

Physical Activity
Nutrition
Development
Safety
Medical Screening

Working Toward School Readiness



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Developmental Health Indicators Birth to Five

A Guide for Parents and Childcare Workers

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Introduction

Parents: Congratulations! Whether you are a parent with a newborn infant or a parent with an older child, this guide was developed for you. These developmental indicators will help you see the milestones that are usual for specific ages. They are intended to outline the average child development. Because there are many factors to consider in growth and development, your child may not reach every indicator exactly as it is outlined here. Parents are often the first to recognize that their child is not on target with development. If you notice that your child is not doing things that other children his age are doing you can consult your pediatrician or health department for an evaluation. The Mississippi Department of Health offers “The First Steps” program to identify and assist children under three years of age with developmental delays. For children three and older, contact your local school district for the Child Find Coordinator to evaluate your child. You may also qualify for the following resources: Women; Infants; Children (WIC) nutrition program, and Mississippi Children’s Health Insurance Plan (CHIP). Access these programs as soon as possible because there are many benefits that you or your child may qualify for.

With children comes a great responsibility to care for them, support them, and teach them. Your role during these first years is very important in preparing them for school. For this reason, make sure that you are ready for the challenge. You can do this by taking care of your physical, mental and emotional health. Make sure that you eat right, exercise, take any prescription medication ordered by your doctor, see your doctor and dentist regularly, and include your family for emotional support as you care for your child.

Family safety is an area in which you can affect learning. Your child is depending on you to provide a safe environment. Therefore, it is important that you use your seat belt, install smoke detectors, and lock guns properly or remove them from your home entirely. Alcohol and drug use can alter behavior and may lead to poor decision making, so limit or eliminate the use of these products. Women who smoke while pregnant risk a low birth weight baby. Exposing infants and children to cigarette smoke leads to a higher rate of respiratory conditions like asthma.

Childcare Workers: Working with children is a great experience. This guide was developed to be a tool for you to use as you care for our children. You have a vital role in caring for children while the parent is away. Many children, while in your care, may reach the milestones in this guide. Remember to share successes and concerns with parents so that they will remain informed on the progress their child is making. Childcare workers are often the first to recognize that a child is not on target developmentally, and parents will look to you for direction in the care of their child. We have included resources to help make information easily available for you and the parents you serve.

Developmental Health Indicators

Birth to Five

A Guide for Parents and Childcare Workers

Purpose

This guide is the result of a group effort. Many concerned individuals from several agencies and the community met to discuss ways to raise awareness regarding children's readiness for school. This guide will give some direction as to the normal healthy development of children as they prepare for school. It also gives some healthy suggestions regarding activity, safety, nutrition and medical check-ups. Those who interact with children daily should be made aware of these indicators to empower them to act when they have questions about development.

Definitions

In an effort to make this guide more user friendly for parents, childcare workers and anyone interested in the development of the children they know and love, definitions are provided below for words used frequently throughout the guide.

Gross motor: Refers to the development of movement using large muscle groups. The muscles in this group would help with balance, throwing, and running.

Fine motor: Refers to the development of movement using small muscle groups. The muscles in this group would help with the little things we do such as putting on clothes, undoing buttons, tying a lace, using a pencil or scissors.

Cognitive Development: Refers to the way children use thinking to solve something. In child development it is the process of learning to do new activities. As they adapt, they learn to do more difficult things. They learn how to reach for an object or how to make a sound. This development of learning comes in stages and is built on previous stages.

Social Emotional: Refers to the way a child connects with his environment. As he grows and develops, he learns to express himself in different ways.

Indicator/Milestone: Is something used to show a visible change, a sign of development, as in the road signs of life. In this case, we will have a list of visible signs that track healthy development.

Development: Are the results we see from the growth of a child.

Physical Activity: Refers to the movement of the body. It is important for physical and mental health. Being vigorous in activity is the process of building strength.

Nutrition: Is the taking in of foods that are essential for the best possible health. These foods contain nutrients that give energy, aid growth, and limit risk of some diseases.

Age Appropriate: Refers to games or activities that are especially fitting for the stage of development in which the child is currently in. These games and activities will change as the child grows and develops.



Indicators Birth to 4 months

Gross Motor:	Wakefulness grows Lifts head Rolls over	Strong reflexes (sucking) Pushes up
Fine Motor	Follows voice Recognizes voice	Reaches for objects Grasp rattle
Cognitive	Laughs Finds voice (vocalizes) Turns to sound	Fixes briefly on faces Indicates boredom Increases babbling
Social-Emotional	Responds to calming Smiles spontaneously (for no reason) Smiles responsively Self consoling	Lengthens sleep Looks at parents

As the child works through this age, he will gradually increase wakefulness. He will gain muscle strength needed to hold head, roll over and push up on his tummy. He will learn to enjoy stimulation by smiling and vocalizing. He will also learn to cry in different ways depending on the need. Parents will have to learn the patterns.

Physical Activity

Stimulation for this child is very important for learning. He should be stimulated with face to face encounters frequently during wakeful hours. His time in confined equipment should be limited to less than ½ hour at a time. Television is not a good source of stimulation.

Safety

This child must ride in a rear facing car seat that is secured in the back seat. Do not leave the child unattended in a tub of water even with a bath ring or other device. Test water temperature with your wrist to avoid burns. Keep small objects, plastic bags, and balloons away from the child to prevent choking. Falls from furniture become a danger due to an increase in movement of the child.

Nutrition

Breast milk or formula is the best choice for infants. No other foods should be added. He should not drink juices or soda. Consult a physician about when to add other foods to this child's diet. Begin gum care.

Medical Screening

This child will get required blood work at birth. He will need to be seen for a check-up at 1 week, 1 month, 2 months, and 4 months of age. Immunizations may be required. A risk assessment will be done to determine other specific testing.



Indicators 4 months to 6 months

Gross Motor:	Rolls over Sits with head steady	Rocks on all fours
Fine Motor	Grasp rattle Reaches for objects	Looks for dropped object
Cognitive	Laughs Turns in direction of voice Turns to other sounds	Begins to recognize name Puts everything in mouth
Social-Emotional	Smiles in response to another Regards own hand	Recognizes familiar faces

This child begins visible social interaction. He babbles expressively. He will respond to affection and changes in the environment. He will let you know if he is happy, hurting, hungry, or mad. He is beginning to recognize faces.

Physical Activity

Stimulation for this child is very important for learning. He should be stimulated with age appropriate toys and direct interaction with family. The direct interaction is the best activity for this child. His time in confined equipment should be limited to less than ½ hour at a time. Television is not a good source of stimulation.

Safety

This child must ride in a rear facing car seat that is secured in the back seat. Do not leave the child unattended in a tub of water, even with a bath ring or other device. Test water temperature with your wrist to avoid burns. Keep small objects, plastic bags, and balloons away from the child to prevent choking. Falls from furniture become a danger due to increase in movement of the child. A home-safety-check should be done, cover power outlets and remove objects that are dangerous. Place barriers to keep child away from heaters, stoves, and appliances.

Nutrition

Breast milk or formula is the best choice for infants. He should not drink juices or soda. The physician will give guidance on how and when to add other foods toward the end of 6 months. One item should be introduced at a time. Continue gum care.

Medical Screening

This child will need to be seen for a check-up at age 4 and 6 months. Hearing will be assessed. Immunizations may be required. He will have an oral evaluation to prepare for teeth. Other selective tests will be done according to risk assessment.



Indicators 6 to 9 months

Gross Motor:	Sits without support	Pulls to stand
Fine Motor	Reaches Changes an object from one hand to the other	Takes 2 objects
Cognitive	DaDa/MaMa babble Says single syllables (da, ma, ba)	Imitates sounds and words Begins pointing
Social-Emotional	Begins to feed self Will work to reach an object Waves bye-bye	Recognizes strangers Seeks parent comfort

This child enjoys playing games like peek-a-boo with his parents. He enjoys taking a vocal turn. He begins to learn his own name. He puts everything in his mouth, and enjoys looking at objects. He is learning to rotate while sitting. He is beginning to move from sitting to crawling. This child fears strangers and looks for parents. He likes to use sounds over and over. He will miss an object that has a regular place. He will have his first teeth during the coming months.

Physical Activity

Stimulation for this child is very important for learning. He should be stimulated with age appropriate activities, and direct interaction with family. The direct interaction is the best activity for this child. Television is not a good source of stimulation. His time in confined equipment should be limited to less than ½ hour at a time. He is now exploring his surroundings and will need supervision as he becomes more active.

Safety

The child must ride in a rear facing car seat that is secured in the back seat. Do not leave the child unattended in a tub of water, even with a bath ring or other device. Test water temperature with your wrist to avoid burns. Keep small objects, plastic bags, and balloons away from child to prevent choking. Falls from furniture become a danger due to increase in movement of the child. Remove objects that can be pulled off furniture. A home-safety-check should be done, cover power outlets and remove objects that are dangerous. Place barriers to keep child away from heaters, stoves, and appliances. Remove household cleaners and medicines to prevent poisoning.

Nutrition

Breast milk, formula, and small amounts of water are the best choices for infants. He should not drink juices or soda. The physician will give guidance on how and when to add other foods one item at a time. You will increase to small “pea” size table foods as the ninth month approaches. Continue gum care; brush teeth as they appear.

Medical Screening

This child will need to be seen for a check-up at 6 and 9 months of age. He will have a developmental screening at 9 months. Immunizations may be required. The oral screening is important at this time, also. There may be other tests according to the risk assessment.



Indicators 9 to 12 months

Gross Motor:	Stands while holding onto something	Will stand alone
Fine Motor	Changes an object from one hand to the other Puts object in a cup	Bangs objects together
Cognitive	Imitates sounds Babbles	Follows simple directions Says 1 word at a time
Social-Emotional	Points to objects Waves bye-bye Imitates activities	Listens while being read to Plays pat-a-cake

This child learns games for two people like peep-eye. While in this age his motor skills are expanding. He will imitate more activities. He may hand a book to a parent and expect a story. He will show distress if he is separated from his parent. He jabbbers with normal expression, for example the pitch of the jabber will raise as if there were a question. He stands alone now without support. Simple directions are followed successfully.

Physical Activity

Stimulation for this child is very important for learning. He should be stimulated with age appropriate activities and direct interaction with family. The direct interaction is the best activity for this child. This child needs vigorous physical activity. You should provide 20 minutes of activity 3-4 times a day at a minimum. No more than 1 hour of TV time a day.

Safety

The child must ride in a rear facing car seat that is secured in the back seat. Do not leave the child unattended in a tub of water, even with a bath ring or other device. Test water temperature with your wrist to avoid burns. Keep small objects, plastic bags, and balloons away from child to prevent choking. Falls from furniture become a danger due to increase in movement of the child. A home-safety-check should be done cover power outlets and remove objects that are dangerous. Place barriers to keep child away from heaters, stoves, and appliances. Secure all dangling cords and remove sharp objects. Crib should be lowered to lowest rung.

Nutrition

When the child is 12 months of age you can begin 100% juices, no more than a ½ cup serving each day. He should not drink sodas, encourage water. He will begin drinking whole milk at 12 months, also. The physician will give guidance on how and when to add other foods one item at a time. By the 12th month, this child will be on table foods. He will need 3 meals and 2-3 nutritious snacks each day. Ask for guidance on appropriate serving sizes. Avoid fried foods and processed meats; limit sweet and salty foods. Instead, make healthy choices of whole grains, real cheese, fruits and vegetables. Avoid giving food as rewards for behavior. Continue dental care.

Medical Screening

This child needs to be seen for a check-up at 9 and 12 months. Immunizations may be required. He will have anemia and lead levels done for all that are Medicaid eligible. Other children will have screening done if the risk assessment indicates. Other selective tests will be done for all children according to the risk assessment.



Indicators 18 months

Gross Motor:	Walks backwards Stoops and recovers	Runs Walks up steps
Fine Motor	Puts object in a cup Scribbles Dumps objects	Drinks from cup Eats with a spoon Builds a tower with 2 objects
Cognitive	Says 1 to 3 words together successfully Points to body parts Follow simple directions	Pulls, points, grunts Brings object to show
Social-Emotional	Drinks from a cup Imitates activities Imitates household chores	Listens to a story Removes clothes Looks at books

This 18 month old child listens to stories and imitates activities, especially household activities. He attempts to express his wants through pulling, pointing, grunting, and pushing. He expresses words of meaning now, not just jabber. He is developing a personality. He knows his name and the names of favorite books or toys. He is now able to walk in steps and runs. He has now mastered the art of cup and spoon use with few spills. He will begin to be interested in toileting.

Physical Activity

As activity increases, you should provide the child with opportunity to have vigorous activity several times each day. This can be indoor or outdoor 20 minutes for 3-4 times each day. No more than 1 hour of TV time a day.

Safety

The child must ride in a car seat that is secured in the back seat. If he has reached 30 pounds or 32 inches he can change to front facing seat. Do not leave the child unattended in water. Keep small objects, plastic bags, and balloons away from child to prevent choking. Falls from furniture become a danger due to increase in movement of the child. Remove objects that can be pulled off furniture. A home-safety-check should be done, cover power outlets and remove objects that are dangerous. Place barriers to keep child away from heaters, stoves, and appliances. Remove household cleaners and medicines to prevent poisoning.

Nutrition

This child should continue with whole milk until age 2. He should have no more than a ½ cup serving of 100% fruit juice a day. Avoid fried foods and processed meats; limit sweet and salty foods. Instead, make healthy choices of fresh fruits, vegetables, whole grains and real cheese. Do not reward behavior with foods. He should have 3 meals and 2-3 healthy snacks each day. Ask for guidance on appropriate serving sizes. Continue dental care.

Medical Screening

This child may need a check up at 15 months; this will depend on the results of previous risk assessments. He will need to be seen at 18 months for a check-up. Immunizations may be required. Other selective tests will be done according to the risk assessment.



Indicators 2 years

Gross Motor:	Throws a ball over hand Jumps up	Imitates food prep Kicks a ball
Fine Motor	Moves to music Turns single pages Imitates a vertical line	Builds a tower with 4-6 blocks
Cognitive	Names one picture Combines words Can point to 6 body parts Speech understood 50% of the time	Completes phrases Answers "where is" Points to 2 pictures Knows 2 actions
Social-Emotional	Puts on clothing Removes clothing Can wash and dry hands	Imitates adults Pretend play Refers to I or Me

The 2 year old plays well alongside other children. He often refers to himself as me. He can now say about 50 words and uses 2 word phrases. Easy 2 step commands are now easily followed. He often completes sentences or phrases that are familiar to him. He can now turn pages in a book one page at a time. He imitates food preparation and goes up and down steps one at a time. He knows correct actions and matches them with things. An example would be a bird flies and a man walks. The baby teeth will soon finish erupting. This child should have 20 baby teeth.

Physical Activity

As activity increases, you should provide the child with opportunity to have vigorous activity several times each day. This can be indoor or outdoor 20 minutes for 3-4 times each day. No more than 1 hour of TV time a day.

Safety

The child must ride in a car seat that is secured in the back seat. If he has reached 30 pounds or 32 inches, he can change to front facing seat. Do not leave the child unattended in water. Keep small objects, plastic bags, and balloons away from child to prevent choking. A home-safety-check should be done, cover outlets and remove objects that are dangerous. Remove household cleaners and medicines to prevent poisoning. Keep away from motorized machinery. Pick the child up around any moving vehicle.

Nutrition

This child should drink 1% or fat free milk. He should have no more than a ½ cup serving of 100% fruit juice a day. Avoid fried foods and processed meats; limiting sweet and salty foods. Instead, make healthy choices of fresh fruits, vegetables, whole grains and real cheese. Never reward behavior with food. He should have 3 meals and 2-3 healthy snacks each day. Ask for guidance on appropriate serving sizes.

Medical Screening

This child should be seen for a check-up at 2 years of age. Immunizations may be required. The routine screening should include lead screening for all Medicaid eligible children. Other tests will be done according to the risk assessment. Continue dental care including annual exam.



Indicators 3 years

Gross Motor:	Can broad jump Balances on one foot for 1 second Rides tricycle	Throws overhand
Fine Motor	Imitates vertical line Wiggles thumb	Builds tower with 8 cubes Copy a circle
Cognitive	Names 1 color Knows 2 adjectives Names 4 pictures	Puts 2-3 sentences together Names objects
Social-Emotional	Can name friend Can brush teeth with help	Self care (feeding, dressing) Imaginative play with story

The 3 year old begins to include other children in play. He has developed self-care skills. He is now more imaginative in his play. He has a conversation and can put 2-3 simple sentences together. 75% of the speech is understandable at this time. He has mastered step climbing and can walk up them with alternating feet. He now draws a person with 2 body parts. He is working on becoming toilet trained for bowel and bladder in the daytime. Encourage talking and singing.

Physical Activity

As activity increases, you should provide the child with the opportunity to have vigorous activity several times each day. This can be indoor or outdoor 20 minutes for 3-4 times each day. No more than 1 hour of TV time a day.

Safety

The child must ride in a car seat that is secured in the back seat. Do not leave the child unattended in water. A home-safety-check should be done, cover outlets and remove objects that are dangerous. Place barriers to keep child away from heaters, stoves, and appliances. Remove household cleaners and medicines to prevent poisoning. Supervise outside play. The child is not ready to cross street alone. Use safety equipment like helmets and knee pads.

Nutrition

This child should drink 1% or fat free milk. He should have no more than a ½ cup serving of 100% fruit juice a day. Avoid fried foods and processed meats; limit sweet and salty foods. Instead, make healthy choices of fresh fruits, vegetables, whole grains and real cheese. He should have 3 meals and 2-3 healthy snacks each day. Ask for guidance on appropriate serving sizes. Continue dental care.

Medical Screening

The 3 year old needs to be seen for a check-up that includes an objective vision measurement. Blood pressure is now part of the regular screening. Immunizations may be required. Other selective tests are done according to the risk assessment. This child should have an annual dental exam.



Indicators 4 years

Gross Motor:	Hops Balances on one foot for 2 seconds	Pours and cuts food
Fine Motor	Builds a tower using 8 cubes Draws a person with 3 parts Copy a cross	Brushes teeth Masters buttons
Cognitive	Knows the meaning of 5 words All speech is understandable	Gives full name Names 4 colors
Social-Emotional	Can copy a cross Plays with others Stands up for self	Aware of gender Describes self Proud of self

The 4 year old child can now describe features of himself; he listens to stories and engages in fantasy play. He can tell you who he is by repeating his first and last names. He knows what to do when he is cold, tired or hungry. All of his speech should be understandable. He can draw a person with 3 parts. He has now mastered brushing his own teeth and dressing himself.

Physical Activity

As activity increases you should provide the child with opportunity to have vigorous activity several times each day. This can be indoor or outdoor 20 minutes for 3-4 times each day. No more than 1 hour of TV time a day.

Safety

The child must ride in a car seat that is secured in the back seat. Do not leave the child unattended in water. A home-safety-check should be done, cover outlets and remove objects that are dangerous. Place barriers to keep child away from heaters, stoves, and appliances. Remove household cleaners and medicines to prevent poisoning. Supervise outside play. The child is not ready to cross street alone.

Nutrition

This child should drink 1% or fat free milk. He should have no more than a ½ cup serving of 100% fruit juice a day; encourage water. Avoid fried foods and processed meats; limiting sweet and salty food. Instead make healthy choices of fresh fruits, vegetables, whole grains and real cheese. Never reward behavior with food. He should have 3 meals and 2-3 healthy snacks each day. Ask for guidance on appropriate serving sizes. Continue dental care.

Medical Screening

This child needs to have a check-up at age 4 with a vision and hearing done by an objective measurement. Immunizations may be required. Other selective tests are done according to the risk assessment. This child should have an annual dental exam.



Indicators 5 years

Gross Motor:	Hops, skips, and jumps Summersaults	Tells simple story
Fine Motor	Ties a knot Draws a person with 6 parts Mature pencil grasp Zips zipper	Copies a triangle Uses a fork Cares for own toileting
Cognitive	Expressive with speech	Able to convey meaning
Social-Emotional	Can copy a triangle Can copy a square Prints some letters and numbers	Shows more independence Wants to be like friends Wants to please

This 5 year old now shows school readiness skills. He likes to play board games and card games. He can draw a person with 6 parts. His language skills are improved. He can count to 10 and can name 4+ colors. Friends are becoming more important to him. As this child approaches six years, he will begin losing his baby teeth.

Physical Activity

As activity increases, you should provide the child with opportunity to have vigorous activity several times each day. This can be indoor or outdoor 20 minutes for 3-4 times each day. No more than 1 hour of TV time a day.

Safety

Begin teaching safety habits like crossing the street, water safety, bicycle safety. Remove household cleaners and medicines to prevent poisoning. Supervise outside play. The child is not ready to cross street alone. Use safety equipment helmets and knee pads.

Nutrition

This child should drink 1% or fat free milk. He should have no more than a ½ cup serving of 100% fruit juice a day encourage water. Avoid fried foods and processed meats limiting sweet and salty foods. Instead make healthy choices of fresh fruits, vegetables, whole grains and real cheese. Ask for guidance on appropriate serving sizes. Never reward behavior with food. He should have 3 meals and 2-3 healthy snacks each day. Continue dental care

Medical Screening

This child needs a check-up before entering school. He will have objective vision and hearing screening. Make sure that immunizations are up to date for school entry. Other tests will be done according to risk assessment. This child should have an annual dental exam. Contact school for items needed to register child.



For example pictures, please see the “Best Practices for Healthy Eating: A Guide To Help Children Grow Up Healthy”

www.nemours.org/department/nhps/child-care/healthy-habits.html

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Resources:

Bright Futures: Guidelines for Health Supervision of Infants, Children, and Adolescents

www.brightfutures.aap.org

Best Practices for Healthy Eating: A Guide to Help Children Grow Up Healthy

www.nemours.org/department/nhps/child-care/healthy-habits.html

First Steps

www.msdh.state.ms.us/msdhsite/_static/41,0,74.html

Mississippi Children's Health Insurance Program

www.msdh.state.ms.us/msdhsite/_static/41,0,96.html

Women; Infants; Children

www.msdh.state.ms.us/msdhsite/_static/41,0,128.html

Did You Know, pamphlets

www.msucares.com/pubs/publications

Developmental Milestones

www.cdc.gov/actearly

Positive Parenting Tips for Healthy Child Development

www.cdc.gov/ncddd/child

5 – 2 - 1 – Almost None

www.nemours.org/department/nhps/five-two-one.html

Healthy Minds: Nurturing Your Child's Development

www.zerotothree.org

