

Child Development Chart

Normal Developmental Behaviors

	Cognitive	Psychological	Motor	Moral	Sexual
0-6 Months	Recognition of mother; no concept of past or future; reaches for familiar people or toys	Attachment to mother/ caretaker; totally dependent; totally trusting; learns intimacy.	Sucking; hands clenched/ grip; neck muscles develop; pulls at clothing; laughs/ coos.	None.	Erections possible; both sexes can be stimulated.
6-12 Months	Objects can be held in memory; learns through routines and rewards; recognizes name; says two to three words besides “mama” and “dada”; imitates familiar words.	Separation from mother; begins to develop a sense of self; learns to get needs met; trusts adults; stretches arms to be picked up; likes to look at self in mirror.	Rolls over; stands with support; creeps/crawls; walks with help; rolls a ball in imitation of adult; pulls self to standing position and stands unaided; transfers object from one hand to the other; drops and picks up toy; feeds self cracker; holds cup with two hands; drinks with assistance; holds out arms and legs while being dressed.	None.	Generalized genital play.
12-18 Months	Experiments with physical environment; understands the word “no”; comes when called to; recognizes words as symbols for objects (cat —meows); uses 10 to 20 words, including names; combines two words such as “daddy bye-bye”; waves good-bye and plays pat-a-cake; makes the sounds of familiar animals; gives a toy when asked; uses words such as “more” to make wants known; points to his or	Early social development; egocentric; accepts limits; develops self-esteem (love from family); plays by self.	Creeps up stairs; gets to standing position alone; walks alone; walks backward; picks up toys from floor without falling; pulls and pushes toys; seats self in child-size chair; moves to music; turns pages two or three at a time; scribbles; turns knobs; paints with whole arm movement; shifts hands; makes strokes; uses spoon with little spilling; drinks from cup with one hand unassisted; chews food; unzips large	Fear of authority figures.	Continued generalized genital play.

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12-18 Months (cont.)	her toes, eyes, and nose; brings objects from another room when asked.		zipper; indicates toilet needs; removes shoes, socks, pants, sweater		
18-36 Months	Can conduct experiments inside head but limited to experience; rapid language growth; copies adult chores in play; carries on conversation with self and dolls; asks “what’s that?” and “where’s my...?”; knows 300 words at 2, 900 words at 3; understand a lot more than what they can say; gives first name; holds up fingers to tell age; combines nouns and verbs “mommy go”; refers to self as “me” rather than by name; Egocentric: assumes you know what he/she knows; likes to hear same story repeated; may say “no” when means “yes.” Cannot incorporate a doll to represent themselves, but can use other objects in play that represent real life.	Autonomy struggles; learns system of meeting needs; seeks adult approval; social development increases; points to things he or she wants; joins in play with other children; shares toys; takes turns with assistance; separation anxiety common (look for lack of separation anxiety in children who have endured trauma)	Can run, throw ball, kick ball, jump; goes up stairs with one hand held by adult; turns single pages; snips with scissors; holds crayon with thumb and fingers (not fist) but may ignore adults as they draw since they must concentrate; uses one hand consistently in most activities; rolls, pounds, squeezes, and pulls clay; uses spoon with little spilling; gets drink from fountain or faucet independently; opens door by turning handle; takes off and puts on coat with assistance; washes and dries hands with assistance.	Knowledge of preferences of authority figures.	Continued generalized genital play; early sex-role development; interested in potty behavior; touches and rubs own genitals, disinhibited – no sense of privacy; role playing to understand what adults are doing, such as playing doctor.
3-5 Years	WIDE RANGE OF LANGUAGE SKILLS AT THIS AGE. Can conduct experiments inside head; cannot sequence; understands some abstract concepts: colors, numbers (but this DOES NOT mean they can tell you “how many times” – they can count tangible	Can cooperate; cannot separate fantasy from reality; has nightmares; models on same-sexed parent; experiences and copes with feelings (sad, jealous, embarrassed) but they are all or nothing, meaning a child can be angry at their parent one minute but once the parent apologizes feeling shift and all is good again;	Swings/climbs; uses small scissors; jumps in place; walks on tiptoes; balances on one foot; rides a tricycle; begins to skip; dances; bathes and dresses; runs around obstacles; walks on a line; pushes, pulls, steers wheeled toys; uses slide independently; throws	Self-esteem dependent on authority figures; follows peers’ fads; negotiates to get needs met. Rules very important. Protective of parents.	Generalized genital play (rubbing genitals until raw is <i>not normal</i>); masturbation to orgasm in females is possible; early experimentation; watches/asks about body functions; private parts and funny but also serious; gender identity established.

	Cognitive	Psychological	Motor	Moral	Sexual
3-5 Years (cont.)	objects in a room, like chairs, crayons, etc.), knows shapes, time (NOT clock time but days, before/after, “naptime,” “bedtime”); understands family relations (baby/parent); can tell a story; has a sentence length of 4 to 5 words; has a vocabulary of nearly 1000 words; names at least one color; understands “tonight,” “summer,” “lunchtime,” “yesterday”; knows his or her last name, name of street on which he or she lives and several nursery rhymes; uses past tense correctly; can speak of imaginary conditions “I hope”; understands basic concept of right and wrong – punishment centered; at 4 can typically grasp truth vs. lie, but may confuse the difference between a lie and a mistake.	plays and interacts with other children; dramatic play is closer to reality, with attention paid to detail, time, and space; plays dress-up; Symbolic representation of self begins (can now use a doll or picture to represent themselves).	ball overhead; catches a bounced ball; skates; jumps rope; pastes and glues appropriately; skips on alternating feet; buttons and unbuttons large buttons; washes hands independently; blows nose when reminded; uses toilet independently; drawing improves and by 4 will trace and draw stick figures.		
6-9 Years	Can think using symbols; can recognize differences; makes comparisons; can take another’s perspective; defines objects by their use; knows spatial relationships like “on top,” “behind,” “far,” and “near”; knows address; identifies penny, nickel, dime; knows common opposites like “big/little”; asks questions for	Early close peer relationships; presence of well-developed defenses; develops identity outside family (school, friends); has likes and dislikes (food, friends, games); chooses own friends; plays simple table games; plays competitive games; engages in cooperative play with other children involving group decisions, role assignments, fair play. Egocentrism crumbles –	Is increasing small muscle motor skills; cuts foods with a knife; laces shoes; dresses self completely; ties bow; brushes independently; crosses streets safely.	Has a conscience; refinements in moral development.	Defenses reduce experimentation, but some continues. Play house ,wedding, family role play games.

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6-9 Years (cont.)	information; distinguishes left from right; able to separate fantasy from reality; improved sequencing of events. By 8, should be able to read a face clock.	suddenly question how others think of them.			
10-15 Years	Can engage in inductive and deductive logic; neurons are present; understands hypothetical situations; conflicts with parents increase.	Increased autonomy struggles; increased focus on identity; focus on peer relationships; rebellious; often moody; romantic feelings; struggle with sense of identity; feels awkward or strange about his or her body; worries about being normal; frequently changing relationships.	Greater body competence (e.g., physical coordination); manual dexterity; growth patterns vary.	Moral development is legalistic; recognition of principles (e.g., justice); selection of role models.	Puberty; sex organs mature; males ejaculate and have wet dreams; both sexes able to masturbate to orgasm with fantasies; girls develop physically sooner than boys; may display shyness, blushing, and modesty.
16-21 Years	Uses formal logic (e.g., opposes racism); debates and can change sides of debate; understands probabilities; uses more flexible abstract thinking; examination of inner experiences; conflict with parents begins to decrease.	Interest in relationships; solidifies personal identity; becomes goal directed; sometimes rebellious; increased concern for others; increased concern for future; places more importance on his or her role in life.	Heightened physical power, strength, and coordination.	Identifies with moral principles, rules, and limit testing; experimentation with sex and drugs; examination of inner experiences.	Feelings of love and passion; development of more serious relationships; sense of sexual identity established ¹ ; increased capacity for tender and sensual love.

Chart adapted from Katie Thompson, Elon College student intern, NC Guardian ad Litem Program. Sources include: "Infant and Toddler Development," Dr. Maureen Vandermaas-Peeler, Elon College; "Child Development," Ray Newnam, Ph.D.; "LD In Depth," LD OnLine, www.ldonline.org; "Growing Up," Pasternak and Kroth; "Your Child's Growth: Developmental Milestones," American Academy of Pediatrics, www.aap.org; and "Normal Adolescent Development," American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, www.aacap.org.