

Healthy Child Development and Behavior



Below are milestones most children will reach between now and 2.5 years of age. Talk with your doctor at your child's next well-visit if your child is not yet reaching these milestones or there are skills your child no longer shows each day.

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, like helping to pick up toys when you say, "It's clean-up time."

Language and Communication Milestones

- Says about 50 words
- Says two or more words together, with one action word, like "doggie run"
- Names things in a book when you point and ask, "What is this?"
- Says words like "I," "me" or "we"

Thinking and Learning Milestones

- 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 two-step instructions like "Put the toy down and close the door."
- Shows they know at least one color, like pointing to a red crayon when you ask, "Which one is red?"

Physical Development Milestones

- Uses hands to twist things, like turning doorknobs or unscrewing lids
- Takes some clothes off by themselves, 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

Healthy Ways to Help Your Child Learn and Grow

Development

- Teach your child to say words correctly. Slowly work toward expanding your child's sentences. If your child says, "or nana," you ask, "Do you want more banana?" Use clear, simple language, and avoid using baby talk.
- Read books together every day and talk about the pictures. Sing to your child often.
- Practice throwing, rolling and kicking a ball. Teach your child to open doors and practice turning the pages of a book.
- Play with puzzles and blocks to encourage sorting and problem-solving. Name the shapes and colors as you play. Encourage "pretend play" by providing dress-up clothes and toys like dolls, cars and play telephones.
- Teach your child to create simple art projects with crayons or finger paints. Display your child's artwork on the wall or refrigerator for your child to see.
- Teach your child to help with simple chores, such as putting laundry in a basket or picking up toys. Praise your child for helping.

Behavior

- Help your child learn to take turns and use words to solve problems when playing with others. Children at this age usually play well next to each other, but often need practice learning to share toys.
- Use positive words and give your child more attention and praise for good behavior. Limit attention or ignore unwanted behavior.
- Teach your child how to talk about feelings.

Feeding

- Give water and 16–24 ounces of whole milk each day. Avoid sugary drinks like juice.
- Offer a variety of healthy foods at mealtimes. Let your child decide how much to eat. Children of this age may not eat the same amount each day.

Sleep

- Your child needs 11–14 hours of sleep a day, including naps. Have a steady routine for bed (bathing, brushing teeth, books, bedtime). The hour before bedtime should be calm. Avoid giving your child a bottle or cup in bed. Try to have the same sleep time each night.

Toilet Training

- Wait for your child to be ready for toilet training, usually around 2 or 3 years old. Look for signs, such as being able to stay dry for 2 hours, knows if they are wet or dry, can help pull pants down and up, can say when a bowel movement (poop) is coming, and is excited to learn.

- Read books about toilet training and offer praise for sitting on the potty.

Digital Media Use

- Children learn best by talking and playing. Limit screen time to 1 hour of high-quality, educational programs each day. It's best if you watch together with your child so you can talk about what they're seeing and use it as an opportunity to teach.
- Avoid putting any type of screen, such as a TV or iPad, in your child's bedroom.

Water Safety

- Drowning is the leading cause of death among children ages 1–4 years old. It is silent and can happen quickly. Do NOT leave your child alone near any water (including bathtubs, toilets, pools, ponds, whirlpools). Install a 4-foot-tall fence with a self-closing and self-latching gate around home pools. Learn more about water safety. *Scan the QR code*

Vehicle Safety

- Keep your child's car seat rear-facing in the back seat until they reach the highest weight or height allowed by the car seat manufacturer. When one of those limits is reached, install the seat in the forward-facing position in the back seat. Learn more about car seat safety and installation. *Scan the QR code*

Find more useful, healthy tips for your family:

Cincinnati Children's Blog

Visit: blog.cincinnatichildrens.org

Young & Healthy Podcast

Listen on:



This information is meant to support your visit with your child's doctor. It should not take the place of the advice of your pediatrician.

Sources: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention | *Bright Futures: Guidelines for Health Supervision of Infants, Children and Adolescents, 4th Edition* | American Academy of Pediatrics

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