

Hello and welcome!

The following are the summaries of childhood developmental stages that my work has found. These stages are the times when children “act out,” with “misbehavior,” but on the other side is an astonishing burst of new ability. Their brain was going through an “upgrade.” My work documents both the irritating behavior and the new abilities. Included in this document are the milestones that are “done.” As of now, this is up to the age of 4, ending at 4. These tables are the summaries,

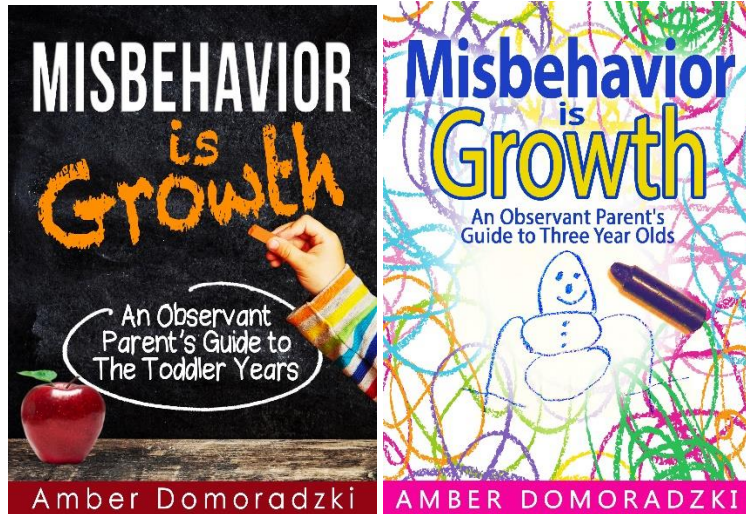
Observant Mom Child Development Milestones

Developmental Milestones for Toddlers		
No.	Age	Milestone
1	18m	Language Comprehension
2	20m	Patterns Symbols
3	21m	Symbolic Thought
4	23m	Memory Expansion
5	2.1	Persistence and Insistence
6	2.2	Deliberate Decision Making
7	2.4	Deliberate Rearranging and Creation
8	2.7	Inference/Sequence of Events
9	2.8	Creative On-The-Spot Problem Solving
10	2.9	Persistent Imagination and Execution
11	2.10	Short-Term Planning
12	2.10	Imaginative Predictions

Developmental Milestones for a Three Year Old		
No.	Age	Milestone
1A/B	3.0.0	Speculation and Mental Sorting/Recollection
2	3.1.0	Deliberate Role Playing and Planning
3A/B	3.1.3	Unconventional/Persistent Application of Principles
4	3.2.2	Intentional Imaging
5A/B	3.3.0	Strategies and Sequences
6	3.4.0	Specific 3-D Maneuvering
7	3.4.2	Compares and Uses Sets of Knowledge
8A/B	3.5.0	Creative Rearrangements
9	3.6.2	Deductive Reasoning Across Time
10A/B	3.7.0	Enormous Knowledge, Segmented
11A/B	3.8.0	Themes
12	3.9.2	Two Alternatives
13	3.10.2	Persistent Focus on One Idea with Many Variables
14	3.11.0	Pushes Bounds

Feel free to print these summaries out and have them laying around in your home. Maybe someone will pick them up and see them, such as to give you some more empathy and support? At my website, www.theobservantmom.com is an email subscription list. When you sign up, you get this file sent to you for free.

For conflict resolution ideas at each milestone, as well as activity ideas to nurture the growth, please see my book series, *Misbehavior is Growth*. The idea behind *Misbehavior is Growth* is that it's not "misbehavior": it's growth! See the behavior as a clue that something big is going on. Lean into the behavior with connection, presence, and mentorship.



Find the summaries for free at my website, www.theobservantmom.com, as well as where to buy *Misbehavior is Growth*.

Thank you for your interest in child mental development!

Sincerely,

Amber Domoradzki ("The Observant Mom")



Toddler Milestone 1 – Language Comprehension

Starts: 18 months

Most Intense: 18 months, 1 week until 18 months, 3 weeks

Ends: 19 Months

Irritable Period Summary

Clingy

- Very clingy
- May be in your lap a lot
- May be with you in the bathroom

Wild, Exuberant, Meltdowns

- Can be wild and exuberant, running around a lot, smiling
- Or may put things right in your face/mouth
- Occasional meltdowns

Sleep Issues

- Sleep schedule becomes erratic, e.g., unreliable nap times

Most Intense

- Wants to be held all the time, many meltdowns

New Abilities Summary

Language Comprehension

- Explosion in language comprehension
- Might learn a new word or two per day
- Differentiates much more: cow versus horse; night versus day; etc.
- For children who are talking (and some don't even until age three or older), an increase in words spoken, about one new word per day
- Spoken words are better enunciated.
- Advanced language children (often girls) talk in complete sentences (three or four words). Please DO NOT compare your children negatively to this list. Look for the good in your child.

Symbols Represent Something

- Uses something other than an object to represent the object
- Might put their hand to their ear as a "phone"
- Might put long green Mega Bloks together and call it an "alligator"
- Might ask you to put sunscreen on their back by pretending to do it with a nearby object then signaling to put in on them
- At this one, the object resembles the symbol; a hand is a phone, green bricks are an alligator. At later milestones, they can use something quite unlike the symbol.
- Might understand the idea of counting and may be counting

Follows Verbal Request Better, Based on the Word Alone

- Understands and executes the function of an object based solely on a verbal clue, e.g., runs over to get a jacket after the word "jacket" is said
- Or goes to the blender after "smoothie" is said
- Can answer a question but answers it by pointing to something or getting it

More Respectful/Follows Some Requests Better

- Follows verbal requests better, e.g., “Please get your bottle”
- More respectful of others when asked to be, e.g., doesn’t step on their sibling after you ask them not to

Self-Awareness

- They are more self-aware now.
- Before, they could light up with joy, smile, be in awe of what is around them, etc. Now they are aware of that very joy.
- They might run around with a toy or food and it’s as if they notice the joy that it is to run around, specifically like that
- Or they might drape themselves in different fabrics, enjoying how the fabric makes them feel and look
- They might be a burst of sunshine, enthusiastically waving at strangers.
- They might have somewhat more deliberate behavior, such as looking at you with slightly more joyful, mischievous eyes.
- More awareness of and interest in body parts

Physical Skills

- Many fine motor skills such as doing puzzles or scribbling
- May copy what fine motor activities other children do, such as wrapping rubber bands on a Geoboard (a mathematical manipulative with a grid made of pegs that rubber bands can be stretched around)
- May like to “scoot” on a tricycle or scooter

Toddler Mini-Milestone 2A

Starts: Lasts for one or two days around 19 months 2 weeks

Irritable Period Summary

- Cranky
- Out of Sorts
- Wants to be near you
- Nap time changes, perhaps being tired later than usual for nap
- Slight fever on this day, with no other symptoms of flu
- Much more likely to become ill however

New Abilities Summary

- It is hard to ascertain what they think at this one, as it is so brief, they are so young, and the next one starts so soon after.
- But given the future milestones, it almost has to be a thought that they can arrange symbols in a way to their liking.
- In the next milestone (2B), they can, say, arrange parts to make Mr. Potato Head's face. They then go on to playfully manipulate those symbols in ways other than intended (3A). They then firmly understand that symbols can represent something but are not the thing (3B). Hence I propose that framework might be put in place here.
- Either way, I think this one is related to the next one, 2B, hence they are clustered together as Milestone 2A and 2B.

Toddler Milestone 2B – Patterns Symbols

Starts: One week before 20 months

Most Intense: 20 Months

Ends: Shortly after 20 Months

Irritable Period Summary

Major Sleep Issues

- Sleep problems: please expect naps won't be normal
- Might wake up in the night

Clingy and Cranky

- Extra crankiness
- Wants to be held and put down over and over
- Wants a lovey to go places with them

Most Intense

- One particular day is likely to be noticeable: Confused, stumbles when they walk, needs to be near you for an extended period of time, may be in and out of sleep all day, might have baby nightmares, wakes up from this state scared and confused, may have a mild fever for one day with no other symptoms of flu.

New Abilities Summary

- In Milestone 1, they better understand that a symbol represented something.
- Now they start to play around with “symbols.” They put objects into desired patterns and notice more patterns in the events around them.

Strings Objects Together

- Arranges disparate objects as to represent something real, e.g., Mr. Potato Head's face
- Might put together LEGO DUPLO toys
- May love Mega Bloks
- Arranges things to form a very basic pattern, such as in a line or a in a stack

Understands Symbols Match Objects (But Plays Around with It)

- Understands who owns what, such as this is mom's phone and should be with mom
- Purposely takes sibling's favorite animal, blanket, or other lovie (suggesting they know that lovie belongs to their sibling)
- When they scribble, they might say it means something now, such as “Mommy” or “Lightning McQueen.”
- Can verbally identify 1 or 2 colors

Strings Events Together

- Sees the particular events that make up a routine, how they relate and how they differ
- Understands the full routine of something well. They might help you make a cup of coffee in the morning and initiates (and may do) all steps correctly.
- Or may put their toys away on shelf
- The sequences they execute might have more steps, such as getting dog food out and putting it in the bowl.

- Understands and initiates daily routines. They might initiate turning a TV on if that's what you do in the mornings.
- Wants to do routines, for instance, wants to watch you make their bottle or cup of milk, not just have it handed to them
- May be upset if routines are missed, such as if you skip brushing their teeth one night
- Follows along with simple, dramatic stories, in which events change, such as *We're Going on a Bear Hunt* by Helen Oxenbury and Michael Rosen
- Loves songs with a twist, such as "Pop Goes the Weasel"
- May love Ring-Around-The-Rosie, where you all go in a circle and then fall down
- Might be able to do the actions to a song such as "Rock-a-Bye Bear"
- Note: to string events together like this requires an increase in memory

Matches a Simple Action to the Right Situation

- They can apply a simple action to the right situation.
- If milk spills, they might go get a paper towel.
- If they get on a bus, they might recognize that the bus driver says "Move on back," as from the song "Wheels on the Bus."
- They can answer a simple question. They can reply with "ya" and mean it now.
- Or they can pick what shoes they want
- Or they can point in the direction they want to go after being asked
- Says "uh oh" when someone is about to fall, as they recognize the danger
- Gets scared of certain noises, such as thunder, as they better understand the threat it may be to them
- May laugh at jokes
- Increase in words spoken, mostly nouns and verbs (i.e., an object as tied to an action)

Manipulates Simple Events

- Deliberately tries different solutions to achieve an end goal, such as making two magnets stick, buckling a seatbelt, or laying a blanket down to make a "bed" to lie down on
- Might show a sad face or cry with the intent of getting another person to do something for them

More Consistent in Fantasy Play

- Fantasy play is more consistent, e.g., consistently flies a toy airplane around as a toy airplane
- Consistently brings favorite animal, blanket, or lovie with them places (suggests a firmer understanding of the continuous nature of time)
- Sings parts of songs

Toddler Milestone 3A—Mischievous with Objects and Symbols

Starts: 20 months, 2 weeks

Most Intense: The week prior to 21 months up to 21 months

Ends: 21 months

Irritable Period Summary

First Part

- A noticeable head shape change, in which their forehead bulges forward, might alert you that this one is starting (around 20 months 2 weeks).
- It starts a bit mild and builds in intensity. Some might not notice it at the beginning (or they simply enjoy the activities the child is demanding, such as going on walks), depending on circumstances. Otherwise:

Demanding, Cranky, Jealous

- Cranky
- Wants to be in the same room with you, always
- Grabs you by the hand constantly and brings you places to do things with them
- Wants to sit in primary caregiver's lap or near primary caregiver often
- Jealous of other children
- Sleep issues: wakes early in the morning

Second Part

- There is yet another head shape change another week in (20 months 3 weeks). The second part shows more intense behavior.
- Spatially confused. For instance, they think they are on the floor when they are on the first stair of a staircase and fall down the step. Please be careful near pool stairs or at playgrounds.
- Totally out of sorts
- Can't make up their mind, for example of what they want for breakfast or perhaps can't communicate it to you
- Drools a lot, puts hand in mouth
- Takes blanket or lovey everywhere
- Absolutely won't forget when they leave something they want behind, e.g., their lovey
- Won't use plates/cups properly but wants to use them in different ways. They carry them to a non-dining area or do something playful with them.

Most Intense

- Insists on being VERY near you, like in the crook of your neck, can't communicate what they want or seems unable to make up their mind, wants to do everything in some specific way that they can't communicate effectively, sleep disruptions.

New Abilities Summary

Tries New Things

- Sees a challenge they think they can do, which they've never done before, and steps up and does it, on their own initiative.
- As an example, there is a very heavy object that you don't think they can pull and may even tell them as such—but they do.
- Very independent and insists on doing things on their own, like getting their own food

- Likes watering plants with a trickle of water from a hose

Uses Objects in a Way Other Than Intended

- They also play with objects in a “wrong” way purposefully.
- They may play with plates in a way other than eating on them, put *your* dress on, or insist on eating fruit while walking around in a store.
- They might like to wrap fabrics around themselves, such as clothes too big for them or big fluffy towels, as if wearing a cloak
- This play time may be needed to facilitate the next milestone, when they are capable of confident symbolic manipulation, in which they creatively use items for something other than their original intended use.

Toddler Milestone 3B—Symbols are Symbols

Starts: 21 Months 1 Week

Most Intense: 21 months 3 weeks until a few days after, then dissipates.

Ends: Between 22 months and 22 months 2 weeks

Irritable Period Summary

Clingy

- Mild at first, asks to be held a lot
- Might demand you do things with them, such as go on a walk
- Wants only their primary caregiver
- More intense meltdowns than before
- More willing to be away from you at times. But when they do get separation anxiety, it's intense.
- Wants a lovey or blanket to come with them everywhere

Demanding and Picky

- Demanding, such as what to watch on TV
- Picky, e.g., about what clothes to wear. Perhaps their newly formed symbolic thought makes them more acutely aware of what is on their shirts (sparkles, pictures, etc.)
- Or picky about how to eat food, e.g., wants to eat something straight out of the bag (take note of what you do and see if they are trying to mimic you)

Sleep and Physical Issues

- Stalls at nap and bedtime, demands story after story, song after song, etc.,
- Might skip naps
- There is a very noticeable change in head shape at 22 months.
- At close to 22 months, they might put things inside their cheek, such as their hand or grapes.

Most Intense

- Demanding, picky, may hit or throw, separation anxiety, sleep disturbances

New Abilities Summary

- Noticeably less clingy
- Less separation anxiety
- A very sunny period occurs around 22 months 2 weeks: they are filled with ecstatic joy and may play cute little cheeky games with you.

Confident Symbolic Manipulation

- They've been working with symbols for the past few milestones. It's that they are sturdy and confident now. Something is a symbol and is used to represent something. It's not the something.
- They might (intentionally) use an object to represent something else, such as a LEGO brick to represent a teacup.
- Understands that symbolic play is just that and is silly, may prefer real things
- They do more with symbols. They don't just find a green block if asked, they also count how many green blocks there are.
- They might be able to sort objects by both color and shape, such as a sorting toy in which the objects are different shapes and colors.

- Concrete to abstract matching games become possible, such as matching a Cinderella doll to a picture of Cinderella
- They might do this spontaneously, such as matching a stuffed animal they have to a real animal they see.
- This makes letter activities become possible, such as letter puzzles.
- Might thus understand abstract symbols, such as letters, better
- Might enjoy tracing shapes, such as circles, with a stencil
- Capable of learning many colors
- Counting might become refined
- Understands difference in gender

Pretend Play

- Pretend play, such as pretending to be a dinosaur, pretending to read
- Imaginative play based on real events, such as puts on a play with dolls based on what they've seen others do (perhaps tries to potty train a doll)

Conversational Flow and Back and Forth in How They Talk

- Simple conversational flow in how they speak
- Responsive to questions such as saying "I'll find it" after asking "Where is your pillow?"
- If you ask them what someone is doing, they may respond with what the person is actually doing. "What's mom doing?" "She's making eggs."
- They may do this nonverbally also by finding something, like their shoes, upon hearing that's what you are doing
- They might initiate a "back and forth" game with you. For instance, they hide behind a door, fully expecting you to come find them.
- More complete sentences such as "I kissed mommy." (Some see this in earlier milestones but you are likely to see an increase anyhow)

Increase in Practical Life and Fine Motor Skills

- Practical life activities explode: turning lights on and off, buckling seat belts, putting clothes on and such.
- They are just very aggressive and have fun with trying to do a lot more things.
- Figures out how to do something they want, such as turning a bin over to use as a step to get to a light switch (using objects other than as intended as in past milestones has come in handy!)
- Attempts a more challenging problem, such as putting a train track together (the kind that only fits together one way). They, however, might not be able to persist with it until completion yet.
- Can remember about 5 events of what is going to happen for the day (snack, play, lunch, store, home)
- Wants to drive your car
- Better fine motor control such as using a spoon better
- Better ability to regulate their own behavior such as placing the spoon next to their plate when done

Learns Quickly

- Learns new things quickly based on watching others.
- For instance, they might learn how to sit at a computer and pretend to use a mouse after seeing someone at the library do it.
- Or learns how to dip food in sauce after seeing at a restaurant for the first time

- Or picks up on any other thing, such as a new puzzle, quickly

Toddler Milestone 4 – Memory Expansion

Starts: 22 Months, 3 weeks

Most Intense: 23 months to 23 months, 1 week

Ends: 23 months, 3 weeks

Irritable Period Summary

Clingy, Defiant

- Starts out with a child who is simply clingy and/or might wake up crying
- Wants only their primary caregiver at certain times
- Demanding of your time
- Defiant in doing normal routines, such as taking a bath
- Possible meltdowns. They are fine—until they aren't.
- Might cry more

Sleep Issues

- Stalls going to bed (wants to read more books, play with toys, etc.)
- Skips naps
- When they wake up from sleep, they often cry

Crazy Behavior

- Crazy behavior: might crawl, climb on top of things, or put crayon on their face
- Grunts instead of answering questions
- May become slightly clumsier, fall down easier, or run into walls

Most Intense

- All of a sudden one day cries more easily or thrashes around, wants to be held, might seem confused, refuses naps for a few days in a row or other sleep disruptions (might wake up at night), might have a slight fever or get sick easier, and may demand large amount of time from primary caregiver

New Abilities Summary

Memory Increase

- Can remember entire songs
- Learns many words (10+) in a short amount of time
- Might be able to play the actual Memory Game, in which they match pairs of overturned cards
- They can answer a question about something not in sight, as they remember what the answer is, such as the color of something.
- They can remember stories and reference back to them, such as remembering the plot of a TV show, such as Thomas the Train.
- They might say things not in sight, such as your family's pet, are "missing." This suggests they quite remember those things.
- Uses more complex sentences, with subjects, objects, verbs, and adjectives as opposed to simply "more!" or "more juice!"

Imagines One End Goal

- An increase in memory seems to always coincide with an increase in imagination. In this case, an ability to imagine one simple end goal.

- Persists at activities that require imagining/visualizing the end goal, such as putting a train track set together (the kind that can only fit together one way).
- Or they purposely pose with a certain facial expression, such as a cute pouty face. This suggest again that they can visualize this end goal.
- They seem to actually think about one option or another, such as “Do you want a kiss?” and they ponder if they do or not.
- They may associate wrapping a gift with a birthday or Christmas coming up.

More Proactive

- They can imagine more. And they think how they think things might go is how they *should* go. As such, they make their thoughts a reality more.
- Before they developed a flow to conversations. Now they initiate conversations, “Hi, Mommy! It’s nice to see you!”
- They might ask you to change their diaper
- You might ask to kiss them and they say no. Later they come up, “Kiss? Kiss?” It’s like they remember they can do such things now.
- They might run up to people and say, “Ready, set, go!”
- States opinions, e.g, “That’s crazy!”

Fine and Gross Motor Control

- Much more delicate fine motor control, e.g., careful in handling and transferring objects
- Might take an interest in using scissors
- Better at puzzles, knobbed cylinders
- Might have an increase in gross motor control, such as they start skipping, ride a balance bike, dance to the Wiggles, love to climb, or love to jump on a trampoline

Toddler Milestone 5 – Persistence and Insistence

Starts: 2.0.1 [year.month.week]

Most Intense: 2.0.3 until 2.1.1

Ends: A few days after the intense period

Irritable Period Summary

Clingy

- At first, it's a child who might grab your hand and lead you somewhere a lot, wants to cuddle, be sad that you left, etc. Then:

Bossy, Demanding, Rigidly Particular

- Bossy, demanding, and possibly whiny
- They are bossy and particular about what you have to do. You have to sit on a particular chair or change their diaper a very particular way.
- Their favorite words right now might be “no,” “sit,” and “move.”
- They want things done exactly the same way as days earlier, which may not be possible and may result in a meltdown. For instance, their dad assembled a toy train track in a certain way, and you don't know how they did it, so you can't exactly replicate it.
- Or they want a ball to roll down the stairs the exact same way each time

Defiant

- Higher propensity to bite (may happen only when they feel trapped such as being held against their will)
- Hates diaper changes
- Takes their clothes or diaper off (may be a desire to change their diaper on their own, diligent diaper changes may help)

Sleep Issues

- Won't nap or stalls at naptime
- Clumsy (which may be from not napping)
- May wake up at night
- May have fears at night

Most Intense

- The previously listed behaviors start out somewhat subtly and get increasingly more intense until the end of the most intense period. At its most intense is a very demanding child who wants you almost hours of the day.

New Abilities Summary

Persistent Over Days

- Comes back to the same activity day after day and gets better at it each day
- Remembers how something was done from a few days ago
- Their memory now is not over everything but very specific things that make a big impression on them.

Persistent at Activities

- Very persistent at accomplishing a challenge, e.g., a jigsaw puzzle or an app
- Can follow a simple verbal instruction about something new such as “hang this picture up with this tape over there” and they keep at it until they get it

- Might draw shapes such as circles
- Can count higher than they could previously

Insistent

- Insistent on doing what others are doing, e.g., to do what their older siblings are doing, such as painting
- They might have a sense that something or someone is gone forever (when it is), such as a toy is missing, and they keep asking where the thing or person went.
- Wants things done similar as before, such as how to build a toy train track

Language

- Very conversational
- May speak in two sentences, e.g., “Hi, Mommy. It’s nice to see you.”
- Gives their opinion, often, such as things are “beautiful”

Identifies, Empathizes with, or Invokes Emotions

- There is a very clear heightened reaction to emotions, in themselves and others.
- Take a look at how YOUR child does this. It’s a clue to their personality.
- They might identify their own emotions, as if it’s novel and interesting, such as, “Wow! Thunder! I’m scared of thunder!”
- They might tell you what they are scared of, many times.
- Might be struck by seeing the emotions in *others*, such as seeing that a character in a book is sad
- Might purposely try to make *you* scared by dressing up in a “scary” outfit (a simple hat) and saying “Boo!”

Toddler Milestone 6 – Deliberate Decision Making

Starts: 2.1.3 [year.month.week]

Most Intense: 2.1.3 until 2.2.1

Ends: 2.2.2 (or bleeds into the next mini-milestone)

Irritable Period Summary

- Slightly preceding this milestone is an increase in head circumference. It might be hard to fit old shirts over their head.
- There is also, at some point in this milestone, an increase in how long their tongue is.

Clingier

- For the most part, might just want to be cuddled
- Might ask to be picked up a lot
- Might cry, and you can't figure out why
- Might ask for help a lot, "Help me! Help me!"
- Might easily have a meltdown, but they easily go back to happy if you can guess what they want

Bossy

- Bossy, e.g., telling you where you are allowed to sit
- Picky and stubborn: might want the same exact shirt day after day
- They can be aggressive or adorable in how they get bossy, depending on the child.
- Might not let you put on their pants (it's probably because they want to pick what pants they wear)
- Insists you fill up their cup to a certain level with liquid
- Bossy about what TV show or movie to watch
- Might not let you sing a song—only they can

Joke Playing

- Plays jokes, e.g., hides things from you on purpose or hides themselves
- Very likely to cheekily dress themselves up, such as in high heels or necklaces, entirely to elicit a reaction from others

Shows Regret

- Might show disappointment in whatever manner your child does: maybe dramatic slumped shoulders. Or full-on meltdowns.
- Shows regret over past decisions. For instance, they choose one pair of shoes before going out, and then they want a different pair while out. They have a complete meltdown over it.

Sleep and Physical Issues

- Sleep disruptions, may be up at night
- Might drool or put their hand in their mouth
- Clumsy
- Might get sick easier

Fearful

- Before they seemed fearless. Now they show fear.
- Shows fear over specific things, such as thunder
- Fear of doing certain things, such as getting on a tricycle

Most Intense

- It varies from a child who just wants to snuggle a lot, gets sick more easily, or who does all of the bossy, stubborn behaviors listed above but more intensely with full meltdowns.

New Abilities Summary

Decision Making

- Can intelligently alter their course if one way isn't working,
- They might use a different word when they see you aren't communicating together well. They might be saying "plate," but you think they are saying "paint," so they say, "a WHITE plate," to help clarify.
- Or they want frosting on a cake, but they already have some. Finally they say, "the GREEN frosting," so you know which kind they want.
- Thus you may find yourself "having full conversations" with them.
- They can look in a different direction in a book to find a picture, if one way isn't proving successful.
- They can understand and answer a question like "Do you want to walk up the stairs or be carried?"
- Very deliberate and particular about what they want, e.g., what movie to watch or how high the liquid in their cup must be filled
- Loves to be asked questions so they can show off their knowledge. Non-verbal children can still do this by pointing.
- Might clap and say "yay!" when they are proud of something they did

Decisive and Picky About How They Dress, Behave, Etc.

- Decisive about many things relating to their life, e.g., how their hair is worn, what they play with, or where they sit at the dinner table
- Very deliberate in how they behave. They may see their siblings play rock, paper, scissor and they make one of the shapes with their hand to play too
- Might follow you around and do what you do, such as how you take care of animals
- Or they deliberately pretend to be like their sibling and put themselves to bed the way their siblings do
- They may now say "I am," an indication they are applying more behavior to themselves, as reflected in their language.

Symbols Help Them Make Decisions

- In the first Toddler Milestones, they developed a more solid understanding of symbols. Now they can use those symbols to make decisions.
- For instance, they may show that they understand that a strawberry on a cup of yogurt means it is strawberry yogurt and a blueberry means it is blueberry.
- Or they can press the "cold" button at a water cooler to get cold water
- Or they might understand that the sound of "a" is the first sound in "apple."
- This understanding may be why they are so picky and demanding. They sincerely think different color cups, e.g., a blue versus yellow cup, do different things (and they are sometimes right!)
- Other examples of understanding the meaning of symbols: may ascribe a triangle as meaning "mountain"

Longer Memory

- They can remember how things went from weeks ago.
- For instance, you had cashews at dinner once, with a particular meal. You have that meal again and they ask for cashews.

- They can't remember the exact time it occurred as in, "We did this thing two weeks ago." They make a connection between two things and remember the connection as such, even if it's been two weeks.

Loves Sorting and Comparing

- They love to compare themselves to others especially. They might:
- Call their dad, "Big daddy!" and themselves "Small [their name]!"
- Might compare their smaller feet to your larger feet
- Or compares quiet things to loud things
- Very likely to love arranging things up in order from big to small
- Loves sorting shapes and colors

More Initiative, Plays Jokes

- Initiates conversations and activities a lot more
- Initiate jokes and games with others, such as waiting for you to come in the room then scaring you
- Might make up their own song, singing "All day long," over and over
- Might ask, "What are you doing, Mom?"
- Might be annoyed by loud noises and say, "Pretty loud!"
- Might put a blanket on their sibling or give them a bottle. (They have more information with which to act now.)
- Makes up their own song
- May playfully hit as a way to get their own way

Toddler Mini-Milestone 7A – Fuses the Real and the Fake

Starts: One week shy of 2.3.0 [year.month.week]

Most Intense: 2.3.0

Ends: Shortly after the most intense period

Note: The timing of this one seems to vary for children.

Irritable Period Summary

Clingy or Bossy

- Again clingy
- Might be bossy and insistent on what they want.
- May just really throw their weight around.

New Abilities Summary

A Confusion or Fusing of Real and Fake Things

- Confusion/blending of fake things as real things
- Might think fake food is real food; may take a bite out of Styrofoam food
- Seems to think they can pick up and use a fork as found in a book. It's as if it "pops out" at them, as if it's a hologram.
- Or they do something like "scrape" at your face and sprinkle it around, as if that something (your face in this case) is actually something they can spread around, as if it's dirt (or whatever pretend play they are engaged in)

Toddler Milestone 7B – Deliberate Rearranging and Creation

Starts: Between 2.3.2 and 2.3.3 [year.month.week]

Most Intense: Around 2.4.0 and again at 2.5.0

Ends: 2.5.2

Irritable Period Summary

- Begins subtly but with a noticeable change in head shape and size
- You might also see them have “lazy” eyes to the point that they look cross eyed. Look for this around 2.3.2.
- Drooling
- The most intense period hits very suddenly at or before 2 years 4 months

“Rearranges” the Environment, Bossy, Wild

- “Rearranges” many things: throws their cup, puts their shirt on inside out, opens your eye lids, wraps themselves in the curtain, throws their stuffed animals around, etc., in a repeated ongoing way
- Bossy, e.g., about diaper changes or where you are allowed to stand
- They might need to have every single one of their toys before they are willing to have their diaper changed.
- You might have to stand at the top of the stairs, while they walk down first.
- VERY defiant (to get diaper changed, go down for a nap, etc.)
- At times nothing seems to console them
- Extremely clumsy, drops stuff, does very risky things like put their blanket over their head and runs
- Makes many bids for connection throughout the day (put on my socks, take off my socks, watch me play, read a book)
- Playfully lies, such as points to the wrong answer when asked a question
- Major meltdowns. Certain flare-ups can be intense.
- About one meltdown per day in between the two peaks

Strong Fears

- Doesn’t want to leave primary caregiver
- Possessive of primary caregiver
- Their thinking that fake things are real things continues and causes problems.
- They might get upset if you throw away paper in the garbage
- They might think balls on a video game are real and are flying behind the TV
- Or they are very upset by a fake scary shark.

Sleep Issues

- Major sleep disruptions
- A strong chance they only nap 1-2 times per week during the irritable period
- If you push naps when they don’t want to, they might throw themselves aggressively on the floor.
- On some days, may take a 6+ hour nap

Most Intense

- This one can be intense—and it’s long.

- There are two peaks at this one. It may be two overlapping milestones. Some see relief in between and others do not.
- A strong fear of abandonment and confusion of fake and real things around 2 years 4 months. They might get really mad you threw something away. They also might think the images in books/shirts are real (e.g., try to pick up and use a picture of a fork).
- Another intense period at 2 years 5 months, in which absolutely nothing seems to console them.

New Abilities Summary

- In the past milestones, they got good at making a data-driven (intelligent) decision. Now their imagination was just turbo charged with the belief that fake things ARE real things.
- This gives them every incentive to twist things around in imagination. They can make deliberate decisions now AND think imaginatively.

Builds from a Script or Idea

- They have a “script” of some sort that they work off of (sometimes literally) and build something intentional.
- They might put on a play, using the pictures in a book as a guide.
- Might follow a visual pattern to build something, e.g., attempts to build a tangram based on the picture of one
- Might put on a play based on a book, for instance a scene from Thomas the Train, over and over
- Can do jigsaw puzzles, specifically they can see a simple picture that should go together and then does it. (That they can know the picture and put it together is between 2 – 12 pieces; they may put larger jigsaw puzzles together by trial and error)
- They might be able to do the puzzles where there are 16 cubes with 6 pictures on each side of the cube.

Deliberate Building

- They build in a way as if they have something in their mind that they want to make a reality.
- Builds elaborately with wooden blocks or other sets on their own in creative ways; uses 10 or 20 or more pieces to do so
- Moves around furniture or other items in the house
- Plays with language; mishmashes songs; very fluent
- Plays around and gets refined/nuanced at whatever it is they do, for instance, making nuanced facial expressions to make people laugh (this is highly dependent on each unique child)

You Can See Them Thinking

- You can see them thinking. Perhaps as their eyes dart around thinking of what to do next in a “Follow me” game.
- Seems to constantly be thinking of what they can do with their own body next. Can they hop? Wiggle their leg? Be upside down?
- They might be struck when they see other characters or people thinking about something, such as the “grumpy” character in *Green Eggs and Ham* when he stops and thinks about eating green eggs and ham.

Visual Acumen

- Can do many Montessori activities, such as the pink tower, with total ease
- They may get the right size block (say of the pink Montessori cubes) on demand to fit into, say, any random box they happen to find.

- They handily match objects to things that are the right shape, such as rods to drawn representations of those rods on paper.

Fuses Fantasy and Reality

- Fantasy and reality are still blurred. When they pretend to be Snow White, they seem to think they ARE Snow White.
- This however allows them to play around wildly, spurring tremendous skills.
- Likes to spin and twist stories. The Prince doesn't love Cinderella. He loves [your daughter]!!!
- When they wake up, you have to kiss them. Because they're Snow White.
- They easily use one object to fill in for another, such as a white magnet attached to a magnetic train is a "snow plow."
- Might enmesh with other family members. They want to wear their hair just "like mom" or have a cup of coffee at the table "like the family."

Toddler Milestone 8A – Inference

Starts: 2.5.2 [year.month.week]

Most Intense: Behavior continues to escalate for about 10 days.

Ends: Just before 2.6.0

Irritable Period Summary

- Note some children do not go through this milestone—at all.
- It is possible that this milestone is shifted for children such that 8A and 8B happen at the same time. Hence please read through the skills listed here even if they don't seem to go through this one. Otherwise:

Head Shape Change

- Noticeable head shape change slightly before irritable behavior

Clingy

- Starts out subtle at first: wants lovey or to cuddle
- May attack you to get a hug
- May come inside just to give you a huge, then goes back outside to continue playing
- Or trots off occasionally and becomes inconsolable (a lovey may help)

Defiant, Demanding, Particular

- Defiant ALL day long to get a diaper change, take a nap, etc.
- You might be hearing, “I don't want to!”
- Wants your attention all day long
- Rigid about the order of things, such as which sock to put on first, then next, then which shoe, etc.
- If they get hurt, you now have to kiss the exact place they got hurt.
- May want a particular caregiver at nursery
- There may be intense nighttime battles.
- If something didn't go well previously, they make sure it goes better next time. For instance, if they didn't like only having one book at bedtime the night before, they make sure to line up two books next to your chair, so tonight you read two books.

New Abilities Summary

- They can make educated guesses about what just happened
- They intuitively start to see that things happen in an order over time.

Inference

- They can make an educated guess, with limited evidence, of what just happened.
- If the garage door is open, they can guess that their dad is home.
- If their brother's door is closed, they guess he is sleeping.
- Note in their early threes, they can *predict* a next event. At this one, they make a logical conclusion about what did happen (not what's about to happen).

An Ability to Use the Unseen

- They can think of things not in immediate sight.
- If you ask them what shirt they want, they might say a shirt that is in another room.
- They might like to hide a favorite toy and make you go find it.

- Can come up with a solution of their own, not presented to them. For instance, as they are crying, you ask what can help them, offering maybe a drink or a toy, and they say, unexpectedly, “a kiss”
- They come up with things not in immediate sight or not being currently talked about. Someone tells them they have pretty hair. They say, defiantly, “No! I have brown hair!”

Events Start, End, and Go a Particular Way

- They seem to understand that particular events are of a specific nature and happen at certain times.
- They might say “bye!” every time you leave something or something leaves them. It’s as if to punctuate their understanding that this event is ending.
- Or they might announce “I’m finished!” after finishing something.
- Or they want to carry the box of leftovers out of the restaurant. Because they know they are done, and that’s what you do.
- They might be able to handle introductions when being introduced to new people.
- They recognize that things should go a particular way. For instance, they insist on keeping the gate to a fence open, because they want to go get a rock in the yard (inside the gate) then go throw it in a pond (outside the gate).
- Reality and fantasy continue to be fused. They might tell their stuffed animal to “stay,” as if it would otherwise get up and walk.
- They can be, as noted, quite particular about the sequence of events. You have to put both socks on, then their shoes.

1:1 Matching of Problem to Solution:

- There is a deductive matching of cause to effect at this one in which simple connections are made.
- They might give their sibling a hug if they are crying.
- They might do something like press the pause button on the remote and utterly delight that it does actually pause the movie. (This also requires a bigger “leap of faith” that this works, as opposed to, say, hammering a ball in a toy.)
- They might also describe a stuffed animal as “sad,” as what is fake and what is real is still fused. But this shows the increase in empathy, which pulls at the heart strings and encourages problem solving.
- In their imaginative play, they might like to pretend their stuffed animal is “stuck” or “lost” and you need to rescue it.

Toddler Milestone 8B—Sequence of Events

Starts: 2.6.1 [year.month.week]

Most Intense: 2.6.2 until 2.7.0

Ends: 2.7.2

Irritable Period Summary

- There is noticeable change in head size and shape, several times over the course of this (long) milestone, with more intense behavior following each change in head shape. It's probably several milestones, but they come one after the other, so I put them in one.
- Note that 8A and 8B might mash together for some children. Please read through the skill set for 8A as well.

Highly Demanding, All Day

- VERY clingy
- Wants your attention all day long, to see what they did or to sit with you. This is, for many caregivers, a very frustrating milestone.
- Very jealous; tries to separate you from their siblings
- May even throw books at you to get you to read to them
- Bossy, e.g., about where you are allowed to sit
- Refuses naps (won't go to the bedroom, runs out of the room, etc.), even though very sleepy
- Loves to be messy and muddy
- Still particular about the order of things: you have to go up the stairs first, then Dad, then them
- The irritating behaviors at this one can last all day long. They are very picky about a lot of things: "NO, THIS for lunch! NO, make a bottle with tap water not filtered water! NO, I want to watch a show. NO, Mom, you are not allowed to sit for more than 10 minutes!" Sorry in advance.

Plays Around with "Lies"

- Deliberately tells mistruths and often. You give them their favorite stuffed animal, doggie, and ask "Is this doggie?" and they bubble, "That's not doggie!!"
- Loves to create dramatic little plays where someone or something needs helped or rescued and they do the rescuing

Hates Leaving Fun Things

- Will not want to leave a fun activity, such as being at the playground or taking a bath
- You might anticipate a major meltdown related to this around 2 years 7 months.

Physical Accidents

- Can be very dangerously clumsy, like they get super upset while on a changing table and almost fall over face first
- More likely to get sick

Most Intense

- Jealous and bossy about their primary caregiver, may hit or throw objects to separate and keep their primary caregiver away from others, may not let primary caregiver move, wants caregiver all day long, gets clumsy and may fall off chairs, changing tables, etc., head first. Be careful when they are simply sitting on a chair even.

New Abilities Summary

- Before, they made an educated guess about what is going on and also started to notice that events go a certain way, at certain times.
- Now they are more intellectual about this process. They can talk about it and make more plans with it.
- They can rely on their past experiences and knowledge to apply a (simple) solution at the right time and place now. In the next milestone, they are more flexible in matching solutions to problems.

Sequence of Events

- Understands sequences of events: "First this, then this" such as "I'll be with you after I finish my drink." They intently watch, waiting for you to be done, and then tell you, "You're done! Now come on!"
- Their new understanding of sequences makes them more cooperative at diaper changes, "First we are going to do this and then we are going to change your diaper." They submit willingly.
- Might use the word "because," e.g., "I am not going to cry, because I am happy" This is a sequence of events, as intellectually understood by them. I did this, because of this.
- Can identify themselves as "thinking," as in "I am thinking about what to do next."
- Might be capable of doing the beginning steps to sound out letter sounds to read a word, such as "n-e-t" spells "net."
- They use their knowledge of steps to manipulate the process. For instance, they know they can give their siblings a hug before bedtime. So, they ask to go give the hug. Then they dart off to go play.
- Loves a story in which something goes wrong in the past and it gets rectified. For instance, a child lost a doll and they go back and get it. Peppa Pig and Paw Patrol are ideal for this.
- After the most intense period, their imaginative play becomes more complex: more characters, more plot twists, they execute the actions faster and more reliably.

Continuity of Time

- Understands "yesterday," "today," and "tomorrow"
- Remembers past events, say the time they almost lost their shoe while running in the rain, and wants to talk about it again and again and again and again.
- They know that they are never getting a fun moment back if they leave.
- On the other hand, at times, they seem more comfortable with separation, as if they understand they will reconvene with something or a person in the future.

Imagination Changes

- Before, fake things and reality were fused. They thought a picture of a fork was a real fork.
- Now they note that such things are fake. They are losing this fantastical thinking.
- If they see a cookie drawn on a paper, they may pretend to eat it, but it's as if they know that's wrong and they are making a joke.

Applies Simple Solutions at Correct Time and Place

- This is not that they execute what is asked of them through pressure or punishment, e.g., eat your dinner or else you don't get cake.
- This is that they, on their own, apply a right or wrong solution to a life problem in a conscious, deliberate way. Such as:
- May know that when you get to a road you have to stop and look (might not be able to fully make a good decision but that you have to make the decision itself)
- If they get dirty, they may ask to take a bath.

- Says sorry after something went wrong (but only can do it immediately after it happened)
- This might show up very playfully at first. They may get to a road and throw their hands up like “Oh no! A road! Whatever are we going to do!?”
- Or another playful way is they intentionally say the wrong answer to something, emphasizing that they know they can choose to be wrong
- Exaggerates when something goes well maybe saying, “Woo hoo!” and when things go poorly such as saying, “Oh no!”
- They may purposely pretend to be shocked or scared.
- More reliably understands rules, e.g., they are unlikely to run into the road at any time now, if, say, on the driveway (It’s a relief, really!)
- Follows some directions like “Can you take your pants off?”
- Much more direct in knowing what they want. They might take your hand and lead you directly to the playground down the street.
- This ability to know what they want and how to get it increases greatly after the most intense period at 2 years 7 months, and they become very confident and fast.

Physical Changes

- More deliberate and exact in their fine motor control, e.g., may deliberately place fingers together
- Growth in their legs, arms, and feet
- Whereas before you may have been constantly worried for them when, say, taking a bath, now they are more reliably stable and coordinated.

Toddler Milestone 9 – Creative On-the-Spot Problem Solving

Starts: 2.7.3 [year.month.week]

Most Intense: 2.8.0 until 2.8.1

Ends: 2.8.2

Irritable Period Summary

- Milestones 8 and 9 are so close together as to likely vary and blend for many children as far as when they start.
- Looking at the behavior is, in my experience, the best indicator to know what milestone you are in. Milestone 9 is distinct from Milestone 8. Milestone 8 is marked by defiance all day long. Milestone 9 is marked by confusion and paralysis to solve problems.

Confused and Indecisive

- Becomes confused and indecisive, whereas not long ago they were confident and certain.
- They might ask you to take a walk and then can't make up their mind about which way to go.
- Seemingly paralyzed to answer a question, e.g., what movie would you like
- Refuses to move to solve a very simple problem. For instance, a toy, cup, or food is a few feet away but they won't get it and instead cry for it, as if paralyzed to do it.
- Wants to have the toys other children have. I believe this stems from a feeling of indecisiveness over what is the very best toy. Seeing a child with a different toy makes them feel the other toy is better.
- Shows regret over the solution they originally picked. For instance, they agree that one solution is OK, such as dad can turn the light off. But they have a change of mind (and gets upset) a few seconds or minutes later when they seem to realize what is going on, because they wanted to do it.

Jealous, Demanding

- Jealous if their caregiver gives attention to another child or person. They get jealous even if they are in a different room and you are giving attention to another child.
- Tries to separate primary caregiver from anyone or anything else that has the child's attention or who is not the child. "No! My mommy!"
- Wants you off and on, but now typically wants something specific and then lets you be again
- Very choosy and particular. Out of their entire wardrobe, there might be only two pairs of pants that they will consider wearing.
- They might demand you go to a particular store, then and there. Everything about their attitude suggests there is no not going to the store.
- They might march you over to a particular chair and demand you sit.
- Not as likely to want to be right next to you all day long. However, they hate when you leave the room. If they leave the room on their own, it's fine. If YOU leave, prepare to be attacked.
- You may have trouble doing the simplest of things, like going to the bathroom or going into another room to look something up on a computer.
- Asks to cuddle (some of the behaviors are cute!)

Sleep and Physical Issues

- Refuses naps, screams about being left alone
- Keeps stalling at bedtime to do "just one more" thing or loves to talk late at night
- Directly asks you to come snuggle with them at night, after putting them to bed
- Drools a lot, puts their hand in their mouth

Most Intense

- Jealous, demanding, won't let you freely move, in seeming disbelief of what is going on, paralyzed to act, irritated and sad for seeming no reason, needs extra comfort

New Abilities Summary

Heightened Self and Situational Awareness

- Right away starts with an incredible increase in self-awareness.
- They might all of a sudden be embarrassed to not have clothes on, as if they understand this custom and their deviance from it. (Their last mental awareness dealt with applying correct behavior at a correct time or place.)
- They clearly start to understand when they are near their own house after coming home in a vehicle.
- Has an increase in imagination. Now they are likely to apply their imagination to themselves for a prolonged time. They may pretend they are a crane for days on end and they pick things up like a crane every time they go to do that.
- Their personality reflects this. They act in a pointed way more, putting their whole body into something. They might act shocked or surprised, on purpose, just to do it.
- Or they might build a tower then shoot you a devilish, "Look at what I did!" look.
- Or they throw themselves into play, acting as if they are a sort of "detective" solving a mystery.
- Also starts off with a noticeable increase in attention span, in which they might commit to a craft or other activity for 45 minutes
- Also has better fine motor control, such as they can squeeze a lime

Flexible Solutions to Problems

- Before they could apply one solution to one problem. Now they can choose a solution from many choices.
- You can all but watch them as they see a new problem arise and scan, in their mind, all potential solutions.
- This makes them more adaptable and quicker to apply a solution on the spot.
- If they notice it is cloudy, they might get an umbrella.
- Can match a song to what is going on. They might start singing "Rain, rain, go away," when they see it's raining.
- Color objects properly, e.g., colors Princess Ariel's hair red
- Can match an etiquette to a social situation. When Dad comes home, they might show them Mom, as if introductions are taking place.
- Attempts to solve much more complex problems without help. On their own, on the spot, they might figure out how to put batteries in the remote control
- Can correct themselves on the spot better, e.g., they say something wrong and you say it the right way, they say it then the right way
- They might make a joke in which they play off of two things (as they can pick from several solutions now to apply on the spot now). For instance, they tell you to "count backwards." So you say, "3, 2, 1..." and they say, "No, count BACKWARDS," and they turn you around so you are facing backwards. It's cute and funny.
- They might realize now that they can talk to you over the baby monitor. They pick it up and yell through it, "Mommy! I want to snuggle! Goodbye."
- Advanced-language children might handle more factors needed to read, such that a picture of a cat also relates to the letters "c-a-t."

- Can apply a solution at a particular time over a more extended time. For instance, you said they could do X in the morning and they wake up, realize it is morning, and they can do X.
- However, you can't yet tell them to do Y at a time (e.g., "tell daddy Y when he gets home"). This skill develops soon. For now, it's based on what they personally want to do and a seeming in-the-moment recognition of the time.

Thinks About Problem Solving Itself

- They might initiate a conversation itself about solving problems, such as "What should we do if the baby is crying? I know! How about a bottle!"
- May make up plays about characters who are "great helpers"
- Can go backwards and forwards in solving problems. They might start to build something and realize they made a mistake a few steps back and go back and fix it.
- They talk to themselves as they work through problems, "No, no, that wasn't right."
- Starts to make beginning value judgments like "Butterflies are nice" or "This creation I made is great." Which one is good? Bad? Which way is better?
- Says "I don't know" now. This suggests they recognize a path forward is possible, but they don't know which one at the current moment.

Challenges Themselves to Solve Problems Differently

- Likes to challenge themselves with new problems and to use a different solution than normal.
- For instance, they might purposely walk a different way than normal to see if they can find their way home.
- Depending on the child, they might like complicated problems about 3-D space. They might challenge themselves to fit as many blocks as they can in a particular area, say the bed of a toy dump truck.
- Or takes on a complicated challenge such as putting together a Tangram puzzle (will need your help but may be committed to trying to solve it)
- Builds much more elaborate constructions, such as making Thomas the Train, with a funnel, whistle, and cab, out of blocks
- Or makes very long, elaborate train tracks that sprawl across an entire room and get bigger and different every day
- Has clever solutions to problems, such as building a bridge over something that has a gap or bump (if building with say train tracks or other materials)
- Might play damsel in distress to get others to come help them (it's one way to solve a problem!)

Toddler Milestone 10 – Persistent Imagination and Execution

Starts: 2.8.3 [year.month.week]

Most Intense: A week before 2.9.0 until 2.9.0, getting progressively worse in that time, then starts to dissipate

Ends: 2.9.2

Irritable Period Summary

Clingy

- May be extremely clingy
- Demands primary caregiver be near them often, wants to sit on you often, nestles in really close to you, follows you everywhere, demands your attention by grabbing you often
- They want to be with you, all day, for weeks
- They might choose to be clingy with people other than their primary caregiver now, such as an older sibling.

Bossy, Demanding, Sensitive

- May cry more easily
- Has meltdowns more easily
- Might block people from moving
- Bossy about how routines are executed, e.g., agrees to do something but insists on doing something else first
- Might utterly refuse to agree to something, such as turn off the TV. When you do, they thrash around on the floor.
- They might still insist you sit in a certain place
- They might want their sister's dinner, not theirs (and are very upset when you don't let them.)
- Demands a specific type of food or drink that they haven't had in a year (suggests an upgrade in memory)

Sleep and Physical Issues

- Stalls at bedtime, majorly.
- Wants to stay up insanely late
- May work on their new skills during this time late at night
- Becomes drooly for a day or two
- More prone to illness

Most Intense

- Cries, won't stop an activity without an epic meltdown, may thrash around when you stop them from doing something (say taking their sibling's dinner), drools, highly possessive of primary caregiver, blocks caregiver from moving, may fall asleep at unusually early hours

New Abilities Summary

- Marked by having much more information in their mind more persistently. They can compare things mentally and execute instructions more reliably with this increase in persistence of imagination.
- This one is marked by a more persistent memory and imagination, resulting in an ability to follow instructions and make mental connections. The next one is marked by the beginning ability to *predict* a next event.

Mental Connections

- Can notice a pattern between things even if they aren't immediately in their sight. For instance, while looking at a tomato, they say it looks like an apple.
- Or while looking at the color yellow says it looks like a lemon
- They might put on a silly play with a potato asking if it's a potato or an avocado.
- Notices similarities, say between a model they built and the real thing

More Persistent Memory

- Can remember new information for a longer amount of time.
- If something interesting happened in the morning, say they saw a big boat, they might tell someone about it in the afternoon.
- If you tell them they can have food after doing X, after they do X, they will demand the food.
- Or they want to take a bath, but you tell them they have to wait until their sibling is done with their bath. When their sibling is done, they tell you it's time for their bath.
- If inclined to do so, can count to 100.
- Their growth in imagination might help them read as they remember certain words. They might read one complete sentence out of a familiar book.

Short-Term Instructions

- Follows and commits to verbal instructions better.
- You might tell them, "The safe spot is the sidewalk. Please stand there" and they actually stay there without forgetting they shouldn't.
- Or you show them how to do an exercise and they copy it well.
- Or you are on a ride and the worker says, "If standing up, hold onto the rail." They, although previously sitting, stand up and hold the handrail.
- Whereas before they didn't follow instructions in a class better, now they are the exemplary student.
- On occasion, more accepting about doing something based on the logic of something. For instance, they are agreeable to getting their diaper changed, because you point out that you don't want them to be dirty.
- Said another way, they follow short-term instructions longer.

Persistent Imagination and Creativity

- Impressive increase in imagination. Perhaps their ability to connect more things mentally spurs originality.
- They might make up plays. Maybe their train gets blocked in by blocks. As far as you know, they've never seen this plot line.
- Make up their own, new solutions to problems. Say they want to balance a block and they can't. They put together many blocks on the bottom to build a platform.
- Or perhaps they go and get a straw for you to drink with. For your glass of wine.
- Starts some simple patterning such as lining up objects by color in the pattern green, yellow, blue. May commit to doing this all day, with patterns getting longer and more complex day after day.
- They also remember things for longer as they re-enact them in their pretend play.
- They might re-enact a lot of stuff that they see. They might put on a play with a basic plot after seeing a show or movie, such as Diesel, a character from Thomas the Train, pushing jobi logs off of a bridge.
- Or if they see, say, a train track structure in a book, they go build an identical one for real.

- Or they see, say, a circle puzzle piece and build a train track creation (or perhaps wood block) creation in a circle

Negotiates

- Negotiates with you on their behalf and in a wild way, e.g., “No the bacon only takes one minute to cook!”
- Clever in figuring out how to get their own way, e.g., if they get to listen to music or watch a video after a bath, they ask to take a bath often

Cognitive Empathy

- They (might) have empathy on a more intellectual level.
- Might pass bread out at the dinner table to others
- Might understand that if they like X, it doesn’t mean others do too
- Sensitive to what you think of their artwork or the things they created: is what they just did good?
- Might try to make something enjoyable for their stuffed animal, such as setting them up with a book to read
- If they are fighting over a toy and the other gets really upset that they didn’t get it, they might give it to them, “so they are not sad.”
- This really depends on the child, however. Some children can be told they hurt someone and not care at all.

Toddler Milestone 11 – Short-Term Planning

Starts: 2.9.3 [year.month.week]

Most Intense: 2.10.0 until 2.10.1

Ends: 2.10.1

Irritable Period Summary

Jealous, Possessive

- Clingy
- Falls asleep on you
- Possessive of primary caregiver
- Want all toys and food for themselves
- Might demand you all morning and again in the evening
- You might have trouble separating from them to do important business, like answer a phone call.
- May be whiny

Extreme Confusion Over the Timing or Completion of Things

- In seeming disbelief of what is in front of their eyes about what just happened. They might beg you to put butter on their bread—and you do—but they insist it’s not on there.
- They think someone is turning off a movie or turning down the volume to something, when they aren’t.
- A large time delay in responding to real events. For instance, after their head gets stuck in a shirt, they break out into tears about it—several seconds after they are no longer stuck.
- They understand processes continue on or “go out of sight” now.
- They might misconstrue this at first. When you brush their hair, they might think their hair will pull out or fly out.
- Or you have to throw away a bag of food, as it got old, and they get terribly upset

Bossy and Rigid—Down to Seconds and Inches

- Does not handle change well, even immediate change, such as moving a utensil a few inches
- Asks to do something and is upset if it doesn’t happen within microseconds
- Demands you sit in a very exact spot and not even inches different
- Extreme, major meltdowns, probably in public
- Strong desire to do things themselves, resulting in meltdowns if they can’t accomplish something
- Might try to put lipstick on and it ends up all over the bottom of their face
- Might hit you in the head with a toy they are frustrated with
- Bossy to others about their role as they solve a problem they are working on
- May use you as a human “tool,” such as making your hand move their toys for them
- Acts as if they are the driver of the car, “Turn! Turn!”
- Meltdowns can last a looong time now, 30+ minutes

Sleep and Physical Issues

- Want to stay up late
- Falls asleep at weird times
- Might talk in their sleep, such as repeating letter sounds they know

- Uncoordinated and clumsy, may drop glass cups, spill liquids while pouring them, seems to love to grab knives by the blade, and such

Most Intense

- One or more terrible meltdowns where they seem confused and in disbelief of what is happening and/or where they boss you around a lot. This one can be through the roof tiresome with some children.

New Abilities Summary

- In the last one, they started to understand that x things happen at y time. This ability strengthens at this one. They are very aware of all plans being made and, now, where they want to be in those plans.

Very Fluid at Understanding Short-Term Future Plans

- Fully understands short-term future plans and makes their desired role in those plans known.
- Understands something like “We can’t have candy now,” because it’s not a convenient time or place. But, on their own, when it is a more appropriate time to have candy (an hour later and after doing a bunch of stuff), they ask about it.
- They might ask about what is happening next.
- Can be told something like “Show Dad this picture when Dad gets home,” and they remember
- Can be involved in planning activities, e.g., bedtime routine
- They very easily handle things up to an hour and pretty well up to a day.
- Similarly understands the short term past. They (might) remember the events of the day and identify them as happening “that day.” But this is typically only if you were just talking about those things with them.

Plans Short-Term Events, Decides How Things Should Go

- Might make a little date with you like “Mommy, come over here and let’s take a nap”
- Very opinionated on how things should go. They are more “rules” oriented. They might admonish others “no taking!”
- May lecture you to “be careful” with them or others

Tries to Act in a Correct Way In-The-Moment

- Much more fluid in their movement. They are unlikely to get as seeming lost in what they are doing as in last milestones. They really change dramatically at this one; they are losing their “babyiness” big time.
- Clearly deep in thought while in mid-action, such as when running around and contemplating their next move
- Tries to do what is right while moving, such as being very careful not to spill a drink.
- They can be told, “I don’t like when you hit me here because it hurts,” and they understand and refrain from hitting.
- Better understands back and forth banter
- Might play cheeky little games where they resist but they know if you are clever there is little point in resisting
- Loves to explore places and know their way around
- Understands that red means “stop” and green means “go”
- More often reliably cooperative if you explain something like “You’re dirty and need a bath”
- Very forthcoming with saying “Thank you” and “You’re Welcome”

- Takes strong initiative to help other children, such as if another child fell off a bike. They stick with the whole thing, all the way until the child is back up and on the bike again. It's extremely endearing.
- Or while on a walk, they always want to help. When your stroller gets stuck, "Ok, Mommy, I'll help you!" As you are trying to get up a hill, "Ok, Mommy, I'll do it!"

Very Exaggerated in their Likes and Dislikes

- States their strong likes and dislikes
- Might very bossy about what rules are to be followed when around them or how you are to treat them
- States what a favorite thing of theirs is
- Likes to exaggerate when things "GROSSSSSS."
- Loves messy/sensory play
- Love to show you gross things in their mouth, such as partially chewed food
- They get a big kick out of your reaction to smells

Toddler Milestone 12 – Imaginative Predictions

Starts: 2.10.2 [year.month.week]

Most Intense: With a bang at 2.11.0

Ends: 2.11.2

Note: Irritating behavior starting at 2.11.3 is the first Three Year Old Milestone

Irritable Period Summary

- There may be a noticeable head shape change which starts this one.

Clingy

- Starts out sweet and subtle at first
- Wants to sit and cuddle
- Right on you as you exercise or sit
- Attached to your leg
- You might see a few exceptionally sunny days at the beginning, which are the especially sunny times from the last milestone. (They are hard to separate as they overlap.)

Demanding

- Escalates about a week in, to a child who is more demanding
- Whiny
- Meltdowns
- Wants you all day
- Stall at bedtime
- At bedtime, they might say they have to go potty or say they are hungry. But they don't eat when you get them food.
- Won't let you leave at bedtime, often up until midnight

No Sense of How Far Away Things Are or How Long Things Take

- They have no sense of how far away things are. They might try to grab the moon.
- This is cute and innocent. It might, however, cause problems when they try to pour a drink and it spills all over.
- Or they put lipstick all over the bottom of their mouth
- If you ask them their sad part of the day, they might answer with something that happened weeks ago.

Disoriented, Confused

- More towards the intense period, they become disoriented and confused.
- They may have just had a toy, but they think you put it away. They keep asking you to get it, even though it is already out, and they should know it's out.
- They might spill a drink or bite into juicy food, creating a mess, then run around, oblivious to the mess, and take a spill.
- Easily falls off of chairs

In Everything, Bossy

- Wants to be "in" everything, such as medicine and other items that they shouldn't be in
- You might have trouble convincing them they can't have diaper paste or prescription medicine.

- You might not be able to move without bumping into them.
- The desire to do everything and make messes can be over-the-top frustrating with some children.
- Want to “help” do everything
- Won’t accept “No” as an answer
- Becomes a back-seat driver, dictating what street they want you to go down

Most Intense

- This one hits like a truck. The intense part starts off right away potentially with spills, accidents, clumsiness, clinginess, confusion and/or whining. They also might demand to stay up really late. However, it noticeably dissipates pretty quickly.

New Abilities Summary

- They’ve been getting good at seeing how things work and what plans are being made. Now they take their hand at predicting what might happen next. It’s wild and inaccurate at first.

Imaginative Predictions

- They are able to predict what next event happens or make a logical guess about what caused something, but in a highly imaginative way.
- This starts right at the beginning of this milestone and follows a clear head shape change.
- They wonder if the person jiggling the door know “is a monster!!!!”
- Their stuffed animals might now be “scared of ghosts.”
- They might make a guess of what will happen next like “Daddy will be back soon.”
- Asks “did you mean?” as they project thoughts about what wasn’t said, but what might have been said
- May understand that food goes into your belly (where you can’t see it)
- May love mystery stories (“who done it?” stories) already
- Might love to initiate and Hide and Seek, as the seeker. They are good at guessing where you are now.

Predictive Solutions

- They like to openly talk about what solutions match what problems. They think of the problem, talk about it, and pick a good tool or action. The problems are not just things happening right now but might happen.
- They might pick up the two utensils at dinner and say, “Fork or spoon? Which one should I choose?”
- They might like to play around with picking the wrong tool for a job, e.g., brushes your hair with a book.
- They might love giving you turn by turn directions to get to the grocery store.
- They might demand you go a different way than usual when driving in your car.
- They may love baking cookies or making a smoothie and seeing how the individual steps do lead to cookies or a smoothie.
- They are more trusting that, say, at a grocery store, you indeed put your stuff on the conveyor belt and pay for them. As such, they are willing to give up a toy and wait for this process to unfold, as they know the stuff will be handed back to them.
- They might match their understanding of what is going on to what you do. When arriving at a restaurant, they are “so excited to eat!” When they have a blanket on, they are “so excited to be warm!” They might state this in weird ways, but when you probe them, all they are doing is matching the theoretical problem to the solution.

- They come up with solutions outside of the paradigm entirely. If you ask them if they made the right or wrong choice, they might smile, “Um ... I made the HAPPY choice!”
- They might like a book in which you pick the right tool for a job. They might like “Are You My Mother?” Which of these animals is the bird’s mother?

Flexible and Creative in Their Imagination

- They are more flexible and creative in their imaginative play.
- For instance, they put balls on a DUPLO truck and says they are wheels.
- They might make up things in their free play like a toy chest needs a “key” to be opened.
- Their stuffed animals may now also “play with toys.”
- Might love to put on plays that they act in, often simple stories like *The Gingerbread Man*. They may be able to put the entire story on themselves.

More Mental Connections, Often Across Time

- Recalls past events and makes connections
- For instance, a character in a book rescued someone just like their dad rescued them in a pool (which happened in the past)
- They sort their toys at one level of abstraction higher. They might line up all “race cars” (ready to race) and all “spectators” (non-race cars like tow trucks and police cars) on the side (ready to watch). All of these things have “x” in common and these others have “y.”
- Might notice that a toy train rolled over a carpet and then left some marks
- Reminds you of something you promised earlier

Emotional Control

- They are much more willing to adhere to requests, even if against their own desire at the time, e.g., please don’t get into that pool you are filling up with water.
- They no longer chase you out of the house if you leave. If they walk you to the door, it’s just because they wanted to say bye.
- Doesn’t just understand but is fully committed to following principles, e.g., “Green means Go” or take their shoes off when you get in the house
- Better emotional control, can collect themselves after they fall
- Noticeable better control over their body, don’t fall as much
- Can easily now say “I’m sorry” and “Thank you” even when they are feeling bashful or uneasy.
- Accepting of “No” as an answer
- Better at playing cooperative games where players take turns

Interested in Small Things

- Interested in small details, such as where tiny mice are in their favorite story
- Or that the smallest speck of dirt from a spill needs cleaned up

Manipulates Their Eyes

- They might like to squint their eyes and points to things
- They might close one eye such that the other can focus on something further away.
- Or maybe likes to look at things through, such as a cardboard tube
- Or they purposely try to make their eyes be a certain way, such as copying your eyes as you pose for a selfie

Three Year Old Milestone 1A—Speculation and Mental Sorting

Starts: 2.11.3

Most Intense: Grows in intensity over a few days

Ends: 3.0.0

Irritable Period Summary

- Wants to be picked up or carried often, but usually only for a brief amount of time
- Refuses to do chores they previously did, such as put their cup on the sink
- Irritable
- Might be very forceful in getting something they want, such as a particular toy, “No, [person’s name]! I want the blue one.”
- Confusion: might grab you, pull you, get confused, and walk in circles
- May have nightmares at night
- Doesn’t want to go to bed
- High fear of abandonment if primary caregiver leaves unexpectedly

Most Intense

- Wants to be held occasionally, irritable, demanding of your time

New Abilities Summary

- They make better educated guesses about what is going on and sort things into mental sequences.

Makes Educated Guesses (Speculation)

- At previous ages, they could draw conclusions from limited proof such as understanding that Dad is home when the garage door opens. Now they make yet more conclusions and educated guesses about what is going on.
- When they see clouds, they might say, “A storm is coming!” Or if Daddy just walked in, they say, “I can smell Daddy!” Or if you are about to see some swans at a park, they say, “Oh, we could feed them!” Or they might see a cake and say it’s a “party,” as opposed to a mere cake. These all make a next step in the mental guess of what is going on.
- With just a little bit of information about something, they can draw a conclusion. So, if they see a hat with a skull and crossbones, they might put it on and say “Arr.” Because they’re a pirate.
- More aware that you are making a “pizza!” as opposed to just putting pepperoni on dough
- They solve jigsaw puzzles with more reasoning (with an educated guess) instead of trial and error. They actively look for, say, the piece with the funnel to go on top of the train they just put together.
- Evaluates what size block fits into a slot, based on their visual acumen, and less on trial and error
- Can follow along with instructions in picture format with some assistance. You might lay out LEGO pieces on the instruction that comes with them, and they can then assemble them by themselves.
- Can better read or identify the last letter in a word. Before, they may have confused say “mat” and “map.” Now they differentiate them. Or perhaps, completely on their own, while you are sounding out words with them, they identify the “g” in “frog.” (Please DO NOT compare your child’s reading skills to this list. Some children just prefer to read at later ages.)
- Interested in where things “disappear” to, such as where the sun goes at nighttime, where the sun goes as you drive around in the van, or where the garbage goes after it is picked up.
- If they hear funny sounds, like ice shifting in the freezer, they really want to know what is going on.

- May want to make the room dark. Perhaps so they can hear the sounds, etc., and make guesses about what is going on.
- They anticipate better how others might feel, “I’m so excited for him!” “I am so scared for him!”
- May love mystery stories such as *The Great Pie Robbery* by Richard Scarry. A mystery is a book in which you have to think about “who done it,” i.e., an educated guess.
- In that they grow in making educative (intuitive) guesses and their hearing/smell grows, it’s as if their instincts and intuition themselves are growing.

Mental Sorting

- May love to put printed or moveable numbers or letters in numerical or alphabetical order
- Sorts loose items into logical patterns, such as in rows of one color and then another, e.g., sorts Magnet toys or Connect 4 discs in patterns.
- May want to create something beautiful or functional, like flowers arranged in a vase or a tunnel as they play with trains
- Understands social hierarchies and relationships (moms, dads, grandparents, uncles, etc.).
- Identifies relationships among people, e.g., one character loves a particular dog and another loves a different animal.
- Notices patterns in clouds
- Can follow patterns (such as from a pattern to a puzzle) to make things and can make up their own free style patterns. Can put two loose triangles together to make a square.
- Spontaneous and strong interest in adding objects

Finds Patterns in Related Events

- Notices similarities about patterns of things not in sight. “Dad saving me from drowning is just like [from a story] the truck that saved the other truck in the mud.”
- They can recall past things and do some mental or mathematical sorting with it. For instance, they can remember they saw something with a pattern of white, white, red, and white and then count that there were thus four things. It’s that they can do it from memory that’s impressive.
- This is indeed “recollection” and bleeds into the next milestone, “Recollection.” Perhaps this ability to sort things mentally helps them with such recollection.
- They can recall the significance of numbers and do things mentally with it, such as recognizing that “8 is greater than 5,” of which they can reliably answer correctly (if math at this age is their thing, which it might not be).
- Accurately recreates something from “real life” that they saw while out and remembered. For instance, puts on a lengthier, more detailed play based on a movie or a party they were at, constructs a familiar place out of train tracks/wood blocks (maybe a very specific tunnel), or draw a crude drawing of a real place (maybe a house or restaurant). It is of things you do routinely or made a big impression on them.

Pretending and Joking

- In their twos, if they were dressed up as a character, they thought they were that character. Now they understand now that if they are dressed up as a character, they are not the character but simply dressed up.
- They similarly playfully admit they are “just joking” now. Mostly they understand that it’s they who or pretending or joking, not as much that others are.
- Interesting note about their perspective: if you put two stuffed animals facing each other and ask if A can see B and then turn them such that they are NOT facing each other and ask if A can see B, they

are apt to get the answers wrong. They don't quite understand yet that something has to be facing something to see it. This comes a few milestones from now.

Applies Social Principles at the Appropriate Time

- Applies fair rules to govern relationships, e.g., lets their sibling take turns with them. What one course of action going forward is right?
- In the late twos, they picked the right tool for the job. They picked a feather duster, not a hammer, to clean a dirty area. Now they see a cabinet is dirty and go get the duster
- Initiates ideal behavior, such as cleaning something that is dirty without being asked to
- Or, on their own, they say "Bye, friends!" when leaving somewhere, as they recognize the social principle, specifically in a situation where they previously did not do this.
- They MIGHT put their own shoes on or change their own clothes in the morning. Or they might demand you do it.
- May learn how to use social principles to their advantage, such as by lying.
- More consistently reasonable about *in-the-moment* things. For instance, they see they are in the way of something that you need and move out of the way.
- Or they take a bath because they recognize they are dirty.
- Being persuaded by logic like this right now pertains only to one step forward, such that there aren't any competing ways of doing things. They will not agree to break their bedtime routine, for instance.

Longer Attention Span

- Noticeably longer attention span, stays with something for an hour or longer
- Much longer imaginative and creative play (several hours)

Dramatic Increase in Gross Motor and Other Skills

- Better gross motor skill, especially with their legs and feet e.g., better at kicking a soccer ball or run noticeably faster
- Better at combining gross motor and fine motor skills, such as hitting a ball with a small club or brush
- Notices smells more, might express displeasure about the smells
- Notices sounds more and may love to sing and dance

Three Year Old Milestone 1B—Recollection

Starts: 3.0.1

Most Intense: 3.0.2 until 3.0.3

Ends: 3.0.3 plus a few days

Irritable Period Summary

- Depends on the temperament of the child and how they channel their creativity and energy. They may be mellow—or they may be whiny, bossy, or demanding of your time.

Bossy, Possessive, Rigid, Touchy

- Wants their own way
- Mad if you take something from them, such as your own phone
- They want to be the one to do things and for as long as they want. They might want to give you more and more vitamins, when you only want one. They do not yet have a reliable sense of “stop.”
- Incredibly pick/bossy about how things should be done: who can get them milk at all, then who is allowed to put the lid on, etc.
- May be highly sensitive when someone does something rather minor to them, say hits them with a balloon
- Grumpy at certain parts of the day but not others, e.g., morning or night
- Their bossiness, if they are bossy, is more about in-the-moment things and directed inwards. It is over thing that affect them and wanting them to go a certain way.
- In the next milestones, their bossiness becomes directed more outwards. It becomes much more about making sure people follow the “rules.”

Doesn't Handle Disappointment Well

- As it gets more intense, they want things done/resolved immediately (“now!”). These meltdowns can be resolved easily if you can guess what they want—but that is sometimes difficult.
- You might play a game with them and have no control over what happens next. For instance, on a tablet, a type of something comes up to be counted and they specifically want to see one thing, say peppermints, but something else keeps coming up. They are distraught they can't control this. They might look wildly confused about it (though, in fairness, tablets are artificial and wildly confusing to children designed for a slower moving, more reliable world).
- However, similarly, doesn't handle the disappoint well if, say, a doctor's appointment is cancelled.
- Or they get really upset if you throw away old food in front of them.
- I believe this inability to handle disappointment is because they can make educated guesses about what is going to happen, such that they fully anticipate something like a doctor's appointment. But they don't have flexibility yet in handling it if it doesn't happen. This new awareness comes soon—as a shock, of course.

Most Intense

- They don't handle disappointment well and this may result in meltdowns. They may look like they are in utter disbelief of what is going on. Or they might just demand your time quite a bit.

New Abilities Summary

- Recollection: they can remember things that happened in the past day with better detail and about the meaning and nuances of what happened.
- If you imagine their perceptual awareness as if they are watching a live play, in the toddler years, up until about now, they can understand everything about the stage of the play, the background. They

noticed things across time that were persistent: their routines, people, events that happened from a long time ago that continue to burn in their mind. Now they see the actors on that stage, who move around more fluidly.

Strong Recollection

- A better recollection, specifically to about one day in the past
- When asked what their happy part of the day was, they will now answer with something that did happen that day. Before their answer was always the same: something that happened two months ago, e.g., they were sad on a train ride once. However, the answer they now give is usually about something you *just* talked about.
- Very perceptive at not just recalling what happened in the past day but also of the emotions and meaning of things that happened, e.g., who was grumpy and why in the past, remembers exact conversations
- These are great clues to your child's core personality and how they perceive the world.
- A feelings-oriented child may be perceptive about the quirky things that define other's personalities, e.g., distinctive things their mom or dad say or when their dad says an inadvertent swear word (whoops!).
- A thinking-oriented child may become more perceptive and place emphasis on mechanical things, "This tunnel will protect us from the rain!"
- More capable of finding a specific object in another room. Please find the red toy, bring me back four blocks, etc. They can remember their task longer as they go do it.
- Interested in finding out if something is true or not, e.g., someone says the baby is sleeping—is he really? In the last milestones they thought about where things "disappeared" to. Now they are going and finding out.
- If you present a new story to them, they can understand it and retell it, over and over, pretty well.
- Able to recall some dreams such as "I dreamed about pepperoni pizza."
- Might let out what they are thinking about. After they mutter and mutter, clearly working something out, they might burst out, "STEAMING DINOSAURS!" And laugh uproariously. Because steaming dinosaurs are funny.
- Has clear thoughts in their head as they think about or work through something, which they do for longer periods of time. You might ask them about what they are thinking about. The answers are fun.
- When talking about mental ideas, they insist that these ideas be linked. For instance, if your sad part was falling off of a bike that day, your happy part must have been riding the bike. They might get upset if you say anything that doesn't link things like this, as if it's not even a possibility.

Three Year Old Milestone 2—Deliberate Role Playing and Planning

Starts: 3.1.0, or a few days shy

Most Intense: Varies among children, lasting about a week sometime between 3.1.0 and 3.1.2

Ends: 3.1.2

Irritable Period Summary

Rules Enforcer

- They are still bossy and rude, but their bossiness and rudeness develops more into making sure everyone follows the “rules.”
- Rude to others, e.g., tells them to “Get out” or “Go away.”
- Might chase children away from places they aren’t supposed to be, such as mom’s bed.
- Orders other kids not to fight

Possessive

- Possessive of toys or things that are “theirs”
- Whiny

A Sense That Things Float Around, Don’t Stop, or Magically Happen

- They think they can magically bring large things to themselves, such as an entire room in the house.
- They are sincerely worried that things keep going forever, such as the van will run into something on the side of the road or someone running towards them will never stop.
- Given their worry about things going forever, they may get overwhelmed in a situation where things move a lot, such as older kids playing basketball in a gym.
- Blames another child for something the other child didn’t do. Say the three year old built a tall tower and got it too tall and fell over. They blame another child for this. This may happen because things “float” around senselessly in their mind right now.
- Sees things that aren’t there as they make up stories in their mind, like there are sharks in the floor or dogs on the ceiling
- Puts their hands on their eyes as if they are scared to see what they are seeing
- The stories they make up in their mind, as they just sit and think, are longer.

Fear of Abandonment

- Doesn’t want to leave primary caregiver (fear of abandonment)
- May become scared of any other adult that is not the primary caregiver

Sleep and Physical Issues

- Falls asleep at weird times of the day
- May wake up at night upset
- Might start chewing or smacking their lips, rocking hard on a non-rocking chair, or other activities suggesting they are anxious
- Parents seem to see this on and off for about two months in the early threes. It should dissipate eventually.

Most Intense

- Possessive, rude, wants a particular caregiver. This one in addition is marked more by wanting others to follow the rules: stop fighting, get off mommy’s bed.

New Abilities Summary

- Role playing: they deliberately choose various “roles” to play, e.g., pretends to be a bear, a particular character, etc.
- They can be involved in short-term planning, such as making a grocery list.
- As is typical of most milestones, they both go in and out: they apply chosen ways of being to themselves (role play) and make more deliberate choices in their outward reality (short-term planning).

Role Playing

- In the last milestones, they showed they really understand the deeper significance of characters, e.g., a particular car isn’t just a car—it’s a race car—or someone is someone else’s mother, and these things matter. Now it’s as if they want to try on these roles for themselves.
- They are much more *deliberate* in which one role they pick. Whereas before in their mid-twos, they pretended to be whomever was fun and right in front of them.
- They might say they are a particular character from a favorite story and carry out an elaborate imaginative play as that character.
- May pretend they are a particular animal and starts to walk like that animal, e.g., a frog or bear
- May use their personal charm to get their way, e.g., may act like a cute puppy
- May walk around like they are “the man”
- Might tell you that you are “cute”
- May want to play around with their physical looks or outfits, e.g., may want to cut their hair to look like their brother. They are likely to want to dress up as the person they admire the most.
- May love puppet shows

Short-Term Planning

- They are starting to notice how things keep moving better. They are noticing how things can keep going and which direction they can take. They can “pivot” in their thinking.
- Orders you to follow the rules, e.g. stop at a Stop sign. They sincerely seem to think that things go to total anarchy unless they insert themselves to follow such rules. Truly it shows how wild imaginations spur fear, an emotional driver, to try out their new skills.
- They can be persuaded by the logic of something now, even if it defies a normal routine. This was unheard of before. For instance, they may indeed usually have their diaper changed at night. But it’s not dirty. So, we don’t have to change it. Specifically, this is that they can be persuaded to do something else *despite* the normal routine.
- Better able to understand the idea of “one more fun thing” and then we are doing something. But at this milestone, it needs to be specific. Like “dump the dirt from the toy dump truck one more time and then we are leaving.” It cannot be left open ended; they won’t pick a “fun thing” on their own.
- Can understand, “If you clean your room, you’ll get a lollipop.”
- Can be involved in simple planning such as putting items on a grocery list. Or they ask you to put something on the grocery list, as they know you are going. You’re out of milk, after all.
- They might make up an impromptu play of something that just happened. You ask them to go to bed. They have two figurines, one wants to go to bed and the other doesn’t. The one who doesn’t want to go to bed valiantly knocks over the one who does.
- They might read a beginner book of about 4 pages with a few words on each page. This is only if language is their thing at this age.
- Very polite. May ask permission before doing anything (the opposite of rude)

- That they can actually plan different courses of action and defy normal routines sets them up greatly for the next milestone in which they become highly unconventional in how principles and procedures can be applied, trying their hand at inventive new solutions—and how.
- In this one, they realize plans can go one of a few ways, based on the relevant information of the situation. They can make some short-term plans. That they are willing to “change directions,” to pivot, marks this milestone.

Three Year Old Milestone 3A—Unconventional Application of Principles

Starts: Hits like a Mack Truck somewhere between 3.1.2 and 3.1.4

Most Intense: The beginning is intense and throughout.

Ends: Shy of 3.2.0 but bleeds into next one

Irritable Period Summary

- This hits like a Mack Truck somewhere between 3.1.2 and 3.1.4. They might become distraught, wildly confused, defiant, or insert themselves unexpectedly into something. Before this, they might be very snuggly, fall asleep more often, or show other mild behaviors.
- These milestones over the next few weeks come rapidly and are hard to pin down.

Tries Unconventional Ways of Doing Things

- This one is very much marked by a child that does things in unconventional ways and absolutely insists on doing things in this new, unconventional way.
- They might do something like insist on putting on their own pants, but they do it purposely wrong by putting both legs in one pant leg. They see if they can walk like this.
- They might have a meltdown as they try to do something the right way but can't, such as wash their feet, but they have difficulty putting soap on their feet, which is harder to do than put soap on their hands.
- They might insert themselves in an attempt to help, but it might not go well. They might push their sibling in their carseat off of a table—which can be terrible. They sincerely thought they were helping get her into the van.

Hates When Others Do Things Unfamiliar to Them

- Very upset when a previously established rule they knew to be true is broken, such as you take longer than normal to start going after stopping at a Stop sign.
- Upset if someone does something in a way that is unfamiliar to them, such as cleans a toilet bowl differently than they saw it done before
- Asks "Why?" a lot, especially when people or characters behave in an odd way

Belligerent—Until They're Not

- Very defiant in obeying requests. But when they decide to be cooperative, after being defiant, they are fully cooperative. It's as if it needs to be done on their timeline. You may as well pad some extra time to get out the door.
- Demanding that you do things in a particular way, e.g., come upstairs right now or hold something in a particular hand

Conflicts and Sensitivity

- Shows intentional spite. They may get angry that someone hurt them, pause to think, then purposely act out by throwing something of the other child's.
- Gives deliberate, playful insults to others, e.g., the baby is "Poopies." They laugh a bit nervously at themselves, because they know this might be wrong. They are applying new ways of doing things. They are nervous about which one is right. This is the very first subtle sign that they feel authentic, self-initiated guilt (an evaluation of themselves and their action).
- They might cry in a way that it seems like the world isn't fair to them.
- May be very sensitive and easily have meltdowns
- Might take a serious spill after tripping. They sincerely seem confused.

Dreams

- Very intense dreams where they laugh a lot or act out something (like flying)
- Dreams where they seem to recite entire movies or TV shows in their sleep

Most Intense

- Does unexpected and unconventional things, may cry in a way that they feel the world is unfair to them, tries to do things they can't quite do but they still persist at them, confused and upset when people do something the "wrong" way, demands you come to them

New Abilities Summary

- Marked by a strong insistence to do things in unconventional ways
- It is also marked by a greater self-awareness: they realize they are cute; they apologize more for their own behavior.
- They made flexible choices in the last milestone. Now they evaluate them—sometimes inducing shame even.
- A better merging of fantasy play to the current reality of what is going on

Unconventional and Flexible Ideas, Applied

- Tries out unconventional things for the sake of it.
- This reveals your child's personality greatly. What boundary are they pushing?
- Are they asking to "fly" in the air in a way such that you are stunned by how much danger they are willing to take on?
- Are they trying to wash their hands AND feet, because they are very clean and organized?
- Are they trying to help get their siblings out the door because they are so very responsible over other people?
- Take a picture of whatever it is, no matter how troublesome it is. This is a coming of three year old age thing.
- Might get around the rules. If you say, "no pushing," they kick. It's a little bit funny.
- Can do routines out of order or backwards
- Can count backwards; not because they, for instance, memorized the countdown before a space rocket launch, but because they can count forwards and now they can count backwards

Deliberate and Responsible in How They Handle Situations

- Better at conflict resolution in which something happens and instead of getting immediately mad, they compose themselves and put together a reasonable way to handle something.
- For instance, they state their feelings in a diplomatic way, "Mommy, I'm sad you destroyed my creation." (You thought they were done!)
- Or they confront their aggressive sibling by saying, politely, "No hitting!"
- Or maybe after an intense conflict with a sibling, they say afterwards, "Don't hit me. And sorry I yelled!"
- Generously helps others and shares their food.

Less Rote in Situations and Follows Instructions More Independently

- Less rote and more involved in social interactions, e.g., may say "thank you for noticing" after you tell them "good job," which is not something that they've ever said before or that they've been exposed to (that you know of)
- They might love that they know to say "cheese!" when a camera is aimed at them. They could say cheese before; it's that they enjoy knowing that they know to do it now.

- They similarly love to be part of certain rituals, such as saying “cheers!” before drinking or giving good night kisses.
- Loves to make decisions about how to act, such as knowing which bathroom to pick (Men or Women). A truly important decision indeed.
- Much more confident in executing routines, such as “Put your backpack in the bin and come join the class” and they do the routine without any help
- May understand more complex road signs and what they mean, e.g., curvy roads ahead

Evaluates Their Own Solutions

- They evaluate if a solution that they come up with is good or bad. For instance, if a solution they thought up to prevent their younger sibling from getting out of an area worked or not.
- Announces they have a “great idea!” of how to solve things, e.g., they get you scissors to help open a package you were fighting with
- Might keep trying new things to get a desired outcome, such as making you laugh

Fantasy and Imaginative Play Applies to Current Situation Better

- This likely blends from the last milestone and into the next one, but they become more “practical” in their fantasy play. In the last one, their fantasy play became much more deliberate, but it was still just for fun. They pretended to be a bear just because it was fun. Now, it’s more applicable to what is going on in the current situation, yet still quite cheeky.
- For instance, they pretend to put magic binoculars on to show you they found a missing toy.
- If you hand them a Hubble Telescope and a globe, they might know it takes pictures of outer space and pretend to do this.
- Perhaps cheekily pretends to “low crawl” up to where you are sitting and eating—so they can steal your food
- They might sing songs constantly, as if they are the background music in a movie, setting the mood about what’s going on. When it rains, they sing “Rain, rain, go away.” As they are cleaning, they might start singing like they are the mice in *Cinderella* helping her clean, “We can do it!” When they drop their dad off at work, they may even tailor the song, e.g., “Daddy finger, daddy finger, where are you? *At work, at work*, how do you do?”

Object Constancy of Character and Self

- Much greater self-awareness. They show they are aware they are cute, for instance.
- They may understand more nuances about the moral of a story. They can understand that although people accuse her of being bad, Cinderella herself is not bad.
- They might still be picking their lips or asking you to rub their head. It’s as if they are amazed they actually exist and [have lips, a head, whatever it is they are rubbing].

Three Year Old Milestone 3B—Persistent (if Rigid) Application of Principles

Starts: 3.2.0

Most Intense: Intense for a few days towards the beginning.

Ends: 3.2.2

Irritable Period Summary

A “Rules Enforcer” or Comforter

- Meltdowns when things don’t go the way they think they “should” be done
- Wants other children to follow the “rules” and gets mad when they don’t. For instance, if another child doesn’t have their seatbelt buckled in a cart at the grocery store.
- Enforcer of the rules but breaks those very rules in enforcing them, such as yells at others to “be quiet” while being loud
- Or perhaps opposite of being rude and aggressive, they enforce what is “right” by taking on the role of comforter. They may go around taking care of “sick” stuffed animals.

Most Intense

- Gets sad or cries easily, doesn’t want you to leave them, demanding of your time, demands others follow the “rules”

New Abilities Summary

- This one is marked by an insistence on persistently applying abstract knowledge or principles to real life situations. They get more aggressive and serious about it at this one.

Insists on the Abstract Matching the Current Situation

- The abstract idea absolutely has to match the current reality now. If you make a “Three waffle sandwich,” it now must have three waffles.
- They use symbolic objects the correct way at all times. If they see a toy crown, they are guaranteed to try to put it on your head.
- That they expect persistent application of rules explains why they might get so upset during the irritable period when their brother isn’t buckled properly in a grocery cart

Wants to Make an Ideal the Reality

- The abstract MUST match the reality starting at this one. They are thus willing to work towards that.
- From my notes about my first, “What I have noticed is a genuine desire to do what is right. If I ask him to do something, he is focused on it, clearly trying to work towards the end of what I asked him to do, even if difficult.”
- A great activity now is to ask them to set up an activity for another child, such as gathering up objects that are the shape of a cylinder so their baby sister can explore this sensory box. They will persist at this and find objects you yourself never thought of.
- They may do this on their own, anyway, such as setting up a “bedroom” or “play area” for their sibling.
- Comforts other people on their own initiative; may go around giving everyone a drink, takes care of their “sick” stuffed animals.
- Or they might comfort their baby sister, “I know, baby, I know.”
- Or they might try to make people laugh to cheer them up.

- They might take a more aggressive role in conflict resolution. They might adorably “karate chop” someone who won’t stop fighting someone else. Or they might be bossy. Every child is different.
- They are very likely to apologize quickly upon realizing they hurt someone.
- When they learn that some others are less fortunate, say that some people are illiterate, they are aghast. On their own, they offer, “I know! We can teach them how to read!” This is even if they personally don’t know how to read.
- They may try to arrange things the way they want them. They might demand you put on a dress “so you can be beautiful.” Or they might want to cut your nails.
- Won’t let you help them with things, such as putting on their seatbelt
- They can do more physical things that require a bit more persistence and even trust in one’s own body. They might have an easier time floating in the water, riding a tricycle, or doing a somersault.

Can Use Abstract Information and Apply It

- Understands how to play a card or board game such as *Richard Scarry’s Busytown*
- May be able to read a map such as to know where they are going
- Willingly submits to how things are meant to be done, even if it goes against what they might think is fun
- For instance, they tear apart a gingerbread house to eat it after it’s made, as this was the purpose of building it (whereas before they wouldn’t have wanted to destroy their creation).
- Obeys requests better, such as “no hitting”

Three Year Old Milestone 4—Intentional Imaging

Starts: 3.2.3

Most Intense: 3.2.3 until 3.2.4

Ends: Shy of 3.3.0

Irritable Period Summary

Sleep Disturbances and Nightmares

- May fall asleep during the day at random times
- Stalls at bedtime (bedtime may be up to 2 hours) or simply stays up late
- Fear of bad guys or monsters at night. May wonder if monsters are in their closet.
- May have nightmares of something they saw and think it's there in their room, such as they saw a bad guy kidnap a child in a movie.
- Screaming at night or waking up distraught
- Or just waking up if you cosleep and are there to immediately comfort them
- Can describe the dreams they had vividly
- Please avoid scary movies at this one (and before). They have or are soon to have a very vivid, persistent memory. They easily “see the unseen” and remember these scary images.

“Lies”

- Purposely gives the wrong answer or thing, e.g., asks you what of two options you want and gives you the opposite of what you asked for
- Likes to tell “lies” about what happens in a story, making up new plots for the fun of it, such as Te Fiti (in *Moana*) turns into Elsa (as opposed to Te Ka).

Lost in Their Thoughts

- Stares into space for a noticeably long time
- Wants to linger on something and watch it intently: maybe something at a store, a large water fountain, or how milk swirls on a lid of a cup

Needs to See Things

- Doesn't like when they can't see something, such as they are in the car and something is blocking their view
- Hates that things pass them by too quickly when driving in a vehicle
- May be overwhelmed by something overly fantastical, such as a person dressed up as a character

Conflicts

- Conflicts with other children and now they are over what rule itself should apply, e.g., they insist that a toy should be “shared” while another sibling tells them “no taking”

Defiant

- This really depends on the child's temperament.
- Sad for seeming no reason, rude demands, whiny, clingy, won't eat
- May be defiant over many things such as getting in the bath, putting shoes on, or going to bed.
- Fickle about food, asks for food then doesn't eat it; doesn't eat, only drinks

Most Intense

- Possible major conflicts but this time over what rule itself should apply. Or maybe they just sleep a lot. However, this one is definitively marked by nightmares.

New Abilities Summary

- Intentional Imaging: They can point to nothing at all and say it's something
- I believe this intentional imaging, an ability to imagine what is not there, aids in many other skills. This includes short term memory, making up new plot twists to stories, and identifying mismatches between theory and reality. Hence, I centered the milestone around it.
- Their short-term memory, in which they remember new information presented on the spot and on their own, gets longer, to about one day.

Intentional Imaging: Conjures Up Images of Things When Nothing is There

- Intentional Imaging: they can point to nothing at all and say it's something.
- In the plays they make up, they imagine things that aren't there. Before, if they imagined a "rockslide," something acted as the rocks, such as blocks. Now they can point to nothing and say it is a "rockslide."
- Makes up stories about things that are not visible, such as they hand you nothing and says it's a particular character

Persistent Observation

- They notice what is going on around them in a persistent way.
- They "eavesdrop" constantly now. They understand what others are talking about and contribute.
- They also remember what was said and use it later.
- You might say "lets teach [the child] to use their tricycle tomorrow." They overhear this, and, later, when they see the tricycle, they get it.
- Or you talk about how two children need to stop fighting. They insert themselves to get them to stop.
- Or you talk about how cute their baby brother is. They then mimic said baby brother, to get the attention for being cute.
- They might point to a building on a map that you frequent often, say a community pool, and say the address. And they're right.
- Wants to linger and watch things, such as a water fountain—as they size up everything about how it works
- May want to watch something simple with great interest, such as liquid swirling around on the lid of a cup
- Asks what others are thinking about or reading about

Notices Richer Details of the Present

- They notice yet more complex details of their surroundings or environment.
- Narrates everything that his happening while they read a book, watch a show, or walk through a store: "Oooh, look, a chair!" "A desk! "A bed!" This is happening, that is happening!
- They notice what other people do. They might notice "Mommy is BEAUTIFUL!" when you put on a dress.
- They may notice women's "boobies."
- Greater ability to know their way around. When at a new restaurant, if they go to the bathroom twice, they might know how to get back to the table by the second time. This greatly grows in the next milestones.
- A more persistent memory. They may do "Five little monkeys jumping on a bed; one fell off and bumped his head," which then leads to 4 monkeys, etc., but they start at 19. It isn't that they can tailor the song or sing it; it's that they stick with 19, all the way down to 0 that is impressive.

- Loves to talk about their favorite story from start to end, noting nuanced details.
- May act out the characters in their plays with incredible detail, such as collapsing, “and then the Prince fell into DESPAIR.”
- Follows along with a story better. Might fill in the details as you read it or act out part of it.
- Loves to put on plays of known favorite stories, filling in many details.
- May endlessly make up new plays, with new endings from the standard ones they have been told
- You might use this as a tactic when they are in meltdown mode or you need their cooperation. Offer to tell their favorite story from start to end. Successful, veteran caregivers often understand the power of telling stories in getting children to cooperate. This is also a great reading comprehension builder.
- More impressive drawings. As they notice more, it gets put into their work
- May, as such, spontaneously write letters
- Becomes pleasant and cooperative

Evaluates Current Life Situations as Compared to the Abstract, Notices Mismatches

- They are constantly thinking, looking, and evaluating now. They take what is being said (the abstract discussion) and see how it is applied to the real-life situation. If something is mismatched between discussion and reality, they notice.
- They will, on their own, not just understand but identify mistakes clearly, and ones that can be highly nuanced.
- If you say, “Your bedroom is right next to the bathroom,” they might get big, astonished eyes and ask, “Mommy, what did you just DO!?” This is because their *sibling’s* bedroom is closer to the bathroom. This is thus the one “right next to” the bathroom. You just made a *mistake*.
- Acutely aware if a family member or favorite toy is missing. They have great emotion wrapped up in the missing person, e.g., sad their “sweet Monkey” is not with them.
- Notices the overall environment. May come up with insightful life observations like, “Mommy, Daddy, and my brother make me happy when I am sad.”
- That they can “see” things when they aren’t there (intentional imaging) may be why they can identify mismatches and mistakes easier. They can mentally hold on to the “right” way of doing things and simultaneously compare it to the current reality.
- They grow in appreciation of mismatches in the abstract and reality, such as they know when someone is “just joking.” They better understand when others, not just themselves, are “just pretending.”

Application of an Ideal to Themselves

- They pick a way to *be* now.
- They have greater self-awareness. If they are ordering others to be quiet, they realize maybe they should be quiet, too.
- They might force this ideal behavior on others. “Henry, be quiet!”
- May make up a character, such as a silly, wayward chicken, and persist at it, as they walk crazily all around, bokking. It is very funny.
- They are very deliberate, even confident and cocky, in how they adopt personas like this.
- If you say something like, “Emily is..,” they complete your sentence for you, “...smart.”
- More quick and nimble

Picks which Rule Should Apply to the Current Situation

- More arguments about what very rule—what abstract idea—should apply in what situation. No taking? Share? Take turns?
- Can understand the idea of “I will only do this for you if you do this,”
- For instance, “I’m not getting you a new banana until you throw the peel of the old banana away.” They can weigh which course of action they want: throw the banana peel away or not.
- Or, similarly: they can help make pancakes, but only if they wash their hands. Either choice is ok.
- May be particular about rules, e.g., “Give me a hug but just a small hug, ok?”
- Or instead of telling you to “shut up,” they tell you, “Be quiet for a little bit.”
- They evaluate good courses of action handily. So, if you try to convince them that monsters or bad guys can’t get to them because the door is locked or whatever, they readily argue with you. Of course a bad guy can ram right through the door.

Holds onto New Information Across Time

- They grow in how long they can hold onto new information, without any prompting.
- They can hold onto abstract ideas, imagination, principles, and information and its relevance across about one day’s time.
- They might notice that it was raining yesterday and now it is not. It is entirely on their own that they notice it.
- Loves the idea of getting better (a progression across time): maybe that weights make them strong or that their dad does things at work that “makes people better.”
- This milestone has many little intense periods over it. It’s as if their persistency in applying principles over time and in complexity expands throughout the milestone with each intense period.

An Interest in the “Unseen”

- Keeps asking “where did something go?” even though they can plainly see it, such as something on a board game you are playing. Perhaps because they want to linger and look at it longer.
- Upset they can’t see a person in a car driving in front of you, if you are following someone in a car. They recognize it is a logistical problem though: you are in the way of their sight.
- May like to hide from you or behind you.

Three Year Old Milestone 5A—Brings Things Close and Booms Things Away

Starts: 3.3.0

Most Intense: Starts a few days in and lasts 4 or 5 days

Ends: Bleeds into the next one

Irritable Period Summary

Starts out Subtly and Then They Get Demanding

- Crashes into you with their tricycle
- Wants to make sure loved ones “get down safely” on the stairs
- You might be able to tell this one is about to start when they start thinking about how to magically move things, such as the cars in the traffic in front of you need to magically “boom away” so your car can move again.
- Then they get demanding throughout the day.

Sleep

- Falls asleep in the day

Most Intense

- A few days in, they might get very demanding, all day. It lasts a few days and dissipates.

New Abilities Summary

Brings Things Closer to or Further Away From Them

- This one in particular seems marked by an incredible awareness of how things are related in spatial relation to each other and how you can get them closer to or further away from each other across any theoretical line.
- They are especially interested in bringing things close together, such as two trains on train tracks. The trains are likely to crash into each other.
- Or they keep making the track longer and longer and longer, like the only thing they care about is making it as long as possible.
- May like to put Unifix cubes in a really, really long line, using 100 cubes or more
- They physically bring YOU to them a lot.
- May love to bring two figurines together for a kiss. I was shocked to learn that both of my boys did this at exactly 1,197 days from their due date.
- May take an unusual interest in giving “introductions” when two people who were separated for a while come back together
- If you say you are going to “beat the storm home,” they notice who won the “race”: you or the storm?
- A big imagination about things that are far away but could be closer. They might pretend to steer a boat and they crashed it into a shore.
- They recognize others have to be looking in a particular direction to see something. They might have their stuffed animal look through toy binoculars. Or they might line up characters in a play to watch other characters do something, e.g. some characters watch a couple dancing or kissing.
- This heightened concern over how to move objects together or further apart, is, I think, a foundational skill for the next milestone, in which they develop strategic (and navigational) thinking.

In the next milestone they might, for instance, walk all around a building trying to figure out the best way to get somewhere. Hence, I grouped these milestones 5A and 5B together.

Projects Things Across a Continuum of Time

- They've been growing in what they notice across time. Now they notice it with much richer, more reliable detail and about things that span a greater length of time, to about a few days.
- Shows they have strong knowledge of what happened that day and what will happen in the future
- For instance, they say a prayer in which they remember everything that happened that day and ask for help with future events.
- Notices things that changed from a few days ago, such as a bathtub has been drained that you were previously playing with boats in
- Works longer at creating something, such as making a structure out of some kind of toy, making it match the picture shown on the box the toy came in
- Makes educated guesses about what will happen next in a story, e.g., "And now the characters are going to go home,"—as they were just out on an adventure
- May, as such, better anticipate a future event like Santa coming
- They might understand a principle that happens over a longer period of time, such as "Your body will heal it," about a cut or bruise they just got. Or, "Eating too many cookies will give you a big belly." However, their understanding of the technical details of how this works may be wonky.

Bigger, More Powerful Wild Imaginations

- In the past milestones, the child became wildly imaginative. In the very early threes, they saw things that don't even seem to be there, such as a dog on the ceiling or sharks in the rug.
- Then they saw what isn't even there (Intentional Imaging). They imagined a "rockslide" when there is nothing there at all to represent one.
- In *this* milestone now, the wild imaginations are still there—and they are big—but the child grows in what they think they can do.
- They see the cars ahead of you on the road and think you can move them by pushing them all out of the way. Or they think someone can "boom hurricanes away!"
- Their imaginations are still a bit unrealistic (they think they can pick up entire cars) but they are growing very confident and feel they are very powerful in what can be done. They, however, don't quite put themselves in the position of moving the cars. The cars just boom away. There is heroism here—an ability to enact positive change—but not a sense of self. This is next.

Growing Physical Attributes

- More nimble, e.g., does somersaults quickly

Three Year Old Milestone 5B—Strategies

Starts: 3.3.1

Most Intense: 3.3.2 until 3.3.3

Ends: 3.3.3

Irritable Period Summary

- **Note:** Different children express themselves differently. Some are very verbal, some want greater connection. Firstborns are likely to be “easier” simply because they have less to compete with.

Meltdowns and “Misbehavior” Over Which Direction To Go

- Purposely goes the wrong way when walking around; such choices interest them intensely now
- Major meltdown when you go somewhere, say to the bathroom at a restaurant, without them
- You were supposed to sit THERE not here. You were supposed to push the train BACKWARDS not forwards.
- Major meltdowns about where they want to go, such as wanting to go to a cookie store when you say no
- In looking at the behavioral patterns, I don’t think this is so much because they want the cookie. I think it’s because they want to figure out how to make that happen. How do you move all these people over to this fun place? Do you walk? Does the cookie store come to you? Do you bend spacetime?

Demanding

- Grabs you to come see the stuff they are doing a lot
- May want you to be right next to them all day.
- Highly demanding of your attention
- Stalls at bedtime

Most Intense

- Can see demanding or belligerent behavior

New Abilities Summary

- They don’t just pick the right tool for the job at this one, which they did in the late twos. They now pick a strategy.
- They are still a bit like a rat in a maze in these early-three milestones, though one growing in its independence and intelligence. In the previous milestones, they really started to fuse abstract knowledge to real life situations, but it was usually only one singular thing that got fused, e.g., if they are asking someone to be quiet, perhaps they should be quiet now.
- Now they can pick from several different strategies as to how to solve a problem as related as how to move around or what is about to happen next.
- They also have remarkable situational awareness, particularly over things that routinely happen. Their sense of patterns over time is growing.

Heightened Awareness of What Everyone Has Been, is Doing and What’s About to Happen Next

- They’ve been growing in what they remember, from a day ago, then several days ago. Now they persistently notice patterns over about one week’s time.
- They are very aware of weekly rituals that the family does, say you go to a particular restaurant every week. They happily delight in the knowledge that this is what’s going on.

- They may cautiously make sure you actually go to said place that you go to weekly. “Oh! You DID make it to [the restaurant].” Good job, Mom or Dad. You know what’s up, too.
- They might get bossy about going to the right place that they now undeniably know is where you are going. If they see the place you are going to from the highway, they might order you to stop the vehicle right then and there, while on the highway. Afterall, you’re basically there. (Becoming specific about moving in a 3-D space is the next milestone.)
- Understands what happened a few days ago really well. They can recall events from the day or past day entirely on their own.
- For instance, when you ask what their happiest part of the day was, they might say something not discussed between the two of you yet. They remembered an event from the day before, maybe you went to the store together or some other odd event. It’s that they remember it entirely on their own that is impressive.
- Announces “how much fun!” they have with other children and enthusiastically exclaims, “I love you so much!”
- They might no longer need pictures in books when reading. They might sit far away from you and just listen. Their ability to persistently notice what is going on, conjure up images, and follow along in their mind has greatly grown in the last milestones.

Can Make On-the-Spot Strategic Decisions Better

- You may have gone somewhere for the first time ever and they understand the layout of the place, what goes on there, etc., even though they just encountered all of it for the first time.
- They may want to optimize what the best way to get around in this new place or make sure they thoroughly understand where everything is. They may literally take your hand and start wandering all over to try to do this.
- They may understand what is going on at this new place better, “Yeah, let’s go back to that thing we saw when we first walked in!”
- Figures out complicated tools on the spot. Sticks with it until they do, such as figuring out what to do at an exhibit at a traveling science show or how to operate an arcade game
- Can accept advice about on-the-spot strategic decisions, such as “Walking this way is better than another way to get somewhere.”
- They might verbalize this strategic thinking, like walking around saying, “What if? WHAT if ...?”
- They no longer have a huge meltdown if you are far away from them. They may put their new strategic thinking to use. “I need to figure out how to get powers to get mommy to me!” It’s fantastical, but they are in the driver’s seat.
- They might have a good strategy to figure something out. For instance, you hand them a sheet with X number of things, which are numbered. To figure out how many X there are, instead of counting, they look for the largest number.

Three Year Old Milestone 6—Specific 3-D Maneuvering

Starts: After 3.3.3

Most Intense: Very intense for up to one week at the beginning

Ends: 3.4.0

Irritable Period Summary

Nightmares and Physical Changes

- The first part may see an intense period revolving around nightmares at night and a fantastical awareness that large object can fit into small ones (when they can't).
- They might wake up on and off throughout the night (suggests nightmares).
- Might stall at bedtime
- Might mentally zone out
- Their nightmares may be of something like a dinosaur took one of their siblings and they need to find them. Truly they are “heroic” now—you don’t get more heroic than saving your brother from a dinosaur!
- Their head shape changes. It may look outright painful for them.
- Noticeably bigger and stronger
- More prone to illness or may have a runny nose with no other symptoms

Highly Demanding

- Demands you all throughout the day, to see what they are doing
- You might have to sit right next to them, as they turn your head for you to look at what they want you to look at.
- This can get pretty frustrating. You might not be able to get anything done all morning.

Sensitive

- Very sensitive and may cry easily over something small, e.g., over a book dropping on the floor or if they stepped on a toy.

Persistent and Aggressive in Getting What They Want

- They might scream, cry, whine, or otherwise *persist intensely* when they don’t get their own way. For instance, they scream if they can’t have your attention, because you are talking to a doctor.
- Orders others to be quiet, stop talking, or go away
- They can be very aggressive about getting you to do what they want. You might get physically pinned down as they demand you do what they want.
- They might chase who they want around, such as a friend or an adult whose company they enjoy.

A Bit Manipulative

- A delayed reaction (up to 20 seconds) in how to respond to being hurt before they start screaming. It is as if they are contemplating how to respond, suggesting they have greater control and choice in responding.
- Might evoke some kind of adorable character, such as a cute puppy or pity to get help
- Or they pretend to be mute or soft-spoken to get you to help them
- They might pick fights with others. They might especially pick on younger siblings.

Confusion Over What They Caused or Can Cause to Happen

- Confusion over what they do and do not have control

- For instance, they might say they are sorry for things they did not cause. If a baby is crying, they might say, “I’m sorry! I’m SORRY!”
- Some children (I suspect more often empaths, people who directly feel other people’s pain) may show guilt, remorse, or shame quickly, such as pouting and bowing their head in shame after being yelled at or confronted by someone for doing something wrong, even if you are very gentle in doing this.
- Might be super upset that they can’t read, when they’ve never been taught or even asked to

Most Intense

- Intense nightmares, in which they get up on and off throughout the night, might start this milestone. Then they might get demanding and even aggressive in getting what they want.

New Ability Summary

Fantastical 3-D Spatial Awareness

- At the beginning, there is a sudden perception that large things can fit into small spaces. For instance, they might think a large stuffed animal can fit into a teeny tiny toy train.
- They might show this in other ways. If you say they are “sharp,” they might think you are saying they are a knife. Objects can magically change into other objects in their mind right now.
- Might think they can “Boom hurricanes away!”
- They might adorably put ear plugs in and think YOU now can’t hear THEM, when it is in fact they who can’t hear you. This suggests their understanding of “people need to be looking in one direction” or “someone talks and the other listens” is still a bit off.

Practical Ability to Bridge Space Between Objects

- They get practical about bridging space between two objects.
- They might become interested in string. They use it to build “bridges” between things.
- In their fantasy play, they might get specific. They might build a “hose” to bring water “close” (their word) to a “fire.”
- Their plays might also involve telling character to “wait” or “I’ll come help you!”
- They might handily figure out to get stools or chairs to get themselves higher to reach things.
- You of course are their favorite object. They might physically bring you to them or move your head to see them.
- Banging things together of course may be fun
- They might get very aggressive about bridging space. They get a running start and say “whooooosh!” as they jump and stick the landing.
- They might be really good at something like leveling overheaped flour in a dry measuring cup with the flat side of a knife.
- They persist at finding a very specific thing, such as “F” on a keyboard or anything else at their current ability level.
- This understanding of practically bridging distance also starts their love of racing. They want to be the first to the van, the first to get their seatbelt buckled, etc.
- They also have some lighthearted fears about “monster chasing them!!”

Solves for the Next X in a Series

- They are much better about going to exactly x on any continuum. They can solve for the next x in a series of things [1,2,3...] ... what’s next?
- Much more methodical in solving a problem, e.g., tries to figure out what is the next [whatever] in a series

- Their deductive reasoning is such that they can guess the next [whatever] in a series is, based on the current data set. So, if three chairs are assigned for a certain three children, then the fourth one remaining must be for the fourth child.
- Greater interest in and ability to put steps in a process in order, such as washing something first and then drying it
- Very interested in what might happen next in science experiments, such as what colors mixed together will make what other color
- Takes their time to make a choice, as if they want to make sure it is an intelligent and educated choice, such as going into deep thought as they think about what to order for dinner
- Says they want to “solve” something
- Understands tasks can be put off until later. They, as such, may purposely procrastinate now.

Builds Deliberate, Specific Patterns

- They build thing in a more orderly way.
- They might put colors in rainbow order.
- They might very deliberately and specifically build a flower arrangement, “The FIRST flower is going to be. The SECOND flower is going to be.”
- Bringing a “hose” to a “fire” in fantasy play is also an example of being specific and deliberate in fantasy play.
- They get specific about time on a more macro scale: they understand something was X days or Y weeks ago.
- Very good at adding, e.g., five toes on one foot and the other make TEN!!!
- Love to make up nonsense words or type out nonsense words. Who says letters have to follow prescribed order? They are in the driver’s seat now!
- This ability to build mental patterns and handle many mental variables, especially as combined with the desire to be the best/race, is what will grow in the next milestones.

Deductive Reasoning About What’s *Not* Said

- They also start to understand what was *not* said.
- Basic deductive reasoning but about things immediately seen and which require a few mental gymnastics, such as “Let’s not get the big one.” “Oh, OK, then we are getting the small one.”
- Or if you point out one way isn’t working, on their own they think, “Ok, let’s try another way then.”

Other

- More socially independent, may make friends spontaneously with children they don’t know

Three Year Old Milestone 7—Compares and Uses Sets of Knowledge

Starts: 3.4.1

Most Intense: A few days between 3.4.1 and 3.4.2

Ends: Right after the intense period

Irritable Period Summary

Highly Demanding

- Wants you to again see everything they are doing or do things with them
- They might want you to sit RIGHT next to them.
- Gets mad if you walk away from them
- All this can get extremely frustrating.

Unexplainable Meltdowns, Paralyzed

- They can be like a “hair trigger” with their meltdowns.
- Might have a meltdown even though it seems like they have everything they could ever want
- Might become paralyzed. They might cry that a door is not opened and won’t open it, even though they can open a door.
- In looking through the behavioral patterns, I think these unexplainable meltdowns may be related to their heightened awareness of how spatial objects relate to one another. Their fork is at a 10-degree angle to their plate, instead of a 30-degree angle, and this just utterly paralyzes them. Same deal with the door.

Sleep

- Might sleep a lot

Most Intense

- An intense, possibly constant need to be near you, in which you do exactly what they say or sit exactly where they want. Or hair trigger meltdowns, in which you can’t figure out what they want. You may very well get to your wit’s end.

New Abilities Summary

Notices and Compares Sets of Knowledge

- Notices patterns of behavior on their own. For instance, if they see it on TV or at an exhibit, “Mommy, bats sleep too!” Humans sleep. And bats sleep. Neat.
- May listen to lengthy explanation about history, government, etc.
- Might repeat words that others say
- Curls up to older children to learn from them
- Cheers for other children
- They might make their stuffed animals do things they do. For instance, a large stuffed monkey sits at a table and has breakfast.
- Loves comparing outcomes, such as racing two toy cars down a track
- They now get into “racing” big time. They might race two cars or race other children to your car or van.
- That they compare entire sets of knowledge is a great bridge between previous and future milestones. Before, they were learning how to get around in 3-D spaces. Now they are comparing entire sets of knowledge (and eventually 3-D spaces) to each other. In a few months, they will realize they don’t

have to do everything in a wash, rinse, repeat way within the spaces they've learned to move around in. That they notice different patterns of things likely stirs this "outside the box" thinking.

Mentally Categorizes Things and Navigates/Reasons with Them

- They make categorizations in their mind, hold onto them mentally, and use them to help them navigate and make decisions.
- From my notes about my second, "She was [in another room] and yelled over to me about a book we were reading, 'Look at the next page! See how two of the trolls are sleeping!' She counts and groups *everything*. And then she remembers this grouping to make decisions."
- It's not just that they are categorizing things. They are using them to navigate: *go* to the page with X, Y, and Z.
- Might actively tell you, "I noticed I had to pee so I went to the potty."
- They now don't just come up with solutions. They verbalize them and reason them out. For instance, where do fish go to the potty? They are surrounded by water. How does that work? You can't go potty *IN* the water. Such an interesting thing to think about when you are learning to "swim" in 3-D space.
- Might conclude that if a person has a window down, they might have wanted fresh air. They have more data sets to compare to and draw conclusions at this one.
- This is the first sign of the "periscope" that they develop in their mid- to late threes. It categorizes data and uses it to navigate.

In a "Driver" Role

- In fantasy play, they may want to play driver, inspector, or otherwise someone in charge.
- They may love to pretend to be a driver of a vehicle such as a tank (or boat) while making heroic decisions for it as they move it around on a play map.
- May literally want to pretend they are driving your vehicle
- They might like the task of inspecting things, such as seeing if the eggs in a carton are cracked or not. This is also comparison of knowledge sets: there is the standard—the ideal egg—compared to the reality, the carton of eggs in front of them.
- They can make up a brand-new play about something on the spot and they execute it now more like they are the director rather than in the moment. They think it up, then execute it.
- Might purposely come up with jokes to entertain their sibling
- May make up a creative pattern. They might make up a poem of their own that rhymes, based on something they just saw, such as "Pigs were on the hill and they fell, fell, fell!"

Three Year Old Milestone 8A — Creative Rearrangements

Starts: One week before 3.5.0

Most Intense: The whole thing is hard but one week starting just before or at 3.5.1 is especially intense.

Ends: Shy of 3.5.2

Irritable Period Summary

Fears

- Fears show up big time at this one.
- Given their fantastical awareness of 3-D objects, in which they think things can magically shrink, they might have related fears, such as that they or a large toy will go down a bathtub drain or that their brother will spontaneously turn into a “bad guy.”
- These fears may make them scared to do things like go down the stairs or get into the bathtub.
- With their heightened awareness of how far away things are, they might have an unusually heightened fear of cars hitting them when in parking lots.
- You might want them to get out of the van, but they feel unsafe. But, they offer to wait in another (specific) part of the van while you get their sibling out.
- Gets mad at you a lot. Maybe because you can’t reach up and get an airplane for them.
- Fear of “monsters chasing them”

Demanding

- *Demands* your attention, to do things with them or watch them do things
- Gets mad when you walk away
- Might have instant, whiny meltdowns
- Might interrupt you a lot (to get your attention)
- Does not want to separate from their primary caregiver, such as if you leave them with a babysitter or walk away
- Wants their lovey (a blanket or stuffed animal used for comfort)

Particular

- They want a particular box of waffles to get a waffle from, a particular TV episode, or a particular vitamin.
- Decision paralysis. They want a very particular TV show or movie but won’t pick which one.
- Gets mad that they can’t decide how a movie should end
- Gets mad they weren’t the one to turn the lights off in the room

Bossy, Controlling, Aggressive

- Some children are more prone to whining and some towards aggression, yet others a mixture of both.
- Might get aggressive towards you at times, if you don’t do what they want. You might get actively punched for the first time ever.
- They might push back on you. For instance, when you playfully “mess” with them, which they previously liked, they now stop you rather forcefully (by nearly punching you) to get you to stop.
- Or they kick things and throw things (probably more likely of boys). Playfully wrestling with them helps.

- May whine and whine when they don't get something they want instantly, even after reassurances and consoling. This is worse in some children than others but can be very, very trying.
- Very bossy and aggressive towards other children but if you press harder you might see it's because they are concerned for the safety of the other child (more likely of empaths)

“Rearranges” Things

- May open all the mini-blinds
- Might throw all of their toys over a balcony
- Might rearrange all the stuffed animals in their bed

Defiant

- Refuses to put their own shoes or clothes on, demands you do it
- Or wants some amount of cuddle/connection time before putting their clothes/shoes on
- Defiant to get in the bathtub

Physical Accidents and Changes

- You can somewhat expect some big accident where they fall or slip on something during the intense part of this milestone.
- It is as if their desire to try out their new skill overrides their footing and causes problems. They might fall off stairs or kick out stools from under them, accidentally.
- Both my daughter and youngest son did this exactly 1,252 days from their due date. This is just shy of 3.5.1. It's an especially difficult time.
- Highly repetitive. They might keep doing the thing that previously hurt them over and over. Or they keep asking the same question, despite it being answered.
- Coinciding with this increase in aggression and accidents is likely growth of their feet, hands, muscles, and lung power. Also: they can really, really wail now.
- They may spit a lot or become very drooly.
- They might have a larger need for sleep, might seem very tired yet won't sleep
- May stay up late, talking to themselves in bed

First Sense of “Forever”

- First sense of “forever.” They think edicts are forever. If you ask them not to go on the stairs, say because you are cleaning them, they might later burst into tears. They want to go upstairs, but they think they never can do that again.

Most Intense

- Ear splitting screams, intense whining, a constant need to be near you, or aggression. This one is INTENSE.
- A loss of their footing as in a way to take a major spill is almost assured—and for them to *not* really learn from it.

New Abilities Summary

Specific About Spatial and Other Awareness

- In the last milestones, they became much more aware of the distance between objects. They had a gross misunderstanding of how to get things to them (the first wild mental awareness) or what can fit in what (the second wild mental awareness). Now, they get (slightly) more realistic about this.
- It is as if nature gives them an overabundance of a skill that they then learn to refine. In this case, they learn that they can bridge things across space, but at first they are wildly off about it: a large stuffed animal can fit into a toy train. Now they see the actual shades of this.
- Very specific in labeling what they are doing, e.g., “I'm on the SIXTH step!”

- Very specific in categorizing things, e.g., octopus have EIGHT legs and crabs have SIX
- Insistent on getting a specific type of something, such as a particular character from a vitamin jar
- Describes things in very stark terms, e.g., “That bird is DEAD.”
- Loves to sort and group things: how many of THIS are there and how many of THAT?

Integrates Sets of Knowledge

- They’ve been noticing entire knowledge sets and how they relate. Now they integrate them together.
- They might make up logical rules that unite two sets of knowledge such as “Red is 1, Orange is 2, Yellow is 3” as they assign the colors of the rainbow a number, thus integrating together the ideas of numerical and rainbow order together.
- Makes up logical rules to govern relationships but which are inaccurate, such as “1 + 0 makes 10.”
- They might start to get very “meta” about the knowledge they are integrating. For instance, they notice “water is wet!” And this is funny to them, because the very definition of “wet” is “something with liquid,” which, for nearly every wet thing, means water.
- Drawings become more realistic, such as drawing a “dragon’s teeth” or a rocket. Perhaps they are more interested in making the pictorial representation match the real life (or visionary) example.

Physically Puts Together Related Things

- They go and gather things that strike them as similar.
- If they see a flamingo video on your phone, they might call up an app on their tablet to show you another flamingo video. It’s not just that they made the connection. It’s that they’ll go get the resource to compare the two things.
- Another example: They may learn to read a word such as “pig.” Later, they find another book that they remembered had “pig” in it, so they can read it to you or a different person.
- Or they make a craft and realize, after they made it, that it looks like their favorite toy. They then hide said craft. It is probably near said toy.

Creatively Mixes and Matches Objects

- They come up with creative ideas by mashing two different things or ideas together.
- They might get a toy cash register they happen to have to be a “bank” as you play a separate game, such as Monopoly Jr.
- Or they come up with a brand-new smoothie, such as a “Chocolate Smoothie.” It’s brilliant, really.
- Or you teach them how to play Go Fish and they make up a new game where something other than cards are matched together, say the color of blocks. As such, they have made a totally new game.
- Or they might make up other games where they mix and match ideas/objects, such as playing hide and seek with a set of toy animals

Puts Smaller Bits of Something into Something Bigger

- The value of the whole is greater than the sum of its parts now.
- They might put together knowledge of how to draw small shapes to draw a bigger picture.
- Or they use small parts to build something bigger, such as bubbles in a bathtub to make a “dog.”
- Or they use the parts from a science kit to build something bigger, such as a “boat.”
- They may be more intellectual about putting smaller parts into a bigger skill. They may put two separate skills together into a more masterful skill, such as applying their knowledge of functional reading and the mechanics of reading together. They know the bathroom sign says “Women” and they sound out each letter, verifying for themselves that it says “Women.”

- If you try spelling things so they avoid knowing what you are talking about, the gig is up. They know “p-a-r-k” means “park.”
- Letting them play with smaller pieces to make something bigger can really unleash creativity. While you may have some levers, catapults, bolts, nuts, pulleys, and slides to make specifically some simple machines, they turn it into "boats," steering wheels, trucks, and upside down slides in which "nets" catch marbles. They want to make things safer, more novel, bigger, faster.
- I suspect that this interest in taking small things and building with them is when the toys they play with become smaller, such as how young children very famously play with the bigger “Mega Bloks,” and then at older ages prefer smaller LEGO bricks.
- As they are starting to chunk up things into a whole, they may start to get pickier as well. They want a very particular episode of a TV show, not just any.

Inserts Themselves into Situations More

- Just as they physically gather objects together, they also throw themselves into situations more.
- They’ll play the game their older siblings are playing.
- Wrestles with dad more
- Strongly interested in animals, such as pigeons in the park, likely to chase them
- May love to help out with younger children

Highly Evaluative of Others

- Very interested in and evaluates others or things on a deeper, almost moral level.
- So-and-so is their best friend (or is *not* their best friend).
- Mommy is a great cook.
- Their house is “amazing.”
- Their sibling is doing something ALL WRONG.
- May admonish you when you forget to say thank you or you’re welcome
- They might taunt you: “Mommy, taller than you!” “Mommy, stronger than you!”

Over Ambitious

- If you ask them what their sad part of the day is, they might trip themselves. And then say their sad part was tripping themselves. THEY control it.
- Similar to wanting to control how movies to end, they are overly ambitious in how creative they can be or what they have control over.

First Sense of Extended Time

- The first age (I have found) at which they might remember something from long ago, such as picking up grandma at the airport last holiday or something you did at a restaurant two months ago. Their long-term memory is growing.

Three Year Old Milestone 8B—Personal Reflection

Starts: 3.5.3

Most Intense: A few days somewhere between 3.5.3 and 3.5.4

Ends: 3.6.0

Irritable Period Summary

- This again bleeds from the last one. You may notice this one starting because they become much more interested in others and where they fit in (adored, rejected?)

Destructive and Demanding

- Becomes a “mini tornado” again: might take movies out of their cases, throw toys (or their socks) off a high place, unrolls rolls of toilet paper, opens the mini-blinds, take heads off their dolls, or open all of the cabinet doors. (Prepare your house and heart for this! It can be maddening—or cute—just depends on the situation.)
- May be demanding and in a way where they gather up many things to bring to you and do things with

Still Has Heightened Fear

- Still has irrational ideas and fears of what might happen to them, although it’s getting more refined. They recognize they won’t go down the bathtub drain, but they think small toys will (when they won’t). They are a bit more precise about what the actual threat is. Although this might make *actual* threats all the scarier.
- This continues to make them fearful of things like new, scary staircases.
- Alternatively, a more thrill-seeking child might purposely go towards the danger, such as waiting last minute to jump away from a bike coming at them.

New Abilities Summary

- They throw themselves into the middle of more situations and figure things out on the spot well, as they did in 8A. But now they also take on more personal responsibility about how they handle themselves in the situations. They grow to be more cautious but also more responsible.

Physically Sturdier and Manipulates Objects Handily

- Their bigger feet, lung power, etc, makes their presence that much more known and their actions that much bolder. They have a hearty laugh now and a gigantic wail.
- They easily and sturdily persist in trying new activities, perhaps learning how to use a swing, how to make it twist then releasing themselves, or how to get up a playground apparatus that requires some diligent, focused climbing.
- They handily manipulate puzzle pieces. It’s no thing for them that a puzzle piece is upside down. They understand that and put it the right way.
- They may already be operating a remote control and turning on the TV.

Interest in Other People

How this plays out depends on your child:

- They may love to chat up strangers while out, such as the grocery store.
- They may want to make sure their younger siblings learn just like they do.
- They may be fascinated by children going fast on a bike.
- Can take a noticeably greater interest in art, especially of children
- May ask questions about others. Like, “What do zombies eat?”

- They might become overwhelmed with sadness over something that happened to you. They might be sad you had to stay at the hospital. Their new sense of “forever” probably negatively impacts this.
- Very realistic in pretend play, such as reenacting how a mommy is pregnant then births a baby by putting the baby in her shirt then “delivering” it
- More realistic about fears: they might know they won’t go down the bathroom drain but think some of their smaller toys will (when they won’t)
- This shows that other people (and objects) are becoming more “real” to them. Others have their own good and bad points, etc. Objects, as well, have their own identity (their baby brother won’t go down the bathtub drain).

Inserts Themselves into Others More

- A highly social child might “work it” in social situations. They gush about how they and another have the same color clothes on, chat them up, etc. What better way to make friends than to notice you both are wearing red shirts?
- Teaches others (e.g., grandma) what they know
- May be very protective of younger siblings
- They might take a big interest in helping other, younger children. They might come up with a clever solution to do this, like, “Everyone calm down! Mommy will be here to help us by teaching us a lesson!”
- Very much understands what other children are doing and may ask to do exactly that. For instance, you are doing an activity that requires you to be with a child every X hours, as you make a sun dial, and they ask to do it and stay with it.
- They continue to integrate, compare, and gather. They might see a character with goggles on and go get their own. But now they really ham it up big time.
- They may want to get things for you. They want to be the one to get baby wipes for the baby.

Cautious, Hesitant, Wants to Get Things Right

- As they insert themselves into situations more, they want to get it right.
- Likely to want to watch you do something first, such as color, rather than do it themselves
- May try to get words exactly right. For dolphin, they try "DO-FIN" "DAH-FIN" "DOLL. FIN."
- They transfer risk. Instead of looking over a high place, they might ask a stuffed animal to first.
- Quite scared to go down a scary set of stairs
- They start to become much more mindful of their surroundings and actions. If they see you are sleeping, they might say “Oh. mommy is sleeping,” and leave the bedroom as quietly as they can.

Sensitivity to Rejection (or Expects Adoration)

- Their first sense of taking something deeply personal shows up here.
- They might ask you to do something and you say, “Not now.” The tone of your voice suggests you are irritated, and they run away, “I asked mommy to play a game! And she doesn’t want to be with me!”
- May be more painfully aware when they are socially left out. For instance, at a dancing class, they are asked to pair up with a friend, and they are the odd one out.
- The very first recognition of authentic shame appears (if they are at all prone to shame). They realize they *did* do something harmful. They might quietly whisper to you that they broke something, so you can help them fix it.
- Not all children will be sensitive to rejection. Some fully expect adoration. They gush when they meet a new friend and see them again, “Oh! I get to see you again!”

Three Year Old Milestone 9—Deductive Reasoning Across Time

Starts: 3.6.1

Most Intense: 4 or 5 days in between 3.6.1 and 3.6.2

Ends: 3.6.2

Irritable Period Summary

- It starts off mild. They might just want to be by you. It builds to a child who is:

Possessive

- Very possessive. Another child can go get any toy whatsoever and they are mad the other child has it.
- Screams or has a meltdown when they can't have their primary caregiver, or if primary caregiver leaves their side suddenly
- Orders you to sit and watch them play, for activity after activity

Bossy. Also Aggressive, but Towards the End of Being Bossy

- They may get bossy. How they do it depends on their personality:
- If they are otherwise easygoing, their bossiness in their sweet little kid advice can be adorable.
- They tell people they are doing things all wrong. They might give a lesson to young sibling on PLACING things not THROWING things.
- Might throw things, as if to experiment
- May playfully hit and kick adults

High Propensity for Shame

- In the last milestone, they realized they really can be responsible for a situation going poorly, and, thus, developed the potential for shame. This (might) show up in a big way now.
- They might get upset to the point of screaming when they are made aware that they hurt someone.
- They might fall to the ground in frustration when they realized they caused something bad to happen, such as they are the ones who moved something, say the TV remote, yesterday, which is why it is lost today.
- Very upset when something doesn't go the right way. For instance, if they fall off a chair, you forget to get them something, or another child escapes outside on accident.
- May be highly protective of loved ones, very fearful for siblings for example
- Very upset when they can't be the one to help someone

Fears Persist Day After Day

- Has a persistent semi-rational fear such as that there is a snake in the house or tigers are chasing them, the same threat of which they worry about day after day (i.e. across time)

Sleep Issues

- Sleep disruptions: might unexpectedly fall asleep in the middle of the day
- Or gets up in the middle of the night

Most Intense

- The exact behaviors depend on the child, but they are indeed intense during the intense period. Perhaps big meltdowns, highly possessive, whiny, very bossy, destructive, takes toys, throws, etc.

New Abilities Summary

Deductive Reasoning as Across Time

- Very good deductive reasoning as now applied across time (past and future)

- They may see a puddle and conclude “It rained yesterday” (which would have happened previously).
- Or “The garbage can is gone so the garbage man must have come.”
- This comes in handy when you, say, tell them that you are currently out of milk and much later they happily offer, on their own, remembering that you are out of milk, “Can I have juice then?”
- Very good at remembering things from the past, such as how to play games
- They can think into the future, such as thinking about what they want from Santa.
- Or they might think about math problems mentally and across a continuum of time. They might know they have 4 of something and you are about to buy 2 more, so they say, “Oh, I’ll have 6!”

Has Something in Mind and Does It

- They have something in their mind that they want to make a reality. They now gather up everything needed to make that happen. They persist with the idea until it’s done.
- They might order you to sit, as they go and get some LEGO pieces, to act out a play they thought up. In the play, you and they sit together while they make “coffee” out of the LEGO pieces, complete with kitchen, etc., and you drink coffee together. Also, your favorite thing to do, which they can observe anyway, is drink coffee.
- In addition, they want you to read book after book to them, look at animals, and practice counting.
- Or they might turn into a mini-tornado, rearranging everything in your house. They might move a garbage can from one room to another (“It’s where it belongs!”); take a fitted sheet off of a bed and try to put a flat sheet on (“This is the right one”); move all of the night lights around; get many flower vases out to make different flower arrangements, put strange things in them, like coffee stirrers; get out creative toys and build the structure as based on the instructions or pictures on the box that comes with it; and drag their stool out and made a piece of toast on their own for the first time ever.
- They might also do something quite athletic and exuberant now, like ride a bike for the first time or go sliding down a hammock.

Plans Across Time

- They might keep asking to buy a toy. Or if you ask what they want as a present, they might want something for their creative play. They want a new bridge or hill for their toy train set. They definitely have something in mind for it.
- May save up their own money to buy a toy they want
- May be really good at completing jobs from a list of things to do.
- Completely committed to doing something like decorating a Christmas tree

Mentally Precise

- It’s as if they can hold onto ideas in their mind with more clarity and with a sturdier ability to get ideas right or to know what is actually real.
- Can better recognize that $1 + 0$ —the written equation—is equal to 1, not 10
- Understands upcoming events with more reliability and precision. A holiday is on X day; Grandma is coming on Saturday; they go to childcare every Thursday
- They might know the clock is at a certain number.
- Good at knowing what is real or fake (such as fake toy eggs are fake). The nature of objects is more solidified in their mind.
- Likes to read (beginning books) or at least pretend to

- They start to design things. Their crafts might start to take on a distinct design, like making a new star shape or adding a stripe or two—instead of randomness or everything is all one color or the same shape they’ve always made.
- Or they design pillows all around them to make a “throne”

Gets More Proficient with Their Hands

- Very receptive to learning the proper way to handle things, such as how to hold a DVD properly or how to throw a frisbee (use this to your advantage!)
- Very good at doing something like picking out a movie, opening the Blu Ray player, putting the disc in, and operating a few buttons on the remote and television
- Might pull up a stool and make toast—all on their own
- May want to put on their own seatbelt
- Better use of their hands, e.g., better able to catch a ball

Fluid, Flexible, and Proactive

- Whereas before they were cautious and deliberate in in-the-moment situations, now they are fluid and proactive.
- They start to say new words, such as “kangaroo,” on the spot, easily. They might start copying what everyone says.
- They are very fluid in social situations. They meet someone new and they immediately give enthusiastic introductions of who is who to the other person.
- Or someone accidentally loses their shoe and they promptly go pick it up for them. They didn’t want the other person to lose it, after all.
- They might dramatically carry in the heavy grocery bags to the kitchen and announce they are a “Big strong man!!”
- If you are crying, they might wordlessly come up to you and wipe your tears.
- Might ask to be the one to give their sister her lemonade that day
- Challenges adults. Dad might say “Diesel [the fuel] dropped in price,” and they challenge him, “No, Diesel [from Thomas the Train] dropped jobi logs!” Diesel is the name of one of the trains, who did indeed drop jobi logs. They need information in their mind about past events to challenge such things in the now.
- Or they admonish their dad that he said, “Bad words.” What were they? He said, “No doughnuts.”

Physical Changes

- Hands and feet might get bigger

Three Year Old Milestone 10A—Enormous 3-D Imagination

Starts: A little after 3.6.2. It can be very mild or intense depending on the child.

Most Intense: For a week around 3.7.0

Ends: 3.7.1

Irritable Period Summary

Possessive

- Highly possessive of toys. If a toy is out and just happens to be “theirs,” no one is allowed to even touch it.
- Possessive of primary caregiver, “My mommy!”

Bossy, Rigid, Stubborn

- You have to do everything as they want.
- There’s no not accommodating them immediately at this one. If they want to go to the potty, you’re going to the potty. If they want a toy in the van, you’re getting the toy in the van.
- When they order you to dance, you’ll instinctively comply.
- There might be a very particular process in how things are done now. They stand at the van door. You count to three. You open the door with the automated controls. They pretend they opened the door. And they get in the van.
- They want to be the one to do nearly everything.
- You might have trouble convincing them they can’t touch a hot pan.
- They might want something outright impossible, such as you have to sit at the end of a bench while simultaneously next to both them and their sibling.
- They might refuse to do something they are usually very agreeable about (like taking a bath). They are stubborn and upset, but not terribly communicative as to why. They just shut down.

Hard on Themselves

- If they can’t get something to work right, they may get mopey and hard on themselves about it.
- Or they get very whiny and upset when they can’t make things go the way they want

Sleep and Physical Issues

- May have nightmares
- May have a slight fever

New Abilities Summary

- This is marked by an impressive ability to imagine a very large 3-D concept, such as outer space.
- This shows up in their imaginations as they imagine what to do in a larger space, such as how to fix a road to improve traffic.
- They seem to get the “bigger picture” too and across time, as they become more reliably cooperative for longer periods of time (about a half a day).

Can Imagine an Enormous 3-D Space

- They can create a vivid realistic 3-D picture in their mind, e.g., can understand the idea of outer space or earth.
- They may love books about space and rockets.
- They might imagine having a party on the moon.

- They might create new stories with this 3-D awareness. They might hear someone needs to go to outer space, so they urgently offer to make a “rocket” out of wood blocks.

Likes to Hear or Create Larger 3-D Scenes

- They might like to hear highly imaginative stories (creating a 3-D picture with words) as a way of learning, such as a story about how a plane takes off, with many details (This depends on their personality. A highly “rational” and pattern-seeking child will listen to the details of an airplane taking off.)
- Or they might beg you to tell the story of how they were born, in intricate detail.
- Depending on their personality, they may want to be involved in everything and they have a very specific process to do it. They want to be the ones to open the refrigerator door, you get the milk, you pour it, they smell the milk, you put the milk back, and they close the refrigerator door. And it’s always like this without deviation. They control this large-ish space. (This insistence on the same thing over and over is more likely of highly “present” children, who tend to be S on the Myers-Briggs, as opposed to N, which is pattern seeking.)
- They might create elaborate scenes, with a bit of a story, with their blocks or LEGO pieces. The two of you, represented by something such as a LEGO, are trapped in a fence.
- A renewed interest in building 3-D shapes out of various objects, such as magnet shapes or wooden blocks

Big, Realistic Imaginations

- Highly imaginative about what they might like to do and in a big but fairly realistic way, e.g., build a new road somewhere to relieve traffic problems
- Their very first “imaginary friends” may appear, although they are unlikely to be “friends” now. “Workers” might help them build a road. Or they might offer to their toy cars that they can come with them to the playground. What they imagine now is likely to be similar to the imaginary friends they eventually develop in their mid-4s.
- You are more likely to find out about these imaginary people if you probe them with questions. “You need to build a road?” “Will you need to move the buildings over there?” “Will you need an excavator?” “Will anyone help you?”

Loves a Knowledge-Based Adventure

- By “knowledge-based adventure,” I mean something where they are given a bit of information and then can go do something or solve something.
- An example might be a treasure map they are given, which helps them find a treasure. They might take this map with them the rest of the night and next day. It is an important thing, indeed.
- Or they might love something like the “Wilderness Explorers” at Disney’s Animal Kingdom. In this, you get a map with places to go visit and do things at, getting a stamp at each.
- Loves to read or at least pretend to. It seems to make them feel big and important.

A Very Fluid, Robust, Joyful Personality

- They easily and very rapidly respond to in-the-moment situations now and with full, fluid personality.
- You might get a “no way!” from them now—after saying something totally mundane.
- Or they admonish you, whispering, “Be quiet! Be as quiet as a mouse!”
- Or they see the Pixar movie *Cars* for the first time in a while and cheekily run around, throwing their butt out exclaiming, “Kachow!”
- Or they put on sunglasses and ask their baby sister, “Baby, do you see how awesome I am?”

- Or they might get adorably bossy. They might tell another to “Calm down!” This is said like “Chill, dude!”
- Complete strangers might get the biggest kick out of how “full of life” your child is right now.

Focused and Committed

- Whereas before they were cautious to color, now they are highly focused in their coloring (or gluing, cutting, etc.)
- I was stunned to find out in my journals that all three of my children did this at about the same age in development. It was at 1,316 days from due date for the girl and exactly 1,318 days from the due date for the boys. They colored with impressive verve. This is, again, following a period when they were timid to color.
- They might take note of how very careful they are being in coloring and they might surprise you with how long they stick with it.
- They easily string Pony beads on shoestring (to make “garland”).
- They broom the floor, the walls, and the ceiling.

Follows Requests for a Longer Amount of Time

- They obey requests better and longer. You might ask them to play in a particular room, and they do.
- They are willing to be by themselves longer and may even actively leave the room you are in, for another one, for a good long while.
- Or you tell them “No hitting,” and they comply for the rest of the afternoon or evening.
- Or if you make cookies for Santa, they are relentless that they are for Santa and that no one eats them.

Accommodating of Others

- Very accommodating of you. If they are too heavy to carry, they understand, and let you just hold their hand instead.
- If you don’t like when they sit on you, they might brush your hair, knowing it sweetens you up as to let them stay there.
- Thinks about the feelings of others
- They are perceptive and inquisitive. If you are staring into space, they might ask, “Mommy, what’s wrong?”
- After someone explains perhaps deep breathing or resting to a child, they copy it and say, “I do this to calm down and not be an angry brother.”

Other

- Very interested in specific smells, such as of milk or human sweat

Three Year Old Milestone 10B—Segmented Knowledge

Starts: 3.7.2 or shy of

Most Intense: From shy of 3.7.3 until one week later

Ends: 3.8.0

Irritable Period Summary

Easily Has Meltdowns, Sensitive, Clingy

- At the beginning, wants you by them often
- Gets very upset if you leave
- Wants you near them at bed, might physically grab you so you don't leave
- Jumps on others and lays on others
- May easily have meltdowns over the slightest of things
- Highly sensitive to when they have been hurt or perceive they were wronged
- Cranky

Playfully Destructive

- An unusually high interest in scissors, strings, etc.
- If you get out stuff to make an activity, they are likely to be more interested in the stuff to make the activity, e.g., the scissors and paper, than the activity and ask for them and use them.
- Your entire kitchen might—might—get covered in string (or tape, etc.)

Confused, Particular, Can't Make up Their Mind, Contradictory

- They want outright contradictory things and can be insufferably choosy.
- They want a TV show on and then get mad when you do turn it on. I believe some nuance of what they want is hard for them to communicate, such as, "Put it on but skip the introduction" or something similar.
- Or they become totally hysterical when something about the nuance of the way something should go doesn't go that way. For instance, they love to watch a particular video before bed (of, say, a song). One night you hit "Skip ad" instead of letting them hit the button—and they become distraught.
- Changes their mind constantly as to how they want to do something, such as where they want to sit to put their shoes on, roaming the house, trying to find the perfect spot—the stairs, no; the top of the stairs, no; etc.
- Or they might get super choosy about something and you have no idea what they want. They might want a "waffle," and you offer everything you can think of, but nothing satisfies them. As it turns out, they wanted their sibling's waffle.
- Says someone took their [something] but you have no idea what they are talking about. They are on a mission to find, say, a "bridge," but you have no idea what they are looking for. And you are otherwise with them 24/7.
- They might want to head butt their sibling. But "no hitting" is a rule. So, they ask you if "no crashing" is a rule or not. Because this is totally different than "no hitting."

Sleep Issues

- May wake up the in the middle of the night from nightmares

New Abilities Summary

Large, Detailed Knowledge

- They have a lot of knowledge now and they are very specific and nuanced about it.

- Develops an impressive memorization of facts, such as what a certain animal eats or the names of the planets
- May become interested in all of the technical details of something, such as how some simple machines work
- Their vocabulary grows and so does their sentence complexity. It has more detail. Instead of saying, “Sit by me,” they might say, “Sit *right next to me*.”
- If they are reading, you might read a sentence to them, and they read it back, but they make sure they get every. single. word. right.
- Very technically accurate, even if contradictory. For example, “You just hit your brother.” “No, I hit his TOE,” or any other similar example
- Loves to answer questions to test their knowledge and understand the world, such as “Are trees living or not living?”
- May ask you questions like, “Mom, did you know ... ?” Because they know.
- Asks curious, pointed questions like, “Do peperoni have a backbone?”
- That they start to break up all of life and their knowledge base, of which is really large now, into segmented, detailed chunks is this milestone. That they can integrate these segmented chunks into an integrated theme is the next milestone.

High-Level Overview of Situations

- They may set the table every day for the family, but they realize now that they might do it differently based on the circumstance. Is dad home today? Because if not, they won’t set a plate for him.
- They have a higher-level understanding of the nature of how things operate, such as conflicts. They describe the process itself that went down. So, if they get into an altercation with someone, they might say, “I’m sorry I made you angry, but we worked together to find a solution.”
- They may act out funny things based on the circumstance of the situation. They see you and they are just waking up from a nap. So they re-enact a scene from Disney’s *Frozen* when Anna just woke up, “The sky’s awake! So I’m awake!”
- May ask you what the rules are. The three rules are x, y, z. Is n the “fourth rule”?
- They might ask you, “How is it going, Mom?” What’s up, Mom? Right now, how are you feeling?

If/Then Logic

- With their higher-level overview and being able to segment knowledge into chunks, they draw more advanced conclusions, using if/then logic.
- A garbage can is on the driveway. But dad already put yours away. So, this one on the driveway must be a neighbor’s garbage.
- Indeed, set a breakfast plate out for dad if he’s home, but not if he’s not home. This is if/then logic.
- Asks intelligent questions based on observed facts with some logical conclusions. “Does the sun use electricity since it’s so bright?”
- With some assists, they can play “Twenty Questions” now. This is different than “I Spy.” In I Spy, you are looking for something that is around you, say the answer is someone’s shoes. In Twenty Questions, something is in someone’s mind, totally made up. Maybe it’s Jupiter, a black hole, or a whale in the ocean. You ask a series of questions, “Is it living or not living?” “Does it require electricity to move?” Based on the answer, you ask a new question. They can understand this kind of game now, where there is something imagined that you are guessing and ask questions in an if/then way to get you to the answer.

Breaks Traditional Routines

- Given their advanced thinking, they are likely to break traditional routines now. They see the whole situation. And they question things.
- If you do something day after day, they now challenge if it has to keep going that same way.
- They might playfully refuse to do something the family does every week. Nope. They are not going to the restaurant like you do every Thursday. They are staying home tonight. Mom.
- They might all of a sudden refuse to take their bath at 7:30 at night, which they've done since they were 6 months old.
- They might want a different breakfast than normal. They normally have X but now they want Y—probably something they saw someone else have.
- It is interesting how jealousy plays a role in child development. It causes them to try different things.
- This ability to apply if/then logic and break established routines may be why they are so fickle in the irritable period, trying one thing, then changing their mind, over and over.

Absorbs and Applies New Knowledge Quickly

- Very handily remembers information told to them, day after day. They are an utter vacuum for knowledge.
- They can apply what they know to real world situations handily.
- After reading a book with activity ideas, they immediately want to go try them out.
- If you tell them about a surprise party for someone, sometime after this, they may innocently and happily go tell the person.
- They can apply a lesson to themselves that they hear in a story, on TV, or that is told to them, such as “You can be a big helper in your family.”
- Can learn new sight words quickly
- Understands new, advanced words immediately and uses them accurately such as “aquarium,” “Riverwalk,” or “blister.” Before they simply repeated the word back. Now, it is highly reliable that they will understand any new word taught on the spot, say it, and start to use it.

Does Things with Their Hands

They love to do things with their hands. They might:

- Send marbles down a Marble Run
- Cut paper
- Paint with watercolors
- Stamp shapes into aluminum foil
- “Saw” things like separating wood blocks with a toy saw
- Cut fruit
- Hold and swing a hammer while helping an adult
- Put bracelets on their wrist
- Write letters nicely, put on makeup with impressive ability, or operate the remote better
- Play with string and other materials to make “bridges”
- Tie things up
- Be interested in simple machines and how things move (both boys and girls may show this)

Three Year Old Milestone 11A—Themes

Starts: 3.8.1

Most Intense: 3.8.2 for just a few days

Ends: 3.8.3

Irritable Period Summary

Extremely Particular and Picky

- They want a very exact episode of a TV show or they want X movie in a series, such as in Star Wars.
- Very picky about which waffle they get out of the box
- Mad you threw away food—that just fell on the floor
- Mad you can't respond to them within milliseconds
- They often have trouble communicating that they want a particular nuance of something, resulting in frustration.

Sleep Issues

- May have nightmares, such as you dropped them off at the donation store
- May want you late at night, suggesting nightmares
- They are so fearful of abandonment at this one that I recommend making it a point to lovingly tell them you would never leave them behind, etc.
- May keep getting up at night, wanting to color or work on a skill
- May fall asleep during the day
- During the time of nightmares and sleep disruptions, you may see head shape changes, such as it elongates.

Imaginary Threats

- Imagines fake threats against them and has a story about them. "A light saber hit me and hurt me." Or, "Hippopotamuses are chasing me!!!" Or, while in the car, "Robbers are at our house stealing our stuff right now." Or, "A black hole will suck me in." Or, if near some large rocks, "Bears are in the cave!"
- They might tell you there are dinosaurs or snakes in their bed.

Most Intense

- A child who is very picky and particular and may have nightmares

New Abilities Summary

- This can be summed up as they understand that the parts make up the whole. They see many details of things and how it is integrated into a larger theme. They are perceptive at first then creative.

Socially Perceptive

- They see more exact details of things that go down around them and, more, what they mean.
- They might note when an adult behaved poorly, say the adult was short with a child. They cite exact reasons, e.g., "That boy had no choice," as the adult was very abrupt and rude to the child.
- They might retell a scuff up between them and another child, over and over, going over all the details of what happened.
- They might ask you what's wrong, if you seem sullen or are just quiet.
- Able to correctly identify who is at fault over something. Before, they said so, but often got it wrong.

- Totally in awe of a show like *Cirque du Soleil*. Also, they want to go back to that neat show about dinosaurs you went to once.

Eavesdrops

- They eavesdrop now in a way that shows they see the bigger picture.
- If they overhear someone on a phone call saying they would like some art from them, they might go start working on it.
- Or they overhear you talking about moving to a new house. They don't like this at all.

Moral Themes

- They can string together specific incidents of action to understand an overall theme.
- They can pick up on the moral theme of longer, more adult stories on their own, e.g., "Luke [Skywalker] has to decide to be a good guy or bad guy."
- They can tell you the plot of the movie, e.g., about Star Wars, "The bad guy tries to steal the robot that looks like a basketball."
- Can relate a book of a movie to the movie itself, such as a book of Wall-E to the movie Wall-E (while watching it)
- Understands the plot of a movie more readily as it progresses
- Begins to prefer movies with real people instead of cartoons

Understands the Rules

- In the last ones, they developed large, detailed knowledge, as well as a better understanding of the overall picture. Now they understand specific rules that govern human behavior.
- They know the three rules are no hitting, no throwing, and no taking. But "no tickling" was not a rule. So. All is good there, right? As they look you right in the eye as they do it.
- They understand that something is going to the "next level," such as they are training to become a Jedi and going to the "next level."
- A sense of justice itself. You might now get told that something is "so unfair!"
- May enforce a general way of being on other children, such as how to eat properly at the table

Creatively Does Things with Themes (Details That Make up a Whole)

- Draws real life things in stunning detail, maybe an entire roller coaster or a train with details about how it works
- May follow along with a complex documentary and draw out the details of what they just learned
- Easily follows along with a complicated game, such as football or checkers
- For a cheeky child, they might put on funny videos, and it seems like they do it to learn how to be funny.
- Might tell you a very long elaborate story about anything at all, but in which there is an overall theme/plot with a beginning, middle, and end and many details: cherries need picked off of a tree, then washed, then packaged, then put on a truck, then delivered
- Their drawing or crafts may now have quite a few details and complex themes, such as colors or shapes that change logically
- If you are going somewhere, say to see beehives, they might gather up everything related to bees in the house: a book on bees, toys that look like bees, etc.
- They might like to count numbers by breaking them up across two hands. They hold 2 fingers up on each hand to make 4. They like doing it like this. They marvel at it. It's like they are thinking, "My own hands can be a calculator!"

Core Personality Integration

- They may not show you this is happening, unless something goes wrong, such as they think you think poorly of them. Thus, they confront you about it. But in that they put things into themes and in that they see other's good and bad traits, they are developing a portrait of themselves, too. Here are some things that may alert you that this is happening:
- They ask you to see their positive attributes and give detailed reasons why they are good, "I put the dishes away, I am kind to my sister ..."
- Fully expects and imagines that others see their good qualities. As they listen to a baby babble, they announce, "The baby is telling me why they love me."
- They might delight in knowing why you just laughed, "Mommy, why did you just laugh?" "Because you made me laugh" "I made you laugh!?" Yes, you cute thing.
- Puts on clothes to define themselves, such as a football jersey. They're the winning quarterback.
- May tell story after story. These stories are them grappling with different ideas to decide how to be—until they can hook them onto something. Indeed, like being a winning quarterback.
- Tells you what they love to do, such as sing and dance
- Takes pride in doing things to improve their wellbeing, such as brushing their teeth well or eating healthy food
- Tells you definitively what they are *not* good at, "I'm not strong, so-and-so is strong."
- Or describes others are "big and strong!"
- Gives reasons for why they love someone or may say "And that's why I love you."
- Assigns jobs to people based on their talents, e.g., "Mom you can't do that because you're not good at. I'll do it because I'm good at it."
- Loves when you take notice of what they are doing

Plays the Cool Hero

- Might do many things with a pair of cool sunglasses on or a funky hat
- May love to fantasize they are a hero, such as a football player winning the game, reenacting all the moves they see on TV, putting on a jersey, and going to bed with their "winning" ball
- Does new, daring, heroic things, such as riding their tricycle up a big hill
- Interesting note: both of my sons had this cheerful "desire to be a hero" at exactly 1,358/1,359 days in development, which is around 3.8.3. My first wanted to pretend to be a football player. My younger son wanted to get up a hill on a tricycle. The exuberance and cheerfulness with which they did both of these things were identical.

A Beginning Ability to Put Themselves in Another's Shoes

- They recognize that other people have experiences as well. It kicks off a better understanding of someone else's perspective. It often starts with how they treat stuffed animals or dolls.
- Very caring and loving to stuffed or real animals. They may want to take care of and protect them, perhaps tucking them into bed at night with their own special blanket: a baby wash cloth.
- Or they ask you to try to send their favorite stuffed animal to the moon. Imagine watching a beloved stuff animal being hurled up into the air, suspended for a second as they "look" down at you, then coming back down. Neat, right? I think they "see" such facial expressions better now.
- Coaches and consoles their stuffed animals as if they are real. They might assure their stuffed animals that, "We would never leave you in the van. We would never leave you on top of a tree."
- They might pretend their stuffed animal is playing a game, as they play for the stuffed animal.
- Transfers social risks to their dolls or stuffed animals, e.g., "Doggy wants to lick you" or if you ask if you can kiss them, they say, "No, kiss doggy."

- Keenly aware that someone else is dizzy, may try to make others dizzy
- They are in awe that they are cold. “I’m so cold!” Like it’s a new awareness
- May want to help their sibling learn how to do something, like go down the slide. They want them to have this experience, too.

Three Year Old Milestone 11B—Precision

Starts: 3.8.3

Most Intense: At the beginning for a few days and again at 3.9.0 for a few days

Ends: 3.9.0

Irritable Period Summary

Possessive

- Possessive of what they are working on
- Hates when someone breaks something that they built
- May hit their sibling, if they mess with their workspace

Extremely Possessive

- At the start of this milestone they are a little bit possessive. 5-10 days in they get *very* possessive.
- Might be aggressive, rude, or bossy, likely in setting their own boundaries
- Super possessive and may thus get rough with their siblings or friends
- If they think something is “theirs,” they take it.
- Can be expected to never share

Confused

- They all of a sudden don’t say words right. For instance, they might say “blue” or “boop” as they try to say “Blippi”
- May be in a confused “do loop,” especially at bed. You need to read a book and the light needs to be on, but they also need to go to sleep and the light needs off, but then they want to read the book, and the light needs to be on, etc.
- They might run around in circles many times per day, as if it brings great comfort to them. I wonder if more flat-footed children are more prone to this, as they seem to like to have firm sensations on their feet.

Sensitive / Focused

- Gets really upset if you yell at them or think they are “bad”
- May start to hate loud noises distracting them
- May blame other children for something they did

Physical Changes

- May physically grow
- Boys’ voices might get slightly deeper.

Most Intense

- Very upset if someone tries to take something they have or interrupts them when working.
- You might see a physical growth spurt or hormonal changes, such as their voice changes slightly.

New Abilities Summary

- They become very precise in more than one way.

Intellectual Precision

- They’ve been holding onto an enormous amount of knowledge in the past milestones. They’ve chunked it up into details and put it back into a new theme. Now they throw this data around in a very precise way.

- They might see the nuances of time. They might say they are going to “be back in 5 minutes,” and they are approximately right. Or, “I just dropped something. It will take me a few seconds to get it.” Or a stain on the floor “will take about a half hour to dry.”
- They like to make two creations of something and to make them be exactly the same height.
- Takes an interest in measuring things and can measure things with a ruler
- If they are mathematically inclined, may write numbers bigger than 100
- Gets advanced ideas exactly right
- Very precise in estimating price. Something is \$8. They have \$5. They should put the item back.
- They might notice things are a “close call!” You almost hit each other. That was a close call.
- They can better understand fast forwarding and rewinding a movie.
- Makes things go slow, then fast, then slow

Highly Precise in Their Imaginations, Thinking, and Perceptiveness

- They might be able to increment the day it is mentally. Yesterday was July 10, so today is July 11.
- They might notice that “The Parthenon is in Aladdin (the movie).” They’re right.
- They get jokes on a more intellectual level. Their sister says something funny. They look over in acknowledgment that Big Sis was funny.
- Might talk about what they would do if they had \$100. They would buy a house.
- May be able to read words without pictures serving as an assist

Takes Social and Other Risks

- Takes social risks, e.g., says “WAH Wah wah” when someone else’s joke falls flat.
- Much chattier with strangers
- Might yell at people they don’t even know who are breaking the rules, say teenagers walking in the middle of the road
- More willing to ask for help when they need it
- May have dreams at night where they heroically do something or accomplish something, such as riding a bike—a skill that they’ve been working on

More Precise Control of Their Hands

- More precise in how they hold, say, a pencil and how they draw
- Might like to trace over letters they see with a pencil
- They might pour cereal in up to the right place in the bowl, instead of letting it overflow and dump all over.
- Better mastery over something like zipping up a jacket, zipping up a wallet, or operating a remote (could do it before; they just get much better now)

Initiates Impressive Creative Projects, with More Details

- Initiates their own highly creative projects
- Initiates projects which are impressive and with more types of parts, such as making a “light saber” out of a paper towel roll and green construction paper.
- Or draws a map showing the downstairs of their house
- May become detailed in their drawings and thus a drawing machine: snow men, trees, race cars, spiders, a sun, a butterfly, Curious George holding a pig

Three Year Old Milestone 12—Two Alternatives

Starts: 3.9.1

Most Intense: 3.9.2 until 3.9.3

Ends: 3.10.0

Irritable Period Summary

Extremely Stubborn

- Extremely stubborn about how things should go.
- They might totally refuse to go do what the family is doing.
- Demanding and stubborn about how to do things.
- You peeled the banana peel all wrong.
- They are extremely rigid that the thing they want (a cup or toy) is a specific color and that the other colors are definitely not acceptable.

Two Alternatives

- They come up with solutions that satisfy both you and them now. YOU go to the pool. THEY are staying home.
- They seem to now recognize that others have their own identity, needs, etc.

Cynical and Distrusting of Others

- But in that they recognize others have needs and can make plans, they seem totally untrusting that others will do that properly. They need to order you around.
- They are convinced their brother was going to take their snack, when he wasn't.
- They are in complete hysterics as you are driving because. Before even getting to the restaurant, they are certain you are going to order 6 chicken nuggets instead of what they want, which is 8 chicken nuggets.
- Or they get mad that you didn't use the word "SOMETIMES" when describing how something works, e.g., "The sun SOMETIMES shines" on their face.
- They get upset with you over tiny details of things. For instance, their dad always says, "Look at this little heart!" before you watch a video together, and he forgets to do it once. They are completely distraught.

Meltdowns Over Who is Faster or Better

- Meltdowns over what likely seem nonsensical, but which is likely over who is faster or better
- They might get after you ask someone to get you a piece of paper, and their sibling got it first.
- Or you are playing with balloons and they are upset their sibling's balloon is higher, thus "winning"

Hates Distractions

- Very upset with things that are distracting, like loud noises when they are trying to watch something. Or if someone hits them accidentally
- They are starting to become like a dog with a bone now. They know what they want, despite any distractions (and they thus don't like them).
- They might agree to a solution to something, such as they turn the TV off. But then they realize that this is a bit of a trick, change their mind mid-action, and announce, "No! I want to watch a MOVIE!"

Physically Grows

- Their arms and legs get longer.

- When they run around now, they might crash into things, such as walls. They don't know how strong they are yet.
- If you cosleep, you might get kicked and elbowed while they are sleeping.

Sleep

- They smile in their sleep, as if they are having pleasant dreams.

Most Intense

- Around 3.9.3 might show an epic meltdown, and it may be regarding what two different people or different things do. Maybe they want you to go to the pool while they stay home, or they have an epic meltdown that someone got somewhere faster than they did.

New Abilities Summary

- Can reliably mentally hold onto two ideas at once; can thus compare each or methodically test one or the other

Tests and Compares Ideas, Things, and Systems

- Gathers up all the supplies they need to do an "experiment." Then they set up the experiment, perhaps one you've done with them previously.
- Formally tests one idea as better or worse than another. They might build rockets out of paper and tests them "one by one" to see which can go higher.
- There is methodology and thought to their experiments. If, say, balancing weights on a fulcrum, they might do it methodically, by taking out the heaviest objects first.
- Verbally says they are "testing" their ideas
- Loves science experiments, especially if two things are compared
- Compares themselves to everything and always wants to be the fastest or the best (as seen before but it's much more intense)

Can Reliably Hold onto to Two Ideas at Once

- They notice, without doing it but just looking at something, that something odd-shaped and large, like a large stuffed animal will NOT fit into something small, such as a small basket. This is significant because in the last milestones, they were wildly off about this.
- They understand North and South (two directions) even as you drive around. They might say, "We're going north, but if we turn around, we would be going south."
- If they do a play, there is a greater trust now that the other person will deliver their lines, and they can respond on cue.
- It's as if they can persistently *hold onto* two separate ideas at the same time at this one. Whereas before, they could not. Any given idea or thing became totally wonky in their mind if their mind was focused elsewhere.
- Hence, also, why they are so painfully aware that someone is, say, faster than them at something

Develops Theories

- Develops theories involving two things, e.g., "Boys can rock climb, but girls can't."
- Before it was "One person can do something, and another can't." Now it's "Boys can, and girls can't." They generalize now.
- Or, "If we got into a car crash, we could try again." Two alternate versions of reality.
- Or if something goes wrong, say flour puffed up at them from a kitchen mixer that wasn't locked, with flour all over their face and clothes, they say, "It's Ok. Sometimes we make mistakes."

Sizes Up Others

- The overly optimistic skill that kicks off these milestones is a sense they can make decisions for other people. They learn they can't and why in these late three milestones.
- You as such might see them size up what others can or can't do.
- They check the truth of what you are saying. You say it is raining. They go and check. "Mommy, you were right." It's not to prove it to themselves. It is to see if YOU were right.
- Sizing up that "Boys can rock climb and girls can't" is also sizing up others.

Adopts Other's Personality

- They adorably adopt other's personality into their own. Other people are more real to them—but so are they—and they mix and match some characteristics.
- For instance, Blippi says, "That was so much fun learning about _____!" They might apply this to their current situation. "That was so much fun learning about building train tracks!"
- If they learn that someone else got a patent because of a "great idea" they had, they might announce they are also a great thinker with great ideas.
- They might put on a play of one of their favorite books with full emotion, hitting all the details, such as playing the happy, go lucky pig from a Gerald & Piggie book by Mo Willems.
- They are safe and secure in their own personality but adorably taking on others. They hit all the right words, notes, and cues in how they act out the other's character.

Very Immersed in Projects and Social Play

- Initiates games with other children, such as Go Fish
- Can play independently of adults

Three Year Old Milestone 13—Persistent Focus on One Idea with Many Variables

Starts: Some time before or after 3.10.1

Most Intense: For up to a week starting around 3.10.2

Ends: It might last until 3.10.3

Irritable Period Summary

Remains Stubborn

- They still have two solutions: one for you and one for them. But they might have some more complex details to it. They insist you order food inside of a restaurant, not go through a drive-thru, while they play in the playground, and then leave. (In fairness, it would work.)
- They are upset you turned right instead of left. Because going left would have got them to where they wanted to go, which was a particular restaurant, playground, etc.
- Very bossy in a specific way. You might have to take turns when helping them get dressed.
- Shows stronger identification with their biological sex in which they want to behave in ways in alignment with their sex, such as insisting on going in specifically the boy's or girl's bathroom
- Or they want to be called "handsome" not "pretty"
- Or they insist on only singing the part in a song where the same sex person that they are sings
- Still utterly hates distractions. "Daddy! Too loud!"

Aggressive, Rigid, Possessive

- May be aggressive, hits their sibling
- May stab their sibling with a pencil
- May kick and cry as they are insisting on the (totally workable, in their eyes) solutions that they came up with
- Won't let you do an activity with another child, keeps harassing you to do what they want
- Might be "over" cuddling. They might give you the side eye when you ask to cuddle.

Whiny

- Can be very whiny
- Demands, while whining, to have very specific, nuanced things. It can be very grating.

Very Confident in Making Decisions—Which Can Cause Problems

- They become very comfortable with making decisions that have several variables, such as when to cross a road based on more factors, such as if the vehicle has a turning signal on or not. This may cause them to dart out into the road on their own unexpectedly, as they felt it was safe to cross.
- Or maybe they categorize things in their own way such as something is "the orange one" and another is "the gray one." You have no idea what the orange or gray one are, and they are whiny and distraught about demanding you to go to one or the other.

Sleep Issues

- Might fall asleep easily during the day
- Might stay up late at night, practicing new skills

New Abilities Summary

- They have the ability to persistently hold onto to two ideas at once, as seen in the last one. Now they can keep ahold of one or more ideas in their mind while evaluating them against the larger picture, with many variables.

Persistently Moves Forward with One Idea (or Themselves) While Other Stuff is Going On

- They persistently hold onto one idea or even sometimes a literal object and accept its constant nature as other things happen to or affect it. They push their one idea (or themselves) forward.
- They understand that north is only a particular way. It's not this way, this way, or that way. I list this first as it is an illustrative example for this milestone. They just seem to more reliably understand that the reality around them is *sturdy*. It's not at all wonky to them anymore. North is north.
- They might ask why someone in a story gets taken to jail. They remark, noting on their own, "But that character is not a bad guy." They persistently hold onto the idea of the character of the person: he is good. This doesn't change because guards are taking him to jail (just like north is north). Why is this bad stuff happening to him?
- They might note that if a moving vehicle is near but doesn't have their turning signal on to go the direction you are, you can still cross the road. They might want to make such decisions more.
- They may constantly ask you to help them identify letters or read. Reading provides useful information to a child who is now steering their own "ship." Which button do they pick to restart versus resume a movie? What are road signs actually telling them?
- In their imagination now, they might want things to happen with them being the main star. Maybe they sit down with you and want a "teacher" to come teach them things. Or maybe they make up a play in which they were sad, but all the neighborhood kids come help them. They are the "one thing" while many things around them happen.
- You might see them intently look at something with one eye while the other eye is half closed. They intently, even slyly, size something up, as they perhaps hold onto the object slightly away from them. Focused: that is this milestone.

Encourages Others to Persist

- They might order you to keep persisting. "Keep singing, Mom!"
- Or they parent their Dad after he cut himself shaving, "It's OK. Your body will heal it. But you should be more careful next time. I hurt myself a lot! But it's by accident..."

Focused and Fast at Games

- They are more persistent at doing things and may play games better or build things faster.
- A very mechanically oriented child may put together something like a Marble Run, which is fairly complex to put together, by themselves. They do it faster than you can.
- May be more focused on games with some more complex logic, such as *Connect 4*

Three Year Old Milestone 14—Pushes Bounds

Starts: 3.11.0 or shy of it

Most Intense: A couple flare ups throughout, each lasting only about a day.

Ends: 3.11.3

Irritable Period Summary

Sleep Issues

- May easily fall asleep in the day

Aggressive

- They might get aggressive in getting their demands met.
- By push the bounds, I mean literally. They literally push things away from them.
- They might punch things to get their way. They might punch the chair you are in to get you out.
- Or they might punch a box of food you offered, if it's not what they wanted
- Upset if they see another child with candy and they can't have it

Communication Issues

- Communication problems, especially over things that move just outside of their immediate environment.
- They might say, crying and distraught, "Look at that one!" and you don't know what "that one" is. It turns out to be a bug that flew away.
- Or they become whiny and distraught to rewind a movie to a particular part. They might be able to communicate this with the right word (or not), but they are irritated by the nature of the problem itself.
- They can be very whiny in their demands and it can be very grating.

Highly Nuanced and Thus a Bit Rude

- They remain specific to the point of rudeness. If someone praises them for being a "responsible young man," they yell back, "I'm not a man! I'm a boy!"
- Or they starkly and inappropriately call a person "fat."

New Abilities Summary

- This one is marked by skills related to things that move from their body out, literally. Casting a fishing line or spraying a hose are examples.

A Sense That They Can Magically Push or Pull Objects Slightly Out of Reach

- They want stronger, more powerful tools to make things happen. They reach for their cup, which is out of reach, and wonder how they can get it. (You just go get it, right?) It is as if they are thinking, "Wouldn't it be fun to get it by magic!?"
- I believe this fantastical thinking may kick off the next cascade of skills, where they push boundaries. As such, this magical sense will slightly precede irritable behavior.
- They notice things that extend across a distance that is beyond their physical reach, such as "our stairs go all the way to the ceiling!" Or they are totally mesmerized when you open the sunroof on a vehicle.
- If they are handed a mechanical pencil or something similar, they are guaranteed to extend the lead as far as it can go.
- Very upset if a toy building structure isn't complete. Maybe you play a Jenga like game, where you build a wall. They very clearly notice that an initial brick is missing. It needs to be complete.

Physically Pushes the Bounds, Exuberantly

- Very exuberant
- May want to do bigger physical things with more verve, such as swing on a swing. It's the joy and exuberance with which they do it that is of note.
- Throws their whole body into the things they act out. They may run in place while describing how they have to save someone.
- May put face paint or marker all over their face. But you should see how proud they are!
- Might crash a birthday party they see while out (no, they weren't invited)
- Their physical gestures might show how they "push the bounds."
- They put their legs and arms out dramatically as they order someone to stop.
- They might chase their sibling around, wanting to hug them.
- May rush to open a door for someone
- After someone playfully messes with them, they pop up, "YOU CAN'T CATCH ME!"
- Loves to be flipped over and tickled

Intentionally and Easily Grows in the Skills They Have

- They do something strikingly independent, all on their own, without being asked to. They might take off their shoes on their own. Or anything else that they hadn't previously been doing but now do.
- They happily announce that they can learn new skills. If they see a kickboard (used for swimming), they bubble, "I don't know how to swim. But I can learn!"
- They may push themselves to go down a slide or climb a ladder they previously didn't go on.
- Big jobs are done right: your entire back porch may be swept of all sand
- Might try something new. They might use watercolor paints for a project that typically uses acrylic paint. In addition, they try out colors they've never used before, in ways they've never colored before.
- They might wander around and find things that need fixed and try to do just that—just because. Maybe a railing in your house is missing its cap or anything similar.
- They might pick up on a new skill easily, especially one in which things move over a distance slightly beyond them, such as learning how to play ping pong, cast a fishing line, or spray a hose.
- Or they easily take to activities in which an object moves with them or others on it, such as pulling a wagon or riding a pony
- They surprise you with how long they can keep up with things now. They might walk the whole way on a nature trail or further than normal when at an amusement park.

More Realistic About What Can be Done

- In the previous milestones, they seemed to want to puppeteer those around them: you do this, I'm doing that. Now they seem to realize others have limitations, wants, needs, etc, and/or need to be slightly persuaded.
- If you can't get them milk right away, they might conclude, "Mommy must not have heard me."
- To get your cooperation, it's like they plot. They sit up in bed, "Wait a minute! What if we were to go downstairs?" Because they want to go downstairs. It's as if they realize they have to be a bit sly to get you to do what they want.
- They size up their environment with more realism.
- They might walk into a room and start evaluating it, "My brother isn't here." "We don't own any pets." Or as noted, they might note that they "don't know how to swim (yet)."

- But this realism often coincides with a solution to pushing the current reality to something better. Their brother isn't here—but they can pretend he is. They don't know how to use a kickboard used for swimming—but they can learn. We don't own any pets—but this stuffed animal can be my pet.
- They have both realism and a desire to push the bounds. Creative, effective solutions ensue!

Just Plain Smarter

- Somewhat into the milestone, they get just plain “smarter” in the way that we adults consider “smart.” They are more alert, faster, and seem to know what’s “up.”
- The skill here is not what’s important. The skills are what they are. It’s the speed in which they do it that is of note.
- If they are adding already, they might add to 10 with shocking speed.
- They might find things in a “find it” book with amazing speed. Or they find things in nature with similar speed, such as birds or squirrels.
- They easily follow along with even adult-themed movies, noting what the characters are doing, etc.
- May cheekily play a role, such as bopping their head to music. They stay in character, both for the joy they derive from it and that it makes others laugh. But mostly the joy they derive from it.
- May be very cooperative in rules or requests, such as staying quiet at the library, going to the potty, etc.
- They really can be a delight in through this age.

Runs a Longer but Still Short Gamut of [Many Things]

- They are pushing the bounds more outside of their own physical being, perceptually and physically, but the gamut they run is fairly short. Anything that gets too long gets scary and wonky.
- Their “pushing the bounds” causes an errant view of how long things last. They seem to think that things last forever, when they don’t. So, if you are telling them “no more videos” at night, they might think this means “no more videos, ever.”
- They develop deeper emotions. They may become more seriously contemplative. They are in deep thought as they persist with their ideas. It looks almost as if they are frowning.
- They are soon to run a much fuller spectrum of human emotion. They will have lower lows and higher highs and their humor will also run the full gamut, becoming serious, quiet, and dark as well as silly and charming to elicit laughs.

Sizes up the Bound Visually

- Towards the end of this milestone, they start to size up visual distance, weight, or other things that run across a spectrum by visual perception alone.
- They might look at a train pulling many cars and conclude, “that train has a heavy load.”
- Or they might start to identify what is impossible
- Their stories may reflect this. A claw is about to get something but then—what!/?—stops. Why did you stop, claw? The claw only goes so far. There is more drama and suspense in their stories.
- They may really like when you draw something for them because “Then I get to see it!” You bring something that could have been far away close to them.
- Corresponding with this stage can be especially aggressive behavior, especially in boys.

Likes to Hide in Small, Dark Places

- They might hide themselves in a “tent,” such as under a table.
- They like to hide here for some amount of time, maybe a half hour. They might rattle off what’s on their mind, perhaps running through all the math facts they know.
- All of my children did this around 1,448 days from the due date (just shy of 3.11.3)!

- With as much as they like to push the bounds, realize what is going on outside of their space, and sense the many variables all around them, maybe they just need a break!