

## Tip sheet: Developmental Milestones by Age



### How Your Child Grows, Learns, and Plays

Children grow and develop at their own pace. But there are some common skills, called milestones - that most children reach around the same age. These include things like sitting, walking, talking, and playing with others.

Milestones help families and professionals understand how a child is developing. If a child is late meeting some milestones, they may need extra help - and that's okay!

Monitor your child's developmental milestones

These developmental milestones have been provided to show some of the skills that mark the progress of young children as they learn to communicate. You may use these milestones to help monitor your child's development.

#### By 6 months

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Most children can:

- turn to source of sounds
- startle in response to sudden, loud noises
- make different cries for different needs (for example, I'm hungry, I'm tired)
- watch your face as you talk
- smile and laugh in response to your smiles and laughs
- imitate coughs or other sounds (for example, ah, eh, buh)

#### By 9 months

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Most children can:

- respond to their name
- respond to the telephone ringing or a knock at the door
- understand being told "no"
- get what they want through sounds and gestures (for example, reaching to be picked up)
- play social games with you (for example, peek-a-boo)
- enjoys being around people
- babbles and repeats sounds (for example, babababa, duhduhduh)

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### By 12 months

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Most children can:

- follow simple one-step directions (for example, "sit down")
- look across the room to something you point to
- use three or more words
- use gestures to communicate (for example, waves "bye bye", shakes head "no")
- get your attention using sounds, gestures and pointing while looking at your eyes
- bring you toys to show you
- "perform" for attention and praise
- combine lots of sounds as though talking (for example, abada baduh abee)
- show interest in simple picture books

### By 18 months

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Most children can:

- understand the concepts of "in and out", and "off and on"
- point to several body parts when asked
- use at least 20 words
- respond with words or gestures to simple questions (for example, "where's teddy?", "what's that?")
- demonstrate some pretend play with toys (for example, gives teddy a drink)
- make at least four different consonant sounds (for example, b, n, d, g, w, h)
- enjoy being read to and looking at simple books with you
- point to pictures using one finger

### By 24 months

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Most children can:

- follow two-step directions (for example, "go find your teddy bear and show it to Grandma")
- use 100 or more words
- use at least two pronouns (for example, "you", "me", "mine")
- consistently combine two or more words in short phrases (for example, "daddy hat", "truck go down")
- enjoy being with other children
- begin to offer toys to peers and imitate other children's actions and words
- be understood by people 50% to 60% of the time
- form words and sounds easily and effortlessly

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- hold books the right way up and turn pages
- "read" to stuffed animals or toys
- scribble with crayons

### By 30 months

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Most children can:

- understand the concepts of size (big and little) and quantity (a little, a lot, more)
- use some adult grammar (for example, "two cookies", "bird flying", "I jumped")
- use more than 350 words
- use action words (for example, run, spill, fall)
- begin taking turns with other children, using both toys and words
- show concern when another child is hurt or sad
- combine several actions in play (for example, feed a doll then put it to sleep, put blocks in train then drive train and drop blocks off)
- include sounds at the beginning of most words (for example, say "cat" rather than "at")
- produce words with two or more syllables or beats (for example, "ba-na-na", "com-pu-ter", "a-pple")
- recognize familiar logos and signs, for example stop sign
- remember and understand familiar stories

### By age 3

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Most children can:

- understand "who", "what", "where" and "why" questions
- create long sentences using 5 or more words and talk about past events (for example, trip to grandparents' house, day at childcare)
- tell simple stories
- show affection for favourite playmates
- engage in multi-step pretend play (for example, cooking a meal, repairing a car)
- be understood by most people outside of the family, most of the time
- be aware of the function of print (for example, in menus, lists, signs)
- have a beginning interest in, and awareness of, rhyming

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### By age 4

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Most children can:

- follow directions involving three or more steps (for example, "first get some paper, then draw a picture, last give it to mom")
- use adult-type grammar
- tell stories with a clear beginning, middle and end
- talk to try to solve problems with adults and other children
- demonstrate increasingly complex imaginative play
- be understood by strangers most of the time
- be able to generate simple rhymes (for example, cat and bat)
- match some letters with their sounds (for example, the letter T says 'tuh')

### By age 5

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Most children can:

- follow group directions (for example, "all the children get a toy")
- understand directions involving "if...then" (for example, "if you're wearing runners, then line up for gym")
- describe past, present and future events in detail
- seek to please their friends
- show increasing independence in friendships (for example, may visit a neighbour by themselves)
- use almost all of the sounds of their language with few to no errors
- know all the letters of the alphabet
- identify the sounds at the beginning of some words (for example, "pop starts with the 'puh' sound")
- source: [www.ontario.ca/page/early-child-development](http://www.ontario.ca/page/early-child-development)

### Helpful Ontario Resources

- Learn about programs that can support your child's growth and development from the time they're born until they start school.
- <https://www.ontario.ca/page/early-child-development>
- <https://www.ontario.ca/page/healthy-babies-healthy-children-program>
- <https://www.ontario.ca/page/infant-hearing-program>
- <https://www.ontario.ca/page/blind-low-vision-early-intervention-program>
- <https://www.ontario.ca/page/preschool-speech-and-language-program>

**JMCC is here to support you and your child. Reach out to your care team if you'd like to learn more about milestones or therapies that can help your child grow and thrive.**

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