

What is child development and what skills do children develop at different ages?

What is child development?

Child development is a process every child goes through. This process involves learning and mastering skills like sitting, walking, talking, skipping and tying shoes. Children learn these skills, called "developmental milestones", during predictable time periods.

Children develop skills in five main areas of development:

1. Cognitive Development: This is the child's ability to learn and solve problems. For example, this includes a two-month-old baby learning to explore the environment with hands or eyes or a five-year-old learning how to do simple math problems.
2. Social and Emotional Development: This is the child's ability to interact with others, including helping themselves and self-control. Examples of this type of development would include: a six-week-old baby smiling, a ten-month-old baby waving bye-bye, or a five-year-old boy knowing how to take turns in games at school.
3. Speech and Language Development: This is the child's ability to both understand and use language. For example, this includes a 12-month-old baby saying his first words, a two-year-old naming parts of her body, or a five-year-old learning to say "feet" instead of "foots".
4. Fine Motor Skill Development: This is the child's ability to use small muscles, specifically their hands and fingers, to pick up small objects, hold a spoon, turn pages in a book, or use a crayon to draw.
5. Gross Motor Skill Development: This is the child's ability to use large muscles. For example, a six-month-old baby learns how to sit up with some support, a 12-month-old baby learns to pull up to a stand, holding onto furniture, and a five-year-old learns to skip.

The National Center on Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities has recently launched a campaign to promote child development. For more information on child development, visit the Act Early website:

<http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/autism/actearly/>

What is a developmental milestone?

A developmental milestone is a skill that a child acquires within a specific time frame. For instance, one developmental milestone is learning to walk. Most children learn this skill or developmental milestone between the ages of 9 and 15 months.

Milestones develop in a sequential fashion. This means that a child will need to develop some skills before he or she can develop new skills. For example, children must first learn to crawl and to pull

up to a standing position before they are able to walk. Each milestone that a child acquires builds on the last milestone developed.

What are typical milestones, or skills, children learn at different ages?

We now know that our brains are not fully developed at birth. In fact, a baby's brain weighs about one-quarter (1/4) of what an adult's brain weighs!

The brain grows very rapidly during the first several years of life. During this time, your child is learning all sorts of new skills.

Because children usually acquire developmental milestones or skills during a specific time frame or "window", we can predict when most children will learn different skills. The pages below describe the types of skills children usually learn at different ages.

What if my child does not meet a developmental milestone?

Each child is an individual and may meet developmental milestones a little earlier or later than his peers. You may have heard people say things like, "He was walking before he turned 10 months, much earlier than his older brother," or "She didn't say much until she was about 2 years old, and then she talked a blue streak!" This is because each child is unique and will develop at his or her own pace.

However, there are definitely blocks of time when most children will meet a milestone. For example, children learn to walk any time between 9 and 15 months of age. So, if your child is 13 months of age and not yet walking, there is no need to worry if he is crawling and pulling to a stand. He has acquired the skills he needs to learn to walk and may begin walking soon. However, if you have a child 15 months of age, who is not yet walking, it would be a good idea to talk with your child's pediatrician to make sure there aren't any medical or developmental problems, since age 15 months is outside of the normal "window" or time frame in which children learn to walk.

However, whenever you have questions, do not hesitate to ask a professional like your child's doctor, nurse practitioner, or a trained child development or behavioral specialist. There are also several clinical specialists who are specifically trained in various areas of development who can be consulted. These include speech pathologists, occupational and physical therapists, developmental psychologists and audiologists.

How can I help my child meet these developmental milestones?

As parents, we all want our children to succeed and be the best they can be. We know from research that two factors influence how your child succeeds and grows: genes and environment.

One of the factors that influence our child's development is their genetic makeup or "genes". Some people refer to this as "nature". Genes are the genetic material we pass onto our children. Children are born with their "genes" in place. These genes act like a blueprint for what characteristics a child may have. For example, genes determine if a child will have blue eyes or brown eyes; they also determine if he will be left- or right-handed.

The other factor that influences child development is the environment. This includes experiences children have in their home, school and community environments. Some people refer to this as "nurture". The environment can either improve or harm a child's genetic blueprint. For example, malnourished children who live in third world countries may not reach their IQ potential because of the impact of their environment on their brain development.

We often think we need to run out and buy special toys, music and games to stimulate our child's development, but we have to remind ourselves that is more important to provide the following everyday activities you can do with your child to encourage brain development.

- ♦ Give your child lots of love and attention. No matter what a child's age, holding, hugging and listening are important ways to show your child they matter.
- ♦ Interact with your child by talking, singing, playing, eating, and reading with your child. Your child will grow up feeling special and important to you. You will also learn a lot about your child's interest and skills.
- ♦ Read, read, read. Research has shown that children who are read to by their parents have a larger vocabulary than other children. Reading also provides children with new perspectives about the world we live in.
- ♦ Learn some simple parenting skills for helping your child to learn how to behave. The most important parenting skills are having consistent rules, rewarding behaviors you want to see you child do more of, and having consequences for behaviors you do not want you child to continue to do.
- ♦ Limit TV time and video time to nor more than 1 - 2 hours of educational viewing per day.
- ♦ Ask for help when you need it from your spouse, partner, family friends and your child's doctor or nurse practitioner. Parenting is wonderful, but it is not always easy.

Childhood Development: First 6 Weeks

Newborns experience the world very differently from the way that we experience the world. Newborns are totally dependent on us for their basic needs. Fortunately, newborns have ways of communicating their needs to us. In the first six weeks, you and your baby will learn a lot about each other. The give-and-take that occurs between you helps to create a bond, which will form the basis of your relationship together and will provide the foundation for your child to develop relationships with others. Pay close attention to your baby, because he is paying close attention to how well you treat him! When your baby sleeps, make sure he is lying on his back unless you doctor tells you otherwise.

What your baby can see:

- ♦ Your baby's vision is not fully developed yet. At birth, your baby can only see objects that are about 8 - 12 inches away, like your face when you are holding her.
- ♦ When you are close to your baby, what she sees best is your face.

- ♦ Soon, you will notice that your baby follows your movements.
- ♦ Your baby may enjoy seeing bright colors or large black and white pictures and toys.

What your baby can hear:

- ♦ Your baby has been listening to sounds since he was inside you. Your baby already recognizes his mother's voice when he is born!
- ♦ Look for changes in your baby's body movements or facial expressions when there are new or loud sounds around him.

What your baby can feel:

- ♦ Your touch is very important to your baby! Babies enjoy gentle massages.
- ♦ By holding your baby, you are teaching her that she is loved and safe.
- ♦ You are not spoiling your baby by holding her. You are helping her feel secure. You cannot "spoil" a baby by holding her too much.
- ♦ Your baby feels temperature changes, so be careful to dress her appropriately for the weather.

How your baby eats:

- ♦ How much and how often your baby eats will vary.
- ♦ Your baby can only tolerate liquids right now, so feed him only breast milk or iron-fortified formula.

How to care for your baby's mouth:

- ♦ Your baby's gums need to be cleaned with an infant toothbrush or wet washcloth/gauze after feedings and at bedtime.

How your baby moves (your baby's gross motor skill development):

- ♦ Your baby is slowly gaining control over his muscles.
- ♦ During these six weeks, your baby will need a lot of support to hold his head up. Be careful not to let his head wobble or shake!
- ♦ Your baby may move his arms and legs to show his interest in the action around him.
- ♦ Your baby may have sudden jerking movements, so when you are carrying him, be careful to support him well.
- ♦ When awake, give you baby "tummy time", so he learns to lift his head and look around.

How your baby communicates (your baby's speech and language development):

- ◆ Your baby's cry is her way of communicating her needs.
- ◆ Your baby cries to let you know when she is hungry, tired, hot, cold, bored, sick, or wants to be held. Very soon, you will notice that your baby's cry sounds different based on her different needs.
- ◆ Your baby may make cooing sounds, particularly when you talk to her.
- ◆ When your baby makes eye contact with you, he is communicating his interest!
- ◆ Your baby may pull back or turn away from you to show that he needs a break.

Loving and playing with your baby:

- ◆ In the first few weeks of life, your baby will sleep much of the time. This is a good time for you to rest.
- ◆ When your baby is awake and alert, it's your time to interact!
- ◆ Talking and singing to your baby are the best things you can do to encourage language development. Lullabies introduce your baby to the sound system of language.
- ◆ Don't worry about holding your baby too much. You are teaching your baby to trust you.
- ◆ The sooner you respond to your baby's crying, the better it is for your baby's sense of security.
- ◆ Spend a lot of time face-to-face with your baby. You'll both enjoy the view!

Childhood Development: 1-1/2 to 3 Months:

You and your baby are slowly settling into a routine of nap times and awake times. By three month, you baby is awake for a good part of the day and sleeping most of the night. Your baby is ready to learn about the world when he is awake. It's a good time to slowly introduce new experiences to your baby. New experiences will help your baby's brain develop. When your baby is asleep, make sure he is lying on his back unless your doctor wills you otherwise.

What your baby sees:

- ◆ Your baby's vision is improving!
- ◆ She is able to follow moving objects better.
- ◆ She can see close objects more clearly.
- ◆ She is starting to look in the direction where sounds are coming from.

- ♦ She sees your smile and learns to smile back.
- ♦ Your baby is discovering her hands and may spend time just looking at them.

What your baby can hear:

- ♦ You may notice that your baby likes to listen to music.
- ♦ Music may calm your baby or make your baby smile and move his arms and legs.
- ♦ Your baby loves to hear your voice, so tell him about what is going on around him.

What your baby can feel:

- ♦ Your baby's hands are opening up more.
- ♦ Your baby may close her hands around objects placed in the palm of her hand.
- ♦ If you rub different materials or toys against her fingers, she will move her fingers against the material or toy.
- ♦ Your baby may even enjoy the filling of her hand in her mouth.

How your baby eats:

- ♦ How much and how often your baby eats will vary.
- ♦ Your baby can only tolerate liquids right now, so feed him only breast milk or iron-fortified formula.
- ♦ Your baby's gums need to be cleaned with an infant toothbrush or wet washcloth/gauze after feedings and at bedtime.

How your baby moves (gross motor skill development):

- ♦ Your baby is strengthening the muscles in his neck so that he may be able to hold his head up on his own, but he still needs your careful support.
- ♦ When you place your baby on his stomach for a little while, your baby will learn to hold up his head.
- ♦ Your baby is also learning to control the muscles in his arms and legs by grabbing or kicking at toys or people

How your baby communicates (speech and language development):

- ♦ Your baby likes to make cooing sounds. When you hear your baby cooing, it's a good idea to coo, sing or talk in return.

- ♦ Your baby will learn that making sounds is a good way to get your attention and will coo even more when you respond to her "talk".
- ♦ Your baby's cries are becoming easier to identify. She will be able to use her sounds to tell you if she is hungry, wet, tired or wants a change of position.
- ♦ Your baby still uses body language to tell you how she feels about what is going on.
- ♦ She may bring her hand to her head to signal that she wants a break, suck her fingers or hand or turn her head away from you.

How your baby is growing emotionally (social and emotional development):

- ♦ By 6 weeks of age, your baby will have learned to smile at you.
- ♦ When she smiles at you, she is inviting you to play with her.

Loving and playing with your baby:

- ♦ Take your baby to different parts of the house so he can experience different things. Change your baby's position every so often. He may like to sit in a swing for a while, and then lie on his belly for a few moments before being cuddled in your arms.
- ♦ Respond quickly to your baby's needs. His cry will tell you what he needs and when he needs it.
- ♦ Your baby will eat about every 3 to 4 hours. Some babies learn to sleep through the night; others still need to eat during the night. Remember to rest when your baby rests if you can!
- ♦ Songs and nursery rhymes help your child to be ready for stories and picture books later on.

Childhood Development: 3 to 6 Months

Your baby is becoming more social these days. Your baby will smile more often and begin to laugh. Your baby will enjoy playing simple games with you. In these games, you and your baby will take turns doing something that delights the other. Your baby learns that her actions can cause a reaction in her surrounds. As your baby gains better muscle control, she is able to really explore her world around her. When your baby is asleep, make sure he is lying on his back.

What your baby can see:

- ♦ Your baby can focus on objects as far away as three feet.
- ♦ Your baby can follow objects going across him and over and under him.

- ◆ Depth perception is developing in your baby. He can begin to differentiate between objects that are close to him and objects that are far away.
- ◆ Your baby likes looking at his hands and feet.
- ◆ He can look back and forth at two different things.

How your baby eats:

- ◆ You can begin introducing solid foods once your doctor says it is okay (usually at the 4- of 6-month checkup).
- ◆ When solid foods are given, be sure she is sitting upright to reduce the risk of choking.
- ◆ Solid foods should begin with iron-fortified, single-grain cereals and slowly shifting to strained/pureed baby meats and baby vegetables.
- ◆ Stay away from "low-fat" foods at this stage, because your baby needs the fat content in foods to grow.

How to care for your baby's mouth:

- ◆ Your baby's gums need to be cleaned with an infant toothbrush or wet washcloth/gauze after feedings and at bedtime.
- ◆ Your baby may be experiencing pain and/or swollen gums as her teeth begin to come in. Most babies get their first tooth at 6 to 7 months although some get it as early as 3 months or as late as 12 months.
- ◆ Try gently massaging the gums with a clean fingertip to provide relief for teething pain. Your baby may feel better when chewing on cold objects (e.g., chilled washcloth, teething ring or cool spoon). Make sure the object won't break or make her choke.

How your baby moves (gross motor skill development):

- ◆ During this period, your baby learns to hold her head up on her own.
- ◆ When you put your baby on her belly, she will learn to push up on her hands to look around.
- ◆ She may start to roll over during these months. It is a good idea to always make sure you leave your baby in a safe place, like a crib or on the floor.
- ◆ If you prop pillow around your baby, she will enjoy sitting up. However, your baby probably can't sit yet -- without support.

How your baby uses her hands (fine motor skill development):

- ◆ Your baby can reach and grab things now.
- ◆ Your baby can play with her hands together.
- ◆ Your baby enjoys reaching for his toes.
- ◆ Your baby puts all kinds of things in his mouth. It's another way of exploring toys.
- ◆ Since your baby loves to put things into his mouth out of curiosity, keep small objects that he could swallow and choke on away from his reach.

How your baby communicates (speech and language development):

- ◆ Your baby is imitating more facial expressions.
- ◆ Your baby will begin using many different vowel sounds.
- ◆ You may hear your baby making more sounds when playing by herself.
- ◆ Your baby may start "squealing" during this time as she explores making high-pitched and low-pitched sounds.
- ◆ You may hear growling or gurgling; you can have a "conversation" by copying your baby's sounds and taking turns "talking".

How your baby is growing emotionally (social and emotional development):

- ◆ Your baby will become more active in getting your attention.
- ◆ Your baby may respond differently to the voice of a stranger than to the voice of a familiar person.
- ◆ Your baby will begin to smile at herself in the mirror.

Loving and playing with your baby:

- ◆ Your baby may enjoy playing peek-a-boo with you.
- ◆ Prop up your baby with pillows, or sit him in your lap, and give him toys to explore with his hands or mouth.
- ◆ Give your baby lots of opportunities to reach for things with different textures.
- ◆ Sing songs with rhymes to your baby.
- ◆ "Read" books with bright pictures to your baby. Your baby will enjoy the sound of your voice and the pictures in the book!

- ♦ Your baby probably still needs 2 to 3 naps per day. Remember to rest if you can during this time!

Childhood development: 6 to 9 Months

Your baby is really beginning to move his body into different positions. Don't expect her to stay in one place for too long. Your baby still enjoys playing with toys or things that are within her reach. Now you will watch as your baby develops new ways to move towards toys or things that are out of her reach. This is a good time to make sure that your house is child safety-proofed! Your baby should still sleep on her back as much as possible

How your baby eats:

- ♦ Begin to wean him from the bottle and introduce a "sippy" cup.
- ♦ Be careful not to let him near small items that he could choke on since your baby will explore the world by putting things in his mouth at this age.

How to care for your baby's mouth:

- ♦ Your baby's gums need to be cleaned with an infant toothbrush or wet washcloth/gauze after feedings and at bedtime.
- ♦ Your baby may be experiencing pain and/or swollen gums as her teeth begin to come in. Most babies get their first tooth at 6 to 7 months, although some get it as early as 3 months or as late as 12 months.
- ♦ Try gently massaging the gums with a clean fingertip to provide relief for teething pain. Your baby may feel better when chewing on cold object (e.g., chilled washcloth, teething ring or cool spoon). Make sure the object won't break or make her choke.
- ♦ Take your baby for her first dental visit when she gets her first tooth and floss any teeth that are touching each other.

How your baby uses her hands (fine motor skill development):

- ♦ Your baby enjoys learning about his surroundings. He is paying more attention to the size and shape of objects.
- ♦ As your baby reaches for things, you will see that he can grasp the object he wants on the first or the second try.
- ♦ Your baby will also be able to see tiny things more clearly and pick them up.
- ♦ Your baby may try to hold his bottle.
- ♦ Your baby can move a toy easily from one hand to the other.

How your baby moves (gross motor skill development):

- ♦ Your baby is learning to sit by herself without pillows or your body as support.
- ♦ Your baby may scoot on her belly by pushing her feet against the floor or by using her elbows and forearms to move. She is getting ready to crawl.
- ♦ Your baby may push herself off the floor so that she rocks back and forth on her hands and knees.
- ♦ Many babies love to stand when you hold them up!
- ♦ Your baby probably practiced rolling from her stomach to her back, and now can roll from her back to her stomach.

How your baby communicates (speech and language development):

- ♦ Your baby's cooing has turned into babbling. He also will enjoy blowing "bubbles" and makes "bbb" sounds. He's practicing his speech sounds by using consonants and vowels.
- ♦ Your baby may turn his head when you call his name.

How your baby explores (cognitive development):

- ♦ If you hide your baby's bottle or toy part of the way, and she sees where you put it, she may try to reach for it!
- ♦ Your baby enjoys repeating an action over and over. She is learning that actions have effects.
- ♦ Your baby loves to explore with her mouth. If she can get the object into her hand, she'll bring it to her mouth.

How your baby responds to others (social and emotional):

- ♦ Your baby shows you in many ways how much he enjoys you. He may smile and laugh when he sees you.
- ♦ Your baby is picking up on your feelings by the tone in your voice. He may smile when he hears a note of happiness in your voice. When he hears anger in your voice, he may frown or look worried.
- ♦ He may communicate with you by using gestures. For example, he may reach out to you when he wants to be picked up.
- ♦ He probably will not be as affectionate with people he doesn't know than with familiar people.

- ♦ Strangers may make him very upset, especially around 7 to 9 months of age.

Loving and playing with your baby:

- ♦ When you hear your baby babbling, talk back to her.
- ♦ Be gentle when introducing someone new to your baby. You and your baby should spend time together with the new person first.
- ♦ Partly cover a familiar toy with a washcloth. Encourage your baby to reach for the toy.
- ♦ Your child is sensitive to you tone of voice. Feeling someone else's anger is stressful to babies, as well as to adults.
- ♦ Sharing familiar pictures in vinyl, cloth and board books will promote a love for reading.

Childhood Development: 9 to 12 Months

You will notice that your baby is very curious and explores his surroundings. Everything is interesting to your baby! He can now pick up those little things that he looked at before. It is really important to get down on your hands and knees and look around your home to make sure it is safe. Pick up small items your baby could put in his mouth and choke on. Shorten cords for blinds or draperies. Lock cabinets. Put safety plugs in electrical outlets. Your baby should still go to sleep on his back. However, he now knows how to roll over and can turn himself over to make sure he can breathe.

How your baby eats:

- ♦ Your baby's using a "sippy" cup.
- ♦ Begin spoon-feeding your baby, using baby-sized utensils.
- ♦ Introduce more solid foods, but cut them into tiny, bite-size pieces first.

How to care for your baby's mouth:

- ♦ Your baby's mouth needs to be cleaned with an infant toothbrush or wet washcloth/gauze after feedings and at bedtime. Be sure to floss between any teeth that are touching each other.
- ♦ Your baby may be experiencing pain and/or swollen gums as he teeth begin to come in. Most babies get their first tooth at 6 to 7 months, although some get it as early as 3 months or as late as 12 months.
- ♦ Try gently massaging the gums with a clean fingertip to provide relief for teething pain. Your baby may feel better when chewing on cold objects (e.g., chilled washcloth, teething ring or cool spoon). Make sure the object won't break or make her choke.

- ◆ Your baby may begin seeing a dentist at her first birthday and every 6 months after.

How your baby uses her hands (fine motor skill development):

- ◆ Your baby will enjoy learning to pick up a toy in each hand and banging them together.
- ◆ Your baby is also learning to voluntarily let go of things and will "practice" dropping objects to watch where they go.
- ◆ Your baby will soon learn to throw things.
- ◆ You may see that your baby wants to pick up her own food. She may eat finger foods on her own.
- ◆ Your baby will learn how to use his thumb and index finger to pick up small objects like Cheerios.

How your baby moves (gross motor skill development):

- ◆ Crawling is the most popular way for babies this age to get around. Make a safe, clean area on the floor for him to practice crawling.
- ◆ Most babies walk after they become good at crawling.
- ◆ Your baby will pull himself up from the floor to stand against a sofa, a table or you.
- ◆ He will then move along the furniture, supporting himself against it.
- ◆ Your baby may express his desire to walk by taking your hand to go walking with him.
- ◆ Your baby is preparing himself to take his first step by himself.
- ◆ Remove or cushion furniture with sharp edges. Your baby will probably fall down a lot. Coffee table corners are especially dangerous!

How your baby communicates (speech and language):

- ◆ Notice that your baby starts to use her pointer finger to show interest in something and to share it with you. Your baby will also be learning to look at something you point to.
- ◆ Notice that when you say "no", your baby may stop what she is doing and may even look at you.
- ◆ Your baby also may recognize a few familiar words. For example, if you say "bye-bye", your baby may lift her arms to you.
- ◆ Your baby may say her first word during this period and know what it stands for.

- ◆ Your baby will recognize his name when he is called.

How your baby explores (cognitive development):

- ◆ Your baby likes to drop his toys against different surfaces. He is noticing all of the different sounds that are made.
- ◆ Put a toy behind your back and your baby may crawl to look for it.
- ◆ Your baby will also learn to go around, under or over things in his path for an object he wants.
- ◆ Your baby may be happy to sit with you when you show him books with large simple pictures of ordinary things.
- ◆ He will like simple children's songs or rhymes. Words repeated over and over help him to learn faster. He also enjoys games like "pat-a-cake" that have rhymes and hand motions.

How your baby is growing emotionally (social and emotional):

- ◆ Your baby may understand the word "no", but probably she will not always obey. This is normal for her developmental level.
- ◆ Your baby may try to imitate some of the things that you do. She may try to drink from the cup the way that you do, talk on the phone or wave by3-bye.
- ◆ You may find that during this period, your baby will only want her mother to take care of her needs and is more hesitant around strangers. This is normal for her developmental level.

Loving and playing with your baby:

- ◆ Items around the home, such as plastic containers, lids, shoeboxes and large blocks are great toys for babies at this age. You can put a block into a shoebox, cover it with its lid, and then encourage your baby to look for the block.
- ◆ When your baby points to something, name it for him.
- ◆ Make a safe place for your baby to crawl and play on the floor!
- ◆ Be sure that electrical outlets are plugged or covered. Use cabinet latches to protect your child from unsafe items. Be careful that your baby cannot get caught up in an extension, phone, curtain or blind cord. Move all cleaning supplies and poisonous materials into high cabinets that your baby cannot reach.
- ◆ Share board and vinyl books that have simple pictures with your baby. Point and name or "play" with the pictures (cover the doggie's eyes)!

- ♦ Your baby will crawl and walk at this own pace. Let him show you when he is ready.
- ♦ Your baby is very curious and may want to explore items that are off-limits. This may be frustrating, but this curiosity is normal. Try to stay calm, but keep your limits clear. The word "no" doesn't work very well at this age, so focus on keeping your baby safe.

Childhood Development: 1 to 2 Years

Learning to walk and talk is your child's biggest job in this year. Enjoy your child's development, and remember to make sure that your child is always supervised.

How your child eats:

- ♦ Your child should be on an eating schedule and can join the family at the dinner table 3 times a day.
- ♦ Your child's appetite may decrease. Remember, a child of this age is eating about 1/4 of an adult serving.
- ♦ Your child may prefer only one type of food ("food jag").
- ♦ Watch your child when he eats and avoid giving him foods that he might choke on. Examples include "hard to chew" food like steak, "small and round" food like hot dogs, grapes, peanuts, popcorn (hot dogs and grapes can be cut into strips) and "sticky" food like peanut butter (peanut butter can be mixed with plain yogurt to decrease stickiness).

How to care for your child's mouth:

- ♦ Your child can begin brushing her teeth with water and a soft-bristled toothbrush around 18 months but will need your help to floss and clean teeth completely.
- ♦ Your child may be seeing a pediatric dentist every 6 months.

How your child uses his hands (fine motor skill development):

- ♦ Your child will move from finger feeding to trying to use a spoon this year.
- ♦ With practice, our baby can learn to drop toys into buckets or bowls.
- ♦ Your child may enjoy making marks on paper with crayons. Supervise him so he does not put the crayons in his mouth or color on the wall (a favorite)!
- ♦ You may notice that your child loves to stack things up and then knock things down.
- ♦ Your child may enjoy nesting cups and stacking rings and other toys that fit inside each other or on top of each other. For example, he will be able to stack 2 to 3 blocks to make a tower.

- ◆ Your child may enjoy simple shape sorters or puzzles after 18 months.
- ◆ Your child may try to take things apart. Keep toys with small parts that your child could choke on away from him.

How your child moves (gross motor skill development):

- ◆ Your child will use lots of energy to learn to walk.
- ◆ Soft shoes or bare feet are probably best when your child is learning to walk. Some shoes may be so stiff that a child's foot can't bend or move easily in them.
- ◆ Your child will learn how to roll and kick a ball.
- ◆ If there are stairs in your child's environment, she may try to walk up them with help. Next, she will put both feet on one step before going to the next step. Never let her do this alone. Always supervise her near the stairs.
- ◆ Always use baby gates or locked doors to protect your baby from stairs and open windows unless you are there to help her and keep her safe.

How your child communicates (speech and language development):

- ◆ When your child points at something, it is to let you know that it has caught his attention. Use your words to teach your baby the names of objects.
- ◆ Your child will learn to point to pictures he recognizes in books or points to parts of his body if you ask him where it is.
- ◆ In this period, your child will begin to say words for the most familiar things or people in his surroundings. By 24 months, he should know at least 50 words.
- ◆ Your child may pronounce a word differently than you do. Don't correct him just repeat the word correctly, so he can hear it.
- ◆ By his second birthday, your child is putting two and three words together to make simple sentences like "Mama go bye-bye" or "want cookie".

How your child explores (cognitive development):

- ◆ Your child will spend more time exploring an object than she has before.
- ◆ Your child will be more interested in turning pages of her favorite books herself.
- ◆ Your child will learn how to match two objects together by color, shape or size.
- ◆ Your child is paying more attention to the actions of others and may try to imitate those actions, like feeding his doll with a cup or spoon.

How your child is growing emotionally (social and emotional development):

- ♦ Your child is learning how to communicate his wants, needs and feelings by using words and facial expressions.
- ♦ "No" is usually a very popular word. Your child may say "no" when he means "yes".
- ♦ The more often you use the word "no" with your child, the more often he will probably say "no" to you, so use it only when really needed.
- ♦ Your child will begin to recognize herself in the mirror.
- ♦ Your child may play next to another child, but your child will not learn to share until he is three to four years old.
- ♦ Your child may prefer the company of adults rather than other children.
- ♦ Your child may show jealousy when he isn't the center of attention.

Loving and playing with your child:

- ♦ Make getting dressed and undressed a fun experience and your child may join in and learn to start undressing herself.
- ♦ Tantrums are normal at this stage. Your child will want to explore everything, but she cannot judge safe and unsafe activities. She will feel frustrated when you limit her activities to keep her safe. Also, she does not have enough words in her vocabulary to explain herself and what she wants.
- ♦ Redirect your child from unsafe activities to more appropriate activities. For example, instead of telling your child not to touch the glass figurines on the coffee table, put them where she can't reach them or climb up to them. Read books with repetition and rhyme. Children this age love rhyming.
- ♦ As you read, point to the pictures from left to right on a page to introduce your child to how we read.
- ♦ Play "show me" with books! For example, "Where's the kitty? Show me the kitty." Show excitement yourself when she points to the kitty.

Childhood Development: 2 to 3 Years

Your child is now a toddler. Toddlers have high energy levels. They want to do things for themselves. Keep in mind that your child is experiencing all sorts of impulses but does not yet have control over them. Tantrums are common. Patience is important.

How your child eats:

- ♦ Make eating fun to avoid "food jags" and pickiness by preparing food in fun shapes or with different dipping sauces (e.g., cheese spreads, yogurt, etc.).
- ♦ Your child should be eating "child-friendly" portions that are 1/3 to 1/2 of a regular adult portion.
- ♦ Your child should start the habit of washing his hands before meals.
- ♦ Your child is capable of helping with some meal preparation: scrubbing vegetables, snapping peas, tearing salad greens and peeling bananas.
- ♦ Watch your child when he eats and avoid giving him foods that he might choke on. Examples include "hard-to-chew" food like steak, "small and round" food like hot dogs, grapes, peanuts or popcorn (hot dogs and grapes can be cut into strips) and "sticky" food like peanut butter (peanut butter can be mixed with plain yogurt to decrease stickiness).

How to care for your child's mouth:

- ♦ Your child may be ready to use a small (pea-sized) amount of fluoridated toothpaste when brushing but will need your help to floss and clean teeth completely. Talk to your pediatric dentist before starting toothpaste.
- ♦ Most children have all 20 "baby" (primary) teeth by age 2.
- ♦ Most children stop sucking their thumbs by age 2.
- ♦ Your child should be seeing a pediatric dentist every 6 months.

How your child uses his hands (fine motor skill development):

- ♦ Your child is more interested in scribbling with crayons. He will begin to copy lines first and then circles.
- ♦ Towards his third birthday, your child may enjoy learning to cut with safety scissors.
- ♦ Your child will enjoy simple stringing activities with large beads. Make sure the beads are large enough so that your child will not choke if he puts them in his mouth.

How your child moves (gross motor skill development):

- ♦ Your child will learn to run without tripping too often.
- ♦ Your child will also learn to jump on both feet.
- ♦ Your child will learn to walk up and down stairs independently.
- ♦ Your child will be able to balance her weight on one foot for a few seconds.

How your child communicates (speech and language development):

- ◆ You will be surprised at how many words your child will learn this year! Try writing down the words that he knows every three months.
- ◆ Your child will learn to talk in short sentences.
- ◆ Your child will be able to talk about events that he remembers happening in the near past but will confuse words like yesterday and tomorrow.
- ◆ Though he may not always follow your directions, your child does understand you better.
- ◆ He will be able to follow directions using the words "on", "in" and "under".
- ◆ By age three, 75% of his speech should be clear.
- ◆ Most strangers will understand at least 50% of what your child says.

How your child explores (cognitive development):

- ◆ Your child will understand simple stories.
- ◆ Your child's imagination will become more vivid. She may even have imaginary friends and will play pretend with dolls and stuffed animals.
- ◆ Your child may enjoy simple puzzles (3- and 4-piece puzzles are great for 2-year-olds).
- ◆ Your child may begin to "play house". You will see that she knows what familiar objects are used for.
- ◆ Your child will be able to name pictures of objects and point to pictures of people doing familiar activities in books.
- ◆ Your child will learn to count "1, 2, 3" and understand what those numbers mean.

How your child is growing emotionally (social and emotional):

- ◆ Your child is showing more interest in other children. He will be more cooperative in simple games with other children. He will like playing with other children.
- ◆ Your child begins to understand rules that are consistently reinforced. Use praise or a favorite activity to reward her for following rules.
- ◆ During this year, the more you help your child with transitions from one activity to the next, the easier it will be for your child. For example, tell him about an upcoming visit to the doctor or a stay with a babysitter.
- ◆ Your child will like having a daily routine. Help him adjust to new experiences or persons by introducing him to the new person or situation slowly.

- ♦ "Mine" is a word often used by your child in this period.
- ♦ By the end of this year, your child will know that he is a boy or that she is a girl, and she can identify herself in the mirror.

Loving and playing with your child:

- ♦ Look for signs from your child that it is time for toilet training. If you wait for your child to show interest, toilet training will be easier and more positive for you and your child. Remember, boys often do not complete toilet training until after the third birthday.
- ♦ Your child will enjoy playing with your old shoes, purses or hats. Playing with dress-up clothing will help your child with her dressing and undressing skills.
- ♦ Be patient with your child. She may need your help in calming down from her many activities.
- ♦ Be firm and consistent in setting limits for your child. Too many rules may cause your child to be very rebellious and too few limits may leave your child feeling very insecure.
- ♦ Read to your child regularly -- every day if you can. Let him fill in the blanks in familiar stories and rhymes.

Childhood Development: 3 to 5 Years

At this age, your child believes that everything revolves around her. She is the center of her world. Her world is full of magic. Her imagination is working all the time. She is also learning to be a good companion to other children her age. Preschool, day care or playgroup provides a great opportunity for your child to learn appropriate social skills.

How your child eats:

- ♦ Make eating fun to avoid "food jags" and pickiness by preparing food in fun shapes (e.g., smarty shape, aircraft landing carrier shape or Mickey Mouse shape) or with different dipping sauces (e.g., cheese spreads, yogurt, etc.).
- ♦ Your child is capable of helping with some meal preparation, such as pouring cold beverages, mixing, breaking eggs, mashing potatoes and squeezing juice.
- ♦ Watch your child when he eats and avoid giving him foods that he might choke on. Examples include "hard-to-chew" food, like steak, "small and round" food, like hot dogs, grapes, peanuts or popcorn (hot dogs and grapes can be cut into strips) and "sticky" food, like peanut butter (peanut butter can be mixed with plain yogurt to decrease stickiness).

How to care for your child's mouth:

- ◆ Your child can use a small (pea-sized) amount of fluoridated toothpaste when brushing but will need your help to floss and clean teeth completely (children may be more compliant when brushing and flossing with "fun" flavors like bubblegum).
- ◆ Children should stop sucking their thumb by 4 to 5 years old. Thumb sucking beyond this age is strongly discouraged, because it can cause dental problems, calluses, infections and social teasing. Ask your pediatrician or dentist about how you can help your child quit this habit.
- ◆ Your child should be seeing a pediatric dentist every six months.

How your child uses his hands (fine motor skills development):

- ◆ Your child will learn to hold his crayon better. Fat pencils and crayons help him to start drawing and pretend writing.
- ◆ Your child will learn how to button his clothes and zip and unzip by himself.
- ◆ Your child may offer to help with household chores. He may learn to pour liquid from a pitcher into a cup. Spilling at this age is normal, though, so make sure your expectations are in line with what he can do.

How your child moves (gross motor skill development):

- ◆ Your child will learn to throw and catch a large ball.
- ◆ Hopping, climbing and skipping are activities that your child may love to practice.
- ◆ Your child will learn to pedal a tricycle during this period. Make sure she wears a helmet.
- ◆ Your child may be more prone to accidents, because she may be more adventurous.
- ◆ Protect your child from falls by making sure play equipment is safe and by supervising your child.

How your child communicates (speech and language development):

- ◆ Asking "why" is a favorite activity for your child during this period. Your child wants to know what causes the events around him.
- ◆ Your child will learn to respond to the question, "Why?" in his own fashion and may ask, "Why?" over and over again.
- ◆ Your child will learn to listen to the explanations of others with interest.
- ◆ Your child's vocabulary continues to grow rapidly.

- ♦ Your child is pronouncing words better but may still leave out or substitute some sounds (especially "L" or "R").
- ♦ Your child's imagination and his increased ability to remember the past make him an interesting storyteller.
- ♦ Your child can recite familiar stories you have read. Reading is all about playing with words and sounds through rhymes, songs and stories.

How your child explores (cognitive development):

- ♦ Your child should be able to answer question, like, "What do you do when you are sleepy or hungry?"
- ♦ Your child will learn to know different shapes by name (circle, square, triangle) and colors (blue, red, yellow, green).
- ♦ Your child will, by age 5, know how to tell a story with a beginning, middle and end.
- ♦ By setting firm and consistent limits for your child, you will begin to teach your child the difference between right and wrong. He may still seem to "lie" on occasion, but he will believe this lie really is the truth.
- ♦ Your child will have a difficult time knowing the difference between reality and fantasy during this period.
- ♦ Your child will have a better understanding of the concepts of past, present and future by the end of this period.
- ♦ Playing "pretend" will ready your child for reading. If a rock can "be" an egg, then a group of letter can stand for a word.
- ♦ During this period, your child may develop new fears, especially about unfamiliar sights and sounds.
- ♦ Your child will learn to share with others -- most of the time.
- ♦ Your child will learn to follow simple rules in games, like "hide and seek", but will always want to win and be first. Playing "fair" comes later.
- ♦ Your child will enjoy playing "make-believe" games.
- ♦ Your child may be very easily influenced by what he watches on TV. He may try to act as if he were his favorite character. Supervise what he watches.
- ♦ Your support and guidance will help your child begin to gain control of his emotional, aggressive and sexual impulses.

- ♦ You may notice that your child will approach other children and begin to play with them.
- ♦ Be aware that a normal part of your child's development during this period is sexual exploration of one's own body. Your child will learn about what is appropriate from your messages to him.

Loving and playing with your child:

- ♦ Playing "house" will give your child opportunities to imitate your activities and to try different roles.
- ♦ Make outdoor playing time part of your child's daily routine. Visit playgrounds or parks and go for walks.
- ♦ Your child's curiosity leads her into exciting new experiences and increases learning.
- ♦ Read to your child regularly -- every day if you can.
- ♦ Your child's interest and attention will be your guide as to what level story is "right" for him
- ♦ Remember, some children may not be toilet trained until they are four years old.

Childhood Development: 5 to 7 Years

As your child begins school, each day becomes an adventure and a time of discovery. This period of childhood is the time each child begins to learn skills needed to become a self-sufficient person. Each child has his or her own personality, which influences each step of learning and development. Physically, this is also a time of tremendous growth. Your child will grow about 2-1/2 inches and 7 pounds each year during this time. Muscular strength, coordination and stamina increase, though your child may be somewhat clumsy at this time as his height and weight increase so rapidly.

How your child eats:

- ♦ Your child is capable of measuring ingredients and using simple kitchen utensils, such as an eggbeater, grater and vegetable peeler. Practice basic skills until they are mastered before allowing your child to try advanced task. Make sure to carefully supervise activities in the kitchen.
- ♦ Watch your child when he eats and void giving him foods that he might choke on. Examples include "hard-to-chew" food, like steak; "small and round" food, like hot dogs, grapes, peanuts or popcorn (hot dogs and grapes can be cut into strips); and sticky food, like peanut butter (peanut butter can be mixed with plain yogurt to decrease stickiness).

How to care for your child's mouth:

- ◆ Your child can start putting the toothpaste on his toothbrush by himself. As he gets older (around 7 years old), you no longer have to brush his teeth after him. This is also a good time to teach your child how to floss responsibly.
- ◆ Your child may begin to lose her "baby" (primary) teeth around age 6. It is very important that your child see a dentist regularly to ensure the growth of healthy permanent teeth.
- ◆ Your child should be seeing a pediatric dentist every 6 months.

How your child uses his hands (fine motor skills development):

- ◆ Your child will learn how to use a pencil to make shapes (like a square) and then to make letters, words and sentences.
- ◆ Your child will be drawing people, houses and trees with more detail than before (for example: at least 6 body parts when he draws a person).
- ◆ By age 7, your child will be able to tie his shoes (if given the opportunity to learn -- with all the Velcro shoes and slip-ons around these days, it may happen later!).

How your child moves (gross motor skill development):

- ◆ Your child will be able to do a series of motions in a row in order to do a complicated motor activity like pumping herself on a swing, skipping, jumping rope or swimming strokes.
- ◆ Your child will develop more visual-motor coordination and be able to catch bounced or thrown balls more easily. The balls can be smaller now.
- ◆ Your child will be able to balance on one foot for 10 seconds.

How your child communicates (speech and language):

- ◆ Your child will be able to recognize opposites, define objects by their use and use relatively good sentence structure.
- ◆ By the time your child turns 7, she will be able to say "v", "j", "sh", "ch", "r", "l", "s", "th", and "str" sounds like in the words, "victory", "judge", "shush", "child", "rabbit", "little", "six", "thirteenth" and "street".
- ◆ Your child understands the rules of conversation and is able to talk and then listen.
- ◆ Be a good listener yourself and encourage stories.

How your child explores (cognitive development):

- ◆ This is the time for learning the fundamentals of reading, writing and basic math.

- ♦ Your child is eager to learn and has a strong desire to please adults.
- ♦ Children at this age can be both cooperative and competitive. Both can promote learning.
- ♦ Your child may focus on only one part of a situation. For example, a child of this age may believe that a tall, narrow bottle of soda contains more soda than a short, wide bottle with an equal amount, because one is taller than the other.
- ♦ Your child may believe that objects have feelings. For example, a child of this age might feel sorry for a car that has a lot of passengers in it.
- ♦ Your child will understand the concept of today, tomorrow and yesterday.
- ♦ Your child will be able to follow 2-step directions. For example, if you say to your child, "Go to the kitchen and get me a trash bag," they will be able to remember that direction.
- ♦ Your child will know his full name, age and address.
- ♦ Your child will be able to answer who, what, when where, why questions.

How your child is growing emotionally (social and emotional):

- ♦ Developing self-esteem is a central issue at this age.
- ♦ Your child is learning to use standards like grades or home runs to measure his performance.
- ♦ Home is still very important and is the foundation for your child to become independent.
- ♦ Increasing separation and independence from parents are healthy steps in your child's development, so going to grandma's or a friend's house are important.
- ♦ Children at this age tend to identify with parent of the same sex.
- ♦ Your child is beginning to compare herself against other people's expectations.
- ♦ Your child is becoming aware that she is one of many people in the world. Up to this time, most children are focused primarily on themselves. Sometimes, this makes a child seem less outgoing than before.
- ♦ Your child may enjoy being with you and at home more at age 5 than she did at age 4. By age 8, your child will probably be more focused on his peers.
- ♦ Your child is developing the social skills to make friends.
- ♦ Your child is a wonderful mimic. He imitates both good and bad adult behavior.

- ♦ Your child is able to communicate well with others without your help.
- ♦ How other children perceive your child will affect his self-image.

Loving and playing with your child:

- ♦ Your child will love board games and other types of games at this age. Let yourself be a kid again, and play with him!
- ♦ Your child will start to be able to think about the world from someone else's perspective. Before age 5, she was pretty much focused on her view!
- ♦ During this time, your child will start to gravitate toward playing with children of her own sex.
- ♦ Your child will become very interested in the difference between truth and lies. Be open and honest with your child. Praise your child appropriately, but remember to not overdo it. Children can see through false praise.
- ♦ Your child often develops modesty around this time. Respect your child and his individuality.
- ♦ At the same time that your child develops modesty, he may also become more interested in his genitals and begin fondling them. This is a good time to calmly discuss sexual differences between boys and girls, acknowledge that masturbating "feels good", and then establish family rules about touching (where and when appropriate).
- ♦ Take time to listen. Take what your child tells you seriously.
- ♦ This is a good time to give your child responsibilities at home within her ability.
- ♦ Read, read, read! Encourage your child to read at the level he is comfortable. Practice and success will help your child love reading.
- ♦ Keep reading aloud. You can read the higher-level books your child is not quite ready to read by himself but will enjoy for the action and story line.

Principles & Practices of Child Care - 2 Hours Credit

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Name: _____ Signature: _____ Date: _____

Use the back of this sheet and/or attach additional sheets as necessary.

1. What is child development?
2. What is a developmental milestone?
3. Name the 5 areas of development:
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
 - d.
 - e.
4. Give an example of a typical milestone that a child may learn at the following ages:
 - a. First 6 weeks:
 - b. 1-1/2 to 3 months:
 - c. 3 to 6 months:
 - d. 6 to 9 months:
 - e. 9 to 12 months:
 - f. 1 to 2 years:
 - g. 2 to 3 years:
 - h. 3 to 5 years:
 - i. 5 to 7 years:
5. What if my foster child is not meeting a developmental milestone?
6. How can I help my foster child meet these developmental milestones?
7. Because of reading this article on child development, how will I care for my children differently?