









Developmental Milestones for Children of Primary School Age

Year 5 – Aged 9-10

Important context: While age-based milestones are helpful guides, they're not rigid rules. Daily living skills develop at different rates, often unevenly or asynchronously, especially for neurodivergent learners. Use these milestones as a flexible reference, always considering each individual's unique profile.

Year 5 – 9-10 years	
Self-Help Skills	<p>At ages 9-10, children should be developing independence in self-care, including showering, managing school preparation, preparing simple meals, and handling personal hygiene without prompts. They are capable of basic money management, time management, and taking on household chores, while also learning emotional regulation, such as positive self-talk and building resilience.</p> <p> Personal Care & Independence</p> <p>By Year 5, most children can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Dress and undress independently, including for PE (managing laces, buttons, ties)• Maintain good personal hygiene (washing hands properly, basic awareness of body changes)• Use the toilet independently and manage personal cleanliness• Look after their own belongings (coat, bag, water bottle) <p> Some children may begin early awareness of puberty changes and need guidance</p> <p> Organisation & Responsibility (School Life)</p> <p>Children typically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pack and organise their school bag independently• Remember key items (homework, reading book, PE kit) most of the time• Manage their own equipment (pencils, ruler, etc.)• Follow daily routines with little prompting• Begin to take responsibility for meeting deadlines (e.g. homework)

	<p> Eating & Daily Living Skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use cutlery confidently and eat independently • Make simple food or drinks (e.g. sandwiches, cereal) with supervision • Understand basic healthy choices (balanced diet, hydration) • Clear up after themselves (tidying plates, wiping surfaces) <p> Managing Themselves (Executive Skills)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow multi-step instructions (e.g. “get changed, pack your bag, line up”) • Begin to manage time more effectively (knowing when to get ready, finish tasks) • Stay focused on tasks for longer periods • Start to plan ahead (e.g. organising what they need for the next day) <p> Problem-Solving & Independence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attempt to solve simple problems before asking for help • Know when to seek adult support appropriately • Show resilience when tasks are challenging • Adapt to small changes in routine with increasing flexibility <p> Home Responsibilities</p> <p>Many children can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help with simple chores (tidying room, setting the table) • Take responsibility for small jobs (feeding pets, organising belongings) • Follow routines at home with minimal reminders
<p>Social and Emotional Skills</p>	<p>At ages 9-10, children show increased independence, prioritising friendships and peer acceptance over family. They develop complex empathy, strong morals, and sharper problem-solving skills, while becoming more self-critical and prone to stress. They prefer group activities, understand complex emotions, and are refining their sense of identity</p> <p> Social Skills & Friendships</p> <p>By Year 5, most children:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Form stronger, more stable friendships based on shared interests and trust • Understand that friendships can be complex (loyalty, disagreements, making up) • Work well in groups, taking on different roles (leader, organiser, contributor)

- Show increased ability to **cooperate, negotiate, and compromise**
- Are more aware of **peer influence** and may start to seek approval from friends
- Include others and show a growing sense of **fairness and justice**

Emotional Awareness & Regulation

Children typically:

- Recognise and name a **wide range of emotions** in themselves and others
- Begin to **manage emotions more independently** (though may still need support)
- Cope better with frustration, disappointment, or change
- Start to understand that people can feel **mixed emotions** at the same time
- Use strategies (talking, taking space, problem-solving) to regulate feelings

Self-Concept & Confidence

- Develop a clearer sense of **self-identity** (strengths, interests, values)
- Show growing **self-confidence**, though this can fluctuate
- Become more aware of how others see them (which can impact self-esteem)
- Take pride in achievements but may also compare themselves to peers

Empathy & Perspective-Taking




- Show **empathy**—understanding how others feel and responding appropriately
- Consider different viewpoints and begin to **see beyond their own perspective**
- Show concern for fairness, equality, and inclusion
- Are more likely to **support or stand up for others** (though not always consistently)







Independence & Responsibility

- Take more responsibility for their actions and behaviour
- Begin to **reflect on choices** and understand consequences
- Show independence in organising themselves (schoolwork, belongings)
- Respond to expectations with less adult prompting


Behaviour & Moral Understanding

- Have a stronger sense of **right and wrong**, and why rules exist

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand fairness in a more nuanced way (not just “equal”) • May question rules or challenge decisions as their thinking develops • Are developing a sense of personal values and beliefs
<p>Communication skills</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Speaking & Listening</p> <p>Can they:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Explain ideas clearly <input type="checkbox"/> Take part in discussions and build on others’ ideas <input type="checkbox"/> Justify opinions with reasons <input type="checkbox"/> Follow more complex instructions
<p>Physical Skills</p>	<p>For Year 5 children (ages 9–10), physical development becomes more refined, controlled, and strategic. Children are typically more confident in movement, with growing strength, coordination, and independence. They also begin to apply skills more purposefully in sports and everyday tasks.</p> <p>Here’s a clear overview of typical physical milestones:</p> <p> Gross Motor Skills (movement, strength & coordination)</p> <p>By Year 5, most children can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Move with control, fluency, and coordination across a range of activities • Combine skills confidently (e.g. running, passing, and shooting in games) • Show improved agility, balance, and reaction speed • Throw, catch, and strike a ball with accuracy and power • Take part in team sports with an understanding of tactics and positioning • Perform sequences in gymnastics or dance with control and expression • Ride a bike, swim, or take part in sports with increasing confidence and endurance <p> Stamina is noticeably stronger—they can sustain activity for longer periods</p> <p> Fine Motor Skills (precision & control)</p> <p>Children typically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write fluently, legibly, and at speed (joined handwriting usually secure) • Adjust writing for purpose (size, neatness, presentation) • Use a wide range of tools accurately (e.g. rulers, compasses, protractors) • Show precision in tasks like drawing, crafting, and construction • Manage everyday tasks independently (tying laces, organising belongings)

	<p> Balance, Coordination & Core Strength</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain good posture for extended periods (important for writing stamina) • Demonstrate strong balance in dynamic activities (e.g. balancing while moving) • Show improved core strength, supporting both PE and classroom tasks <p> Body Awareness & Spatial Awareness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have a strong sense of how their body moves in space • Judge distance, timing, and speed accurately (e.g. intercepting a ball) • Follow and create complex sequences of movement • Apply skills strategically in games (anticipating others' movements) <p> Health, Fitness & Independence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand the importance of regular exercise, hydration, and nutrition • Recognise how their body responds to exercise (heart rate, breathing) • Show increasing independence in self-care and organisation (changing for PE, managing kit) • Begin to take responsibility for personal fitness and participation
<p>Learning Skills (Secrets of Success)</p>	<p> Learning Skills (Very Important)</p> <p>Can they:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <input type="checkbox"/> Work independently for sustained periods • <input type="checkbox"/> Stay focused and complete tasks • <input type="checkbox"/> Try different strategies when stuck • <input type="checkbox"/> Accept feedback and improve work • <input type="checkbox"/> Show resilience (don't give up quickly) <p> These are often as important as academic skills at this stage.</p>
<p>Academic Skills</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Year 5 Academic Milestones Checklist (Ages 9–10)</p> <p>English</p> <p> Reading</p> <p>Can they:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Read fluently and with expression from age-appropriate books <input type="checkbox"/> Explain what has happened and summarise key points <input type="checkbox"/> Infer characters' thoughts and feelings using evidence


- Identify how an author uses language (e.g. powerful words, description)
- Skim and scan to find information quickly

 **Secure if:** they can do this independently and explain their thinking.

Writing

Can they:

- Write clearly for different purposes (story, explanation, persuasion)
- Organise ideas into **paragraphs**
- Use varied sentence types (including complex sentences)
- Use punctuation mostly correctly (commas, brackets, dashes, colons)
- Spell most Year 5/6 common words correctly
- Edit and improve their own work

 **Secure if:** writing is consistent, readable, and mostly accurate without heavy support.

Mathematics

Number & Calculation

Can they:

- Read and write numbers up to **1,000,000**
- Use formal written methods (+, -, ×, ÷) accurately
- Solve multi-step problems

Fractions, Decimals & Percentages

Can they:

- Compare and order fractions
- Add/subtract fractions with the same denominator
- Understand decimals to **3 decimal places**
- Recognise simple percentages (e.g. 50%, 25%)

Measurement


Can they:

- Convert units (e.g. grams ↔ kilograms)
- Calculate **perimeter and area**
- Solve real-life problems involving time and money

Geometry & Statistics

Can they:

- Identify different types of angles
- Plot points on a grid (coordinates)
- Read and interpret line graphs

 **Secure in maths if:** they can apply skills to solve problems, not just complete calculations.

Science

Can they:

- Ask scientific questions and suggest investigations
- Carry out **fair tests**
- Record results (tables, graphs, diagrams)
- Explain findings using scientific vocabulary
- Understand key topics (forces, space, materials, life cycles)

Foundation Subjects (General Indicators)

Can they:

- Use maps and atlases confidently
- Explain historical events and compare time periods
- Use computers safely and create simple programs
- Show creativity in art, music, and design

How to Judge Overall “On Track”

A child is broadly **on track in Year 5** if they:

- Meet **most** of the checklist items
- Can apply skills **independently** (not just with help)
- Show **consistency across subjects**
- Are beginning to handle **more complex reasoning and problem-solving**

When to Look Closer

You might want extra support if a child:


- Still struggles with basic reading fluency or times tables
- Avoids writing or produces very limited work
- Cannot apply maths skills to solve problems
- Lacks confidence or gives up quickly

Suggestions if a child is falling behind or excelling

If your child is falling behind (Year 5)


Reading support

- Read **daily for 10–15 minutes**, even if it's shared reading
- Use “take turns” reading to reduce pressure
- Focus on understanding rather than speed
- Ask simple, supportive questions:
 - “What has happened so far?”
 - “Why did the character do that?”
 - “Can you find evidence in the text?”

 Priority: comprehension and confidence, not volume


Writing support

- Keep writing short and structured (5–10 minutes)
- Focus on **one skill at a time**:
 - basic sentence structure
 - punctuation (., ? !)
 - spelling common words
- Use real-life writing:
 - shopping lists
 - notes/messages
 - short diary entries
- Encourage “say it → write it → check it”

 Priority: clarity and basic accuracy

Maths support

- Strengthen **times tables (up to 12x)** daily (quick bursts, not long drills)
- Use objects and visuals for understanding (arrays, counters, Lego)
- Focus on:
 - addition/subtraction fluency
 - place value (thousands, hundreds, tens, ones)
- Break word problems into steps:
 - What do we know?
 - What are we asked?
 - What operation do we need?

 Priority: fluency + understanding number structure

General strategies


- Keep sessions short (10–15 minutes max)
- Prioritise confidence over correction

- Praise effort and persistence
- Stay in regular contact with school to align support

If your child is excelling in Year 5


Reading extension

- Introduce more complex texts (challenging novels, non-fiction, poetry)
- Ask deeper analytical questions:
 - “Why did the author choose this word?”
 - “What is the author trying to make you feel?”
 - “What evidence supports your view?”
- Encourage summarising and comparing texts

 Priority: inference, analysis, and evaluation


Writing extension

- Encourage longer, structured writing:
 - multi-paragraph stories
 - persuasive arguments
 - reports
- Introduce “writer’s craft” challenges:
 - varied sentence structures
 - advanced punctuation (colons, semicolons where appropriate)
 - ambitious vocabulary
- Build editing habits:
 - “How can this be improved for impact?”

 Priority: style, precision, and effect on reader

Maths extension

- Move into reasoning-heavy tasks:
 - multi-step word problems
 - explaining methods clearly
- Explore:
 - fractions, decimals, percentages links
 - number patterns and algebra-like thinking
- Ask:
 - “Is there another way to solve it?”
 - “Can you prove your answer?”

 Priority: reasoning and mathematical explanation

Enrichment ideas

- Coding and logic challenges

- STEM experiments with prediction → testing → explanation
- Independent research projects (space, history, climate, etc.)
- Creative writing projects (stories, scripts, journals)

💡 Priority: independence and depth of thinking

🧑‍🏫 What matters for both groups

🧩 1. Keep learning consistent, not intense

Short, regular input works better than long sessions.

🌐 2. Build independence

Year 5 is a key year for reducing adult support gradually.

❤️ 3. Protect confidence

Whether behind or ahead, confidence strongly influences progress.

🏫 4. Work with school

Teachers can:

- adjust expectations or groupings
- provide targeted intervention or extension
- highlight specific gaps or strengths

★ Simple summary

- If falling behind → **rebuild fluency, simplify tasks, increase repetition**
- If excelling → **increase complexity, reasoning, and independence**