

Developmental Milestones

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Developmental milestones are a set of functional skills or age-specific tasks that most children can do at a certain age range. They are observable infant behaviours that reflect the overall abilities of an infant during a defined period of infancy. When describing infant development, tasks are generally categorized into the following headings:

Gross motor: using large groups of muscles to sit, stand, walk, run, etc., keeping balance, and changing positions.

Fine motor: using hands to be able to eat, draw, dress, play or write

Language: speaking, using body language and gestures, communicating, and understanding what others say.

Cognitive: Thinking skills: including learning, understanding, problem solving, reasoning, and remembering.

Social: Interacting with others, having relationships with family, friends, and teachers, cooperating, and responding to the feelings of others.

No two children will develop at the same rate. This is completely normal. All children are different and develop skills at different times; however, children do develop in similar patterns. The physical development of the infant begins at the head, and then progresses to other parts of the body (for example, head control precedes sitting, which precedes walking).

The nurses in the well baby clinic assess the developmental milestones through observation and parental reporting. If there is a concern that a baby is not developing properly, a doctor should be consulted.

Age	Key Developmental Milestones for Most Children
One month	<p>Movement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Makes jerky, quivering arm thrusts• Moves head from side to side while lying on stomach• Keeps hands in tight fists• Rooting and sucking behavior• Strong reflex movements such as the Moro or startle reflex <p>Visual</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Focuses best at 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

	<p>Hearing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognizes some sounds • May turn toward familiar sounds and voices
End of the third month	<p>Movement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 • Takes swipes at dangling objects with hands • Grasps and shakes hand toys <p>Visual</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Watches faces intently • Follows moving objects <p>Hearing and Speech</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smiles at the sound of your voice • Begins to babble • Begins to imitate some sounds • Turns head toward direction of sound <p>Social/Emotional</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begins to develop a social smile • Becomes more communicative and expressive with face and body • Imitates some movements and facial expressions
7 months	<p>Movement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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) <p>Vision</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to track moving objects matures <p>Language</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responds to own name • Begins to respond to "no" • Responds to sound by making sounds • Uses voice to express joy and displeasure • Babbles chains of consonants <p>Cognitive</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finds partially hidden object • Explores with hands and mouth • Struggles to get objects that are out of reach <p>Social/Emotional</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enjoys social play • Interested in mirror images • Responds to other people's expressions of emotion

12 months	<p>Social and Emotional</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shy or anxious with strangers • Cries when mother or father leaves • Enjoys imitating people in his play • May be fearful in some situations • Prefers mother and/or regular caregiver over all others • Finger-feeds himself • Extends arm or leg to help when being dressed <p>Movement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reaches sitting position without assistance • 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 <p>Language</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 <p>Cognitive</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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, listening to receiver)
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Resources:

Excerpted from *Caring for Baby and Young Child: Birth to Age 5*, By the American Academy of Paediatrics, Bantam 1999
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