NC Infant-Toddler Program

the earlier you know, the better they’ll grow

Developmental Milestones

Children grow, learn and develop at different rates. One may walk earlier than another, while another might talk first. Use this chart as one way to check whether your child is meeting developmental milestones during the first three years. Remember that every child is unique. If you have questions or concerns about how your child sees, hears, moves, communicates, learns, plays or interacts with others, talk with your primary care physician or contact your local Children’s Developmental Services Agency (CDSA). Success in your child’s growth and development benefits from EARLY action if you have a concern.

1 month:
- Lifts head when lying on tummy
- Stares/looks at faces
- Responds to sounds

2 months:
- Makes sounds—coos and gurgles
- Follows objects with eyes
- Holds head up for short periods of time
- Notices his/her hands

3 months:
- Recognizes faces
- Holds head steady and upright
- Begins to develop a social smile
- Can bear weight on legs when feet placed on firm surface
- Follows moving objects

4 months:
- Smiles, laughs, and coos when talked to
- Rolls over from back to side or stomach
- Reaches for and bats objects
- Recognizes parent’s voice and touch

5 months:
- Reaches, grasps, and puts objects in mouth
- Holds out arms to be held
- Plays peek-a-boo
- Plays with hands and feet

6 months:
- Sits and stands with support
- Rolls over in both directions
- Turns towards sounds and voices
- Imitates sounds

7 months:
- Responds to other’s expressions of emotion
- Uses hands to explore, pat, touch, stroke
- Babbles series of sounds

8 months:
- Passes objects from hand to hand
- Pulls self up to standing
- Starts to crawl or scoot

9 months:
- Says “Ma-ma” or “Da-da” to either parent
- Exchanges expressions with you (smile)
- Jabbers or combines syllables
- Responds to own name

10 months:
- Waves bye-bye
- Crawls well on hands and knees
- Drinks from a cup when cup is held

11 months:
- Says “Ma-ma” and “Da-da” to appropriate parent
- Walks holding onto furniture
- Drinks from cup and picks up small objects

12 months:
- Makes sounds and simple gestures
- Uses at least three words
- Lets you know what he/she wants and doesn’t want

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At two years of age, toddlers are increasingly more verbal, using two- to three-word phrases and making requests like “more juice.” They have a vocabulary of 50-100 words and understand 250-300 words. They can feed themselves and open cabinets and boxes. They also like to take things apart, explore their surroundings, and imitate their parents and other children. Common socio-emotional behaviors are showing affection, playing independently, and acting shy around strangers. Two-year olds can be very determined to have things their way, thus temper tantrums can occur.

By three years of age, children may be very independent. Physically, they can walk up and down steps and put on their own shoes. With the verbal ability to say three-to-five word sentences, they can repeat common rhymes, understand most sentences, and say their names and age. Three-year-olds can play make-believe with toys, animals, and people. They can play simple games with other children, name at least one color correctly, and ride a tricycle. Three-year-olds express a wide range of emotions.

Though exact times for reaching these milestones can vary among children, these milestones can serve as a guide as you watch your child grow and develop.