

Developmental Milestones: Your Child at 5 Years

What are developmental milestones?

Developmental milestones are skills most children achieve by a certain age. Developmental milestones include physical, social, emotional, cognitive, and communication skills that are appropriate for the child's age. Milestones give important clues about a child's health and well-being. Any child whose milestones are delayed should be evaluated by a health or developmental professional.

- **Social and emotional** milestones include how children learn about their own emotions and the emotions of others. These milestones also involve learning how to interact and play with other people.
- **Language and communication** milestones involve language, speech, and nonverbal communication (for example, hand gestures or facial expressions). These milestones include a baby's babbling, their first words, and their ability to listen to others and hold a conversation.
- **Cognitive (learning, thinking, problem-solving)** milestones are centered on a child's ability to think, learn, and solve problems. Cognitive milestones include an infant learning how to react to different facial expressions and a preschooler learning to say the alphabet.
- **Movement/physical development** involves both gross motor skills and fine motor skills. Gross motor skills are typically the first to develop. They include your child's ability to support their head, sit up, stand, crawl, and walk. Fine motor skills involve precise movements such as grasping a spoon, picking up small objects, and drawing.

As a parent or caregiver, you spend the most time with your child and know them the best. If your child is not meeting these age-related milestones, or if you think there could be a problem with the way your child plays, learns, speaks, or acts, it is important to tell your child's primary care provider so they can assess your child's development. Discuss these concerns with them at your child's 5-year well-child exam.

Here are the milestones to expect from your child based on what most children do at this age:

Social/emotional

- Wants to please friends
- Wants to be like friends
- More likely to agree with rules
- Likes to sing, dance, and act
- Shows concern and sympathy for others
- Is aware of gender
- Can tell what's real and what's make-believe
- Shows more independence (for example, may visit a next-door neighbor alone [adult supervision is still needed])
- Is sometimes demanding and sometimes very cooperative

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Language/communication

- Speaks very clearly
- Tells a simple story using full sentences
- Uses future tense; for example, "Grandma will be here."
- Says name and address

Cognitive (learning, thinking, problem-solving)

- Counts 10 or more things
- Can draw a person with at least 6 body parts
- Can print some letters or numbers
- Copies a triangle and other geometric shapes
- Knows about things used every day, like money and food

Movement/physical development

- Stands on one foot for 10 seconds or longer
- Hops; may be able to skip
- Can do a somersault
- Uses a fork and spoon and sometimes a table knife
- Can use the toilet independently
- Swings and climbs

Tell your child's doctor if you notice any signs of developmental delay for this age. Additional developmental evaluation and services for preschool and kindergarten-aged children are available through your local school district.

Resources and References:

<https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly/milestones/index.html>

<https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly/concerned.html>

<https://www.texasprojectfirst.org/PreschoolProg.html>