

# Developmental Milestones: Ages 2 Months to 5 Years

Although no 2 children develop at the same rate, most babies should be able to do certain things at certain ages. Learning to sit up, walk, and talk are some of the major developmental milestones your child will achieve.

Here is information about how babies and young children typically develop. Examples of developmental milestones for ages 2 months to 5 years are listed.

NOTE: If you see large differences between your child's age and the milestones listed, talk with your child's doctor.

## By 2 Months

<p><b>Social/Emotional Milestones</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Calms down when spoken to or picked up</li> <li>• Looks at your face</li> <li>• Seems happy to see you when you walk up to them</li> <li>• Smiles when you talk to or smile at them</li> </ul> <p><b>Language/Communication Milestones</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Makes sounds other than crying</li> <li>• Reacts to loud sounds</li> </ul>	<p><b>Cognitive Milestones (learning, thinking, problem-solving)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Watches you as you move</li> <li>• Looks at a toy for several seconds</li> </ul> <p><b>Movement/Physical Development Milestones</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Holds head up when on tummy</li> <li>• Moves both arms and both legs</li> <li>• Opens hands briefly</li> </ul>
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## By 4 Months

<p><b>Social/Emotional Milestones</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Smiles on their own to get your attention</li> <li>• Chuckles (not yet a full laugh) when you try to make them laugh</li> <li>• Looks at you, moves, or makes sounds to get or keep your attention</li> </ul> <p><b>Language/Communication Milestones</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Makes sounds like "ooh" or "aah" (cooing)</li> <li>• Makes sounds back when you talk to them</li> <li>• Turns head toward the sound of your voice</li> </ul>	<p><b>Cognitive Milestones (learning, thinking, problem-solving)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If hungry, opens mouth when they see breast or bottle</li> <li>• Looks at their hands with interest</li> </ul> <p><b>Movement/Physical Development Milestones</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Holds head steady without support when you are holding them</li> <li>• Holds a toy when you put it in their hand</li> <li>• Uses their arm to swing at toys</li> <li>• Brings hands to mouth</li> <li>• Pushes up onto elbows/forearms when on tummy</li> </ul>
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## By 6 Months

<p><b>Social/Emotional Milestones</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knows familiar people</li> <li>• Likes to look at self in a mirror</li> <li>• Laughs</li> </ul> <p><b>Language/Communication Milestones</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Takes turns making sounds with you</li> <li>• Blows "raspberries" (sticks tongue out and blows)</li> <li>• Makes squealing noises</li> </ul>	<p><b>Cognitive Milestones (learning, thinking, problem-solving)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Puts things in their mouth to explore them</li> <li>• Reaches to grab a toy they want</li> <li>• Closes lips to show they don't want more food</li> </ul> <p><b>Movement/Physical Development Milestones</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rolls from tummy to back</li> <li>• Pushes up with straight arms when on tummy</li> <li>• Leans on hands to support themselves when sitting</li> </ul>
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## By 9 Months

<p><b>Social/Emotional Milestones</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Is shy, clingy, or fearful around strangers</li><li>• Shows several facial expressions, like happy, sad, angry, and surprised</li><li>• Looks when you call their name</li><li>• Reacts when you leave (looks, reaches for you, or cries)</li><li>• Smiles or laughs when you play peekaboo</li></ul> <p><b>Language/Communication Milestones</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Makes a lot of different sounds like “mamamama” and “babababa”</li><li>• Lifts arms up to be picked up</li></ul>	<p><b>Cognitive Milestones (learning, thinking, problem-solving)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Looks for objects when dropped out of sight (like a spoon or toy)</li><li>• Bangs 2 things together</li></ul> <p><b>Movement/Physical Development Milestones</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Gets to a sitting position by themselves</li><li>• Moves things from one hand to their other hand</li><li>• Uses fingers to rake food toward themselves</li><li>• Sits without support</li></ul>
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## By 12 Months (1 Year)

<p><b>Social/Emotional Milestone</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Plays games with you, like pat-a-cake</li></ul> <p><b>Language/Communication Milestones</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Waves “bye-bye”</li><li>• Calls a parent “mama” or “dada” or another special name</li><li>• Understands no (pauses briefly or stops when you say it)</li></ul>	<p><b>Cognitive Milestones (learning, thinking, problem-solving)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Puts something in a container, like a block in a cup</li><li>• Looks for things they see you hide, like a toy under a blanket</li></ul> <p><b>Movement/Physical Development Milestones</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Pulls up to stand</li><li>• Walks, holding on to furniture</li><li>• Drinks from a cup without a lid, as you hold it</li><li>• Picks things up between thumb and pointer finger, like small bits of food</li></ul>
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## By 15 Months (1 ¼ Years)

<p><b>Social/Emotional Milestones</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Copies other children while playing, like taking toys out of a container when another child does</li><li>• Shows you an object they like</li><li>• Claps when excited</li><li>• Hugs stuffed doll or another toy</li><li>• Shows you affection (hugs, cuddles, or kisses you)</li></ul> <p><b>Language/Communication Milestones</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Tries to say 1 or 2 words besides <i>mama</i> or <i>dada</i>, like “ba” for <i>ball</i> or “da” for <i>dog</i>.</li><li>• Looks at a familiar object when you name it.</li><li>• Follows directions given with both a gesture and words. For example, they give you a toy when you hold out your hand and say, “Give me the toy.”</li><li>• Points to ask for something or to get help.</li></ul>	<p><b>Cognitive Milestones (learning, thinking, problem-solving)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Tries to use things the right way, like a phone, cup, or book</li><li>• Stacks at least 2 small objects, like blocks</li></ul> <p><b>Movement/Physical Development Milestones</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Takes a few steps on their own</li><li>• Uses fingers to feed themselves some food</li></ul>
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## By 18 Months (1 ½ Years)

<p><b>Social/Emotional Milestones</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Moves away from you but looks to make sure you are close by</li> <li>• Points to show you something interesting</li> <li>• Puts hands out for you to wash them</li> <li>• Looks at a few pages in a book with you</li> <li>• Helps you dress them by pushing arm through sleeve or lifting up foot</li> </ul> <p><b>Language/Communication Milestones</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tries to say 3 or more words besides <i>mama</i> or <i>dada</i></li> <li>• Follows 1-step directions without any gestures, like giving you the toy when you say, “Give it to me”</li> </ul>	<p><b>Cognitive Milestones (learning, thinking, problem-solving)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Copies you doing chores, like sweeping with a broom</li> <li>• Plays with toys in a simple way, like pushing a toy car</li> </ul> <p><b>Movement/Physical Development Milestones</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Walks without holding on to anyone or anything</li> <li>• Scribbles</li> <li>• Drinks from a cup without a lid and may spill sometimes</li> <li>• Feeds themselves with their fingers</li> <li>• Tries to use a spoon</li> <li>• Climbs on and off a couch or chair without help</li> </ul>
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## By 24 Months (2 Years)

<p><b>Social/Emotional Milestones</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Notices when others are hurt or upset, like pausing or looking sad when someone is crying</li> <li>• Looks at your face to see how to react in a new situation</li> </ul> <p><b>Language/Communication Milestones</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Points to things in a book when you ask about them, like “Where is the bear?”</li> <li>• Says at least 2 words together, like “More milk”</li> <li>• Points to at least 2 body parts when you ask them to show you</li> <li>• Uses more gestures than just waving and pointing, like blowing a kiss or nodding yes</li> </ul>	<p><b>Cognitive Milestones (learning, thinking, problem-solving)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Holds something in one hand while using the other hand, for example, holding a container and taking the lid off</li> <li>• Tries to use switches, knobs, or buttons on a toy</li> <li>• Plays with more than one toy at the same time, like putting toy food on a toy plate</li> </ul> <p><b>Movement/Physical Development Milestones</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kicks a ball</li> <li>• Runs</li> <li>• Walks, not climbs, up a few stairs with or without help</li> <li>• Eats with a spoon</li> </ul>
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## By 30 Months (2 ½ Years)

<p><b>Social/Emotional Milestones</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plays next to other children and sometimes plays with them</li> <li>• Shows you what they can do by saying, “Look at me!”</li> <li>• Follows simple routines when told, like helping pick up toys when you say, “It’s cleanup time”</li> </ul> <p><b>Language/Communication Milestones</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Says about 50 words</li> <li>• Says 2 or more words, with 1 action word, like “Doggie run”</li> <li>• Names things in a book when you point and ask, “What is this?”</li> <li>• Says words like “I,” “me,” or “we”</li> </ul>	<p><b>Cognitive Milestones (learning, thinking, problem-solving)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uses things to pretend, like feeding a block to a doll as if it were food</li> <li>• Shows simple problem-solving skills, like standing on a small stool to reach something</li> <li>• Follows 2-step instructions like “Put the toy down and close the door”</li> <li>• Shows they know at least 1 color, like pointing to a red crayon when you ask, “Which one is red?”</li> </ul> <p><b>Movement/Physical Development Milestones</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uses hands to twist things, like turning doorknobs or unscrewing lids</li> <li>• Takes some clothes off by themselves, like loose pants or an open jacket</li> <li>• Jumps off the ground with both feet</li> <li>• Turns book pages, one at a time, when you read to them</li> </ul>
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## By 3 Years

<p><b>Social/Emotional Milestones</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Calms down within 10 minutes after you leave them, like at a child care drop-off</li><li>• Notices other children and joins them to play</li></ul> <p><b>Language/Communication Milestones</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Talks with you in conversation by using at least 2 back-and-forth exchanges</li><li>• Asks who, what, where, or why questions, like “Where is mommy/daddy?”</li><li>• Says what action is happening in a picture or book when asked, like “running,” “eating,” or “playing”</li><li>• Says first name when asked</li><li>• Talks well enough for others to understand, most of the time</li></ul>	<p><b>Cognitive Milestones (learning, thinking, problem-solving)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Draws a circle when you show them how</li><li>• Avoids touching hot objects, like a stove, when you warn them</li></ul> <p><b>Movement/Physical Development Milestones</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Strings items together, like large beads or macaroni</li><li>• Puts on some clothes by themselves, like loose pants or a jacket</li><li>• Uses a fork</li></ul>
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## By 4 Years

<p><b>Social/Emotional Milestones</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Pretends to be something else during play (like a teacher, superhero, or dog)</li><li>• Asks to go play with children if none are around, like “Can I play with Alex?”</li><li>• Comforts others who are hurt or sad, like hugging a crying friend</li><li>• Avoids danger, like not jumping from tall heights at the playground</li><li>• Likes to be a helper</li><li>• Changes behavior based on where they are (like a place of worship, library, or playground)</li></ul> <p><b>Language/Communication Milestones</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Says sentences with 4 or more words</li><li>• Says some words from a song, story, or nursery rhyme</li><li>• Talks about at least 1 thing that happened during their day, like “I played soccer”</li><li>• Answers simple questions like “What is a coat for?” or “What is a crayon for?”</li></ul>	<p><b>Cognitive Milestones (learning, thinking, problem-solving)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Names a few colors of items</li><li>• Tells what comes next in a well-known story</li><li>• Draws a person with 3 or more body parts</li></ul> <p><b>Movement/Physical Development Milestones</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Catches a large ball most of the time</li><li>• Serves themselves food or pours water, with adult supervision</li><li>• Unbuttons some buttons</li><li>• Holds crayon or pencil between fingers and thumb, not a fist</li></ul>
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## By 5 years

<p><b>Social/Emotional Milestones</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Follows rules or takes turns when playing games with other children</li><li>• Sings, dances, or acts for you</li><li>• Does simple chores at home, like matching socks or clearing the table after eating</li></ul> <p><b>Language/Communication Milestones</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Tells a story they heard or made up with at least 2 events. For example, a cat was stuck in a tree and a firefighter saved it.</li><li>• Answers simple questions about a book or story after you read or tell it to them.</li><li>• Keeps a conversation going with more than 3 back-and-forth exchanges.</li><li>• Uses or recognizes simple rhymes (like <i>bat-cat</i> or <i>ball-tall</i>).</li></ul>	<p><b>Cognitive Milestones (learning, thinking, problem-solving)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Counts to 10</li><li>• Names some numbers between 1 and 5 when you point to them</li><li>• Uses words about time, like <i>yesterday</i>, <i>tomorrow</i>, <i>morning</i>, or <i>night</i></li><li>• Pays attention for 5 to 10 minutes during activities, for example, during story time or making arts and crafts (Screen time does not count.)</li><li>• Writes some letters in their name</li><li>• Names some letters when you point to them</li></ul> <p><b>Movement/Physical Development Milestones</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Buttons some buttons</li><li>• Hops on 1 foot</li></ul>
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## Well-Child Visits

Remember to take your child to their recommended well-child (health supervision) visits. At each visit, your child's doctor will check their progress and ask you about the ways you see them growing.

Visit [HealthyChildren.org](https://www.healthychildren.org) for more information.

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