

The Milestones

Growth and Development from Birth to Three Years

One of the most exciting things about being a parent is seeing your child grow and learn new things. Watching your child walk or talk for the first time is truly wonderful!



Keeping track of your child's progress will help you see if he or she is developing typically. 'Typical' includes a huge range. The stages described here are guidelines only, not a set of rules. If you have any concerns, talk to your public health nurse or family doctor.

Birth to Three Months

Your Child's Body

- Raises head when lying on tummy.
- Eyes follow moving objects.
- Closer to three months, can roll from tummy or back, to side.

Your Child's Feelings

- Crying is his main way of communicating.
- Coos, chuckles, and gurgles happily when given attention.
- Smiles at people who directly smile and talk to him.

Your Child's Mind

- Recognizes parents' voices, right from birth.
- Responds to the sound of a bell or rattle.
- Observes surroundings.
- Watches and plays with hands.
- Uses his mouth to feel and identify things.

Three Months to Six Months

Your Child's Body

- Lifts her head and pulls to sitting position when her hands are held.
- Sits with slight support.

Your Child's Feelings

- Closer to six months, he begins to relate to other people by imitating them e.g., playing 'pat-a-cake'.

Your Child's Mind

- Starts to recognize faces and begins to show a preference for familiar people.
- If a toy is moved from sight, thinks it no longer exists.

Six Months to One Year

Your Child's Body

- Throws toys on purpose.
- Can creep on belly and then crawl - either on hands and knees, hands and feet, or by scooting along on her bottom.
- When he first pulls himself up to stand, he might need help getting down.
- Takes first steps and walks alone sometime between eight and eighteen months of age.

Your Child's Feelings

- Is thrilled to be crawling and walking.
- Loves being the centre of attention.
- Gets scared around strangers - cries when parents leave.
- With all the exciting changes in his life, he may have trouble sleeping.

Your Child's Mind

- Babbles - might say "Mama" or "Dada."
- Starts to recognize her name when spoken.

- Loves playing ‘peekaboo’ - begins recognizing that when people or things move from sight, they still exist and will come back.
- Is learning about ‘in’ - placing objects inside a container.
- Is learning about ‘letting go’. For example, dropping things off the high chair.

One Year to Eighteen Months

Your Child’s Body

- Has lots of energy - wants to explore everything!
- Can feed herself using her fingers or a spoon.
- Can drink from a cup.
- May climb out of his crib.

Your Child’s Feelings

- Gets frustrated easily.
- Cries less but whines more.
- Is often not sociable with other children - may hit, push or grab them.
- Impatient - wants it now!
- Favourite word is “No.”
- May want a special toy or blanket with him all the time.

Your Child’s Mind

- Has a short memory - may keep turning the knobs on the stereo again and again, even if you tell him not to.
- May do the opposite of what you tell her to do.
- Loves shutting doors, closing books, being chased and caught.
- Those who are starting to talk can speak in short phrases like “More cookie” or “Where mama go?”
- Understands much more than she can say.

Eighteen Months to Three Years

Your Child’s Body

- Can walk up and down stairs (but not with alternate feet).
- Can learn to ride a tricycle.
- Can run, climb, kick, and throw a ball.
- Loves dancing to music.
- Gradually uses one hand more than the other.

Your Child’s Feelings

- Sometimes gets frustrated because he wants to do more than he is able to do, which may cause tantrums.

- Insists on doing everything ‘myself’, but needs help in making choices.
- Starts trying to be the boss but needs to know that parents set limits.
- Has a lot of fears - might have nightmares.
- Likes other children’s company, although usually plays separately.
- Does not like sharing toys.

Your Child’s Mind

- Is developing an imagination - likes to play doctor with dolls or police with cars.
- Sometimes confuses the truth with what he wishes were true. For example, “The cat made me spill it!”
- Asks ‘why’ a lot.
- Likes things whole - might get upset if you cut up her pancakes or tear a page out of her pad of paper.
- Needs to figure things out on his own.
- Loves guessing games.

This BC HealthFile has presented some ideas to help you with the challenge of parenting. There are other topics in the child development series that you may also find helpful. The BC HealthFiles link and this series can be found on the BC HealthGuide Web site at:

www.bchealthguide.org/healthfiles/index.stm



For more BC HealthFile topics visit www.bchealthguide.org/healthfiles/index.stm, or visit your local public health unit.

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