Child Development
Stages and Milestones

Development is how children grow and learn to move, speak, think, and interact with others. While every child develops at their own pace, developmental milestones offer a general guide for what to expect at different ages. These milestones fall into four key areas: physical (movement), cognitive (learning and thinking), social and emotional, and communication (language).

Infancy
Birth to 12 Months

Physical
Lifts head, rolls over, sits with support, and may crawl or stand.

Communication
Coos, babbles, and uses gestures such as waving.

Social and Emotional
Smiles, recognizes caregivers, and shows attachment.

Cognitive
Explores with hands and mouth and follows objects with their eyes.

Toddlerhood
1-3 Years

Physical
Walks, runs, climbs, and uses utensils.

Communication
Says single words, combines words, and follows simple directions.

Social and Emotional
Shows independence, may have tantrums, and plays near other children.

Cognitive
Sorts shapes and colors and begins pretend play.

Preschool
3-5 Years

Physical
Hops, stands on one foot, and dresses self.

Communication
Speaks in sentences, asks questions, and tells simple stories.

Social and Emotional
Plays with others, shows empathy, and follows simple rules.

Cognitive
Counts, names colors, and understands basic time concepts.

School Age
6-12 Years

Physical
Improves coordination and learns sports or instruments.

Communication
Uses complex sentences and understands others' perspectives.

Social and Emotional
Forms friendships and develops self-esteem.

Cognitive
Thinks logically and solves problems.

Adolescence
13-18 Years

Physical
Experiences growth spurts and puberty-related changes.

Communication
Expresses complex ideas and engages in debate.

Social and Emotional
Seeks independence and values peer relationships.

Cognitive
Thinks abstractly and plans for the future.

When to Talk to Your Pediatrician

Talk to your child's pediatrician if your child loses skills, does not respond to sounds or people, or shows significant delays in:

- **Movement**
- **Speech**
- **Social Interaction**

Early support can make a big difference.

Every child is unique. If you have concerns, your pediatrician can help guide you.

For more resources, visit
mhamd.org/earlychildhood

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MENTAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION OF MARYLAND

Healthy New Families

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Healthy New Families is a program of the Mental Health Association of Maryland. We promote mental health and well-being for new parents, infants and young children, and families across Maryland by connecting families and providers with resources, education, and support.

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