

Important Milestones: Your Child at Three Years

How your child plays, learns, speaks and acts will give you important clues about your child's development. Developmental milestones are things that a majority of children can do by a certain age.

Look at what your child has reached by his or 3rd birthday and discuss this with your child's doctor next time you see them and find out what to expect next.

What most babies do at this age:

Social and Emotional

- Copies adults and friends
- Shows affection for friends without prompting
- Takes turns in games
- Shows concern for a crying friend
- Understands the idea of "mine" and "his" or "hers"
- Shows a wide range of emotions
- Separates easily from mom and dad
- May get upset with major changes in routine
- Dresses and undresses self

Language/Communication

- Follows instructions with 2 or 3 steps
- Can name most familiar things
- Understands words like "in," "on," and "under"
- Says first name, age, and sex
- Names a friend
- Says words like "I," "me," "we," and "you" and some plurals (cars, dogs, cats)
- Talks well enough for strangers to understand most of the time

- Carries on a conversation using 2 to 3 sentences

Cognitive (learning, thinking, problem-solving)

- Can work toys with buttons, levers, and moving parts
- Plays make-believe with dolls, animals, and people
- Does Puzzles with 3 or 4 pieces
- Understands what “two” means
- Copies a circle with pencil or crayon
- Turns book pages one at a time
- Builds towers of more than 6 blocks
- Screws and unscrews jar lids or turns door handle

Movement/Physical Development

- Climbs well
- Runs easily
- Pedals a tricycle
- Walks up and down stairs

Act early by talking to your child’s doctor if you child:

- Falls down a lot or has trouble with stairs
- Drools or has very unclear speech
- Can’t work simple toys (such as peg boards, simple puzzles, turning handle)
- Doesn’t speak in sentences
- Doesn’t understand simple instructions
- Doesn’t play pretend or make-believe
- Doesn’t want to play with other children or with toys
- Lose skills they once had

If you're concerned, act early by telling your child's doctor or nurse if you notice any of these signs of a possible developmental delay for their age.