

Ages and Stages

If everyone in the world were alike, it would be easy to give you a chart that listed exactly all the ages and stages that your child would pass through to reach adulthood. Fortunately, we are not alike and we have the much more exciting job of rearing children who will surprise us almost daily.

Each child develops and matures at his or her own rate. As new parents, we spend a great deal of time wondering when our child will sleep through the night, when he will walk, and when she will talk. But no one can give you a definitive answer to those questions. Because of these wonderful individual differences, we speak of ages and stages only to give you some general guideposts along the way. Here is a list of some of the things you may see your child do as he or she passes through childhood.

1 month

- Sleeps, cries a great deal
- Eats often
- Stares at objects

2 – 4 months

- Listens to voices
- Watches, follows, and reaches for objects
- Smiles and gurgles
- Sucks on fist
- Lifts head and chest
- Sits propped up
- Recognizes parents' voices

5 – 8 months

- Plays with feet
- Rolls over
- Handles rattle or ball
- Drops things on purpose
- Puts everything in mouth
- Plays pat-a-cake and peek-a-boo
- Bangs objects on table
- Gets first tooth

9 – 12 months

- Sits up, crawls, stands alone
- Vocalizes; is socially responsive
- Looks at, touches, manipulates objects
- Moves about a room
- Says, "Bye-bye, No, Mama, Dada."
- Listens
- Begins to learn the meaning of, "No."

12 – 18 months

- Feeds self
- Throws things
- Walks
- Pushes and pulls toys
- Climbs
- Looks at pictures
- Stacks things
- Gives up one nap
- Needs safe environment
- Shows affection, jealousy, sympathy
- Becomes inquisitive
- Imitates adults
- Uses two or three words
- Enjoys water play

18 – 24 months

- Insists on doing things for self ("Me do it!")
- Opens and explores drawers; turns knobs
- Looks at picture books
- Begins to show temper
- Becomes attached to blanket
- Listens to nursery rhymes
- Always on the move
- Speaks about a dozen words
- Pushes baby carriage
- Begins "No" stage
- Claims everything ("Mine!")

2 years

- Walks well, even runs
- Climbs up and down stairs
- Drinks from glass with fewer spills
- Kicks ball

- Scribbles
- Solves simple puzzles
- Is not sharing much yet
- Sometimes hits, grabs, bites
- May want rigid routine
- Can be demanding and negative
- Follows elaborate bedtime rituals
- Language becomes useful and fun
- Draws vertical line with pencil
- Explores, fantasizes
- Develops memory
- Listens to short stories
- Asserts self
- Knows own gender
- Puts toys away with assistance

3 years

- Walks and runs easily
- Rides tricycle
- Has more hand control
- Puts toys away with supervision
- Begins to share
- Asks questions just to ask
- Asks permission
- Tries to dress self
- Learns to button and zipper
- Stays dry during daytime
- Likes to be read to
- Talks to other children
- Begins to resist routine around 3½
- Responds to voice inflection; may like to follow whispered instruction
- Tries to please
- Attentive to spoken words
- More able to accept suggestions
- Can choose between alternatives
- Begins to report dreams
- Sometimes selects "special" friend
- Can be jealous of a new sibling
- Plays well with one or two kids yet still plays alone a great deal
- Eats with very few spills
- Scribbles have meaning to child

4 years

- Asks many questions
- Wants friends
- Exhibits clear sense of self
- Runs, jumps, hops, climbs
- Throws ball overhand
- Can use scissors, string beads
- Uses paint brush, folds paper
- Can dress and undress; likes to pick clothes
- Toilets without help
- Chooses and serves food to self
- Asserts self
- Boasts, name calls, tattles freely
- Likes to be the leader
- Enjoys fantasy play
- Doesn't understand concept of lying
- Ventures into using profanity
- Uses mommy or daddy as final authority
- Enjoys being silly with friend
- Whispers and tells secrets
- Tells tall tales
- Is developing a larger vocabulary
- May have fears (kidnappers, giants, the dark)

5 years

- Is friendly
- Wants to be dependable
- Likes to feel independent
- Likes praise; wants to be good
- Wants to try only what can be accomplished
- Rides tricycle
- Likes to help
- Talks; asks questions for information
- Finds letters and words interesting
- Makes friends and gets along with peers
- Bounces and catches large ball without a bounce
- Likes to play dress-up