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Child Development Chart

There are several key areas of development, which can be remembered by saying **PILES**
P = physical, **I** = intellectual, **L** = language, **E** = emotional, **S** = social

The table below shows what a child should be doing at any given stage, based on the average child from 3 months to 5 years. However, don't get too caught up on ages as your child could be faster in one area and slower in another, or he could be slower than average at first but then catch up and be more advanced later on. This table is therefore only a rough guide, but it is helpful for deciding what play equipment and play opportunities to provide.

Click on an age group below. Use your **BROWSER BACK BUTTON** to return to the top of this page

3 months 6 months 9 months 12 months 15 months 18 months 2 years 2½ years 3 years 4 years 5 years					
AGE	PHYSICAL	INTELLECTUAL	LANGUAGE	EMOTIONAL	SOCIAL
3 Months	Legs not yet strong enough for holding weight when standing.	Visually alert, and follows adults with eyes, moves head.	Stops crying to sound of rattle.	Shows excitement at sounds, which he likes. Running bath water etc.	Stares at parent or carer when being fed.
	Will hold rattle for a few moments, but cannot usually look at it, at the same time.	Shows eagerness when offered milk.	Makes noises when happy.	Quietens to sound of familiar voice.	Reacts happily to familiar situations.
	Can hold head up for several seconds. Head and chest lifts when lying on tummy.	Hand play. Loves to look at hands. Presses palms together, and clasps hands.	Turns head to sound.	Shows pleasure when handled, and talked to.	Enjoys bath and other routine activities.
	Rests weight on hands. Grabs at surface with hands.		Will suck lips at sounds of feed preparation.	Shows distress at loud noises.	Smiles.
	Hands open. Arm movements are symmetrical. Movements				

	generally smoother.				
AGE 6 months	PHYSICAL	INTELLECTUAL	LANGUAGE	EMOTIONAL	SOCIAL
	Moves arms purposefully.	Forgets about toy if hidden.	Starts to make tuneless double or single syllable sounds, eg 'muh-muh'.	Manipulates toys very well. Watches them at the same time.	Becomes unfriendly to strangers at about 7 months.
	Lifts head and chest up higher now, when lying on tummy. Rests weight on outstretched arms and flat palms.	Stares at toys within reach, and grabs toy with both hands. Occasionally uses one.	Laughs to self while playing, also screams with delight and with irritation.	Loves rattles and will grab for one when offered. Then shakes it deliberately.	Is still friendly with strangers unless startled or familiar adult isn't there.
	Will pull himself to sit when hands are held. Will lift head up when lying on back.	More alert now and eagerly watches people in the room.	Turns to where familiar voice comes from. Listens to voice.	Holds hands up to be lifted.	Loves 'Rough and Tumble' play.
	Plays with feet when lying on back. Sits upright supported.	Uses whole hand to hold toys. Palmar grasp.		Touches breast or bottle when being fed.	
	Kicks legs alternately. Will take weight on legs when held. Bounces. Rolls over.	Passes toy from hand to hand. Watches toy fall.			
AGE 9 months	PHYSICAL	INTELLECTUAL	LANGUAGE	EMOTIONAL	SOCIAL
	Rolls along, wriggles and may crawl.	Recognises names.	Babbles away to self, in melodically repetitive syllables, eg 'Mamamama'.	Starts to be wilful and have tantrums.	Offers toys to adults, but only drops toy into hand. Cannot place.
	Leans forward to pick up a toy easily.	Starts to master pincer grasp (holds small objects between thumb and forefinger).	Copies simple sounds.	Likes to watch surroundings while being carried.	Recognises family members.
	Attempts to walk along when hands are held.	Points at books and pictures.	Shouts for attention, waits and repeats.	Interested in everything.	Copies facial expressions.
	Pulls to standing. But will not be able to lower himself back down. Falls down.	Still learns about objects by putting them into mouth.	Knows the meaning of 'bye' and 'NO!'	Very alert on walks.	Loves peek-a-boo, and may join in.
	Sits up unsupported.	Drops toy deliberately but cannot actually place it down. Laughs before action toys pop up remembering the action	Learning to communicate through sounds.	Has favourite toys.	Clingy to familiar adult, and unfriendly to strangers. Watches with continued interest for a few minutes.

		Splashes in bath deliberately.			
AGE	PHYSICAL	INTELLECTUAL	LANGUAGE	EMOTIONAL	SOCIAL
12 months	Might crawl upstairs.	Throws toys on purpose.	Understands certain simple everyday words, such as cup or teddy.	Doesn't like to be parted from parent/carer.	Puts toys in mouth less, and drools less.
	Sits up easily from lying down.	Loves to bang two toys/bricks together to make a sound.	Knows own name well.	Loves picture books.	Feeds self messily.
	Sidesteps round the furniture.	Uses pincer grasp well.	May use a few words. Copies others.	Can use action toys which produce a sound or an action when pushed etc.	Holds out arm or foot to help dress.
	May stand alone. Pulls self to standing from sitting, and down again.	Knows how to use familiar objects, like a hairbrush.	Babbles in conversational tones.	Shows affection.	Can drink from cup with lid.
	Crawls, bum shuffles, or crawls on hands and feet.	Points at objects. Puts things in containers. Takes things out of containers.	Knows how to follow simple instructions.	Greets familiar adults with great pleasure from some distance.	Gazes at everything with great interest for ages when outdoors.
	Walks with hands held. Either one or both. Sits unaided for longer periods. May walk alone.	May show preference for using left or right hand. Uses tripod grasp (thumb, forefinger and middle finger).	Uses most letters of alphabet, in vocalisation.	Loves pat-a-cake game.	
AGE	PHYSICAL	INTELLECTUAL	LANGUAGE	EMOTIONAL	SOCIAL
15 months	Falls over frequently when walking.	Likes to stand and watch goings on outside window.	Will scream to get something.	Loves to throw toys away in fun.	Curious with new people.
	Manages stairs up, and sometimes down.	Plays with bricks and can build tower of two.	If wants something, will point at it.	Shows a lot of affection to family.	When dressing, will help more.
	Kneels.	Uses a very precise pincer grasp to pick up small things.	Now says a few words.	Still needs constant reassurance from parent/carer.	Short attention span.
	Gets up from sitting, alone.	Uses both hands to hold pencil/crayon using the palmar grasp. Will scribble to and fro.	Sounds as though trying to hold a conversation although won't be understandable.	Really loves books now and will pat the pages while looking at the pictures.	Knows how to use lots of common objects. If toy is hidden, will search for it.
	Sits down with a bump. May walk unaided but with uneven wide steps, and uses arms for		Understands many words. Obeys simple instructions like 'give me your cup!'	Likes dolls, but does not treat them as a baby, instead just carries them round roughly.	Chews larger pieces of food now. Better at using a cup and spoon.

	balance.		Points to named people or toys.	Loves to play with walk along toys.	Is always getting up to mischief, needs continuous attention.
AGE 18 months	PHYSICAL	INTELLECTUAL	LANGUAGE	EMOTIONAL	SOCIAL
	To sit down on low seat, backs into it.	Scribbles backwards and forwards and does dots.	Understands many more words.	Sometimes clingy, sometimes independent and determined.	Likes learning about different sized objects.
	Walks very well without needing arms for balance.	Will now build a three brick tower.	Sounds like speech but not yet understandable.	Still needs familiar adult to be close by.	Can help to undress self but not dress.
	Runs but not when things in the way.	Holds pencil half way down using palmar or tries to uses fingers and thumb.	Will chatter away to self while playing. Uses 'echolalia' - i.e. copies last words or word of sentence.	Recognises familiar adults from further away.	Can use cup without lid but spills a little, holds with both hands.
	Can manoeuvre large boxes and toys.	Draws with both hands but may show a preference.	Responds when spoken to. Uses 6-20 words. Speech improves.	Still points to pictures in books. Pays more attention and will turn pages roughly.	Can feed self with spoon, but still plays with food.
	On own, comes backwards downstairs or bumps on bottom.	Sometimes uses a pencil in each hand.	Recognises and points to some body parts. Gives toy or familiar object to adult when asked.	Pretend play includes doll play and simple domestic play.	Does throw toys but doesn't look where they land.
	Can walk up and down the stairs holding adult's hand.	Notices very small objects, and instantly picks up with precise pincer grasp.	Points and uses single words when wants something or shouts.	Loves to carry large teddy around.	Able to put toys familiar objects away by self.
	Squats and kneels when playing.		Obeys simple requests, such as 'bring me your coat.'	Loves to explore and try everything out, without a sense of danger.	Doesn't suck on toys any more.
	Loves to try and sing nursery rhymes.				
		Knows what 'NO' means.			
AGE 2 years	PHYSICAL	INTELLECTUAL	LANGUAGE	EMOTIONAL	SOCIAL
	Able to manoeuvre large toys with wheels.	Will hold the pencil in favoured hand.	Listens when spoken to, and to others' conversations.	Likes to role-play and pretend play.	More ready for toilet training.
	Loves to pull along toys on string.	Better at using small objects, and can now place objects down gently.	Can name well-known objects.	Likes dress-up games.	Parallel play - will play beside others but doesn't actually play with them.
	Can run easily and	Will carefully turn	Follows simple	Very inquisitive,	Loves to copy

	round objects in the way.	the pages of a book and will even notice fine points of pictures.	requests like 'Go and see who's outside'.	but doesn't have a sense of danger.	when household chores are being done.
	Uses furniture to climb up high, and gets down again by self.	Six cube tower.	Talks about himself by his name.	Wants a lot of attention. Very clingy when upset but defiant when told off.	Can spoon-feed self with no problems.
	Squats to play and stands up again without the need to use hands.	When shown a photo of someone known, will be able to identify them.	Has little 'conversations' with self. May not be understandable.	Has more tantrums, but can be diverted.	Drinks from a cup with no lid without spilling.
	Tries to kick a ball but simply walks into it.	Now holds pencils nearer the tip and uses tripod grasp.	Uses 'echolalia' all the time.	Doesn't understand yet about sharing toys or attention.	Says 'MINE' a lot when others try to play with favourite toys.
	Can walk up and downstairs by self, hand on the railing, slowly placing both feet on each step.	Scribbles in circles, back and forth and dots. Will copy a line and occasionally a V.	Recognises and points to more body parts. Is always asking, 'what's that?'	Wants instant gratification of requests, very reluctant to compromise.	Takes exception to others getting attention from own parent or carer.
	Loves to push self along on a sit'n'ride toy. Can steer but not pedal.		Can speak around 50 words. Again, can understand many more than that.		
	Spatial awareness increases.		Will string two or three words together.		
	Overhand throwing of ball.		Loves to sing nursery rhymes.		
AGE 2½ years	PHYSICAL	INTELLECTUAL	LANGUAGE	EMOTIONAL	SOCIAL
	Kicking and throwing improving.	Can now identify himself in a photo.	Sometimes so impatient to get words out that will stutter.	Still needs to be near parent or carer.	When going to the toilet, he'll pull his pants down, but needs help to pull back up.
	Still puts both feet on each step when coming downstairs.	Loves to pick out small details in pictures in books.	Knows difference between you, me and I.	Tantrums are still happening but are less easy to stop.	Might be able to last the whole night without wetting.
	Walks upstairs with no problems.	Shows a right or left-handed preference when drawing.	Uses language well in play with small figures.	Hates to be restrained.	More realistic roll play.
	Manages climbing frames.	Holds his pencil with a better tripod grasp.	Now can say at least 200 words.	Doesn't have an awareness of danger yet.	Uses tea sets and cooking sets more realistically.
	Does tiptoes.	Will copy a circle and a flat line.	Always asks "What are you doing?" or "Who's that?" etc. Very inquisitive.	Will not give in, and shows extreme stubbornness.	Will use a spoon to feed self properly and might use a fork.
	Can run really well.	May also copy a T and a V.	Can recite some rhymes or songs. Can tell you his full		Sometimes plays with children, but not for long.

			name.		
	Jumps off bottom step feet together.	Can build a 7-block tower.	During play, will talk about what he's doing.		Still unwilling to share.
	Manoeuvres large toys with ease. Cannot yet avoid obstacles.		Likes to listen to favourite stories. Will still use echolalia.		
AGE	PHYSICAL	INTELLECTUAL	LANGUAGE	EMOTIONAL	SOCIAL
3 years	Can balance on one foot for a moment.	May name all colours but sometimes mixes up blue and green.	More inquisitive questioning.	Affectionate to baby brother/sister.	Tidies up well.
	Very Dextrous on outdoor equipment.	Able to thread big beads and built 9-block high towers and small bridges with bricks.	Now will recite name, age and sex.	More able to last the whole night without wetting.	Plays well with others, during pretend play.
	Will walk on tiptoes.	Likes to paint but unable to produce recognisable pictures. Decides what it is after painting.	Can recite numbers up to 10 but only able to count 3 objects.	Loves helping with the housework and other chores.	Uses a spoon and a fork to eat.
	Steers and runs round obstructions with ease.	Can use children's scissors.	Sentences are completely understandable but still sound childlike.	Pretend play is more dramatic and incorporates made up objects and people.	Will now share.
	Uses the pedals on a trike, and steers well.	Holds a pencil properly.	Able to have simple conversations with others.	Behaviour is on the whole better. May be demonstrative, warm and trusting.	Will play by self or with others with toys on the floor.
	Will throw balls above head. Catches clumsily with arms or hands.	Will draw a head for a person. Sometimes has other features.	Will talk to self whilst playing, mainly throughout pretend play.	Will now wait for wants to be fulfilled.	Can now wash hands, but unable to dry hands properly.
	Forcefully kicks ball. Walks in an adult fashion upstairs, even holding a big toy.	Can copy a circle, a V, T, H and a cross.	Wants to be read favourite stories, again and again.	Will show a little understanding of past and present.	When going to the toilet can manage by self.
	Still puts both feet on each step when coming downstairs. Likes to jump off the last step.		Recites more rhymes and can sing some songs.		Still requires help with buttons, laces, zips, etc.
	Moves large toys about easily. Sits on bottom with ankles crossed.		Understands and can use, you, me, I, him, her, she, he and plurals.		
	Spatial awareness good.		Grammar not yet totally correct.		
AGE	PHYSICAL	INTELLECTUAL	LANGUAGE	EMOTIONAL	SOCIAL

4 years

Bends down to pick up toys with legs straight.	Skilful at holding pencils.	Very inquisitive, always asking questions such as 'what does that mean?'	Loves Vivid pretend play and dress-up.	Now has best friends. Is sometimes hostile and sometimes friendly.
Can use ladders and will climb up trees.	Can draw a house.	Loves to have a joke.	More self-sufficient. Very wilful.	Argues more constructively.
Better with ball games. Can throw, catch and kick well, and can now bounce a ball.	Now draws people with heads, bodies, legs, and mostly with arms and fingers too.	Likes long stories now, also tells stories. Occasionally mistakes reality with imaginings.	Understands about past, present and future.	Cheeky with adults and friends when cross.
Very good on a trike.	May decide what drawing/painting is before it's done.	Grammar is now correct.	Complex play on the carpet with toys.	Expertly uses fork and spoon when eating.
Runs upstairs with total efficiency.	Can build 10-brick high tower, bridges and can copy 6-brick steps.	Can count 4 or 5 objects, and can recite up to 20.	Sympathetic to little brother/sister or friends when hurt or upset.	Takes turns and shares.
Runs about on tiptoe.	Copies X, T, H, V and O.	Can sing several songs or rhymes. Knows own name, age and address.	Uses humour more in play and conversation.	doesn't like tidying up.
Is adept at running round obstructions and corners with agility.	Knows primary colours.	Still confuses letters in speech, such as K with T, R with W, or TH with F.		Able to get dressed and undressed by self but not yet able to manage some hard to reach buttons and laces.
Able to sit cross-legged. Hops around and balances on one foot for longer.		Will recall latest happenings in conversations with others.		Can now brush teeth, wash hands and dry hands.

AGE 5 years

PHYSICAL	INTELLECTUAL	LANGUAGE	EMOTIONAL	SOCIAL
Dances.	More detailed drawings and paintings including surroundings.	Still asks the meaning of intangible words.	Normal conduct more restrained reasonable and self-sufficient.	Lots of complex play, using more and more imagination.
Can now play all sorts of ball games competently.	Can usually copy a 10-brick step model.	Still loves to listen to stories, and will use them in play later.	Will defend and care for babies and toddlers.	Is capable of using a knife and fork.
Balance improved considerably.	Can now draw figures with all features, including head, body, arm, legs and face.	Will now recite own name, address, age and sometimes knows birthday.	Reassures friends when they are upset.	Very skilled at construction toys.
Can now balance on either foot easily for about 10 seconds. Hops for longer.	Can count fingers.	Knows more songs and rhymes, and loves to sing them.	Has definite best friends with whom he is usually friendly and obliging.	Shares very well and doesn't argue very much.

Able to walk along a thin line.	Can draw a more detailed house including the windows, chimney, door and roof.	Takes pleasure in humorous stories and witticisms.	Sense of humour greatly increasing.	Will tidy up but usually needs prompting.
Touches toes with straight legs.	Skilled at colouring in. Great at jigsaws.	Is increasingly articulate.	In pretend play, will carry on stories to the next day.	Can now get dressed and undressed by self.
Softly runs on tiptoes. Skips. Has a strong grip with both hands.	Now knows more colours and can match well. Excellent handling of pens and pencils.	Only confuses the letter S with TH, or F with TH now.		Can wash own face and hands and dry too.
More energetic and lively in general.	Can now copy a square, a triangle, and L, H, V, Y, X, T, O, U, C and A.			
Expert at all outdoor activities such as swinging, climbing and sliding.	Can relate to the time of day corresponding to everyday activities.			

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