

30-Month-Old Developmental Milestones

Milestones matter! How your child plays, learns, speaks, acts, and moves offers important clues about their development. Below is a list of milestones that most babies will have achieved by 30 months (or 2.5 years) of age.

Social and emotional milestones

- Plays next to other children and sometimes plays with them
- Shows you what they can do by saying “Look at me!”
- Follows simple routines when told (such as helping to pick up toys when you say, “It’s clean-up time.”)

Language and communication milestones

- Says about 50 words
- Says 2 or more words together with one action word like “Doggie run”
- Names things in a book when you point and asks “What is this?”
- Says words like “I,” “me,” or “we”

Cognitive milestones (learning, thinking, problem-solving)

- Uses things to pretend, like feeding a block to a doll as if it were food
- Shows simple problem-solving skills, like standing on a small stool to reach something
- Follows 2-step instructions like “Put the toy down and close the door”
- Shows they know at least one color (Example: pointing to a red crayon when you ask “Which one is red?”)

Movement and physical development milestones

- Uses hands to twist things like turning doorknobs or unscrewing lids

- Takes some clothes off on their own, like loose pants or an open jacket
- Jumps off the ground with both feet
- Turns book pages, one at a time, when you read to them

Other things to share with your child’s doctor at their 30-month visit:

- What are some things you and your child do together?
- What are some things your child likes to do?
- Is there anything your child does or does not do that concerns you?
- Has your child lost any skills they once had?

You know your child best. Don’t wait. If your child is not meeting one or more milestones, has lost skills they once had, or if you have other concerns, act early. Talk with your child’s doctor, share your concerns, and ask about developmental screening.

If your doctor is concerned about your child’s development, they may refer your child to a specialist or to Early On, which is the early intervention program in the State of Michigan (1-800-EARLYON or 1800EarlyOn.org). You can also contact Early On at any point on your own to request an evaluation.

You can help your child grow and learn!

As your child’s first teacher, you can help their learning and brain development. Try these simple tips and activities in a safe way. Talk with your child’s doctor if you have questions or for more ideas on how to help your child’s development.

- Encourage “free play” where your child can follow their interests, try new things, and use things in new ways.
- Give more attention to behaviors you want to see than those you don’t want to see. For example, say “I like how you gave Jordan the toy.”

- Let your child make simple decisions. Let them choose what to eat for a snack (offer a few healthy options) or what to wear. Limit choices to two or three.
- Ask your child simple questions about books and stories. Ask questions such as “Who?” “What?” and “Where?”
- Help your child “draw” with crayons on paper, shaving cream on a tray, or chalk on a sidewalk. If you draw a straight line, see if they copy you. When they get good at lines, show them how to draw a circle.
- Let your child play with other children, such as at a park or library. Ask about local play groups and pre-school programs. Playing with others helps them learn the value of sharing and friendship.
- Eat family meals together as much as you can. Give the same meal to everyone. Enjoy each other’s company and avoid screen time (TV, tablets, and phones, etc.) during meals.
- Limit screen time to no more than 1 hour per day of a children’s program with an adult present. Children learn by talking, playing, and interacting with others.
- Use words to describe things to your child such as big or small, fast or slow, on or off, and in or out.
- Help your child do simple puzzles with shapes, colors, or animals. Name each piece when your child puts it in place.
- Play with your child outside. For example, take your child to the park to climb on equipment and run in safe areas.
- Allow your child to eat as much or as little as they want at each meal. Your job is to offer them healthy foods and it’s your child’s job to decide if and how much they want to eat.
- Ask your child’s doctor or teachers about toilet training to know if your child is ready to start. Most children are not able to toilet train until to 2

to 3 years old. Starting too early can cause stress and setbacks, which can cause training to take longer.

- Let your child play with large boxes. They can pretend the box is a car, bus, train, or house etc. Let them color, paint, and put stickers on it.
- Play “ready, set, go” with your child. For example, pull your child back in a swing. Say “Ready, set...,” then wait and say “Go” when you push the swing.
- Encourage your child to name colors, body parts, and pictures in books.
- Kick a ball back and forth with your child. When your child is good at that, show them how to run and kick the ball.
- Have steady routines for sleeping and feeding. Create a calm, quiet bedtime for your child. Put on their pajamas, brush their teeth, and read 1 or 2 books to them. Children at this age need 11 to 14 hours of sleep per day (including naps). Consistent sleep times make it easier.
- Play “follow the leader” with your child. Walk in a straight line, make turns, walk backwards, and walk on tiptoes. Let your child lead after you show them how.
- Read to your child and visit the local library. This will help your child enjoy reading and be ready to read when they are older.
- Encourage “pretend” play. For example, let your child pretend to cook using safe things from your kitchen.
- Show your child how to turn pages in a book or magazine.

To see more tips and activities download CDC’s Milestone Tracker app. This milestone checklist is not a substitute for a standardized validated developmental screening tool. These developmental milestones show what most children (75% or more) can do by each age. Subject matter experts selected these milestones based on available data and expert consensus.

This handout is adapted from www.cdc.gov/ActEarly
Scan the QR code for more information:



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