

Watch and Help Me Grow

*Developmental Milestones
Birth to Five Years*



Collaboration for
Early Childhood
Strong Start, Bright Future

This publication is intended to provide families with the information they need to support their child's successful development. It is made possible through a generous grant from *Communityworks* Partnership supported by the Oak Park-River Forest Community Foundation and support from the Rotary Club of Oak Park-River Forest. This guide is also available online at www.collab4kids.org.

HOW DO CHILDREN DEVELOP?

Each child develops on his/her own timeline and not all children meet each milestone at the same time. The milestones listed in this guide provide a timeline for when most children master these skills. Some children will gain several new motor skills without developing new language skills or vice versa. This is typical as long as the child begins to master new skills in the other areas within a month or two. Children frequently learn through imitation and modeling, so provide many examples of the behavior that you would like to see from your child. If you have concerns about your child's development, share them with your child's physician, providing specific examples of what your child does well and when your child seems to struggle.

For information supporting all aspects of your child's development and for a searchable 2012 Early Childhood Resource Directory, please visit the website for Collaboration for Early Childhood at www.collab4kids.org.

ALWAYS TALK TO YOUR CHILD'S DOCTOR AT ANY AGE IF YOUR CHILD...

- Uses one side of his/her body more than the other
- Does not appear interested in interacting with familiar adults or peers
- Loses speech, motor, or social skills that he/she previously had
- Covers ears for a sound that is unexpected
- Tilts head in order to see objects
- Brings books close to his/her face when reading
- Does not imitate sounds or actions
- Does not respond when his/her name is called

SOURCES

CDC – Act Early Campaign, Milestone Moments Booklet
(www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly/downloads.html)

Hawaii Early Learning Profile (HELP) (www.vort.com)

Just In Time Parenting Newsletter

(<http://www.extension.org/pages/22110/just-in-time-parenting-enewsletters>)

Parenting Counts - Talaris Institute (<http://www.parentingcounts.org/information/timeline>)

PBS Parents - Child Development Tracker (<http://www.pbs.org/parents/child-development>)

0 - 3 MONTHS

WHAT I CAN DO...

- Smile at you
- Look at faces
- Make cooing and babbling sounds
- Explore my hands and toys with my mouth
- Turn my head to sounds and listen to voices
- Follow a person or toy with my head and eyes
- Hold a rattle
- Stop crying when you pick me up
- Cry differently for different needs
- Wiggle my arms and kick my legs
- Enjoy lying on my tummy for brief periods of time, gradually increasing each week
- Hold my head steady when my back and neck are supported
- Feed with a coordinated suck-swallow-breathe sequence

HOW YOU CAN HELP ME...

- Look at books and pictures with me, talk about what I am looking at
- Place me on my tummy when I'm awake and place toys in front of and beside me
- Place me on my tummy several different times per day for short periods of time and lie down with me
- Copy the sounds I make back to me
- Listen to my different cries and respond to my needs
- Hold me when I am upset
- Smile at me and play peek-a-boo
- Talk and sing to me
- Provide big, soft, and safe toys for me to explore with my mouth
- Cuddle and hold me often
- Do not let me spend too much time in a car seat, bouncy seat, or other baby equipment

WHEN TO TALK TO MY DOCTOR...

- I do not respond to loud sounds
- I am unable to watch/track things as they move
- I do not smile at people
- I keep my hands at my side and do not bring them to my mouth
- I show signs of discomfort after feeding or do not latch well during feeding
- I do not hold my head up by 8 weeks old

3 - 6 MONTHS

WHAT I CAN DO...

- Copy sounds I hear
- Coo and giggle
- Make vowel and consonant sounds (ah, eh, oh, m, and b)
- Recognize familiar people and things
- Hold my head steady
- Roll in both directions
- Begin to sit with minimal or no support
- Turn my head to the left and right when I am sitting
- Show excitement by waving my arms and kicking my legs
- Respond to my name
- Show curiosity about objects and try to get things that are out of reach
- Hold my head up and begin to push up when I am on my tummy to learn how to crawl
- Clasp my hands together
- Track items with my eyes without having to turn my head also
- Show interest in my hands and enjoy looking at them
- Sometimes increase the amount I cry for a few weeks

HOW YOU CAN HELP ME...

- Set steady routines for sleeping and feeding
- Pick up and give me toys I drop so I can learn cause and effect
- Hold me and talk to me
- Smile at me
- Provide a safe environment and age-appropriate toys for me to reach for and explore
- Play on the floor with me
- Read books to me
- Place me on the floor on my back, on my tummy, and in seated positions

WHEN TO TALK TO MY DOCTOR...

- I struggle to hold my head steady
- I do not reach for and grasp toys in my hands
- I do not bring items to my mouth to chew and explore
- I do not push down with my legs when my feet are placed on a hard surface
- I am quiet and do not coo or make sounds
- I seem too stiff with tight muscles or my muscles seem too floppy and loose
- I cannot hold my head up when pushing up while on my tummy
- My head appears tilted to one side or the back of my head has a flat area
- I take longer than 30 minutes per feeding

6 - 9 MONTHS

WHAT I CAN DO...

- Shout for your attention
- Make different sounds and begin to say mamama and bababa
- Cling to you when I am afraid of strangers
- Wave or respond to bye-bye
- Use my fingers to point at things that interest me
- Pick up cereal using my thumb and fingers
- Look for things you hide
- Crawl or scoot backward and forward
- Sit without support and catch myself with my hands if I begin to fall over
- Attempt to pull myself up on furniture and kneel at a table or toy
- Begin to get into a sitting position by myself
- Transfer toys from one hand to the other
- Recognize my name and turn to the speaker
- Comfort myself with my thumb or by holding a special blanket

HOW YOU CAN HELP ME...

- Describe what I see
- Continue with routines; I feel secure when I know what will happen next
- Stay near me as I move around and explore; I might become fearful if you are too far away
- Play social games with me like peek-a-boo and pat-a-cake
- Push a ball or car back-and-forth and play "my turn, your turn" games
- Sing and read books to me
- Support me at my hips when I try to stand up
- Provide containers so I can practice placing items in and dumping them out
- Make sure that I am finished with my bottle before I am put down in my crib

WHEN TO TALK TO MY DOCTOR...

- I do not consistently respond when you call my name
- I struggle to sit without help
- I only say one or two sounds and am usually very quiet
- I only play by myself and do not play back-and-forth games
- I am unable to recognize familiar people
- I do not look where you point when you point at a close object
- I do not use my eyes together when watching a moving object or if my eyes are crossed
- I do not transfer toys from one hand to the other
- I spend more time looking at my hands rather than playing with toys and objects

WHAT I CAN DO...

- Finger feed myself crackers and dry cereal
- Hold and play with a spoon at mealtimes; I do not yet bring a spoon to my mouth
- Begin to say “mama” and “dada” to specifically mean my mother and father
- Understand simple directions and what “no” means
- Babble single-consonant sounds (ba)
- Babble to myself when I play alone
- Crawl well
- Sleep for 12-14 hours a night, with fewer daytime naps
- Cooperate with dressing by extending my arms and legs
- Move my body when I hear music
- Cry when you leave
- Hand toys or books to you so we can play together
- Test your reactions during feeding and bedtime
- Pull to stand and “cruise” along furniture
- Remove pieces from puzzles and ring stacks

9 - 12 MONTHS

HOW YOU CAN HELP ME...

- Ensure the environment is safe for me to freely explore
- Give me hugs, kisses, and praise for good behavior
- Read books with me
- Label and identify objects and actions throughout the day so I can learn new words and phrases
- Set limits and discipline me when needed; use distraction, taking an object away, or trading for a more appropriate object works well
- Take me for walks outdoors and to the park
- Play with me in the grass and let me explore new sensory experiences
- Let me play with appropriate toys such as balls, blocks, and stacking/nesting cups

WHEN TO TALK TO MY DOCTOR...

- I am not yet crawling or am struggling to stand when supported by an adult
- I am not pointing at people or objects that interest me
- I do not imitate any gestures like shaking my head or waving
- I do not babble
- I have trouble picking up toys
- I have trouble transitioning to solid foods

WHAT I CAN DO...

- Say several single words (1-3 words by 15 months, 10-15 words by 18 months)
- Use my voice along with pointing or gesturing to let you know what I want
- Attempt to sing along to favorite songs
- Hand toys back to you
- Begin to complete puzzles
- Bring an item from another room on request
- Understand more words and phrases and short commands like “give me a kiss” or “come here”
- Engage in simple pretend play like feeding a doll
- Have a tantrum because I get frustrated easily
- Help undress myself by taking off my hat or socks
- Bring a spoon to my mouth with food; I will still spill some of the food off of the spoon
- Eat the same foods as you at mealtimes
- Let you know when I have a soiled diaper
- Walk independently
- Crawl and then walk up and down stairs holding a rail

12 - 18 MONTHS

(1 - 1½ YEARS)

HOW YOU CAN HELP ME...

- Provide a safe, predictable environment for me so I can feel secure
- Ask for behaviors you want: say “time to sit” rather than “don’t stand in your highchair”
- Focus on my good behaviors
- Distract me with another activity when I am upset rather than use a lot of words to talk to me
- Ignore temper tantrums when you can, but always keep me and others safe
- Repeat words or sounds I make
- Label body parts and items throughout the day
- Encourage pretend play (use dolls, play telephones, etc.)
- I should not watch TV; play with me instead
- Remind me not to hit or bite others
- Teach me basic hygiene skills – brushing teeth, washing hands
- Give me drinks in a sippy or open cup; I do not need my bottle anymore
- Give me a new food along with a favorite food; give it to me with 10-15 meals before you decide that I do not like it

WHEN TO TALK TO MY DOCTOR...

- I only crawl and do not walk by myself
- I do not use any true words or have said the same words for 1 month without using any new words
- I do not use any gestures like pointing or waving
- I do not know what to do with familiar objects or toys
- I do not notice or care when a familiar caregiver leaves or returns

WHAT I CAN DO...

- Follow simple two-step directions (“get the ball and put it in the basket”)
- Stand on my tiptoes, run, kick a ball, and climb up and down on furniture
- Match animal sounds to animals
- Identify one body part by 18 months and three body parts by 24 months
- Remember where objects belong and help with cleaning up
- Point to five pictures of familiar objects and/or people
- Assemble four nesting cups or blocks together
- Recognize myself in photographs
- Get excited when I am around other children although I might not play with them
- Use my own name to refer to myself
- Use 20 words by 21 months and 50 words by 24 months
- Say several two-word phrases
- Name several pictures in familiar books
- String large beads
- Build a tower using six cubes or blocks
- Show a wide range of emotions, including joy, anger, and jealousy towards others
- Imitate you when you are doing chores and housework

18 - 24 MONTHS

(1½ - 2 YEARS)

HOW YOU CAN HELP ME...

- Include me in simple household chores; I enjoy dusting and cleaning up after dinner
- Teach me the names of body parts, animals, and objects around the house
- When I point at things, encourage me to say the word
- Play with me; I enjoy puzzles, blocks, playdough, crayons, and paper
- Take me to the park so I can practice climbing, running, and playing with balls
- Let me try drinking from an open cup and through a straw
- Set limits that are firm and fair; be consistent in enforcing them
- When I do something wrong, use a firm voice to correct my actions; do not discipline me in anger, yell, or hit
- Count stairs with me as we walk up and down together

WHEN TO TALK TO MY DOCTOR...

- I use only single words and do not try to imitate longer phrases
- I do not imitate or copy words and actions
- I struggle to follow simple directions
- I do not know what to do with common objects (cup, phone, brush, etc.)
- I am not running well and struggle to climb onto furniture or go up/down stairs

WHAT I CAN DO...

- Name clothing items and know when to use them (jackets are used when it is cold outside)
- Use three-word sentences along with pronouns, action words, and past tense
- Say my name
- Get upset when you do not understand me
- Answer *yes/no, what, where* questions
- Wash my hands and brush my teeth with minimal assistance
- Undress – remove several articles of clothing
- Anticipate the need to go potty although it might not be in time
- Walk up and down steps by myself with two feet on each step
- Run avoiding obstacles and stop without help or falling down
- Imitate standing on one foot
- Catch a large ball
- Understand and follow home or classroom routines
- Know six body parts
- Match simple shapes and colors (circles, triangles, squares, black and white)
- Understand action words
- Hold a crayon with my thumb and fingers; draw vertical lines, horizontal lines, and continuous circles

WHEN TO TALK TO MY DOCTOR...

- I struggle to play with simple toys
- I make limited eye contact with you or others
- I do not want to play or be around other children or appear to have extreme anxiety around peers
- I only use single words or fewer than 50 words

24 - 30 MONTHS

(2 - 2½ YEARS)

HOW YOU CAN HELP ME...

- Talk about my emotions to help me label them
- Read children's books about emotions and feelings
- Give me more complex instructions and help me when I struggle to understand
- Draw with me
- Read with me and ask me to label items in the book
- Encourage me to climb stairs independently and to climb up onto chairs (when it is safe)
- Continue to label objects throughout the day so my vocabulary continues to increase
- Talk to me about going potty; help me to use the toilet every few hours until I can tell you myself when I need to go (I might not be ready for several more months)
- Encourage my independence in undressing, feeding, wiping my nose, and washing my hands
- Give me a new food along with a favorite food; give it to me with 10-15 meals before you decide that I do not like it
- Do not let me watch or play more than 30-60 minutes on TV, computer, or video games each day

WHAT I CAN DO...

- Walk upstairs and downstairs holding a rail
- Pedal a tricycle, stand on one foot, and jump backwards, forwards, and sideways
- Climb jungle gyms and ladders at the playground
- Begin to use scissors to snip paper
- Complete tasks independently
- Play next to a friend and sometimes share
- Show empathy when others are crying and show a wide range of emotions
- Vocalize for all my needs and use over 200 words to express my ideas and needs
- String smaller beads
- Build a tall tower of blocks
- Complete three- or four-piece puzzles
- Understand size concepts – stack rings in correct order, place small block on top of a big block
- Sort items by color
- Understand most verbs and adjectives and some prepositions
- Tell you my full name
- Participate in storytelling and recite portions of familiar songs and nursery rhymes
- Ask questions

30 - 36 MONTHS

(2½ - 3 YEARS)

HOW YOU CAN HELP ME...

- Talk to me and listen to what I have to say
- Play matching games with me (match the toy pig with the picture of a pig in the book)
- Allow free play time where you can observe my creativity in play
- Let me get messy in play and let me play with water, paint, sand, and playdough
- Plan play dates or take me to the park so I can interact with other children; help me to manage social problems
- Set rules and limits for me and stick to them; give me a short time-out when I break rules
- Encourage my independence even though it might take longer to complete a task

WHEN TO TALK TO MY DOCTOR...

- I do not play make-believe or pretend games
- I fall down or struggle to climb stairs, furniture, playground equipment, etc.
- I use gestures rather than words to let you know I want something
- I frequently say words and phrases that adults cannot understand
- I drop portions of words, either at the beginning or end
- I stop doing things I used to do – using words, smiling, playing near other children

WHAT I CAN DO...

- Understand almost everything you say to me (around 1000 words)
- Say descriptive sentences (“The big ball rolled under the table.”)
- Follow a three-step direction
- Sing along with familiar songs
- Play with one toy or activity for 5-10 minutes
- Pretend that a doll is eating, sleeping, crying
- Understand the names of colors
- Understand the concepts “one”, “two”, “all”
- Play with my friends
- Tell you how old I am
- Draw a person with two or three body parts
- Use scissors to snip paper
- Walk up and down stairs while alternating feet
- Jump, hop, and gallop
- Play on the swing, slide, and jungle gym at the playground without hesitation
- Ride a tricycle longer distances
- Brush my teeth
- Help set the table and do simple chores

36 - 42 MONTHS

(3 - 3½ YEARS)

HOW YOU CAN HELP ME...

- Talk to me and listen to what I have to say
- Take me to the playground
- Give me blocks to build with
- Have me tell you what I did today
- Give me “first...then” directions
- Read to me
- Do not let me watch or play more than 30-60 minutes on TV, computer, or video games each day
- Tell me what I can do rather than what I cannot do (“walk in the house” instead of “don’t run”)

WHEN TO TALK TO MY DOCTOR...

- I only say single words or a few two-word phrases
- I say lots of sounds, but adults have a hard time understanding my words
- I always play with toys for less than 2 minutes
- I have difficulty following two-step directions
- I scribble with crayons but do not copy shapes
- I do not engage in pretend play
- I do not like to touch paint or playdough
- I can not jump up off of the floor or down from a step

WHAT I CAN DO...

- Tell a story about an event that happened in the past
- Ask “Why?” questions
- Count to 10
- Share toys with other children
- Take on roles during dramatic play
- Try to do things by myself
- May not distinguish between fantasy and reality
- Sometimes I am afraid of something I was not afraid of before
- Show a variety of emotions
- Understand other people’s feelings
- Catch a ball
- Throw a ball towards a person
- Jump a distance of 12+ inches
- Stack a tower of blocks and build structures
- Go to the bathroom by myself
- Eat only certain foods one week and then change preferences the following week

42 - 48 MONTHS

(3½ - 4 YEARS)

HOW YOU CAN HELP ME...

- Talk to me and listen to what I have to say
- Answer my questions
- Let me be independent, but set boundaries
- Give me simple jobs to complete with several steps
- Let me eat foods I like today; I will change food preferences next week
- Give me a new food along with a favorite food; give it to me with 10-15 meals before you decide that I do not like it
- Give me toys that make me think and use my imagination
- Know that I might be scared because of magical thinking (e.g., monster under my bed)
- Let me play outside and talk with me about what we see
- Read to me daily

WHEN TO TALK TO MY DOCTOR...

- I do not want to play with other children
- I have difficulty with following a class or home routine
- I have trouble eating, sleeping, or toileting by myself
- I only eat five foods and refuse all other foods
- I play with toys in only one way; I have not started pretend play
- I have trouble playing on playground equipment
- I only play with toys or people for 2-3 minutes before losing interest

WHAT I CAN DO...

- Tell a story
- Pretend to “read” a familiar book
- Sing a familiar song by myself
- Tell you what I like and do not like
- Ask *who, what, where, when, why, how* questions
- Use plurals, possessive, and past tense correctly most of the time
- Be “in charge” of my friends during play time – be bossy, set the rules
- Share toys and experiences with classmates, cousins, siblings, or friends
- Follow class rules and routines
- Play a simple board or card game
- Develop print awareness
- Draw a person with at least five body parts
- Copy letters
- Use scissors to cut on a line
- Skip
- Dress and undress myself
- Help serve food onto my plate

48 - 54 MONTHS

(4 - 4½ YEARS)

HOW YOU CAN HELP ME...

- Talk to me and listen to what I have to say
- Play with me
- Let me play outside
- Give me some household responsibility – set the table or put toys away
- Play rhyming games and other word games with me
- Read to me and let me “write” a book
- Create art projects and drawings with me
- Let me get messy in play and let me play with water, paint, sand, and playdough
- Expect me to follow simple rules and help me understand when I break them
- Make up silly songs with me

WHEN TO TALK TO MY DOCTOR...

- I use words and phrases that cannot be understood by people I see once a week
- I do not try to talk to peers
- I appear uncoordinated during active, motor play
- I only appear happy or mad, without showing other emotions
- I use too much force or not enough when playing with toys or coloring
- I have difficulty remembering rules or routines that have been in place for several months

WHAT I CAN DO...

- Understand new words easily and begin using them when speaking
- Make up stories
- Talk on the phone
- Talk about the emotions I am feeling
- Name colors accurately
- Draw pictures
- Help with jobs around the house
- Have one or two friends that I really like to play with
- Take turns while playing
- Act out a scene in pretend play
- Tell you my address, phone number, or birthday
- Play with an interesting toy or activity for 15-30 minutes
- Finish a project that was previously started
- Draw a picture of my family
- Do a somersault
- Understand the basic concept of time

54 - 60 MONTHS

(4½ - 5 YEARS)

HOW YOU CAN HELP ME...

- Talk to me and listen to what I have to say
- Set expectations and tell me what I can do
- Have art supplies for me to create with
- Provide a print-rich environment (lots of books, writing, talking about letters)
- Encourage me to tell you a story

WHEN TO TALK TO MY DOCTOR...

- I talk in short phrases rather than complete sentences
- I use the same words and do not say different parts of speech
- I listen, but do not sing along with familiar songs
- I only show one or two emotions rather than a wide variety
- I tell you something but do not ask questions
- I do not like to run, climb, jump, walk on a balance beam, or swing at the park
- I do not play with friends/peers
- I play with toys only one way and do not use my imagination in play

WHAT IF YOU ARE CONCERNED, BUT YOUR CHILD'S DOCTOR IS NOT?

You may continue to have concerns about your child's development after talking with your child's doctor. Before taking additional steps, please make sure you ask your child's doctor to administer a formal developmental screening. Even if your child's doctor recommends completing a screening or evaluation in several months, **you always have the right to directly contact Early Intervention (EI), the local school district, or a private therapy clinic for an evaluation.**

IF YOUR CHILD IS UNDER 3 YEARS OF AGE

The Illinois Early Intervention (EI) system provides evaluations and therapies for children under three years of age with a disability or developmental delay. A family can call their local Child and Family Connections Office to arrange a free developmental evaluation through the EI system. If the child has delays in one or more areas of development, he/she may qualify for therapy services based on his/her specific needs. *For further information visit DHS at <http://www.dhs.state.il.us/ei> or the Illinois Early Intervention Clearinghouse at www.eiclearinghouse.org.*

Child and Family Connections #7 – West Suburban Cook County

708-449-0625 / 888-KONTACT (566-8228); 4415 W Harrison, Suite 201, Hillside, IL 60162

IF YOUR CHILD IS 3 YEARS OR OLDER

Parents should call the local school district, share your concerns, and ask for a screening or evaluation. Each school district operates slightly differently, but most will schedule an initial meeting with the family to identify the areas of concern. If the concerns could impact the child's ability to participate successfully in school, then an evaluation may be completed.

Oak Park (District 97)	708-524-3030	www.op97.org
River Forest (District 90)	708-771-8283	www.district90.org
Forest Park (District 91)	708-366-5703	www.forestparkschools.org

WHAT IF YOUR CHILD IS NOT ELIGIBLE FOR EI OR SCHOOL SERVICES, BUT YOU STILL HAVE CONCERNS? WHAT IF YOU WANT MORE THERAPY FOR YOUR CHILD THAN RECOMMENDED BY EARLY INTERVENTION OR SCHOOL?

Families can obtain therapy at pediatric therapy clinics. The clinics will complete an evaluation that is billed to the family's insurance or directly paid for by the family. The results of the evaluation determine recommendations for each child. Call your insurance company for a list of your in-network providers. Additional resources can be found on our website at collab4kids.org/parent-resources.

The Collaboration for Early Childhood is a community-driven organization that cultivates the development of the whole child, birth to age five, by engaging families, local organizations, early childhood educators, caregivers, and health providers to create equitable, nurturing, and interconnected systems of support.

If you have questions about child care, early childhood education, or parent support available in your community, please contact us!



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