



Help your child reach their developmental milestones

All children deserve a good start to life, and the early years are a critical time for growth. In fact, a child's first 2000 days (or 5 years) are the most important for their long-term development. Their physical, social and emotional wellbeing quickly evolves in this time and they are always learning. Parents and carers are their best first teacher.

You can support your child's development through everyday moments. These can be moments at libraries or parks, or at home playing with their toys, reading books or singing songs.

Explore



Encourage your child to use their senses to feel, listen and look at objects (e.g. sand, leaves, and toys).

Move



Help your child use their body to play and learn, like pushing and pulling objects.

Learn



Talk and problem solve with things like puzzles and blocks.

Imagine



Play out simple ideas. Try to add in new scenarios or roles. Play with dolls or teddies or creatively use boxes as objects (e.g. a car).

Remember your child's health checks!

Regular health checks with your child health nurse or doctor are important for monitoring your child's growth and development. Between the ages of 2 and 5, child health checks are recommended at the following ages:

- 2 years
- 2 and a half years
- 3 years
- 4 years
- 5 years

These health checks are included in your child's Personal Health Record (the red book). Your GP or child health nurse will record the results of each health check and track their milestones in this book.

Flag it early

Milestones matter!

How your child plays, learns, speaks, acts and moves offer important clues about their development.

Questions or concerns?

- Contact your GP
- Call 13 HEALTH (13 43 25 84) and ask to talk to a child health nurse. You can call 24 hours a day, 7 days a week for the cost of a local call.
- Contact your local Child Health Service

Children's Health Queensland

Milestones checklist for child development 2 to 5 years

Every child achieves developmental milestones as they grow

Developmental milestones are the skills children learn and master as they grow, such as walking, talking, eating, going to the toilet and playing with others. Children typically learn these new skills within a certain age range. For example, most children will achieve the milestone of learning to walk between the ages of 9 and 15 months. If a child hasn't met a milestone by the time most children do, it could be a sign they need extra support.

The Milestones checklist for child development helps parents, carers, early childhood educators and health professionals track how children are growing and learning. It covers four areas of child development:

- Social and emotional
- Language and communication
- Movement and self-care
- Thinking and learning.

Tracking the milestones across these four areas will help you know:

- If a child is reaching milestones at the expected age.
- If a child has not achieved a milestone by the typical age and what to do.
- When a child should see a GP or child health nurse for a developmental screening.

If you have any concerns about your child's development at any time, talk to your GP or child health nurse.

Every child is unique

Every baby grows and develops at their own pace. Some milestones may also look different in children from different cultural groups, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families. If your child's journey looks different, getting advice can help you understand their strengths and challenges and get support early.

Important: This checklist does not cover all possible development milestones in children. If you are concerned about your child's hearing, vision, growth, diet or sleep, speak to your GP or child health nurse.

How to use the checklist

1. Tick the checklist boxes for each milestone as your child can do them.
2. Share the checklist with your child's GP, child health nurse or early childhood educator when talking about their development.
3. Don't wait. Act early if:
 - a. Your child has not met one or more milestones for their age, or
 - b. You notice any of the 'Warning signs at any age'.

It's important to

Flag it early



The Child Development Milestones Checklist was developed by Children's Health Queensland, a specialist statewide hospital and health service delivering world-class, person-centred paediatric care for children and young people across Queensland and northern New South Wales. childrens.health.qld.gov.au

Disclaimer: This information has been produced by healthcare professionals as a guideline only and is intended to support, not replace, discussion with your child's GP or healthcare professionals. The developmental milestones included in this checklist show what most children (75% or more) can do by each age. This checklist is not a screening or diagnostic tool. It is meant to be used to start conversations with your GP or healthcare professionals when seeking support, advice or further screening.

Some information in this resource has been adapted from the US Center for Disease Control and Prevention's online resource Learn the Signs, Act Early.

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Milestones checklist for child development

Has your child reached these milestones by each age?

Flag it early

	By 2 years	By 2.5 years	By 3 years	By 4 years	By 5 years
Social and emotional 	☐ Notices when others are hurt or upset. ☐ Looks at your face to see how to react to a new situation.	☐ Plays next to other children (parallel play). ☐ Follows simple routines when told, like helping pick up toys when you say, "it's clean up time". ☐ Shows you what they can do by saying "look at me".	☐ Calms down within 10 minutes after you leave. ☐ Notices and plays with other children.	☐ Prefers playing with others than alone. ☐ Comforts others who are hurt or sad. ☐ Avoids danger (e.g. won't jump from tall heights). ☐ Likes to be a 'helper'. ☐ Changes behaviour based on where they are, like the library or playground. ☐ Pretends to be something else during play, like a doctor.	☐ Follows rules or takes turns when playing games with other children. ☐ Does simple chores at home like clearing the table after eating. ☐ Sings, dances or acts for you.
Language and communication 	☐ Says and understands at least 50 words. ☐ Says two or more words together, like "more milk". ☐ Speaks using sounds including vowels and consonants. ☐ Can point to things in a book when asked. ☐ Can point to at least 2 body parts when asked. ☐ Uses gestures other than waving and pointing, like blowing a kiss.	☐ Uses action words when putting two or more words together, like "doggie run". ☐ Names things in a book when you point and ask, "what's this?". ☐ Says words like, "I, "me" or "we". ☐ Follows two-step directions, like "put the toy down and close the door".	☐ Names an action in a picture when asked "What is she doing?". ☐ Says their first name when asked. ☐ Can have a conversation with at least two back-and-forth turns. ☐ Asks who, what, where or why questions. ☐ Other people understand them most of the time.	☐ Answers simple questions like "what is a crayon for?". ☐ Says sentences of more than 4 words. ☐ Says some words from a song, story or nursery rhyme. ☐ Talks about at least one thing that happened during the day. ☐ Speaks using many sounds correctly. ☐ Other people understand them all of the time.	☐ Uses or recognises simple rhymes, like bat-cat, ball-tall. ☐ Keeps a conversation going with more than three back-and-forth turns. ☐ Tells a story they have heard or made up where at least two things happen. ☐ Answers simple questions about a book or story read/told to them. ☐ Speaks using most sounds in sentences. May still find it hard to say 's', 'r', 'l' and 'th'.
Movement and self-care 	☐ Kicks a ball. ☐ Runs. ☐ Walks (not climbs) up a few stairs with or without help. ☐ Eats with a spoon.	☐ Uses their hands to twist things, like unscrewing a lid. ☐ Turns pages in a book, one at a time. ☐ Jumps off the ground with both feet. ☐ Takes some clothes off by themselves, like loose pants.	☐ Uses a fork. ☐ Can thread objects, like large beads. ☐ Puts some clothes on by themselves, like loose pants. ☐ Draws a circle when you show them how.	☐ Serves themselves food or pours water with adult supervision. ☐ Holds a pencil between their fingers and thumb (not fist). ☐ Able to undo some buttons by themselves. ☐ Catches a large ball most of the time.	☐ Hops on one foot. ☐ Able to do some buttons up by themselves.
Thinking and learning 	☐ Tries to use switches, knobs or buttons on a toy. ☐ Plays with more than one toy at the same time, like pouring a cup of pretend tea. ☐ Holds something in one hand while using the other hand, like holding a container and taking the lid off.	☐ Shows simple problem-solving skills, like using a stool to reach something. ☐ Uses things to pretend, like feeding a block to a doll as if it were food. ☐ Shows they know at least one colour.	☐ Avoids touching hot objects, like a stove, when warned. ☐ Has started toilet training. ☐ Can focus on a story for at least 5 minutes. ☐ Can play on their own for at least 5 minutes.	☐ Shows and names a few colours when you point to items. ☐ Tells what comes next in a well-known story. ☐ Draws a person with 3 or more body parts. ☐ Is toilet trained during the day.	☐ Counts to 10. ☐ Names some numbers between 1 and 5 when you point to them. ☐ Uses words about time like "morning". ☐ Pays attention for 5-10mins during activities like story time or drawing. ☐ Writes some letters in their name. ☐ Draws people with at least 6 body parts. ☐ Names some letters when you point to them.

Warning signs at any age. See your GP	Strong caregiver concerns	Loss of ANY skills	Lack of response to sound or visual stimuli	Lack of, or limited eye contact	Differences between right and left sides of the body in strength, movement or tone	Obvious low tone (floppy) or high tone (stiff and tense) that significantly affects development and functioning
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Important: The milestones in each age group are the expected age at which they should have developed. If your child has not met a milestone by the listed age, see your GP or child health nurse for advice.