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Social Emotional and Fine Motor Milestones

24-36 Months

24-30 Months

Social Emotional/ Sensory-Regulatory

- Develops fears, especially of large animals
- Hoards possessions (e.g., toys, stuffed animals)
- Shows adults and peers their belongings (e.g., “look at my dress”)
- Exhibits tantrum behaviors and continues tantrums despite distractions
- Demands independence (e.g., says, “I can do it myself”)
- Demonstrates improved self toileting with reminders
- Shows wide variety of emotions
- Clings to familiar toys and clothing

Fine Motor

- Imitates vertical and horizontal strokes
- Folds paper in half
- Can hold and let go small items steadily
- Exhibits definite hand preference
- Strings four beads together
- Removes small twist-on cap with one turn
- Feeds self easily with spoon
- Puts on some clothes and shoes without differentiating front/back, left/right
- Unbuttons front buttons of jacket
- Builds a 10 block tower

30-36 Months

Social Emotional/ Sensory-Regulatory

- Separates easily from parent in familiar surroundings
- Begins to obey and respect simple rules
- Shows increasing independence (e.g., refuses to have hand held)
- Wants to make decisions
- Greets adults spontaneously
- Joins other children in play
- Understands taking turns
- Goes to toilet by self with minimal assistance
- Understands what belongs to others

Fine Motor

- Roughly cuts along a line using scissors
- Can imitate horizontal strokes with scribbling
- Imitates building a 3 block bridge
- Copies drawing a closed circle
- Uses non-dominant hand for stabilizing of materials consistently
- Uses adult like grasp when coloring
- Strings ½ inch beads
- Begins to use a fork
- Pours liquid from a small container
- Dresses with minimal assistance

Red Flags

- Has difficulty transitioning from one activity to another
- Drools during tasks that require increased concentration
- Extreme difficulty separating from caregiver

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