

Understanding Your Child's Developmental Stages

3 Months

6 Months

9 Months

Social/Emotional

- Smiles when a familiar person talks or interacts with your child
- Enjoys being held and cuddled

Communication

- Responds to loud sounds:
 - Is calm or quiet in response to a familiar voice
 - Coos and gurgles (make sounds other than crying or fussing)

Movement

- Kicks their arms and legs freely when lying on their back
- Lifts their head when placed on their tummy
- Briefly grasps a finger or light weight toy placed in their hand

Learning/Thinking

- Likes to look at faces or contrasting objects (i.e. black and white)
- Follows a moving object or person with their eyes

Self-Care

- Sucks and swallows well from the breast or bottle with little leakage/ dribbling
- Enjoys sucking on other things such as their hands, your fingers, a pacifier, or tongue

- Begins looking at and reaching for their feet
- Begins to respond differently to strangers (ie. staring or crying)
- Enjoys seeing their reflection in the mirror

- Turns their head to find sounds
- Makes sounds to express happiness (laughing, squealing, etc.) and sounds to show displeasure (crying, fussing, whining, etc.)
- Begins babbling with a few consonant sounds like "b" or "m"

- Rolls from their back to their tummy
- Sits for a few seconds on their own while bent forward or leaning on their hands
- Bears weight on their legs when held in standing
- Reaches for nearby objects
- Passes a toy from one hand to the other hand

- Shows interest in toys and try to get a toy that is out of reach
- Grasps toys and play by shaking or banging them
- Brings toys and other objects to their mouth to explore them

- Anticipates daily activities like being fed (may open their mouth, calm, or show excitement at seeing the bottle)
- Puts their hands up to the bottle to help support it

- Enjoys playing games like pat-a-cake and peek-a-boo
- Begins to show separation anxiety or become upset when their caregiver leaves the room

- Strings common sounds together like "mamama", "dadada" or "gagaga"
- Pauses briefly in respond to a firm tone of voice or "no" (even though they may continue what they are doing)
- Communicates through gestures like reaching, waving, raising their arms, or pushing things away

- Sits up straight without support for at least a minute
- Scoots forward and pivot on their tummy
- Stands while holding onto furniture or your hands
- Holds out a toy or food to share or show you

- Enjoys playing by banging toys or on other objects
- Imitates gestures and sounds
- Looks for a toy that they dropped or that you try to hide while they are looking

- Picks up small objects or pieces of food using their thumb and one or two fingers
- Eats pureed or soft food from a spoon

Understanding Your Child's Developmental Stages

12 Months

18 Months

24 Months

Social/Emotional

- Has and expresses definite likes and dislikes
- Begins to show fear or uncertainty around strangers
- Copies everyday activities they see you doing (like combing your hair)
- Starts to develop a sense of humor

- Shows affection to caregivers
- Asserts their independence by resisting you (which could lead to a tantrum)
- Plays pretend in simple ways like feeding a doll or stuffed animal

- Tries to do many things on their own (which can be frustrating if they need help)
- Has trouble sharing their toys
- Plays next to other children but not necessarily with them
- Refers to themselves by name or with words like "me/I"

Communication

- Follows a few simple requests or commands (i.e. "come here," "sit down," etc.)
- Vocalizes or gestures to get your attention or keep your attention
- Babbles using lots of different sounds and tones of voice
- Begins to say their first word like "mama" or "dada"

- Uses a few words and imitates some new sounds or words
- Points to show you things they want or things they are interested in
- Follows simple directions (i.e. "Go get your shoes.")
- Finds familiar objects or people you name around the house (like "Where's Grandma?" or "Where's the dog?")

- Learns new words on a regular basis
- Begins putting two words together in a phrase (i.e. "Bye, mom," "more milk," etc.)
- Identifies some simple body parts when named
- Points to familiar pictures in books when named (may even name the pictures on their own)

Movement

- Pulls themselves up into standing
- Walks while holding onto furniture (cruising)
- Claps their hands or two objects together
- Points or pokes at things with their index finger.

- Walks well (even while carrying a toy)
- Squats to pick up toys from the floor and stand back up
- Climbs up stairs and possibly on low furniture
- Stacks two to four blocks

- Throws and kicks a ball
- Runs (though may have trouble stopping and turning)
- Climbs on and off furniture by themselves
- Imitates drawing lines on paper

Learning/Thinking

- Enjoys putting objects into containers and taking them out
- Practices and masters simple cause and effect toys (i.e. pushing a button to make music play)
- Begins to play with toys purposefully (like pushing cars or rolling a ball)

- Scribbles with crayons
- Helps turn thick pages of books
- Knows the purpose of common household objects (like putting a phone up to their ear to talk or using a spoon to pretend to eat)

- Enjoys exploring by opening and closing things and trying to see how things work
- Begins matching a few shapes to complete a two-to-three piece shape puzzle or shape sorter
- Listens to a short story or song (may try to sing on their own, too)

Self-Care

- Holds out their arm or leg to help with dressing
- Finger feeds themselves bite-sized pieces of food
- Drinks from an open cup with help or a toddler cup on their own

- Holds and drinks from a cup though may spill some
- Feeds themselves with a spoon (it can still be a bit messy)
- Takes off some clothing like socks or hats

- Feeds themselves with a spoon with little spilling
- Washes their hands with help
- Knows where things generally belong around the house

Understanding Your Child's Developmental Stages

30 Months

36 Months

Social/Emotional

- Watches and imitates other children playing nearby (may even try to join in their play)
- Enjoys make believe and dress-up play
- Begins to be shy or clingy around strangers at first

Communication

- Uses many words on their own
- Often uses two- to three-word phrases when talking
- Follows a two-step direction (such as "Get your shoes, and bring them here.")
- Names a few simple actions when seeing them in pictures (i.e. eating, sleeping, crying, etc.)

Movement

- Walks up and down stairs while holding onto the wall or railing
- Jumps with both feet leaving the floor
- Twists their wrist to unscrew a lid or turn a doorknob
- Strings a large bead

Learning/Thinking

- Shows increased problem solving (i.e. pulling up a chair to get something out of reach or trying several different ways to open something they want)
- Sorts a few objects based on shape or color
- Tells you about something they created (may tell you they drew mommy or built a castle)
- Pretends an object is something else (i.e. a brush is a phone or a block is a car)

Self-Care

- Takes off most items of clothing on their own
- Uses a fork to feed themselves
- Helps to put things away or clean up

- Begins playing more interactively with small groups of children (may even have one or two favorite friends)
- Shows concern for a friend or other child that is crying
- Follows a few simple rules, but often breaks them to test boundaries

- Talks about things that happened in the past or that are happening in the future
- Understandable when talking most of the time
- Responds to several prepositions (i.e. in, on, under, beside, etc.)
- Asks questions about things around themselves (where?, what?, why?)

- Walks up stairs while placing just one foot on each step (alternating their feet)
- Stands on one foot briefly
- Catches a large ball using both arms and their chest
- Opens and closes a pair of scissors to snip

- Begins to understand the meaning of one item as opposed to many (i.e. "You can have one cookie.")
- Begins to turn pages of a book one at a time
- Copies drawing a circle
- Sometimes hold a crayon or pencil with the tips of their fingers like you do

- Pulls up their own pants and puts on a shirt or jacket themselves
- Shows some interest in learning to use the toilet (may already be potty trained)
- States their first and last name when asked