

Developmental Milestones for Children of Primary School Age

Year 3 – Aged 7-8

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 3 – 7-8 years

Self-Help Skills

- **Personal Hygiene:** Children start to shower or bathe independently, with supervision nearby, and brush their teeth effectively.
- **Dressing:** Managing complex fastenings, such as buttons and zippers, tying their shoelaces and choosing appropriate clothing for weather.
- **Meal Prep:** Pouring drinks and preparing simple breakfast items (cereal, toast).
- **Organisation:** Children start to help parents with organising their school bag/equipment for the next day and keeping their room tidy.

For **Year 3 children (ages 7–8)**, self-help skills are about moving from adult-supported routines to **growing independence**, while still needing reminders and structure. Children are learning to manage themselves more consistently across the school day.

Here's a clear overview:

Personal Care & Independence

By Year 3, most children can:

- Dress and undress independently (including for PE, though may need reminders for speed or organisation)
- Manage basic hygiene (washing hands, using tissues, covering coughs)
- Use the toilet independently and manage personal cleanliness
- Look after their belongings with some support (coat, bag, lunchbox)

Organisation & Responsibility (School Life)

Children typically:





- Pack and unpack their **school bag** with guidance
- Remember key items some of the time (reading book, PE kit), but often need reminders
- Begin to take responsibility for their own equipment (pencils, ruler)
- Follow daily routines, though still benefit from prompts
- Start to understand expectations around **homework and tasks**





Eating & Daily Living Skills

- Eat independently using cutlery
- Open containers and manage lunch items with increasing confidence
- Make simple choices about food (with guidance)
- Begin to clear away after themselves

Managing Themselves (Executive Skills)

- Follow **1–2 step instructions** reliably; beginning to manage 3-step instructions with support
- Stay focused on tasks for short periods, building stamina
- Transition between activities with reminders
- Begin to understand simple routines and timing (e.g. getting ready for next lesson)

	<p> Problem-Solving & Independence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Try simple strategies before asking for help (e.g. re-reading instructions)• Begin to show resilience, though may give up if tasks feel difficult• Ask for help, but may rely on adults quickly• Cope with small changes when supported <p> Home Responsibilities</p> <p>Many children can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Help with simple chores (tidying toys, setting the table)• Take some responsibility for their belongings• Follow basic routines with reminders
<p>Social and Emotional Skills</p>	<p>For Year 3 children (ages 7–8), social and emotional development is focused on building positive relationships, understanding feelings, and developing self-control. This is often a transition year where children move from more adult-supported behaviour to greater independence.</p> <p>Here’s a clear breakdown:</p> <p> Social Skills & Friendships</p> <p>By Year 3, most children:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Form friendships, though these may still change fairly often• Enjoy playing and working with others, especially in small groups• Are learning to take turns, share, and cooperate• Begin to understand group rules and expectations• May need support to resolve disagreements fairly• Are starting to become more aware of peer opinions, but adults are still key <p> Emotional Awareness & Regulation</p> <p>Children typically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Can identify basic emotions (happy, sad, angry, worried)• Are beginning to talk about their feelings more clearly• May still need adult support to manage strong emotions• Can calm down after upset with guidance• Are developing patience, but may still find waiting difficult

	<p> Self-Confidence & Self-Concept</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Show growing confidence in familiar tasks and routines • Begin to recognise their strengths and areas they find tricky • May compare themselves to others, but this is still developing • Respond well to encouragement and praise <p> Empathy & Understanding Others</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Start to recognise how others might feel • Can show kindness and helpfulness (e.g. comforting a friend) • Are beginning to understand that others may think differently • Still developing the ability to fully see another person’s perspective <p> Independence & Responsibility</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begin to take responsibility for their behaviour with support • Follow rules and routines, though may need reminders • Are learning to make simple choices and understand consequences • Increasing independence in social situations, but still guided by adults <p> Behaviour & Moral Understanding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand basic ideas of right and wrong • Often see things as very black and white (“fair/unfair”) • Follow rules mainly to please adults or avoid consequences
Communication skills	<p>Speaking & Listening:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Discussion Skills: Participating confidently in discussions and offering their ideas and opinions in group settings. <input type="checkbox"/> Presentation Skills: Presenting information clearly to others (e.g., a short presentation or book review). <input type="checkbox"/> Listening Skills: Actively listening to others, asking relevant questions, and providing appropriate responses. <input type="checkbox"/> Storytelling: Retelling stories and personal experiences in a clear and engaging way.
Physical Skills	<p>For Year 3 children (ages 7–8), physical development focuses on building coordination, control, and confidence. Children are becoming more skilled in movement but are still refining accuracy and consistency.</p> <p>Here’s a clear breakdown:</p>

Gross Motor Skills (movement & coordination)

By Year 3, most children can:

- Run, jump, hop, and skip with **increasing control**
- Begin to link movements together (e.g. run and jump smoothly)
- Show improving **balance**, though it may still be inconsistent
- Throw and catch a ball with growing accuracy (but not always consistently)
- Kick and control a ball in simple games
- Take part in team activities, beginning to understand **rules**
- Climb and use playground equipment confidently

👉 Movements are developing, but still becoming **more fluid and reliable**

Fine Motor Skills (hand control & precision)

Children typically:

- Write legibly, though size and spacing may still vary
- Begin to develop **joined handwriting** (depending on school approach)
- Hold a pencil comfortably with good control
- Use scissors accurately for simple shapes
- Draw with increasing detail

Balance, Coordination & Core Strength


- Sit at a table with improving posture (may still need reminders)
- Balance on one foot for a short period
- Begin to control their body in PE activities (e.g. simple balances in gymnastics)
- Core strength is developing but not yet fully secure

Body Awareness & Spatial Awareness

- Begin to understand how their body moves in space
- Judge distance and speed with growing accuracy
- Follow **simple sequences of movement** (e.g. in dance or PE)
- May still need support with more complex patterns

Stamina & Physical Confidence

- Increasing energy and willingness to take part in physical activity
- Can sustain activity for longer than younger children, but may tire more quickly than older peers
- Growing confidence, though some children may still be hesitant in new activities

	<p>Movement and Coordination:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Continuing to develop fine and gross motor skills (e.g., running, jumping, throwing). <input type="checkbox"/> Participating in team sports and understanding basic rules (e.g., football, basketball). <p>Health & Fitness:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Understanding the importance of physical activity for health. <input type="checkbox"/> Learning basic concepts of fitness (e.g., strength, stamina, flexibility).
<p>Learning Behaviours</p> <p>(Secrets of Success)</p>	<p> Learning Skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Can work independently for short periods <input type="checkbox"/> Follows instructions with 2–3 steps <input type="checkbox"/> Tries even when work feels challenging <input type="checkbox"/> Talks about their ideas and explains their thinking <input type="checkbox"/> Completes homework with some support
<p>Academic Skills</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Year 3 Parent Checklist (Ages 7–8)</p> <p>English</p> <p>Reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Fluency: Children should be able to read age-appropriate texts with increasing fluency and confidence. <input type="checkbox"/> Comprehension: They should demonstrate an understanding of the main ideas, events, and characters in stories. They should be able to retell stories and identify key details (who, what, where, when, why). <input type="checkbox"/> Inference: Begin to make simple inferences based on the text, such as predicting what might happen next or explaining why a character acted in a certain way. <input type="checkbox"/> Genre Recognition: Understanding different types of texts (fiction, non-fiction, poetry) and being able to identify the characteristics of these genres. <input type="checkbox"/> Reading Strategies: Use strategies to decode unfamiliar words (e.g., context, phonics, root words). <p>Writing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Sentence Structure: Writing longer and more detailed sentences with correct punctuation (e.g., commas, apostrophes for possession). <input type="checkbox"/> Paragraphs: Beginning to write in paragraphs, with a clear beginning, middle, and end. <input type="checkbox"/> Spelling & Grammar: Applying spelling rules (e.g., adding prefixes and suffixes) and using correct grammar, including subject-verb agreement and correct use of past/present tense. <input type="checkbox"/> Writing for Different Purposes: Writing for a variety of purposes, including descriptive, narrative, persuasive, and instructional writing.

- Handwriting:** Continuing to develop legible and consistent handwriting, transitioning from print to cursive.
- Creative Writing:** Expanding their creative writing skills with more developed characters, settings, and plots.

Mathematics

Number and Place Value:

- Understanding Place Value:** Recognising the value of digits in three-digit numbers (hundreds, tens, and ones).
- Counting:** Counting in steps of 2, 5, 10, 50, and 100. Understanding and working with larger numbers (up to 1000).
- Comparing and Ordering Numbers:** Ordering numbers up to 1000, and comparing numbers using symbols (<, >, =).
- Rounding:** Rounding numbers to the nearest 10 or 100.

Addition and Subtraction:

- Mental Calculations:** Beginning to perform addition and subtraction mentally, applying knowledge of known number facts.
- Column Addition & Subtraction:** Using column methods to add and subtract numbers up to 3 digits.
- Solving Word Problems:** Solving addition and subtraction word problems with increasing complexity.

Multiplication and Division:

- Times Tables:** Learning and recalling multiplication and division facts for the 3, 4, and 8 times tables (in addition to 2, 5, and 10 times tables from earlier years).
- Multiplication & Division Facts:** Using known multiplication and division facts to solve more complex problems.
- Written Methods:** Begin to use formal methods of multiplication and division.
- Word Problems:** Solving multiplication and division word problems.

Fractions:

- Understanding Fractions:** Recognizing and understanding fractions such as $\frac{1}{2}$, $\frac{1}{3}$, $\frac{1}{4}$, $\frac{1}{5}$, and $\frac{1}{10}$, and comparing them.
- Fractions of Numbers:** Finding simple fractions of numbers (e.g., $\frac{1}{2}$ of 8, $\frac{1}{3}$ of 9).
- Equivalent Fractions:** Recognising equivalent fractions (e.g., $\frac{1}{2} = \frac{2}{4}$).

Geometry:

- 2D and 3D Shapes:** Recognising and naming a wider range of shapes (e.g., quadrilaterals, triangles, and 3D shapes like cubes, pyramids, and spheres).
- Properties of Shapes:** Identifying the properties of 2D and 3D shapes (e.g., number of sides, vertices, and faces).
- Symmetry:** Identifying lines of symmetry in 2D shapes and drawing symmetrical shapes.
- Position and Direction:** Describing positional language and following directions (e.g., "up," "down," "left," "right").

Measurement:

- Length and Height:** Measuring and comparing lengths and heights using standard units (e.g., meters, centimeters).
- Weight and Mass:** Understanding and using kilograms and grams to measure weight.
- Capacity and Volume:** Measuring and comparing the capacity of containers (e.g., liters, milliliters).
- Time:** Reading and using both digital and analog clocks, including telling the time to the nearest 5 minutes.
- Money:** Solving problems involving money (e.g., adding and subtracting amounts, giving change).
- Data Handling:**
- Collecting Data:** Collecting data and representing it in bar charts, pictograms, and tables.
- Interpreting Data:** Interpreting and drawing conclusions from graphs and charts.

Science

Plants:

- Parts of Plants:** Understanding the structure and functions of different parts of plants (roots, stems, leaves, flowers).
- Plant Growth:** Investigating what plants need to grow (light, water, nutrients).
- Pollination:** Learning about pollination and seed dispersal.

Animals (Including Humans):

- Skeleton and Muscles:** Learning about the human skeleton and basic muscles, and how they help us move.
- Nutrition:** Understanding the basic food groups and the importance of a balanced diet.

Rocks and Soils:

- Types of Rocks:** Identifying different types of rocks (e.g., igneous, sedimentary, and metamorphic) and their properties.
- Soil Composition:** Understanding what soil is made of.

Light and Shadows:

- Sources of Light:** Understanding that light comes from sources like the sun, torches, and lamps.
- Shadows:** Investigating how shadows are formed and how they change over the course of the day.

Forces and Magnets:

- Push and Pull:** Understanding the concepts of force (push and pull).
- Magnetic Forces:** Investigating magnets and understanding their properties (e.g., poles, attraction, repulsion).





History & Geography

History:

- Ancient Civilizations:** Learning about ancient civilizations, such as the Romans, and Pre-History.
- Chronology:** Understanding the concept of timelines and the sequence of historical events.

Geography:

- **Map Skills:** Using maps to locate countries, continents, and oceans. Beginning to understand grid references and symbols on maps.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Human and Physical Geography: Understanding the difference between human geography (e.g., cities, population) and physical geography (e.g., mountains, rivers). <p>Art & Design</p> <p>Creative Expression:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Experimenting with a range of materials, tools, and techniques (e.g., painting, drawing, sculpture) <input type="checkbox"/> Creating artwork based on different themes and subjects. <input type="checkbox"/> Studying famous artists and exploring their styles. <p>3D Art:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Creating 3D art (e.g., models, clay work) and understanding space and form. <p>Computing</p> <p>Digital Literacy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Using technology <input type="checkbox"/> Word processing <p>► When to look more closely</p> <p>You might want extra support if your child:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Struggles to read simple texts fluently • Finds basic number facts very difficult • Avoids writing or becomes very frustrated
<p>Suggestions if a child is falling behind or excelling</p>	<p> If your child is falling behind (Year 3)</p> <p> Reading support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short daily reading (10 mins) — consistency matters more than length • Re-read familiar books to build confidence • Read <i>to them</i> as much as they read themselves • Ask simple questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ “What just happened?” ○ “Why did the character do that?” <p> Focus: understanding, not speed</p> <p> Writing support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Don’t over-correct spelling during writing (pick 1–2 key targets only)

- Encourage “say it → write it → read it back”
- Use everyday writing:
 - shopping lists
 - messages
 - captions for drawings
- Model sentences together:
 - “Let’s say it, then improve it.”

💡 Focus: confidence + clarity over perfection

Maths support

- Use real objects (coins, Lego, food) for calculations
- Practise **number bonds and times tables little and often**
- Keep maths practical:
 - cooking
 - measuring
 - shopping
- Break word problems into steps:
 - “What do we know?”
 - “What are we trying to find?”

💡 Focus: understanding number, not speed

General strategies

- Keep sessions short (5–15 minutes)
- Praise effort, not correctness
- Avoid pressure before school/homework fatigue builds
- Share concerns with school early—they can adapt support

If your child is excelling in Year 3

Reading extension

- Introduce richer texts (longer chapters, varied genres)
- Ask deeper questions:
 - “Why did the author choose this word?”
 - “What evidence supports that?”

💡 Focus: inference and author intent

Writing extension

- Encourage longer pieces with planning:
 - stories with paragraphs
 - alternative endings

- Add “writer challenges”:
- include speech
- use 3 different sentence starters
- Encourage editing:
- “How can you make this more powerful?”

💡 Focus: style and structure

Maths extension

- Move beyond answers into explanations:
- “How did you solve it?”
- Introduce multi-step problems
- Explore patterns:
- sequences
- logic puzzles
- Start explaining reasoning verbally and in writing

💡 Focus: reasoning, not just calculation

Enrichment ideas

- Coding apps or logic games
- Science experiments with predictions and explanations
- Creative projects (build, design, invent)
- Research topics they are interested in

💡 Focus: curiosity and independence

For both groups (most important)

1. Keep learning visible but light

- Use fridge notes, games, conversations—not worksheets overload

2. Build independence gradually

- Don’t step in too quickly—give thinking time

3. Protect confidence

- Progress in Year 3 is uneven—confidence matters more than speed

4. Talk to school early

- Teachers can:
 - adjust tasks
 - provide interventions
 - extend challenge work

Simple rule of thumb

- If struggling → **reduce complexity, increase repetition, build confidence**
- If excelling → **increase depth, reasoning, and independence**