



Divine Love Medical Services PC

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Child Development Milestones
Birth to 24 Months



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Introduction

Every child develops at their own pace, but there are key milestones that help parents and caregivers track healthy growth.

This guide from Divine Love Medical Services PC outlines the major physical, cognitive, and social-emotional milestones from birth to 24 months.

Use this as a reference — not a checklist. If you have concerns about your child's development, please reach out to our office.

0-3 Months: The Newborn Stage

Physical:

Lifts head briefly during tummy time. Moves arms and legs actively. Grasps objects placed in hand. Startles at loud sounds. Brings hands to mouth.

Cognitive:

Focuses on faces 8-12 inches away. Follows moving objects with eyes. Recognizes familiar voices. Prefers bold patterns and high-contrast colors. Begins to anticipate routines.

Social-Emotional:

Begins to smile socially (around 6 weeks). Calms when spoken to or picked up. Makes cooing sounds. Enjoys gentle touch and skin-to-skin contact.

Language:

Cries to communicate needs. Coos and makes gurgling sounds. Turns head toward sounds. Begins to mimic facial expressions.

Tips for Parents:

- Do tummy time 3-5 minutes several times a day
- Talk and sing to your baby often
- Use black-and-white toys for visual stimulation
- Respond to cries promptly to build trust

When to Talk to Your Doctor:

- Does not respond to loud sounds
- Does not follow moving objects with eyes
- Does not smile at people by 2 months
- Cannot hold head up when pushing up on tummy



3-6 Months: Discovering the World

Physical:

Rolls from tummy to back (and back to tummy by 6 months). Reaches for and grasps toys. Supports weight on legs when held upright. Pushes up on arms during tummy time. Brings feet to mouth.

Cognitive:

Explores objects by putting them in mouth. Responds to own name. Shows curiosity about surroundings. Tracks objects that move out of sight. Recognizes familiar objects at a distance.

Social-Emotional:

Laughs out loud. Enjoys playing with people. Recognizes familiar faces and begins to know strangers. Shows excitement by waving arms and legs. Enjoys looking at self in mirror.

Language:

Babbles with vowel sounds ("ah," "eh," "oh"). Responds to changes in tone of voice. Makes sounds to express joy or displeasure. Begins to string vowels together.

Tips for Parents:

- Provide safe toys in different textures and colors
- Play peek-a-boo to build object permanence
- Read board books with bright pictures daily
- Give supervised floor time for rolling practice

When to Talk to Your Doctor:

- Does not try to reach for objects
- Shows no affection for caregivers
- Does not respond to sounds around them
- Does not roll in either direction



6-9 Months: On the Move

Physical:

Sits without support. Begins crawling (some babies scoot or army crawl first). Transfers objects between hands. Develops pincer grasp. Pulls to stand holding furniture.

Cognitive:

Looks for hidden objects (object permanence developing). Babbles chains of consonants ("bababa," "mamama"). Understands "no." Explores cause and effect (drops toys to watch them fall).

Social-Emotional:

Shows anxiety around strangers. Has favorite toys. Plays peek-a-boo and responds to simple games. May cling to familiar adults. Shows preferences for certain people.

Language:

Uses gestures like pointing and waving. Copies sounds and gestures. Strings syllables together. Understands simple words like "mama" and "dada."

Tips for Parents:

- Baby-proof your home as mobility increases
- Offer finger foods to practice pincer grasp
- Name objects and actions throughout the day
- Play simple games like pat-a-cake and "so big"

When to Talk to Your Doctor:

- Does not bear weight on legs with support
- Does not sit with help
- Does not babble ("mama," "baba," "dada")
- Does not play back-and-forth games



9-12 Months: Almost Walking

Physical:

Pulls to stand. Cruises along furniture. May take first steps.
Points at objects. Picks up small items with thumb and finger.
Bangs objects together. Sits down from standing without falling.

Cognitive:

Uses simple gestures like waving bye-bye. Says "mama" and "dada" with meaning. Follows simple directions like "give me the ball." Explores objects in many ways (shaking, banging, throwing). Finds hidden objects easily.

Social-Emotional:

Shows preferences for certain people and toys. Tests parental responses to behavior. Repeats actions that get attention. May be fearful in new situations. Puts out arm or leg to help with dressing.

Language:

Says 1-3 words besides "mama" and "dada." Tries to imitate words. Uses exclamations like "uh-oh!" Understands "no" and simple instructions. Responds to simple verbal requests.

Tips for Parents:

- Encourage cruising by placing toys along furniture
 - Read together daily and let baby turn pages
 - Play "where did it go?" games with hidden toys
 - Praise attempts at new skills to build confidence
- Physical:**
Pulls to stand. Cruises along furniture. May take first steps.
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Tips for Parents:

- Encourage cruising by placing toys along furniture
- Read together daily and let baby turn pages
- Play "where did it go?" games with hidden toys
- Praise attempts at new skills to build confidence

When to Talk to Your Doctor:

- Does not crawl or stand with support
- Does not point to things
- Does not learn gestures like waving
- Loses skills they once had



12-18 Months: The Toddler Emerges

Physical:

Walks independently. Stacks 2-3 blocks. Scribbles with crayons. Climbs onto furniture. Pulls toys while walking. Begins to run stiffly. Drinks from a cup. Eats with a spoon (messily!).

Cognitive:

Says several single words (vocabulary of 5-20 words). Points to show interest. Identifies familiar objects in books. Knows what ordinary things are for (phone, brush, spoon). Begins simple pretend play.

Social-Emotional:

Shows affection to familiar people. May have temper tantrums when frustrated. Engages in simple pretend play (feeding a doll). Shows ownership by saying "mine." May be afraid of strangers. Hands you a book to read.

Language:

Says single words and tries new words often. Shakes head "no" and nods "yes." Points to what they want. Follows simple spoken directions. Waves bye-bye and blows kisses.

Tips for Parents:

- Provide push toys and safe climbing opportunities
 - Offer crayons and large paper for scribbling
 - Use simple words and short sentences
 - Allow safe exploration and supervised independence
- Physical:
Walks independently. Stacks 2-3 blocks. Scribbles with crayons. Climbs onto furniture. Pulls toys while walking. Begins to run stiffly. Drinks from a cup. Eats with a spoon (messily!).

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Social-Emotional:

Shows affection to familiar people. May have temper tantrums when frustrated. Engages in simple pretend play (feeding a doll). Shows ownership by saying "mine." May be afraid of strangers. Hands you a book to read.

Language:

Says single words and tries new words often. Shakes head "no" and nods "yes." Points to what they want. Follows simple spoken directions. Waves bye-bye and blows kisses.

Tips for Parents:

- Provide push toys and safe climbing opportunities
- Offer crayons and large paper for scribbling
- Use simple words and short sentences
- Allow safe exploration and supervised independence

When to Talk to Your Doctor:

- Does not walk by 18 months
- Does not know what familiar things are for
- Does not say at least 6 words
- Does not gain new words or loses skills



18-24 Months: Language Explosion

Physical:

Runs with better coordination. Kicks a ball forward. Walks up and down stairs with help. Throws a ball overhand. Begins to sort shapes and colors. Stands on tiptoe. Makes or copies straight lines and circles.

Cognitive:

Uses 2-word phrases ("more milk," "daddy go"). Follows 2-step instructions. Names items in a picture book. Points to body parts when asked. Begins make-believe play. Completes simple puzzles (2-3 pieces).

Social-Emotional:

Shows increasing independence ("me do it!"). Plays alongside other children (parallel play). Copies others, especially adults and older children. Gets excited around other children. Shows defiant behavior.

Language:

Vocabulary explosion (50+ words). Begins combining words into short sentences. Asks "what" and "where" questions. Names familiar people, objects, and body parts. Repeats words heard in conversation.

Tips for Parents:

- Encourage imaginative play with dolls and toy kitchens
- Offer simple choices to build independence
- Sing songs with actions (Itsy Bitsy Spider, Wheels on the Bus)
- Set consistent, gentle boundaries for behavior

Physical:

Runs with better coordination. Kicks a ball forward. Walks up and down stairs with help. Throws a ball overhand. Begins to sort shapes and colors. Stands on tiptoe. Makes or copies straight lines and circles.

Cognitive:

Uses 2-word phrases ("more milk," "daddy go"). Follows 2-step instructions. Names items in a picture book. Points to body parts when asked. Begins make-believe play. Completes simple puzzles (2-3 pieces).

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- Set consistent, gentle boundaries for behavior

When to Talk to Your Doctor:

- Not walking by 18 months
- Does not use at least 6 words
- Does not copy actions or words
- Does not notice when a caregiver leaves



Final Notes

Remember: milestones are guidelines, not deadlines. Every child is unique.

When to contact us:

- No babbling by 12 months
- No single words by 16 months
- No 2-word phrases by 24 months
- Loss of previously acquired skills

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We're here to support your child's healthy development.



Every step counts! 💛