

Butterflies (36 – 48 months) Progression Milestones Overview:

Every Child A Talker (ECaT)

- **Listening & Attention:** Listens well in small groups when interested. Enjoy stories with increasing recall and join in with repeated phrases. Can maintain attention but also shift focus when needed. Follows directions unless deeply absorbed in their own activity.

	• Understanding (Receptive Language): Understands how objects are used (e.g., what we use to cut). Shows understanding of prepositions such as <i>under</i>, <i>on top</i>, <i>behind</i>. Beginning to understand simple <i>why</i> and <i>how</i> questions. • Talking (Expressive Language): Use more complex sentences with pronouns and connectors (and, because). Speech is mostly clear to others, even in longer sentences. Can retell a simple event in the correct order. Uses talk to explain, predict, reason and recall past experiences. Frequently asks questions (who, what, when, how). Uses a range of tenses (play/playing/played/will play). Sound clusters (e.g., <i>pl</i>, <i>sm</i>) emerging; <i>th</i> and <i>r</i> still developing. • Social Communication: Beginning to consider others' needs with support. Initiates conversations and seeks support or guidance from others. Talks confidently about home and community. Forms friendships and enjoys linking up with peers.
Emotional Regulation	• Children begin to understand others' feelings, show empathy, and use language to express their own emotions with growing confidence. • They start using calming strategies more independently and can talk about what causes their feelings. • Children begin to problem-solve simple social conflicts (e.g., taking turns), follow basic rules, and show increasing emotional resilience, while still needing adult reassurance at times.

Fine Motor Skills	• Children's drawing becomes more refined, with recognisable shapes (crosses, squares) and simple people, and they begin using a tripod grip more consistently. • Cutting progresses from snipping to cutting along lines and around simple shapes, and threading becomes more accurate with smaller beads and lacing cards. • Hand strength and control improve through activities like moulding dough, building more complex constructions, and using utensils confidently during meals.
Gross Motor Skills	• Children move with greater speed and control, running fast, stopping and starting smoothly, jumping and landing on two feet, walking on tiptoes and beginning to hop. • Ball skills develop as they try to catch large balls with outstretched arms, throw with improved aim, and kick with better coordination. • They climb stairs one foot per step, use playground equipment confidently, balance briefly on one leg, and begin to pedal trikes or bikes.
Mark Making	• Children hold a pencil with fingers opposite the thumb, forming a clearer thumb–index arc; the fingers move together as one unit. • Movement comes mainly from the wrist, showing improved control compared to earlier grip stages. • This grip allows children to draw more controlled shapes such as zigzags, crosses, curves and simple human figures.

	• Provide activities that strengthen pincer grip and finger control (tweezers, tongs, small objects, dough, clay, plasticine). • Encourage fine-motor play involving squeezing, pinching, rolling and manipulating materials to build wrist stability and finger strength. • Use simple movement language to guide mark-making (e.g., “zigzag,” “curve,” “cross,” “outline,” “press harder/softer,” “clockwise,” “anti-clockwise”).
Mathematics	• Children use one-to-one correspondence up to 5, recognise numerals to 5, reliably subitise 1–3 items and understand that numbers represent quantity. They count to 10, use number names and comparative language (<i>more than</i>, <i>fewer than</i>), match numerals to sets, notice equal groups and represent quantities with fingers, marks or pictures. • They compare amounts using <i>more</i> and <i>fewer</i>, understand simple positional language, visually judge which group has, count sounds/actions, begin sharing objects into small groups and show interest in talking about numbers. • Children identify common 2D shapes in the environment, explore them in play using simple language, and copy or extend more complex patterns (ABBA, ABC).
Reading	• Children enjoy and understand stories with growing attention, talking about pictures, answering simple questions, and beginning to retell familiar parts.

	• They show early comprehension by predicting what might happen next, making simple links to their own experiences and joining in with repeated phrases, refrains and rhymes. • Children understand how books work, holding them correctly, turning pages one at a time, noticing print and letters, choosing favourite books and sometimes “reading” independently using the pictures.
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