

# Developmental Milestones

(Compiled by CDRC)

(Original sources: CDC- Act Early Campaign,  
National Center for Infants, Toddlers, and Families- Zero to Three Campaign)

## 0-3 Month Milestones

### Social Emotional

- Begins to develop a social smile
- Enjoys playing with other people and may cry when playing stops
- Becomes more expressive and communicates more with face and body
- Imitates some movements and facial expressions

### Movement

- Supports upper body with arms when lying on stomach
- Opens and shuts hands
- Pushes down on legs when feet are placed on a firm surface
- Brings hand to mouth
- Takes swipes at dangling objects with hands
- Grasps and shakes hand toys

### Vision

- Watches faces intently
- Follows moving objects
- Recognizes familiar objects and people at a distance
- Starts using hands and eyes in coordination

### Hearing and Speech

- Smiles at the sound of your voice
- Begins to babble or make sounds
- Begins to imitate some sounds
- Turns head toward direction of sound

### What you can do with your baby:

- Talk and sing to them
- Hold and snuggle them
- Watch and learn your babies signals (hunger cry, tired cry, happy)
- Respond to their signals; when eyes are bright and awake it is play time
- Give them something to hold on to or reach for (toy or finger)
- Comfort them when they cry. Soothing makes them feel safe and loved
- Read to your baby

## 3-6 Month Milestones

### Social Emotional

- Enjoys social play
- Interested in mirror images
- Responds to other people's expressions of emotion and appears joyful often

### Movement

- Rolls both ways (front to back, back to front)
- Sits with, and then without, support on hands
- Supports whole weight on legs
- Reaches with one hand
- Transfers object from hand to hand
- Uses hand to rake objects

### Vision

- Develops full color vision
- Distance vision matures
- Ability to track moving objects improves
- Finds partially hidden object
- Explores with hands and mouth
- Struggles to get objects that are out of reach

### Hearing and Speech

- Responds to own name
- Begins to respond to "no"
- Can tell emotions by tone of voice
- Responds to sound by making sounds
- Uses voice to express joy and displeasure
- Babbles chains of sounds

### What you can do with your baby:

- Place your baby in different positions to help develop new skills like rolling and crawling (play on back and stomach, sit with support) Always put them on their back to sleep.
- Offer interactive toys for them to play with (different sizes, shapes, sounds, textures)
- Talk to your baby and have back and fourth conversations (when they babble you answer)
- Create routines to help them learn things like going to bed (i.e. bath, books, feeding, song, bed)
- Read to your baby

## 6-9 Month Milestones

### Social Emotional

- Learning to solve problems (if a toy drops they look for it)
- Copy what they see others do (play peek-a-boo)
- Understand harsh tones

### Movement

- They can pick up small objects
- They can sit on their own
- May crawl, scoot, or pull up on furniture
- Vision

### Vision

- Develops full color vision
- Distance vision matures
- Ability to track moving objects improves

### Hearing and Speech

- They babble a lot
- When talked to they make sounds back
- Use their voice to show feelings (anger, joy)
- Copy actions like waving or shaking their head no

### What you can do with your baby:

- Let your baby explore interesting objects like toys with buttons to push
- Talk to your baby and tell them when you like what they are doing
- Let them start trying to pick up baby safe foods to eat
- Give them time to move around on their own to build muscle and coordination
- Read to your baby

## 9-12 Month Milestones

### Social Emotional

- Shy or anxious with strangers
- Cries when mother or father leaves
- Enjoys imitating people
- Prefers certain people and toys
- Tests parental responses to behavior
- May be fearful in some situations
- Prefers mother and/or regular caregiver over all others
- Repeats sounds or gestures
- Finger-feeds himself
- Extends arm or leg to help when being dressed

### Movement

- Reaches sitting position without assistance
- Crawls forward on hands and knees
- Pulls self up to stand
- Walks holding on to furniture
- Stands or walks momentarily without support
- Uses pincer grasp
- Bangs two objects together
- Puts objects into and out of container
- Lets objects go voluntarily
- Pokes with index finger

### Cognitive

- Explores objects in different ways (shaking, banging, throwing)
- Finds hidden objects easily
- Looks at correct picture when the image is named
- Imitates gestures
- Begins to use objects correctly (drinking from cup, brushing hair)

### Language

- Pays increasing attention to speech
- Responds to simple verbal requests
- Responds to "no"
- Uses simple gestures, such as shaking head for "no"
- Changes tone when babbles
- Says "dada" and "mama" and directs it to them
- Uses exclamations ("Oh-oh!")
- Tries to imitate words

### What you can do with your baby:

- Talk to your baby (tell them what is happening and what will happen next)
- Interpret what your baby is doing by using words (you are pushing your food away, you must be all done)
- Name the things your baby looks at and points to (i.e that is the moon)
- Give them time and a safe place to practice crawling and walking
- Play hide-and-seek games with objects
- Help them take the next steps in their play (instead of banging blocks stack them)
- Read to your child

## 24 Month Milestones

### Social Emotional

- Imitates behavior of others, especially adults and older children
- More aware of herself as separate from others
- More excited about other children
- Shows increased independence
- Begins to show defiant behavior
- Separation anxiety increases toward midyear then fades

### Movement

- Walks alone, begins to run
- Pulls toys behind while walking
- Stands on tiptoe
- Kicks a ball
- Climbs onto and down from furniture unassisted
- Walks up and down stairs holding on to support
- Scribbles on his or her own
- Builds tower of four blocks or more

### Cognitive

- Finds objects even when hidden under two or three covers
- Begins to sort by shapes and colors
- Begins make-believe play

### Language

- Points to object or picture when it's named for him
- Recognizes names of familiar people, objects, and body parts
- Says several single words (by 15 to 18 months)
- Uses simple phrases
- Uses 2- to 4-word sentences
- Follows simple instructions
- Repeats words overheard in conversation

### What you can do with your baby:

- Let your child scribble with crayons or markers
- Help them practice physical activities like climbing and pedaling
- Introduce new vocabulary words
- Talk with them about things in their world
- Be patient with their why questions
- Help them deal with conflicts around taking turns

## 36 Month Milestones

### Social Emotional

- Imitates adults and playmates
- Spontaneously shows affection for familiar playmates
- Can take turns in games
- Understands concept of "mine" and "his/hers"
- Expresses affection openly
- Expresses a wide range of emotions
- By 3, separates easily from parents
- Objects to major changes in routine

### Movement Hand and Finger Skills

- Climbs and runs well
- Walks up and down stairs, alternating feet (one foot per stair step)
- Kicks ball and pedals tricycle
- Bends over easily without falling
- Makes up-and-down, side-to-side, and circular lines with a crayon
- Turns book pages one at a time
- Builds a 6 block tower
- Screws and unscrews jar lids
- Turns rotating handles

### Cognitive

- Makes mechanical toys work
- Matches an object in her hand or room to a picture in a book
- Plays make-believe with dolls, animals, and people
- Sorts objects by shape and color
- Completes puzzles with three or four pieces
- Understands concept of "two"

### Language

- Follows a two-three part command
- Recognizes and identifies almost all common objects and pictures
- Understands most sentences
- Understands placement (on, in)
- Uses 4 to 5 word sentences
- Can say name, age, and sex
- Uses pronouns (I, you, me, we, they) and some plurals (cars, dogs, cats)
- Strangers can understand most of her words

### What you can do with your baby: •

- Talk to your baby and repeat their two word requests as a sentence (more milk = you want more milk in your cup)
- Put their feelings into words (I know you are mad)
- Play pretend
- Practice sorting objects with them
- Help them solve problems on their own
- Read with them and ask them questions about the story