

Child Development Notes – 0 – 8 Years

The first twelve months

| What babies can do | By Month 1 | By 6 months | By 12 months |
|--|--|--|--|
| | Turn head to a hand that is stroking a baby's cheek | Raise the head and upper body on arms while lying on the stomach | Sit without support |
| | Bring both hands towards the mouth | Use eyes to explore the surroundings & track people & objects | Crawl on hands and knees and pull self to a standing position |
| | Turn towards familiar sounds or voices | Reach for dangling objects | Take a few steps while holding on for support |
| | Follow a slowly moving object with eyes | Grasp & shake objects | Try to imitate words and sounds |
| | Touch the breast with hand or hands when suckling | Roll both ways | Enjoy playing and clapping |
| | Communicate by crying | Sit with support | Follow simple requests |
| | | Explore objects with hands and mouth | Repeat sounds and gestures for attention, and enjoy attention |
| | | Begin to explore sounds and more facial expressions | Pick up things with the thumb and one finger; pick up and drop things |
| | | Make various sounds: coo; gurgle; boo; squeal; laugh | Start holding objects such as spoon and attempt self-feeding |
| | | Respond to own name and familiar faces | Maybe afraid of strangers |
| | | Smile at self in the mirror | |
| How parents/caregivers can help | Make skin-to-skin contact with the baby (breastfeeding a good example) | Continue with the close contact activities. Start weaning the baby from 6 months | More food (three to four meals a day from 9 months) supplements to breastfeeding or formula milk |
| | Massage and cuddle the baby often | Continue to hold and cuddle the baby frequently | Respond to the baby affectionately and in a caring way |

| | | | |
|--|--|--|---|
| | Give the baby lots of love and attention in a gentle way | Give the baby safe, clean toys and explore with her or him. You can make these toys yourself | Point to objects and pictures and name them |
| | Make eye contact with your baby. Make funny faces, funny sounds | Lay the baby on the floor (clean & safe) to move freely. Put some toys nearby to encourage reaching and grasping | Play simple games. Follow the baby's lead if she/he starts a game. |
| | Move a toy in front of a baby's face (safe distance) to encourage tracking | Prop the baby up so that so that he/she can look around | Give the bay objects to push or pull or roll Provide containers that babies can fill and empty with small objects |
| | Keep everything clean. Wash your hands after changing the baby and before feeding the baby | Have a conversation by repeating the baby's sounds and taking turns | Encourage interaction with other family members |
| | | | Keep sharp objects, plastic bags, and small items that baby could choke on out of reach (Shared accommodations – Iron boxes and other hot objects out of reach) |
| Warning signs of developmental problems | Difficult suckling or refusing to suckle | Stiffness or difficult moving limbs (e.g. hands and legs) | Lack of response to others |
| | No eye contact when held | Little or no response to sounds or familiar faces | Difficult keeping balance when walking |
| | Little movement of arms or legs | Refusing breast milk or food | Lack of appetite |
| | Little reaction to loud sounds or bright lights | Constant moving of the head which might indicate an ear infection | Unexplained changes in behaviour |
| Between age 2 & 5 years of age, children are now able to walk and talk. They are busy, full of energy and curiosity. They are still dependent on adults but want to do things for themselves. They may get frustrated when they cannot. They challenge adults and try to assert themselves which can cause tantrums. 'No' may become a popular word. | | | |

It is important that children learn to care for their personal needs (dressing themselves, feeding themselves etc but supervised). If they are going to school, allow for time to let them do things for themselves with your help.

At this stage, they are building on the many skills already developed – language, thinking, control over emotions, social skills (enjoy playing with other children).

| | 2 Years | 3 Years | 5 Years |
|--|---|--|--|
| What Children can do | <p>Point to familiar objects or pictures when these are named</p> <p>Say two or more words together to express a complete thought (e.g. mummy no, bye mummy)</p> <p>Follow simple instructions</p> <p>Scribble if given a pencil or crayon (whole arm movement)</p> <p>Enjoy simple stories and songs</p> <p>Imitate the behavior of others</p> <p>Begin to feed themselves and try to dress themselves</p> | <p>Walk, run, climb, kick & jump easily</p> <p>Say her/his name & age</p> <p>Match and name some colours</p> <p>Use number words</p> <p>Ask and answer questions</p> <p>Recite rhymes, sing simple songs</p> <p>Use make-believe objects in play</p> <p>Feed themselves</p> <p>Express affection</p> <p>Wash & dry hands, brush teeth with some help</p> <p>Gain bladder control</p> | <p>Move in a coordinated way</p> <p>Speak in sentences and use many words</p> <p>Speak clearly</p> <p>Understand opposites (e.g. fat/thin; short/tall)</p> <p>Hold a crayon or pencil between the thumb & first two fingers</p> <p>Use either the right or left hand most of the time</p> <p>Play with other children & make friends</p> <p>Complete a simple task and not give up</p> <p>Dress without help</p> <p>Ask many questions</p> <p>Count five to ten objects</p> <p>Use the toilet without help</p> |
| | 2 years | 3 years | 5 years |
| How parents/caregivers can help | <p>Ensure all children get enough food and a variety of nutritious food</p> <p>Make sure children are immunized</p> <p>Teach them to avoid dangerous objects and places</p> <p>Talk to them normally</p> <p>Provide simple rules & reasonable expectations</p> <p>Provide consistent daily attention & affection & praise their achievements</p> | <p>Read and look at books with the child & talk about the pictures</p> <p>Tell children stories; teach rhymes and songs</p> <p>Listen to children and answer their questions</p> <p>Provide children with materials for pretend, creative play, building and drawing</p> <p>Give children simple tasks such as putting toys back to their place after playing</p> | <p>Listen to children and answer their questions; have conversations with them</p> <p>Play games, talk and interact with children as often as possible</p> <p>Read to them and tell them stories</p> <p>Encourage them to explore</p> <p>Provide space, time and materials for creative play, building and drawing</p> |

| | | | |
|--|--|--|--|
| | <p>Share rhymes, action songs, finger plays and chants</p> <p>Read to your children everyday or have someone else in the family do this</p> <p>Provide children with objects that encourage sorting, matching, pretending and toys for pushing and pulling</p> <p>Provide thick crayons, pencils, chalk or brushes for drawing & painting</p> | <p>Provide consistent affection everyday</p> <p>Provide children with opportunities for play with other children</p> <p>Limit television watching and ensure that only age-appropriate shows are watched by children</p> <p>Encourage but don't force children to eat; give them as much time as they need to eat.</p> <p>Help them learn to dress, use the toilet, wash and dry hands, brush their teeth, comb their hair</p> | <p>Acknowledge and encourage positive behavior & set clear limits</p> <p>Provide consistent affection everyday</p> <p>Limit television watching and ensure children are not watching age-inappropriate shows</p> <p>Enroll the child in available early running programs</p> |
| What children can do | <p>Age 8</p> <p>Enjoy school and learning</p> <p>Enjoy and participate in physical activities both individually and with others</p> <p>Have good eye-hand coordination</p> <p>Begin to understand abstract ideas and use more complex thinking to solve problems</p> <p>Are aware that other people have different opinions, beliefs and ways of doing things</p> <p>Pay attention in class</p> <p>Speak fluently</p> <p>Have 'best friends' and enjoy being with them</p> <p>Have reasonable self-control and greater understanding of emotions</p> | | |
| How parents/caregivers can help | <p>By being a good role model</p> <p>Encouraging your child to express his/her feelings, opinions and beliefs</p> <p>By spending time with your child; talking and listening to them</p> <p>Playing games and activities together</p> <p>By encouraging creativity</p> <p>By encouraging playing with friends & getting involved in activities outside of school & home chores</p> <p>Setting clear limits for behavior & praising positive behavior</p> <p>By showing interest in your child's school and getting involved</p> | | |
| Warning signs of developmental problems | | | |
| Signs | <p>2 years</p> <p>Does not respond to other people or children</p> <p>Difficulty keeping balance when walking</p> <p>Lack of appetite</p> | <p>3 years</p> <p>Little interest in play or food</p> <p>Frequent falls</p> <p>Difficulty manipulating small objects</p> <p>Unable to understand simple statements</p> | <p>5 years</p> <p>Unable to make friends (unless there are good reasons such as language proficiency)</p> <p>Being left out of other children's play</p> |

| | | | |
|----------------------|---|-------------------------------------|--|
| | Unexplained changes in behaviour | Unable to speak using several words | (without good explanation) Fear, anger or violence when playing with others Difficulty using crayons and pensils Speech that cannot be understood |
| Warning signs | Age 8 Difficulty making and keeping friends (with no good explanation) Avoidance of challenges & tasks without trying, giving up Being unable to communicate needs, thoughts and emotions Having trouble focusing and/or paying attention Not completing school work (without a good explanation) Being very aggressive, very shy or very withdrawn | | |

Common Conditions & Symptoms/Characteristics/possible Causes

| | |
|--|---|
| Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) | ADHD is a neurological condition related in part to brain chemistry Becomes apparent in some children in pre-school and early school years Characteristics: in-attention, hyperactivity and impulsivity |
| Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) | ASD is an umbrella term that encompasses the term autism, aspergers syndrome, autistic disorder and classic autism Children or individuals who have ASD have difficulties in three main areas: Social understanding and behavior Social communication (verbal and non-verbal) Rigidity of thinking The way these three impairments are manifested vary enormously from one person to another Studies point to a combination of genetic and environmental factors as possible cause of ASD |
| Deafness | Passed down from parents The child's mother had German measles during pregnancy The child had cerebral malaria The child had meningitis (an infection in the brain and spinal cord) The child was born pre-maturely The child had a severe ear infection. |
| Blindness | The mother caught a disease such as German measles or another infectious disease during pregnancy (this is particularly dangerous in the first 12 to 14 weeks of pregnancy) Malnutrition of mother or child Lack of Vitamin A Diseases caught by child Injuries during and after delivery Eye infections Incorrect practices due to myths and misconceptions |
| Brain Damage (including | The mother caught a disease such as German measles, chicken pox, genital herpes, during pregnancy |

| | |
|--|---|
| cerebral palsy and other conditions) | Parasites Harmful substances such as alcohol, tobacco, nicotine, caffeine and drugs during pregnancy Damage caused during delivery (e.g. lack of oxygen to the baby) Accidents, infections or malnutrition after birth |
| Cleft lip and palate This condition develops early in pregnancy, usually between 6 and 9 weeks when the two sides of the mouth are joining | Severe emotional stress of the mother during pregnancy Harmful substances taken by the mother early in the pregnancy such as alcohol, smoking etc. |
| Epilepsy (Seizure or Fits) | Passed down from parents Lack of oxygen during delivery Infections of the brain Fever Head injury |
| Polio | Polio is very contagious though increasingly rare viral disease It is usually caught from contact with faeces of a person infected with polio due to lack of access to polio vaccination |
| Down Syndrome | Passed down from parents It results in a child having developmental & physical abnormalities The incidence of down syndrome rises with increasing maternal age, especially if mother's age is 35 years or older. |

Reference

The Parent's Handbook (Circle Pines, Minn.: American Guidance Service, 1989)