children learn a lot by listening to and watching other people, so it's important to give them plenty of experiences that encourage them to do this. Getting out and about in the local area, park, shops and library can be fascinating for young children and really help their language to develop. 'Home-made', personal books, using family photographs with 2 and 3 word 'sentences' are fun to make together and can be very helpful. Sharing books about your family together can help your child with joining words together. They may also enjoy 'lift the flap' books and books with a lot of repetition or rhyme. Going to your local library to get new picture books can help you give your child more opportunities to learn.

Developmental Journal

Summary of development during Step 8 continued

Physical

Children have a desire to be physically active, and may now be expressing themselves through action and sound. At this Step, most children are more mobile around the house and outdoors. Your child might also enjoy moving to music, and their movements may begin to match the rhythm of the music.

Self-help in daily life (feeding, washing and dressing) is something that can be encouraged and rewarded, one step at a time. Routines are useful here, so keeping your child's coat on the same peg is helpful as they will know where to find it. For this sort of learning and for many other areas too, you can help by offering just enough support for your child to experience success. Success builds self-confidence and a wish to achieve more and helps children feel good about doing things for themselves.

If your child is still learning to move around, then make sure they can see and get to lots of different interesting toys. Store toys and books where the child can access them by themselves but can also put them away independently. Tell stories, action songs and rhymes that encourage children to join in the movements and act out the actions. You can help motivate your child to feed themselves by giving them a lot of variety in their food, while making sure that they can handle it, either with fingers or a spoon. Encourage your child's efforts when they try to help with dressing routines, for example putting their foot into a shoe. Choose clothes that encourage independence and confidence, for example – belts, buttons and buckles can be difficult to manage at this stage.




Thinking




Children's growing understanding and thinking means that play can get more varied and complicated. Your child's attention span is increasing and so they're able to tackle more challenging activities. Your child's thinking about the world is progressing all the time. One way this shows itself is in putting things into categories and learning the names for groups of things.

Your child can learn a lot from games where daily activities are acted out, such as playing with toy plates, cups and pretend food. These sorts of games also help children to learn by playing with brothers, sisters, cousins and friends. Sorting games, like putting things into boxes (all the big ones go here and all the little ones go over here), can be an enjoyable way of encouraging children to think about categories and talking about how things are the 'same' and 'different' also helps.





This Step links with Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) age/stage band 3

Personal, social and emotional




	Emerging Seen for the first time	Developing Seen sometimes	Achieved Seen often	Notes
Helps with dressing – for example, holds out arm for sleeve or foot for shoe				
Can tolerate brief separations from special people				
Expresses emotions and seeks reaction – for example, may cry at a minor injury and ask for help or comfort				
Starts to share and ‘give and take’				
Plays ball cooperatively with an adult – for example, may kick or roll the ball back and forth				
Uses a familiar adult as a secure base from which to explore independently in new environments – for example, goes away to play and interact with others, but returns for a cuddle if becomes anxious				

	Emerging Seen for the first time	Developing Seen sometimes	Achieved Seen often	Notes
Is learning new words almost every day 				
Uses words for actions as well as objects and people				
Listens and responds to simple information or instructions out of context – for example, “Ben, find your car” or “Ali, put your teddy in bed”				
Begins to use words to refer to people and things that are not present 				
Sings or gestures along with favourite action rhymes, although words may not be clear				
Says two words together – for example, “teddy sleeping”, “more juice” 				

Physical

	Emerging Seen for the first time	Developing Seen sometimes	Achieved Seen often	Notes
Holds cup with both hands and drinks without much spilling 				
Is aware of where clothes are kept – for example, outdoor coat and shoes by the door				
Gets onto child’s chair without assistance, either backwards or sideways				
Brushes own hair				
Can kick a large ball 				
Starts to help with dress and hygiene routines 				

Thinking

	Emerging Seen for the first time	Developing Seen sometimes	Achieved Seen often	Notes
Matches objects with parts that fit together – for example, puts lid on teapot 				
Uses understanding of cause and effect – for example, straightens up a tower of blocks if it starts to wobble				
Shows a curiosity about how things work – for example, looks closely at the parts of a mechanical toy				
Is interested in pushing and pulling things				
Builds simple structures				
Shows interest in toys with buttons, flaps and simple mechanisms				
Asks for a desired object by pointing, which may be accompanied by vocalisations or single words, checking back to adult that request has been noticed				
Can organise and categorise objects – for example, putting all red things and all blue things in separate piles 				

Special events and achievements:

Developmental Journal • Step 8

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Questions we want to ask:

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Step 9



Developmental Journal

Summary of development during Step 9

Personal, social and emotional

Your child will be experiencing a wider range of emotions and will try to express them. Sometimes it's hard to work out what they're feeling from what they say and do.

Children typically find out around this time that they can 'pretend' about things that they've done or have not done, just as they can pretend in play. This is another sign of their growing independence, so in some ways it is a positive thing, but you need to help them to learn what's right and wrong in this area!

Encourage your child to put their feelings into words. It may be difficult for them to do this though, so be patient and show them warmth and affection. You can also encourage your child to join in with simple domestic jobs like tidying toys, setting the table etc.

Communication

In this Step, children understand more words and longer sentences. It may look like they understand almost everything you say, but this is still a developing area.

Children also talk much more in this Step. They're getting better at putting short sentences together and at putting ideas into words. Your child will pick up new words from what you say, so lots of talk about what you're doing together continues to be important.

Children's speech may still be unclear at times and there will be some sounds or combinations of sounds they find hard to say.

Their memory is improving as well, and this lets them talk in their own way about what happened yesterday, or about things that are not in front of them or people in the family that are not at home.

It's still important to match your language to your child's to really help them develop. Do use longer sentences and new words, but not so long they will get lost – just two or three words longer than your child's. Play alongside your child, taking their lead and using words to describe what they are doing – don't ask too many questions, but do comment and leave plenty of space for them to talk. Children can be full of questions at this stage – if you can answer most of them in a way they understand, their curiosity and language will grow. Children are beginning to talk about things outside of the 'here and now'. You can encourage this by giving useful words that help them do this, such as 'yesterday' and helping understanding by giving memorable events – for example, "Remember, yesterday, we went to the park with Milly. We had ice cream". Games that involve picking up differences in speech sounds, like 'Where's the cat?', and 'Where's the hat?' encourage listening as well as speaking.

Developmental Journal

Summary of development during Step 9 continued

Physical

Around this time, children start to be more adventurous in their play. They are excited by their increasing skills! They may push and pull things, and are generally able to be much more physically active. Their movements may sometimes be quite quick and unpredictable! They may start to climb, slide and play and will enjoy visits to a playground or park. Children will use their body to communicate – waving, pointing and you can also watch for how your child can use their whole body to show how they might be feeling – for example, excited, interested, annoyed.

Children's fine motor skills are also improving. They are better able to hold pencils and crayons and enjoy making marks and playing with dough, clay and sand. They will use sticks, brushes and other tools to make marks and patterns.

Your child will be becoming more aware of the signals their body gives them about the need to have a drink, to eat and to go to the toilet. If your child is aware of when they need to go to the toilet, then it may be a good time to start toilet training.

Going to playgroup, play school or a Children's Centre with other children of the same general level of development can benefit your child enormously. Children can experience a wider range of play activities in a playgroup than it is easy to provide at home and they can learn a great deal from each other. They also learn a lot about play, about the behaviour that's expected and about self-help skills.





Thinking





Children at this stage of development are better at remembering how to do things in daily life – so when you say "Brush dolly's hair", they're more likely to know what to do. You can encourage this by commenting on things that happen regularly in their life – for example, "It'll be time for a bath soon". Children are also more aware of changes to routine.

Children become more curious about other people and more sensitive to their feelings. Watching and copying what other people do is an important way for them to learn. You can encourage this by making opportunities for your child to play with other children. Try to do this in a way that helps your child build their social skills. It's also valuable for children to watch you doing things with other adults and, where appropriate, to be included.









You can build on children's developing ability to notice changes in routines by playing hiding games or by putting familiar things in unexpected places in a jokey way – for example, you could put a sock on their hand. Children very much enjoy little homemade books like 'My favourite toys' or 'I went to the zoo'. You can make these by just stapling together some sheets of paper and sticking in drawings or pictures from magazines. Watching TV with your child can be valuable too. Choose programmes that your child finds interesting, introduce a range of new ideas and that you can talk about together.

This Step links with Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) age/stage bands 3 and 4





	Emerging Seen for the first time	Developing Seen sometimes	Achieved Seen often	Notes
Understands that some things are theirs, some things are shared, and some things belong to other people 				
Actively draws others into social interaction 				
Hands a toy to an adult for assistance when unable to get it to work; sees adult as someone who can help				
Spends time in groups of other children engaged in own play, but watching the other children				
Demonstrates sense of self as an individual – for example, wants to do things independently, says “No” to adult 				

	Emerging Seen for the first time	Developing Seen sometimes	Achieved Seen often	Notes
Repeats words or phrases from familiar stories 				
Fills in the missing word or phrase in a known rhyme, story or game – for example, 'Humpty Dumpty sat on a...' 				
Understands simple instructions involving two people or objects such as "Get Mummy's shoes" or "Find Jacob's car"				
Uses words to ask for help – for example, when washing hands				
Uses 'adult' form of vowels (a, e, i, o, u) most of the time				
Recognises and joins in with songs and actions – for example, 'The Wheels on the Bus' 				

Physical

	Emerging Seen for the first time	Developing Seen sometimes	Achieved Seen often	Notes
Runs safely on whole foot, stopping and starting easily and avoiding obstacles 				
Squats steadily to rest or play with object on the ground and rises to feet without using hands 				
Feeds self competently with spoon 				
Drinks well without spilling 				
Puts on hat and slip-on shoes 				
Indicates need for toilet by behaviour – for example, dancing movements or holding self 				
Holds pencil between thumb and two fingers no longer using whole hand grasp 				

Thinking

	Emerging Seen for the first time	Developing Seen sometimes	Achieved Seen often	Notes
Copies everyday actions in play – for example, brushing doll’s hair, cleaning dolls’ house, feeding teddy toy food 				
Makes pretend sequences – for example, pouring pretend tea then drinking, washing then drying a doll, getting in a toy car and going to work				
Creates and experiments with blocks, colours and marks 				
Tries to work out problems by thinking first – for example, how to switch something on or how to get something that’s out of reach				
Operates mechanical toys – for example, turns the knob on a wind-up toy, pulls back on a friction car, pushes button to open flap 				

Special events and achievements:

Developmental Journal • Step 9

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Step 10



Developmental Journal

Summary of development during Step 10

Personal, social and emotional

The boundaries of the world are expanding, although your child will still appreciate you being there as a source of security – particularly in new situations. Children are brave explorers and they're often unaware of the dangers around them, so they need to be watched carefully, as they can now open doors and wander off. They're curious about people and will often 'people watch' and copy other people's behaviour. By the time they reach this Step, children are growing more and more independent, particularly with feeding, dressing and toileting, and will defend their own space and toys, and their right to do things in their own way. This means they may need help and encouragement to adjust their behaviour to fit in with other people – for example, when playing with friends.

Children sometimes get angry and frustrated when they can't make themselves understood. They may also be jealous for your attention when it's not on them. Your child may be confrontational when what they want isn't the same as what you want. How you handle these small conflicts can stop them turning into big issues. Achieving a balance between your wishes and those of your child is important. Children need to learn self-control and not just to be controlled by you. Learning to wait is often an important issue for young children, and you need to be sensitive to how long your child can realistically be expected to wait.

You may now be able to start to involve your child in everyday routines out in the wider world like putting shopping in the supermarket trolley or paying at the till. It's helpful to match such tasks to your child's ability, so that they get plenty of positive rewards when they join in. As children at this Step can find self-discipline quite difficult, it is important to give them lots of praise, for example if you have asked them to wait while you finish a task and they did so successfully.

Communication

Children are beginning to understand and use longer sentences and experiment with putting words together in different ways. They are still learning the rules of grammar that adults use, so they may say things like "Mummy goed to work" or "There are lots of sheeps". This is a good sign, because it shows they're trying to work out what the 'rules' are.

During this Step, children may stutter or stammer as they have a lot to say and are still just learning to talk, putting words and sentences together. Many children will go through a phase such as this, though it is important to seek advice if you or your child is anxious or if there is a family history of stammering.

If your child does struggle to get words out, it is best to give lots of time and reassurance. It's a good idea not to "correct" the way children say things as it can make them feel they are not talking properly and put them off communicating; the best way is to repeat back what children say, but with the correct way of saying it. So if your child says "I goed shops" you could say... "that's right, you did go to the shops". Playing alongside your child and talking about games and activities continues to be a great way to build language, conversation and essential listening and turn taking skills.

Developmental Journal

Summary of development during Step 10 continued

Physical

Mobile children need plenty of exercise and lots of opportunity to develop their bodies and movement skills. Many young children are very energetic and they run around, kick balls and go climbing, or express their energy in other physical ways. Children will experiment with new ways of moving and balancing. This brings new risks, so you will need to help them to stay within their 'safety zone'. A careful balance is needed where children are encouraged to assess the risks for themselves and each situation can give valuable opportunities to talk about "What might happen if..." or "Remember when you ..."

You'll notice developments in your child's fine motor skills too. Watch how they can use their fingers and hands to grasp, twist, knock and throw objects. For example, they are better able to handle small objects and can build tall towers out of blocks. They can also use their hands to do more 'fiddly' tasks when dressing or undressing themselves, such as unfastening their coat.

'Messy' play with cornflour, dough and paint provides opportunities to explore and play with patterns, colours and hand-eye coordination. The introduction of musical instruments – a saucepan drum kit or home-made shakers will provide opportunities to look, listen and get actively involved in musical movement and play. Try activities that encourage children to control their movements – for example, musical statues or musical bumps.

Thinking







Simple activities around the house and positive encouragement are important because they provide opportunities for children to listen to other people and learn about how these things are done.

Children are increasingly able to follow routines and are learning about the idea of time and may be able to understand some time words such as 'soon'.






Children's ability to focus their attention on things for longer periods is increasing, so they can now do activities that take more time. However, your child is still learning to shift attention when you want them to. Some children also want everything always to be done in the same order – this expresses a wish to control things around them. Sometimes the world can seem very complicated to a young child and order and predictability helps them feel more secure, as well as providing good opportunities to learn. If your child is going to an early years group, you may find they want things to be done in the same way there and at home.

Washing up, helping to mend things, and trips out to new places are good ways to provide lots of different, playful learning opportunities. You could try visual ways of presenting routines, like charts and timetables. Use time words by saying "Your egg will be done soon" or "It'll be time for bed later" and showing how clocks are used by pointing to the hands and numbers. To ensure your child is paying attention when you want to say something important to them, you may need to ask them to stop and listen first.



	Emerging Seen for the first time	Developing Seen sometimes	Achieved Seen often	Notes
Responds positively to a variety of familiar adults				
Shows affection towards other children and younger siblings				
Takes a lead in positive interactions with special people – for example, initiates interaction, shows spontaneous affection, can wait a little while before seeking others for comfort and security				
Uses others as sources of information by asking questions				
Makes choices that involve challenge, when adults ensure their safety				
Shows understanding of some rules and routines				

	Emerging Seen for the first time	Developing Seen sometimes	Achieved Seen often	Notes
Learns new words very rapidly and uses them when communicating with other people 				
Understands more complex sentences – for example, “Put your toys away and we’ll read a book” 				
Shows sustained engagement and interaction when sharing a picture storybook with an adult				
Tries to repeat many things adults say, either saying the actual word or making a close match – for example, says “Um-beya” for ‘umbrella’				
Uses a variety of question words – for example, ‘what’, ‘where’, ‘who’ 				
Says three words together – for example, “go park today”, “big red bus”  				

Physical

	Emerging Seen for the first time	Developing Seen sometimes	Achieved Seen often	Notes
Climbs confidently and uses nursery play climbing equipment 				
Builds a tower of up to six blocks				
Fits small shapes and objects into holes during posting activities				
Takes off loose coat or shirt when undone				
Turns pages in a book one at a time 				
Unzips front zipper on coat or jacket 				
Can undo Velcro fasteners				
Shows control in holding and using hammers, books and mark-making tools 				

Thinking

	Emerging Seen for the first time	Developing Seen sometimes	Achieved Seen often	Notes
Matches sets of identical objects; understands the idea of 'the same'				
Begins to develop sense of time; understands terms such as 'later', 'tomorrow' and 'yesterday'				
Understands simple explanations and reasons given by others				
Understands size differences (bigger, smaller and so on) – for example, selects the bigger or smaller object or picture when asked				
Names two or three colours				
Completes simple puzzle board with shapes that fit together				

Special events and achievements:

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Step 11



Developmental Journal

Summary of development during Step 11

Personal, social and emotional

During this Step, children become better able to accept being apart from you for longer periods of time. This is affected by how much experience they have had of other people looking after them, but it's going to be a big part of their life soon. You can help by continuing to build a secure relationship with them. Children at this stage of development often have fears and worries that seem silly to adults, but are very real for them. If they feel that they can trust you to listen and take their feelings seriously, it helps to give them confidence in you through all the challenges that lie ahead.

To continue building a secure relationship with your child, express your positive feelings for them, praise them for things they do that you value, be consistent in doing what you say you will do, and generally let them trust you as a reliable and loving person.

Communication

Children's understanding of words and sentences is increasing, so that by now they will be starting to understand more complex sentences such as 'Push it slowly' or 'Give me the red ball'.

Although your child may also still be using signs and gestures, in general, in this Step, children are expanding their use of language and talking in longer sentences. They may be using words like 'and' to join ideas together, and words like 'the' and 'he' to mark what they're talking about more clearly. Children's pronunciation is still developing, so there may still be times when it is difficult to follow what they are saying. But in general, they understand much more of what you and other people say, and you can have longer and more complicated conversations. Your child is probably also finding out that language can be used to assert independence. 'No' is a useful word when you're a child!

Share books and talk about the story and the characters; children love stories about themselves, which can be made up or you can make a picture book of an outing or event with photos and pictures. Finding ways of talking through differences of opinion is important, because it can help your child to think things through for themselves later on. You can do this through talking about why characters do different things in books or on TV, which helps children see things from different perspectives. Playing games that have a story to them are really good for building conversations and language, things like acting out different events, such as going on a trip or going shopping, or turning a box into a rocket trip to the moon. Playing with toy figures, cars or animals are a great way to develop play and language skills. It's also a way for children to broaden their understanding of how things go together in sequence. Learning to do things in the right order is important in many areas of life.

Developmental Journal

Summary of development during Step 11 continued

Physical

Children can now move in lots of different ways e.g. running, climbing, jumping, rolling, twisting. Outdoor activities that develop physical skills in a safe environment are important at this stage of development. Your child will probably be happy for quite long periods supervised in a playground, especially if there are other children or adults around who join in. Learning to take risks, but doing so safely, is something that you can continue to help them with. Music can also help children 'burn off' energy. You might find they have favourite songs that they like dancing to.

Children's hand-eye co-ordination is improving and they can use this ability in activities. They may also be able to use a wider range of tools, for example those that require just one hand.

Although your child is making progress, putting on and taking off shoes and coats, toileting, hand washing and eating are all likely to still need plenty of practice. As with many other things, rewarding small steps in the right direction is the key to helping children.

You can involve your child in the preparation of food so they are smelling, touching and seeing it at every stage. This also gives you the chance to talk about what they like and don't like to eat, which foods are healthy choices and what new things you could try.





Thinking



Although school is still some way off, you can help to prepare your child for the sorts of things that they will be doing. Being able to follow instructions is an important skill that they'll need. Children learn about classroom routines at a childminder's, in a children's centre or early years setting – this is very important preparation for going to school.

Your child's confidence and ability to play with other children and relate to other adults and strangers is growing. It's an important step forward when they begin to work out what other people are thinking and feeling. Talking about your own thoughts and feelings can help with this, and talking about what they may be thinking or feeling is good, too. Your child is likely to develop some close friendships now and this is another valuable way for them to learn social skills. Building good relationships with brothers and sisters and other family members like cousins continues to be important.








You can introduce simple number games, such as counting stairs as you go up and down, and drawing and painting, as well as continuing with activities that involve recognizing everyday sounds, such as the toilet flushing, speech sounds and words. Creative activities like cutting and sticking, or using clay, allow children of different ages and abilities to have fun together.





This Step links with Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) age/stage bands 4 and 5

	Emerging Seen for the first time	Developing Seen sometimes	Achieved Seen often	Notes
Demonstrates concern towards others who are upset – for example, offers favourite toy, pats arm or back, offers cuddle and so on				
Seeks out others to share experiences				
Understands they have to share and take turns but might not always be willing to do so – for example, with toys				
Participates and helps with familiar routines with help from adults – for example, dusting, setting table or putting away toys				
Includes another child in their play sequence and may talk to them as they do so – for example, gives child a cup to drink from				
Recognises self in mirror or photo – for example, if looks in a mirror and sees dirt or food on face, tries to wipe it off, or points to self in photo when asked				

	Emerging Seen for the first time	Developing Seen sometimes	Achieved Seen often	Notes
Shows understanding of position words such as 'in', and 'on' – for example, carries out the action 'Put dolly in the box' or selects a picture correctly from 'Find the apple in the bag'				
Talks about ownership – for example, 'my teddy', 'your book' 'the man's car'				
Uses pronouns correctly – for example, 'I', 'me' and 'you'				
Knows full name				
Says all or part of simple nursery rhymes				
Listens eagerly to short stories, is able to talk about particular parts of them and requests favourites over and over again				

Physical

	Emerging Seen for the first time	Developing Seen sometimes	Achieved Seen often	Notes
Walks downstairs safely, two feet to each step while carrying a toy				
Stands on one foot when shown				
Makes snips in paper with child scissors				
Usually able to control bowel with occasional accidents				
Takes pleasure in personal hygiene including toileting				
Pulls up own trousers, and pulls up zipper				
Can undo large buttons				
Screws and unscrews toy nuts and bolts				
Able to blow – for example, candles or when cooling food				
Catches a large ball				

	Emerging Seen for the first time	Developing Seen sometimes	Achieved Seen often	Notes
Seeks to learn basic skills in turning on some ICT equipment 				
Engages in imaginative play and role-play based on own experiences – for example, ‘driving a car’ 				
Shows curiosity about the world by asking questions and thinking about reasons why things happen				
Joins in with learning activities led by more able partner and can perform new actions after they have seen them demonstrated				
Enjoys playing with small-world models such as a farm, a garage, or a train track 				
Notices deliberate mistake in story telling or rhyme				
Uses and understands the logic of ‘if...then’ – for example ‘If I stand on a step, then I can reach the toy’, ‘If I eat my sandwich, then I can have some chocolate pudding’				
Repeats a two digit number sequence, e.g. 7, 2				
Is more organised, gathering together the toys they want to play with before starting play – for example, getting the doll and the tea set before starting to play tea-parties or getting the train and tracks and setting them out before playing trains				

Special events and achievements:

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Step 12



Developmental Journal

Summary of development during Step 12

Personal, social and emotional

This step can often be a challenging time for both parents and children. It's because children are getting a stronger sense of their own abilities and, understandably, want to use them as much as possible. This can lead to conflicts between growing independence and the need to understand risks, limits and boundaries. This may come out as stubbornness, negativity or anger when frustrated, but these are also positive signs of a child's motivation. So, it is important to keep showing your child that you care about them and that you can help them to deal with these new challenges.

One of the key things that is learned during this stage by children is to understand that other people's feelings need to be taken into account. This forms the basis for sharing and cooperating, which become increasingly important from now on.

Talk with your child about thoughts and feelings to help them understand that other people's feelings need to be taken into account. If there are conflicts with friends or family members, you may need to offer guidance in these situations so that your child can develop their own ways of dealing with the challenges that come with learning to get on well with other people.

Communication

Language flowers in children during Step 12. They not only learn many new words, but they're also talking about the past, whereas before, much of their talk was about the here and now. As well as speaking in longer and more complex sentences, they may also talk to themselves while they're doing things. There's nothing wrong with this, in fact it's a good sign that they're using language more now to make sense of their experiences.

Alongside their use of more words, your child is also understanding important new ideas through words and in sentences. They will be getting an understanding of past and future, will know about what particular objects are for and will make more sense of questions involving 'who' and possibly 'why'.

Your child is likely to be taking more interest in stories, ones that you tell, as well as ones that you read to them from books, and they'll be getting used to the idea that books have stories in them and the concept of reading.

Play simple turn taking activities, such as kicking a ball or very simple jigsaws because turn taking and listening are really important for conversations. Play games where you take turns listening and talking; so maybe giving instructions to each other to put the shopping away or drawing a picture together; it can be fun for the adult to make mistakes and see if your child corrects you. Make supermarket shopping more fun by spotting different things – can you see something to eat, something to drink – and talking about what you like and dislike.

Developmental Journal

Summary of development during Step 12 continued

Physical

Children are becoming more independent and more confident about tackling physical challenges and learning new motor skills. Playground equipment, bikes and trikes and ball games are all active pursuits that help this learning, as well as contributing to general health and fitness. But children still tire easily and need help with pacing themselves and with 'wind-down' or quiet times. They also need your help with assessing risks so that they are aware of the limits to their abilities and don't over-reach themselves.

Now children can use more equipment and tools, it's important they do safely and appropriately. This is also a good opportunity to encourage their creativity and fine motor skills.

Children are generally aware of what their body needs in terms of eating, sleeping and toileting. Sometimes they may still need your help, for example they may ask for the toilet or ask you to fasten their shoe.

Make lots of different equipment, craft activities and objects available and see what you and your child can make together. For many children, swimming and water games are particularly enjoyable and, of course, they're good for general fitness.



Thinking





With your child's developing mental capacities comes an increasing ability to think about how to approach more complicated situations where solutions aren't immediately obvious, like fitting shapes into simple jigsaw puzzles, putting together plastic bricks and threading beads. Although they have been building the foundations for understanding numbers since they were born, it's at this stage of development that children start to really think about ideas like counting and simple adding up.

This is also a time when children's fears can increase as they begin to appreciate more about the wider world. Giving explanations at a level that your child can understand helps to reinforce your role as someone who can help them to learn.





Materials, such as coloured blocks, can be used in number games. Your child is likely to become more curious about how things work too, so it's helpful to give them toys and other objects that have parts that can be taken apart and put back together again. This is also a time when children can practise operating some household equipment, with your support to ensure safety – for example, a telephone.

This Step links with Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) age/stage band 5







	Emerging Seen for the first time	Developing Seen sometimes	Achieved Seen often	Notes
Forms a special friendship with another child 				
Is sometimes stubborn or negative and reacts with annoyance to frustration				
Enjoys responsibility of carrying out small tasks such as carrying a bag back from the shops 				
Regularly uses adults as sources of knowledge, comfort and shared activities 				
Takes pride in appearance – for example, prefers certain clothes				
Shows independence in selecting and carrying out activities				

	Emerging Seen for the first time	Developing Seen sometimes	Achieved Seen often	Notes
Uses sentences involving more than three words				
Understands use of objects – for example, can give the right answer to “What do we use to cut things with?”				
Can retell a simple past event in correct order – for example, “went down slide and hurt finger”				
Uses correct form of verbs such as ‘be’, ‘do’ and ‘have’ – for example, “I am hungry” rather than “I be hungry” or “I did that” rather than “I doed that”				
Talks about own life and favourite things				
Asks questions with yes/no answers – for example “Was he singing?”				
Says negative sentences – for example, “He wasn’t singing”				
Uses a range of tenses to talk about past, present and future – for example, ‘play’, ‘playing’, ‘will play’ and ‘played’				

Physical

	Emerging Seen for the first time	Developing Seen sometimes	Achieved Seen often	Notes
Holds pencil near its tip between first two fingers and thumb and uses it with good control to draw different shapes 				
Asks for toilet using voice, gesture or action – for example, leads adult to toilet and asks verbally or makes a sign				
Pulls down own pants when using the toilet 				
Rides tricycle, using pedals				
Can jump forward about 60 cm (2 feet)				
Puts arms into open-fronted coat or shirt when held up 				
Washes and dries hands				

Thinking

	Emerging Seen for the first time	Developing Seen sometimes	Achieved Seen often	Notes
Puts three pictures in correct order to represent a sequence in a familiar activity or story 				
Uses various building materials 				
Follows directions if not intently focused on own choice of activity 				
Shows awareness of danger – for example, is careful on playground equipment 				
Builds stories around toys – for example, farm animals climbing an armchair ‘cliff’ and having to be rescued				
Notices what adults do, copying what is observed and then doing it when the adult is not there				
Uses ICT to perform more complex functions, such as selecting a channel on the TV remote control 				
Repeats a three digit number sequence – for example, 2, 8, 5				
Draws person with head and one or two other features or parts				

Special events and achievements:

Developmental Journal • Step 12

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Questions we want to ask:

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Step 13



Developmental Journal

Summary of development during Step 13

Personal, social and emotional

Relationships with other people, especially 'significant others' like parents, carers, and brothers and sisters and other family members, seem to become more important for children in this Step. They usually show that they care more about the people that matter to them, and are more prepared to fit in with what other people in their home and community do, and how they want to do it. It's around this time that children start to model their behaviour on what other people do – usually people to whom they feel close.

If your child is spending time in an early years setting, fitting in with the routines of the setting gives another opportunity for this sort of learning, but it's not always easy for a young child to adapt to a different set of expectations. It's very common for children to be tired and irritable after spending time in an early years setting, especially during the first few months. This is partly a reflection of the challenge of being with a lot of relatively unfamiliar people, without the support of their main attachment figure(s). Settling into a new environment like this is a real achievement for a child.

You can encourage your child to join in with family jobs around the house, like tidying up, and to take pride in self-care routines by offering your support and praise when they get things right. By this step, children will also benefit from actively joining in a wider range of social activities with their family and community.

Communication

Your child is now mostly using the adult sounds of words and they will be much easier to understand, even for people who don't know them well.

Children are also getting a better understanding of how talking, reading and writing join up with one another at this stage of development. Children may begin to recognise their name when written, and to know how letters and words link with meanings. Up to now these have come mainly through speech.

You can help the transition into reading and then writing by making sure you have fun together when you share picture books with your child. Children in this Step are more able to listen to longer stories, but they may still need your help in holding their attention. You could also both have a list for the supermarket shopping or do some colouring or painting together for fun.

The time has come when you can have real conversations. Simply finding time to talk together, such as about what you can see, what you like to do and what you both feel, is one of the best ways to continue to build a good relationship with your child. It will also help them to meet the challenges that they will face as they grow older. You could have a special time each day when you share your thoughts. Dinner time can be a good time to having a chat about the day and bedtimes can be great for sharing a book- sometimes children can enjoy telling a familiar story to you.

Developmental Journal

Summary of development during Step 13 continued

Physical

By the time they get to this Step, children are quite skilled, and need plenty of opportunity to exercise and keep fit. They will be better at judging spaces – for example, when playing hide and seek deciding whether they can fit into a little space. Children will also be able to jump off objects, jump over skipping ropes and hop.

Malleable materials are those that can be made into different shapes, such as dough or clay. These can be great fun for children at this Step as they can do a whole range of things with them, for example prodding, twisting or squeezing them or making them look spiky. Encourage children to think about what they want the dough to look like before they start playing with it, as this will help them to plan what they need to do to achieve their aim. When playing with dough and changing its shape, you can introduce new language such as 'squeeze' and 'prod'.

Use whole-body action games such as 'Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes'. Some children enjoy organised sessions at leisure centres or other places where children of similar levels of development can benefit from being with trained people and using more specialised equipment. But this is also just about letting off steam and having fun.








Thinking




Children become much better able to talk about their growing knowledge, and more interested in hearing explanations for things they don't yet understand. Their memory is improving; they're taking in more 'facts' about the world through sharing books, magazines and watching television together. They are also keen to learn about more complicated and interesting objects through 'hands-on experience' – not just toys.

Learning about numbers and counting is also an enjoyable part of learning. At this point in their development, children often get particularly interested in the similarities and differences between things.






It's good to provide a range of materials and objects that work in different ways for different purposes – for example, a whisk, a torch, an old alarm clock or mobile 'phone and other household objects. Playing grouping and counting games together is a fun way to encourage important new learning.

This Step links with Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) age/stage bands 5 and 6





	Emerging Seen for the first time	Developing Seen sometimes	Achieved Seen often	Notes
Is more outgoing towards strangers and more confident in new social situations – for example, in playgroup although may be anxious at first 				
Understands that own actions affect other people – for example, becomes upset or tries to comfort another child when they realise they have upset them 				
Has an awareness and pride in self as having own identity and abilities and welcomes praise 				
Can express wishes and needs clearly and understands when these are not immediately met 				
Often actively seeks sharing and fairness				
Shows care and concern for others, for living things and the environment 				
Enjoys joining in with family customs and routines 				
Is curious about others and can adapt behaviour to fit in with different events and social situations – for example, removing shoes and socks before going on slide after seeing others doing this				

	Emerging Seen for the first time	Developing Seen sometimes	Achieved Seen often	Notes
Begins to use language for pretending and organising play – for example, “you be the mum and I be the baby” 				
Produces nearly all the consonant sounds accurately				
Easily understood by a range of people				
Retells stories in the correct sequence, drawing on language patterns of stories such as ‘Once upon a time’				
Understands ‘when’ and ‘why’				
Talks about what might happen next in a familiar situation				
Uses longer sentences to link more than one idea, for example “We walked to the park and we watched the ducks” 				

Physical

	Emerging Seen for the first time	Developing Seen sometimes	Achieved Seen often	Notes
Negotiates space successfully when playing racing and chasing games with other children, adjusting speed or changing direction to avoid obstacles 				
Handles tools, objects, building and malleable materials safely and with increasing control 				
Hangs up own coat				
Buttons up clothes				
Walks upstairs using alternating feet, one foot per step 				
Eats competently with knife and fork				
Reliably dry and clean during the day 				

Thinking

	Emerging Seen for the first time	Developing Seen sometimes	Achieved Seen often	Notes
Shows interest in different occupations and ways of life 				
Remembers three or four items shown on a list – for example, a picture shopping list of apples, oranges and bananas				
Comments and asks questions about where they live and the natural world 				
Builds complex things with a wide range of objects, selecting appropriate resources and adapting their work where necessary 				
Talks about personal intentions, describing what they are trying to do				
Is able to ignore distractions and concentrate on a chosen task				
Concentrates and listens for more than ten minutes in adult-led activities that they enjoy				

Special events and achievements:

Developmental Journal • Step 13

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Step 14



Developmental Journal

Summary of development during Step 14

Personal, social and emotional

By the time children reach Step 14, they have become aware of themselves as a unique individual, with their own thoughts, feelings, identities and preferences. They're aware that other people have their own personalities, identities, wishes and needs too, and that there are many different ways in which people live their lives. The next step is to learn to respect these differences and appreciate the value of other people's ways of doing things, at the same time as feeling part of one's own family, community and culture. It's also about learning the social skills to join in with others in play and constructive activities – skills that are best learned in small groups of children, with adult support.

Children's growing emotional maturity also means that they are better able to put their feelings into words. Talk to your child about the good and bad things that they experience, as this continues to help them feel secure in their special relationships.

Communication

Children's understanding at Step 14 is much better developed. It includes more complex words including sequence words 'first....after...last'. They are fluent communicators and usually fluent speakers, although some may use sign language or technology to help them get what they want to say across. They can use reasonably well-formed and longer sentences and put together quite long narratives about the things they've done. They're also asking a lot of 'How?', 'Why?' and 'What?' questions, often asking about the names of things and what unfamiliar words mean. They have an understanding of the way that written words relate to spoken words and are taking their first steps towards reading for themselves.

Games that involve thinking about what words mean, what they might rhyme with and the sounds involved in the words are often good fun at this stage. You can also use games to introduce new words, such as thinking of lots of words that mean 'big' – enormous, large, huge etc. Board games are also useful to practice turn taking skills and to learn about how to follow rules of a game.

Developmental Journal

Summary of development during Step 14 continued

Physical

As well as developing their running, jumping and climbing skills, for which they need plenty of chances to play on a variety of equipment, children in Step 14 are also improving their skills at doing more intricate things with their hands. Children can also use their bodies to communicate expressively with or without music – encourage them to use their imagination in play to do this.

Children’s emotional maturity and motivation for independence can be also be seen in their ability to mostly dress and undress themselves. They also follow hygiene routines, such as throwing away tissues in a bin, and understand what is needed to stay healthy, for example knowing why you go to the dentist. These skills are also important for entry into school and early years settings.

At this stage the child is gaining confidence and independence. Rules and routines will need to be established so that the child understands why they can’t run into the road, or wander off into a crowd. Stories and picture books can be used to reinforce these messages.

Encourage children’s self-help skills around hygiene, clothing and feeding – for example, teeth cleaning, washing hands before preparing food. Obstacle courses, trails and treasure hunts will help your child to listen, understand and follow instructions moving around with a group of other children and an adult.




Thinking



Children’s ability to find out about the world for themselves increases daily, as they gain more understanding of the ways in which they can investigate and explore. They become more competent at using different approaches and sources for learning for themselves. Children passing through Step 14 are capable of thinking about how to tackle simple problems, before launching into them. They spend time planning what to do, and this is evident in their play, which becomes more complex and involves objects that are used in a number of different ways. They are also better able to maintain their attention on a task, and understand spoken instructions without stopping the activity to look at the speaker.

Number concepts are now firmer, and children begin to understand how number plays an important part in everyday life – for example when using money, cooking or sharing things out. Understanding of time improves, and children often find it easier to wait for short periods of time because they now know what ‘five minutes’ means!





Although children are more independent at this Step, they will still benefit from the help of more able children or adults working with them.

This Step links with Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) age/stage band 6 and the Early Learning Goals



	Emerging Seen for the first time	Developing Seen sometimes	Achieved Seen often	Notes
Can describe self in positive terms and talk about own strengths and weaknesses 				
Enjoys and joins in with shared play appropriately – for example, turn-taking and sharing 				
Understands and follows agreed values when in group situations with adults and children				
Selects and uses activities and resources independently				
Understands that people have different needs, views, cultures and beliefs, which need to be treated with respect				
Understands that they can expect others to treat their needs, views, cultures and beliefs with respect				
Is confident and skilled in seeking comfort, reassurance and help from special people				
Enjoys talking about past experiences, the present and future plans				
Knows about their culture and beliefs and those of other people				
Works as part of a group or class, taking turns and sharing fairly, understanding that there need to be agreed values and codes of behaviour for groups of people, including adults and children, to work together harmoniously				

	Emerging Seen for the first time	Developing Seen sometimes	Achieved Seen often	Notes
Can produce most speech sounds, although may have difficulty with some consonant blends – for example, ‘tr’ in tree, ‘bl’ in blue				
Can pick out words that rhyme				
Shows an understanding of the elements of stories – for example, main character, sequence of events and story beginnings and endings				
Asks “Why?” frequently and considers replies				
Adapts language to the needs of the listener				
Can pick out the first sound in a word				

Physical

	Emerging Seen for the first time	Developing Seen sometimes	Achieved Seen often	Notes
Travels around, under, over and through balancing and climbing equipment with confidence 				
Shows increasing accuracy in throwing, catching and kicking a ball				
Recognises the importance of keeping healthy, and those things which contribute to this 				
Takes responsibility for self-care in washing, teeth cleaning and toileting 				
Dresses and undresses independently				

Thinking

	Emerging Seen for the first time	Developing Seen sometimes	Achieved Seen often	Notes
Selects the tools and techniques they need to shape, assemble and join materials they are using 				
Explains own knowledge and understanding, and asks appropriate questions of others				
Finds out about and identifies the uses of everyday technology, and uses information and communication technology, and programmable toys, to support their learning				
Makes short-term future plans				
Finds out about their environment, and talks about the features that they like and dislike				
Shows flexibility in trying different ways of tackling problems				

Special events and achievements:

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