



### **Our Vision**

We believe in the promise and potential of every child, teen and young adult.

### **Our Mission**

To remove barriers to learning, helping children, teens and young adults become resilient, happy and successful at home, at school and in life.

### **Our Quest**

We strive to remove social emotional and learning barriers for kids and families regardless of language, location or ability to pay.

### **Our Areas of Excellence**

ADHD  
Learning Differences  
Autism  
Anxiety & Depression

### **The Center:**

Consultation. Evaluation. Therapy.

### **Sand Hill School:**

For 1st-8th grade kids with dyslexia and other learning differences.

### **Esther B. Clark School:**

Therapeutic day school for grades 2-10.

### **The Community Clinic:**

Serving the underserved.

### **Community Education and Engagement:**

Classes, meetings and resources for parents, teachers and behavioral health professionals.

Call 650.688.3625 for an appointment.  
Español 650.688.3650  
*We're here to help.*

650 Clark Way • Palo Alto, CA 94304  
650.325.5530 • [www.chconline.org](http://www.chconline.org)



## As we grow...

Key Developmental Milestones  
Ages 1-18



**Dear Parents,**

Taking a first step, smiling, and saying first words are important milestones in a child's life—and in a parent's life too! At each age in a child's life, there are predictable levels of skill to expect. This booklet outlines developmental milestones for ages 1 to 18—a checklist you can use as you observe your child growing up, and a guide to use with your pediatrician or your child's teacher. Parenting is a huge undertaking and each child is unique. Having as much information as possible helps.

We hope this little book will help you on your journey.

**Happy parenting!**

*Rosalie Whitlock*

Rosalie Whitlock, PhD  
Executive Director

*References:*

American Academy of Pediatrics  
American Speech-Language-Hearing Association  
Centers for Disease Control

**Movement**

- Gets to sitting position without assistance
- Crawls forward on belly by pulling with arms and pushing with legs
- Walks holding on to furniture
- May walk two or three steps without support
- Uses pincer grasp (brings thumb and forefinger together)
- Bangs objects together
- Puts objects in and takes objects out of container
- Tries to imitate scribbling
- Loves to drop things so you can pick them up!

**Language & Communication**

- Responds to simple verbal requests (e.g., "Come here." "Bathtime!")
- Uses simple gestures, such as shaking head for "no"
- Says "dada" and "mama"
- Uses exclamations, such as "oh-oh!"

**Cognition**

- Explores objects in many different ways (shaking, banging, throwing, dropping)
- Finds hidden objects easily
- Looks at correct picture when the image is named

**Social Emotional**

- Cries when mother or father leaves
- Tests parental responses to his actions during feedings (What do you do when he refuses a food?)
- Tests parental responses to his behavior (What do you do if he cries after you leave the room?)
- Repeats sounds or gestures for attention

**Developmental Concerns**

*Everyone develops at different rates but talk to your health care professional if your child demonstrates any of the following as the first birthday approaches:*

- Is not saying any words
- Does not make sustained eye contact
- Does not crawl
- Cannot stand when supported
- Does not search for objects that are hidden while he watches
- Says no single words ("mama" or "dada")
- Does not learn to use gestures, such as waving or shaking head
- Does not point to objects or pictures

**Movement**

- Walks alone
- Pulls toys behind her while walking
- Begins to run
- Kicks a ball
- Walks up and down stairs holding on to support
- Scribbles spontaneously
- Builds tower of four blocks or more

**Language & Communication**

- Points to object or picture when it's named for him
- Recognizes names of familiar people, objects, and body parts
- Says several single words (by 15 to 18 months)
- Uses simple phrases (by 18 to 24 months)
- Uses two- to four-word sentences

**Cognition**

- Finds objects even when hidden under two or three covers
- Begins to sort by shapes and colors
- Begins make-believe play

**Social Emotional**

- Imitates behavior of others, especially adults and older children
- Increasingly enthusiastic about company of other children
- Demonstrates increasing independence
- Begins to show defiant behavior

**Developmental Concerns**

*Everyone develops at different rates but talk to your health care professional if your child demonstrates any of the following as 18 to 24 months approach:*

- Cannot walk by 18 months
- Does not speak at least 15 words by 18 months
- Does not use two-word sentences by age two
- Does not seem to know the function of common household objects (brush, fork, spoon) by 15 months
- Does not imitate actions or words by 24 months

**Movement**

- Climbs well
- Runs easily
- Pedals a tricycle
- Walks up and down stairs, one foot on each step
- Screws and unscrews jar lids or turns door handle
- Copies a circle with pencil or crayon

**Language & Communication**

- Follows instructions with two or three steps
- Can name most familiar things
- Understands words like "in," "on," and "under"
- Says first name, age, and sex
- Talks well enough for strangers to understand most of the time
- Carries on a conversation using two to three sentences

**Cognition**

- Can work toys with buttons, levers, and moving parts
- Plays make-believe with dolls, animals, and people
- Does puzzles with three or four pieces
- Understands what "two" means

**Social Emotional**

- Shows affection for friends without prompting
- Shows concern for crying friend
- Understands the idea of "mine" and "his" or "hers"
- Shows a wide range of emotions

**Developmental Concerns**

*Everyone develops at different rates but talk to your health care professional if your child demonstrates any of the following as the next birthday approaches:*

- Falls down a lot or has trouble with stairs
- Has very unclear speech
- Does not speak in sentences
- Cannot work simple toys
- Does not play pretend or make-believe
- Loses skills he once had



## 4 years

### Movement

- Hops and stands on one foot up to five seconds
- Throws ball overhand
- Catches bounced ball most of the time
- Uses scissors
- Draws circles and squares

### Language & Communication

- Has mastered some basic rules of grammar
- Speaks in sentences of five to six words
- Tells stories

### Cognition

- Correctly names some colors
- Understands the concept of counting and may recognize a few numbers
- Begins to have a clearer sense of time
- Understands the concept of "same" and "different"

### Social Emotional

- Interested in new experiences
- Pretends to be "Mom" or "Dad"
- Increasingly inventive in fantasy play
- Negotiates solutions to conflicts
- Imagines that many unfamiliar images may be "monsters"
- Views self as a whole person involving body, mind, and feelings

### Developmental Concerns

*Everyone develops at different rates but talk to your health care professional if your child demonstrates any of the following as the next birthday approaches:*

- Cannot throw a ball overhand
- Cannot jump in place
- Cannot grasp a crayon between thumb and fingers
- Shows no interest in other children or interactive games
- Does not engage in fantasy play
- Lashes out without any self-control when angry or upset
- Does not use "me" and "you" appropriately



## 5 years

### Movement

- Stands on one foot for ten seconds or longer
- Hops, somersaults
- Swings and climbs on playground equipment
- Copies a triangle and other geometric patterns
- Prints some letters
- Dresses and undresses without assistance

### Language & Communication

- Recalls part of a story
- Uses future tense
- Tells longer stories
- Says name and address

### Cognition

- Can count ten or more objects
- Correctly names at least four colors
- Can name everyday household items

### Social Emotional

- Wants to please friends
- Wants to be like her friends
- Likes to sing, dance, and act
- Able to distinguish fantasy from reality

### Developmental Concerns

*Everyone develops at different rates but talk to your health care professional if your child demonstrates any of the following as the next birthday approaches:*

- Unusually fearful, aggressive, shy or sad
- Unusually withdrawn and not active
- Distracted after five minutes
- Cannot tell what's real and what's make-believe
- Does not play a variety of games and activities
- Does not use plurals or past tense properly
- Does not talk about daily activities or experiences
- Does not draw pictures



# 6-11 years: Elementary School age

## **Movement**

- Learns to print letters and numbers, and then words
- By seven years, keeps printing neatly within the lines
- Draws pictures that are recognizable
- Develops ball skills with smaller ball
- Rides a two wheel bike
- Jumps rope, skips and chases
- Dresses and grooms self completely
- Can use tools (i.e., hammer, screwdriver)

## **Language & Communication**

- Tells and retells stories and events in a logical order
- Expresses ideas with a variety of complete sentences
- Starts and stays on topic and takes turns in conversation
- Gives directions
- Participates in group discussions
- Uses subject area information and vocabulary (e.g., social studies) for learning

## **Cognition**

- Can tell time
- Reads more and enjoys reading
- Understands fractions
- Understands concept of space
- Can name months and days of week, in order
- Writes stories
- Starts school and homework habits now
- Begins to see the point of view of others more clearly
- Has an increased attention span

## **Social Emotional**

- Cooperates and shares but can be jealous of others and siblings
- Likes competition and games
- Enjoys clubs and groups, such as Boy Scouts or Girl Scouts
- Starts to form stronger, more complex friendships and peer relationships. It becomes more emotionally important to have friends, especially of the same gender
- Starts to think about the future
- Experiences more peer pressure
- Is more aware of his or her body as puberty approaches
- Measures his performance against others

## **Developmental Concerns**

*Everyone develops at different rates but talk to your health care professional if your child demonstrates any of the following, if a teacher talks with you, if your child expresses concern or if you do not see improvements:*

- Has poor motor coordination
- Has poor pronunciation, uses incomplete sentences
- Experiences an inability to concentrate
- Cannot play cooperatively
- Demonstrates little imaginative and fantasy play
- Demonstrates poor social/academic adjustment in school: preoccupied, easily frustrated, emotional outbursts, difficulty concentrating, can be overly reliant on teachers
- Experiences academic challenges: difficulties in reading or understanding math, memory issues, difficulty writing thoughts on paper
- Has poor impulse control, inadequate coping skills, anxiety, easily frustrated, may feel out of control
- Acts out frustration, anger, or anxiety with hitting, fighting, lying, stealing, breaking objects, verbal outbursts, swearing
- Has extreme reactions to perceived danger (i.e., "fight, flight, freeze" response)
- Is mistrustful of adults, or overly solicitous, manipulative
- Has difficulties in peer relationships, feels inadequate around peers, is over-controlling



# 12-18 years: Middle School & High School age

## **Movement**

- Uses physical activities to develop gross and fine motor skills
- Skills are more integrated and smooth

## **Language & Communication**

- Uses complex sentences
- Understands complicated instructions
- Uses humor and can be sarcastic or witty
- Uses slang and may speak differently to adults and peers
- Uses texting as a strong form of peer to peer communication
- Enjoys telling long stories

## **Cognition**

- Is better able to express feelings through talking
- Shows more concern about future school and work plans
- Is better able to give reasons for their own choices, including about what is right or wrong
- Thinks hypothetically: calculates consequences of thoughts and actions without experiencing them, considers a number of possibilities and plans behavior accordingly
- Think abouts thought: leads to introspection and selfanalysis
- Shows insight and perspective taking: understands and considers others' perspectives, and perspectives of social systems
- Uses systematic problem solving: can attack a problem, consider multiple solutions, plan a course of action

## **Social Emotional**

- Shows more concern about body image, looks, and clothes
- Focuses on themselves, going back and forth between high expectations and lack of confidence
- Shows more interest in and influence by peer group
- Feels stress from more challenging school work
- Spends less time with parents and more time with friends
- Has an increasing ability to control emotions
- Shows an increased tolerance for frustration

## **Developmental Concerns**

*Everyone develops at different rates but talk to your health care professional if your child demonstrates any of the following, if a teacher talks with you, if your child expresses concern or if you do not see improvements:*

- Has social immaturity: is unable to share or negotiate with peers, overly bossy, aggressive, competitive
- Lacks impulse control, needs immediate gratification
- Has exaggerated responses (tantrums, aggression) to even mild stressors
- Has poor self esteem or low confidence
- Acts out frustration, anger, or anxiety with hitting, fighting, lying, stealing, breaking objects, verbal outbursts, swearing
- Has difficulties in peer relationships, feels inadequate around peers, is over-controlling
- Is unable to initiate, participate in, or complete activities, gives up quickly
- Experiences academic challenges: difficulties in reading or understanding math, memory issues, difficulty writing thoughts on paper
- Develops eating problems

