



The Division of Developmental Pediatrics,
Department of Pediatrics, Faculty of Medicine and Dentistry, University of Alberta

SNAPSHOTS* DEVELOPMENTAL MILESTONES

Mnemonic	Gotta Find Strong Coffee Soon‡				
	G = Gotta	F = Find	S = Strong	C = Coffee	S = Soon
Age	Gross Motor	Fine Motor	Speech / Language	Cognitive / Problem Solving	Social / Emotional
Newborn	Primitive reflexes – step, place, Moro, Babinski, ATNR Flexor posture	Primitive reflexes – grasp	Primitive reflexes – root, suck Alerts to sound Startles to loud sounds Variable cries	Visual focal length ~10" Fix & follow slow horizontal arc Prefers contrast, colours, face Prefers high pitched voice	Bonding (parent → child) Self-regulation/soothing
2 mos	Head steady when held Head up 45° prone	Hands open half of time Bats at objects	Turns to voice Cooing	Prefers usual caregiver Attends to moderate novelty Follows past midline	Attachment (child → parent) Social smile
4 mos	Sits with support Head up 90° prone, arms out Rolls front → back	Palmar grasp Reaches and obtains items Brings objects to midline	Laugh, razz, "ga", squeal	Anticipates routines Purposeful sensory exploration of objects (eyes, hands, mouth)	Turn-taking conversations Explores parent's face
6 mos	Postural reflexes Sits tripod Rolls both ways	Raking grasp Transfers hand to hand	Babble (nonspecific)	Stranger anxiety Looks for dropped or partially hidden object	Expresses emotions: happy, sad, mad Memory lasts ~24 hrs
9 mos	Gets from all 4s → sitting Sits well with hands free Pulls to stand Creeps on hands and knees	Inferior pincer grasp Pokes at objects	"Mama", "dada" (specific) Gestures "bye bye", "up" Gesture games ("pattycake")	Object permanence Uncovers toy "Peek-a-boo"	Separation anxiety
12 mos	Walks a few steps Wide-based gait	Fine pincer (fingertips) Voluntary release Throws objects Finger-feeds self cheerios	1 word with meaning (besides mama, dada) Inhibits with "no!" Responds to own name 1-step command with gesture	Cause & effect Trial & error Imitates gestures and sounds Uses objects functionally, eg rolls toy car	Explore from secure base Points at wanted items Narrative memory begins
15 mos	Walks well	Uses spoon, open top cup Tower of 2 blocks	Points to 1 body part 1-step command no gesture 5 words Jargoning	Looks for moved hidden object if saw it being moved Experiments with toys to make them work	Shared attention: points at interesting items to show to parent Brings toys to parent
18 mos	Stoops and recovers Runs	Carries toys while walking Removes clothing Tower of 4 blocks Scribbles, fistful pencil grasp	Points to object, 3 body parts 10-25 words Embedded jargoning Labels familiar objects	Imitates housework Symbolic play with doll or bear, eg "Give teddy a drink"	Increased independence Parallel play
2 yr	Jumps on two feet Up & down stairs "marking time"	Handedness established Uses fork Tower of 6 blocks Imitates vertical stroke	Follows 2-step command 50+ words, 50% intelligible 2 word phrases "I", "me", "you", plurals	New problem-solving strategies without rehearsal Searches for hidden object after multiple displacements	Testing limits, tantrums Negativism ("no!") Possessive ("mine!")
3 yr	Pedals trike Up stairs alternating feet	Undresses Toilet trained (2 ½ - 3 ½ yrs) Draws circle, cross + Turns pages of books	3-step commands 200 words, 75% intelligible 3-4 word phrases W questions ("why?") States full name, age, gender	Simple time concepts Identifies shapes Compares 2 items (eg "bigger") Counts to 3	Separates easily Sharing, empathy Cooperative play Role play ("pretending")
4 yr	Hops on one foot Down stairs alternating feet	Draws x, □, diagonals Cuts shape with scissors Buttons	Sentences, 100% intelligible Tells a story Past tense	Counts to 4 Opposites Identifies 4 colours	Has preferred friend Elaborate fantasy play
5 yr	Balance on one foot 10 secs Skips May learn to ride bicycle (if available)	Draw person (10 body parts) Tripod pencil grasp Prints name, copies letters Independent ADLs, incl tying	5000 words Future tense Word play, jokes, puns Phonemic awareness	Counts to 10 accurately Recite ABC's by rote Recognises some letters Pre-literacy and numeracy skills	Has group of friends Follows group rules Games with rules

Development: trends, delays and disabilities

Sector	Gross Motor	Fine Motor	Speech / Language	Cognitive / Problem Solving	Social / Emotional
Domains/ skills/processes	Posture Change of position Ambulation Strength Balance Coordination	Tool use Dexterity Precision Bi-manual coordination	Communication Words and symbols (semantics) Grammar (syntax) Pragmatics Articulation/voice/fluency	Intellect Thinking Remembering Categorising Problem-solving Analysis/synthesis	Self-awareness Empathy Relationships Emotional regulation
Trends	Primitive reflexes to volitional movement Cephalo-caudal Proximal to distal Flexor to extensor Postural reflexes fade as balance increases Single mvts to sequences Effortful to automatic	Primitive reflexes to volitional movement (grasp) Proximal to distal (whole hand to fingertips) Effortful to automatic Unilateral to bimanual coordination	Primitive reflexes to volitional movement (suck) Proximal to distal (back of throat to lips, tongue, teeth) Understanding before speaking (rec before exp) Inc'ing length of utterance Inc'ing complexity of syntax "Metas"	Implicit memory before explicit Specific>general>specific Increased # of dimensions attended to simultaneously "Trial & error" to mental rehearsal Concrete (sensory, hands-on) to abstract Inc'd use of executive functions Inc'd length of attention span "Metas"	Bonding: parent>child Attachment: child >parent Increasing social circle: self >primary caregiver >extended family >peers >broader community >country & culture >world
Examples of devt'l disorder in sector	Cerebral palsy Muscular dystrophies DCD	DCD Dysgraphia	Devt'l language disorders Language-based learning disability (dyslexia) Dysarthria/Stuttering	Mental retardation (intellectual impairment) Learning Disabilities	Autism spectrum disorders Reactive attachment disorder
Examples of adult functional loss in sector	Paresis/paralysis	Paresis/paralysis Apraxia	Aphasias	Dementia Specific stroke syndromes	Mental health disorders Post concussion personality changes
Adult disability (mostly based on loss of previously normal function, per Canada Revenue) Vision: acuity in both eyes 20/200 (6/60) or less OR greatest diameter of field of vision in both eyes is 20 degrees or less.	Walking " unable to walk even with approp. therapy, medication & devices; OR requires an inordinate amount of time to walk, even with approp. therapy, medication & devices"	Feeding Dressing Elimination (toileting req'd for bowel or bladder functions) " unable to do task even with approp. therapy, medication & devices; OR requires an inordinate amount of time to do task, even with approp. therapy, medication & devices"	Speaking Hearing " unable to speak/understand even with approp. therapy, medication & devices; or requires an inordinate amount of time to speak/understand, even with approp. therapy, medication & devices" (hearing specifies "in a quiet setting")	"Mental functions" = -Adaptive functioning (eg self-care, health & safety, social skills common, simple transactions) -Memory -Problem-solving, goal-setting, and judgment " unable to perform mental functions* even with approp. therapy, medication & devices; OR requires an inordinate amount of time to do task, even with approp. therapy, medication & devices"	Adaptive functioning (eg self-care, social skills) " unable to perform mental functions* even with approp. therapy, medication & devices; OR requires an inordinate amount of time to do task, even with approp. therapy, medication & devices"
Who assesses	MD PT	MD OT	MD SLP Audiologist	MD Psychologist Optometrist or Ophthalmologist	MD Psychologist Mental health therapist
RED FLAGS! REGRESSION (loss of skills) & PARENTAL CONCERN are red flags at any age	Persistent primitive reflexes Abnl tone or mvt patterns at any age, spasticity, hypotonia, absent DTRs Asymmetry Poor head control at 5 mos Not sitting independently with hands-free at 8 mos Not rolling back-front, not taking weight well through the legs when held at 9 mos Not walking by 18 mos	Lack of transfer at 7 mos Using one hand exclusively at any age Delayed self care (ADLs) at 4 years Delayed printing at school entry	Problems with feeding and/or swallowing Parents suspect hearing loss, babbling stops at > 6 mos, lack of response to sound (check hearing!) No single words by 15 mos No combos by 24 mos Stutter past 3 ½ yrs (or earlier if anxiety/mannerisms) Idiosyncratic speech, disordered sequence of development Poor intelligibility for age	Lack of developmentally appropriate response to visual stimuli Immature play (like younger child) Stereotypic play; lack of pretend School failure (either for specific subjects like reading or math or generalised) Always check vision and hearing if any concerns—can be assessed as young as newborn	Emotional dysregulation Abnormal attachment patterns (over-clingy, indiscriminate) Limited social smiling and shared enjoyment by 6 mos Limited gestures like pointing, response to name, joint attention by 12 mos Limited social imitative play by 18 mos (eg imitating housework) Limited pretend play (eg feeding doll) by 24 mos No friends at school-age