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## Important Milestones: Your Child By Three Years

CDC's milestones and parent tips have been updated and new checklist ages have been added (15 and 30 months). For more information about the recent updates to CDC's developmental milestones, please review the Pediatrics journal article [↗](#) and these important key points.

How your child plays, learns, speaks, acts, and moves offers important clues about your child's development. Developmental milestones are things most children (75% or more) can do by a certain age.

Check the milestones your child has reached by 3 years by completing a checklist with CDC's free [Milestone Tracker](#) mobile app, for [iOS](#) [↗](#) and [Android](#) [↗](#) devices, using the [Digital Online Checklist](#), or by [printing the checklist](#) [↗](#) [1 MB, 2 Pages, Print Only] below.

*"Learn the Signs. Act Early." materials are not a substitute for standardized, validated [developmental screening tools](#).*

## What most children do by this age:

### Social/Emotional Milestones

- Calms down within 10 minutes after you leave her, like at a childcare drop off [↗](#)
- Notices other children and joins them to play [↗](#)

### Language/Communication Milestones

- Talks with you in conversation using at least two back-and-forth exchanges [↗](#)
- Asks "who," "what," "where," or "why" questions, like "Where is mommy/daddy?" [↗](#)
- Says what action is happening in a picture or book when asked, like "running," "eating," or "playing" [↗](#)
- Says first name, when asked [↗](#)
- Talks well enough for others to understand, most of the time [↗](#)

### Cognitive Milestones (learning, thinking, problem-solving)

- Draws a circle, when you show him how [↗](#)
- Avoids touching hot objects, like a stove, when you warn her [↗](#)

### Download CDC's free Milestone Tracker App



Help your child grow and thrive with CDC's free [Milestone Tracker](#) app. [↗](#)

[cdc.gov/MilestoneTracker](https://cdc.gov/MilestoneTracker)



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### Concerned About Your Child's Development? Act Early.

**You know your child best.** Don't wait. If your child is not meeting one or more milestones, has lost skills he or she once had, or you have other concerns, act early. Talk with your child's doctor, share your concerns, and ask about developmental screening.

#### If you or the doctor are still concerned:

1. Ask for a referral to a specialist who can evaluate your child more; and
2. Call your state or territory's early intervention program to find out if your child can get

## Movement/Physical Development Milestones

- Strings items together, like large beads or macaroni 
- Puts on some clothes by himself, like loose pants or a jacket 
- Uses a fork 

services to help. Learn more and find the number at [cdc.gov/FindEI](https://www.cdc.gov/FindEI).

For more on how to help your child, visit [cdc.gov/Concerned](https://www.cdc.gov/Concerned).

## Other important things to share with the doctor...

- What are some things you and your child do together?
- What are some things your child likes to do?
- Is there anything your child does or does not do that concerns you?
- Has your child lost any skills he/she once had?
- Does your child have any special healthcare needs or was he/she born prematurely?



### Tips and Activities: What You Can Do for Your 3 year old



As your child's first teacher, you can help his or her learning and brain development. Try these simple tips and activities in a safe way. Talk with your child's doctor and teachers if you have questions or for more ideas on how to help your child's development.

- Encourage your child to solve her own problems with your support. Ask questions to help her understand the problem. Help her think of solutions, try one out, and try more if needed.
- Talk about your child's emotions and give him words to help him explain how he's feeling. Help your child manage stressful feelings by teaching him to take deep breaths, hug a favorite toy, or go to a quiet, safe place when he is upset.
- Set a few simple and clear rules that your child can follow, such as use gentle hands when playing. If he breaks a rule, show him what to do instead. Later, if your child follows the rule, recognize and congratulate him.

[Click here for more tips and activities](#)

### More Parenting Tips and Activities



- Read with your child. Ask questions, such as "What is happening in the picture?" and/or "What do you think will happen next?" When she gives you an answer, ask for more details.

- Play counting games. Count body parts, stairs, and other things you use or see every day. Children this age are starting to learn about numbers and counting.
- Help your child develop his language skills by speaking to him in longer sentences than his, using real words. Repeat what he says, for example, “need nana,” and then show how to use more “grown-up” words by saying, “I want a banana.”
- Let your child help with making meals. Give him simple tasks, such as washing fruits and vegetables or stirring.
- Give your child instructions with 2 or 3 steps. For example, “Go to your room and get your shoes and coat.”
- Limit screen time (TV, tablets, phones, etc.) to no more than 1 hour per day of a children’s program with an adult present. Don’t put any screens in your child’s bedroom. Children learn by talking, playing, and interacting with others.
- Teach your child simple songs and rhymes, such as “Itsy Bitsy Spider” or “Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star.”
- Give your child an “activity box” with paper, crayons, and coloring books. Color and draw lines and shapes with your child.
- Encourage your child to play with other children. This helps him learn the value of friendship and how to get along with others.
- Let your child play with playdough by squishing it, pressing it, pinching it, and making balls in different colors. This builds her hand and finger muscles for writing, buttoning, and cutting.
- Give your child simple, healthy food choices. For example, at snack time ask, “Do you want carrots or an apple?”
- Play games to teach opposites. Get down low and say, “I am small.” Then stand up and say, “I am big.” Do the same thing for fast/slow, quiet/loud.
- Play matching games. Ask your child to find objects in books or around the house that are the same.
- Play outside with your child. Go to the park or a walking trail. Allow your child plenty of time to choose what and how she wants to play. Join her and follow her lead.
- Help your child be ready for new places and meeting new people. For example, you can read stories or role play (pretend play) about new places or things to help him feel more comfortable.
- Encourage your child to tell you her name and age.

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