

Stages of Social Development

- Stage 1. Children wander around and watch others play. They do not participate or talk to the others playing. Communication is often physically expressed, like arm movements and pointing. Large groups are difficult to become a part of. (Infants and toddlers).
- Stage 2. Children watch others play, ask questions and make suggestions but they tend to not participate. They are likely to leave if asked to interact. They prefer their solitary ways, working at their own pace (2-year olds).
- Stage 3. Children play alone. A child might act out a role alone with no apparent awareness of others. They select a toy with which to play but show no interest in other children's activities (2- and 3-year olds).
- Stage 4. Children play near other children and may play with the same objects but they do not interact with the other children. The children play side by side and at times they might make conversation with themselves but not with the other children in the same area (3- and 4-year olds).
- Stage 5. Children play with others, are engaged in activities, and they may exclude some children. They rarely negotiate about the direction of their play. They interact with others at various times to share props, or to have a partner in play. Friendships are often linked to play. Rules are important and they believe in justice. They are eager to please (4-year olds).
- Stage 6. Children organize their play, assign roles, and negotiate turn-taking. There is constant chatter about the roles the children play. They recognize the benefits of working together; peers are paramount and friendships can be intricate. They are able to share the materials and take turns using them. At times they are competitive (4-, 5-, and 6-year olds).