



Infant & Toddler

DEVELOPMENTAL CHECKLISTS

Just like tracking height and weight, tracking developmental milestones helps caregivers see how children's skills compare to typical growth and development.

Developmental milestones are skills most children can do by a certain age. There are important milestones children achieve at each stage of life.

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 bit later; however, certain skills tend to develop within predictable age ranges.

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 acknowledge what the child is accomplishing—a first smile, a first step, a first word.



HELPFUL HINTS TO USING MILESTONE CHECKLISTS:

- Child care providers and teachers work with many children, so watching children closely and recognizing certain skills will come naturally. Most milestones can be observed while the child is playing in a variety of activities and following daily routines throughout the day.
- If milestones do not occur naturally while observing the child, caregivers can engage the child with social interaction, toys, and demonstrations to try to elicit or bring out 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 by a skill on the milestone checklist when the child is observed performing that skill. If the child needs assistance to complete the skill, do not check the skill on the milestone checklist; this means the child is still learning this skill.
- While some milestones (like language) can be observed anytime 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 during centers.

The following milestone checklists can be used by parents 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.

The checklists can also be downloaded at: cliengage.org/public/tools/assessment/infant-toddler-checklists/

0-3 months

DEVELOPMENTAL CHECKLIST

Child's Name:

Administrator's Name:

Date(s) of Administration:

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
- Pushes down on legs when feet are on a hard surface
- Begins to make smoother movements with arms and legs by 3 months old
- Opens and shuts hands
- Brings hands to mouth
- Grasps with entire hand when finger or rattle is placed in palm
- Focuses on objects up close (6-12 inches away)
- Prefers to gaze at black-white contrast and human faces
- Tracks slow moving objects with eyes

SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL

- Likes to be held close and cuddled
- Turns head toward familiar voice
- Enjoys looking at faces
- Begins to smile and coo at people
- Enjoys playing with people and might cry when playing stops
- Cries when hungry, uncomfortable, tired, or unhappy
- Can briefly calm self by sucking on hand or pacifier
- Is comforted by voice, sight, smell, and touch of familiar caregiver

COGNITIVE

- By 3 months, spends more time awake and alert
- Tracks or follows objects with eyes
- Looks back and forth briefly from one object to another

LANGUAGE & LITERACY

- Startles at loud sounds
- Quiets or smiles when spoken to
- Starts to turn eyes or head toward sounds
- Cries; by 3 months will start to make different cries for different needs (hungry, tired)
- Makes pleasure sounds (coos and goos)
- Listens to and looks at a book for brief periods of time

RED FLAGS

Teachers should talk to parents or guardians if they notice one or more of these signs of possible developmental delay. 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
- Doesn't bring hands to mouth
- Can't hold head up when pushing up when on tummy



CHILDREN'S
LEARNING
INSTITUTE

3-6 months

DEVELOPMENTAL CHECKLIST

Child's Name:

Administrator's Name:

Date(s) of Administration:

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
- Begins to sit with support
- Pushes down on legs or bounces on feet when supported in a standing position
- Reaches, grasps and holds objects
- Uses both hands to explore toys and bring them to mouth
- Shakes and bangs objects
- Grasps and plays with feet while lying on back
- Focuses eyes on small objects up close as well as objects a few feet away
- By 5 months, develops good color vision
- Reaches for spoon while being fed
- Closes mouth firmly or turns head away when hunger is satisfied
- Teeth may begin to appear
- Begins to sleep for a longer period through the night

SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL

- Observes people and activities
- Responds with eye gaze, smiling, and cooing when spoken to, picked up, or shown affection by a familiar caregiver
- Initiates social interactions with others by making eye contact and cooing
- Copies some facial expressions, like smiling or frowning
- Laughs aloud, squeals, blows bubbles
- Shows excitement by waving arms and legs
- Communicates distress verbally (fusses, cries) and nonverbally (turns head, frowns, arches back, spits up)
- Stops crying when a familiar caregiver comes near
- Responds to other people's emotions

COGNITIVE

- Looks around and shows curiosity about things nearby in environment
- Reaches for objects
- Begins to explore objects (e.g., banging, putting in mouth)
- Begins to experiment with cause and effect (e.g., shaking a rattle to make noise)
- Begins to act bored or fuss if activity does not change
- Forgets about object when removed from view

LANGUAGE & LITERACY

- Responds to changes in tone of voice
- Begins to turn in response to name
- Responds to music and singing
- Laughs aloud
- Starts to babble with sounds like p, b, m
- Vocalizes to get attention, express displeasure, show eagerness
- Produces raspberries, squeals, trills
- May start to imitate sounds s/he hears
- Takes turns making sounds with others
- Reaches toward and touches a book
- May respond to caregiver's voice while reading by smiling and cooing

RED FLAGS

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- Has trouble moving one or both eyes in all directions by 4 months
- Can't hold head steady by 4 months
- Doesn't coo or make sounds by 4 months
- Doesn't push down with legs when feet are placed on a hard surface by 4 months
- Doesn't try to get things that are in reach
- Shows no affection for caregivers
- Doesn't respond to sounds around him
- Has difficulty getting things to mouth
- Doesn't make vowel sounds ("ah", "eh", "oh")
- Doesn't roll over in either direction
- Doesn't laugh or make squealing sounds
- Seems very stiff, with tight muscles
- Seems very floppy, like a rag doll

Child's Name:

Administrator's Name:

Date(s) of Administration:

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HEALTH & MOTOR

- Crawls on hands and knees
- 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
- Picks up small objects using pincer grasp
- May drool and enjoy chewing toys during teething
- Holds own bottle
- Places pacifier in own mouth
- May begin sleeping through the night

SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL

- Looks back and forth between toy and adult while playing
- Reaches out to touch another person
- Responds differently to caregiver and strangers, may become clingy with familiar adults
- Turns and looks when name is called
- Recognizes self in mirror
- Expresses distinct emotions, such as fear, sadness, anger, excitement
- Seeks reassurance from caregivers, for example starts to crawl and often "checks back" with caregiver

COGNITIVE

- Explores objects by visually inspecting them, turning them around, feeling all surfaces, shaking, and dropping them
- Begins to repeat actions to get an effect
- Searches for partially hidden objects

LANGUAGE & LITERACY

- Watches your face when you talk
- Understands 3 to 50 words
- Recognizes the sight of spoon, bottle
- Starts to recognize names of family members
- Understands "hi" and "bye"
- Starts to understand "no"
- Babbles using repeated syllables of alternating consonants and vowels (e.g., "bababa," "gagaga")
- Babbles with inflection and rhythmic patterns
- May start to clap hands and bang purposefully to make noise
- Recognizes familiar objects in pictures
- Especially likes pictures of faces
- Vocalizes and pats pictures
- Explores a book by feeling it, turning it upside down, putting it in mouth, dropping it, or throwing it

RED FLAGS

Teachers should talk to parents or guardians if they notice one or more of these signs of possible developmental delay. 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
- Doesn't sit with help
- Doesn't babble ("mama," "baba," "dada")
- Doesn't play any games involving back-and-forth play
- Doesn't respond to own name
- Doesn't seem to recognize familiar people
- Doesn't look where you point
- Doesn't transfer toys from one hand to the other

9-12 months

DEVELOPMENTAL CHECKLIST

Child's Name:

Administrator's Name:

Date(s) of Administration:

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, standing)
- Pulls self to stand
- Cruises or walks holding on to furniture
- May stand alone
- May take a few steps or walk while holding adult's hands
- "Dances" or moves body to music
- Bangs two small objects together
- Puts objects in and out of container
- Waves bye-bye
- Claps hands
- Sees distant objects (15-20 feet away)
- Drinks from cup with assistance
- Finger feeds self; may remove food from mouth, look at it, and put it back in

SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL

- Repeats sounds and actions that get attention or laughter
- Shows affection to others, such as hugs, pats, and kisses
- Uses several gestures like showing, pointing, and waving bye-bye
- Plays simple interaction games, such as peek-a-boo and pat-a-cake
- Looks to familiar adults for comfort
- Is shy or nervous with strangers and may cry when separated from primary caregiver ("stranger anxiety")
- Understands "no"
- Begins to show a sense of humor, for example 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 on request, expects to have it returned immediately
- Remembers and finds object hidden under cloth or cup
- Shows interest in putting objects in and out of containers
- Stacks rings on peg
- Understands that an illustration or photo in a book represents a real object

LANGUAGE & LITERACY

- Recognizes name
- Participates in language games such as peek-a-boo and patty cake
- Understands name of one body part
- Recognizes spoken words as symbols for objects
- By 12 months, has 1 to 2 words including sounds with meaning such as "Mama," "Dada," "Uh-oh"
- Imitates familiar sounds
- Produces true words during sound play
- Uses several gestures like showing, giving, waving, and pointing
- Babbles with imitation of real speech and with expression
- Reaches for the favorite of two books offered
- Especially likes books with single pictures of familiar objects
- Looks at 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. Parents should discuss red flags with their pediatricians or call Early Childhood Intervention (ECI) to ask for a developmental screening.

- Doesn't crawl
- Can't stand when supported
- Doesn't search for things that she sees you hide
- Doesn't say single words like "mama" or "dada"
- Doesn't learn gestures like waving or shaking head
- Doesn't point to things
- Loses skills he once had

12-18 months

DEVELOPMENTAL CHECKLIST

Child's Name:

Administrator's Name:

Date(s) of Administration:

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
- Walks independently
- Squats to pick something up
- Pushes/pulls toys while walking
- Points to things
- Turns board book pages
- Holds crayon in fist and makes marks on paper or surface
- Begins to stack blocks
- Holds and drinks from cup by self
- Begins to eat with a spoon with some spilling
- Begins to help with undressing

SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL

- Shows 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
- Often attached to favorite toy or blanket

COGNITIVE

- Shows understanding of how objects go together (e.g., cup on saucer, spoon in bowl)
- 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

- Understands names of many objects
- Points to several body parts
- Follows simple commands with gestures
- Shows early pretend play (e.g., uses spoon as telephone)
- Uses 5 to 50 words, including names
- Points to show something s/he wants
- Shakes head and says "no"
- May start to combine words (e.g., "more cookie," "car go")
- Gives book to caregiver to read aloud
- Holds book with help
- 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
- Grasps a crayon and makes marks on paper or surface
- Holds crayon or marker in fist

RED FLAGS

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

- Doesn't point to show things to others
- Can't walk
- Doesn't know what familiar things are for
- Doesn't copy others
- Doesn't gain new words
- Doesn't have at least 6 words
- Doesn't notice or mind when a caregiver leaves or returns
- Loses skills he once had

18-24 months

DEVELOPMENTAL CHECKLIST

Child's Name:

Administrator's Name:

Date(s) of Administration:

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
- Begins to run
- 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)
- Scribbles
- 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
- Pays attention to verbal safety warnings (e.g., "That's hot!")

SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL

- Plays near or next to other children ("parallel play")
- Copies others, especially adults and older children
- 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
- Re-enacts familiar daily experiences (e.g., sweeping, covering a doll with blanket, talking on a play phone)
- May pretend an object is something else (e.g., block as a car, banana as a phone)

LANGUAGE & LITERACY

- Begins to understand simple prepositions (e.g., "in" vs. "out," "up" vs. "down")
- Points to things or pictures when they are named
- Follows simple instructions without gestures
- Points to objects in a book
- By 24 months should be regularly combining words
- Uses words like "more" to make wants known
- Makes sounds of familiar animals
- Repeats words overheard
- Produces 25 to 200 words
- Uses one pronoun (e.g., "me," "mine")
- Can name objects common to surroundings
- Uses at least 2 prepositions (e.g., "up," "in")
- Carries book around the room
- May verbally request books
- Follows simple stories
- Especially likes nursery rhymes and books about familiar routines like bedtime or 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. 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 (for example, "drink milk")
- Doesn't know what to do with common things, like a brush, phone, fork, spoon
- Doesn't copy actions and words
- Doesn't follow simple instructions
- Doesn't walk steadily
- Loses skills she once had

Child's Name:

Administrator's Name:

Date(s) of Administration:

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
- May start to hold a crayon between thumb and fingers
- Scribbling becomes more varied to include vertical lines, horizontal lines, and circles
- Learns to turn paper pages, may turn 2 to 3 pages at a time
- Completes simple puzzles
- Stacks a tower of blocks
- Strings large beads together
- Turns a doorknob
- Screws/unscrews a lid
- Undresses by self, unzips zippers, and takes off shoes
- Shows signs of readiness for toilet training (e.g., stays dry for longer periods of time)
- Washes and dries hands
- Begins to brush teeth with adult assistance
- Enjoys helping with simple household chores (e.g. wiping the table, feeding a pet)
- Tells where it hurts when in pain

SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL

- Says "please" and "thank you" when reminded
- Shows interest in other children and enjoys being around them, even if not playing together yet
- May show preference for certain children, show affection for friends
- Participates in simple group activity or group game like chase
- Begins to take turns with assistance
- Recognizes some emotions in self and others; begins to name feelings
- 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

- Matches 3 to 4 colors
- Understands "big" and "little"
- Likes to hear same story repeated
- Follows instructions with 2 steps
- Understands words like "in," "on," and "under"
- Begins to understand "what" and "where" questions
- Understands simple questions dealing with his/her environment and activities
- Identifies objects by function (e.g., "Show me what we eat with")
- Names body parts
- Can say between 200 and 900 words
- Uses short sentences
- Asks questions like "What's that?" or "Where's my ___?"
- Uses quantitative words (e.g., "some," "one," "more")
- Says first name, age, and sex
- Says words like "I," "me," "we," and "you" and some plurals (cars, dogs, cats)
- Carries on a conversation using 2 to 3 sentences
- May carry on pretend conversation between self and dolls/stuffed animals
- Uses two-word negative phrases, such as "no want"
- Talks to other children as well as adults
- Speech is understood by most listeners most of the time
- Loves reading the same book again and again
- Holds book right side up
- Learns to turn paper pages, may turn 2 to 3 pages at a time
- Searches for favorite picture or page
- Tells about pictures in own words
- Repeats some of the words or phrases in a story
- Fills in words or completes the end of sentences/rhymes in familiar stories
- Pretends to read books aloud to self
- Begins to recognize 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
- May start to hold a crayon between thumb and fingers
- May verbally describe own drawings or "writing"

24–36 months, continued.

COGNITIVE

- Knows where things usually belong
- Uses a chair or stool to reach an object
- Completes simple puzzles
- 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)
- By 36 months, begins to pretend play a greater variety of events (e.g., visiting the doctor, going to the zoo, birthday party)

RED FLAGS

Teachers should talk to parents or guardians if they notice one or more of these signs of possible developmental delay. 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 (such as peg boards, simple puzzles, turning handle)
- Doesn't speak in sentences
- Doesn't understand simple instructions
- Doesn't play pretend or make-believe
- Doesn't want to play with other children or with toys
- Doesn't make eye contact
- Loses skills he once had

Child's Name:

Administrator's Name:

Date(s) of Administration:

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
- Stands on one foot for a few seconds
- Climbs ladder and uses slide
- Pedals a tricycle
- Does finger plays while singing songs
- Forms simple shapes out of playdough (e.g. balls, snakes)
- Colors pictures, may color outside the lines
- Copies a circle and a cross
- Begins to draw recognizable forms
- Begins to show a preference for being right-handed or left-handed
- Builds 3-dimensional structures with blocks
- Snips with scissors
- Blows nose when reminded
- Dresses self with some assistance
- 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
- Begins to notice differences and similarities in people (e.g., skin color, hair color, abilities)
- Can name a friend
- Initiates or joins in cooperative play with other children
- Joins in group games with simple rules
- Begins to negotiate solutions to conflicts or might accept compromise offered by an adult
- Shares toys and takes turns, with assistance
- Expresses a wider range of emotions (e.g., embarrassed, bored, brave, grateful)
- Develops specific fears (e.g., monsters, the dark, certain animals, costumed characters)
- Begins to develop patience (is able to briefly wait without becoming upset) with assistance
- Expresses emotions through words in addition to actions and body language
- Begins to manage emotions by asking for help or using conscious self-soothing strategies (e.g., deep breaths to calm down, self-talk) with assistance

COGNITIVE

- Identifies basic colors and shapes
- Sorts objects using one or two features into categories (e.g., all large red cars together)
- Copies simple patterns
- Begins to count
- Begins to understand concepts of volume (e.g., empty, half, large, small, etc.)
- Some understanding of time (e.g., last night, tomorrow, yesterday, summer)
- Recognizes familiar driving routes and locations in neighborhood (e.g., says, "That's where Grandma lives!" when approaching her house)
- Better able to ignore distractions and focus on the task at hand, may persist 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)
- Organizes and plans what to pretend, such as roles, scenarios, and dialogue (e.g., "Let's play baking! I'll be the mommy and you be the baby.")

36–48 months, continued.

LANGUAGE & LITERACY

- Understands up to 1,500 words by age 4
- Can group objects according to category
- Can follow commands with modifiers (e.g., “Walk slowly to the car”)
- Understands names of different kinds of animals
- Understands four different prepositions
- Understands one or more colors
- Understands concepts such as “longer” (vs. “shorter”) and “larger”(vs. “smaller”) when the contrast is presented
- Follows simple instructions even when stimulus objects are not present (e.g., “Go to the kitchen and get your shoes”)
- Beginning to understand time concepts (last night, tomorrow, yesterday, summer)
- Can tell a story and relate events and experiences.
- Uses sentences of 4 to 5 words
- Says 1,000 words
- Answers simple who, what, where, why questions
- Sings a song or says a poem from memory such as the “Itsy Bitsy Spider” or the “Wheels on the Bus”
- Can say first and last name when asked
- Speech is 90% intelligible with context
- Uses language for imaginative play
- Asks questions, makes requests,
- Can repeat words with four syllables
- Has most vowels and diphthongs and consonants p, b, m, w, n well established
- Names at least one or more colors correctly
- Turns pages one at a time and from left to right
- Sits still for longer stories read aloud
- Retells a familiar story in own words
- Begins to recognize some letters and numbers
- May spontaneously rhyme or detect rhymes
- Pretends to read to a caregiver, dolls, or stuffed animals
- Relates a story to personal experiences
- Begins to draw recognizable forms
- Can copy a circle and a cross
- Understands that writing is used for communicating ideas and information
- Makes symbols or squiggles that resemble writing
- Begins to copy some capital letters
- May switch direction while writing and rotate the orientation of the paper
- Can dictate story or letter to be written down
- May express interest in typing on electronic devices

RED FLAGS

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

- Can't jump in place
- Has trouble scribbling
- Shows no interest in interactive games or make-believe
- Ignores other children or doesn't respond to people outside the family
- Resists dressing, sleeping, and using the toilet
- Can't retell a favorite story
- Doesn't understand “same” and “different”
- Doesn't use “me” and “you” correctly
- Speech cannot be understood by those outside the family
- Loses skills he once had

Acting Early: Navigating Concerns about Children's Development

● A roadmap for early childhood professionals



Children are rapidly developing in early childhood, especially the first three years. Early care providers and teachers have a unique opportunity to partner with families in keeping children on a healthy path to development—especially when a child may be experiencing developmental delays.

1 OBSERVE & TRACK

Use developmental milestone checklists to track children's progress across important early skills.

Teachers can track a child's development by watching how he or she plays, learns, speaks, interacts, and moves. Knowing what to look for is key to knowing how a child is developing. Use milestones checklists to become aware of which developmental skills are expected at what ages.

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

When completing a milestones checklist, talk to the child's family to find out if there are additional skills that the child demonstrates at home in order to gain a more complete picture of the child's skills.

In addition to completing the checklist, document your specific concerns very clearly in writing. For example, "Marco is 15 months old, but I haven't heard him try to say any words."

2 COMMUNICATE CONCERNS EARLY

When a child's development appears delayed or unusual, it's best not to "wait and see." Talk to parents as soon as you have concerns based on your observations. If intervention is needed, it's better to start early.

3 COMMUNICATE CONCERNS CAREFULLY

When sharing concerns with families, choose a time when you and the family can have a private and relaxed conversation. Arrange for someone to translate if the family speaks a language other than yours. Have the milestone checklists handy during the meeting so families can view them, and share any observations and notes about the child in a respectful, thoughtful, and non-judgmental way. Remember to present positive observations about their child's development as well as your concerns. Give families a chance to talk and ask questions. Understand that it may be hard for parents to hear developmental concerns about their child. Let them know that you care about their child and want to support his or her development.

4 CONNECT FAMILIES TO RESOURCES

Recommend that the family make an appointment to share concerns with a **specialist** (child psychologist or developmental pediatrician). Write down specific concerns to discuss at the appointment, and encourage families to bring any completed milestone checklists to share with the doctor.

A family member, doctor, childcare provider, teacher, or other concerned person in a child's life can contact **Early Childhood Intervention (ECI)** to request an evaluation for children ages birth to 3-years-old, at no cost to families. Offer to call ECI with families, as this might make it more comfortable for them. Early Childhood Intervention professionals assess infants and toddlers for any developmental concerns and determine whether the child needs intervention services and supports.

To find ECI programs in Texas:

Go to dmzweb.dars.state.tx.us/prd/citysearch to search for local programs, or call 1-877-787-8999, select language, and then press 3.

For developmental concerns about children 3-years-old and older, families can request a free evaluation from the **local public school district** by calling their local zoned elementary school to request a formal evaluation for their child.

Navigating Concerns about Your Child's Development ● A roadmap for families



CHILDREN'S
LEARNING
INSTITUTE

Children are rapidly developing in early childhood, especially during the first three years. Parents, early care providers, and teachers have a unique opportunity to work together to keep children on a healthy path of development, especially when there is a concern that a child may be experiencing a developmental delay.

1 OBSERVE & TRACK

Many parents enjoy documenting their child's first milestones, such as their first smile, word, or tooth. Watching your baby closely and celebrating each new skill is an exciting part of parenthood! It's also natural to compare your baby to his siblings or friends, even though every baby is different. One baby may walk earlier and start talking later, while another may start talking earlier but be slower to walk. Nonetheless, there are predictable sequences and typical time frames in which most children develop particular skills. A developmental checklist that lists milestones in different areas of development can help you see whether your child appears to be "on track." You may want to document your child's progress periodically by reviewing such a checklist and noting the skills your child has shown (see cliengage.org/public/tools/assessment/infant-toddler-checklists/ to download a free version). Looking at a developmental checklist can also alert you to areas in which your child may be showing a delay. This is important because you know your child best, and you may be the first to notice concerns about your child. To gain a more complete picture of your child's growth, talk with your child's teacher or childcare provider for additional input. For instance, social skills may be more evident when your child is in a group setting with other children. Most providers will use a developmental checklist as part of their observation and assessment process for each child. Parents should always have access to this information.

2 COMMUNICATE CONCERNS EARLY

If you have a concern or question about your child's development, it is always a good idea to bring it to the attention of your child's teacher, and your child's health care provider. They can refer you to a specialist to take a closer look at your child's development. If your child's skills or unusual behaviors are concerning you or your child's teacher, do not 'wait and see' for too long. Early identification and intervention is the best way to help your child.

3 COMMUNICATE CONCERNS CLEARLY

Sharing concerns about your child's development can feel emotionally difficult. No one wants to hear that there might be something "not quite right" with their child. However, your child cannot speak up for herself. If there is a concern, you must be the one to gather information and advocate for her needs. When approaching your child's teacher, ask for a good time to have a private conversation. Have the milestones checklist handy during the conference to view together. You may want to bring written notes and questions as well. Take time to talk and ask questions. Be clear and specific about your concerns. Ask for the caregiver's observations and input. Finish the conversation with a plan on how to work together to come up with a next step that is agreeable to all. It's often a good idea to set up a time for a follow-up conversation.

In talking with your pediatrician about your child's development, share observations about your specific concerns as well as any reports or notes from your child's teacher. Be assertive about requesting a referral to a specialist if you feel you still have questions and need more answers and information.

4 CONNECT WITH RESOURCES

Parents may also connect directly to Early Childhood Intervention (ECI) to request an evaluation of their child. These services are available to any child up to age three years, and initial evaluations are provided free of charge. Intervention services may have a copay that is calculated based on income. ECI professionals assess infants and toddlers for any developmental concerns and determine whether the child is in need of intervention services, such as speech, physical, occupational, or feeding therapies, developmental teaching, and other supports.

To find ECI programs in Texas: Go to <https://hhs.texas.gov/services/disability/early-childhood-intervention-services> or call 1-877-787-8999, select language, and then press 3.

For developmental concerns about children 3-years-old and older, families can request a free evaluation from the **local public school district** by calling their local zoned elementary school to request a formal evaluation for their child.