

WHAT IS CHILD DEVELOPMENT?



Child development refers to how a child becomes able to do more complex things as they get older. Development is different than growth. Growth only refers to the child getting bigger in size. If you are concerned about your child's development, please call Help me Grow of Summit County and the County of Summit Board of MRDD at 330-376-7273.

When we talk about normal development, we are talking about developing skills like:

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, write, and do many other things.

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.

What are developmental milestones?

Developmental milestones are a set of functional skills or age-specific tasks that most children can do at a certain age range. Your pediatrician uses milestones to help check how your child is developing. Although each milestone has an age level, the actual age when a normally developing child reaches that milestone can vary quite a bit. Every child is unique! Here are some milestones to watch for:

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 fist
- 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

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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

BY 18 MONTHS OF AGE DOES YOUR CHILD:

Motor Skills

- like to pull, push, and dump things
- pull off hat, socks, and mittens
- turn pages in a book
- stack 2 blocks
- carry a stuffed animal or doll
- scribble with crayons
- walk without help
- run stiffly, with eyes on the ground

Sensory and Thinking Skills

- identify an object in a picture book
- laugh at silly actions (as in wearing a bowl as a hat)
- look for objects that are out of sight
- put a round lid on a round pot
- follow simple 1-step directions
- solve problems by trial and error

Language and Social Skills

- say 8-10 words you can understand
- look at a person who is talking to him
- ask specifically for her mother or father

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- use "hi," "bye," and "please," with reminders
- protest when frustrated
- ask for something by pointing or by using one word
- direct another's attention to an object or action
- become anxious when separated from parent(s)
- seek attention
- bring toys to share with parent
- act out a familiar activity in play (as in pretending to take a bath)
- play alone on the floor with toys
- compete with other children for toys
- recognize herself in the mirror or in pictures
- seem selfish at times

BY 2 YEARS OF AGE DOES YOUR CHILD:

Motor Skills

- drink from a straw
- feed himself with a spoon
- help in washing hands
- put arms in sleeves with help
- build a tower of 3-4 blocks
- toss or roll a large ball
- open cabinets, drawers, boxes
- operate a mechanical toy
- bend over to pick up a toy and not fall
- walk up steps with help
- take steps backward

Sensory and Thinking Skills

- like to take things apart
- explore surroundings
- point to 5-6 parts of a doll when asked

Language and Social Skills

- have a vocabulary of several hundred words
- use 2-3 word sentences
- say names of toys
- ask for information about an object (asks, "Shoe?" while pointing to shoe box)
- hum or try to sing
- listen to short rhymes
- like to imitate parents
- sometimes get angry and have temper tantrums
- act shy around strangers
- comfort a distressed friend or parent

- take turns in play with other children
- treat a doll or stuffed animal as though it were alive
- apply pretend action to others (as in pretending to feed a doll)
- show awareness of parental approval or disapproval for her actions
- refer to self by name and use "me" and "mine"
- verbalize his desires and feelings ("I want cookie")
- laugh at silly labeling of objects and events (as in calling a nose an ear)
- enjoy looking at one book over and over
- point to eyes, ears, or nose when you ask



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