



APPROXIMATE AGE	DEVELOPMENTAL STAGE	UPSTAIRS BRAIN DEVELOPMENT	WHAT IT MIGHT LOOK LIKE
0-18 months 	Trust vs. Mistrust	• Learning that my smiles and cries matter • Finding ways to get my needs met with my safe adults	• Laughing and babbling • Beginning to ask for things with gestures and sounds • Crying during transitions • Coming back to calm after getting upset
Toddler 	Autonomy vs. Shame & Doubt	• Exploding curiosity • Language acquisition • Increasing body awareness	• Exploring my world with all my senses • Testing limits • Asking questions • Repeating words and phrases • Potty training • Curiosity about body parts
Preschool 	Initiative vs. Guilt	• Curiosity and courage to try new things • Increasing understanding of structure, roles, and rules • Growing creativity • Sequencing and beginning to understand cause and effect • Beginning to identify basic emotions	• “I can do it!” attitude • Mimicking what I see • Imaginative play • Playing to make sense of my environment and experiences • Skill building with support through frustrating attempts • More goal-directed actions like arts & crafts, learning letters and numbers, etc.
Elementary 	Industry (sense of competence) vs. Inferiority	• Building on foundational skills • Comparing myself with peers • Increasing self-control • More complex thinking • Understanding the feelings of others	• Learning to read and write • Exploring hobbies and interests • Questioning differences and similarities • Learning to be a team player • Taking responsibility for more classroom or household chores • Caring about others
Adolescent* 	Identity vs. Confusion	• Learning I am my own person with different problems and successes than the adults in my life • Gaining skills for adult roles • Increasing capacity for complex thought and reasoning	• Connecting with available supports, like peers and trusted adults for guidance • Managing more responsibilities • Taking on leadership roles or employment opportunities • Finding my own style, interests, priorities, and passions • Exploring personal values that differ from my family of origin
Young Adult* 	Intimacy vs. Isolation	• Becoming my own person • Deepening relationships and connections with myself and others	• Navigating life with others (roommates, colleagues, etc.) • Enjoying the reciprocal nature of healthy relationships • Dealing with the emotional ups and downs of adult life • Making big decisions about my future