

Developmental milestones are a set of functional skills or age-specific tasks that most children can do at a certain age range. Pediatricians use milestones to help check how your child is developing. Although each milestone has an age level, the actual age when a normally developing child reaches that milestone can vary quite a bit. Every child is unique

Developmental milestones by the end of the first month

Movement

- ▶ Makes jerky, quivering arm thrusts
- ▶ Brings hands within range of eyes and mouth
- ▶ Moves head from side to side while lying on stomach
- ▶ Head flops backward if unsupported
- ▶ Keeps hands in tight fists
- ▶ Strong reflex movements

Visual

- ▶ Focuses 8 to 12 inches away
- ▶ Eyes wander and occasionally cross
- ▶ Prefers black-and-white or high-contrast patterns
- ▶ Prefers the human face to all other patterns

Hearing

- ▶ Hearing is fully mature
- ▶ Recognizes some sounds
- ▶ May turn toward familiar sounds and voices

Smell and Touch

- ▶ Prefers sweet smells
- ▶ Avoids bitter or acidic smells
- ▶ Recognizes the scent of his own mother's breast milk
- ▶ Prefers soft to coarse sensations
- ▶ Dislikes rough or abrupt handling

Developmental health watch

If, during the second, third or fourth weeks of a baby's life, she shows any of the following signs of developmental delay, parents should notify their pediatrician.

- ▶ Sucks poorly and feeds slowly
- ▶ Doesn't blink when shown a bright light
- ▶ Doesn't focus and follow a nearby object moving side to side
- ▶ Rarely moves arms and legs; seems stiff
- ▶ Seems excessively loose in the limbs, or floppy
- ▶ Lower jaw trembles constantly, even when not crying or excited
- ▶ Doesn't respond to loud sounds

Developmental milestones by the end of the three months

Movement

- ▶ Raises head and chest when lying on stomach
- ▶ Supports upper body with arms when lying on stomach

- ▶ Stretches legs out and kicks when lying on stomach or back
- ▶ Opens and shuts hands
- ▶ Pushes down on his legs when his feet are placed on a firm surface
- ▶ Brings hand to mouth
- ▶ Takes swipes at dangling objects with hands
- ▶ Grasps and shakes hand toys

Visual

- ▶ Watches faces intently
- ▶ Follows moving objects
- ▶ Recognizes familiar objects and people at a distance
- ▶ Starts using hands and eyes in coordination

Hearing and Speech

- ▶ Smiles at the sound of your voice
- ▶ Begins to babble
- ▶ Begins to imitate some sounds
- ▶ Turns head toward direction of sound

Social/Emotional

- ▶ Begins to develop a social smile
- ▶ Enjoys playing with other people, and may cry when playing stops
- ▶ Becomes more communicative and expressive with face and body
- ▶ Imitates some movements and facial expressions

Developmental health watch

Although each baby develops in her own individual way and at her own rate, failure to reach certain milestones may signal medical or developmental problems requiring special attention. If you notice any of the following warning signs in a infant at this age, discuss them with the child's parents.

- ▶ Still has Moro reflex after 4 months
- ▶ Doesn't seem to respond to loud sounds
- ▶ Doesn't notice her hands by 2 months
- ▶ Doesn't smile at the sound of your voice by 2 months
- ▶ Doesn't follow moving objects with her eyes by 2 to 3 months
- ▶ Doesn't grasp and hold objects by 3 months
- ▶ Doesn't smile at people by 3 months
- ▶ Cannot support her head well at 3 months
- ▶ Doesn't reach for and grasp toys by 3 to 4 months
- ▶ Doesn't babble by 3 to 4 months
- ▶ Doesn't bring objects to her mouth by 4 months
- ▶ Begins babbling, but doesn't try to imitate any of your sounds by 4 months
- ▶ Doesn't push down with her legs when her feet are placed on a firm surface by 4 months
- ▶ Has trouble moving one or both eyes in all directions
- ▶ Crosses her eyes most of the time. (Occasional crossing of the eyes is normal in these first months.)
- ▶ Doesn't pay attention to new faces, or seems very frightened by new faces or surroundings

Developmental milestones by the end of the 7 months

Movement

- ▶ Rolls both ways (front to back, back to front)
- ▶ Sits with, and then without, support of her hands
- ▶ Supports her whole weight on her legs
- ▶ Reaches with one hand
- ▶ Transfers object from hand to hand
- ▶ Uses raking grasp (not pincer)

Vision

- ▶ Develops full color vision
- ▶ Distance vision matures
- ▶ Ability to track moving objects matures

Language

- ▶ Responds to own name
- ▶ Begins to respond to "no"
- ▶ Distinguishes emotions by tone of voice
- ▶ Responds to sound by making sounds
- ▶ Uses voice to express joy and displeasure
- ▶ Babbles chains of consonants

Cognitive

- ▶ Finds partially hidden object
- ▶ Explores with hands and mouth
- ▶ Struggles to get objects that are out of reach

Social/Emotional

- ▶ Enjoys social play
- ▶ Interested in mirror images
- ▶ Responds to other people's expressions of emotion

Developmental health watch

- ▶ Seems very stiff with tight muscles or Seems very floppy like a rag doll
- ▶ Head still flops back when body is pulled up to a sitting position
- ▶ Reaches with one hand only
- ▶ Refuses to cuddle
- ▶ Shows no affection for the person who cares for him
- ▶ Doesn't seem to enjoy being around people
- ▶ One or both eyes consistently turn in or out
- ▶ Persistent tearing, eye drainage or sensitivity to light
- ▶ Does not respond to sounds around him
- ▶ Has difficulty getting objects to his mouth
- ▶ Does not turn his head to locate sounds by 4 months
- ▶ Doesn't roll over in either direction (front to back or back to front) by 5 months
- ▶ Seems inconsolable at night after 5 months
- ▶ Doesn't smile spontaneously by 5 months
- ▶ Cannot sit with help by 6 months
- ▶ Does not laugh or make squealing sounds by 6 months

- ▶ Does not actively reach for objects by 6 to 7 months
- ▶ Doesn't follow objects with both eyes at near (1 foot) and far (6 feet) ranges by 7 months
- ▶ Does not bear some weight on legs by 7 months
- ▶ Does not try to attract attention through actions by 7 months
- ▶ Does not babble by 8 months
- ▶ Shows no interest in games of peekaboo by 8 months

Developmental milestones by the end of the 12 months

Social and Emotional

- ▶ Shy or anxious with strangers
- ▶ Cries when mother or father leaves
- ▶ Enjoys imitating people in his play
- ▶ Shows specific preferences for certain people and toys
- ▶ Tests parental responses to his actions during feedings.
- ▶ Tests parental responses to his behavior.
- ▶ May be fearful in some situations
- ▶ Prefers mother and/or regular caregiver over all others
- ▶ Repeats sounds or gestures for attention
- ▶ Finger-feeds himself
- ▶ Extends arm or leg to help when being dressed

Movement

- ▶ Reaches sitting position without assistance
- ▶ Crawls forward on belly
- ▶ Assumes hands-and-knees position
- ▶ Creeps on hands and knees
- ▶ Gets from sitting to crawling or prone (lying on stomach) position
- ▶ Pulls self up to stand
- ▶ Walks holding on to furniture
- ▶ Stands momentarily without support
- ▶ May walk two or three steps without support

Language

- ▶ Pays increasing attention to speech
- ▶ Responds to simple verbal requests
- ▶ Responds to "no"
- ▶ Uses simple gestures, such as shaking head for "no"
- ▶ Babbles with inflection
- ▶ Says "dada" and "mama"
- ▶ Uses exclamations, such as "Oh-oh!"
- ▶ Tries to imitate words

Cognitive

- ▶ Explores objects in many different ways (shaking, banging, throwing, dropping)
- ▶ Finds hidden objects easily
- ▶ Looks at correct picture when the image is named
- ▶ Imitates gestures
- ▶ Begins to use objects correctly (drinking from cup, brushing hair, dialing phone, etc.)

Developmental health watch

Each baby develops in his own manner, so it's impossible to tell exactly when a child will perfect a given skill. Although the developmental milestones will give you a general idea of the changes you can expect as your child gets older, don't be alarmed if his development takes a slightly different course. Alert your parents if a baby displays any of the following signs of possible developmental delay in the 8- to 12-month age range.

- ▶ Does not crawl and/or Does not point to objects or pictures
- ▶ Drags one side of body while crawling (for over one month)
- ▶ Cannot stand when supported
- ▶ Does not search for objects that are hidden while he watches
- ▶ Says no single words ("mama" or "dada")
- ▶ Does not learn to use gestures, such as waving or shaking head

Developmental milestones by the end of the 2 years

Movement

- ▶ Walks alone
- ▶ Pulls toys behind her while walking
- ▶ Carries large toy or several toys while walking
- ▶ Begins to run
- ▶ Stands on tiptoe
- ▶ Kicks a ball
- ▶ Climbs onto and down from furniture unassisted
- ▶ Walks up and down stairs holding on to support

Hand and Finger Skills

- ▶ Scribbles spontaneously
- ▶ Turns over container to pour out contents
- ▶ Builds tower of four blocks or more
- ▶ Might use one hand more frequently than the other

Language

- ▶ Points to object or picture when it's named for him
- ▶ Recognizes names of familiar people, objects and body parts
- ▶ Says several single words (by 15 to 18 months)
- ▶ Uses simple phrases (by 18 to 24 months)
- ▶ Uses two- to four-word sentences
- ▶ Follows simple instructions
- ▶ Repeats words overheard in conversation

Cognitive

- ▶ Finds objects even when hidden under two or three covers
- ▶ Begins to sort by shapes and colors
- ▶ Begins make-believe play

Social

- ▶ Imitates behavior of others, especially adults and older children
- ▶ Increasingly aware of herself as separate from others
- ▶ Increasingly enthusiastic about company of other children

Emotional

- ▶ Demonstrates increasing independence
- ▶ Begins to show defiant behavior
- ▶ Episodes of separation anxiety increase toward midyear then fade

Developmental health watch

- ▶ Cannot walk by 18 months
- ▶ Fails to develop a mature heel-toe walking pattern after several months of walking, or walks exclusively on his toes
- ▶ Does not speak at least 15 words by 18 months
- ▶ Does not use two-word sentences by age 2
- ▶ By 15 months, does not seem to know the function of common household objects (brush, telephone, bell, fork, spoon)
- ▶ Does not imitate actions or words by the end of this period
- ▶ Does not follow simple instructions by age 2
- ▶ Cannot push a wheeled toy by age 2

Developmental milestones by the end of the 3 years

Movement

- ▶ Climbs well
- ▶ Walks up and down stairs, alternating feet
- ▶ Kicks ball
- ▶ Runs easily
- ▶ Pedals tricycle
- ▶ Bends over easily without falling

Hand and Finger Skills

- ▶ Makes vertical, horizontal and circular strokes with pencil or crayon
- ▶ Turns book pages one at a time
- ▶ Builds a tower of more than six blocks
- ▶ Holds a pencil in writing position
- ▶ Screws and unscrews jar lids, nuts and bolts
- ▶ Turns rotating handles

Language

- ▶ Follows a two- or three-component command
- ▶ Recognizes and identifies almost all common objects and pictures
- ▶ Understands most sentences
- ▶ Understands physical relationships ("on," "in," "under")
- ▶ Uses four- and five-word sentences
- ▶ Can say name, age and sex
- ▶ Uses pronouns (I, you, me, we, they) and some plurals (cars, dogs, cats)
- ▶ Strangers can understand most of her words

Cognitive

- ▶ Makes mechanical toys work
- ▶ Matches an object in her hand or room to a picture in a book
- ▶ Plays make-believe with dolls, animals and people

- ▶ Sorts objects by shape and color
- ▶ Completes puzzles with three or four pieces
- ▶ Understands concept of "two"

Social

- ▶ Imitates adults and playmates
- ▶ Spontaneously shows affection for familiar playmates
- ▶ Can take turns in games
- ▶ Understands concept of "mine" and "his/hers"

Emotional

- ▶ Expresses affection openly
- ▶ Expresses a wide range of emotions
- ▶ By 3, separates easily from parents
- ▶ Objects to major changes in routine

Developmental health watch

- ▶ Frequent falling and difficulty with stairs
- ▶ Persistent drooling or very unclear speech
- ▶ Inability to build a tower of more than four blocks
- ▶ Difficulty manipulating small objects
- ▶ Inability to copy a circle by age 3
- ▶ Inability to communicate in short phrases
- ▶ No involvement in "pretend" play
- ▶ Failure to understand simple instructions
- ▶ Little interest in other children
- ▶ Extreme difficulty separating from mother

Developmental milestones by the end of the 4 years

Movement

- ▶ Hops and stands on one foot up to five seconds
- ▶ Goes upstairs and downstairs without support
- ▶ Kicks ball forward
- ▶ Throws ball overhand
- ▶ Catches bounced ball most of the time
- ▶ Moves forward and backward with agility

Hand and Finger Skills

- ▶ Copies square shapes
- ▶ Draws a person with two to four body parts
- ▶ Uses scissors
- ▶ Draws circles and squares
- ▶ Begins to copy some capital letters

Language

- ▶ Understands the concepts of "same" and "different"
- ▶ Has mastered some basic rules of grammar
- ▶ Speaks in sentences of five to six words
- ▶ Speaks clearly enough for strangers to understand

- ▶ Tells stories

Cognitive

- ▶ Correctly names some colors
- ▶ Understands the concept of counting and may know a few numbers
- ▶ Approaches problems from a single point of view
- ▶ Begins to have a clearer sense of time
- ▶ Follows three-part commands
- ▶ Recalls parts of a story
- ▶ Understands the concept of same/different
- ▶ Engages in fantasy play

Social

- ▶ Interested in new experiences
- ▶ Cooperates with other children
- ▶ Plays "Mom" or "Dad"
- ▶ Increasingly inventive in fantasy play
- ▶ Dresses and undresses
- ▶ Negotiates solutions to conflicts
- ▶ More independent

Emotional

- ▶ Imagines that many unfamiliar images may be "monsters"
- ▶ Views self as a whole person involving body, mind and feelings
- ▶ Often cannot distinguish between fantasy and reality

Developmental health watch

- ▶ Cannot throw a ball overhand and/or Cannot jump in place
- ▶ Cannot ride a tricycle
- ▶ Cannot grasp a crayon between thumb and fingers
- ▶ Has difficulty scribbling and/or Cannot stack four blocks
- ▶ Still clings or cries whenever his parents leave him
- ▶ Shows no interest in interactive games and/or Ignores other children
- ▶ Doesn't respond to people outside the family
- ▶ Doesn't engage in fantasy play
- ▶ Resists dressing, sleeping, using the toilet
- ▶ Lashes out without any self-control when angry or upset
- ▶ Cannot copy a circle and/or Doesn't use sentences of more than three words
- ▶ Doesn't use "me" and "you" appropriately