

# CDC Milestone Checklist (Birth to 5 Years)

Checklist · 88 items · 14 sections

The CDC Learn the Signs. Act Early program revised its developmental milestone checklists in 2022. The milestones listed below are what 75% of children can do by each age, the threshold the CDC uses with the AAP to flag developmental concerns earlier. If your child has not reached a milestone by the listed age, talk to your pediatrician and ask about a referral for developmental evaluation. Early intervention is most effective before age three.

Open the editable, AI-powered version online:

<https://genechecklist.com/checklist/cdc-milestone-checklist>

## 2 MONTHS

- Calms down when spoken to or picked up  
HIGH
- Looks at your face  
HIGH
- Seems happy to see you when you walk up  
HIGH
- Smiles when you talk to or smile at them  
HIGH
- Makes sounds other than crying  
HIGH
- Reacts to loud sounds  
HIGH
- Watches you as you move
- Holds head up when on tummy  
HIGH
- Moves both arms and both legs  
HIGH

## 4 MONTHS

- Smiles on their own to get your attention  
HIGH

- Chuckles when you try to make them laugh  
**HIGH**
- Makes sounds like ooh and aah (cooing)  
**HIGH**
- Turns head toward your voice  
**HIGH**
- Opens mouth at the sight of breast or bottle when hungry
- Holds head steady without support when held  
**HIGH**
- Brings hands to mouth

## 6 MONTHS

- Looks at themselves in a mirror
- Laughs  
**HIGH**
- Takes turns making sounds with you  
**HIGH**
- Blows raspberries (sticks tongue out and blows)
- Makes squealing noises
- Rolls from tummy to back  
**HIGH**
- Pushes up with straight arms when on tummy  
**HIGH**

## 9 MONTHS

- Is shy or fearful around strangers  
**HIGH**
- Shows several facial expressions like happy, sad, angry, surprised  
**HIGH**
- Looks when you call their name  
**HIGH**
- Makes a lot of different sounds like mamamama and bababababa  
**HIGH**
- Looks for objects when dropped out of sight (object permanence)  
**HIGH**
- Gets to a sitting position by themselves  
**HIGH**

- Moves things from one hand to the other

HIGH

## 12 MONTHS

- Plays games with you, like pat-a-cake

HIGH

- Waves bye-bye

HIGH

- Calls a parent mama or dada or another special name

HIGH

- Understands no (pauses or stops briefly when you say it)

HIGH

- Pulls up to stand

HIGH

- Walks holding on to furniture (cruising)

HIGH

- Drinks from a cup without a lid as you hold it

## 15 MONTHS

- Looks at a few pages in a book with you

- Tries to use things the right way (phone, cup, book)

HIGH

- Says one or two words besides mama or dada

HIGH

- Takes a few steps on their own

HIGH

## 18 MONTHS

- Moves away from you but looks back to make sure you are close

- Points to show you something interesting

HIGH

- Tries to say three or more words besides mama or dada

HIGH

- Follows one-step directions without gestures (sit down)

HIGH

- Walks without holding on to anyone or anything

HIGH

## 2 YEARS

- Notices when others are hurt or upset
- Points to things in a book when you ask (where is the bear?)

HIGH

- Says at least two words together (more milk)

HIGH

- Points to at least two body parts when you ask

- Runs

HIGH

- Kicks a ball

HIGH

## 30 MONTHS

- Notices other children and joins them to play
- Plays with toys with other children (pushing cars, taking turns)
- Says about 50 words

HIGH

- Says two or more words with one as an action (doggie run)

HIGH

- Uses simple pretend play (feeds a doll, talks on toy phone)

- Jumps off the ground with both feet

## 3 YEARS

- Calms down within 10 minutes after you leave them somewhere
- Talks with you in conversation using at least two back-and-forth exchanges

HIGH

- Asks who, what, where, or why questions

HIGH

- Says what action is happening in a picture or book when asked

HIGH

- Strings together objects, like a short bead necklace

- Puts on some clothes by themselves, like loose pants

## 4 YEARS

- Pretends to be something else during play (teacher, dog)
- Comforts others who are hurt or sad
- Says sentences with four or more words
- HIGH**
- Says some words from a song, story, or nursery rhyme
- Names a few colors of items
- Catches a large ball most of the time

## 5 YEARS

- Follows rules or takes turns when playing games with other children
- HIGH**
- Sings, dances, or acts for you
- Tells a story they heard or made up with at least two events
- HIGH**
- Answers simple questions about a book or story after you read or tell it
- HIGH**
- Counts to 10
- Names some numbers between 1 and 5 when you point to them
- Buttons some buttons
- Hops on one foot

## RED FLAGS

- Loss of skills already learned is always a reason to call the pediatrician
- HIGH**
- No social smile by 3 months: discuss with pediatrician
- HIGH**
- No babbling by 9 months: ask about hearing test
- HIGH**
- No words by 16 months: ask for developmental evaluation
- HIGH**
- No two-word phrases by 24 months: ask for developmental evaluation
- HIGH**
- Cannot walk by 18 months: ask for evaluation
- HIGH**

## NEXT STEPS

- Early intervention is free and available state by state in the US under IDEA Part C  
HIGH
- Ages 0 to 3: contact your state's early intervention program directly  
HIGH
- Ages 3 to 5: contact your local public school district even if not enrolled  
HIGH
- Download the CDC Milestone Tracker app for a personal record