

DEVELOPMENTAL MILESTONES: A GUIDE FOR PARENTS

THE FIRST YEAR

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Have you ever wondered how your child is growing and developing compared to other children of the same age? How do you know if your child is "on the right track"?

Your child is going through many physical and mental changes. Although no two children grow at the same rate, experts agree there are "normal" signs of development. This brochure will provide you with a checklist of important milestones in your child's development during the first year of life.

It is a simple tool you can use to become aware of and appreciate the dramatic changes that are occurring in your child.

Watch for these signs in your child over a one month period. (Even children have "bad days.") Remember, each child is different and may learn and grow at a different rate. However, if your child cannot do many of the skills listed for his or her age group, you should consult your pediatrician. If your child was born sooner than expected, be sure to deduct the number of months early from his or her age. A 5-month-old born 2 months early would be expected to show the same skills as a 3-month-old who was born on his or her due date. Several additional sources of information are listed on the back of this brochure.

You are the most important observer of your child's development. If your child has special needs, early help can make a difference.

By 3 months of age does your child:

Motor Skills

- lift head when held at your shoulder
- lift head and chest when lying on his stomach
- turn head from side to side when lying on his stomach

- follow a moving object or person with his eyes
- often hold hands open or loosely fisted
- grasp rattle when given to her
- wiggle and kick with arms and legs

Sensory and Thinking Skills

- turn head toward bright colors and lights
- turn toward the sound of a human voice
- recognize bottle or breast
- respond to your shaking a rattle or bell

Language and Social Skills

- make cooing, gurgling sounds
- smile when smiled at
- communicate hunger, fear, discomfort (through crying or facial expression)
- usually quiet down at the sound of a soothing voice or when held
- anticipate being lifted
- react to "peek-a-boo" games

By 6 months of age does your child:

Motor Skills

- hold head steady when sitting with your help
- reach for and grasp objects
- play with his toes
- help hold the bottle during feeding
- explore by mouthing and banging objects
- move toys from one hand to another
- shake a rattle
- pull up to a sitting position on her own if you grasp her hands
- sit with only a little support
- sit in a high chair
- roll over
- bounce when held in a standing position

Sensory and Thinking Skills

- open his mouth for the spoon
- imitate familiar actions you perform

Language and Social Skills

- babble, making almost sing-song sounds
- know familiar faces
- laugh and squeal with delight
- scream if annoyed
- smile at herself in a mirror

By 12 months of age does your child:

Motor Skills

- drink from a cup with help
- feed herself finger food like raisins or bread crumbs
- grasp small objects by using her thumb and index or forefinger
- use his first finger to poke or point
- put small blocks in and take them out of a container
- knock two blocks together
- sit well without support
- crawl on hands and knees
- pull himself to stand or take steps holding onto furniture
- stand alone momentarily
- walk with one hand held
- cooperate with dressing by offering a foot or an arm

Sensory and Thinking Skills

- copy sounds and actions you make
- respond to music with body motion
- try to accomplish simple goals (seeing and then crawling to a toy)
- look for an object she watched fall out of sight (such as a spoon that falls under the table)

Language and Social Skills

- babble, but it sometimes "sounds like" talking
- say his first word
- recognize family members' names
- try to "talk" with you
- respond to another's distress by showing distress or crying
- show affection to familiar adults
- show mild to severe anxiety at separation from parent
- show apprehension about strangers
- raise her arms when she wants to be picked up
- understand simple commands

If you have questions about your child's development or want to have your child tested,

- call your pediatrician
- the local health department

- the Make-A-Difference Information Network (They can help you find a testing location near your community.) 1-800-332-6262
- the Parent Helpline (They can help you with questions about child rearing.) 1-800-332-6378

Contact your county extension office to obtain other publications in this series. Additional resources on parenting are also available.

Thanks to Ann Murray and Susan Wanska for their assistance in the preparation of this publication series.

The developmental information provided in this bulletin has been synthesized from a variety of professional resources to help you appreciate your child's progress. It is not a formal, standardized measurement tool.

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