



U.S. Army Child, Youth  
& School Services

# Parent Pick Me Ups

Infants/Toddlers/Preschoolers-

What is child development and what skills do children develop at different ages?

**What is child development?** Child development is a process every child goes through. This process involves learning and mastering skills like sitting, walking, talking, skipping, and tying shoes. Children learn these skills, called developmental milestones, during predictable time periods. Children develop skills in five main areas of development:

**Cognitive Development:** The ability to learn and solve problems. For example, this includes a two-month-old baby learning to explore the environment with hands or eyes or a five-year-old learning how to do simple math problems.

**Social and Emotional Development:** The ability to interact with others, including helping themselves and self-control. Examples of this type of development would include: a six-week-old baby smiling, a ten-month-old baby waving bye-bye, or a five-year-old boy knowing how to take turns in games at school.

**Speech and Language Development:** The ability to both understand and use language. For example, this includes a 12-month-old baby saying his first words, a two-year-old naming parts of her body, or a five-year-old learning to say "feet" instead of "foots".

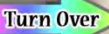
**Fine Motor Skill Development:** The ability to use small muscles, specifically their hands and fingers, to pick up small objects, hold a spoon, turn pages in a book, or use a crayon to draw.

**Gross Motor Skill Development:** The ability to use large muscles. For example, a six-month-old baby learns how to sit up with some support, a 12-month-old baby learns to pull up to a stand holding onto furniture, and a five-year-old learns to skip.

**What is a developmental milestone?** A developmental milestone is a skill that a child acquires within a specific time frame. Milestones develop in a sequential fashion. This means that a child will need to develop certain skills before they can develop new skills. For example, children must first learn to pull up to a standing position before they are able to walk. Each milestone that a child acquires builds on the last milestone developed.

Inclusion of any third-party website does not constitute DoD, Army or Federal Government endorsement.  
For the ease of reading, we have used personal pronouns (he/she) randomly & they are not solely indicative of gender.

For additional tips ...

Turn Over 



For More Information:  
[www.vicenzaMWR.com](http://www.vicenzaMWR.com)

Deployment Support: 0444-71-7401, Davis Hall, Room 48

Trainer: 0444-71-5008 (CDC 398) or 5700 (Villaggio CDC)

Child Behavior Consultant: 347-601-5077

Military Family Life Consultant: 333-489-8967



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**What if my child does not meet a developmental milestone?** Each child is an individual and may meet developmental milestones a little earlier or later than other children. This is because each child is unique and will develop at their own pace. However, there are definitely blocks of time when most children will meet a milestone. For a listing of milestones for certain ages checkout the websites below. And if you have questions, do not hesitate to ask a professional like your child's doctor or a child behavioral specialist.

## How can I help my child meet these developmental milestones?

Research shows that two factors influence how your child succeeds and grows: genes and environment. Genes are the genetic material we pass onto our children. Some people refer to this as "nature." These genes act like a blueprint for what characteristics a child may have. For example, genes determine if a child will have blue eyes or brown eyes. The other factor that influences child development is the environment. This includes experiences children have in their home, school and community environments. Some people refer to this as "nurture." The environment can either improve or harm a child's genetic blueprint. Children in third world countries may not reach their IQ potential because of the impact of their environment on their brain development.

## Tips

- Give your child lots of love and attention. No matter what a child's age, holding, hugging, and listening are important ways to show your child they matter.
- Interact with your child by talking, singing, playing, eating, and reading with your child. Your child will grow up feeling special and important to you. You will also learn a lot about your child's interests and skills.
- Learn some simple parenting skills for helping your child to learn how to behave. The most important parenting skills are having consistent rules, rewarding behaviors you want to see your child do more of, and having consequences for behaviors you do not want your child to continue to do.

**This information is compiled from these sources:**

### Websites:

- American Academy of Pediatrics - [www.aap.org](http://www.aap.org)
- How Kids Develop - [www.howkidsdevelop.com](http://www.howkidsdevelop.com)
- Zero to Three — [www.zerotothree.org](http://www.zerotothree.org)

### Books:

- What's Going On in Their?, By Lise Eliot
- Your Child's Growing Mind, By Jane M. Healy
- Brain Rules for Baby, By John Medina
- Nurture Shock: The new thinking about children, By Po Bronson

