

Your Child's Growth: Developmental Milestones

Guidelines for Parents



Watching a young child grow is a wonderful and unique experience for a parent. Learning to sit up, walk, and talk are some of the more major developmental "milestones" your child will achieve. But your child's growth is a complex and ongoing process. Young bodies are constantly going through a number of physical and mental changes.

Although no two children develop at the same rate, they should be able to do certain things at certain ages. As a parent, you are in the best position to note your child's development, and you can use the milestones described below as guidelines.

At the ages noted, observe your child for 1 month. (This lets you take into account any days when your child may be acting differently because he or she is sick or upset.) Use the milestones listed for each age to see how your child is developing.

Remember a "no" answer to any of these questions does not necessarily mean that there is a problem. Every child develops at his or her own pace and may sometimes develop more slowly in certain areas than other children the same age. Keep in mind these milestones should be used only as guidelines.

Plan to talk about these guidelines with your pediatrician during your next office visit if you note the following:

- major differences between your child's development and the "milestones"
- your child does not yet do many of the things usually done at his or her age

3 Months

When your baby is lying on his back, does he move each of his arms equally well? Check "no" if your child makes jerky or uncoordinated movements with one or both of his arms or legs, or uses only one arm all the time.

Yes No

Does your child make sounds such as gurgling, cooing, babbling, or other noises besides crying?

Yes No

Does your baby respond to your voice?

Yes No

Are your child's hands frequently open?

Yes No

When you hold your child in the upright position, can he support his head for more than a moment?

Yes No

6 Months

Have you seen your baby play with her hands by touching them together?

Yes No

Does your child turn his head to sounds that originate out of his immediate area?

Yes No

Has your baby rolled over from her stomach to her back or from back to stomach?

Yes No

When you hold your baby under his arms, can he bear some weight on his legs? Check "Yes" only if he tries to stand on his feet and supports some of his weight.

Yes No

When your child is on his stomach, can he support his weight on outstretched hands?

Yes No

Does your baby see small objects such as crumbs?

Yes No

9 Months

When your child is playing and you come up quietly behind him, does he sometimes turn his head as though he hears you? (Loud sounds do not count.) Check "Yes" only if you have seen him respond to quiet sounds or whispers.

Yes No

Can your child sit without support and without holding up her body with her hands?

Yes No

Does your baby crawl or creep on her hands and knees?

Yes No

Does your baby hold his bottle?

Yes No

12 Months

When you hide behind something or around a corner and then reappear again, does your baby look for you or eagerly plan for you to reappear?

Yes No

Does your baby make "ma-ma" or "da-da" sounds? Check "Yes" if she makes either sound.

Yes No

Does your baby pull up to stand?

Yes No

Does your baby say at least one word?

Yes No

Does your baby walk holding on to furniture?

Yes No

Is your baby able to locate sounds by turning her head?

Yes No

18 Months

Can your child hold a regular cup or glass without help and drink from it without spilling?

Yes No

Can your child walk all the way across a large room without falling or wobbling from side to side?

Yes No

Does your child walk without support or help?

Yes No

Does your child say at least two words?

Yes No

Does your child take off his shoes by himself?

Yes No

Does your child feed himself?

Yes No

2 Years

Can your child say at least three specific words, other than “da-da” and “ma-ma,” that mean the same thing each time they are said? Yes No

Can your child take off clothes such as pajamas (tops or bottoms) or pants? (Diapers, hats, and socks do not count.) Yes No

Does your child run without falling? Yes No

Does your child look at pictures in a picture book? Yes No

Does your child tell you what she wants? Yes No

Does your child repeat words others say? Yes No

Does your child point to at least one named body part? Yes No

3 Years

Can your child name at least one picture when you look at animal books together? Yes No

Can your child throw a ball overhand (not sidearm or underhand) toward your stomach or chest from a distance of 5 feet? Yes No

Can your child answer simple questions? Yes No

Does your child help put things away? Yes No

Can your child answer the question, “Are you a boy or girl?” Yes No

Can your child name at least one color? Yes No

4 Years

Can your child pedal a tricycle at least 10 feet forward? Yes No

Does your child play hide-and-seek, cops-and-robbers, or other games where he takes turns and follows rules? Yes No

Can your child name pictures in books or magazines? Yes No

Can your child tell you what action is taking place in a picture? Yes No

Does your child use action words (verbs)? Yes No

Does your child play pretend games, such as with toys, dolls, animals, or even an imaginary friend? Yes No

5 Years

Can your child button some of his clothing or his doll’s clothes? (Snaps do not count.) Yes No

Does your child react well when you leave him with a friend or sitter? Yes No

Can your child name at least three colors? Yes No

Can your child walk down stairs alternating her feet? Yes No

Can your child jump with her feet apart (broad jump)? Yes No

Can your child point while counting at least three different objects? Yes No

Can your child name a coin correctly? Yes No

6 Years

Can your child tie his shoes? Yes No

Can your child dress herself completely without help? Yes No

Can your child catch a small bouncing ball, such as a tennis ball, using only her hands? (Large balls do not count.) Yes No

Can your child copy a circle? Yes No

Can your child tell his age correctly? Yes No

Can your child repeat at least four numbers in the proper sequence? Yes No

Can your child skip with both feet? Yes No

As a parent, you are in the best position to note these subtle aspects of your child’s behavior. These clues signal that your child’s development is on schedule or that something might be wrong. A “no” answer to any of the questions may be a warning sign; make sure to bring it to your pediatrician’s attention. Remember, these milestones are an aid, and not a test.

If you have any questions, plan to discuss them with your pediatrician. Pediatricians are trained to detect and treat developmental problems in children. Many problems, if detected early, can be treated by your pediatrician and successfully managed.

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The information contained in this publication should not be used as a substitute for the medical care and advice of your pediatrician. There may be variations in treatment that your pediatrician may recommend based on individual facts and circumstances.

From your doctor

