

## How Children Grow

Children are born learning. When you cuddle, talk, read, play, and dance with children, this helps their whole self to grow healthy, happy, and secure. Each child grows and learns at his/her own pace, as well as in relation to the cultural practices and expectations of the family. Below are some typical behaviors you can expect at different stages. Not all children will follow this exactly, and that is okay. However, if you notice that a child is behind on many of these, talk to the child's health care provider.

- Birth to 3 months:** Lifts head  
Looks at faces  
Smiles and coos when spoken to  
Cries  
Likes to be held and rocked
- 3 to 6 months:** Rolls over  
Follows objects with eyes  
Makes single sounds  
Shows feelings  
Grasps objects  
Recognizes familiar faces
- 6 to 9 months:** Sits up without help  
Aware of self and aware of differences  
Looks into a mirror – responds to name  
Makes a string of sounds  
Clings – experiences and shows fear  
Begins chewing  
Rolls over – can stand for short time with support
- 9 to 12 months:** Says simple words  
Moves very fast – crawling and walking  
Plays hiding games  
Uses sounds and gestures  
Begins to show sense of humor
- 12 to 15 months:** Begins walking without help  
Scribbles  
Begins using words  
Plays next to other children  
Can experience and show shame  
Begins to mimic adult behavior
- 15 to 18 months:** Dances and sings  
Puts two words together  
Uses 10-15 words on his/her own without encouragement  
Tries to be helpful  
Is sensitive and may “catch” feelings from adults
- 18 to 24 months:** Can build a tower  
Likes to climb  
Uses single words a lot

Is able to run  
Looks at pictures in a book  
Begins to use two-word phrases

**2 to 3 years:**

Kicks, jumps, and walks up/down stairs  
Pretends and shows affection  
Uses three-word phrases  
Identifies people with words  
May begin to use social labels  
Classifies people by gender  
Says at least 100 words

**3 to 4 years:**

Plays with others  
Knows names of colors and how to draw shapes  
Uses action words  
Identifies people according to physical characteristics  
Absorbs positive/negative feelings and ideas about people, including themselves  
Pedals a tricycle  
Opens door using door knob

**4 to 5 years:**

Balances on one foot  
Sings songs  
Comforts friends  
Uses four- to five-word sentences  
Enjoys active play  
Can name three colors and count to ten  
Seeks labels for race, gender, and abilities

**5 to 6 years:**

Asks questions to seek information  
Can dress self completely  
Explores real/make-believe and fair/unfair  
Understands cultural identity  
Enjoys exploring cultures of friends/classmates