

Developmental Milestones of Children from Birth to 12 Years

The items listed in this chart are based on average ages when various milestones or traits emerge. Many children may develop certain traits at an earlier or later age.

PHYSICAL	COGNITIVE	EMOTIONAL & SOCIAL	LANGUAGE
<i>Birth to Six Months</i>			
<p>Gross (Large) Motor Skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lifts head and chest when on stomach. • Rolls from back to side or side to back. • Rolls completely over from back or stomach. • Sits with support. • Holds head erect. <p>Fine (Small) Motor Skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reaches for objects. • Holds objects for short periods of time before dropping them. • Touches and pats bottle. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognizes and responds to own name. • Discriminates between familiar and unfamiliar faces. • Demonstrates happiness and unhappiness with sounds. • Demonstrates memory by waiting while feeding is prepared and stopping crying when person enters room. • Looks forward to feeding by sight. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expresses affection. • Shows interest in human faces. • Has sense of humor. • Becomes excited when played with. • Stares at strangers. • Smiles at familiar faces. • Develops attachment to primary caregiver. • Becomes trusting when needs are met; fretful when needs are not met. • Shows displeasure when loses contact with person. • Smiles and babbles at people and toys. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses crying to signal distress and pain. • Responds to human voice. • Turns head and moves eyes toward noise and sound. • Startles to loud noise. • Coos, chuckles, laughs and squeals. • Babbles and repeats sounds. • May fix his gaze on a person's mouth as the person talks. • Likes musical sounds and squeaky toys. • Laughs out loud.
<i>Six to 12 Months</i>			
<p>Gross (Large) Motor Skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progresses from sitting steady when supported to sitting without support. • Crawls on hands and knees. • Pulls to standing position. • Walks with help. • Stands alone. <p>Fine (Small) Motor Skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reaches for small objects. • Places objects in a container. • Picks up medium and large objects. • Changes objects from one hand to another. • Plays with two toys; one in each hand. • Points with fingers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follows simple directions. • Searches for object that has disappeared. • Pours objects out of container and puts each back in. • Imitates actions of others. • Understands basic cause and effect relationships (touching hot stove burns hand). • Enjoys repetition of events. • Enjoys picture book for short period of time. • Assembles simple nesting toys. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Becomes more emotionally attached to caregiver. • Protests at separation from mother. • Shows some negative reaction to strangers. • Seeks approval; doesn't want disapproval. • Plays simple games with adults. • Enjoys being center of attention. • Enjoys communicating with others. • Smiles, pats and plays with image in mirror. • Expresses pleasure and displeasure. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Babbles intentionally to get others to respond. • Responds to name when it is used. • Understands a few words such as <i>no</i> and <i>bye</i>. • Says <i>mama</i> and <i>dada</i>. • Begins to babble in sentence-like sounds. • Responds correctly to a few words. • Uses gestures in an intentional manner to express wants. • Can wave bye-bye. • Enjoys simple rhymes and songs. • Makes two-syllable words like <i>dada</i> and <i>bye bye</i>.

PHYSICAL	COGNITIVE	EMOTIONAL & SOCIAL	LANGUAGE
<i>12 to 18 Months</i>			
<p>Gross (Large) Motor Skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stands alone. • Walks without support; starting and stopping with control. • Walks backward with pull toy. • Runs stiffly. • Squats down to pick up object and stands up. • Climbs up stairs; creeps down backwards one at a time. • Climbs out of crib and play pen. <p>Fine (Small) Motor Skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Turns several pages of book at one time. • Scribbles on paper with crayon. • Releases ball with slight thrust. • Picks up small objects between thumb and forefinger. • Can open small box. • Holds spoon with fist. • Feeds self with fingers. • Holds and drinks from cup. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learns by exploring. • Responds to simple directions. • Points to familiar objects upon request. • Identifies family members in photos. • Remembers where things are in different areas of house (room). • Hunts for hidden toy. • Shows brief interest in picture book. • Gives mechanical toy to caregiver to activate. • Places a large round shape in a form board. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is self-centered, demanding, stubborn and self-assertive • Imitates adults. • Is inconsistent in expressing emotions. • May become upset when adults place limitations on activities. • Expresses anger. • Engages in parallel play. • Rolls ball to adult. • Likes to <i>show off</i> for audience. • Shows fear of strangers. • Is unable to share. • Responds to simple instructions. • Takes pride in accomplishments. • Increases negativism. • May show fear of storms and animals. • Is easily distracted. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses one word at a time as a sentence, such as <i>go, see and milk</i> • Experiences rapid gain in learning and understanding new words. • Knows at least three words other than <i>mama and dada</i>. • Uses several words than can be understood. • Says <i>hi</i> or <i>bye</i> if asked. • Points to a few body parts if asked. • Listens to simple stories, songs and rhymes. • Uses words that resemble real words such as <i>ba-ba</i> for bottle.

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<i>18 To 24 Months</i>			
<p>Gross (Large) Motor Skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Runs stiffly. • Jumps off ground with both feet. • Bends at waist to pickup object. • Walks up and down steps, one step at a time. • Throws objects overhead. • Kicks large ball. • Climbs onto low objects. <p>Fine (Small) Motor Skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manages spoon. • Makes vertical marks and circles with crayon (pencil). • Turns doorknobs. • Pulls down zippers. • Shows hand preference, but switches hands often. • Assists in dressing and undressing self. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Points to body parts upon request. • Acknowledges absence of familiar persons (points to door, says <i>gone</i>). • Points to and names objects in book. • Begins to recognize shapes. • Enjoys cause-and-effect relationships (banging drum, turning on TV). • Follows simple instructions. • Asks names of objects. • Identifies more objects with names. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expresses love and affection openly. • Seeks approval and praise. • Is outgoing, friendly and less self-centered. • Continues to be easily distracted. • May show need for security object. • Expresses pride and jealousy. • Continues parallel play. • Is possessive; refuses to share. • Shows strong positive and negative reactions. • Shows strong desire for own way. • May exhibit aggressive actions (hitting, biting, pushing). • Pulls adults to show something or get help. • Tests limits set by caregiver. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses one to two words to make a sentence, for example, "Me," and "Me shoe." • Names pictures of common objects (cat, dog, man, house). • Knows and uses approximately 50 words. • Makes 25 to 50 percent of her words understood. • Follows simple, one-step directions ("Bring the book to me.") • Uses word <i>no</i> often. • Takes part in simple conversations. • Likes singing and rhymes. • Tries to tell about experiences. • Uses words to make wants known.

PHYSICAL	COGNITIVE	EMOTIONAL & SOCIAL	LANGUAGE
<i>Two to Three Years</i>			
<p>Gross (Large) Motor Skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is constantly in motion. • Jumps off low objects. • Pushes self on wheeled toys. • Runs but has difficulty stopping. • Seats self in small chairs. • Alternates feet going upstairs, but not downstairs. • Kicks ball. • Throws ball overhand; no aim. • Catches objects with arms extended and elbows stiff. <p>Fine (Small) Motor Skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Turns individual pages of book. • Screws lids on and off. • Builds crude towers of six or more blocks. • Scribbles circles and horizontal and vertical lines. • Takes simple objects apart and puts back together. • Uses spoon; spills a lot. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follows simple directions. • Enjoys reciting finger plays, nursery rhymes and songs. • Repeats radio and TV commercials. • Responds to rhythms. • Learns simple relationships such as big and small. • Invents simple sentences to express thoughts. • Uses names of familiar people and objects. • Asks names of objects. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Becomes less easily distracted. • Is self-centered, aggressive and temperamental. • Views situations in terms of own needs. • See-saws between independence and dependence. • Wants to do things for self. • Desires consistency. • Desires approval; feels hurt when disciplined for actions. • Is unable to share. • Wants to be accepted by others. • Likes to play with adults and older children. • Is difficult to understand and control. • May continue to express negativism. • Has temper tantrums. • Resists naps but needs rest. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses a vocabulary of between 50 and 300 words by age three. • Understands most of what is said to them. • Uses the word <i>no</i> often. • Has understandable speech at least 65 to 70 percent of the time. • Follows two-step directions. • Uses own name when referring to self before using <i>me</i> or <i>I</i>. • Uses two to four word sentences, regularly. Grammar may be incorrect, such as "Me do it." • Uses plurals. • Recognizes that language is effective in expressing needs. • Asks questions frequently such as, "What's that?" • Understands many more words than uses when talking. • Wants to participate when being read to by turning the pages of the book, pointing or making sounds. • Enjoys books, singing and rhymes. • Speaks loudly, at times, before learning voice control. • Knows first and last name.

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<i>Three to Four Years</i>			
<p>Gross (Large) Motor Skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hops, skips, jumps and runs. • Makes sudden stops and starts. • Walks on tiptoes. • Hops on one foot. • Marches to rhythm. • Alternates steps when climbing stairs; comes down one step at a time. • Throws ball by thrusting with arm and shoulder; catches with arms held out straight. • Swings on a swing. • Walks a low balance beam. • Rides tricycle. <p>Fine (Small) Motor Skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Builds block towers of about 9 or 10 blocks. • Holds pencils and crayons with control. • Draws straight lines and copies circles. • Draws three-part person. • Cuts with scissors. • Unbuttons clothes. • Pulls up large zippers. • Uses spoon and fork. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is curious about how things work. • Begins to understand reasoning of caregivers. • Interested in size and shape. • Identifies colors. • Counts from one to ten. • Counts two or more objects. • Asks <i>why</i> questions. • Responds to <i>how</i> questions. • Learns name, address, phone number, sex, age and parents names. • Holds up fingers to indicate age. • Uses bathroom words and laughs. • Enjoys doing things for self. • Develops better understanding of cause and effect. • Distinguishes between fact and fiction. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Becomes less self-centered. • Is sunny and agreeable most of time. • Displays feelings in more acceptable manner. • Learns to take turns and share. • Shows new fears (animals, storms, dark and monsters). • Makes friends easily and may prefer one over another. • Engages in cooperative play. • Tries to please caregivers; desires praise and approval. • Usually follows requests and can be reasoned with. • Has strong likes and dislikes. • Is pleased with self. • Expresses anger physically (hitting, biting and pushing). • Seeks comfort from parents and caregivers. • Engages in imaginative play. • Has imaginary friend. • Enjoys assisting in simple housekeeping and mealtime tasks. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Says full name. • Knows an average of 900 words. • Shows rapid language development. • Uses sentences that are three to four words long. • Mispronounces 40 percent of speech sounds. • Enjoys listening to stories. • Understands more words than able to use. • Asks simple <i>who</i> and <i>what</i> questions. • Tells simple events in sequence. • Demonstrates beginning phonological awareness (hearing and recognizing the sounds of language). • Uses words to express ideas and feelings. • Usually follows requests and can be reasoned with. • Draws circles and lines in art work.

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<i>Four to Five Years</i>			
<p>Gross (Large) Motor Skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whirls around, turns, somersaults and hangs on bars. • Hops several times in a row. • Climbs large play equipment. • Jumps forward using a forward arm action. • Jumps up and down. • Throws ball overhead with less body movement. • Bounces ball and catches ball with elbows in front of body. <p>Fine (Small) Motor Skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Builds straight block towers. • Draws a house and person. • Prints name. • Forms crude shapes with clay. • Cuts on lines with scissors. • Brushes teeth, combs hair and washes hands. • Dresses self except for tying shoes. • Develops hand preference. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improves ability to reason. • Knows birthday. • Identifies coins such as penny, nickel and dime. • Understands seasons. • Begins to understand need for rules. • Understands concept of texture, size, distance and temperature. • Forms logical conclusions. • Enjoys games that test abilities. • Improves ability to remember past events. • Has difficulty understanding time. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Struggles for independence • Is moody. • Doesn't want to be told what to do. • Accuses adults of being bossy and unfair. • Feels strong attachment to family and home. • Desires approval from parents and caregivers. • Brags on parents and home. • Enjoys cooperative play and simple competitive games. • Is often bossy and inconsiderate. • Increases interest in friends. • Shares personal belongings. • Has difficulty in taking turns. • Resents being treated like a baby. • Accepts changes in routine. • Shows concern and sympathy for others. • Expresses regret. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has vocabulary of 1500 words. • Uses sentences of five to six words. • Mispronounces 20 percent of speech sounds. • Listens attentively to stories. • Tells stories. • Uses puppets, flannel board and pictures. • Names months and days of week. • Notices signs and prints in the environment. • Asks <i>who</i>, <i>what</i>, <i>where</i> and <i>why</i> questions. • Responds to open-ended questions.

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<i>Five to Six Years</i>			
<p>Gross (Large) Motor Skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Runs, swerves and turns corners faster and smoother. • Walks a straight line. • Climbs and tumbles. • Races with others. • Skips and jumps rope. • Beats rhythm instruments to beat of music. • Rides bicycle with training wheels. • Draws arm back and uses body weight to project ball. • Catches ball; elbows at sides. <p>Fine (Small) Motor Skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Builds towers, bridges and houses with blocks. • Makes simple drawings. • Draws recognizable person. • Makes alphabet letters. • Buttons, snaps and zips clothes. • Ties shoe laces. • Pours from small pitcher. • Uses fork, spoon and knife. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learns right from wrong. • Accepts rules; but doesn't always understand reason. • Enjoys routines. • Exhibits increased attention span and concentration. • Follows instructions concerning numbers. • Understands terms like <i>more than</i> and <i>less than</i>. • Uses many words without understanding definitions. • Understands simple classifications such as groups of trees and animals. • Places blocks and nesting toys in order (small to large). • Asks a lot of questions, especially, "Why?" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is more cooperative and conscientious. • Desires support and approval. • Asks permission and follows instructions. • Likes to work and play with others. • Prefers friends own age; usually own sex. • Has strong desire to please. • Is proud of and likes to assist parents. • May voluntarily help with younger siblings. • Forms sex-role identity (what it means to be male or female). • Respects other's property. • Expresses anger more verbally than physically. • Boys quarrel more and use more physical force than girls. • Engages in elaborate and imaginative role play situations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vocabulary increases to over 2200 words. • Mispronounces ten percent of speech sounds. • Pretends and fantasizes (tells <i>tall tales</i>, has imaginary playmates, associates with story characters). • Uses many words without understanding definitions. • Names or describes people, places, things, locations, sizes, colors, shapes, numbers and actions. • Gives simple one-step directions. • Uses pictures to orally retell a story with a beginning, middle, and end, with or without prompts. • Demonstrates active listening behaviors such as facing the speaker, making eye contact, and maintaining attention. • Writes simple sentences around known words, repetitive phrases, and sentence beginnings.

PHYSICAL	COGNITIVE	EMOTIONAL & SOCIAL	LANGUAGE
<i>Six to Nine Years</i>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growth rate slows. • Requires around eleven hours sleep each night. • Needs frequent rest. • Establishes preference for one side of body over the other. • Has established which hand to use. • Girls mature faster than boys. • Coordination not fully developed. • Runs, jumps, climbs, slides and dances. • Plays ball, tag and catch. • Improves writing skills. • Engages in art activities. • Plays musical instruments. • Dresses and undresses self completely. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asks more complex questions. • Desires detailed answers. • Shows unusual interest in numbers. • Accepts and understands rules. • Exhibits longer attention span. • Likes active, competitive games. • Enjoys simple games such as checkers and cards. • Draws symbolic pictures. • Understands value of coins. • Enjoys hobbies and collections. • Likes to experiment. • Enjoys playing with dolls, blocks and tools. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Becomes more settled and quiet. • Worries about many things. • Shows fear of imaginary creatures (witches, monsters). • Is fearful of being alone. • Girls show more fear than boys. • Questions adults' ideas. • Resents being told what to do. • Wants adult approval and love. • Desires independence. • Understands right from wrong. • Wants to be free of guilt. • Offers excuses for wrong doing. • Complains about anything unpleasant. • Shows increased interest in friends. • Begins to have boy and girl friendships. • Desires group acceptance. • Boasts constantly. • Tells secrets, whispers and giggles. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses books independently. • Likes stories about real life situations, animals and space. • Likes riddles and rhymes. • Uses words that reflect a growing range of interests and knowledge. • Gives directions with two to four steps. • Tells and retells stories incorporating the use of descriptive language and elements of a story. • Demonstrates active listening behaviors such as taking turns and asking relevant questions. • Uses a variety of simple sentences.

PHYSICAL	COGNITIVE	EMOTIONAL & SOCIAL	LANGUAGE
<i>Nine to 12 Years</i>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develops more adult like proportions. • Develops harder, larger bones. • Is sick less often. • Extremely active. • Starts developing secondary sex characteristics. • May begin growth spurt. • Develops interest in more specific motor skills such as skating, bicycling, running and gymnastics. • Engages in organized sports such as tennis, baseball, football, swimming and golf. • Has well developed small muscles. • Refines writing. • Develops special interests in activities such as model building, shop work, art classes, music and crafts. • Tries new foods; has favorites. • Eats neatly. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognizes problems and can work out solutions. • Draws conclusions from what is seen. • Learns to generalize and draw conclusions. • Is interested in factual information. • Enjoys group projects such as science and art. • Likes to construct things. • Enjoys learning experiences involving pets. • Applies math concepts to daily life. • Spends long periods of time working on hobbies and crafts. • Has increased memory and thinking becomes more abstract. • Understands value of money. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Becomes less self-centered. • Becomes excessively moody if puberty begins. • Quarrels more often. • Is sensitive and experiences hurt feelings in social situations. • Gets along well with others. • Engages in group activities. • Enjoys making new friends. • Shows loyalty to peers. • Acts and dresses like peers. • May be embarrassed to show affection to family members in front of peers. • Boys think girls are a nuisance and girls are tomboys. • Devises secret codes and practical jokes. • Resents being teased and criticized. • Develops strong sense of right and wrong. • Is self-conscious of sexual development. • Exhibits hero worship. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begins to use reference books. • Enjoys reading aloud. • Enjoys mysteries, adventure stories and biographies. • Adjusts language and vocabulary to fit an audience, topic, or purpose. • Develops vocabulary from textbooks and personal reading. • Gives precise directions and instructions for more complex activities and tasks. • Tells and retells stories in a formal storytelling format using descriptive language, story elements, and voice to create interest and mood. • Demonstrates effective listening skills by exhibiting appropriate body language. • Uses a variety of simple and compound sentences of varied lengths.