

Developmental Milestones

Developmental milestones are specific behaviors that are expected to be seen in children as they grow older. The ability to sit alone, crawl, walk and talk are all milestones that appear at different stages. With this concise guide, you can follow your child's development by paying attention to the behaviors they might display within each age range listed



The study of child development explores how children acquire the skills to perform more complex tasks as they grow older (Mohammed, 2020). Normal development includes developing:

- Gross motor skills (movement milestones): refers to the ability to maintain balance, switch positions, and use one's muscles to sit, stand, and walk.
- Fine motor skills (movement milestones): refers to the ability to use one's hands while eating, playing, dressing, and engaging in other activities.
- Language skills (language and communication milestones): refers to the ability to speak, communicate, understand the others, and use body language and gestures.
- Cognitive skills (learning, thinking, and problem-solving): refers to the ability to learn, understand, reason, remember, and find a solution to a complex problem.
- Social skills (social and emotional milestones): refers to the ability to socialize with others, develop relationships, and respond to other's emotions (Mohammed, 2020).

Each child's developmental journey is unique. Nevertheless, specialists have set specific guidelines on typical child development and various signs for parents to look out for in the course of their child's development which indicate a possible developmental delay. Below you'll find milestones organized by period of development, and tips on when to contact a health professional about your concerns. Keep in mind that these are **not** exact guidelines. The pace of development may differ between children. Please refer to a specialist should you have any concerns. Acting early on warning signs can often prevent a problem altogether.

Milestones at 1 Month

Social and Emotional Skills

- Favors soft sensations
- Dislikes to be held or touched roughly or suddenly
- Recognizes mother's breastmilk from smell

Language and Communication Skills

- Might turn head in direction of familiar sounds

Cognitive Skills

- Prefers to stare at the human face
- Prefers to stare at black and white or high contrast patterns

Motor Skills

- Displays jerky and shaky arm thrusts
- Can bring one's hands within range of eyes and mouth
- Head falls backward if left unsupported
- Keeps hands clenched in fists and has strong reflex movements

Visual and Hearing Skills

- Can focus vision 8-12 inches far
- Eyes wander and sometimes cross
- Hearing is fully matured



Reference: Shelov, S. P., & American Academy of Pediatrics. (2009). *Caring for your baby and young child: birth to age 5*. New.

Milestones at 2 Months

Social and Emotional Skills

- Starts to smile at others
- Can shortly calm oneself by sucking on thumb
- Attempts to look at the caregiver

Language and Communication Skills

- Makes babbling sounds and coos
- Turns head in direction of sounds

Cognitive Skills

- Focuses and concentrates on faces
- Follows objects with eyes and can recognize people from afar
- Starts showing signs of boredom when an activity is prolonged by crying and fussing

Motor Skills

- Starts to push oneself up when placed on his/her tummy
- Can hold head up
- Arm and leg movements become smoother



Reference: American Academy of Pediatrics. (2014). *The Complete and Authoritative Guide: Caring For Your Baby And Young Child Birth to Age 5*. ed. Bantam Books.

Hagan, J. F., Shaw, J. S., & Duncan, P. M. (2007). *Bright futures: Guidelines for health supervision of infants, children, and*

Milestones at 3 Months

Social and Emotional Skills

- Starts to show a social smile
- Likes playing with others and might cry if activity stops
- Is more communicative with facial and bodily expressions
- Copies certain movements and facial expressions

Language and Communication Skills

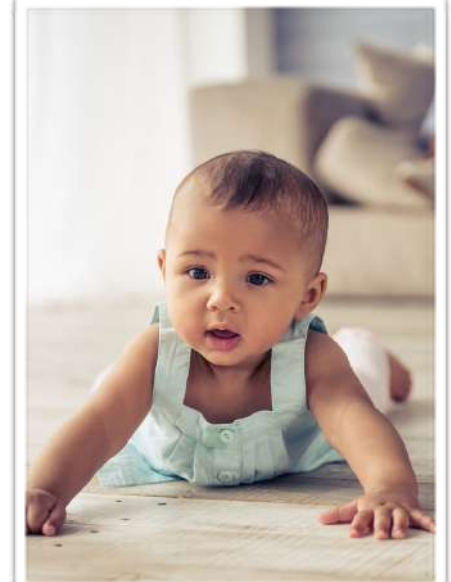
- Smiles at the sound of a familiar voice
- Starts babbling and imitating certain sounds

Cognitive Skills

- Observes faces closely
- Follows with eyes moving objects
- Recognizes familiar people and objects from afar
- Turns head in direction of sounds

Motor Skills

- Can lift up head and stretches legs when placed on stomach
- Swats at dangling objects with hands
- Touches mouth with hands
- Grabs and shakes toys



Reference: Shelov, S. P., & American Academy of Pediatrics. (2009). *Caring for your baby and young child: birth to age 5*. New.

Milestones at 4 Months

Social and Emotional Skills

- Begins smiling spontaneously, mainly at people
- Likes playing with others and might cry if activity stops
- Imitates certain facial expressions such as smiling or scowling

Language and Communication Skills

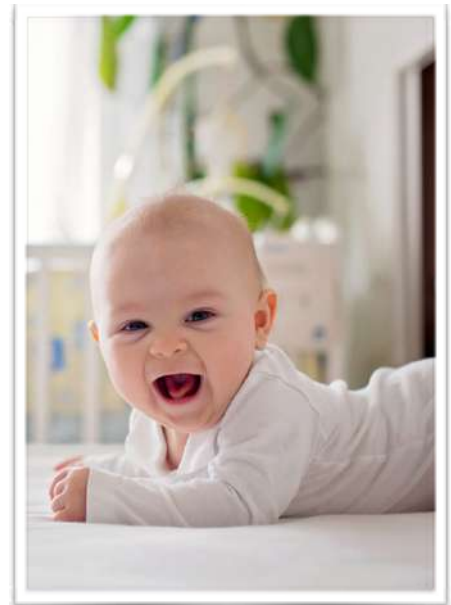
- Starts babbling with expressions and imitates sounds heard
- Cries differently when hungry, in pain, or tired

Cognitive Skills

- Informs you if he/she is happy or sad and responds to affection
- Tries to grab a toy with one hand
- Starts using eyes and hands together
- Follows moving objects with eyes

Motor Skills

- Can hold head up when unsupported
- Presses down on legs when feet touch a surface
- Can roll over from tummy to back
- Pushes up to elbows when placed on stomach



Reference: American Academy of Pediatrics. (2014). *The Complete and Authoritative Guide: Caring For Your Baby And Young Child Birth to Age 5*. ed. Bantam Books.

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Milestones at 5 Months

Social and Emotional Skills

- Recognizes caregiver visually
- Builds an attachment relationship to caregiver

Language and Communication Skills

- Starts to answer to one's name
- Makes squealing sounds
- Conveys anger with sounds rather than crying

Cognitive Skills

- Turns head to search for a dropped object

Motor Skills

- Can roll over from back to front
- Can sit up with pelvic support
- Starts to reach out and grab dangling objects in front of him/her
- Passes on objects from hand to mouth to hand
- Can clasp hands together



Reference: Gerber, R. J., Wilks, T., & Erdie-Lalena, C. (2010). Developmental milestones: motor development. *Pediatrics in review*.

Milestones at 6 Months

Social and Emotional Skills

- Recognizes familiar faces and can tell if someone is a stranger
- Enjoys playing with others, specifically parents
- Reacts to other's display of emotions and often appears happy
- Enjoys seeing self in the mirror

Language and Communication Skills

- Answers to one's name and reacts to sounds by babbling
- Enjoys taking turns with parent while making sounds
- Expresses joy and discontent with sounds

Cognitive Skills

- Shows interest in objects nearby and tries to reach out
- Puts objects in mouth

Motor Skills

- Can roll from front to back and back to front
- Starts to sit up without support
- May bounce on legs when standing
- Sways back and forth, often starts crawling backward instead of moving forward



Reference: American Academy of Pediatrics. (2014). *The Complete and Authoritative Guide: Caring For Your Baby And Young Child Birth to Age 5*. ed. Bantam Books.

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