

Your Child's Growth: Developmental Milestones

Although no 2 children develop at the same rate, they should be able to do certain things at certain ages. Learning to sit up, walk, and talk are some of the major developmental milestones your child will achieve.

Here is information about how babies and young children typically develop. Examples of developmental milestones for ages 1 month to 6 years are listed.

NOTE: If you see large differences between your child's age and the milestones listed, talk with your child's doctor.

At 1 Month

Social

- Looks at parent; follows parent with eyes
- Has self-comforting behaviors, such as bringing hands to mouth
- Starts to become fussy when bored; calms when picked up or spoken to
- Looks briefly at objects

Language

- Makes brief, short vowel sounds
- Alerts to unexpected sound; quiets or turns to parent's voice
- Shows signs of sensitivity to environment (such as excessive crying, tremors, or excessive startles) or need for extra support to handle activities of daily living
- Has different types of cries for hunger and tiredness

Motor

- Moves both arms and both legs together
- Holds chin up when on tummy
- Opens fingers slightly when at rest

At 2 Months

Social

- Smiles responsively
- Makes sounds that show happiness or upset

Language

- Makes short cooing sounds

Motor

- Opens and shuts hands
- Briefly brings hands together
- Lifts head and chest when lying on tummy
- Keeps head steady when held in a sitting position

At 4 Months

Social

- Laughs aloud
- Looks for parent or another caregiver when upset

Language

- Turns to voices
- Makes long cooing sounds

Motor

- Supports self on elbows and wrists when on tummy
- Rolls over from tummy to back
- Keeps hands unfisted
- Plays with fingers near middle of body
- Grasps objects

At 6 Months

Social

- Pats or smiles at own reflection
- Looks when name is called

Language

- Babbles with sounds such as "da," "ga," "ba," or "ka"

Motor

- Sits briefly without support
- Rolls over from back to tummy
- Passes a toy from one hand to another
- Rakes small objects with 4 fingers to pick them up
- Bangs small objects on surface

At 9 Months

Social

- Uses basic gestures (such as holding out arms to be picked up or waving bye-bye)
- Looks for dropped objects
- Plays games such as peekaboo and pat-a-cake
- Turns consistently when name is called

Language

- Says "Dada" or "Mama" nonspecifically
- Looks around when hearing things such as "Where's your bottle?" or "Where's your blanket?"
- Copies sounds that parent or another caregiver makes

Motor

- Sits well without support
- Pulls to stand
- Moves easily between sitting and lying
- Crawls on hands and knees
- Picks up food to eat
- Picks up small objects with 3 fingers and thumb
- Lets go of objects on purpose
- Bangs objects together

At 12 Months (1 Year)

Social

- Looks for hidden objects
- Imitates new gestures

Language

- Uses “Dada” or “Mama” specifically
- Uses 1 word other than *Mama*, *Dada*, or a personal name
- Follows directions with gestures, such as motioning and saying, “Give me (object)”

Motor

- Takes first steps
- Stands without support
- Drops an object into a cup
- Picks up small object with 1 finger and thumb
- Picks up food to eat

At 15 Months

Social

- Imitates scribbling
- Drinks from cup with little spilling
- Points to ask something or get help
- Looks around after hearing things such as “Where’s your ball?” or “Where’s your blanket?”

Language

- Uses 3 words other than names
- Speaks in what sounds like an unknown language
- Follows directions that do not include a gesture

Motor

- Squats to pick up object
- Crawls up a few steps
- Runs
- Makes marks with crayon
- Drops object into and takes it out of a cup

At 18 Months

Social

- Engages with others for play
- Helps dress and undress self
- Points to pictures in book or to object of interest to draw parent’s attention to it
- Turns to look at adult if something new happens
- Begins to scoop with a spoon
- Uses words to ask for help

Language

- Identifies at least 2 body parts
- Names at least 5 familiar objects

Motor

- Walks up steps with 2 feet per step when hand is held
- Sits in a small chair
- Carries toy when walking
- Scribbles spontaneously
- Throws a small ball a few feet while standing

At 2 Years

Social

- Plays alongside other children
- Takes off some clothing
- Scoops well with a spoon

Language

- Uses at least 50 words
- Combines 2 words into short phrase or sentence
- Follows 2-part instructions
- Names at least 5 body parts
- Speaks in words that are about 50% understandable by strangers

Motor

- Kicks a ball
- Jumps off the ground with 2 feet
- Runs with coordination
- Climbs up a ladder at a playground
- Stacks objects
- Turns book pages
- Uses hands to turn objects such as knobs, toys, or lids
- Draws lines

At 2½ Years

Social

- Urinates in a potty or toilet
- Spears food with fork
- Washes and dries hands
- Increasingly engages in imaginary play
- Tries to get parents to watch by saying, “Look at me!”

Language

- Uses pronouns correctly

Motor

- Walks up steps while alternating feet
- Runs well without falling
- Copies a vertical line
- Grasps crayon with thumb and fingers instead of fist
- Catches large balls

At 3 Years

Social

- Enters bathroom and urinates by himself
- Puts on coat, jacket, or shirt without help
- Eats without help
- Engages in imaginative play
- Plays well with others and shares

Language

- Uses 3-word sentences
- Speaks in words that are understandable to strangers 75% of the time
- Tells you a story from a book or TV
- Compares things by using words such as *bigger* or *shorter*
- Understands prepositions such as *on* or *under*

Motor

- Pedals a tricycle
- Climbs on and off couch or chair
- Jumps forward
- Draws a single circle
- Draws a person with head and 1 other body part
- Cuts with child scissors

At 4 Years

Social

- Enters bathroom and has bowel movement by himself
- Brushes teeth
- Dresses and undresses without much help
- Engages in well-developed imaginative play

Language

- Answers questions such as “What do you do when you are cold?” or “What do you do when you are you sleepy?”
- Uses 4-word sentences
- Speaks in words that are 100% understandable to strangers
- Draws recognizable pictures
- Follows simple rules when playing a board or card game
- Tells parent a story from a book

Motor

- Hops on 1 foot
- Climbs stairs while alternating feet without help

- Draws a person with at least 3 body parts
- Draws a simple cross
- Unbuttons and buttons medium-sized buttons
- Grasps pencil with thumb and fingers instead of fist

At 5 and 6 Years

Social

- Follows simple directions
- Dresses with little assistance

Language

- Has good language skills
- Can count to 10
- Names 4 or more colors

Motor

- Balances on 1 foot
- Hops and skips
- Is able to tie a knot
- Draws a person with at least 6 body parts
- Prints some letters and numbers
- Can copy a square and a triangle

Well-Child Visits

Remember to take your child to his recommended well-child (health supervision) visits. At each visit, your child’s doctor will check his progress and ask you about the ways you see your child growing.

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends regular well-child visits at the following times:

- Before your baby is born (for first-time parents)
- Before your newborn leaves the hospital
- Within 3 to 5 days after birth and within 48 to 72 hours after leaving the hospital
- During the first year after birth: visit by 1 month of age and also at 2, 4, 6, 9, and 12 months of age
- In early childhood: visit at 15 months, 18 months, 2 years, and 2½ years of age as well as yearly visits from 3 to 4 years of age
- In middle childhood: yearly visits from 5 to 10 years of age
- In adolescence and early adulthood: yearly visits from 11 to 21 years of age until care of your child changes to an adult-oriented physician

Your pediatrician may recommend additional visits. If you have any questions or concerns about your child, talk with your child’s doctor. If there is a concern, early treatment is important.

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) is an organization of 67,000 primary care pediatricians, pediatric medical subspecialists, and pediatric surgical specialists dedicated to the health, safety, and well-being of all infants, children, adolescents, and young adults.

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. Information applies to all sexes and genders; however, for easier reading pronouns such as he are used throughout this publication. Developmental milestones are adapted from Hagan JF Jr, Shaw JS, Duncan PM, eds. Bright Futures: Guidelines for Health Supervision of Infants, Children, and Adolescents [pocket guide]. 4th ed. Elk Grove Village, IL: American Academy of Pediatrics; 2017.

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