

Developmental Milestones

** please note that these milestones are based on averages. If you have any concerns about your child's development, please discuss these concerns with your pediatrician**

1 month: lifts head momentarily when on belly, symmetric movements, regards face, responds to sounds, stays awake for 1 hour or longer.

What you can do – soothe your baby when he/she cries, talk and sing to your baby, offer your baby lots of different objects to look at and to. Play “tracking” games by moving yourself and objects back and forth (helps develop sight, neck muscles).

2 months: lifts head and chest when on belly, social smile, turns to sound, follows objects to midline, coos and vocalizes, recognizes parents, symmetric movements.

What you can do (2-6 months) – when your baby starts to babble, talk and babble back to teach conversation. Engage in back and forth interactions with gestures. Introduce one toy at a time for your baby to explore (small rattle, rubber ring, soft doll, board book). Lay your baby down and give him/her toys to reach for.

4 months: holds head up steady when upright, lifts up on elbows when prone, opens hands, follows objects past midline, bats at objects, holds hands together, laughs, babbles and turns to sound, recognizes parents.

6 months: no head lag, sits with minimal support, stands when placed, reaches for objects, transfers things from one hand to another, laughs, begins to imitate sounds.

What you can do – talk a lot with your baby, label and narrate, respond to his/her communications. Give your baby time to imitate your sounds/actions. Encourage your baby to reach for and get things by him/herself. Create an environment that is safe for exploration.

9 months: Crawls, gets to sitting, sits well without support, plays peek-a-boo or pat-a-Cake, says mama and dad

nonspecific, responds to own name, pulling to stand, bangs blocks together. Develops object permanence, stranger anxiety, and parent preference – which makes separations harder.

What you can do – engage in “circles” of communication with your baby – keep it going as long as he/she is engaged.

Comfort him/her when he/she is frustrated and help him/her try again. Play social games (hide-and-seek, peek-a-boo, pat-a-cake). Let your child direct play – observe closely to see what he/she can do.

12 months: takes a few steps, pincer grasp, enjoys social games, says 2-4 words, babbles like talking, imitates, drinks from cup, waves bye-bye, feeds self.

What you can do (12-18 months)- encourage your child to use words and gestures to communicate, read favorite books over and over, encouraging your child to use words to describe who or what is on the familiar pages. Offer toys that represent familiar objects (play kitchen, toy telephone), and join him/ her in play, letting him/her direct play. Create safe, low places in your home accessible to your child for your child to explore – be constructive instead of destructive – don’t say “stop/don’t run”, instruct to “do walk slowly” instead. Redirect misbehaviors and ignore temper tantrums.

15 months: walks well, climbs stairs, uses utensils, says 3-10 words (specific), communicates by pointing/grunts, points to 2 body parts, scribbles, stacks objects, shows emotions.

18 months: runs, walks backwards, brushes teeth with help, throws ball, shows affection, listens to a short story, can follow a one-step command, language continued to improve.

What you can do – expand on what your child says to encourage language, continue to read books, sing songs. Give choices when reasonable (red or pink bow, shorts or pants) to prevent tantrums, and do not ask questions when there is no choice (“It’s time to leave.” instead of “Are you ready to go?”). Use logical consequences to actions (if deliberately dumps out milk, he/she doesn’t get any more). Time out (one minute per age) for unacceptable behaviors (biting, hitting).

2 years: jumps in place, turns pages of board book one at a time, will make horizontal/circular strokes with a crayon, washes and dries hands, takes off clothing, kicks a ball, shares achievements with others, able to maintain a short conversation, shows imagination, continued language development.

What you can do – Continue to read daily, encourage stories/opinions, sing songs, give choices. Encourage independence, but be ready to step in and help. Acknowledge and give names to feelings. Encourage pretend play and take part in. Spend times outdoors and with other children the same age.

3 years: Can balance on one foot, kick a ball, ride a tricycle, knows name, age, and sex, puts on clothing, knows 2 colors, potty-trained.

What you can do – Continue to read daily, play board games, give choices, assign small chores.

4 years: hops on one foot, rides bike with training wheels, knows colors, sings songs, knows first and last name, plays cooperatively with others, draws circle/square/triangle

What you can do – Continue to read daily, play interactive games, assign chores, be positive about separation.