



MILESTONES MATTER: UNDERSTANDING YOUR CHILD'S DEVELOPMENT

[Enter presenters' information here]



What You Will Learn

- Demonstrate why monitoring milestones are important in identifying common developmental concerns
- Learn about the different areas of developmental milestones that children reach at different ages
- Know what steps to take if there is ever a concern about your child's development
- Learn about free tools and resources to help monitor your child's development including how to communicate concerns with teachers, healthcare providers, and others
- [If applicable: Learn about state/local resources]



Why Monitor Your Child's Development?

Developmental disabilities are common and often not identified before school age

- **1 in 6 children** (3–17 years of age) has a developmental disability¹
- Developmental disabilities are even more common among children from low-income households, with **1 in 5 children** experiencing a developmental disability¹



1. Zablotsky, B, et al, *Pediatrics* 2019



Why Monitor Your Child's Development?

- **About 1 in 31 children** is estimated to have autism spectrum disorder (ASD)¹



1. Shaw et al. CDC, MMWR Surveillance Summary 04/2025



UNDERSTANDING DEVELOPMENTAL MILESTONES



What Are Developmental Milestones?

- **Things most children can do by a certain age like:**
 - By 2 months: reacting to loud sounds
 - By 9 months: lifting arms up to be picked up
 - By 3 years: drawing a circle, when you show them how
- **Children reach milestones in how they play, learn, speak, act, and move**
- **Though all children develop at their own pace, most children reach developmental milestones at or around the same age**



Learn the Signs.
Act Early.



Why Monitor Developmental Milestones?

- Monitoring developmental milestones enables parents to support their child's growth and act early if there is a concern.
- In a recent survey, parents frequently searched for information about developmental milestones.



When 1,002 parents were asked about child-rearing topics they seek information about, 70% reported seeking information about developmental milestones, which was the highest score among topics.



Domains (Areas) of Development



- **Social/Emotional**
- **Language/Communication**
- **Cognitive (learning, thinking, problem-solving)**
- **Movement/Physical**

Learn the Signs.
Act Early.



So Many Milestones to Celebrate!

- Monitoring milestones helps every parent and caregiver support their child's development



- CDC's *Learn the Signs. Act Early. Milestones in Action* [Photo and Video Library](#) shows what each milestone looks like in real-life situations





CDC'S FREE RESOURCES CAN HELP YOU



CDC's Milestone Resources

Free Tools for Monitoring Children's Development



Your child at 15 months

Child's Name _____ Child's Age _____ Today's Date _____

Milestones matter! How your child plays, learns, speaks, acts, and moves offers important clues about his or her development. Check the milestones your child has reached by 15 months. Take this with you and talk with your child's doctor at every well-child visit about the milestones your child has reached and what to expect next.

What most children do by this age:

Social/Emotional Milestones

- Copies other children while playing, like taking toys out of a container when another child does
- Shows you an object she likes
- Claps when excited
- Hugs stuffed doll or other toy
- Shows you affection (hugs, cuddles, or kisses you)

Cognitive Milestones (learning, thinking, problem-solving)

- Tries to use things the right way, like a phone, cup, or book
- Stacks at least two small objects, like blocks

Language/Communication Milestones

- Tries to say one or two words besides "mama" or "dada," like "ba" for ball or "da" for dog
- Looks at a familiar object when you name it
- Follows directions given with both a gesture and words. For example, he gives you a toy when you hold out your hand and say, "Give me the toy."
- Points to ask for something or to get help

Movement/Physical Development Milestones

- Takes a few steps on his own
- Uses fingers to feed herself some food

Other important things to share with the doctor...

- What are some things you and your child do together?
- What are some things your child likes to do?
- Is there anything your child does or does not do that concerns you?
- Has your child lost any skills he/she once had?
- Does your child have any special healthcare needs or was he/she born prematurely?

You know your child best. Don't wait. If your child is not meeting one or more milestones, has lost skills he or she once had, or you have other concerns, act early. Talk with your child's doctor, share your concerns, and ask about developmental screening. If you or the doctor are still concerned:

1. Ask for a referral to a specialist who can evaluate your child more, and
2. Call your state or territory's early intervention program to find out if your child can get services to help. Learn more and find the number at cdc.gov/FindEI.

For more on how to help your child, visit cdc.gov/Concerned.

Don't wait. Acting early can make a real difference!

Milestone Moments

Milestones Matter!

Look inside for milestones to watch for in your child and tips for how you can help your child learn and grow from birth to age 5.

Download CDC's Free Milestone Tracker app

www.cdc.gov/ActEarly/Materials

Grow Up Healthy!

5 years
 • Knows when to sit, stand, walk, run, and jump.
 • Knows when to use a spoon, fork, and knife.
 • Knows when to use a toilet.
 • Knows when to use a comb and brush.

4 years
 • Knows when to use a spoon, fork, and knife.
 • Knows when to use a toilet.
 • Knows when to use a comb and brush.

3 years
 • Knows when to use a spoon, fork, and knife.
 • Knows when to use a toilet.
 • Knows when to use a comb and brush.

2-3 years
 • Knows when to use a spoon, fork, and knife.
 • Knows when to use a toilet.
 • Knows when to use a comb and brush.

18-23 months
 • Knows when to use a spoon, fork, and knife.
 • Knows when to use a toilet.
 • Knows when to use a comb and brush.

12-15 months
 • Knows when to use a spoon, fork, and knife.
 • Knows when to use a toilet.
 • Knows when to use a comb and brush.

6 months
 • Knows when to use a spoon, fork, and knife.
 • Knows when to use a toilet.
 • Knows when to use a comb and brush.

4 months
 • Knows when to use a spoon, fork, and knife.
 • Knows when to use a toilet.
 • Knows when to use a comb and brush.

2 months
 • Knows when to use a spoon, fork, and knife.
 • Knows when to use a toilet.
 • Knows when to use a comb and brush.

Watch Me!
 Celebrating Milestones and Sharing Concerns
 A FREE Online Training Course

Early care and education providers play a critical role in the health and wellness of children in their care and their families.

1 Year online CDC course that helps early care and education providers better identify and monitor developmental milestones, recognize signs of potential delays, and share observations with parents. It's changing lives! Home and best practices to support professionals and help children reach their full potential.

www.cdc.gov/WatchMeTraining

Jayden
 is 10 months old!

If your child is between the checklist ages above, you will receive the checklist for the younger age.

MILESTONES MATTER: LET'S TALK ABOUT THEM!

Milestones at 4 Months

- Brings hands to mouth
- Holds head steady

Milestones at 9 Months

- Sits without support
- Bangs things together

Milestones at 15 Months

- Points to get help
- Uses fingers to feed themselves

Milestones at 2 Years

- Points to body parts
- Eats with a spoon

Milestones at 3 Years

- Uses a fork
- Asks "who", "what" questions

Milestones at 4 Years

- Says sentences with 4 words
- Serves themselves food

Get free milestone checklists for these ages and more at www.cdc.gov/Milestones or by calling 800-CDC-INFO (800-232-4676).

Learn the Signs. Act Early.

Your Child's Early Development is a Journey

These are just a few of many important milestones to look for. For complete checklists for your child's age visit www.cdc.gov/Milestones or download CDC's free **Milestone Tracker** app.

2 MONTHS

- Looks at your face
- Reacts to loud sounds
- Reaches when you talk to or smile at her
- Holds head up when in tummy

6 MONTHS

- Reaches for people
- Takes little sips of water with you
- Reaches to grab a toy or rattle
- Pushes away from you
- Plays games with you, like peek-a-boo
- Calls a parent "mama" or "dada"

12 MONTHS

- Plays something in a container, like a block in a cup
- Pulls up to stand

2 YEARS

- Says about 50 words
- Uses things to pretend, like holding a block to a doll or a teddy bear
- Shows you what she can do by saying, "Look at me!"
- Jumps off the ground with both feet
- Talks with you in conversations
- Draws a circle, when you show her how
- Names other children and puts them to play
- Draws a stick

18 MONTHS

- Looks at your face to see how to react in a new situation
- Says at least five words besides "mama" or "dada"
- Points to show you something interesting
- Thinks to say three or more words besides "mama" or "dada"
- Plays with you in conversations
- Names a few colors of items
- Answers simple questions like "What is that?"
- Names a few colors of items
- Draws a few buttons
- Uses or recognizes simple phrases

3 YEARS

- Follows rules or takes turns when playing games with other children
- Writes or recognizes simple phrases

4 YEARS

- Writes or recognizes simple phrases

5 YEARS

- Writes or recognizes simple phrases

Amazing Me
 It's Busy Being 3!

www.cdc.gov/actearly

NATIONAL CENTER ON BIRTH DEFECTS AND DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

Learn the Signs. Act Early.

Baby's Busy Day
 Being one is So Much Fun!

Milestone Moments

Milestones Matter!
 Look inside for milestones to watch for in your child and tips for how you can help your child learn and grow from birth to age 5.

WHERE IS BEAR?
 A Terrific Tale for 2-Year-Olds

Written by Libby Martinez
 Illustrated by Allison Valentine

Help your child grow and thrive

Your child's early years are so very important. Tracking how your little one plays, learns, speaks, acts, and moves helps you support their development.

Download CDC's free **Milestone Tracker** app to find fun and easy activities for each age.

Track & Share Milestones | Get Tips & Activities | Learn When to Act Early

Learn more at cdc.gov/MilestoneTracker

Milestones Matter

Track your child's developmental milestones and try brain building tips to add learning to everyday moments!

Track Your Child's Development
 Track how your child plays, learns, speaks, acts, and moves with CDC's Milestone Tracker app—and share all progress and any concerns with their doctor during well-child visits. www.cdc.gov/MilestoneTracker

BY 2 MONTHS: Smiles at you

BY 6 MONTHS: Laughs with you

BY 12 MONTHS: Plays games with you, like "peek-a-boo"

BY 18 MONTHS: Points to show you something interesting

Brain Building Tip: Suggested Age: 0–2 years
 We're surrounded by words that are ready for reading. Try reading signs aloud to your child and talk to them about what they mean. It doesn't matter if it's a book, magazine, or billboard—it all counts! Reading to your child, anywhere and everywhere, helps them develop a rich, diverse vocabulary. Find more tips at roomsg.org.

Learn "No Spills, Act Early!"
 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
www.cdc.gov/actearly
 1-800-CDC-INFO

Do you have concerns about how your child plays, learns, speaks, acts or moves? Visit www.cdc.gov/concerned and talk with your child's doctor.

Milestone Checklists

Free, printable checklists are available online (and in *CDC's Milestone Tracker* app) featuring

- Age-specific milestones
 - Guidance on what to expect for most children by the next age checklist (up to age 5 years)
- Open-ended questions for you to answer
- Parenting tips and activities to help your child learn and grow
- Guidance for what to do if you have a developmental concern
- Early intervention information
- Reminders about well visits and developmental screening

Your child at 5 years

Child's Name _____ Child's Age _____ Today's Date _____

Milestones matter! How your child plays, learns, speaks, acts, and moves offers important clues about his or her development. Check the milestones your child has reached by age 5. Take this with you and talk with your child's doctor at every well-child visit about the milestones your child has reached and what to expect next.



What most children do by this age:

Social/Emotional Milestones

- Follows rules or takes turns when playing games with other children
- Sings, dances, or acts for you
- Does simple chores at home, like matching socks or clearing the table after eating

Language/Communication Milestones

- Tells a story she heard or made up with at least two events. For example, a cat was stuck in a tree and a firefighter saved it
- Answers simple questions about a book or story after you read or tell it to him
- Keeps a conversation going with more than three back-and-forth exchanges
- Uses or recognizes simple rhymes (bat-cat, ball-tall)

Cognitive Milestones (learning, thinking, problem-solving)

- Counts to 10
- Names some numbers between 1 and 5 when you point to them
- Uses words about time, like "yesterday," "tomorrow," "morning," or "night"
- Pays attention for 5 to 10 minutes during activities. For example, during story time or making arts and crafts (screen time does not count)
- Writes some letters in her name
- Names some letters when you point to them

Movement/Physical Development Milestones

- Buttons some buttons
- Hops on one foot

Other important things to share with the doctor...

- What are some things you and your child do together?
- What are some things your child likes to do?
- Is there anything your child does or does not do that concerns you?
- Has your child lost any skills he/she once had?
- Does your child have any special healthcare needs or was he/she born prematurely?

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1. Ask for a referral to a specialist who can evaluate your child more; and
2. Call any local public elementary school for a free evaluation to find out if your child can get services to help.

For more on how to help your child, visit cdc.gov/Concerned.

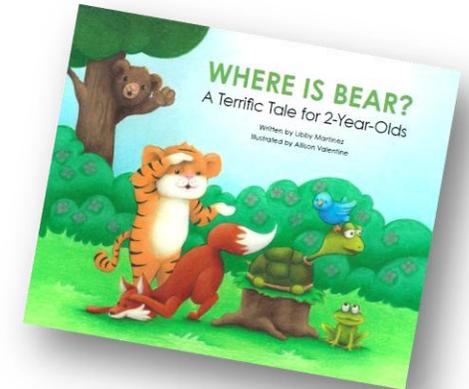
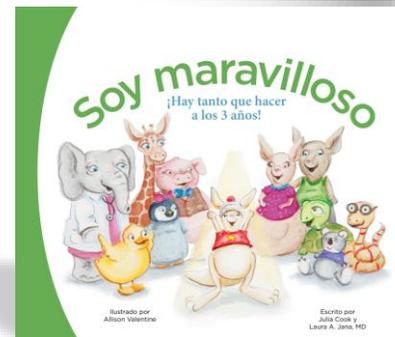
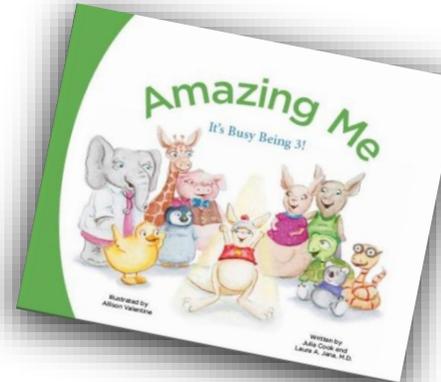
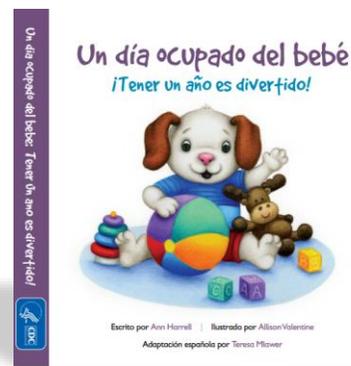
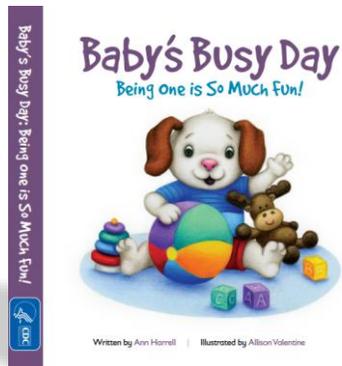
Don't wait. Acting early can make a real difference!



Amazing Children's Books

- Milestones highlighted throughout story
- Parent tips and information about when to act early on concerns
- Available in English and Spanish
- Order free books:
<https://www.cdc.gov/ActEarly/Orders>



Learn the Signs.
Act Early.



All Materials are Relatable and Accessible



- Written in family-friendly language
- Includes milestones easy to see in your child
- Milestones were tested for understanding with families from different backgrounds
- Available in [multiple languages](#) and in a variety of formats (paper, online, and app)

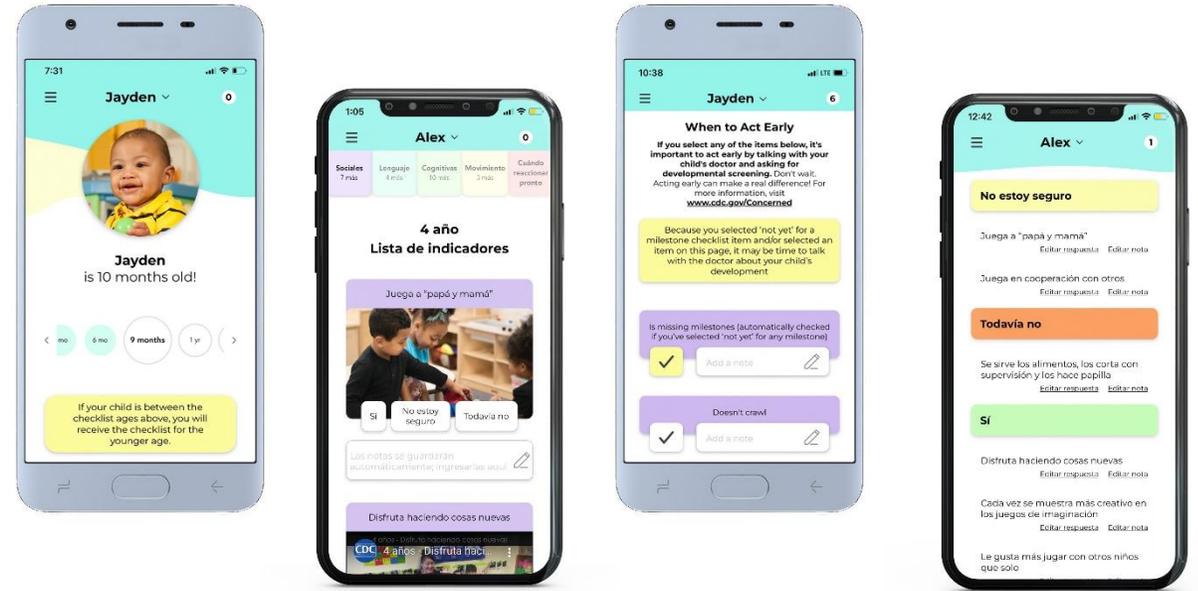
Learn the Signs.
Act Early.



CDC's Milestone Tracker App

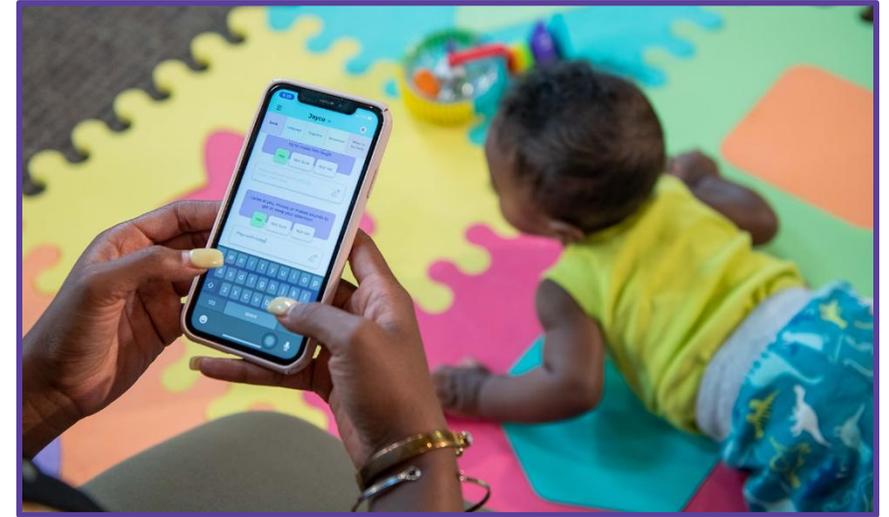
- Includes the same content as the milestone checklists
- Available in English and Spanish
- Available for iOS and Android phones
- Interactive milestone checklists show each milestone with a photo or video
- FREE with no ads
- Easy to use
- *Milestones in Action* photos and videos show you what each milestone looks like

Available at: www.cdc.gov/MilestoneTracker
Available at: www.cdc.gov/Sigamos



Start Monitoring Your Child's Development Today!

- [Download](#) CDC's Milestone Tracker app
- [Order](#) a Milestone Moment booklet
- [Order](#) children's books
- Complete an [online](#) milestone checklist
- Visit cdc.gov/ActEarly for resources and information



Developmental Monitoring, Screening, and Evaluation...

What is the Difference?

Developmental Monitoring

WHO: You — parents, grandparents, other caregivers

WHAT: Look for developmental milestones

WHEN: From birth to 5 years

WHY: To help you

- celebrate your child's development
- talk about your child's progress with doctors and childcare providers
- learn what to expect next
- identify any concerns early

HOW: With easy, free checklists – get yours at www.cdc.gov/Milestones

Developmental Screening

WHO: Healthcare provider, early childhood teacher, or other trained provider

WHAT: Look for developmental milestones

WHEN:

- **Developmental Screening** at 9, 18, 30 months of age
- **Autism Screening** at 18 and 24 months of age

WHY: To find out

- if your child needs more help with development, because it is not always obvious to doctors, childcare providers, or parents
- if more developmental evaluation are recommended

HOW: With a formal, validated screening tool – [learn more](#) 

Developmental Evaluation

WHO: Developmental pediatrician, child psychologist, or other trained provider

WHAT: Identify and diagnose developmental delays and conditions

WHEN: Whenever there is a concern

WHY: To find out

- if your child needs specific treatment
- if your child qualifies for early intervention

HOW: With a detailed examination, formal assessment tools, observation, and surveys from parents and other caregivers, often in combination, depending on the area of concern

Learn the Signs. Act Early. materials are for **DEVELOPMENTAL MONITORING**



Learn the Signs.
Act Early.





WHAT TO DO IF YOU HAVE CONCERNS



How to Get Help For Your Child

If your child is not meeting a milestones for their age or you have ANY concerns:

- Don't wait; acting early can make a real difference
- Make an appointment with your child's healthcare provider
- Complete a milestone checklist
 - Write down your questions and concerns; take them with you to the doctor's appointment
- Ask your child's doctor about developmental screening



**If you or the doctor thinks there might be a delay, ask the doctor for a referral to a specialist who can do more evaluation.*

Learn the Signs.
Act Early.



Early Intervention is Best

- The earlier a child is identified as having a developmental disability or delay, the sooner interventions and family supports can start
 - While earlier is better, it is **never** too late to start services and get support
- Early intervention can improve your child's skills, abilities, future school performance, and long-term self-care
- Early identification and intervention help families understand their child's strengths as well as areas in which they may need support
- Getting services for developmental delays early can help prevent challenging behaviors later



Learn the Signs.
Act Early.



What Else Can I Do?

You can also connect with your state or territory's [early intervention](#) program to find out if your child can get services to help. A doctor's referral may not be necessary.

- **If your child is under age 3:**
 - Call your state or territory's early intervention program and say: **“I have concerns about my child's development, and I would like to have my child evaluated to find out if they are eligible for early intervention services.”**
- **If your child is 3 years old or older:**
 - Call the local public elementary school, ask to speak with the person in charge of special education, and say: **“I have concerns about my child's development and would like to have my child evaluated through the school system for preschool special education services.”**



CDC's Act Early Ambassadors

- Represent 48 states; Washington, DC; and 3 territories
- Champion CDC's *Learn the Signs. Act Early.* program
- Are passionate about child development and early identification
- Work to add developmental monitoring into programs across their state/territory
- Connect with your ambassador here: cdc.gov/ActEarly/Ambassadors





QUESTIONS?



Contact Us!



- [Enter presenters contact information here]
- CDC's Act Early Inbox
 - ActEarly@cdc.gov

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