

Your child at 3 years



Child's Name _____

Child's Age _____

Today's Date _____

Milestones matter! How your child plays, learns, speaks, acts, and moves offers important clues about his or her development. Check the milestones your child has reached by age 3. Take this with you and talk with your child's doctor at every well-child visit about the milestones your child has reached and what to expect next.

What most children do by this age:

Social/Emotional Milestones

- Calms down within 10 minutes after you leave her, like at a childcare drop off
- Notices other children and joins them to play

Language/Communication Milestones

- Talks with you in conversation using at least two back-and-forth exchanges
- Asks "who," "what," "where," or "why" questions, like "Where is mommy/daddy?"
- Says what action is happening in a picture or book when asked, like "running," "eating," or "playing"
- Says first name, when asked
- Talks well enough for others to understand, most of the time

Cognitive Milestones (learning, thinking, problem-solving)

- Draws a circle, when you show him how
- Avoids touching hot objects, like a stove, when you warn her

Movement/Physical Development Milestones

- Strings items together, like large beads or macaroni
- Puts on some clothes by himself, like loose pants or a jacket
- Uses a fork

Other important things to share with the doctor...

- What are some things you and your child do together?
- What are some things your child likes to do?
- Is there anything your child does or does not do that concerns you?
- Has your child lost any skills he/she once had?
- Does your child have any special healthcare needs or was he/she born prematurely?

You know your child best. Don't wait. If your child is not meeting one or more milestones, has lost skills he or she once had, or you have other concerns, act early. Talk with your child's doctor, share your concerns, and ask about developmental screening. If you or the doctor are still concerned:

1. Ask for a referral to a specialist who can evaluate your child more; and
2. Call any local public elementary school for a free evaluation to find out if your child can get services to help.

For more on how to help your child, visit [cdc.gov/Concerned](https://www.cdc.gov/Concerned).

Don't wait.
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Help your child learn and grow

As your child's first teacher, you can help his or her learning and brain development. Try these simple tips and activities in a safe way. Talk with your child's doctor and teachers if you have questions or for more ideas on how to help your child's development.



- Encourage your child to solve her own problems with your support. Ask questions to help her understand the problem. Help her think of solutions, try one out, and try more if needed.
- Talk about your child's emotions and give him words to help him explain how he's feeling. Help your child manage stressful feelings by teaching him to take deep breaths, hug a favorite toy, or go to a quiet, safe place when he is upset.
- Set a few simple and clear rules that your child can follow, such as use gentle hands when playing. If he breaks a rule, show him what to do instead. Later, if your child follows the rule, recognize and congratulate him.
- Read with your child. Ask questions, such as "What is happening in the picture?" and/or "What do you think will happen next?" When she gives you an answer, ask for more details.
- Play counting games. Count body parts, stairs, and other things you use or see every day. Children this age are starting to learn about numbers and counting.
- Help your child develop his language skills by speaking to him in longer sentences than his, using real words. Repeat what he says, for example, "need nana," and then show how to use more "grown-up" words by saying, "I want a banana."
- Let your child help with making meals. Give him simple tasks, such as washing fruits and vegetables or stirring.
- Give your child instructions with 2 or 3 steps. For example, "Go to your room and get your shoes and coat."
- Limit screen time (TV, tablets, phones, etc.) to no more than 1 hour per day of a children's program with an adult present. Don't put any screens in your child's bedroom. Children learn by talking, playing, and interacting with others.
- Teach your child simple songs and rhymes, such as "Itsy Bitsy Spider" or "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star."
- Give your child an "activity box" with paper, crayons, and coloring books. Color and draw lines and shapes with your child.
- Encourage your child to play with other children. This helps him learn the value of friendship and how to get along with others.

To see more tips and activities download CDC's Milestone Tracker app.

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Your child at 4 years



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Today's Date _____

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What most children do by this age:

Social/Emotional Milestones

- Pretends to be something else during play (teacher, superhero, dog)
- Asks to go play with children if none are around, like "Can I play with Alex?"
- Comforts others who are hurt or sad, like hugging a crying friend
- Avoids danger, like not jumping from tall heights at the playground
- Likes to be a "helper"
- Changes behavior based on where she is (place of worship, library, playground)

Language/Communication Milestones

- Says sentences with four or more words
- Says some words from a song, story, or nursery rhyme
- Talks about at least one thing that happened during his day, like "I played soccer."
- Answers simple questions like "What is a coat for?" or "What is a crayon for?"

Cognitive Milestones (learning, thinking, problem-solving)

- Names a few colors of items
- Tells what comes next in a well-known story
- Draws a person with three or more body parts

Movement/Physical Development Milestones

- Catches a large ball most of the time
- Serves himself food or pours water, with adult supervision
- Unbuttons some buttons
- Holds crayon or pencil between fingers and thumb (not a fist)

Other important things to share with the doctor...

- What are some things you and your child do together?
- What are some things your child likes to do?
- Is there anything your child does or does not do that concerns you?
- Has your child lost any skills he/she once had?
- Does your child have any special healthcare needs or was he/she born prematurely?

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- Help your child be ready for new places and meeting new people. For example, you can read stories or role play (pretend play) to help him be comfortable.
- Read with your child. Ask him what's happening in the story and what he thinks might happen next.
- Help your child learn about colors, shapes, and sizes. For example, ask the color, shapes, and size of things she sees during the day.
- Encourage your child to use "his words" to ask for things and solve problems but show him how. He may not know the words he needs. For example, help your child say, "Can I have a turn?" instead of taking something from someone.
- Help your child learn about others' feelings, and about positive ways to react. For example, when he sees a child who is sad, say "He looks sad. Let's bring him a teddy."
- Use positive words and give attention to behaviors you want to see ("wanted behaviors"). For example, say "You're sharing that toy so nicely!" Give less attention to those you don't want to see.
- Tell your child in a simple way why she can't do something you don't want her to do ("unwanted behavior"). Give her a choice of what she can do instead. For example, "You can't jump on the bed. Do you want to go outside and play or put on some music and dance?"
- Let your child play with other children, such as at a park or library. Ask about local play groups and pre-school programs. Playing with others helps you child learn the value of sharing and friendship.
- Eat meals with your child when possible. Let her see you enjoying healthy foods, such as fruits, vegetables, and whole grains, and drinking milk or water.
- Create a calm, quiet bedtime routine. Avoid any screen time (TV, phone, tablet, etc.) for 1 to 2 hours before bed and don't put any screens in your child's bedroom. Children this age need 10 to 13 hours of sleep a day (including naps). Consistent sleep times make it easier!
- Give your child toys or things that encourage his imagination, such as dress-up clothes, pots and pans to pretend cook, or blocks to build with. Join him in pretend play, such as eating the pretend food he cooks.
- Take time to answer your child's "why" questions. If you don't know the answer, say "I don't know," or help your child find the answer in a book, on the Internet, or from another adult.

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Your child at 5 years



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What most children do by this age:

Social/Emotional Milestones

- Follows rules or takes turns when playing games with other children
- Sings, dances, or acts for you
- Does simple chores at home, like matching socks or clearing the table after eating

Language/Communication Milestones

- Tells a story she heard or made up with at least two events. For example, a cat was stuck in a tree and a firefighter saved it
- Answers simple questions about a book or story after you read or tell it to him
- Keeps a conversation going with more than three back-and-forth exchanges
- Uses or recognizes simple rhymes (bat-cat, ball-tall)

Cognitive Milestones (learning, thinking, problem-solving)

- Counts to 10
- Names some numbers between 1 and 5 when you point to them
- Uses words about time, like "yesterday," "tomorrow," "morning," or "night"
- Pays attention for 5 to 10 minutes during activities. For example, during story time or making arts and crafts (screen time does not count)
- Writes some letters in her name
- Names some letters when you point to them

Movement/Physical Development Milestones

- Buttons some buttons
- Hops on one foot

Other important things to share with the doctor...

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- Your child might start to “talk back” in order to feel independent and test what happens. Limit the attention you give to the negative words. Find alternative activities for her to do that allow her to take the lead and be independent. Make a point of noticing good behavior. “You stayed calm when I told you it’s bedtime.”
- Ask your child what she is playing. Help her expand her answers by asking “Why?” and “How?” For example, say “That’s a nice bridge you’re building. Why did you put it there?”
- Play with toys that encourage your child to put things together, such as puzzles and building blocks.
- Use words to help your child begin to understand time. For example, sing songs about the days of the week and let him know what day it is. Use words about time, such as today, tomorrow, and yesterday.
- Let your child do things for himself, even if he doesn’t do it perfectly. For example, let him make his bed, button his shirt, or pour water into a cup. Celebrate when he does it and try not to “fix” anything you don’t have to.
- Talk about and label your child’s and your own feelings. Read books and talk about the feelings characters have and why they have them.
- Play rhyming games. For example, say “What rhymes with cat?”
- Teach your child to follow rules in games. For example, play simple board games, card games, or Simon Says.
- Create a spot in your home for your child to go to when he’s upset. Stay nearby so your child knows he is safe and can come to you for help calming as needed.
- Set limits for screen time (TV, tablets, phones, etc.) for your child, to no more than 1 hour per day. Make a media use plan for your family.
- Eat meals with your child and enjoy family time talking together. Give the same meal to everyone. Avoid screen time (TV, tablets, phones, etc.) during mealtime. Let your child help prepare the healthy foods and enjoy them together.
- Encourage your child to “read” by looking at the pictures and telling the story.
- Play games that help with memory and attention. For example, play card games, Tic Tac Toe, I Spy, or Hot and Cold.

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