

Is Your Child on Track?

All children develop at individual and different rates, and there is a wide range of “typical” development.

If you have any questions about your child’s development, or the rate at which he/she is meeting milestones, call MKSA at 516-731-5588 and our professionals will answer any questions and guide you in your child’s development.

Feel free to print this page to share and discuss with your child’s pediatrician.

Birth to 3 months

MILESTONES

Tracks a slowly moving object 8-12” away
Brings hand to mouth
Mouths toys
Turns head toward direction of sound
Startled by loud noises
Makes noises other than crying
Looks at human faces or black and white patterns
Cries, but is comforted when picked up and held
Begins to develop a social smile
Swallows liquids with no difficulty
Sleeps for 4- to 10-hour intervals
Enjoys bath time
Raises head briefly when lying on stomach
Grasps and shakes hand toys
Moves arms and legs more smoothly

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

Present colorful objects for baby to look at
Talk and sing to baby
Hang mobiles, play music, make animated faces
Help baby’s motor development by engaging in ‘tummy time’ every day
Give baby plenty of cuddle time and body massages
Encourages baby’s responses by presenting objects with bright colors and faces
Talk to baby every day to show that language is used to communicate

WHEN TO BE CONCERNED

Doesn’t respond to loud noises
Cannot support head well
Has trouble moving one or both eyes in all directions
Crosses eyes most of the time (occasional crossing is normal in first few months)
Doesn’t grasp and hold objects
Doesn’t follow moving objects with eyes
Doesn’t smile at people
Doesn’t babble
Doesn’t push down with legs when feet are placed on firm surface

4 to 6 months

MILESTONES

Plays with rattle placed in hand
Purposely drops an object to watch it fall
Pulls a cloth from face
Smiles a lot; can laugh; coos when caregiver speaks
Babbles chains of sounds
Responds to own name
Enjoys social play
Expresses desire to be picked up
Interested in mirror images
Swallows pureed foods
Uses tongue to move food in mouth
Closes lips while swallowing
Transfers object from hand to hand
Sits up and stands with support
Rolls both ways - front to back, back to front

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

Present objects such as rattles, for baby to play with
Help baby sit up with support during play time and during bath time
Encourage baby to practice ‘tummy time’, roll over, and reach for objects while playing
Offer toys that allow two-handed exploration and play
Talk to baby to encourage language development; baby may begin to babble
Respond with pleasure to baby’s sounds
Communicate with baby; imitate baby’s noises and praise him/her when he/she imitates yours

WHEN TO BE CONCERNED

Refuses to cuddle
Doesn’t show affection for caregiver
Seems very stiff, or very floppy
Head still flops back when body is pulled to a sitting position
Doesn’t respond to sounds around him/her
Doesn’t smile, laugh or make squealing sounds
Has difficulty getting objects to mouth
Doesn’t roll over in either direction – front to back, or back to front
Cannot sit with help

7 to 12 months

MILESTONES

Finds hidden objects
Pokes with index finger
Looks at pictures in a book
Says “ma-ma” and “da-da”; waves bye-bye
Responds to name; follows simple spoken command; uses simple gestures, such as shaking head for “no”
Points to request something
Shows specific preferences for certain people and toys
Plays simple games
Plays well for short time with two or three children
Feeds self finger foods; closes mouth on rim of cup; picks up cup and takes 4-5 swallows
Sleeps through the nights; takes 1-2 daytime naps
Helps with dressing or undressing
Crawls on belly; pulls self up to standing position; walks while holding onto furniture
Uses pincer grasp (between thumb and forefinger); scribbles spontaneously
Moves from back to sitting without help

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

Play “peek-a-boo”, puppets, wave bye-bye; encourage two-way communication by responding to baby’s noises
Establish a regular bedtime with a calming ritual starting one hour prior
Help baby stand while holding baby’s hands
Baby-proof baby’s environment
Use gestures such as waving goodbye to help convey meaning; name and describe objects during everyday activities
Use picture books to work on communication and bonding
While standing at sofa, set a toy slightly out of reach to encourage walking while using furniture as support

WHEN TO BE CONCERNED

Doesn’t learn to use gestures, such as waving hand or shaking head
Drags one side of body while crawling (for over one month); asymmetry between the two sides of body; or body too stiff or too floppy
Doesn’t search for objects baby sees being hidden
Doesn’t respond to name or say single words; doesn’t babble
Doesn’t point to objects or pictures
Can’t stand when supported; can’t sit with help
Doesn’t actively reach for objects
Doesn’t follow objects with both eyes at near (one foot) and far (six feet) ranges
Shows no interest in games of peek-a-boo

Is Your Child on Track?

12 to 18 months

MILESTONES

Looks at picture book with adult
Places objects into cups; dumps out contents
Knows what everyday objects are for (brush, telephone, etc.)
Points to wanted object
Can follow 1-step verbal command without gestures (i.e. "sit down"); protests by saying "no," shaking head or frowning
Uses at least 5 words; points to at least 3 body parts when asked
Separates easily from caregiver in familiar environment; may cling in new situations; may have tantrums
Plays alone for short periods; extends toy to show others
Enjoys simple make-believe play
Chews textured foods; eats finger foods; stirs with spoon; drinks from cup; sips from straw
Sleeps through the night; one daytime nap
Fusses when diaper needs changing
Walks alone; walks backwards, and down stairs with help
Enjoys pushing or pulling toys while walking
Holds crayon with fingers, hand on top, forearm turned so thumb is directed downward

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

Give your child choices whenever possible; ask your child questions to help stimulate decision-making process
Offer toys such as ride and pull toys, jack-in-the-box, music toys, and balls
Let your child scribble with thick washable crayons or markers
Encourage child to stack blocks and then knock them down
Establish consistency with routines like meal-times and bedtimes
Sing, play music for, and read to your child regularly
Teach your baby to imitate your actions, including clapping your hands, blowing kisses, and playing finger games

WHEN TO BE CONCERNED

Doesn't point to objects that he wants
Doesn't spoon-feed and drink from cup independently
Doesn't stack 2-4 objects
Doesn't make eye contact
Does not respond to name
Cannot walk
Doesn't seem to know function of common household objects
Doesn't respond to simple verbal requests; doesn't have at least 5 words
Experiences a dramatic loss of skills he/she once had

19 months to 2 years

MILESTONES

Can name 5 or more objects
Follows 2-step directions (pick up your toy and put it in the basket)
Stacks 6-7 blocks
Has 20-50 words; begins to imitate 2-word sentences
Points and names objects in a book
Can point to and name 15 or more pictures of common objects when named
Sings familiar songs
Listens quietly to story, music or TV
Curious; gets into everything; often defiant; has difficulty sharing; wants caregiver nearby if upset
Verbalizes bowel and bladder needs (50% of the time); tries to wash own hands and face
Begins using fork; uses spoon independently
Puts on simple clothing
Walks well; walks backward
Dances, jumps, runs and kicks; rides tricycle
Draws using circular, vertical and horizontal strokes

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

Give your child two choices when possible
Read to your child; label, describe and talk about pictures in the book
Color with your child and teach him games
Teach your child simple clapping games
Teach your baby what sounds animals make and practice by using an animal picture book
Teach your child to throw and catch a ball
Teach your child about dangerous things; consequences should be given for dangerous behavior after warnings
Let your child make choices about food
Reduce in-between snacks so he/she will be hungry at mealtimes

WHEN TO BE CONCERNED

Doesn't point to objects when named
Doesn't spoon-feed and drink from cup independently
Doesn't stack 2-4 objects
Doesn't copy others
Doesn't gain new words
Cannot walk
Doesn't make eye contact
Doesn't use 2-word sentences
Experiences a dramatic loss of skills he/she once had

2 to 3 years old

MILESTONES

Can tell his/her own age
Understands "one," "one more," and "all"
Imitates behavior of others; especially adults and older children
Begins to sort by shapes and colors
Says between 50-200 words; understands between 500-900 words
Uses 2-3 word sentences
Loves picture books
Begins make-believe play
Is shy around strangers
Recognizes when someone else is happy or sad
Feeds himself with spoon
Removes shoes, socks, and pants; unzips zipper
Kicks large ball; jumps in place; stands on tiptoe
Uses adult grasp when holding a pencil
Catches ball, trapping against chest

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

Explore the pages in a book each day; point to and label pictures
Play make-believe and dress up
Allow toddler to play with spoons, cups, pots pans
Label items throughout the day especially when out in the community
Play outdoors with water or sand box; play indoors with arts and crafts such as play-doh and paints
Sing and dance to music; engage in finger play to rhymes and music
Practice sorting, matching objects around the home such as socks

WHEN TO BE CONCERNED

Does not make eye contact; does not respond to name
Does not use gestures to communicate such as pointing
Doesn't follow simple instructions; doesn't use two-word sentences; doesn't imitate actions or words
Can't push a wheeled toy
Repetitive movements with objects; repetitive movements or posturing of body, arms, hands, or fingers
Child seems more interested in objects than people; does not show interest in other children
Resists change in daily routine
Uses people as "tools" to meet their needs
Spins objects, has odd play
Experiences a dramatic loss of skills he/she once had

Is Your Child on Track?

3 to 4 years old

MILESTONES

Can say name, age and sex
Stacks 9-10 blocks
Matches three colors
Points to pictures of common objects described by their use (e.g. "Show me what you eat with.")
Understands between 800-1500 words; mean sentence length is 3.4 words
Understands most sentences
Follow instructions with 2 or 3 steps
Starts asking "why"; understands "in," "on," and "under"
Becomes more social; makes friends easily
May show more fears (of dark, of monsters)
Can take turns in games; starts sharing toys
Changes activities when requested
Understands concept of "mine" and "his/hers"
Eats on his own
Stabs food with fork and brings to mouth
Daytime control of toileting needs with occasional accidents
Copies drawing a circle
Stands on one foot for 3 seconds; kicks a ball at least 6 feet; pedals tricycle
Threads four small beads on string

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

Help child understand and ask questions
Ask questions such as "Are you a boy?"
Expand vocabulary; name body parts, and identify what you do with them-- "This is my nose. I can smell flowers."
Use photographs of familiar people and places, and retell stories of events
Let your child help with cooking by pouring ingredients and stirring things together
Cut and sort pictures from a magazine into categories
Expand on social communication and storytelling skills and "acting out"

WHEN TO BE CONCERNED

Frequent falling and difficulty with stairs
Persistent drooling or very unclear speech; cannot communicate in short phrases
Cannot build a tower of more than four blocks
Cannot copy a circle by age 3
No involvement in pretend play
Doesn't understand simple directions
Little interest in other children
Poor eye contact
Extreme difficulty separating from mother or primary caregiver
Limited interest in toys; difficulty manipulating small objects
Restricted and repetitive patterns of behavior or interests
Unusual preoccupation with objects such as light switches, fans, spinning objects
Experiences a dramatic loss of skills he/she once had

4 to 5 years old

MILESTONES

Tells own age and full name
Interested in new experiences
Plays "mom" or "dad"
Produces 4-6 word sentence; has vocabulary of about 2,000 words; speaks clearly
Asks for assistance when needed
Sings a song or says a poem from memory, i.e. "Wheels on the Bus"
Follows directions and obeys authority figure; may increase misbehavior
Cooperates with other children; waits for turn
Sits quietly to listen to story/music
Dresses and undresses; can lace shoes; brushes own teeth
Wants to be independent
Is toilet trained and washes hands without help
Catches ball with hands; rides bicycle with training wheels
Walks up and down stairs alternating feet, without support
Holds crayon with thumb and finger; can copy a square

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

Read aloud every day; tell stories that have interesting characters; discuss the stories together
Draw, finger-paint, cut and paste to help develop motor skills; play with Legos and blocks
Schedule weekly play dates or activities with other children
Play with balls to throw, catch and kick
Encourage development of large muscles by allowing child to run, climb and swing on playground equipment.
Encourage independence in getting dressed, brushing his teeth and simple household chores
Encourage your child to use language to express ideas, and feelings
Recite rhymes, poems and sing songs
Practice writing letters and numbers
Use blocks, straws, sticks and other objects to make shape patterns

WHEN TO BE CONCERNED

Doesn't follow simple instructions
Doesn't use 2-3 word sentences
Doesn't imitate actions or words
Shows no interest in interactive games; does not interact with other children
Still clings or cries when parents leave him
Ignores other children or doesn't respond to people outside the family
Can't retell a favorite story
Doesn't engage in fantasy or dramatic play
Appears to ignore speech; hears "only what he wants to"

5 to 6 years old

MILESTONES

Understands a few written words
Draws a person with 6 recognizable parts
Understands opposites; understands real and make-believe
Recites telephone number
Plays group games following rules
Participates in conversations
Understands concepts "yesterday/today" "before/after" "most/least"
Identifies and counts up to 10
Starts to print some letters of name
Share information about and event or story
Answers "why" questions by giving reason
Puts on shirt and pants independently
Uses toilet independently
Can take shower or bath independently
Cuts out shapes with scissors
Throws ball 10 feet overhead
Can do a somersault

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

Use descriptive words and complete sentences to express thoughts and ideas
Sort and count objects and identify written corresponding number
Practice writing numbers and letters; practice printing name
Teach personal information such as age, phone number, and address
Give instructions that involve several simple directions in a row
Read a story to the child and ask her/him what happened first, next and last
Give child simple tasks to do daily and praise him/her for completion
Ask questions and engage child in conversation about daily events
Have child practice using scissors; cut out shapes and objects in a magazine
Encourage independence and responsibility: give child jobs like setting table, putting laundry away etc.

WHEN TO BE CONCERNED

Shows extreme behavior (unusually fearful, aggressive, sad)
Shows no interest in interactive games; does not interact with other children
Still clings or cries when parents leave him
Doesn't respond to people outside the family
Can't tell what's real and what's make-believe
Can't give first and last name
Doesn't draw pictures
Doesn't engage in fantasy or dramatic play
Appears to ignore speech; hears "only what he wants to"