Development & responsibilities

A family guide | Ages 5-11

Age 5 includes CDC milestones. After age 5, these are broad developmental patterns, not an official CDC milestone checklist. Ages are guides, not deadlines.

Age	Milestones / developmental patterns	Example tasks & chores	Realistic expectations & support
5	Takes turns in games; tells a story with two events; counts to 10; attends to an activity for 5-10 minutes; hops on one foot. [1]	Match socks; put toys away; clear an unbreakable place setting. [1,4]	Expect brief, simple jobs with modeling and reminders. Help with frustration and transitions.
6-7	Growing independence, teamwork and ability to describe feelings. Can follow short sequences of instructions with practice. Coordination improves. [2,3]	Make the bed; set the table; sort laundry; put clothes in a hamper. [4]	Use clear steps and a predictable routine. Check understanding; do not expect reliable self-management yet.
8-9	Self-care and coordination improve. Friendships matter more; reading and understanding of time and numbers expand. [2,3]	Put away laundry; vacuum an accessible area; prepare a cold snack. [4]	Let them start familiar jobs independently, then check together. Continue reminders and help with friendship conflicts.
10-11	More complex learning and growing peer awareness. Early puberty may bring greater self-consciousness and desire for privacy. Timing varies. [3,6]	Feed pets; bring in groceries; water plants; assist with a simple meal. [5]	Use a shared checklist for school and home. Discuss body changes respectfully; support planning rather than expecting adult judgment.

Chores are learning options, not a list to assign all at once. Adapt expectations to skills, disability, neurodivergence, experience and family circumstances.

Development & responsibilities

A family guide | Ages 12-18

Age 5 includes CDC milestones. After age 5, these are broad developmental patterns, not an official CDC milestone checklist. Ages are guides, not deadlines.

Age	Milestones / developmental patterns	Example tasks & chores	Realistic expectations & support
12-14	Puberty and peer influence are prominent. Privacy and independence become more important; abstract thinking develops unevenly. [6,8]	Fold or wash laundry after instruction; load dishes; clean counters; help plan a meal. [4,7]	Agree on clear responsibilities and check-ins. Expect practice with organization and emotions, plus continued adult coaching.
15-17	Future planning and abstract reasoning grow. Identity and relationships gain importance; decisions under stress or peer pressure may remain inconsistent. [6,8]	Cook a familiar meal; clean shared spaces; care for pets; help shop and compare prices. [5,7]	Increase independence as skills are demonstrated. Balance chores with school, work and rest; discuss safety and review mistakes together.
18	Entering young adulthood: personal values, future goals and independence often become clearer. Planning and self-regulation still develop. [6,8]	Manage laundry and meals; share household cleaning; practice a budget and schedule appointments with support as needed. [5,7]*	Use mutually agreed household responsibilities. Support education or work planning. Do not assume complete financial or emotional independence.

Chores are learning options, not a list to assign all at once. Adapt expectations to skills, disability, neurodivergence, experience and family circumstances.

* Scheduling appointments is an added practical transition-to-adulthood example, not an official milestone. The final column is an educational synthesis of the sources.

How to use this guide

Teach before expecting: Demonstrate a task, do it together, then allow practice. Add one responsibility at a time. Use reminders and acknowledge progress.

Safety depends on readiness: Supervise heat, knives, cleaning products, tools and animals. Do not allow cleaning products to be mixed. Age alone does not determine readiness to stay home alone or care for another child.

Responsibility with support: Agree on what finished looks like and when to check in. Mistakes and reminders are part of learning. Protect time for schoolwork, rest and play.

When to seek guidance: Ask the pediatrician about lost skills, persistent difficulties with daily functioning or developmental concerns. This educational guide does not replace an individual assessment.

Sources & notes

Table numbers correspond to these sources. Summarized and adapted for this handout; this is not an official publication or endorsement by these organizations. Sources accessed November 2, 2026.

[1] **CDC** - Milestones by 5 Years

[2] **CDC** - Positive Parenting Tips: Middle Childhood (6-8 years)

[3] **Johns Hopkins Medicine** - The Growing Child: School-Age (6 to 12 Years)

[4] **American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP)** - Age-Appropriate Chores for Children

[5] **AAP** - Kids & Money: Help Your Child Learn Good Financial Habits

[6] **AAP** - Stages of Adolescence

[7] **AAP** - Household Chores for Teens

[8] **National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH / NIH)** - The Teen Brain: 7 Things to Know