Excerpt from:


**Table 2.1. Developmental milestones of self-regulation.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age range</th>
<th>Developmental progression</th>
<th>How this might look</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Early infancy (0-6 months) | Temperament plays an important role in how children react to new experiences and how easily they calm down. Self-regulation is primarily external. Early signs of self-regulation begin to emerge. | • Crying or cooing to express needs  
• Focusing on faces and interesting patterns  
• Self-soothing (e.g., sucking on a fist)  
• Turning head away from unwanted sounds or people                                                                                                                                               |
| Late infancy (6 months-24 months) | Self-regulation is still largely externally-regulated by adults. Children start to demonstrate working memory, maintain attention for short periods of time, and show early signs of controlling emotions and behavior. | • Calming down in response to adult cues and responses  
• Persisting on engaging tasks for a short time  
• Remembering salient locations when driving in a car  
• Searching for hidden objects  
• Showing recognition of key people in their lives (e.g., family members and caregivers)                                                                                                                                 |
| Toddlerhood (24-36 months; 2-3 years) | Self-regulation starts to move from external to internal control as children learn to comply and internalize adult commands and requests.                                                                                      | • Using cues from parents/caregivers to decide how to respond to new people or situations  
• Using private speech to say things like “Don’t touch the stove, it’s hot!”                                                                                                                                 |
| Preschool (3-5 years) | Rapid development in self-regulation parallels rapid growth in brain development. Children start to develop theory of mind or an understanding that others have thoughts and feelings that may differ from their own. Perspective-taking abilities begin to develop, but children are still largely egocentric and may have difficulty seeing other perspectives. | • Demonstrating self-regulation during make-believe play with others  
• Remembering and following multi-step instructions, and demonstrating self-control of emotions and behavior  
• Showing persistence on activities like puzzles and blocks  
• Using private speech as a regulation strategy                                                                                                                                               |
| Kindergarten (5-6 years) | Rapid growth in brain development continues and is accompanied by development in self-regulation. Children’s theory of mind continues to develop and children become less egocentric and increase their | • Cooperating and playing well with peers  
• Demonstrating a range of strategies to regulate behaviors, emotions, and thoughts  
• Increasing ability to persist on and |
| perspective-taking skills. Metacognition increases and can be used to reflect on children’s own thinking. Children start to use self-regulation strategies and do so more consistently. | complete tasks |
| • Remembering, following, and completing multi-step instructions |