

Normal Development: Newborn

Here's what you might see your baby doing between the ages of 0 and 2 weeks old.

Reflexes

- Reflexive actions: crying, grasping, yawning, swallowing, sucking, blinking, coughing, gagging, sneezing.
- Grasps whatever is placed in hand.
- Sucks whatever is placed in mouth.
- Is startled by sudden noises and movements.

Movement

- Jerky, mostly uncontrolled motions.
- Waves arms, kicks legs, wiggles and squirms.
- Cannot turn body or support head without assistance.
- Cannot sit without support.
- May turn head from side to side while lying on back.

Sleep/Wakefulness

- Usually sleeps from 17 to 20 hours per day.
- Cries and fusses about 1 to 3 hours per day.
- Is alert and quiet about 2 to 3 hours per day.

Vision

- Cannot focus clearly.
- Sees best at 8 and 10 inches.

Interactive Behaviors and Senses

- Smiles spontaneously and unselectively.
- Discriminates between some smells.
- Begins to turn in direction of sound.
- Begins to distinguish the human voice from other sounds.
- Is more sensitive to high-pitched voices, especially mother's voice.
- Cries a lot.
- Makes tiny gurgling sounds when content.
- Senses parent's emotional state from the touch.
- Show preference for the human face.

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Normal Development: 12 Months Old

Here's what you might see your baby doing between 12 months and 15 months

Daily Activities

- Usually follows a definite daily pattern.
- Opens cabinets, pulls tablecloths.
- Usually examines an object before putting into mouth.
- Likes to feed self.

Language Development

- Expresses complete thought with single syllable (“da” means “I want that”).
- Shows definite understanding of a few simple words.
- Utters a few words (“mama”, “dada”, “ball”, “dog”).
- Loves rhythms and rhymes.

Emotional and Behavioral Development

- Shows more negativism (may resist naps, refuse certain foods, throw occasional tantrums).
- Continues to prefer people to toys.
- Has developed a deep attachment to a few familiar people.
- Love to make parents laugh.
- Shows somewhat less “stranger” anxiety.
- May give up something on request.
- Displays a sense of humor.

Motor Skills

- Usually walks with assistance; may walk without assistance.
- Crawls rapidly.
- Stands alone.
- Seats self on floor.

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Normal Development: 2 Years Old

Physical Development

- Is constantly in motion.
- Tires easily.
- Runs and climbs.
- Walks up and down stairs alone.
- Begins to tiptoe.
- Builds a tower of 3 to 5 blocks.
- Progresses from random scribbling to somewhat more controlled movements.

Emotional Development

- Is in the “terrible twos”; gets upset and impatient easily.
- Shows anger by crying or striking out.
- Becomes frustrated when not understood.
- Wants own way.
- May assert self by saying “no”.
- Reverts to baby behaviors at times.
- Gets upset when daily routine changes.
- Shows sharp mood changes.

Social Development

- Imitates with considerable realism
- Becomes more interested in brothers and sisters.
- Knows gender.
- May have an imaginary playmate.
- Enjoys playing among, not with, other children.
- Does not share.
- Claims everything is “mine”.
- May scratch, hit, bite and push other children.

Mental Development

- Dramatically increases interest in language.
- Shows frustration if not understood.
- Uses child grammar.
- Uses three-to-five-word phrases by end of second year.
- Understands more words than can speak.
- Is in the “do it myself” stage.
- Cannot be reasoned with much of the time.
- Cannot choose between alternatives.

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Normal Development: 3 Years Old

Physical Development

- Jumps, gallops, tiptoes, runs smoothly.
- Can walk backwards a long distance.
- May stumble and fall frequently.
- Rides a tricycle.
- Pours from a pitcher or milk carton using both hands.
- Undresses self, but needs help with dressing.
- Buttons and unbuttons large buttons.
- Uses crayons with somewhat more control.
- Most primary teeth have erupted.

Emotional Development

- Becoming more relaxed and flexible.
- Still cries and hits at times.
- Quickly alternates between shyness and exuberance.
- May show fear of unfamiliar objects or activities.
- May want to be a baby at times.
- Begins to talk about dreams.

Social Development

- Is keenly interested family activities.
- Idolizes parents.
- Seeks approval from adults.
- Tests limits constantly.
- Often prefers to play alone.
- May have an imaginary playmate.
- Shares and takes turns occasionally.
- Quarrels with other children.

Mental Development

- Develops more stable concepts of self.
- Speaks about 1,000 words.
- Begins to use pronouns in speech.
- Grasps some grammatical principles.
- Delights in hearing stories over and over again.
- Loves learning short rhymes and songs.
- May match or identify primary colors.
- Enjoys imaginative and imitative play.
- Can assume some very simple responsibilities.
- Puts toys away with adult help.
- Has attention span of no more than a few minutes.
- Can choose between alternatives.

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Normal Development: 4 Years Old

Physical Development

- Hops, runs, skips, climbs with increasing skills.
- Tires easily.
- Is accident prone.
- Enjoys making loud noises, but is frightened by unexpected sounds.
- Toilets independently.
- Makes designs and draws recognizable objects.
- Manipulates blunt scissors.
- Dresses self (with exception of shoes).
- Small muscle control lags behind large muscle control.

Emotional Development

- Regresses to baby behavior periodically.
- Shows new fears (becoming aware of more dangers).
- Has a penchant for silliness.

Social Development

- Refers to parents as final authority.
- Continues to test parental limits.
- Uses “naughty” words to observe reactions.
- Is ready for group activities.
- Talks “with” another child, but does not listen to what other child says.
- Tattles and name calls.
- Is more aware of sex role differences.
- Imitates adult activities.

Mental Development

- Is more likely to solve problems through words than aggressive action.
- Has a vocabulary of about 1,500 – 2,000 words.
- Speaks in 4-to-5-word sentences.
- Fancies funny, exaggerated stories.
- Can count to 5.
- Identifies some shapes.
- Begins to understand some concepts of time (yesterday, today, tomorrow).
- Asks endless “why” questions.
- Usually, can put toys and materials away without adult assistance.
- Insists on finishing an activity or project.
- Likes helping with small tasks.
- Begins to know the difference between right and wrong.
- Shows growing ability to distinguish between honesty and dishonesty.
- Tell tall tales, but cannot always distinguish between honesty and dishonesty.
- Believes the only viewpoint is his or her own.

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Normal Development: 5 Years Old

Physical Development

- Begins to lose primary (baby) teeth.
- Displays left or right handedness.
- Builds elaborate structures.
- Tires easily.
- Bathes, eats, dresses, toilets independently.
- Begins to participate in semi-structured games.
- Enjoys active games and movement.
- Enjoys playing noisy rhythm instruments.
- Is curious about reproduction and birth.

Emotional Development

- Begins to express more feelings in words.
- Embarrasses easily, and cannot yet laugh at self.
- Feelings about death appear.
- Shows guilt over misbehavior.
- Likes independence.
- Is serious and dependable.

Social Development

- Submits to more rules and regulations.
- May tattle, name-call, hit and shove at times.
- Distinguishes between sex roles.
- Cooperates in simple group tasks.
- Likes to please adults.
- Takes turns during playing and speaking.
- Gets along comfortably with other children.
- Is keenly interested in family activities.

Mental Development

- Begins to recognize letters and words.
- Sustains activities over longer periods of time.
- Has developed an overall image of self.
- Crave facts.
- Names simple colors.
- Understand left and right on self.
- Has a vocabulary of about 2,000 – 2,500 words.
- Can help with easy, household chores.
- Can learn address and phone number.
- Can think some things through.
- Counts to 10.
- Begins to understand concept of opposites.
- Can speak in sentences of 6 to 8 words.

- Identifies coins.

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Normal Development: 6 Years Old

Physical Development

- Loves active play but may tire easily.
- Can be reckless (does not understand dangers completely).
- Is still improving basic motor skills.
- Is still not well coordinated.
- Begins to learn some specific sports skills like batting a ball.
- Dawdles much of the time.
- Is fascinated with the subject of teeth.
- May become a more finicky eater.
- Uses crayons and paints with some sill, but has difficulty writing and cutting.
- May resist baths.
- Permanent teeth erupting, both front teeth or molars.

Emotional Development

- May have unpredictable mood swings.
- Is quite sensitive to criticism.
- Has a problem admitting mistakes.
- Feels quite guilty about mistakes.

Social Development

- Evaluates self and friends.
- Begins to impose rules on play activities.
- Cooperates with other children with some difficulty.
- Has difficulty considering the feelings of others.
- Values independence.

Mental Development

- Likes taking responsibility for simple household chores.
- Likes to make simple decisions.
- Counts to 100.
- Asks endless "how-what-when-where-why" questions.
- Continues to refine concepts of shape, space, time, color and numbers.
- Begins to understand the difference between intentional and accidental.
- Begins to understand differences of opinion.
- Still has a short attention span (about 15 minutes maximum).
- Enjoys dramatic play.

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Normal Development: 7 Years Old

Physical Development

- Still has better large muscle than small muscle coordination.
- Rides a bicycle.
- Begins to alternate rigorous and restful activities independently.
- Favors competitive games.
- Has more refined eye-hand coordination.
- May ask questions with subject teeth.
- Still preoccupied with subject of teeth.

Emotional Development

- Becomes better at expressing negative feelings through language.
- May blame another for own mistakes.

Social Development

- Plays with boys and girls together.
- Usually has a best friend of the same sex.
- Shows growing concern about popularity among peers.
- Seeks approval of peers as well as adults.
- Takes it upon self to enforce rules.
- Tattles on other children perceived to be misbehaving.
- Tends to be quite critical.
- Begins to look for role-models.

Mental Development

- Experiences rapid language development.
- Wants to be "first," "best," "perfect," "correct," in everything.
- Is greatly concerned with right and wrong.
- Still has difficulty with the concepts of honesty and dishonesty.
- Begins to use logical reasoning to solve problems.
- Continues to enjoy dramatic play.

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Normal Development: 8 years Old

Physical Development

- Continues to be accident prone, especially on the playground.
- Has more control over small muscles, and therefor writes and draws with more skill.
- Displays a casual attitude toward clothing and appearance.
- Seems to be all hands and arms.
- May agonize over height and weight.
- Seems to possess boundless energy.

Emotional Development

- Begins to realize others experience similar feelings of anger, fear, sadness.
- Is easily embarrassed.
- Becomes discouraged easily.
- Is often self-deprecating.

Social Development

- Can be argumentative and bossy.
- Can also be quite lovable and responsive.
- Show increasing ability to understand the needs and opinions of others.
- Is preoccupied with finding compatible friends.
- Especially like to belong to informal “clubs” formed by children themselves.
- Also likes to belong to more structure adult-led groups such as Scouts.
- Beings to display a sense of loyalty.
- Enjoys secrets.
- Shows some hostility toward the opposite sex.
- No longer wants to assist in household chores.

Mental Development

- Is often Idealistic.
- Is keenly interested in projects and collections.
- Is proud of completing tasks.
- Resists adult guidance at times.

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Normal Development: 9 Years Old

Physical Development

- Acquires greater small muscle coordination.
- Has increasing dexterity.
- Favors active, highly-charged games and sports.
- Wants to excel in sports and recreational skills.
- Becomes more interested in clothing and appearance.
- Laughs at bathroom humor.

Emotional Development

- Becomes self-absorbed and introspective.
- Tends to be critical of self.
- Takes comfort in knowing others experience similar troubling feelings.

Social Development

- Has ideas and interests independent from parents.
- Does not like anything "different".
- Wants to talk, dress, and act just like friends.
- Is involved in informal clubs and small groups of the same sex.
- Begins to just sit and talk with friends.

Mental Development

- Uses reference books with increasing skill.
- Becomes immersed in a hobby or project, then drops it for another.
- May be a perfectionist.
- Generally, follows instructions.
- Is developing personal standards of right and wrong.
- Is highly concerned about fairness.

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Normal Development: 10 Years Old

Physical Development

- Physical growth and development varies enormously among this age group.
- Is energetic and spirited.
- Is usually awkward.
- Strives to be physically fit.
- Is fascinated with how the body works.
- May be curious about drugs, alcohol, and tobacco.
- Continues to revel in bathroom humor.

Emotional Development

- Fluctuates between dependent child and independent pre-teen.
- Becomes increasingly self-conscious.

Social Development

- Seeks approval for being "good" from significant people.
- Becomes preoccupied with the opposite sex.
- Relates to peer group intensely and abides by group decisions.
- Succumbs to peer pressure more readily.
- Does not want to be "different".
- Continues to participate in small groups of same sex.
- Confides constantly in best friend.
- Can be fickle.

Mental Development

- Is eager to learn and master new skills.
- Is proud of doing things well.
- Is concerned about personal capabilities.
- Has internalized standards of right and wrong to some degree.

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Normal Development: 11 Years Old

Physical Development

- May experience pubescent growth spurt if female (usually a year or two later for males).
- May tire easily and appear lazy (growth spurt drains energy).
- Is preoccupied with and self-conscious about appearance.
- May have an appetite that fluctuates sharply.
- Enjoys observing or participating in competitive sports.
- Is keenly interested in learning about body changes.
- May be curious about drugs, alcohol and tobacco.

Emotional Development

- May be experiencing sudden, dramatic, emotional changes associated with puberty.
- Vacillates between maturity one moment, immaturity the next moment.
- Tends to conceal feelings.
- Is hard on self and ultrasensitive to criticism.

Social Development

- Wants parental assistance, but may resist when offered.
- Is critical of parents.
- Is concerned with prestige and popularity.
- Likes to belong to a group and be like others.
- Becomes quite faddish.
- Spends about twice as much time on weekends with friends as with parents.
- Friendships may change due to different levels of maturity.
- Is acutely aware of the opposite sex.

Mental Development

- Has an increasing attention and concentration span.
- Strives to succeed.
- Has strong opinions.
- Begins to understand the motives behind the behavior.

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