

Child Development

Child development is the path of growing up, involving learning and mastering certain skills or tasks, referred to as “developmental milestones.” Explore the chart below to understand what milestones your child should reach at each age and the key parent tasks that can help them get there.

	Birth → 18 Months	18 Months → 3 Years
CHILD TASKS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To feel loved & worthy of being cared for • To bond with caregivers • To believe their needs are important • To trust their environment • To explore their world 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To become more independent • To separate & individuate from parent with “no” • To become comfortable saying things are “mine” to define self • To start identifying feelings & expressing them in appropriate ways • To continue to explore their world
MILESTONES / WHAT'S GOING ON	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning to smile, turn over, sit, crawl, climb, stand & walk; saying first words • Dependent on parents for everything • Do not know they are separate from parents • Get their sense of “self” from caretakers’ feelings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning to walk on own, drink from cup, say up to 15 words, point to body parts, use the toilet; talk, joke, & sing • Very active • Torn between independence & insecurity • Frequent tantrums • Easily frustrated • Refusing to share • At 2 or so, ready for play with peers & nursery school
PARENTING TASKS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give calm continual care; respond, hold & cuddle when child cries to build trust • Establish schedules/routines to give sense of predictability & security • Give positive, warm non-verbal & verbal attention in spite of his/her not understanding yet 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep physically safe; baby-proof • Encourage exploring • Know that “no” is the start of individuation • Choose your battles; let go • Tolerate “selfish” behavior so they can know “owning” • Accept positive & negative feelings; acknowledge feelings • Offer choices • Try to say more “yesses” • Set limits on unsafe behaviors
PARENTING CHALLENGES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feeling helpless & frustrated when trying to understand baby’ cries, needs & wants, fear of separating • Example: Separation anxiety/ fears strangers @ 7-9 months 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Losing patience in response to toddler’s “NOs” (may say “no” even when they mean “yes”) • Tolerating tantrums & toddler’s refusing to share • Trying to establish good boundaries, such as helping child sleep in own bed

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	4 Years → 5 Years	6 Years → 11 Years
CHILD TASKS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To continue exploring and learning about their world To learn to use their power To take initiative To become more well-behaved socially To start to learn that there are consequences to their acts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To develop mastery of skills & self-control To develop intellectual curiosity To learn about rules & internalize them; learn responsibility To acquire best friends (may have an “enemy”) To start to see from others’ points of view To select same gender role-models To develop ability to reason, problem-solve & cooperate To learn social skills To prepare to be teenage
MILESTONES / WHAT’S GOING ON	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learning to hop, somersault, climb, swing, skip; talks in several word sentences; use toilet without help; undresses & dresses; name some colors; are ready for preschool Very active; enjoys new activities Curious about the world; have lots of questions Learning difference between reality and fantasy Enjoy fantasy & pretend play Want to be in charge & do it “all by myself” Want playdates & friends Learns to accept rules 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attending school & learning to read & write; acquiring social skills (reading cues, joining play, hosting playdates, learning sportsmanship) May be physically awkward; developing small muscles; acquiring permanent teeth Managing their emotions better Are more self-conscious May use back-talk Want to win or be first May fear death, failure, rejection, peer pressure Spend less time with parents Attention span increases Learn about money
PARENTING TASKS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allow your child the space to explore Give information, correct misinformation, answer questions, Use positive & negative consequences to teach cause and effect Set limits calmly & fairly Help learn difference between fantasy & reality Encourage peer relationships Give chances to make decisions to give them a sense of power and control 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage learning new skills & doing new activities Encourage (& help) finishing tasks Praise efforts for trying Answer kids’ questions honestly Allow & help them to develop interests and talents; Have realistic expectations; don’t expect perfection Set clear, fair rules Give warnings of consequences to help learning cause & effect Encourage problem-solving (What can you do differently next time?) Assign chores to build sense of family and of responsibility
PARENTING CHALLENGES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Controlling responses to their high activity, defiance, saying “no” a lot; refusing parents’ rules Tolerating wanting to “do it myself” (& the messes that most likely occur!) Being patient with the “whys,” constant questions & challenges Helping your child cope with normal losses (pets, grandparents) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tolerating all the questions Setting limits without anger when they test limits or break rules Balancing “screen time” with other activities Encouraging family values in the face of TV content (acts of aggression, poor role-models) Encouraging physical activity and healthy eating choices