



# Infant & Toddler DEVELOPMENTAL CHECKLISTS

***Just like tracking height and weight, tracking developmental milestones provides information about how a child's skills compare to typical growth and development.***

Developmental milestones are skills children typically can do with a certain age range. Knowing what to look for is key to knowing how a child is developing. Developmental milestones can help caregivers become aware of what skills are expected at what ages and celebrate what the child is accomplishing—a first smile, a first step, a first word.



Each child is an individual, so it is important to remember that a milestone checklist is only a guide for growth and development. Some children may achieve skills a little earlier, and some children may achieve skills a little later; however, certain skills tend to develop within predictable age ranges.

## **HELPFUL HINTS FOR USING MILESTONE CHECKLISTS:**

- Most milestones can be observed while the child is playing during a variety of activities and following daily routines throughout the day.
- If milestones do not occur naturally while observing the child, engage the child with social interaction, toys, and demonstrations to try to elicit certain skills. Infants and toddlers may be most comfortable moving around and playing on the floor, while preschoolers may sometimes play at a table.
- Mark a check or date on the milestone checklist when the child is observed performing each skill. If the child needs assistance to complete a skill, do not check off the skill on the milestone checklist, as it means the child is still learning this skill.
- While some milestones (like language) can be observed at any time during the day, other milestones will most likely be observed during targeted times of the day. For example, motor skills will be easy to observe during movement activities, dancing, and in the yard/playground. Look for self-help skills during arrival, dismissal, toileting, and mealtimes. Social-emotional skills can be observed while children play or interact with each other.

***The following milestone checklists can be used by families and teachers of children from birth to 48 months of age. They are divided into age ranges and areas of development: Language, Social-Emotional, Cognitive, Early Literacy, Physical Health & Motor Development. Milestones are typically achieved by the end of the age range.***

The checklists can also be downloaded at: [public.clienage.org/tools/assessment/infant-toddler-checklists/](https://public.clienage.org/tools/assessment/infant-toddler-checklists/)



# 0-3 months

## DEVELOPMENTAL CHECKLIST

**Child's Name:**

**Observer's Name:**

**Date(s) of Observation:**

*Tip: If completing multiple times (e.g., once per month), use a different colored pen for each administration.*

### HEALTH & MOTOR

- Stretches legs out and kicks when lying on stomach or back
- Raises head and chest up when lying on tummy
- Opens and shuts hands
- Focuses on objects up close (6-12 inches away)
- By 3 months old, begins to make smoother movements with arms and legs

### SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL

- Likes to be held close and cuddled
- Enjoys looking at faces
- Begins to smile at people
- Can briefly calm self by sucking on hand or pacifier
- Is comforted by voice, sight, smell, and touch of familiar caregiver

### COGNITIVE

- Spends more time awake and alert by 3 months old
- Tracks or follows movements with eyes
- Looks back and forth briefly from one object to another

### LANGUAGE & LITERACY

- Startles at loud sounds
- Starts to turn eyes or head toward sounds
- Starts to make different cries for different needs (hungry, tired, uncomfortable)

### RED FLAGS

Teachers should talk to parents or guardians if they notice one or more of these signs of possible developmental delay by the end of this age range. Parents should discuss red flags with their pediatricians or call Early Childhood Intervention (ECI) to ask for a developmental screening.

- Doesn't respond to loud sounds
- Doesn't watch things as they move
- Doesn't smile at people  
Can't hold head up when on tummy



# 3-6 months

## DEVELOPMENTAL CHECKLIST

**Child's Name:**

**Observer's Name:**

**Date(s) of Observation:**

*Tip: If completing multiple times (e.g., once per month), use a different colored pen for each administration.*

### HEALTH & MOTOR

- Holds head steady, unsupported
- Rolls from back to tummy and tummy to back
- Pushes up on forearms when lying on tummy
- Sits with support by 6 months old
- Pushes down on legs or bounces on feet when supported in a standing position
- Brings both hands together at midline
- Brings hands to mouth
- Reaches for, grasps, and holds objects
- Shakes and bangs objects
- Focuses eyes on small objects up close as well as on objects a few feet away
- Closes mouth firmly or turns head away when hunger is satisfied

### SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL

- Responds with eye gaze or smiling when spoken to, picked up, or shown affection by a familiar caregiver
- Initiates social interactions with others by making eye contact and/or cooing
- Copies some facial expressions, like smiling or frowning  
Shows excitement by waving arms and legs
- Laughs or chuckles

### COGNITIVE

- Looks around and shows curiosity about things nearby in environment (objects, people, activities)
- Looks at own hands with interest
- Forgets about object when removed from view
- Begins to experiment with cause and effect (e.g., shaking a rattle to make noise)

### LANGUAGE & LITERACY

- Turns head toward the sound of caregiver's voice
- Responds to music and singing
- Coos (sounds like "ooh" and "ahh")
- Communicates vocally (to get attention, to express displeasure by fussing or crying) and nonverbally (turns head, frowns, arches back, spits up)
- Produces raspberries, squeals, trills
- Takes turns making sounds with others
- Reaches toward and touches a book
- May respond by smiling and cooing to caregiver's voice while reading

### RED FLAGS

Teachers should talk to parents or guardians if they notice one or more of these signs of possible developmental delay by the end of this age range. Parents should discuss red flags with their pediatricians or call Early Childhood Intervention (ECI) to ask for a developmental screening.

- Doesn't bring hands to mouth
- Has trouble moving one or both eyes in all directions by 4 months old
- Can't hold head steady by 4 months old
- Doesn't coo or make sounds by 4 months old
- Doesn't push down with legs when feet are placed on a hard surface by 4 months old
- Doesn't try to get things that are in reach
- Doesn't respond to sounds around them
- Has difficulty getting things to mouth
- Doesn't roll over in either direction
- Doesn't laugh or make squealing sounds
- Seems very stiff, with tight muscles on one or both sides of the body
- Seems very floppy, like a rag doll
- Loses skills they once had



# 6-9 months

## DEVELOPMENTAL CHECKLIST

**Child's Name:**

**Observer's Name:**

**Date(s) of Observation:**

*Tip: If completing multiple times (e.g., once per month), use a different colored pen for each administration.*

### HEALTH & MOTOR

- Crawls
- Can get into sitting position by self
- Sits without support
- Holds one thing in each hand at the same time
- Transfers object from one hand to the other hand
- Uses fingers to rake and pick up small objects in palm
- May drool and enjoy chewing toys during teething
- Places pacifier in own mouth (if he or she uses one)
- May begin sleeping through the night

### SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL

- Looks back and forth between toy and adult while playing
- Shows interest in simple interaction games (e.g., peek-a-boo, pat-a-cake)
- Reaches out to touch another person
- Responds differently to caregiver than to strangers; may become clingy with familiar adults
- Turns and looks when name is called
- Expresses distinct emotions (e.g., fear, sadness, anger, excitement)

### COGNITIVE

- Explores objects (e.g., visually inspects, turns around, feels, mouths, shakes, drops)
- Repeats actions to get an effect
- Searches for objects that are partially hidden or dropped out of sight

### LANGUAGE & LITERACY

- Watches caregiver's face when they talk
- Lifts arms to request to be picked up
- Shows recognition of family members' or pets' names (e.g., by turning to look for the person or pet when caregiver says, "Where's \_\_\_?")
- Babbles repeated syllables of alternating consonants and vowels (e.g., "bababa")
- Explores a book by feeling it, turning it upside down, or putting it in mouth
- Vocalizes and pats pictures

### RED FLAGS

Teachers should talk to parents or guardians if they notice one or more of these signs of possible developmental delay by the end of this age range. Parents should discuss red flags with their pediatricians or call Early Childhood Intervention (ECI) to ask for a developmental screening.

- Doesn't bear weight on legs with support under the arms
- Doesn't sit with support
- Doesn't babble ("mama," "baba," "dada")
- Doesn't make eye contact
- Doesn't show interest in any games involving back-and-forth play
- Doesn't respond to own name
- Doesn't seem to recognize familiar people
- Doesn't transfer toys from one hand to the other
- Loses skills they once had



# 9-12 months

## DEVELOPMENTAL CHECKLIST

**Child's Name:**

**Observer's Name:**

**Date(s) of Observation:**

*Tip: If completing multiple times (e.g., once per month), use a different colored pen for each administration.*

### HEALTH & MOTOR

- Changes positions without help (between crawling, sitting, or standing)
- Pulls self up to stand
- Cruises or walks holding on to furniture
- May stand alone
- "Dances" or moves body to music
- Bangs two small objects together
- Puts objects in and out of container
- Waves bye-bye
- Claps hands
- Picks up small objects between thumb and pointer finger
- Finger feeds self; may remove food from mouth, look at it, and put it back in
- Drinks from cup with assistance

### SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL

- Participates in simple interaction games (e.g., peek-a-boo, pat-a-cake)
- Uses several communicative gestures (e.g., showing, pointing, giving, or waving bye-bye)
- Looks to familiar adults for comfort
- May be shy or nervous with strangers and may cry when separated from primary caregiver ("stranger anxiety")
- Responds to "no" by stopping momentarily or protesting
- Begins to show a sense of humor (e.g., laughing at funny faces)

### COGNITIVE

- Takes action with a goal in mind (e.g., avoids diaper change by crawling away)
- Gives an object to adult upon request, expects to have it returned immediately
- Remembers and finds object hidden under cloth or cup

### LANGUAGE & LITERACY

- Demonstrates understanding of a few words (e.g., "hi," "bye," "no") or simple phrases
- Touches or points to one body part when named (e.g., on self, on adult, or in book)
- Babbles with expression in a way that sounds like real speech
- Imitates familiar sounds
- Says one to two words including sounds with meaning (e.g., "Mama," "Dada," "Uh-oh")
- Reaches for the favorite of two books offered
- Looks at objects or pictures that are named
- Opens and closes book
- Pays attention to a story for a few minutes at a time

### RED FLAGS

Teachers should talk to parents or guardians if they notice one or more of these signs of possible developmental delay by the end of this age range. Parents should discuss red flags with their pediatricians or call Early Childhood Intervention (ECI) to ask for a developmental screening.

- Can't stand when supported by holding on to fingers or furniture
- Doesn't search for things that they see you hide
- Doesn't babble expressively
- Loses skills they once had



# 12-18 months

## DEVELOPMENTAL CHECKLIST

**Child's Name:**

**Observer's Name:**

**Date(s) of Observation:**

*Tip: If completing multiple times (e.g., once per month), use a different colored pen for each administration.*

### HEALTH & MOTOR

- Rolls a ball
- Climbs up stairs on hands and knees
- Walks independently
- Squats to pick something up
- Pushes/pulls toys while walking
- Stacks at least two blocks or small objects
- Holds crayon or marker in fist
- Drinks from an open cup as caregiver holds it
- Eats with a spoon with some spilling
- Helps with undressing self

### SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL

- Initiates joint attention (e.g., points to car and looks at caregiver to make sure the caregiver sees it too)
- Brings toy to share with caregiver
- Enjoys praise and clapping to celebrate accomplishments
- Moves toward or away from people or objects to express comfort/discomfort
- Looks to caregiver for reassurance when faced with a new situation
- Shows affection to others (e.g., hugs, pats, kisses)
- May use a favorite toy or blanket to self-soothe

### COGNITIVE

- Shows understanding of how objects go together (e.g., spoon with bowl, shoe with sock)
- Tries to make mechanical objects work after watching someone else do it
- Solves problems by trial and error (e.g., inverts bottle to obtain object)
- Engages in simple pretend play (e.g., pretends to drink from an empty cup, feed a doll/stuffed animal, roll a car, talk on a play phone)

### LANGUAGE & LITERACY

- Shakes head and says "no"
- Looks at familiar objects when named
- Points to several body parts when named
- Follows simple commands that are paired with gestures
- Uses at least three or more words besides "mama" or "dada"
- Gives book to caregiver to read aloud
- Turns board book pages
- Points to pictures in a book to show interest
- Copies caregiver's reactions to the book
- Begins to name some familiar objects in pictures
- Makes mark with crayon on paper or surface

### RED FLAGS

Teachers should talk to parents or guardians if they notice one or more of these signs of possible developmental delay by the end of this age range. Parents should discuss red flags with their pediatricians or call Early Childhood Intervention (ECI) to ask for a developmental screening.

- Doesn't look where you point
- Doesn't point to show things to others
- Can't walk
- Doesn't try to imitate others
- Isn't gaining new words
- Doesn't say at least five words
- Doesn't notice or mind when a caregiver leaves or returns
- Doesn't use gestures like waving bye-bye
- Doesn't show affection (cuddles, hugs, kisses)
- Loses skills they once had



# 18-24 months

## DEVELOPMENTAL CHECKLIST

**Child's Name:**

**Observer's Name:**

**Date(s) of Observation:**

*Tip: If completing multiple times (e.g., once per month), use a different colored pen for each administration.*

### HEALTH & MOTOR

- Climbs on/off furniture without help
- Walks up and down stairs holding on
- Throws a ball
- Kicks a ball
- Uses feet to propel riding toys
- Takes linking toys apart and puts them back together (e.g., snap lock beads)
- Pours, fills, and digs (e.g., sand, water)
- Starts to eat with a fork
- Helps with dressing
- Lets caregiver know when diaper is wet or soiled
- Helps pick up and put away toys

### SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL

- Plays near or next to other children ("parallel play")
- Shows signs of empathy and caring for others (e.g., comforting another child who is hurt or giving bottle to a crying baby)
- Begins to assert independence ("No!," "Mine!") and own preferences, wants to try doing things without help
- May have temper tantrums and use physical aggression when frustrated

### COGNITIVE

- Plays hide-and-find with objects
- Matches two similar objects
- Inserts shapes into matching slots with assistance (e.g., shape sorter)
- Activates mechanical toy without demonstration (e.g., wind-up toys, switches, buttons, knobs)
- Likes to take things apart and experiment with how they work

### LANGUAGE & LITERACY

- Follows simple instructions without gestures (e.g., "Put it in the trash" or "Bring it to Mommy")
- Makes sounds of familiar animals
- Uses one or more words to to make wants known
- Produces at least 25 words
- Uses two-word phrases
- Uses one pronoun (e.g., "me," "mine")
- Points to real objects or pictures in a book when named
- Especially likes rhyming chants and/or books about familiar routines (e.g., bedtime, bath time)
- Uses a word or two to comment on a favorite picture
- Scribbles and experiments with marks on paper, but no understanding of "writing" yet

### RED FLAGS

Teachers should talk to parents or guardians if they notice one or more of these signs of possible developmental delay by the end of this age range. Parents should discuss red flags with their pediatricians or call Early Childhood Intervention (ECI) to ask for a developmental screening.

- Doesn't use two-word phrases (e.g., "drink milk")
- Doesn't know what to do with common things (e.g., a brush, phone, fork, spoon)
- Doesn't copy actions and words
- Doesn't walk steadily
- Loses skills they once had



# 24-36 months

## DEVELOPMENTAL CHECKLIST

**Child's Name:**

**Observer's Name:**

**Date(s) of Observation:**

*Tip: If completing multiple times (e.g., once per month), use a different colored pen for each administration.*

### HEALTH & MOTOR

- Climbs well
- Runs easily
- Jumps in place
- Rolls, pounds, squeezes, pulls playdough
- Stacks a tower of blocks
- Strings large beads together
- Uses hands to twist (e.g., turn a doorknob, unscrew lid on toy container)
- Takes off some clothing by self (e.g., jacket, shoes; unzips zippers)
- Shows signs of readiness for toilet training (e.g., stays dry for longer periods of time)
- Washes and dries hands
- Helps brush own teeth
- Enjoys helping with simple household chores (e.g., wiping the table, feeding a pet)
- Shows or tells where it hurts when in pain

### SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL

- Says "please" and "thank you" when reminded
- Enjoys being around other children; may show preference for certain friends
- Participates in simple group activity or game, like chase
- Begins to take turns with assistance
- Recognizes and/or names some feelings in self and others
- Takes pride in own accomplishments by smiling, clapping, cheering for self, or saying "I did it!"
- May have increased temper tantrums, physical aggression, or rapid mood shifts

### LANGUAGE & LITERACY

- Follows two-step instructions
- Demonstrates understanding of at least one preposition (e.g., "up," "down," "in," "on," "under")
- Responds verbally or nonverbally to "what" and "where" questions (e.g., "What are you doing?," "What is that?," or "Where are your shoes?")
- Names body parts
- Uses two-word phrases or short sentences
- Asks questions like "What's that?" or "Where's my\_\_?"
- Uses quantitative words (e.g., "some," "one," "more")
- Says first name and age
- Uses some pronouns (e.g., "I," "me," "we," "you")
- Uses some plurals ("cars," "dogs," "cats")
- Carries on a simple conversation using two or three exchanges
- Talks to other children as well as adults
- Holds book right side up
- Names or tells about pictures in own words
- Fills in words or completes the end of a rhyme/sentence in a familiar book
- May love reading the same book again and again
- Pretends to read books aloud to self
- Recognizes some frequently seen signs and symbols (e.g., stop sign or fast food logo)  
Scribbling becomes more varied to include vertical lines, horizontal lines, and circles

*continued on next page*



## 24–36 months, continued.

### COGNITIVE

- Knows where things usually belong
- Uses a chair or stool to reach an object
- Completes simple puzzles
- Pretends an object is something else (e.g., block as a car, banana as a phone)
- Strings steps of pretend play together in a sequence (e.g., making crying noise to indicate doll is sad, preparing food for doll, feeding it, and putting it to bed)

### RED FLAGS

Teachers should talk to parents or guardians if they notice one or more of these signs of possible developmental delay by the end of this age range. Parents should discuss red flags with their pediatricians or call Early Childhood Intervention (ECI) to ask for a developmental screening.

- Falls down a lot or has trouble with stairs
- Drools or has very unclear speech
- Can't work simple toys (e.g., peg boards, simple puzzles, a turning handle)
- Doesn't speak in simple sentences
- Doesn't follow simple instructions (e.g., "Put it in the trash" or "Bring it to Mommy")
- Doesn't do pretend play
- Doesn't want to play with other children
- Loses skills they once had



# 36-48 months

## DEVELOPMENTAL CHECKLIST

**Child's Name:**

**Observer's Name:**

**Date(s) of Observation:**

*Tip: If completing multiple times (e.g., once per month), use a different colored pen for each administration.*

### HEALTH & MOTOR

- Catches a big ball with arms extended
- Pushes, pulls, steers wagon or wheeled toys
- Walks up and down stairs with alternating feet
- Jumps off low step
- Climbs ladder and uses slide
- Pedals a tricycle
- Forms simple shapes out of playdough (e.g., balls, snakes)
- Holds a crayon between thumb and fingers
- Begins to show a preference for being right-handed or left-handed
- Builds three-dimensional structures with blocks
- Snips with scissors
- Blows nose when reminded
- Puts on some clothing (e.g., jacket, shoes) by self
- Unbuttons large buttons
- Uses toilet independently during daytime
- Pours liquid from small pitcher with supervision
- Spreads with a butter knife with supervision
- Can recite familiar safety rules

### SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL

- Can follow familiar daily routines at home and school with adult assistance
- Can name a friend
- Initiates or tries to join in play with other children
- Shares toys and takes turns, with assistance
- Begins to negotiate solutions to conflicts or might accept compromise offered by an adult
- Is able to wait briefly without becoming upset, with assistance
- Expresses emotions through words in addition to actions and body language
- Begins to manage intensity of emotions by asking for help or using self-soothing strategies (e.g., deep breaths to calm down, hugging a comfort object) with assistance

### LANGUAGE & LITERACY

- Follows simple instructions even when objects are not present (e.g., "Go to the kitchen and get your shoes")
- Can follow commands with modifiers (e.g., "Walk slowly to the car")
- Demonstrates understanding of four different prepositions (e.g., "up," "in," "on," "under")
- Says what action is happening in a picture (e.g., jumping, drinking, playing).
- Can relate events and experiences (e.g., "I went swimming with Grandma")
- Uses sentences of three to four words
- Sings a song or says a poem from memory (e.g., "Itsy Bitsy Spider," "Wheels on the Bus")
- Can say first and last name when asked
- Names an object within a category (e.g., "Tell me a kind of fruit," "Name different kinds of animals")
- Speech is understood by familiar adults and peers
- Answers simple "who," "what," "where," and "how" questions
- Asks "who," "what," "where," and "why" questions
- Turns pages one at a time
- Sustains attention to an age appropriate book when read aloud
- Retells a familiar story in own words with some prompting (e.g., "What happens next?")
- Names or points to some letters and numbers
- Copies a circle and plus sign when caregiver shows how to draw them
- Begins to draw recognizable forms (e.g., person drawn with circle for head and two vertical lines for legs)
- Attempts to write by making squiggles, letter-like forms, and/or letters in their name
- May express interest in typing on electronic devices

*continued on next page*

## 36–48 months, continued.

### COGNITIVE

- Identifies some colors
- Identifies basic shapes (circle, square, triangle)
- Sorts objects into categories using one feature (e.g., all cars together)
- Counts aloud up to 10
- Counts up to 5 objects one by one
- Recognizes familiar driving routes and locations (e.g., says, “That’s where Grandma lives!” when approaching her house)
- Better able to ignore distractions and focus on the task at hand, persists in completing something that is a bit difficult
- Experiments with different objects during play to compare their effects (e.g., cars on ramps to see which goes faster)
- Repeats actions to improve results (e.g., blowing bubbles or pumping legs on swing)

### RED FLAGS

Teachers should talk to parents or guardians if they notice one or more of these signs of possible developmental delay by the end of this age range. Parents should discuss red flags with their pediatricians and can request a free evaluation for their child from the local public school district by calling their local zoned elementary school.

- Has trouble drawing lines and circular shapes
- Does not do pretend play
- Shows no interest in playing with others
- Cannot put on any clothes independently
- Resists using the toilet
- Doesn’t use “me” and “you” correctly
- Speech cannot be understood by those outside the family
- Loses skills they once had