# Developmental Milestones to be reached by the end of 3 years

## What is child development?
*Child development* refers to how a child becomes able to do more complex things as they get older. Development is different than growth. *Growth* only refers to the child getting bigger in size. When we talk about normal development, we are talking about developing skills like:

- **Gross motor:** using large groups of muscles to sit, stand, walk, run, etc., keeping balance, and changing positions.
- **Fine motor:** using hands to be able to eat, draw, dress, play, write, and do many other things.
- **Language:** speaking, using body language and gestures, communicating, and understanding what others say.
- **Cognitive:** Thinking skills: including learning, understanding, problem-solving, reasoning, and remembering.
- **Social:** Interacting with others, having relationships with family, friends, and teachers, cooperating, and responding to the feelings of others.

## Movement

- Climbs well
- Walks up and down stairs, alternating feet
- Kicks ball
- Runs easily
- Pedals tricycle
- Bends over easily without falling

## Hand and Finger Skills

- Makes vertical, horizontal and circular strokes with pencil or crayon
- Turns book pages one at a time
- Builds a tower of more than six blocks
- Holds a pencil in writing position
- Screws and unscrews jar lids, nuts and bolts
- Turns rotating handles

## Language

- Follows a two- or three-component command
- Recognizes and identifies almost all common objects and pictures
- Understands most sentences
- Understands physical relationships ("on," "in," "under")
- Uses four- and five-word sentences
- Can say name, age and sex
- Uses pronouns (I, you, me, we, they) and some plurals (cars, dogs, cats)
- Strangers can understand most of her words

## Cognitive

- Makes mechanical toys work
- Matches an object in her hand or room to a picture in a book
- Plays make-believe with dolls, animals and people
- Sorts objects by shape and color
- Completes puzzles with three or four pieces
- Understands concept of "two"

**Social**

- Imitates adults and playmates
- Spontaneously shows affection for familiar playmates
- Can take turns in games
- Understands concept of "mine" and "his/hers"

**Emotional**

- Expresses affection openly
- Expresses a wide range of emotions
- By 3, separates easily from parents
- Objects to major changes in routine

**Developmental Health Watch**

The developmental milestones give you a general idea of the changes you can expect as your child gets older, but don't be alarmed if her development takes a slightly different course. Each child develops at her own pace. Do consult your pediatrician, however, if your child displays any of the following signs of possible developmental delay for this age range.

- Frequent falling and difficulty with stairs
- Persistent drooling or very unclear speech
- Inability to build a tower of more than four blocks
- Difficulty manipulating small objects
- Inability to copy a circle by age 3
- Inability to communicate in short phrases
- No involvement in "pretend" play
- Failure to understand simple instructions
- Little interest in other children
- Extreme difficulty separating from mother

Excerpted from *Caring for Baby and Young Child: Birth to Age 5*, Bantam 1999

If you are concerned about your child's development, please see your child's doctor and

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