

# What can I do to support my child's development?

Listed below are activities in the five main areas of development. Try to make each activity more difficult as your child grows older or gets better at that skill.



### COMMUNICATION

- **Play "I Spy."** Give clues about an object you see in the room and ask your child to guess what it is.
- **Use parallel talk.** Describe what your child is doing, seeing or feeling, such as "you're throwing the ball."



### GROSS MOTOR

- **Take your child to the playground.** Practice climbing up the slide and sliding down or play hopscotch together.
- **Play "Simon Says."** Give your child directions such as "Simon says walk on your tiptoes" or "Simon says skip across the room."



### FINE MOTOR

- **Draw shapes with a pencil or crayon.** Ask your child to draw the shapes next to yours without tracing.
- **Teach your child how to use child-safe scissors.** Show him or her how to make the blades go up and down. Practice cutting straight lines and shapes.



### PROBLEM SOLVING

- **Place objects of different sizes and textures in a grab bag.** Let your child feel the objects without looking. Ask him or her to guess what each object is.
- **Plan a treasure hunt.** Draw a map or give your child clues about how to find an object hidden in the room.



### PERSONAL SOCIAL

- **Play dress-up or make-believe.** Children can use action-figures, puppets or dolls to act out different scenes.
- **Let your child help at mealtimes.** They can practice pouring milk or juice into a cup or using a spoon to scoop food onto their own plate.



# CHILD DEVELOPMENTAL MILESTONES

[www.earlystagesdc.org](http://www.earlystagesdc.org)



## What are developmental milestones?

As children grow, they develop specific abilities, like walking up stairs or recognizing colors. These are called developmental milestones. An active child will develop physical skills more quickly. A shy child may be slower to develop speech. Both of these situations can be perfectly normal. So instead of asking whether your child is normal, you may find it more helpful to ask whether your child has reached specific developmental milestones.

The following pages list several important milestones grouped by the age at which most children reach them. By learning when children usually develop certain abilities, parents and caregivers can understand when a child is doing fine and when a child may need more help.

### When should I call Early Stages?

The earlier a child receives services, the more likely it is that their needs will be reduced or even eliminated as they get older. If you are concerned about how your child is walking, talking, playing, learning, or behaving, trust your instincts and contact us. Children referred to Early Stages receive a developmental screening. If necessary, your child will receive a more in-depth evaluation.

Some of the services that Early Stages can recommend include specialized instruction, speech/language therapy, physical therapy, occupational therapy, psychological services, and behavioral support services. All of our services are **free**.

- **For children between the ages of 2 years 8 months and 5 years 10 months, call Early Stages at 202-698-8037 or visit our website at [www.earlystagesdc.org](http://www.earlystagesdc.org).**

- **For children under 2 years 8 months, call Strong Start, the DC Early Intervention Program, at 202-727-3665.**



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**By the end of their  
THIRD MONTH,  
most babies:**

- Lift head and chest when lying on stomach
- Hold upper body up with arms when lying on stomach
- Kick legs
- Open and shut hands
- Bring hands to mouth
- Grab and shake toys
- Watch moving objects
- Watch faces closely
- Recognize familiar objects and people
- Start using hands and eyes together
- Begin to babble and to imitate some sounds
- Smile when they hear their parents' voices
- Enjoy playing with other people
- May cry when playing stops<sup>1</sup>

3 months



**By the end of their  
SEVENTH MONTH,  
most babies:**

- Roll over stomach to back and back to stomach
- Sit up
- Reach for objects
- Move objects from one hand to the other
- Support weight on legs when held up
- See in color
- See at a distance
- Use voice to express feelings
- Respond to own name
- Babble
- Understand emotions by tone of voice
- Explore objects with hands and mouth
- Struggle to get objects that are out of reach
- Enjoy playing peek-a-boo
- Show an interest in mirrors<sup>1</sup>

7 months



**By their  
FIRST BIRTHDAY,  
most babies:**

- Crawl
- Pull self up to stand
- Walk holding onto furniture
- May walk few steps without help
- Grasp with fingers
- Say "dada" and "mama"
- Try to imitate words
- Respond to "no" and simple requests
- Use simple gestures, such as shaking head "no" and waving bye-bye
- Explore objects
- Begin to use objects (drinking from cup, brushing hair)
- Find hidden objects easily<sup>1</sup>

1



**By their  
SECOND BIRTHDAY,  
most children:**

- Walk alone
- Jump
- Pull toys behind them while walking
- Carry toys while walking
- Begin to run
- Kick a ball
- Climb on and off furniture
- Walk up and down stairs while holding onto support
- Scribble with crayon
- Build tower of 5 blocks or more
- Recognize names of familiar people, objects and body parts
- Use 2 words together
- Follow simple instructions (1 or 2 steps)
- Begin to sort objects by shapes and colors
- Begin to play make-believe
- Imitate behavior of others
- Want to do things for themselves<sup>1</sup>

2



**By their  
THIRD BIRTHDAY,  
most children:**

- Can do some things for themselves (like putting on clothes and feeding self)
- Enjoy playing imaginatively and with other kids
- Tell stories with 2 to 3 sentences
- Can be understood more than half of the time
- Can name a friend
- Know whether they are a boy or girl
- Build a tower of 6 to 8 cubes
- Throw a ball overhand
- Ride a tricycle
- Walk up stairs alternating feet
- Balance on 1 foot for 1 second
- Copy a circle
- Draw a person with 2 body parts (head and one other part)
- Are toilet trained during the daytime<sup>2</sup>

3



**By their  
FOURTH BIRTHDAY,  
most children:**

- Play with other children
- Can follow family rules
- Play with favorite toys
- Listen to stories
- Engage in fantasy play
- Know first and last name
- Sing a song or say a poem from memory
- Know what to do if cold, tired, or hungry
- Can be understood
- Name 4 colors
- Play board/card games
- Draw a person with 3 parts
- Hop on one foot
- Balance on 1 foot for 2 seconds
- Build a tower of 8 blocks
- Copy a cross
- Can eat by themselves
- Brush their teeth
- Can dress self

4



**By their  
FIFTH BIRTHDAY,  
most children:**

- Are more likely to agree to rules
- Like to sing, dance, and act
- Able to distinguish fantasy from reality
- Recall part of a story
- Speak sentences of more than 5 words
- Know their name and address
- Can count 10 or more objects
- Correctly name at least 4 colors
- Stand on one foot for ten seconds or longer
- Hop, swing, and climb
- Copy a triangle and other geometric patterns
- Print some letters of the alphabet
- Use a fork and spoon
- Dress and undress without assistance<sup>2</sup>

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