

Toddler Developmental Milestones

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Gross Motor Skills

Gross Motor development involves the larger, stronger muscle groups of the body. In early childhood, it is the development of these muscles that enable the baby to hold his/her head up, sit, crawl and eventually walk, run and skip.

Between the ages of 12–18 months, your preschooler should:

- Start walking independently
- Attempt to run, or runs with stiff posture
- Squat down to pick something up
- Crawl up stairs and creep back down
- Step on stationary ball when trying to kick the ball
- Seat self on small chair
- Pull a toy behind themselves while walking
- Throw underhand when sitting

Between the ages of 18 months – 2 years, your toddler should:

- Walk up and down the stairs while holding your hand
- Run fairly well
- Jump with feet together, clearing the floor
- Jump down and forwards
- Squat to play
- Stand on tiptoe with support
- Start to use ride-on toys
- Throw a ball into a box
- Kick a ball forwards

Between the ages of 2 – 2 ½ years, your toddler should:

- Stand on tiptoes if shown first
- Jump from bottom step
- Begin to ride a tricycle, moving forward with feet on the floor
- Stand on balance beam with 2 feet and attempt to step forward
- Catch a large ball with arms straight out

Between the ages of 2 ½ - 3 years, your toddler should:

- Stand on 1 foot momentarily

- Walk up the stairs alone with alternating feet
- Walk downstairs with 2 feet on same step
- Walk on tiptoe
- Start riding a tricycle using the pedals
- Catch a ball with arms bent
- Kick a ball forwards

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Fine Motor Skills

“Fine motor” refers to the movements we make with the small muscles of the hands. Children start to use their hands right at birth to explore their own bodies and the world around them. Their fine motor skills develop as their whole body starts to move and become more stable. They also learn to do more things with their hands as their cognitive and social/emotional skills improve.

Below are some of the typical developmental milestones for fine motor skills. After each age group, you can find some “red flags” that might indicate a problem.

Between the ages of 12-18 months, your child will:

- Point to pictures in books
- Build a tower using 2 blocks
- Use her hands together to hold a toy at the middle of her body
- Scribble with a crayon
- Point with his pointer finger
- Hold her own cup and drink, with some spilling
- Feed himself using a spoon, with some spilling
- Remove his own socks
- Put her hat on her head

Red Flags for Fine Motor Development (18 months)

If you notice some of the following things about your child by the time she is 18 months old, you may want to talk to your doctor or to another health professional such as an [occupational therapist](#) or a [physiotherapist](#).

- Your child is not able to use a pincer grasp (thumb and pointer finger) to pick up small objects
- Your child does not point at things using his pointer finger (e.g. pictures in a book)
- Your child is not able to put things into containers
- Your child is not able to use both hands during play (most children do prefer one hand over the other)
- Your child’s movements seem shaky or stiff

Between the ages of 18 months and 2 years, your child will:

- Build a tower with 4-6 blocks
- Put 4 rings on a stick
- Put large pegs in a pegboard
- Turn pages of a book, 2 or 3 at a time
- Scribble
- Turn knobs
- Throw a small ball
- Paint on paper using her whole arm to move the paintbrush
- Imitate you drawing a vertical line (1) and a circle (it may not be accurate)
- Begin to string large beads
- Feed herself using a fork and spoon
- Pull up a large zipper
- Start to hold a crayon with her fingers, usually with her hand at the top of the crayon
- Put large shapes into a shape sorter

Red Flags for Fine Motor Development (2 years)

If you notice some of the following things about your child by the time she is 2 years old, you may want to talk to your doctor, or to another health professional such as an [occupational therapist](#) or a [physiotherapist](#).

- She cannot imitate you drawing a vertical line (1)
- He is still putting lots of toys in his mouth
- He is not able to put a simple, large puzzle piece into a wooden puzzle
- She is not able to put a simple shape into a shape sorter
- She cannot feed herself with a spoon
- He cannot stack 2-3 blocks on top of one another

Between the ages of 2-3 years, your child will:

- Fold paper in half
- Draw straight lines and circles
- Imitate you drawing a cross
- Turn single pages in a book
- Snip the edges of paper with scissors (by 30 months)
- Hold crayons using the thumb and fingers
- Use one hand more often than the other for most activities
- Build a tower of up to 9 large blocks
- Put together large linking blocks, such as Megablocks
- String ½ inch sized beads
- Cut across a piece of paper (by 3 years)
- Use a fork to eat
- Manage large buttons
- Put on some items of clothing with supervision