



Developmental Milestones

The text that follows is from a brochure of the Early Intervention Project, an interagency effort between the Minnesota Departments of Health, Education and Human Services and local interagency early intervention committees.

“A Checklist for Growing Children

Here's an overview* of what to expect children to do between birth and age five. If you believe your child seems different, call for a developmental evaluation. Note: Premature infants tend to develop somewhat more slowly. Check with your doctor, if you have questions.

At 3 months, does your child:

- turn head towards bright colors and lights
- move eyes in same direction together
- recognize bottle or breast
- respond to loud sounds
- make fists with both hands
- grasp rattles or hair
- wiggle and kick with legs and arms
- lift head and chest while on stomach
- smile
- make cooing sounds

At 6 months, does your child:

- follow moving objects with eyes
- turn towards source of normal sound
- reach for objects and pick them up
- roll from stomach to back
- transfer objects from one hand to other
- play with toes
- help hold bottle during feeding

- recognize familiar faces
- babble

At 12 months, does your child:

- sit without support
- pull to a standing position
- crawl on hands and knees
- drink from cup
- enjoy peek-a-boo and patty-cake
- wave bye-bye
- hold out arms and legs while being dressed
- put objects into container
- stack two blocks
- have a 5-6 word vocabulary

At 18 months, does your child:

- like to pull, push and dump things
- follow simple directions ("Bring the ball")
- pull off shoes, socks and mittens
- like to look at pictures
- feed self
- make marks on paper with crayons
- use 8-10 words that are understood
- walk without help
- step off low object and keep balance

At 2 years, does your child:

- use 2-3 word sentences
- say names of toys
- recognize familiar pictures

- carry an object while walking
- feed self with spoon
- play alone and independently
- turn 2 or 3 pages at a time
- like to imitate parents
- identify hair, eyes, ears and nose by pointing
- build a tower of four blocks
- show affection

At 3 years, does your child:

- Walk up steps alternating feet
- ride a tricycle
- put on shoes
- open door
- turn one page at a time
- play with other children for a few minutes
- repeat common rhymes
- use 3-5 word sentences
- name at least one color correctly
- use toilet

At 4 years, does your child:

- balance on one foot 4-8 seconds
- jump from step
- dress and undress with little help
- cut straight with scissors
- wash hands alone
- play simple group games
- ask questions beginning, "What? Where? Who?"

- give reasonable answers to basic questions
- give first and last names
- show many emotions

At 5 years, does your child:

- skip using feet alternately
- catch a large ball
- bathe self
- dress alone
- speak clearly
- count five to ten objects
- draw a body with at least five parts
- print a few letters
- copy familiar shapes (square, circle, triangle)

*This checklist was originally printed in the Early Intervention Services brochure for the Martin County Special Education Cooperative in Fairmont, MN.

Not all kids are cut out to develop the same way. Some can't wait to get help. A little extra help now might make a difference later.

The story of Sandy

Sandy's mother suspected that her baby didn't have normal hearing. She didn't respond to voices or loud sounds. Although her family doctor couldn't find any abnormality in her ears, her parents took Sandy to an ear specialist where special testing showed a large hearing loss. Equipped with hearing aids, Sandy received special training in signing and language skills. At five years old, Sandy is speaking well. She goes to school with all of the other children from her neighborhood. Sandy's mom says, "If Sandy had not had the program as an infant, we would not have known how to work with her and those early months would have been lost. She would have been much more handicapped than she is."

The story of Michael and Matthew

When Matthew and Michael were born, their parents realized they would both need help. Matthew has spina bifida and Michael has cerebral palsy. With help from county and human services, the family received nursing and respite care in their home. Physical therapy was sometimes held in the backyard, with neighborhood kids taking part. The boys took community karate lessons to improve their motor skills, and they now attend a regular community preschool. Their mother says, "Recently a

new professional began working with the kids and said, 'I just can't believe how well they look and how functional they are.' Everyone who works with them comments on that. Not only was intervention at an early age important, but the support to our family has been crucial to their development."

The story of Danny

In the first few months Danny's mother realized he wasn't doing the same things her other two children had done at the same ages. She called the school district for information. A variety of professionals assessed Danny, then confirmed that he had a significant developmental delay - a condition where some babies develop skills more slowly than others. An individual educational plan was written and a special ed team came to their home once a week. They worked with Danny and his parents to teach him to sit in a high chair, to feed himself, to play and to develop skills similar to other children his age. His mother says, "I'm so glad we've been able to work and learn right along with him at home. In the beginning I felt alone and frightened, but now we've met other parents in the same situation and they've been very supportive."

The story of Molly

Molly is a child with Down's Syndrome. When she was two weeks old, she was enrolled in an infant stimulation program. During the weekly visits of an occupational therapist, Molly's mother learned many ways of working with Molly to improve her muscle movement and coordination. Now six years old, Molly is mainstreamed into a normal first grade class with only a little help. She is learning reading and math skills once thought impossible for a child with her handicap. Molly's mother comments, "I know that my child made remarkable progress because help was made available so early. I was taught things I never would have thought of that helped to improve Molly's speech and motor skills. I believe strongly that every young child with a disability and his/her family should be offered the kind of help we had."

The first step: screening

Not all babies do the same things at the same ages. If your child is not developing at the same rate as others or is not doing several of the activities on the checklist above, don't wait. Call your family doctor, medical clinic or the (local health department).

What services are available for young children and their families?

If your child is eligible, many early intervention resources can be found in your local community. When possible, these services are in the home or in community settings such as day care, early child family education or nursery schools, where parents can participate. Services can include: respite care, public health nursing services, physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech/language therapy, early childhood special education services, special equipment, family support activities and training for parents."