

Excerpt from:

McClelland, M. M. & Tominey, S. L. (2015). *Stop, Think, Act: Integrating Self-Regulation in the Early Childhood Classroom*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Table 2.1. Developmental milestones of self-regulation.

Age range	Developmental progression	How this might look
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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cooperating and playing well with peers • Demonstrating a range of strategies to regulate behaviors, emotions, and thoughts • Increasing ability to persist on and

	<p>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.</p>	<p>complete tasks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Remembering, following, and completing multi-step instructions
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