



Child Development Milestones – 3 years

The majority of children will achieve these milestones by the time they turn 3 years. All children develop at different rates. Some children are slower than others (developmentally delayed) but catch up with time. Other children, however, may have an underlying problem that causes their delayed development, and they may not catch up. It is important for these children to get as much treatment (early intervention) as possible. So if you are concerned about any aspect of your child’s development, see your child health nurse or doctor for help without delay. If in doubt, it is better to have your concerns checked than to ‘wait and see’.

✓ An average child can...	✓ Signs of possible problems include...
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Gross motor

<input type="checkbox"/> Walk heel-to-toe	
<input type="checkbox"/> Stand on one leg	<input type="checkbox"/> Unsteady balance – cannot balance on one foot
<input type="checkbox"/> Jump off a step, both feet together	
<input type="checkbox"/> Climb up stairs, one foot at a time	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Weakness, poor quality movement (e.g. clumsy, falls often)

Fine motor

<input type="checkbox"/> Copy (draw) circle, cross, horizontal stroke	<input type="checkbox"/> Unable to copy (draw) lines, crosses, circles
<input type="checkbox"/> Thread six beads	
<input type="checkbox"/> Build tower of eight or more blocks	
<input type="checkbox"/> Use scissors to cut along a line	<input type="checkbox"/> No ability with scissors (although ability can depend on experience)
<input type="checkbox"/> Use fork and spoon	<input type="checkbox"/> Unable to use cutlery
<input type="checkbox"/> Undo button	<input type="checkbox"/> Unable to undo button

Talking and understanding

<input type="checkbox"/> Name objects and body parts	
<input type="checkbox"/> Talk without just repeating what you say	<input type="checkbox"/> Persistent copying in talking (such as repeating parts of movies, etc.)
<input type="checkbox"/> Be understood almost all of the time	<input type="checkbox"/> Mostly can't be understood
<input type="checkbox"/> Use different types of words correctly	<input type="checkbox"/> Limited grammar or vocabulary
<input type="checkbox"/> Define things by use (house, key, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/> Limited content, interests or variation in the language
<input type="checkbox"/> Give first name	
<input type="checkbox"/> Follow three-step instructions	<input type="checkbox"/> Can't follow a 2-3 step instructions
<input type="checkbox"/> Identify two colours	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Still need to talk to them in simplified, 'baby' language





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✓ An average child can...	✓ Signs of possible problems include...
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Social

<input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrate clear, imaginative play involving people	
<input type="checkbox"/> Wash and dry hands	
<input type="checkbox"/> Put on clothing	<input type="checkbox"/> No interest in learning how to dress self
<input type="checkbox"/> Play interactive games	
<input type="checkbox"/> Give first name on request	<input type="checkbox"/> No awareness/response to name
<input type="checkbox"/> Use fork and spoon together at the table	<input type="checkbox"/> No interest in learning how to feed self
<input type="checkbox"/> Name own sex	<input type="checkbox"/> Unable to name own sex
<input type="checkbox"/> Play with other children, with play beginning to interact around common interests. Turn-taking and sharing is beginning	<input type="checkbox"/> No interest in developing interactive play skills with other children
<input type="checkbox"/> Separate from parents without crying	
<input type="checkbox"/> Can describe simple feelings of self – like happy, sad	<input type="checkbox"/> No apparent awareness of own feelings
	<input type="checkbox"/> No interest in helping in social/household activities
	<input type="checkbox"/> Play is mechanical and repetitive with little change, imagination or human content

Intellectual

<input type="checkbox"/> Play includes imaginary objects	<input type="checkbox"/> Play shows little imagination
<input type="checkbox"/> Draw a face with crude features	<input type="checkbox"/> No understanding of using a pencil beyond random scribble
<input type="checkbox"/> Recognise a number	
<input type="checkbox"/> Repeat back 2-3 numbers	<input type="checkbox"/> No understanding of what numbers mean beyond copying counting
<input type="checkbox"/> Understand concepts of bigger and smaller	
<input type="checkbox"/> Recognise money	<input type="checkbox"/> No awareness of money (although this depends on experience)

If you have any concerns about your child's development, see your child health nurse or GP.

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