

# Important Milestones By The End Of 1 Year (12 Months)

Babies develop at their own pace, so it's impossible to tell exactly when your child will learn a given skill. The developmental milestones listed below will give you a general idea of the changes you can expect, but don't be alarmed if your own baby's development takes a slightly different course.

## Social and Emotional

- Shy or anxious with strangers
- Cries when mother or father leaves
- Enjoys imitating people in his play
- Shows specific preferences for certain people and toys
- Tests parental responses to his actions during feedings
- Tests parental responses to his behavior
- May be fearful in some situations
- Prefers mother and/or regular caregiver over all others
- Repeats sounds or gestures for attention
- Finger-feeds himself
- Extends arm or leg to help when being dressed

## Cognitive

- Explores objects in many different ways (shaking, banging, throwing, dropping)
- Finds hidden objects easily
- Looks at correct picture when the image is named
- Imitates gestures
- Begins to use objects correctly (drinking from cup, brushing hair, dialing phone, listening to receiver)

## Language

- Pays increasing attention to speech
- Responds to simple verbal requests
- Responds to "no"
- Uses simple gestures, such as shaking head for "no"
- Babbles with inflection (changes in tone)
- Says "dada" and "mama"
- Uses exclamations, such as "Oh-oh!"
- Tries to imitate words

## Movement

- Reaches sitting position without assistance
- Crawls forward on belly
- Assumes hands-and-knees position
- Creeps on hands and knees
- Gets from sitting to crawling or prone (lying on stomach) position
- Pulls self up to stand
- Walks holding on to furniture
- Stands momentarily without support
- May walk two or three steps without support

## Hand and Finger Skills

- Uses pincer grasp
- Bangs two objects together
- Puts objects into container
- Takes objects out of container
- Lets objects go voluntarily
- Pokes with index finger
- Tries to imitate scribbling

## Developmental Health Watch

Alert your child's doctor or nurse if your child displays any of the following signs of possible developmental delay for this age range.

- Does not crawl
- Drags one side of body while crawling (for over one month)
- Cannot stand when supported
- Does not search for objects that are hidden while he or she watches
- Says no single words ("mama" or "dada")
- Does not learn to use gestures, such as waving or shaking head
- Does not point to objects or pictures
- Experiences a dramatic loss of skills he or she once had

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# Important Milestones By The End Of 2 Years (24 Months)

Children develop at their own pace, so it's impossible to tell exactly when yours will learn a given skill. The developmental milestones below will give you a general idea of the changes you can expect as your child gets older, but don't be alarmed if your child takes a slightly different course.

## Social

- Imitates behavior of others, especially adults and older children
- More aware of herself as separate from others
- More excited about company of other children

## Emotional

- Demonstrates increasing independence
- Begins to show defiant behavior
- Separation anxiety increases toward midyear then fades

## Cognitive

- Finds objects even when hidden under two or three covers
- Begins to sort by shapes and colors
- Begins make-believe play

## Language

- Points to object or picture when it's named for him
- Recognizes names of familiar people, objects, and body parts
- Says several single words (by 15 to 18 months)
- Uses simple phrases (by 18 to 24 months)
- Uses 2- to 4-word sentences
- Follows simple instructions
- Repeats words overheard in conversation

## Movement

- Walks alone
- Pulls toys behind her while walking
- Carries large toy or several toys while walking
- Begins to run
- Stands on tiptoe
- Kicks a ball
- Climbs onto and down from furniture unassisted
- Walks up and down stairs holding on to support

## Hand and Finger Skills

- Scribbles on his or her own
- Turns over container to pour out contents
- Builds tower of four blocks or more
- Might use one hand more often than the other

## Developmental Health Watch

Alert your child's doctor or nurse if your child displays any of the following signs of possible developmental delay for this age range.

- Cannot walk by 18 months
- Fails to develop a mature heel-toe walking pattern after several months of walking, or walks only on his toes
- Does not speak at least 15 words
- Does not use two-word sentences by age 2
- By 15 months, does not seem to know the function of common household objects (brush, telephone, bell, fork, spoon)
- Does not imitate actions or words by the end of this period
- Does not follow simple instructions by age 2
- Cannot push a wheeled toy by age 2
- Experiences a dramatic loss of skills he or she once had

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# Important Milestones By The End Of 3 Years (36 Months)

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## 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

## 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"

## Language

- Follows a two- or three-part command
- Recognizes and identifies almost all common objects and pictures
- Understands most sentences
- Understands placement in space ("on," "in," "under")
- Uses 4- to 5-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

## Movement

- Climbs well
- Walks up and down stairs, alternating feet (one foot per stair step)
- Kicks ball
- Runs easily
- Pedals tricycle
- Bends over easily without falling

## Hand and Finger Skills

- Makes up-and-down, side-to-side, and circular lines 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

## Developmental Health Watch

Alert your child's doctor or nurse 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
- Cannot build a tower of more than four blocks
- Difficulty manipulating small objects
- Cannot copy a circle by age 3
- Cannot communicate in short phrases
- No involvement in "pretend" play
- Does not understand simple instructions
- Little interest in other children
- Extreme difficulty separating from mother or primary caregiver
- Poor eye contact
- Limited interest in toys
- Experiences a dramatic loss of skills he or she once had

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# Important Milestones By The End Of 4 Years (48 Months)

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## Social

- Interested in new experiences
- Cooperates with other children
- Plays "Mom" or "Dad"
- Increasingly inventive in fantasy play
- Dresses and undresses
- Negotiates solutions to conflicts
- More independent

## Emotional

- Imagines that many unfamiliar images may be "monsters"
- Views self as a whole person involving body, mind, and feelings
- Often cannot tell the difference between fantasy and reality

## Cognitive

- Correctly names some colors
- Understands the concept of counting and may know a few numbers
- Tries to solve problems from a single point of view
- Begins to have a clearer sense of time
- Follows three-part commands
- Recalls parts of a story
- Understands the concepts of "same" and "different"
- Engages in fantasy play

## Language

- Has mastered some basic rules of grammar
- Speaks in sentences of five to six words
- Speaks clearly enough for strangers to understand
- Tells stories

## Movement

- Hops and stands on one foot up to five seconds
- Goes upstairs and downstairs without support
- Kicks ball forward
- Throws ball overhand
- Catches bounced ball most of the time
- Moves forward and backward with agility

## Hand and Finger Skills

- Copies square shapes
- Draws a person with two to four body parts
- Uses scissors
- Draws circles and squares
- Begins to copy some capital letters

## Developmental Health Watch

Alert your child's doctor or nurse if your child displays any of the following signs of possible developmental delay for this age range.

- Cannot throw a ball overhand
- Cannot jump in place
- Cannot ride a tricycle
- Cannot grasp a crayon between thumb and fingers
- Has difficulty scribbling
- Cannot stack four blocks
- Still clings or cries whenever parents leave
- Shows no interest in interactive games
- Ignores other children
- Doesn't respond to people outside the family
- Doesn't engage in fantasy play
- Resists dressing, sleeping, using the toilet
- Lashes out without any self-control when angry or upset
- Cannot copy a circle
- Doesn't use sentences of more than three words
- Doesn't use "me" and "you" correctly
- Experiences a dramatic loss of skills he or she once had

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# Important Milestones By The End Of 5 Years (60 Months)

Children develop at their own pace, so it's impossible to tell exactly when yours will learn a given skill. The developmental milestones below will give you a general idea of the changes you can expect as your child gets older, but don't be alarmed if your child takes a slightly different course.

## Social

- Wants to please friends
- Wants to be like her friends
- More likely to agree to rules
- Likes to sing, dance, and act
- Shows more independence and may even visit a next-door neighbor by herself

## Emotional

- Aware of gender
- Able to distinguish fantasy from reality
- Sometimes demanding, sometimes eagerly cooperative

## Cognitive

- Can count 10 or more objects
- Correctly names at least four colors
- Better understands the concept of time
- Knows about things used every day in the home (money, food, appliances)

## Language

- Recalls part of a story
- Speaks sentences of more than five words
- Uses future tense
- Tells longer stories
- Says name and address

## Movement

- Stands on one foot for 10 seconds or longer
- Hops, somersaults
- Swings, climbs
- May be able to skip

## Hand and Finger Skills

- Copies triangle and other shapes
- Draws person with body

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- Prints some letters
- Dresses and undresses without help
- Uses fork, spoon, and (sometimes) a table knife
- Usually cares for own toilet needs

## Developmental Health Watch

Alert your child's doctor or nurse if your child displays any of the following signs of possible developmental delay for this age range.

- Acts extremely fearful or timid
- Acts extremely aggressively
- Is unable to separate from parents without major protest
- Is easily distracted and unable to concentrate on any single activity for more than five minutes
- Shows little interest in playing with other children
- Refuses to respond to people in general, or responds only superficially
- Rarely uses fantasy or imitation in play
- Seems unhappy or sad much of the time
- Doesn't engage in a variety of activities
- Avoids or seems aloof with other children and adults
- Doesn't express a wide range of emotions
- Has trouble eating, sleeping or using the toilet
- Can't tell the difference between fantasy and reality
- Seems unusually passive
- Cannot understand two-part commands using prepositions ("Put the doll on the bed, and get the ball under the couch.")
- Can't correctly give her first and last name
- Doesn't use plurals or past tense properly when speaking
- Doesn't talk about her daily activities and experiences
- Cannot build a tower of six to eight blocks
- Seems uncomfortable holding a crayon
- Has trouble taking off clothing
- Cannot brush her teeth efficiently
- Cannot wash and dry her hands
- Experiences a dramatic loss of skills he or she once had

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# Resources

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## GOVERNMENT RESOURCES

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)  
National Center on Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities  
Web: [www.cdc.gov/ncbddd](http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd)
- National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities  
Web: [www.nichcy.org/states.htm](http://www.nichcy.org/states.htm)
- Department of Education  
Web: [www.ed.gov/index.html](http://www.ed.gov/index.html)
- National Institute of Mental Health  
Phone: 1-866-615-6464  
Web: [www.nimh.nih.gov](http://www.nimh.nih.gov)
- State Health Insurance Program (SCHIP)  
Phone: 1-877-KIDS-NOW Web: [www.insurekidsnow.gov](http://www.insurekidsnow.gov)

## SPECIAL RESOURCES

- American Academy of Pediatrics  
Phone: 1-847-434-4000 Web: [www.aap.org](http://www.aap.org)
- Parent to Parent-USA  
Web: [www.p2pusa.org](http://www.p2pusa.org)

## AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDERS (ASD)

- Autism Society of America (ASA)  
Phone: 1-800-3-AUTISM Web: [www.autism-society.org](http://www.autism-society.org)
- Cure Autism Now  
Phone: 1-888-8-AUTISM Web: [www.cureautismnow.org](http://www.cureautismnow.org)
- National Alliance for Autism Research  
Phone: 1-888-777-NAAR Web: [www.naar.org](http://www.naar.org)
- Organization for Autism Research  
Phone: 1-703-351-5031  
Web: [www.researchautism.org](http://www.researchautism.org)
- Autism Coalition  
Phone: 1-914-935-1462 Web: [www.autismcoalition.org](http://www.autismcoalition.org)
- First Signs  
Phone: 1-978-346-4380 Web: [www.firstsigns.org](http://www.firstsigns.org)
- National Institute of Child Health & Human Development  
Web: [www.nichd.nih.gov/autism](http://www.nichd.nih.gov/autism)
- CDC's National Immunization Program: "Vaccines and Autism" Internet Site  
Web: [www.cdc.gov/nip/vacsafe/concerns/autism/default.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/nip/vacsafe/concerns/autism/default.htm)

## CEREBRAL PALSY

- United Cerebral Palsy  
Phone: 1-800-872-5827 Web: [www.ucpa.org](http://www.ucpa.org)
- National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke (NINDS)  
Web: [www.ninds.nih.gov](http://www.ninds.nih.gov)

## INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY (also known as Mental Retardation)

- The Arc of the United States  
Phone: 1-301-565-3842 Web: [www.thearc.org](http://www.thearc.org)
- American Association of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (AAIDD)  
Phone: 1-202-387-1968 Web: [www.aaid.org](http://www.aaid.org)

## HEARING LOSS

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Early Hearing Detection and Intervention Program  
Web: [www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/ehdi](http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/ehdi)
- American Academy of Audiology  
Phone: 1-800-AAA-2336 Web: [www.audiology.org](http://www.audiology.org)
- American Academy of Pediatrics Bright Futures  
Phone: 1-847-434-4223  
Web: [brightfutures.aap.org/web/](http://brightfutures.aap.org/web/)
- American Speech-Language-Hearing Association  
Phone: 1-800-638-8255 Web: [www.asha.org](http://www.asha.org)

## VISION LOSS

- National Federation of the Blind  
Phone: 1-410-659-9314 Web: [www.nfb.org](http://www.nfb.org)
- American Council of the Blind  
Phone: 1-800-424-8666 Web: [www.acb.org](http://www.acb.org)
- American Foundation for the Blind  
Phone: 1-800-232-5463 Web: [www.afb.org](http://www.afb.org)

## ATTENTION-DEFICIT/HYPERACTIVITY DISORDER (ADHD)

- Children and Adults with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (CHADD)  
Phone: 1-800-233-4050 Web: [www.chadd.org](http://www.chadd.org)
- CHADD National Resource Center  
Phone: 1-800-233-4050  
Web: [www.help4adhd.org](http://www.help4adhd.org)
- Attention Deficit Disorder Association (ADDA)  
Phone: 1-484-945-2101 Web: [www.add.org](http://www.add.org)

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