



3 Things to Do to Help Your Child With Developmental Delays



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It's exciting to see kids explore new things and learn about the world. A lot of growth happens in kids' first few years of life. And when your child has **developmental delays**, it can be easy to feel like you constantly have to make up for lost time.

Even if your child is working with **early intervention** to develop skills, you may wonder what else you could be doing to help. The good news is that there are some small, simple things you can do to help your child make progress.

1. Keep playing.

There are many fun activities that can help build skills. Everyday activities like playing with play-dough, **slime**, or putty can **help build fine motor skills**. Even typical kid play, like digging in the dirt or dancing, can **help build gross motor skills**.

Just hanging out at the local playground with other kids can help, too. Swinging, sliding, climbing, and giggling with other kids **helps develop important skills**. And it's more than just physical skills. On the playground, kids learn social skills—like how to follow rules, share, and take turns.

2. Show and tell.

Kids with developmental delays may have more trouble than other kids their age understanding what you say or following directions. That can be **frustrating for your child**—and for you.

Put together picture schedules for your home. They can be as simple as charts that break down the steps of everyday tasks. Or they can show your daily routine. (**Download and print picture charts** for brushing teeth, washing hands, getting dressed, plus other **picture schedules** to customize for your family.)

When you give directions out loud, make them simple and to the point. And explore **ways to make sure your child can follow them**.

3. Keep in touch.

If your child is in **early intervention**, check in with the service coordinator regularly. That person keeps in touch with all the people working with your child and can be your point of contact for questions. That way you don't have to track down all the providers and talk to them one-on-one.

Also, keep talking with your health care provider or whoever sees your child for medical checkups. That may be a regular doctor, a health care clinic, or a hospital. (If your family doesn't have health care, **visit this government website** to learn about free or low-cost health insurance options.)

These professionals know what's typical for young kids because they see them every day. They can continue to rule out other things that can get in the way of development, like hearing loss or vision problems. They can also update you on which skills are appropriate as your child gets older.

When your child has developmental delays, it may be hard to watch other kids do things before your child does. But that doesn't mean your child can't do fun and exciting things. Learn more about **how kids develop learning and thinking skills**. And **watch one parent's "pep talk"** about how to handle the tough stuff.

Key takeaways

- Kids with developmental delays often have trouble following directions.

- Keep playing, and keep directions simple and to the point.
- Your service coordinator or health care provider can help you understand your child's progress and next steps.

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