



Early Intervention: How to Help Your Child Who has a Developmental Delay

1. Know the developmental milestones EARLY.

The more you know about the milestones and each age your child should achieve them, the easier it will be to identify any delays. You can find parent friendly guides to developmental delays here:

<https://www.pinterest.com/pin/44332377557332968/>

2. Keep a journal.

As you are learning the milestones, keep notes. Write down any skill you see that your child may be missing or weak in. See a template for a record keeping worksheet on the next page or visit:

http://www.parentcenterhub.org/wp-content/uploads/repo_items/recordkeeping.pdf





Sample Record-keeping Worksheet

Use the spaces below to keep a record of the conversations you have with service agencies and others regarding your child.

Problem/Topic:

Name of person or agency you talked to:

Name of your contact person *(may be same as above)*:

Date you called: _____

Phone #: _____

Email: _____

Results of discussion: _____

Action taken *(if any)*:

Person not helpful on this topic, but may be helpful regarding *(list topics/areas/issues)*:

Next steps *(Follow up needed)*:

<http://www.parentcenterhub.org/>



3. Look for other factors.

A lot of times there are other things that may affect your child's development which don't necessarily mean a developmental delay. A good example is children born prematurely.

4. Keep in contact with your pediatrician.

Your child's doctor is an important piece to the puzzle. He or she can rule out problems. Your child's pediatrician can also explain which skills are appropriate for your child's age.

5. Be a good role model.

Your child is a sponge and will mimic almost everything you do, so try to be aware of positive modeling when interacting with your child. Talking to your child is a good way to help your child to develop good language skills. In order to speak well, children need to hear speech. For example, during play and daily routines, always talk to your child about what you are doing. When your child is getting dressed you can say, "You are putting your arms into your shirt" or at breakfast, while cooking you can say, "Mommy is cooking your breakfast".

Remember that no one is perfect and always take time out for self-care. As parents, it is very easy to get so busy caring for our children that we forget to care for ourselves as well. If you are to be a good parent and provide your child with everything he or she needs to be healthy, you have to practice regular self-care.





Stages of Development Birth to 3 Years

As your child grows and develops, you may wonder if he or she is progressing age appropriately. It is easy to get an idea of their progression. Below are some stages of development from Birth to 3 Years. These were taken from the Center for Kids Health.

Doctors use milestones to determine if your child is developing “on track”. As you review these however, do not become alarmed or fearful if your child does not appear to be “on track” or developing as indicated by the list. These are only approximations. All children are unique. The fact that you may not see a particular stage of development in your child at a particular time does not necessarily indicate problems or delays. These are meant to be guides only. Make sure to discuss any and all concerns with your child’s pediatrician.

Here's what your newborn might do:



Communication and Language Skills

- turns his or her head toward a parent's voice or other sounds
- cries to communicate a need (to be held or fed, to have a diaper changed, or to sleep)
- stops crying when the need is met (your baby is picked up, fed, or changed; or goes to sleep)

Movement and Physical Development

- moves in response to sights and sounds
- rooting reflex: turns toward breast or bottle and sucks when a nipple is placed in the mouth
- Moro reflex (startle response): when startled, throws out arms and legs, then curls them back in
- Fencer's pose (tonic neck reflex): when head is turned to one side, straightens the arm on that side while bending the opposite arm
- grasp reflex: holds a finger placed in the palm; toes curl when touched on the sole of the foot



Social and Emotional Development

- soothed by a parent's voice and touch
- has periods of alertness

Cognitive Skills (Thinking and Learning)

- looks at faces when quiet and alert
- follows faces

When to Talk to Your Doctor

Every child develops at his or her own pace, but if there's something that concerns you, tell your doctor. Also, tell the doctor if your baby:

- doesn't suck well at the breast or on a nipple
- has an arm or leg that seems weaker than the other
- is extremely irritable or difficult to soothe

Here's what your 1 month old might do:

Communication and Language Skills

- startles at loud noises
- makes sounds other than crying

Movement and Physical Development

- keeps hands in tight fists
- arms and legs move equally on both sides
- when lying on the tummy, holds head up briefly



Social and Emotional Development

- recognizes mother's voice
- when upset, responds to a parent's cuddles, voice, and affections
- becomes alert when hearing a pleasant sound, like music



Cognitive Skills (Thinking and Learning)

- will stare at an object placed in front of the face, especially something brightly colored
- follows faces

When to Talk to Your Doctor

As your baby becomes more alert, he or she will watch you constantly. You'll be watching your little one closely too, so it's a good time to notice any subtle signs that could point to a problem. Tell the doctor if your baby:

- has one eye that is crossed or eyes that don't line up in the same direction
- does not respond to pleasing sounds, such as "baby talk" or gentle music
- has legs or hands that do not move in unison: only one leg kicks, for example, or just one arm shakes.

Here's what your 6 month old might do:

Communication and Language Skills

- blows raspberries and begins to pronounce consonants like "ba," "da," and "ga"
- starts to babble ("babababa")
- begins to recognize his or her own name
- understands a few words, such as "bath"
- uses his or her voice to get attention and express feelings

Movement and Physical Development

- begins to push up to a crawling position, and possibly rock back and forth on the knees
- sits with support
- stands with help and, from a standing position, bounces up and down with support
- passes an object from one hand to the other
- newborn reflexes (like the grasp reflex) go away
- reaches for and grabs objects using a raking grasp (using the fingers to rake at and pick up objects)
- rolls over both ways (back to front, front to back)



Social and Emotional Development

- recognizes and responds happily to familiar faces
- startles at loud noises and might cry in fear
- is socially active, smiles to attract your attention, and responds to you when you interact
- expresses happiness, pleasure, sadness, and displeasure (anger)

Cognitive Skills (Thinking and Learning)

- "mouths" toys and other items to get a better understanding of the environment
- reaches for anything (and everything!) in view
- moves in the direction he or she wants to go (for example, when your baby sees you walk into the room, his or her arms go up and your baby leans toward you)
- looks at the floor after dropping a toy, showing he or she understands where it fell

When to Talk to Your Doctor

Every baby develops at his or her own pace, but if you notice anything that concerns you — however small — share it with your doctor. Always tell the doctor if your baby:

- shows little interest in others and rarely smiles or "talks"
- makes little eye contact and rarely points a finger at something
- does not move an object from one hand to the other
- is unable to sit up with support
- has trouble eating purées by spoon (for example, pushes food out of the mouth instead of swallowing)

Also, if you ever notice that your baby has lost skills he or she once had or shows weakness on one side of the body, tell your doctor.

Here's what your 12 month old (1 year) might do:

Communication and Language Skills

- says "mama" and "dada" (specific to parents), plus one or two other words
- waves goodbye
- points to objects
- babbles with inflections that mimic normal speech
- understands simple questions: "Where is your nose?" or "What sound does a cow make?"



Movement and Physical Development

- bangs together cubes or blocks held in both hands
- stands alone
- walks with one hand held and possibly even walks alone
- can stack two blocks
- precisely picks up objects with thumb and forefinger
- during mealtime, uses hands to bring small pieces of food to the mouth

Social and Emotional Development

- enjoys peekaboo, pat-a-cake, and other social games
- likes being read to and looking at picture books
- cries when you leave the room
- feels proud when he or she gains a new skill like standing, walking, etc.

Cognitive Skills (Thinking and Learning)

- follows one-step commands (such as, "Please give me the ball.")
- watches and imitates older kids and adults
- repeat behaviors that produce a desired effect, such as dropping a toy over a ledge so that you can pick it up
- will look at a book and turn the pages

When to Talk to Your Doctor

Every child develops at his or her own pace, but certain signs could indicate a delay in development. Talk to your doctor if your child shows any of these signs:

- walks with a limp or uneven stride
- when falling, falls forward instead of backward
- cannot pick up a small object (like a raisin) and does not feed himself or herself
- does not point at objects
- does not babble with consonant sounds ("ba, da, ga")

Here's what your 24 month old (2 years) might do:

Communication and Language Skills

- says more than 50 words
- uses two-word phrases ("I go!")
- is understood half the time by a stranger
- replaces baby talk ("num-nums") with real words ("breakfast") when prompted



Movement and Physical Development

- stacks blocks
- runs well
- kicks a ball
- walks down stairs
- draws lines and circular scribbles
- feeds himself or herself well



Social and Emotional Development

- plays alongside other children
- fears things like loud sounds, certain animals, etc.
- tells you when a diaper is soiled or he or she needs to use the potty

Cognitive Skills (Thinking and Learning)

- can follow a two-step command ("Pick up your toy and put it on the shelf.")
- can name many body parts
- can pick out pictures in a book
- starts to engage in pretend play, such as feeding a baby doll

When to Talk to Your Doctor

Every child develops at his or her own pace, but certain signs could indicate a delay in development. Talk to your doctor if your child:

- doesn't run, or always walks on tippy toes
- doesn't speak
- makes vowel sounds but no consonants or words
- doesn't express emotions (happy, sad, frustrated, excited) in response to others or surroundings
- does not engage in pretend play

Here's what your 36 month old (3 years) might do:

Communication and Language Skills

- strings three or more words together to form short sentences
- is understood most of the time
- asks "why?" often
- understands spatial words (such as in, on, and under)



Movement and Physical Development

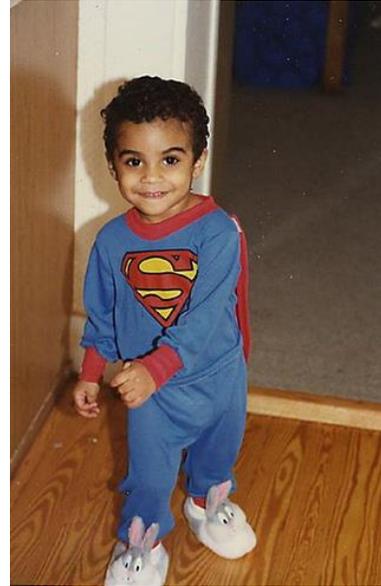
- can walk upstairs with alternating feet
- catches a ball with full, outstretched arms
- balances on one foot for 1 second
- can copy a circle
- dresses and undresses with a little help

Social and Emotional Development

- is toilet trained during the daytime
- can name a friend
- can indicate whether he or she is a boy or a girl
- plays make-believe
- takes turns while playing

Cognitive Skills (Thinking and Learning)

- knows first and last name and age
- engages in pretend play
- can count three objects
- does simple puzzles
- can retell a story from a book



When to Talk to Your Doctor

Every child develops at his or her own pace, but certain signs could indicate a delay in development. Talk to your doctor if your child:

- doesn't speak, or can't speak in sentences
- doesn't follow simple directions
- doesn't engage in pretend play
- doesn't jump
- has severe separation anxiety
- can't make strokes with a crayon or pencil



<http://kidshealth.org/en/parents/development-sheets.html>



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