

# Early Childhood Milestones in the Development of *Caring and Empathy*

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These milestones show how children begin to connect to the human community. The approximate age for each milestone is based on research (with a wide range of methodologies) with young children that demonstrated the achievement is possible. This is a partial list drawn from the author's book *Raising Courageous Kids*.<sup>1</sup>

This checklist represents overall age trends. Individual differences exist in the precise age at which children achieve each milestone. Children learn these milestones through playful and sensitive interaction with parents and other loving caregivers, not through formal instruction. A developmental timetable is operating here that cannot be artificially accelerated. A child's temperament will influence the timing and frequency of these milestones. Children who were born premature will acquire the milestones later. Failure to observe milestone behavior is not evidence that the child has failed to achieve that milestone.

These milestones are not solitary achievements. They reflect accomplishments achieved in a partnership between loving parents and their children. Conversely, failure to achieve a milestone *may* be a statement about the quality of that relationship. Developmental delays in these milestones could be due to neurological problems outside of a parent's control.

## 3 months

- Responds to you (and other friendly people) with a true social smile at @six weeks (Eliot, 1999, 301)
- Responds with sound and movement when you talk to her; has good eye contact with you (eyes brighten)
- Engages in brief face-to-face interaction with you that is emotionally satisfying and positively arousing (*mutual affect synchrony*). Critical for coordination of biological rhythms (Shore, 2001, 18) (Shore, 2001, 18)
- Discriminates between positive and negative facial expressions (first emotional recognition) (Caron, Caron, & Myers, 1982; Haslet, 1997, 30) More gaze aversion, protest behavior and crying in response to mothers with a sad expression, flat voice, and minimal body movement (Gemelli, 1996, 155)
- Re-experiences positive affect with you following a negative interruption (Shore, 2001, 20-21)
- Imitates your facial expressions of happiness and anger (Haviland and Lelwica, 1987)
- Imitates simple facial expressions of a loved one (sticking out tongue, opening mouth, purse lips shortly after birth (Meltzoff, 1988, Reissland, 1988)
- Cries in response to another child's crying (Simner, 1971)
- Responds differently to your happy, sad, and angry facial and vocal expressions

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<sup>1</sup> These milestones are reprinted from *Raising Courageous Kids: Eight Steps to Practical Heroism* by Charles A. Smith (Notre Dame, IN: Sorin Books, 2004). Used with permission. *Raising Courageous Kids* includes an expanded list of milestone topics and ages (from birth to about fourteen years). You can read about the book and download free resources at <http://www.raisingcourageouskids.com>.

- She may look away and fuss if you show her a motionless sad face (Tronick, 1978)
- Ceases crying when you enter the room (Restak, 2001, 31)

## 6 months

- Recognizes familiar faces; responds differently to strangers (Iowa State University, 1993)
- Engages you in brief “conversations”: she will coo and gurgle, often accompanied by hand or finger movements and by a smile or excited facial expression (Gottman, 1997, 187; Eliot, 1999, 302-303)
- Adjusts to turn taking in conversations (Eliot, 1999, 302) Matches switching pauses (when one speaker stops and the other begins) with loved one (Haslet, 1997, 51)
- Expressions of happiness are greater when interacting with you than with someone who is less familiar to him
- Smiles at herself in the mirror
- Shows distinct sadness, distress when put down and left, and then reacts positively when you return (Barnet and Barnet, 1998, 137)
- Shows anger and resists restraint (has short-term goals) (Barnet, 1998, 137-138)
- Shows distress when toy is taken away (Iowa State University, 1993)
- Cries to let loved one know he wants something and when satisfied can gradually stop crying
- Enjoys your gentle caresses and cuddling
- Knows when you are angry, surprised, or afraid by your facial expression
- Imitates your gestures, facial expressions and vocalizations (Eliot, 1999, 300; Haslet, 1997, 51)
- Reacts to the strong emotions of others by focusing on self, e.g., cries or touches self when hearing another baby cry (*Stage 1a: Global empathic distress*. Distress focused on self; reacts to the strong emotions of others—what happens to you—happens to me) (Barnet and Barnet, 1998, 167; Hoffman, 1994)
- Becomes more withdrawn, more negative emotionally, and less responsive when loved one demonstrates sadness (Gottman, 1997, 187)

## 9 months

- “Conversations” become more a reciprocal give-and-take. She seems to be listening to you
- Shows joy in simple social games (Sroufe, 1996, 168-169)
- Displays joy, sadness, fear, disgust, interest, surprise, anger, and affection (Eliot, 1999, 299)
- Understands “no-no” (Restak, 2001, 30)
- When you display a happy face, responds with gazing and expressions of joy. When you display a sad face, shows more sadness and averts your gaze. Mirrors your posed expressions of joy and sadness (Haslet, 1997, 30; Termine & Izard, 1988)

- Associates vocal tones of happiness or sadness with the appropriate facial expression (Walker-Andrews, 1998; Gopnik, 1999, 28)
- Acutely aware of you and will do everything in her power—fussing, crying, clinging—to try to keep him or her nearby (sense of personal agency) (Eliot, 1999, 410)
- Coordinates his visual attention to an object with that of a loved one, aware of both the object as well as the loved one's attention to the object (joint attention—the loved one is attending in such a way that joint experiences are possible; treats the loved one as an intentional being (Shore 2001, 34)

## 1 year

- Waves hi or good-bye to you
- Quiets down at the sound of your soothing voice or when held affectionately
- Shows awareness of the comings and goings of loved ones
- May cry when separated from you (child retains image of absent loved one)
- Regulates own behavior in a situation of uncertainty by studying your emotional response (Emde et al., 1987; Haslet, 1997, 31) (e.g., will cross the visual cliff if mother's face is happy; not if frightened), i.e., social referencing (Stroufe, 1996)
- Smiles at strangers when you are nearby
- Difficult to console when separated from those she loves
- Shows interest in nearby babies
- Follows a line of sight of your eyes or the direction of your pointed finger to pick out an object of your attention (Gopnik, Meltzoff, & Kuhl 1999, 32)
- Points to objects to bring them to the attention of others (Schulman, 1991, 37)
- Recognizes that others act as independent agents (Haslet, 1997, 136)
- Can point to a picture of a happy or angry person when hearing a matched voice tone (Gopnik, Meltzoff, & Kuhl 1999, 28)
- Observes and imitates others without being coached to do so (with a slight time delay)
- Plays brief, cooperative games with simple rules with loved ones (I do one thing, she does another, etc.)
- Becomes agitated and disturbed when she views others in distress (Eisenberg, 1992, 8)
- May appear to be upset when loved ones yell at each other (Barnet and Barnet, 1998, 194)
- May cry and protest when picked up by a stranger (who do not mediate their approach with a toy or game and without a prolonged familiarization period. Can show positive reaction at other times—situational (Sroufe, 1996, 105-113)
- Chooses a familiar, kind action based on what he knows will make a loved one happy (e.g., will give mother something she likes to eat even though he himself does not like it).

## 1.5 years

- ❑ Looks at you when she begins talking with you; tries to understand you
- ❑ Uses gaze and hand movements to indicate two different directions, one referring to the social partner, and the other referring to the referent (Haslet, 1997, 45)
- ❑ Makes sounds or motions to capture your attention to show that she wants you to do something (like raising arms to be picked up) (Barnet and Barnet, 1998, 139).
- ❑ Engages and sustains a brief action-reaction play with a familiar child (primarily copying each other in what they say and do); engages in rhythmic co-action sequences (large scale—falling down, jumping, loud chanting) (Dunn, 1988, 112)
- ❑ Anticipates your feelings and receives pleasure from her power to influence another's emotions (may seem like teasing). For example, she pulls your hair. You say no. She says yes and smiles. You say no, and she says nice!
- ❑ Tries to comfort her loved one when she sees him sad or crying, although is more likely to seek to be comforted; may feel so agitated that she hits him to make him stop (Barnet and Barnet, 1998, 165). **May try to help someone else by means of a soothing voice or gentle touch. (Bloom, 2004)** Sometimes clumsy attempts to provide aid (Denham, 1998, 35)
- ❑ Defends a family member who is hurt by another, e.g., tears up a newspaper that made his mother sad; 17 month old in doctor's office watched his brother get a shot and responds by hitting the doctor (Hoffman, 2000, 99).
- ❑ Offers simple forms of generosity to loved ones; able to understand when a sibling wanted what they had and will sometimes share in social interactions not involving distress without being asked (more to sustain interaction than concern for others) (Bronson, 2000, 98; Eisenberg, 1992, 12)
- ❑ Helps someone in distress by patting or stroking, or to a lesser extent hugging and kissing. Does primarily what he would find self-comforting
- ❑ Occasionally makes a sacrifice to alleviate distress, e.g., offer t-bear to crying friend, then gets friend's blanket (Eisenberg, 1992, 45, 51)
- ❑ Anticipates your feelings and receives pleasure from his power to influence your emotions. May seem like aggressive teasing surrounding transgression (Dunn, 1988, 17) (e.g., pulls hair, mother says no, child says yes and smiles, mother says no, child says nice!)
- ❑ Understands the causes, consequences, and correlates of emotions and that feelings can affect a person's facial expression ("Katie not happy face, Katie sad"); feelings result from another's action ("You sad Mommy. You hurt finger."); and feelings can elicit a reaction from someone else ("I cry so Grandma picked me up and rocked me") (Gottman, 1997, 73)
- ❑ *Stage 2: Egocentric empathic distress.* Distress of others does not belong to him (agitation wanes, e.g., touches other, not self) but the boundary between self and other is not distinct. Still cries but can now focus on other as a distressed person. Creates internal cues that help him vicariously experience another child's emotions. Genuine concern and comforting emerges a little later but not *effective* action (Barnet and Barnet, 1998, 165-167) (Gottman, 1997, 67-70) React to the distress of another with less tears and distress, more and more with little efforts to do something for the other

- child or adult, such as patting or stroking, or to a lesser extent, hugging and kissing (Eisenberg, 1992, 9). May get his own mother when he sees a child crying (Zahn-Waxler, 1990, 105) Uses what is self-comforting on distressed other (e.g., suck thumb with one hand, looks sad, pulls his father's ear. Wipers his mother's tears while wiping his own eyes. Rubs her elbow then rubs his own elbow while saying "Ow," and grimaced as though in pain (Hoffman, 2000, 89)
- May show empathetic anger (sees a child cry after getting injection; hits doctor) (Bloom, 2004).
  - Brings toys to show you
  - Enjoys playing games with more elaborate rules of give-and-take or hiding-and-finding (e.g., peekaboo)
  - Makes vocal expressions to share purposes, interests, and feelings of interest, pleasure, surprise, etc. with a loved one (Trevvarthen, C (2001, 111)
  - Leaves your side to explore and then establishes contact with you from a distance for reassurance. Returns occasionally during play for "emotional refueling" (California Department of Education, 1990)
  - Recognizes discrepancies in self in a mirror reflection (touch nose with rouge on it) (Siegel, 2001, 135; Sroufe, 1996, 197-198)
  - Recognizes continuity of self through time as manifested in self-referential behaviors (Siegel, 2001, 44)
  - Talks about events that have happened to her (sense of self at a time in the past—autobiographical memory) (Siegel, 2001, 44, 74)
  - Understands the goal of an action without seeing it completed. (Meltzoff, 1995)
  - Calls attention to things that are broken or flawed (e.g., child brings toy doll with missing eye to parent and points to the flaw) (Dunn, 1988, 22-24)
  - Figures out what to do with objects by watching what others do with them (Gopnik, 1999, 33)
  - Says or does something to show she knows that some behaviors are unacceptable (forbidden action) (Dunn, 1988, 18-19; Sroufe, 1996, 197-198) (e.g., spills drink, vocalizes, looks at mother and points to spill. Oh Oh." No expression of shame or guilt though
  - Helps in some everyday household tasks performed by adults without being directed; goal oriented, not limited just to imitation (Eisenberg, 1992, 12)
  - When asked, consciously or deliberately restrains himself for a brief interval (@20 seconds) before giving in to an impulse (e.g., opening a brightly wrapped package or snatching a raisin from under a cup) (Eliot, 1999, 411)

## 2 years

- Seeks out and enjoys simple interactions with other children, e.g., loud chanting or jumping up and falling down together (Barnet and Barnet, 1998, 158)
- Engages in complimentary exchanges and role reversals with a familiar child (e.g., run-and-chase or catch-and-throw-back) (Dunn, 1988, 117)
- Brings toys to share play with loved ones (more advanced than just showing)

- Resolves peer conflicts by occasionally sharing a toy (Haslet, 1997, 126)
- Talks spontaneously about his genuine affection for those he loves
- Says, “No!” to loved ones occasionally
- Refers to another by his or her name
- Refers to self by first name (Restak, 2001, 63)
- Uses pronouns “I” and “mine.” (Small, 2001, 118)
- Shows pride and takes credit for accomplishments
- Identifies his picture when asked to find it in a stack of pictures that includes pictures of others
- Enjoys an audience and applause (Iowa State University, 1993)
- Understands that wanting and getting lead to happiness and that wanting and not getting lead to sadness (Denham, 1998, 58-59)
- Acts as if they “know” what others feel. They look at and talk about babies who are crying, saying things like “Baby is sad.” They comment when mom or dad looks unhappy. They frown when others frown. Suggests they feel for others
- Understands that she can hurt others (Dunn, 1998, 27-28) (e.g., child hits baby brother and says “Poor Thomas.” Mother responds, “What happened?” Child says, “I banged him.” Mother replies, Well, you better kiss him better.”) (example from Dunn, 1988)
- Occasionally participates in housekeeping tasks without being told to do so (e.g., boy with toy lawnmower and shovel “helps” his dad) (Rheingold, 1982, in Eisenberg, 1992)
- Genuinely understands that self and others are independent agents; that is, both actors in the social exchange are playing separate roles and have separate intentions—play real game of hide-and-seek (waiting to be found is still hard, run in opposite direction when seeker comes near (Dunn, 1988, 18-19; Sroufe, 1996, 196-197)
- Talks spontaneously about his genuine affection for loved ones (Barnet and Barnet, 1998, 158)
- Shows caution toward but not excessive fear toward friendly strangers when you are present; reacts positively to strangers from a safe distance
- Makes appeals for sympathy when hurt (Dunn, 1988, 69)
- Talks about what she wants and how she feels (e.g., says “I want a cookie”)
- Shows distress after having accidentally harmed a loved one
- Can pretend to be in a state other than his own if it serves his interests (e.g., acts tired to get snack) (Dunn, 1988, 21)
- Know and act out that various objects are not just what they are but also representations of other things. For example, he may treat a doll or stuffed animal as though it were alive. Invent as well as understand that there might be a relationship between an object and an idea that has nothing to do with the actual function of the object (Small, 2001, 113)

- Occasionally teases (able to assess what comments annoy another, based on an understanding of the other's feelings, and able to anticipate the other's reaction) (e.g., removes sibling's comfort object in the course of a fight, leaving a fight in order to go and destroy a cherished possession of the sibling; pulling the sibling's thumb (sucked in moments of stress) out of his mouth, pushing a toy spider at a sibling who was afraid of spiders.(Haslet, 1997, 156)
- Asserts that rules applied to them should also be applied to a brother or sister (Dunn, 1988, 53) (e.g., Both children have pushed stools up to a kitchen counter next to oven, to investigate cooking materials. Mother arrives: "Ah ah! Don't touch please. Hot!" She removes Carla, the 21 month old. Carla makes a protest noise. Mother says, "Oh, I know!" Carla replies, "Annie going there!" Mother then tells Annie, "Annie come right away. Right away." (from (Dunn, 1988)
- Stops doing something when asked (responds correctly to authority figure's disapproving looks and gestures)
- Complies with a request not to touch an attractive object when left alone for a brief period
- Makes appeals to a sibling to change his or her behavior by asserting own wants or rights of possession. Shows some notion of symmetry with which rules could be applied to others as well as themselves (Dunn, 1988, 53)
- May try to evade or cover up a wrongdoing (e.g., mother finds cookies in a closet.). Deliberately evades (Dunn, 1988, 21)
- Shows a sudden and dramatic disregulation of relationship attunement and a deflation or "descrescendo" of affect, along with a marked inhibition of motor behavior when the caregiver reacts with strong displeasure or disgust (first appearance of shame) (Sroufe, 1996, 74, 201-202)
- Dampens negative emotions—wrinkled brow, compressed lips, lip biting (Denham, 1998, 52) based on an understanding of what is allowed and what is not (Eisenberg, 1995, 145)
- Shows spontaneous self-corrections, verbal concern, and may make attempts at reparation (Denham, 1998, 46; Sroufe, 1996, 197-198)
- May spontaneously tell or show a loved one that he has done something wrong (Sam when I named something wrong)

## 2.5 years

- Talks with you about the day's recollections (frames his experience in terms of story) (Engel, 1999, 55)
- Pretends to be kind to a doll or stuffed animal (as in feeding a teddy bear)
- Shows verbal concern when things are broken or flawed (e.g., may ask, "Who broke it?" or "Who hit him?") (Barnet and Barnet, 1998, 181; Dunn, 1988, 22-24)
- Acts upset when seeing someone or something that is hurt (primarily personal distress, not sympathy or sympathy)
- Adjusts his behavior somewhat when in public

- Makes self-evaluative statements (e.g., “I a bad bad boy mommy.”) (Barnet and Barnet, 1998, 180)
- Understands accountability (as indicated by blaming others and denying his own culpability). May seem like lying (Dunn, 1988, 29)
- Makes a sincere apology after a harmful wrongdoing (Hoffman, 2000)
- Looks to see if a loved one is watching when she does something wrong (i.e., knows she is doing something wrong) (Dunn, 1988, 18-22)
- Occasionally resists a loved one’s authority by asserting her desires, possibly saying “No!” (Tests the dimensions on which her desires and the desires of others may be in conflict.)
- Shows pleasure in “getting it right.” (Barnet and Barnet, 1998, 180)
- Knows that her own happiness depends on the happiness of others; knowledge of interdependence (Wilson, 1993, 59)
- Talks about what she wants and how she feels (e.g., says “I want a cookie”)
- Very possessive; offers toys to other children, but then wants them back (Iowa State University, 1993)
- Shows a sense of humor; laughs at silly labeling of objects and events (as in calling a nose an “ear”)
- Offers a spontaneous and familiar kindness to comfort someone who is sad, e.g., shares her blanket (Barnet and Barnet, 1998, 168)
- Uses words to console a brother or sister in distress (Barnet and Barnet, 1998, 158)
- Tries to induce a loved one to help a brother or sister in distress (Barnet and Barnet, 1998, 158)
- Tries to make up for harm she has caused (e.g., offers prized possessions or affection to the harmed person (Denham, 1998, 46)
- Understands conversations even when not directly participating in them (Haslet, 1997, 105)
- Recognizes that questions require responses (Haslet, 1997, 112)
- Contributes new information to a conversation between a loved one and a sibling (Haslet, 1997, 105)

### 3 years

- Participates in family storytelling about shared experiences.
- Creates entertaining stories that have a beginning, middle, and end (Engel, 1999, 16, 50)
- Uses words or gestures to communicate a desire for closeness, e.g., says “hug” or gestures to sit in your lap to allow for hugging.
- Directs social acts to two other children at once (aware of audience).
- Knows that individual emotional reactions in others will diverge depending on the desires or preferences of the individual

- ❑ Knows that emotions can change with different information; understands that different perspectives result because people have access to different information or have different needs (Hoffman, 1982 in Eisenberg 1992)
- ❑ *Stage 3: Empathy for another's feelings.* Aware of the suffering of a distinct "Thou;"—other people's feelings may differ from one's own; more responsive to cues as to other's feelings (Barnet and Barnet, 1998, 167; Eisenberg, 1992, 13; Hoffman, 1994)
- ❑ Shows awareness that others' feelings can differ from her own.
- ❑ Engages in pretend play about emotional states, e.g., pretends to be sad or angry
- ❑ Accurately names emotional expressions of happiness and sadness (Denham, 1998, 58-60)
- ❑ Understands that facial expressions reveal emotions ("Katie not happy face, Katie sad").
- ❑ Understands that a person's experiences affect feelings ("You sad Mommy. You hurt finger.")
- ❑ Spontaneously offers to share things (Dunn, 1988, ?)
- ❑ Adjusts his help to better match the needs of the distressed person (e.g., finds a crying child's mother instead of his own). Has a repertoire of primitive caring responses: physical contact; inspecting the hurt, gift-giving, protection or defense, concerned questioning, advice, reassurance, etc (Gottman, 1997, 71-80)
- ❑ Delay can occur between discovery of another's distress and helping (Hoffman, 2000, 72)
- ❑ If he is the cause of another's distress, he shows greater willingness to comfort or help another (emergence of guilt). May not readily distinguish between the distress they observe and the distress they caused—may feel responsible for both (Barnet and Barnet, 1998, 169)
- ❑ Confesses to a wrongdoing (Kochanska, 1994)
- ❑ Knows that feelings can affect facial expression (e.g., "Katie not happy face; Katie sad.") (Hoffman, 2000, 73)
- ❑ Engages in role-complimentary pretend play (e.g., play "house") (Barnet and Barnet, 1998, 159)
- ❑ Takes turns in structured games (Restak, 2001, 63)
- ❑ Knows that anger signals being in an undesired state, along with a gruff vocal tone, lowered brows, and a tendency to attack physically or verbally—signal to "get out of the way." (Denham, 1998, 59)
- ❑ Understands that feelings can elicit reactions from others ("I cry so Gamma picked me up and rocked me").
- ❑ Uses emotion language in reflective discussions especially about the causes and consequences of feeling states ("I miss Mommy; I get sad"); as a means of manipulating the feelings and behaviors of others ("Talk nice Mommy—don't be so mad"), and in teasing ("I'm going to eat you up and I'll tell Grandpa you died." "You will? And will he be happy or sad?" "Sad.") (Denham, 1998, 76-79).

- Speaks with intensity about his emotions (“My kitty gone. I cried.”) (Denham, 1998, 58-59)
- Shows distress when witnessing another’s misbehavior
- Verbalizes emotional experiences of feeling good, happy, sad, afraid, angry, loving, mean, and surprised (Denham, 1998, 77)
- Talks about causes of events and feelings to draw your attention to a need, to express distress, or to enlist support to achieve a goal (Barnet and Barnet, 1998, 157)
- Occasionally poses an emotional expression he does not feel (Dunn, 1988, 18-22)
- Hides something effectively from others (knows other’s perspective)
- Refers to her own feelings, social rules, and material consequences of a sibling’s actions when making a protest (Dunn, 1988, 51)
- Knows that another person cannot see something even though she can (object behind screen) (Gopnik, 1999, 41)

### 3.5 years

- Tries to make others laugh and enjoys the response to his humor
- Tells simple jokes as part of a family conversation (use of humor to place self within the family conversation)
- Draws a loved one’s attention to dangerous things (e.g., broken glass, pins on the floor)
- Understands that her behavior can hurt other people’s feelings
- Talks about past emotions and mental states (“I was sad yesterday”)
- Reenacts themes of wrongdoing in his play (e.g., scold a doll for being naughty)
- Inhibits and corrects herself just before she does something wrong (can stop the impulse to misbehave)
- Spontaneously confesses and apologizes to loved ones, without being told to do so
- Can be trusted to comply with simple, reasonable requests when unsupervised
- Seeks reassurance after misbehavior (shows concern about maintaining good feelings with loved one)
- Occasionally demonstrates shame when caught in a wrongdoing
- After misbehaving, appears to need reassurance that he is still loved
- Shows relief when forgiven for a wrongdoing

### 4 years

- Tells you about her experiences, narratives with coherent flow and direction, like a good story Tells autobiographical narratives (requires the psychological formatting of events in a narrative form with coherent flow and directionality) (Peterson and A. McCabe, 1983)
- Prefers playing with other children than playing alone, unless deeply involved in a solitary task
- Knows what he does can trigger a positive or negative response by others

- Helps another child to accomplish something that cannot be achieved alone
- Judges the causes and consequences of emotions by referring to internal goals (“He wants the toy”) and external outcomes (“The toy broke”) (Denham, 1998, 71)
- Accurately uses terms for feeling angry, loving, afraid, mean, and surprised (Denham, 1998, 60, 77)
- Understands that the same situation can give rise to different emotions in different people (weighing multiple sources of information) (Denham, 1998, 83)
- Fear of dark and monsters (Iowa State University, 1993)
- Separates from a loved one for short periods without crying
- Delays an impulse through selective attention and purposeful distraction to achieve a more important goal (is more purposeful and can resist longer than at 18 months) (Goleman, 1995, 82)
- Adjusts behavior to conform to simple, understandable rules (Greenspan)
- Understands “good” as opposed to “bad” rules but does not necessarily recognize the underlying justification for rules (Haslet, 1997, 151)
- Has internalized a clear notion of fairness (e.g., an obligation to share; “You promised!” “You cheated!”) (Damon, 1988, 36; Barnett and Barnett, 1998, 195)
- Discriminates between conventions (e.g., “Don’t talk with your mouth full”) and moral rules (e.g., “no hitting”) (Barnett and Barnett, 1998, 183; Nucci, 2001, 11)
- Takes turns and shares (most of the time) (Iowa State University, 1993)
- Usually is kind and considerate, not deliberately cruel, to pets
- Can label a statement as true or false (Haslet, 1997, 117-118)
- Has a systematic set of beliefs about the thoughts, feelings, intentions, motives, knowledge, and capacities of other people. Appreciation of other’s beliefs: Aware of others false beliefs (e.g., put cupcake under blue box in front of two children; one child leaves; put cupcake under a red box and ask present child where other would look when returning—says blue box, i.e., aware that other does not have the correct information) (Haslet, 1997, 144)
- Shares his toys even when parents or other authority figures are not watching (Wilson, 1993, 57)
- Includes prosocial themes in play
- Responds generously to another in need (gives a portion of what she has to someone who does not have any)
- Can reconcile a conflict between facial expression of emotion and the situation (smiling while getting an injection—“She likes shots.”); attribution of idiosyncrasy, a precursor of understanding the psychological causes of personalized reactions of emotion-eliciting situations (Denham, 1998, 84)
- Appreciates the difference between what is real and what is make-believe (Greenspan)
- Points out something in the past to explain something in the present (e.g., “He’s crying ‘cause his ice cream fell on the floor.”)

### 4.5 years

- Cooperates with other children in play and shows flexibility in both leading and following
- Tries to bargain (e.g., says, “I’ll give you this toy if you give me that one.”)
- Distinguishes between appearance and reality (e.g., knows that a sponge can look like a rock or a stone like an egg, and that clouds are white, regardless of the color of sunglasses through which they view them) (Eliot, 1999, 412)
- Recognizes that he could have chosen to behave differently (can understand the idea of being held justly accountable)
- Expresses a notion of “fairness” when she feels she or others have been wronged (e.g., child says, “That’s not fair!”)
- Tries to stop others from misbehaving
- Modifies her language when talking with younger children (Haslet, 1997, 128) (Westby, 1988, Shatz & Gelman, 1973)

### 5 years

- Talks about what he might do when he grows up.
- Talks about personal preferences; speaks up for himself; shows he knows he is a special individual with personal needs
- Forms a close relationship with at least one other child (Haslet, 1997, 124)
- Responds to a friend’s crying with more sympathy than to a mere acquaintance (through all the preschool years) (Denham, 1998, 37; Eisenberg, 1992, 11)
- Shows concern or sympathy for others as a group; refers to a group as needy (e.g., “Poor people need food)
- Enjoys social play but sometimes needs to get away and be alone.
- Understands that the causes of happy, sad, angry, and fearful feelings can vary depending on who is experiencing the emotion and that causes have uniquely individual effects; realizes the same event can produce different feelings in different people (Denham, 1998, 80-81; Hoffman, 2000, 73)
- Has a paradigm of prototypical causes of basic emotions—thematic ideas (Denham, 1998, 69)
- Knows that emotion expressed may not be emotion felt (beginning to understand dissemblance—emotion can be faked); people can control their emotional expressions (Denham, 1998, 90-94; Hoffman, 2000, 74)
- Understands that someone can have a desire even if not acted on (Astington & Gopnik, 1991)
- Evaluates intention to determine the wrongfulness of a behavior
- Refers to another’s need as a reason to be kind; uses principles or norms of equity in distributing resources (Hoffman, 2000, 251)
- Teaches household rules to a playmate in his home on his own (e.g., tells a friend, “No running up the steps!”)

- Judges wrongdoer's feelings on the basis of the consequences of his or her actions, using naïve desire-based causal analysis (happy if not caught; angry if caught) (Denham, 1998, 99). Ambivalence is strong. So he may also attribute guilt to a story character who is responsible for harming another ("She's sorry she pushed him down." (Hoffman, 2000, 117) So, with ambivalence, he may be happy he has a toy he stole from another child but sad when he sees the child crying—mixed emotional consequences. Parents should keep this in mind (Denham, 1998, 100)
- Identifies both external (e.g., seek help, changing situation—"Give him ice cream."), and mentalistic (e.g., redirecting thoughts, reinterpreting the situation, pretense—"He decides to..." or "He thinks of...") strategies for changing unpleasant emotions; physical and material strategies for sadness, material and verbal for anger, verbal and physical for distress (Denham, 1998, 85, 89)
- Feels guilty about not reciprocating (Hoffman, 2000, 120)
- Understands and respects rules; often asks permission (Iowa State University, 1993)
- Evaluates the adequacy of messages and repairs messages, when needed, when conversing with others; treats talk as something to be commented on; begins to check message accuracy and adequacy (Haslet, 1997, 100-101)
- Justifies help by simple reference to either the other person's needs ("I gave her beads because she wanted some; gave him crackers because he was hungry), pragmatic reasons ("I wiped the table because it was wet)—a focus on the task at hand, relationship with recipient (I helped him 'cause he's my friend), or self-gain (Eisenberg, 1992, 21-23)
- More positive and prosocial when a peer victim is alone than when in a group (Denham, 1998, 37)
- Uses hedonistic or needs-oriented reasoning in moral decisions—risk justifies inaction (e.g., don't stop a bully because you might get pushed down) (Eisenberg, 1992, 26-27)
- Protects younger children
- Understands that personal sacrifice increases the value of kindness
- Shows relief when given the opportunity to make up for damage she has caused
- Adjusts behavior to meet a social display rule (e.g., smiles when given a small serving by grandma instead of whining and complaining) (Denham, 1998, 49)
- Invents games with simple rules (Iowa State University, 1993)
- Has a sense of others as having a history, an identity, a life (Hoffman, 2000, 84)
- Understands the customs of their particular community and have some idea of what makes a story a story (Engel, 1999, 17)
- Occasionally engages in purposeful deception (tell a lie); understands the difference between factually inaccurate and deception (importance of intent) (Haslet, 1997, 98).
- Interprets emotions in adult stranger's vocal tones and distinguishes between vocal tones in infant vocalizations (Haslet, 1997, 37)

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