

Your Child at 3 Years

Milestones matter! How your child plays, learns, speaks, acts, and moves offers important clues about his or her development. Check the milestones your child has reached by age 3. Take this with you and talk with your child's doctor at every visit about the milestones your child has reached and what to expect next.

What Most Children Do by this Age:

Social/Emotional

- ☒ Copies adults and friends
- ☒ Shows affection for friends without prompting
- ☒ Takes turns in games
- ☒ Shows concern for a crying friend
- ☒ Understands the idea of "mine" and "his" or "hers"
- ☒ Shows a wide range of emotions
- ☒ Separates easily from mom and dad
- ☒ May get upset with major changes in routine
- ☒ Dresses and undresses self

Language/Communication

- ☒ Follows instructions with 2 or 3 steps
- ☒ Can name most familiar things
- ☒ Understands words like "in," "on," and "under"
- ☒ Says first name, age, and sex
- ☒ Names a friend
- ☒ Says words like "I," "me," "we," and "you" and some plurals
- ☒ (cars, dogs, cats)
- ☒ Talks well enough for strangers to understand most of the time
- ☒ Carries on a conversation using 2 to 3 sentences

Cognitive (learning, thinking, problem-solving)

- ☒ Can work toys with buttons, levers, and moving parts
- ☒ Plays make-believe with dolls, animals, and people
- ☒ Does puzzles with 3 or 4 pieces
- ☒ Understands what "two" means
- ☒ Copies a circle with pencil or crayon
- ☒ Turns book pages one at a time
- ☒ Builds towers of more than 6 blocks
- ☒ Screws and unscrews jar lids or turns door handle

Movement/Physical Development

- ☒ Climbs well
- ☒ Runs easily
- ☒ Pedals a tricycle (3-wheel bike)
- ☒ Walks up and down stairs, one foot on each step

KNOW YOUR CHILD BEST

Act early if you have concerns about the way your child plays, learns, speaks, acts, or moves, or if your child:

- Is missing milestones
- Falls down a lot or has trouble with stairs
- Drools or has very unclear speech
- Can't work simple toys (such as peg boards, simple puzzles, turning handle)
- Doesn't speak in sentences
- Doesn't understand simple instructions
- Doesn't play pretend or make-believe
- Doesn't want to play with other children or with toys
- Doesn't make eye contact
- Loses skills he once had

Tell your child's doctor or nurse if you notice any of these signs of possible developmental delay and ask for a developmental screening.

DON'T WAIT.

Acting early can make a real difference

Help Your Child Learn and Grow

You can help your child learn and grow. Talk, read, sing, and play together every day. Below are some activities to enjoy with your 3-year-old child today.

- ☐ Go to play groups with your child or other places where there are other children, to encourage getting along with others.
- ☐ Work with your child to solve the problem when he is upset.
- ☐ Talk about your child's emotions. For example, say, "I can tell you feel mad because you threw the puzzle piece." Encourage your child to identify feelings in books.
- ☐ Set rules and limits for your child, and stick to them.
- ☐ If your child breaks a rule, give him a time out for 30 seconds to 1 minute in a chair or in his room. Praise your child for following the rules.
- ☐ Give your child instructions with 2 or 3 steps.
- ☐ For example, "Go to your room and get your shoes and coat."
- ☐ Read to your child every day. Ask your child to point to things in the pictures and repeat words after you.
- ☐ Give your child an "activity box" with paper, crayons, and colouring books. Colour and draw lines and shapes with your child.
- ☐ Play matching games. Ask your child to find objects in books or around the house that are the same.
- ☐ Play counting games. Count body parts, stairs, and other things you use or see every day.
- ☐ Hold your child's hand going up and down stairs. When she can go up and down easily, encourage her to use the railing.
- ☐ Play outside with your child. Go to the park or hiking trail. Allow your child to play freely and without structured activities.

Milestones adapted from CARING FOR YOUR BABY AND YOUNG CHILD: BIRTH TO AGE 5, Fifth Edition, edited by Steven Shelov and Tanya Remer Altmann © 1991, 1993, 1998, 2004, 2009 by the American Academy of Pediatrics and BRIGHT FUTURES: GUIDELINES FOR HEALTH SUPERVISION OF INFANTS, CHILDREN, AND ADOLESCENTS, Third Edition, edited by Joseph Hagan, Jr., Judith S. Shaw, and Paula M. Duncan, 2008, Elk Grove Village, IL: American Academy of Pediatrics via CDC (U.S) at <https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly/milestones/> adjusted for UK advice.

This milestone checklist is not a substitute for a standardised, validated developmental screening tool.

