

Track Brain Development Milestones

1 Month

Movement

Makes jerky, quivering arm thrusts
Brings hands within range of eyes and mouth
Moves head from side to side while lying on stomach
Head flops backward if unsupported
Keeps hands in tight fists
Strong reflex movements

Smell and Touch Milestones

Prefers sweet smells
Avoids bitter or acidic smells
Recognizes the scent of his own mother’s breastmilk
Prefers soft to coarse sensations
Dislikes rough or abrupt handling

Visual and Hearing Milestones

Focuses 8 to 12 inches (20.3 to 30.4 cm) away
Eyes wander and occasionally cross
Prefers black-and-white or high-contrast patterns
Prefers the human face to all other patterns
Hearing is fully mature
Recognizes some sounds

May turn toward familiar sounds and voices

Developmental Health Watch

Sucks poorly and feeds slowly
Doesn’t blink when shown a bright light
Doesn’t focus and follow a nearby object moving side to side
Rarely moves arms and legs; seems stiff
Seems excessively loose in the limbs, or floppy
Doesn’t respond to loud sounds
Lower jaw trembles constantly, even when not crying or excited

1 Year

Movement

Gets to sitting position without assistance
Crawls forward on belly by pulling with arms and pushing with legs
Assumes hands-and-knees position
Creeps on hands and knees supporting trunk 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

Language Milestones

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
Says “dada” and “mama”
Uses exclamations, such as “oh-oh!”
Tries to imitate words

3 Months

Movement

Raises head and chest when lying on stomach
Supports upper body with arms when lying on stomach
Stretches legs out and kicks when lying on stomach or back
Opens and shuts hands
Pushes down on legs when feet are placed on a firm surface
Brings hand to mouth
Takes swipes at dangling objects with hands
Grasps and shakes hand toys

Smell and Touch Milestones

Begins to develop a social smile
Enjoys playing with other people and may cry when playing stops
Becomes more communicative and expressive with face and body
Imitates some movements and facial expressions

Visual and Hearing Milestones

Watches faces intently
Follows moving objects
Recognizes familiar objects and people at a distance
Starts using hands and eyes in coordination
Smiles at the sound of your voice
Begins to babble
Begins to imitate some sounds
Turns head toward direction of sound

Cognitive Milestones

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)

Social & Emotional Milestones

Shy or anxious with strangers
Cries when mother or father leaves
Enjoys imitating people in play
Shows specific preferences for certain people and toys
Tests parental responses to his actions during feedings (What do you do when he refuses a food?)
Tests parental responses to his behavior (What do you do if he cries after you leave the room?)
May be fearful in some situations
Finger-feeds himself
Prefers mother and/or regular caregiver over all others
Repeats sounds or gestures for attention
Extends arm or leg to help when being dressed

Cognitive Milestones

Finds objects even when hidden under two or three covers
Begins to sort by shapes and colors
Begins make-believe play
Social and emotional milestones
Imitates behavior of others, especially adults and older children
Increasingly aware of herself as separate from others
Increasingly enthusiastic about company of other children
Demonstrates increasing independence
Begins to show defiant behavior
Increasing episodes of separation anxiety toward midyear, then they fade

Developmental Health Watch

Cannot walk by eighteen months
Fails to develop a mature heel-toe walking pattern after several months of walking, or walks exclusively on his toes
Does not speak at least fifteen words by eighteen months
Does not use two-word sentences by age two
Does not seem to know the function of common household objects (brush, telephone, bell, fork, spoon) by fifteen months
Does not imitate actions or words by the end of this period
Does not follow simple instructions by age two
Cannot push a wheeled toy by age two

Developmental Health Watch

Doesn’t seem to respond to loud sounds
Doesn’t notice her hands by two months
Doesn’t smile at the sound of your voice by two months
Doesn’t follow moving objects with her eyes by two to three months
Doesn’t grasp and hold objects by three months
Doesn’t smile at people by three months
Cannot support her head well at three months
Doesn’t reach for and grasp toys by three to four months
Doesn’t babble by three to four months
Doesn’t bring objects to her mouth by four months
Begins babbling, but doesn’t try to imitate any of your sounds by four months
Doesn’t push down with her legs when her feet are placed on a firm surface by four months

Crosses her eyes most of the time (Occasional crossing of the eyes is normal in these first months.)

Doesn’t pay attention to new faces, or seems very frightened by new faces or surroundings
Still has the tonic neck reflex at four to five months

Doesn’t babble by three to four months

Doesn’t reach for and grasp toys by three to four months

Doesn’t bring objects to her mouth by four months

Begins babbling, but doesn’t try to imitate any of your sounds by four months

Doesn’t push down with her legs when her feet are placed on a firm surface by four months

Crosses her eyes most of the time (Occasional crossing of the eyes is normal in these first months.)

Doesn’t pay attention to new faces, or seems very frightened by new faces or surroundings

Still has the tonic neck reflex at four to five months

7 Months

Movement

Rolls both ways (front to back, back to front)
Sits with, and then without, support of her hands
Supports her whole weight on her legs
Reaches with one hand
Transfers object from hand to hand
Uses raking grasp (not pincer)

Language Milestones

Responds to own name
Begins to respond to “no”
Distinguishes emotions by tone of voice
Responds to sound by making sounds
Uses voice to express joy and displeasure
Babbles chains of consonants

Cognitive Milestones

Finds partially hidden object
Explores with hands and mouth
Struggles to get objects that are out of reach

Social & Emotional Milestones

Enjoys social play
Interested in mirror images
Responds to other people’s expressions of emotion and appears joyful often

4 Years

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 & 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

Language Milestones

Understands the concepts of “same” and “different”
Has mastered some basic rules of grammar
Speaks in sentences of five to six words
Speaks clearly enough for strangers to understand
Tells stories

Hand & Finger Skills

Copies triangle and other geometric patterns
Draws person with body
Prints some letters
Dresses and undresses without assistance
Uses fork, spoon, and (sometimes) a table knife
Usually cares for own toilet needs

Language Milestones

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

Cognitive Milestones

Can count ten 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)

Visual and Hearing Milestones

Develops full color vision
Distance vision matures
Ability to track moving objects improves

Developmental Health Watch

Seems very stiff, with tight muscles
Seems very floppy, like a rag doll
Head still flops back when body is pulled up to a sitting position
Reaches with one hand only
Refuses to cuddle

Shows no affection for the person who cares for him

Doesn’t seem to enjoy being around people

One or both eyes consistently turn in or out

Persistent tearing, eye drainage, or sensitivity to light

Does not respond to sounds around him

Has difficulty getting objects to his mouth

Does not turn his head to locate sounds by four months

Doesn’t roll over in either direction (front to back or back to front) by five months

Seems inconsolable at night after five months

Doesn’t smile spontaneously by five months

Cannot sit with help by six months

Does not laugh or make squealing sounds by six months

Does not actively reach for objects by six to seven months

Doesn’t follow objects with both eyes at near (1 foot) [30 cm] and far (6 feet) [180 cm] ranges by seven months

Does not bear some weight on legs by seven months

Does not try to attract attention through actions by seven months

Does not babble by eight months

Shows no interest in games of peekaboo by eight months

Cognitive Milestones

Correctly names some colors
Understands the concept of counting and may know a few numbers
Approaches 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 concept of same/different
Engages in fantasy play

Social & Emotional

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
Imagines that many unfamiliar images may be “monsters”
Views self as a whole person involving body, mind, and feelings
Often cannot distinguish between fantasy and reality

Developmental Health Watch

Exhibits extremely fearful or timid behavior
Exhibits extremely aggressive behavior
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

Developmental Health Watch

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 his parents leave him

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” appropriately