

Developmental Milestone Checklist

Birth to three — what most children can do, and what is worth asking about.

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How to use it

These are guides, not deadlines. Children reach milestones across a wide range of normal ages.

Check the age band your child is in now, not the ones ahead of it.

A single late milestone is usually not the concern. A pattern is — several things behind at once, or difficulty across more than one area.

Born early? Premature babies are usually assessed against corrected age, which adjusts for how early they arrived. Ask your pediatrician how long that applies.

Contact your child's doctor promptly if

Your child has **lost a skill they previously had** — sitting, crawling, words, or eye contact. Losing an acquired skill is investigated differently from being slow to gain one, and it should not wait.

Milestones and red flags by age

Age	Most children can	Worth asking about if not
2 months	☐ Hold their head up during tummy time ☐ Watch you as you move ☐ Smile when you smile or talk to them	☐ Not reacting to loud sounds ☐ Not looking at your face ☐ Not making sounds other than crying
4 months	☐ Hold their head steady without support when you hold them ☐ Push up onto their elbows on their tummy ☐ Coo, and make sounds back when you talk	☐ Head still not steady when held ☐ Not bringing hands to mouth ☐ Not cooing or making sounds back
6 months	☐ Roll from tummy to back ☐ Push up on straight arms on their tummy ☐ Take turns making sounds with you, and laugh	☐ Not rolling from tummy to back ☐ Not pushing up on their arms ☐ Not laughing or making squealing noises
9 months	☐ Sit without support, and get into sitting on their own ☐ Look when you call their name ☐ Babble strings of sounds like “mamamama”	☐ Not sitting without support ☐ Not looking when you call their name ☐ Not babbling

Age	Most children can	Worth asking about if not
1 year	☐ Pull up to stand, and walk holding on to furniture ☐ Wave “bye-bye” ☐ Call a parent “mama” or “dada”, and understand “no”	☐ Not pulling up to stand ☐ Not waving or using gestures ☐ No “mama”, “dada” or other name for a parent
15 months	☐ Take a few steps on their own ☐ Try one or two words besides “mama” and “dada” ☐ Point to ask for something or to get help	☐ Not taking steps on their own ☐ No words besides “mama” and “dada” ☐ Not pointing to ask for things
18 months	☐ Walk without holding on to anyone or anything ☐ Try three or more words besides “mama” and “dada” ☐ Point to show you something interesting	☐ Not walking independently ☐ Fewer than three words ☐ Not pointing to show you things
2 years	☐ Kick a ball, and run ☐ Say at least two words together, like “more milk” ☐ Use gestures beyond waving and pointing	☐ Not walking steadily or running ☐ No two-word phrases ☐ Not pointing to things in a book when you ask
30 months	☐ Jump off the ground with both feet ☐ Say about 50 words, and use “I”, “me” and “we” ☐ Pretend — feeding a block to a doll as if it were food	☐ Not jumping with both feet ☐ Not putting two words with an action word together ☐ No pretend play
3 years	☐ Talk well enough for others to understand, most of the time ☐ Hold a conversation with two back-and-forth exchanges ☐ Put on some clothes, and use a fork	☐ Speech others usually cannot understand ☐ Not asking “who”, “what”, “where” or “why” ☐ Not joining other children to play

What to do next

Three routes to an evaluation

Your child's age	Where it goes	What it costs
Under three	Your state's early intervention program. A parent can refer their own child — no doctor's referral and no diagnosis needed.	The evaluation is free everywhere. What services cost afterward depends on the state.

Your child's age	Where it goes	What it costs
Three and over	Your school district. Request it in writing — that starts a legal timeline; a phone call does not.	No cost for the evaluation.
Any age	Private therapy, directly. Does not depend on qualifying for school services.	Varies. Insurance may cover part.

What to bring

Specific examples, with rough dates. “Stopped waving around her first birthday” carries more than “seems behind”.

Video. A child often does very little in an unfamiliar room. A thirty-second clip of what you are describing at home is worth more than a careful description of it.

What has changed, and **what you have already tried**.

Notes before your appointment

Source. Milestones follow the CDC’s Learn the Signs. Act Early. checklists, revised in 2022 and published as Zubler JM, Wiggins LD, Macias MM, et al. Evidence-Informed Milestones for Developmental Surveillance Tools. *Pediatrics*. 2022;149(3):e2021052138. Checked August 17, 2026.

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