



The Important Role of Educators in Monitoring Healthy Development

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Learn the Signs.
Act Early.



Objectives

- Why tracking each child's developmental milestones is important and how educators can help.
- Understand the role of monitoring and screening in promoting healthy childhood development.
- Identify tools for assisting parents in monitoring their child's development.



What is Developmental Monitoring?

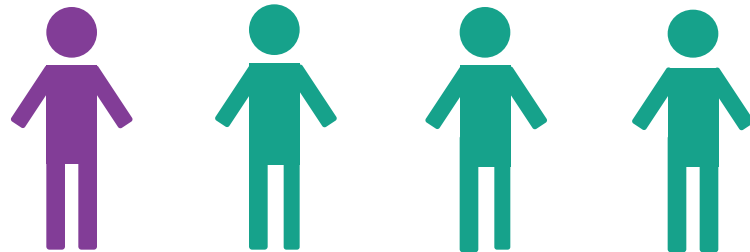
- A structured way to track a child's physical, mental, social, and emotional well-being
- Happens consistently over time
- Also known as “*developmental surveillance*”



Why is it important?

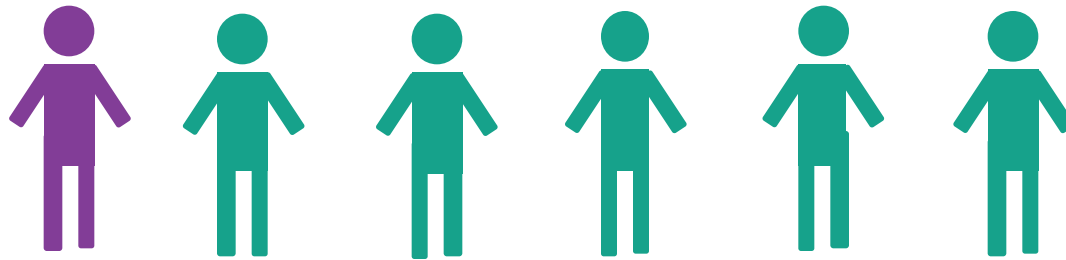
- Developmental Disabilities are common
- Children at risk
 - As many as 1 in 4 kids below 5 years are at moderate to high risk for delays (e.g., developmental, behavioral social)

(Data Resource Center OR Health & Sciences Univ. MCHB, HRSA 2011/2012)



Importance Cont'd

- CDC estimates for children 3-17 years
 - 1 in 6 has a Developmental Disability
- (Boyle et al., Pediatrics 2011)



Why is it Important?

- Many children with developmental disabilities are not identified until after entering school
- Early intervention can have a significant positive impact on a child's outcome
 - Critical period of brain development
 - Effects on:
 - Health
 - Mental health/behavior
 - Education
 - Child welfare



Who Can Conduct Developmental Monitoring?

- AAP (American Academy of Physicians) recommends that developmental surveillance/monitoring be incorporated at every well-child visit
- Parents, early care educators and healthcare providers working in partnership



Tools You Can Use To Perform Developmental Monitoring

Learn the Signs. Act Early.

CDC's National Center on Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities

- LTSAE is a health education program designed to emphasize the importance of early identification of developmental concerns.
- Promotes awareness of:
 - Healthy developmental milestones
 - Importance of tracking development
 - Importance of acting early if there are concerns.



Birth to 5: Watch Me Thrive

- US Department of Education Initiative to promote:
 - Celebrating Milestones
 - Promoting Universal Screening.
 - Identifying Possible Delays and Challenges Early.



Developmental “Milestones”

- Behaviors that most children can do by a certain age
- Act as a marker along the course of typical development
- Note how children play, learn, speak and act at a certain age
- **Remember all children develop at their own pace and some will reach certain milestones slightly late or early**

Welcome to *Milestones in Action* - a FREE library of photos and videos of developmental milestones.



2 months



4 months



6 months



9 months



1 year

Milestone Domains

- Social/emotional
- Language/communication
- Cognitive
- Motor

Very important to attend to all domains



18 months

- Social
 - Simple pretend and imitation, explores alone with parent nearby
- Language
 - Several single words, points to show he wants something
- Cognitive
 - Know how ordinary things are used, scribbles
- Motor
 - Walks alone, drinks from cup, eats with spoon

CONCERNS:

Doesn't follow simple instructions

Doesn't use 2-word phrases

Doesn't copy words or actions



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2 Years

- Social
 - Plays mainly beside other children
- Language
 - 2-4 word sentences, 50 word vocabulary
- Cognitive
 - Follows 2-step directions
- Motor
 - Kicks a ball, begins to run

CONCERNS:

Doesn't follow simple instructions

Doesn't use 2-word phrases

Doesn't copy words or actions



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3 Years - Shows concern for a crying friend



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U.S. Department of Health
and Human Services

Centers for Disease
Control and Prevention

[cdc.gov/Milestones](https://www.cdc.gov/Milestones)

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3 Years

- Social
 - Shows concern for a crying friend
- Language
 - Says name, age & gender; uses more than 200 words
- Cognitive
 - Does puzzles with 3-4 pieces, turns door handle
- Motor
 - Climbs well, rides tricycle



CONCERNS:

Doesn't speak in sentences

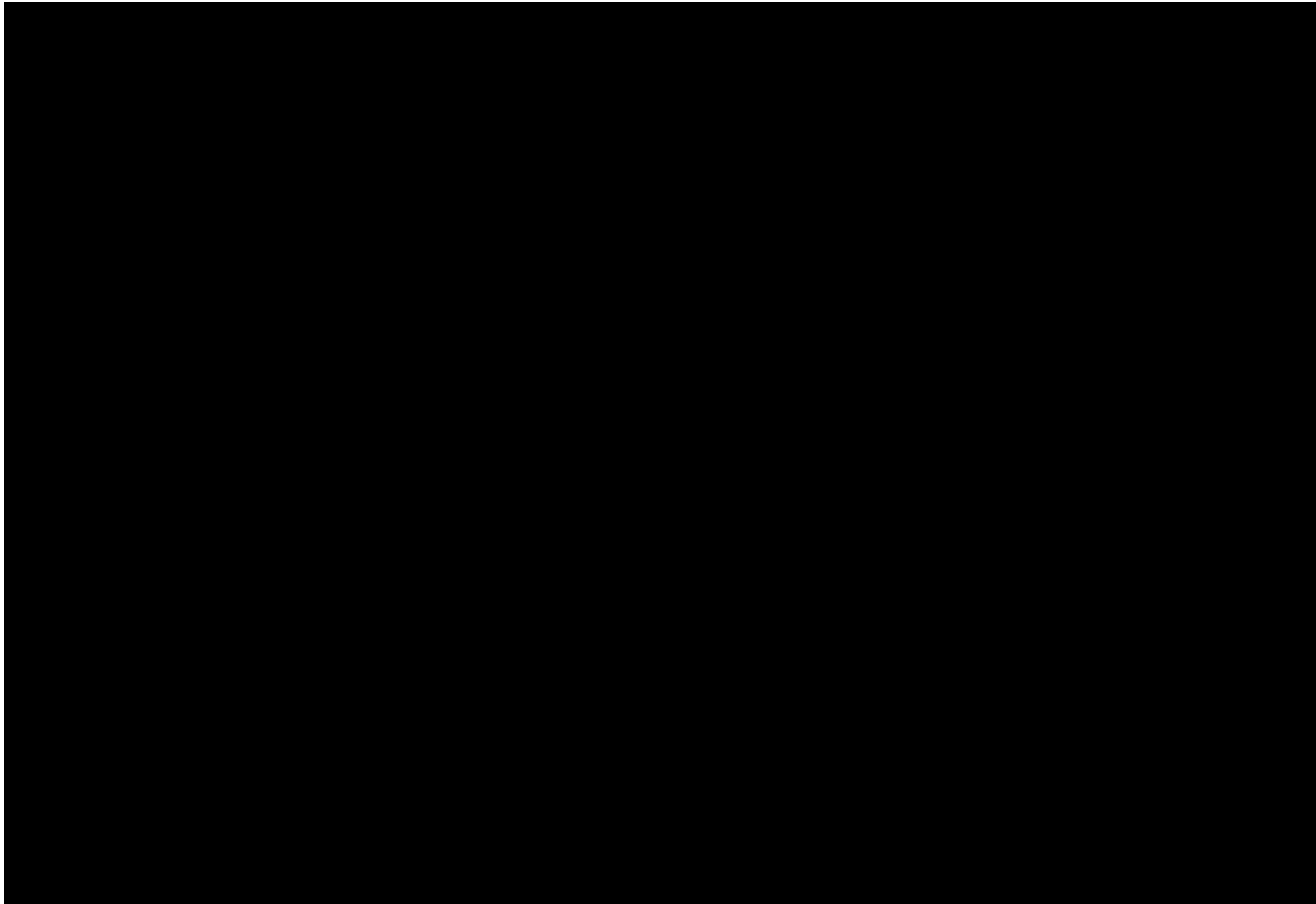
Doesn't make eye contact

Doesn't play pretend or make-believe

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3 Years –Takes turn in game



4 Years

- Social
 - Prefers playing with other children
- Language
 - Tells stories, sings songs
- Cognitive
 - Tells you what she thinks is going to happen next in a book
- Motor
 - Hops on one foot, catches a bounced ball



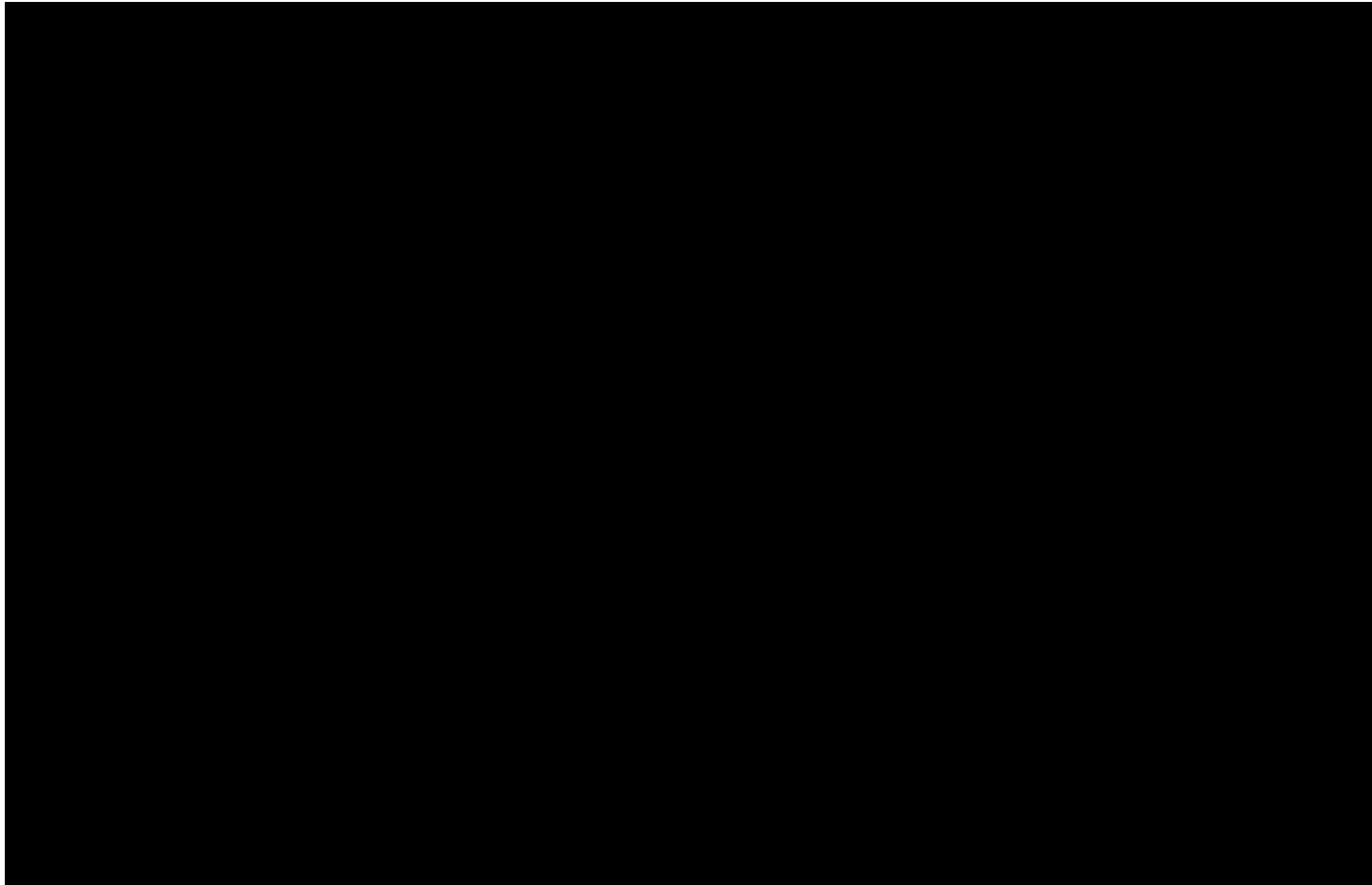
CONCERNS:

Shows no interest in interactive games
Ignores other children

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4 Years-More creative make believe



Free Milestone Tracking Tools

- Developed by CDC's "Learn the Signs. Act Early." program
- Free, easy to use
- Available in English and Spanish and a variety of other language options



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Example of Milestone Checklists


- Checklists for ages 2 months through 5 years
- Milestones across 4 areas of development
- Help identify causes for celebration or concern

Your Baby at 9 Months

Child's Name

Child's Age

Today's Date



How your child plays, learns, speaks, and acts offers important clues about your child's development. Developmental milestones are things most children can do by a certain age.

Check the milestones your child has reached by the end of 9 months. Take this with you and talk with your child's doctor at every visit about the milestones your child has reached and what to expect next.

What Most Babies Do at this Age:

Social/Emotional

- ☐ May be afraid of strangers
- ☐ May be clingy with familiar adults
- ☐ Has favorite toys

Language/Communication

- ☐ Understands "no"
- ☐ Makes a lot of different sounds like "mamamama" and "bababababa"
- ☐ Copies sounds and gestures of others
- ☐ Uses fingers to point at things

Cognitive (learning, thinking, problem-solving)

- ☐ Watches the path of something as it falls
- ☐ Looks for things he sees you hide
- ☐ Plays peek-a-boo
- ☐ Puts things in her mouth
- ☐ Moves things smoothly from one hand to the other
- ☐ Picks up things like cereal o's between thumb and index finger

Movement/Physical Development

- ☐ Stands, holding on
- ☐ Can get into sitting position
- ☐ Sits without support
- ☐ Pulls to stand
- ☐ Crawls

Act Early by Talking to Your Child's Doctor if Your Child:

- ☐ Doesn't bear weight on legs with support
- ☐ Doesn't sit with help
- ☐ Doesn't babble ("mama", "baba", "dada")
- ☐ Doesn't play any games involving back-and-forth play
- ☐ Doesn't respond to own name
- ☐ Doesn't seem to recognize familiar people
- ☐ Doesn't look where you point
- ☐ Doesn't transfer toys from one hand to the other



Tell your child's doctor or nurse if you notice any of these signs of possible developmental delay for this age, and talk with someone in your community who is familiar with services for young children in your area, such as your state's public early intervention program. For more information, go to www.cdc.gov/concerned or call 1-800-CDC-INFO.

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that children be screened for general development at the 9-month visit. Ask your child's doctor about your child's developmental screening.

Adapted from Caring for Your Baby and Young Child: Birth to Age 5, Fifth Edition, edited by Steven Shaffer and Tanya Remor Almon © 1991, 1993, 1996, 2004, 2009 by the American Academy of Pediatrics and Bright Futures: Guidelines for Health Supervision of Infants, Children, and Adolescents, Third Edition, edited by Joseph Ragan, Jr., Judith S. Shaw, and Paula M. Dawson, 2000, 101 Green Village, N. American Academy of Pediatrics. This milestone checklist is not a substitute for a standardized, validated developmental screening test.

www.cdc.gov/actearly | 1-800-CDC-INFO

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Milestone Checklists: How to Use

- Throughout the year, pay attention to how each child is meeting milestones and mark the checklist accordingly.

Your Child at 2 Years

Child's Name

Child's Age

Today's Date

How your child plays, learns, speaks, and acts offers important clues about your child's development. Developmental milestones are things most children can do by a certain age.

Check the milestones your child has reached by his or her 2nd birthday. Take this with you and talk with your child's doctor at every visit about the milestones your child has reached and what to expect next.

What Most Children Do at this Age:

Social/Emotional
☐ Copies others, especially adults and older children

☐ Climbs onto and down from furniture without help
☐ Walks up and down stairs holding on
☐ Throws ball overhand
☐ Makes or copies straight lines and circles

Social/Emotional

☐ Copies others, especially adults and older children
☐ Gets excited when with other children
☐ Shows more and more independence
☐ Shows defiant behavior
(doing what he has been told not to)
☐ Plays mainly beside other children, but is beginning to include other children, such as in chase games



Early Educators Can Reach Families

- Early Childhood professionals are a valuable resource to families
 - Increase awareness
 - Monitoring and screening
 - Referral to evaluation and intervention



Families cont'd

- Regular contact with families = meaningful input
 - Parents may be more likely to notice or take action on a concern if mentioned by someone they trust
 - But conversely, they may feel falsely reassured if a trusted professional does NOT mention a concern (Important)
- Gaps in healthcare can be reduced by other resources



Fact Sheets

- *Tips for Talking With Parents*
 - Ideas about how to start conversation with parents if concerned
 - Things to remember when having a difficult conversation
- *Developmental Screening*
 - What it is and why it's important
- Condition-specific fact sheets

Tips for Talking with Parents

If you suspect a child has a developmental delay and believe a parent is unaware of it, this sample conversation can give you ideas of how to talk with the child's parent.

Good afternoon, Ms. Jones. We love having Taylor in class. He really enjoys story time and follows directions well. He is working hard on coloring but is having a difficult time and gets frustrated. I have also noticed a few things about Taylor's social skills that I would like to discuss with you. Do you have a few minutes? [Cite specific behaviors and when they occurred.] Have you noticed any of these at home?

Ms. Jones, here is some information that shows the developmental milestones for a child Taylor's age. Let's plan to meet again next week [set a time] after you've had time to read it and think it over. [Provide information such as the fact sheets.]

Ms. Jones, I know this is hard to talk about, and I may be over-reacting, but I think it would also be a good idea to talk to Taylor's doctor about this in the next few weeks. You can take this information with you when you go. The doctor can give Taylor a "developmental screening" which can answer some questions about his progress and whether you need to do anything else. Maybe there is no problem, but getting help early can make a big difference if there is, so it's really important to find out for sure. Let me know if you need anything from me for that doctor's appointment!

Thank you for agreeing to talk with me today. We'll all do our best to help Taylor. He is a great kid!

If a parent approaches you with concerns about his or her child, this might help you respond.

Mrs. Smith, you wanted to speak with me privately about Taylor? [Listen to her concerns. See if she has noticed the same behaviors you have, and share examples that are the same as or different from hers.]

I am glad to know we are both on the same page. I have some information that might help you when you're watching Taylor at home this week. This fact sheet shows the developmental milestones for his age. Each child develops at his or her own pace, so Taylor might not have met all these milestones; it's worth taking a closer look. Let's meet again next [set a date] after you've had time to read this and think about it.

I also think it would be a good idea to talk to Taylor's doctor about this in the next few weeks. You can take this information with when

you go. The doctor can give Taylor a "developmental screening" which can answer some questions about his progress and whether you need to do anything else. Let me know if you need anything from me for that doctor's appointment. Thank you for talking with me today. We'll all do our best to help Taylor. He is a great kid!

Tips for these conversations with parents:

- Highlight some of the child's strengths, letting the parent know what the child does well.
- Use materials like the "Learn the Signs, Act Early," fact sheets. This will help the parent know that you are basing your comments on facts and not just feelings.
- Talk about specific behaviors that you have observed in caring for the child. Use the milestones fact sheets as a guide. Example: If you are telling the parent "I have noticed that Taylor does not play pretend games with the other children," you could show the parent the line on the milestones fact sheet for a four-year-old that says that a child that age "engages in fantasy play."
- Try to make it a discussion. Pause a lot, giving the parent time to think and to respond.
- Expect that if the child is the oldest in the family, the parent might not have experience to know the milestones the child should be reaching.
- Listen to and watch the parent to decide on how to proceed. Pay attention to tone of voice and body language.
- This might be the first time the parent has become aware that the child might have a delay. Give the parent time to think about this and even speak with the child's other caregivers.
- Let the parent know that he or she should talk with the child's health care professional (doctor or nurse) soon if there are any concerns or more information is needed.
- Remind the parent that you do your job because you love and care for children, and that you want to make sure that the child does his or her very best. It is also okay to say that you "may be overly concerned," but that it is best to check with the child's doctor or nurse to be sure since early action is so important if there is a real delay.

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Milestone Tracker App



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Developmental Monitoring and Screening Early Childhood Educators

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6 months



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1 year

Tracking Milestones Helps You . .

- Understand each child's developmental progress
 - Determine if a child needs extra help in an area



- Gather objective information for talking with parents or other providers
- Tracking and sharing milestones with parents routinely will make conversations easier if there is ever a concern



Tracking Milestones Helps Parents...

- Get excited about child development
- Understand that watching for milestones is important
- Pinpoint any potential developmental concerns
- Reinforce impressions of “good progress” and/or reassure appropriate gains
- Validate concerns if present



Helps Parents cont'd

- Have realistic expectations of behavior
 - Understand a child may not be “bad” when they want to try a new skill on their own
- Better match of behaviors and skills can help reduce parental frustration
- Research has shown evidence that children with disabilities may be subject to higher rates of abuse
 - Parents of children with disabilities have higher rates of marital discord and divorce



Washington Ambassador

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- Learn the signs. Act Early.
- <https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly/index.html>

