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## **Play and Cognitive Milestones**

### **24-36 Months**

#### **24-30 Months**

##### **Play**

- Recreates daily experiences
- Increases variety of roles assumed in role play
- Begins to narrate own play
- Uses 3-5 related actions to carry out a sequence
- Uses similar object to represent an absent object desired in play (e.g., a box for a doll bed)
- Orients personal accessories approximately (e.g., sunglasses to nose bridge and ears)
- Mimes actions with object support (e.g., pours imaginary liquid into cup)
- Nests four cups
- Aligns multiple objects

##### **Cognitive**

- Increases sophistication of tool use
- Understands the concept of “one”
- Follows a related 2-part command
- Follows an unrelated 2-part command
- Matches circles, squares, and triangles
- Matches identical simple pictures of objects
- Thinks about past events
- Requests for objects not immediately present
- Recalls and repeats parts of songs

#### **30-36 Months**

##### **Play**

- Imitates peers
- Acts out events from family life
- Acts out events from storybooks and TV shows
- Begins to impersonate characters/roles
- Narrates own play
- Makes dolls talk in play
- Engages in empty handed miming (e.g., pretends to drink with no cup)
- Explores drawing
- Recognizes missing parts of an incomplete picture
- Builds towers with blocks
- Builds enclosures with blocks for dolls and animals

##### **Cognitive**

- Begins abstract thinking
- Shows planning in play
- Uses logic to relate experiences (e.g., if/then)
- Seeks adult assistance when independent attempts fail
- Understands functions of objects (e.g., nail and hammer)
- Understands big and little
- Counts from 1 to 5
- Can count 2 objects
- Remembers ideas for play
- Reconstructs social sequences (e.g., phone call)

#### **Red Flags**

- Little interest in what other children are doing or interacting with them
- Does not engage in pretend or make-believe games
- Difficulty noticing and understanding feelings in themselves and others
- Is unable to track object movements with eye gaze

*\*\*If your child does not meet most of these milestones by 36 months, consider scheduling a developmental therapy evaluation.*