

# Developmental Milestones and Competency Ratings

By 3 months old

*Rating key: 1 = Fully present; 2 = Inconsistently present or emerging; 3 = Absent.*

Competency Domain	Milestone	Milestone Rating	Comments	Competency Domain Rating
<b>Emotional</b>	Briefly calms self (e.g., sucks on hand).			
	Exhibits interest in the outside world when in an alert state (e.g., gazes at objects, people, or light; localizes to sound; adjusts breathing in response to sound of voices).			
	Is comforted by proximity to caregiver and soothing motion.			
	Remains in a calm, focused state for at least 2 minutes.			
	Makes smooth state transitions (e.g., sleep to drowsy to awake).			
	Expresses contentment or discomfort.			
<b>Social-Relational</b>	Smiles responsively (i.e., social smile).			
	Looks at caregiver's face.			
	Coos responsively.			
	Localizes to familiar voices and sounds.			
	Shows interest in facial expressions.			

**By 3 months old***Rating key: 1 = Fully present; 2 = Inconsistently present or emerging; 3 = Absent.*

Competency Domain	Milestone	Milestone Rating	Comments	Competency Domain Rating
<b>Language-Social Communication</b>	Follows sounds (e.g., turning head in response to sound).			
	Coos and gurgles.			
	Imitates simple facial expressions (e.g., smiling, sticking tongue out).			
<b>Cognitive</b>	Follows people and objects with eyes.			
	Loses interest or protests if activity does not change.			
<b>Movement and Physical</b>	Pushes up trunk when lying on stomach.			
	Holds head up without support.			
	Hands are often open (i.e., not in fists).			

**By 6 months old**

Rating key: 1 = Fully present; 2 = Inconsistently present or emerging; 3 = Absent.

Competency Domain	Milestone	Milestone Rating	Comments	Competency Domain Rating
<b>Emotional</b>	Responds to affection with smiling, cooing, or settling.			
	Demonstrates a range of emotions that includes happiness, excitement, sadness, fear, distress, disgust, anger, joy, interest, and surprise.			
	Expresses anger, frustration, or protest with distinct cries and facial expressions.			
	Recovers from distress when comforted by caregiver.			
<b>Social-Relational</b>	Imitates some movements and facial expressions (e.g., smiling or frowning).			
	Engages in socially reciprocal interactions (e.g., playing simple back-and-forth games).			
	Seeks social engagement with vocalizations, emotional expressions, or physical contact.			
	Watches faces closely.			
<b>Language-Social Communication</b>	Copies sounds.			
	Babbles with <i>p</i> , <i>b</i> , and <i>m</i> sounds.			
	Vocalizes excitement and displeasure (e.g., laughs and coos).			
	Produces distinct cries to show hunger, pain, or being tired.			

**By 6 months old***Rating key: 1 = Fully present; 2 = Inconsistently present or emerging; 3 = Absent.*

Competency Domain	Milestone	Milestone Rating	Comments	Competency Domain Rating
<b>Cognitive</b>	Tracks moving objects with eyes from side to side.			
	Experiments with cause and effect (e.g., bangs spoon on table).			
	Smiles and vocalizes in response to own face in mirror image.			
	Recognizes familiar people and things at a distance.			
	Demonstrates anticipation of certain routine activities (e.g., shows excitement in anticipation of being fed).			
<b>Movement and Physical</b>	Swats at dangling objects.			
	Pushes down on legs when feet are on a hard surface.			
	Sits without support.			
	Rolls over from tummy to back.			
	Holds and shakes an object.			
	Bangs two objects together.			
	Brings hands to midline.			
	Reaches for object with one hand.			

**By 9 months old***Rating key: 1 = Fully present; 2 = Inconsistently present or emerging; 3 = Absent.*

Competency Domain	Milestone	Milestone Rating	Comments	Competency Domain Rating
<b>Emotional</b>	Has strategies for self-soothing.			
	Demonstrates preference for caregivers.			
	Intentionally communicates feelings to others.			
<b>Social-Relational</b>	Distinguishes between familiar and unfamiliar voices.			
	Shows some stranger wariness.			
	Protests separation from caregiver.			
	Enjoys extended play with others, especially caregivers.			
	Engages in back-and-forth, two-way communication using vocalizations and eye contact.			
	Mimics other's simple gestures.			
	Follows other's gaze and pointing.			

**By 9 months old***Rating key: 1 = Fully present; 2 = Inconsistently present or emerging; 3 = Absent.*

Competency Domain	Milestone	Milestone Rating	Comments	Competency Domain Rating
<b>Language-Social Communication</b>	Responds to sounds by making sounds or moving body.			
	Imitates speech sounds when prompted			
	Begins to use noncrying sounds (speech sounds) to get and keep attention			
	String vowels together when babbling ( <i>ah, eh, oh</i> ).			
	Makes sounds to show joy or displeasure			
	Begins to use gestures to communicate wants and needs (e.g., reaches to be picked up).			
	Follows some routine commands when paired with gestures			
	Shows understanding of commonly used words.			
<b>Cognitive</b>	Mouths or bangs objects.			
	Tries to get objects that are out of reach.			
	Looks for things he or she sees others hide (e.g., toy under blanket).			

**By 9 months old***Rating key: 1 = Fully present; 2 = Inconsistently present or emerging; 3 = Absent.*

Competency Domain	Milestone	Milestone Rating	Comments	Competency Domain Rating
<b>Movement and Physical</b>	Rolls over in both directions (front to back, back to front).			
	Brings self to sitting position independently.			
	Stands with support.			
	Moves independently from one place to another (e.g., crawling, scooting).			
	Turns pages of a book.			
	Reaches for and grasps objects.			
	Passes objects from one hand to the other.			

**By 12 months old***Rating key: 1 = Fully present; 2 = Inconsistently present or emerging; 3 = Absent.*

Competency Domain	Milestone	Milestone Rating	Comments	Competency Domain Rating
<b>Emotional</b>	Looks to caregiver for information about new situations and environments.			
	Looks to caregiver to share emotional experiences.			
	Responds to other people's emotions (e.g., displays sober, serious face in response to sadness in parent; smiles when parent laughs).			
	Uses gestures to communicate feelings (e.g., clapping when excited).			
<b>Social-Relational</b>	Offers object to initiate interaction (e.g., hands caregiver a book to hear a story).			
	Plays interactive games (e.g., "peek-a-boo" and "pat-a-cake").			
	Looks at familiar people when they are named.			
	Gives object to seek help (e.g., hands shoe to parent).			
	Extends arm or leg to assist with dressing.			
<b>Language-Social Communication</b>	Understands "no."			
	Responds to own name.			
	Looks in response to "where" questions (e.g., "Where is the doggie?").			

**By 12 months old**

Rating key: 1 = Fully present; 2 = Inconsistently present or emerging; 3 = Absent.

Competency Domain	Milestone	Milestone Rating	Comments	Competency Domain Rating
<b>Language-Social Communication</b> <i>(continued)</i>	Makes different consonant sounds such as <i>mamamam</i> and <i>babababa</i> .			
	Points to nearby objects.			
	Imitates conventional gestures (e.g., waving bye-bye, clapping).			
	Responds to simple directives accompanied by gestures such as “come here.”			
	Has a few words (e.g., “mama,” “dada,” “hi,” “bye-bye,” or “dog”).			
<b>Cognitive</b>	Watches the path of something as it falls.			
	Has favorite objects (e.g., toys, blanket).			
	Explores objects and how they work in multiple ways (e.g., mouthing, touching, dropping).			
	Fills and dumps containers.			
	Plays with two objects at the same time.			

**By 12 months old***Rating key: 1 = Fully present; 2 = Inconsistently present or emerging; 3 = Absent.*

Competency Domain	Milestone	Milestone Rating	Comments	Competency Domain Rating
<b>Movement and Physical</b>	Takes a few steps without holding on.			
	Walks holding onto furniture (i.e., cruises).			
	Moves from sitting to standing position.			
	Stands alone.			
	Picks up things between thumb and index finger (e.g., cereal).			
	Crawls forward on belly, pulling with arms and pushing with legs.			
	Turns around while crawling.			
	Crawls while holding an object.			

**By 15 months old***Rating key: 1 = Fully present; 2 = Inconsistently present or emerging; 3 = Absent.*

Competency Domain	Milestone	Milestone Rating	Comments	Competency Domain Rating
<b>Emotional</b>	Shows affection with kisses (without pursed lips).			
	Demonstrates cautious or fearful behavior such as clinging to or hiding behind caregiver.			
<b>Social-Relational</b>	Seeks and enjoys attention from others, especially caregivers.			
	Engages in parallel play with peers.			
	Presents a book or toy when he or she wants to hear a story or to play.			
	Repeats sounds or actions to get attention.			
	Enjoys looking at picture books with caregiver.			
	Engages in parallel play with peers.			
<b>Language-Social Communication</b>	Uses simple gestures such as shaking head “no” or waving “bye-bye.”			
	Responds to the gestures of others.			
	Enjoys looking at picture books with caregivers.			
	Makes sounds with changes in tone (sounds more like speech).			

**By 15 months old***Rating key: 1 = Fully present; 2 = Inconsistently present or emerging; 3 = Absent.*

Competency Domain	Milestone	Milestone Rating	Comments	Competency Domain Rating
<b>Language-Social Communication</b> <i>(continued)</i>	Uses complex communication skills integrating gestures, vocalizations, and eye contact (e.g., looking to parent while taking his or her hand to bring him or her to a desired toy).			
	Identifies correct picture or object when it is named.			
	Follows simple requests (e.g., “pick up the toy”; “roll the ball”).			
<b>Cognitive</b>	Imitates complex gestures (e.g., signing).			
	Initiates joint attention (e.g., points to show others something interesting or to get others’ attention).			
	Finds hidden objects easily.			
	Uses objects for their intended purpose (e.g., drinks from a cup, smooths hair with brush).			
<b>Movement and Physical</b>	Explores physical environment.			
	Pushes objects (e.g., boxes, toy trucks, push toys).			
	Walks independently.			

**By 18 months old**

Rating key: 1 = Fully present; 2 = Inconsistently present or emerging; 3 = Absent.

Competency Domain	Milestone	Milestone Rating	Comments	Competency Domain Rating
<b>Emotional</b>	Demonstrates self-comforting strategies.			
	Shares humor with peers or adults (e.g., laughs at and makes funny faces or nonsense rhymes).			
<b>Social-Relational</b>	Likes to hand things to others during play.			
	Engages in reciprocal displays of affection (e.g., hugs or kisses with a pucker).			
	Asserts autonomy (e.g., “me do”).			
	Reacts with concern when someone appears hurt.			
	Leaves caregiver’s side to explore nearby objects or setting.			
	Engages in teasing behavior such as looking at parent and caregiver and doing something “forbidden.”			
<b>Language-Social Communication</b>	Uses at least 20 words or word approximations such as <i>baba</i> for ball.			
	Shows consistent increases in vocabulary each month.			
	Says and shakes head “no.”			
	Can follow one-step verbal commands without any gestures (e.g., sits when you say “sit down”).			

**By 18 months old***Rating key: 1 = Fully present; 2 = Inconsistently present or emerging; 3 = Absent.*

Competency Domain	Milestone	Milestone Rating	Comments	Competency Domain Rating
<b>Language-Social Communication</b> <i>(continued)</i>	When pointing, looks back to caregiver to confirm joint attention.			
	Combines words, gestures, and eye contact to communicate feelings and requests.			
<b>Cognitive</b>	Enacts play sequences with objects according to their intended use (e.g., pushing a toy dump truck and emptying its cargo).			
	Shows interest in a doll or stuffed animal by giving a hug.			
	Points to at least one body part.			
	Points to self when asked.			
	Plays simple pretend games (e.g., feeding a doll).			
	Scribbles with crayon, marker, and so forth.			
	Turns pages of book.			
	Recognizes self in mirror.			
<b>Movement and Physical</b>	Stacks two blocks.			
	Walks up steps with help.			

**By 18 months old***Rating key: 1 = Fully present; 2 = Inconsistently present or emerging; 3 = Absent.*

Competency Domain	Milestone	Milestone Rating	Comments	Competency Domain Rating
<b>Movement and Physical</b> <i>(continued)</i>	Pulls toys while walking.			
	Helps undress him- or herself (e.g., pulls off hat, socks, mittens).			
	Eats with a spoon.			
	Drinks from open cup.			

**By 24 months old***Rating key: 1 = Fully present; 2 = Inconsistently present or emerging; 3 = Absent.*

Competency Domain	Milestone	Milestone Rating	Comments	Competency Domain Rating
<b>Emotional</b>	Exhibits embarrassment and pride.			
	Exhibits shame and guilt.			
	Exhibits empathy (e.g., offers comfort when someone is hurt).			
	Attempts to exert independence frequently.			
	Names or understands words for basic emotions.			
<b>Social-Relational</b>	Imitates others' complex actions, especially adults and older children (e.g., putting plates on the table, posture, gestures).			
	Enjoys being with other young children.			
	Takes pride and pleasure in independent accomplishments.			
	Primarily plays in proximity to other young children but notices and imitates other young children's play more frequently.			
	Responds to being corrected or praised.			
<b>Language-Social Communication</b>	Enjoys being read to.			
	Names actions.			

**By 24 months old***Rating key: 1 = Fully present; 2 = Inconsistently present or emerging; 3 = Absent.*

Competency Domain	Milestone	Milestone Rating	Comments	Competency Domain Rating
<b>Language-Social Communication</b> <i>(continued)</i>	Knows names of familiar people and many body parts.			
	Uses two words together (e.g., “more cookie”; “Dada, bye-bye?”).			
	Repeats words overheard in conversation.			
	Names objects in picture books (e.g., cat, bird, ball, or dog).			
	Imitates animal sounds such as “meow,” “woof,” “baa,” and “moo.”			
	Uses some self-referential pronouns such as “mine.”			
<b>Cognitive</b>	Finds things even when hidden under two or three covers or when hidden in one place and moved to a second place (i.e., does not give up when the hidden object is not in the first location).			
	Begins to sort shapes and colors.			
	Completes sentences and rhymes from familiar books, stories, or songs.			
	Plays simple make-believe games (e.g., pretend meal).			
	Builds towers of four or more blocks.			
	Follows two-step instructions (e.g., “Pick up your shoes and put them in the closet”).			

**By 24 months old***Rating key: 1 = Fully present; 2 = Inconsistently present or emerging; 3 = Absent.*

Competency Domain	Milestone	Milestone Rating	Comments	Competency Domain Rating
<b>Movement and Physical</b>	Participates in dressing (e.g., putting arms into sleeves, pulling pants up or down, putting on hat).			
	Stands on tiptoes.			
	Kicks a ball.			
	Runs.			
	Climbs onto and down from furniture without help.			
	Walks up and down stairs holding on.			
	Draws lines.			
	Drinks using a straw.			
	Opens cabinets, drawers, and boxes.			

**By 36 months old***Rating key: 1 = Fully present; 2 = Inconsistently present or emerging; 3 = Absent.*

Competency Domain	Milestone	Milestone Rating	Comments	Competency Domain Rating
<b>Emotional</b>	Expresses full range of emotions, including pride, shame, guilt, and empathy.			
	Expresses distress or anger with words.			
	Shows pride in new learning and new experiences.			
	Expresses affection openly and verbally.			
	Expresses feelings through pretend play and drama.			
<b>Social-Relational</b>	Shows affection to peers without prompting.			
	Shares without prompts.			
	Can wait turn in playing games.			
	Shows concern for crying peer by taking action.			
	Engages in associative play with peers (i.e., infants/young children participate in similar activities without formal organization but with some interaction).			
	Shares accomplishments with others.			
	Helps with simple household tasks.			

**By 36 months old***Rating key: 1 = Fully present; 2 = Inconsistently present or emerging; 3 = Absent.*

Competency Domain	Milestone	Milestone Rating	Comments	Competency Domain Rating
<b>Language-Social Communication</b>	Clearly uses <i>k, g, f, t, d, and n</i> sounds.			
	Builds logical bridges between ideas using words such as “but” and “because.”			
	Asks questions using words such as “why?” or “how?”			
	Says first name when asked.			
	Names most familiar objects.			
	Understands words such as “in,” “on,” and “under.”			
	Knows own identifying information (e.g., name, age, gender).			
	Identifies peers by name.			
	Uses some plurals (e.g., “cars,” “dogs,” “cats”).			
	Uses labels “mine,” “I,” “you,” “me,” “their,” “his,” or “hers” accurately.			
	Speaks well enough for familiar listeners to understand most of the time.			
	Carries on a conversation using two or three sentences.			
	Uses sentences that are at least three to four words.			

**By 36 months old***Rating key: 1 = Fully present; 2 = Inconsistently present or emerging; 3 = Absent.*

Competency Domain	Milestone	Milestone Rating	Comments	Competency Domain Rating
<b>Cognitive</b>	Labels some colors correctly.			
	Plays thematic make-believe with objects, animals, and people.			
	Answers simple “why” questions (e.g., “Why do we need a coat when it’s cold outside?”).			
	Shows awareness of skill limitations.			
	Understands “bigger” and “smaller.”			
	Understands concept of “two.”			
	Enacts complex behavioral routines observed in daily life of caregivers, siblings, or peers.			
	Solves simple problems (e.g., obtains a desired object by opening a container).			
	Attends to a story for 5 minutes.			
<b>Movement and Physical</b>	Plays independently for 5 minutes.			
	Manipulates some buttons, levers, and moving parts.			
	Climbs on high and low structures.			
	Runs fluidly.			

**By 36 months old***Rating key: 1 = Fully present; 2 = Inconsistently present or emerging; 3 = Absent.*

Competency Domain	Milestone	Milestone Rating	Comments	Competency Domain Rating
<b>Movement and Physical</b> <i>(continued)</i>	Copies a circle.			
	Builds tower of more than six blocks.			
	Pedals a tricycle (three-wheel bicycle).			
	Catches and kicks big ball.			
	Walks up and down steps, alternating feet.			

**By 48 months old***Rating key: 1 = Fully present; 2 = Inconsistently present or emerging; 3 = Absent.*

Competency Domain	Milestone	Milestone Rating	Comments	Competency Domain Rating
<b>Emotional</b>	Expresses distress or anger with words.			
	Conveys emotional experiences in pretend play.			
	Complies with basic cultural rules for emotional expression.			
<b>Social-Relational</b>	Pretends to play “Mom” and “Dad” (or other relevant caregivers).			
	Asks about or talks about parent and caregiver when separated (i.e., holds the other in mind).			
	Engages in cooperative play with other infants/young children.			
	Has a preferred friend.			
	Expresses interests, likes, and dislikes.			
<b>Language-Social Communication</b>	Relates experiences from school or outside home.			
	Describes events or things using four or more sentences at a time.			
	Identifies rhyming words such as “cat-hat” or “ping-ring.”			
	Recognizes and understands basic rules of grammar (e.g., plurals, tense).			
	Sings a song or says a poem from memory (e.g., “Itsy Bitsy Spider” or the “Wheels on the Bus”).			

**By 48 months old***Rating key: 1 = Fully present; 2 = Inconsistently present or emerging; 3 = Absent.*

Competency Domain	Milestone	Milestone Rating	Comments	Competency Domain Rating
<b>Language-Social Communication</b> <i>(continued)</i>	Tells stories.			
	Says first and last name when asked.			
	Uses words or adjectives to describe or talk about him- or herself.			
	Understands, uses, and responds to questions of “how” or “when.”			
	Uses words that talk about time.			
	Speech is generally understood by nonfamily members.			
<b>Cognitive</b>	Names several colors and some numbers.			
	Counts to five.			
	Has rudimentary understanding of time.			
	Shares past experiences.			
	Remembers parts of a story.			
	Engages in make-believe play with capacity to build and elaborate on play themes.			
	Connects actions and emotions.			

**By 48 months old***Rating key: 1 = Fully present; 2 = Inconsistently present or emerging; 3 = Absent.*

Competency Domain	Milestone	Milestone Rating	Comments	Competency Domain Rating
<b>Cognitive</b> <i>(continued)</i>	Responds to questions that require understanding the idea of “same” and “different.”			
	Draws a person with two to four body parts.			
	Understands that actions can influence others’ emotions (e.g., tries to make others laugh by telling simple jokes).			
	Waits for turn in simple games.			
	Elaborates on thematic make-believe play.			
	Plays board or card games with simple rules.			
	Describes what is going to happen next in a book.			
	Talks about right and wrong.			
<b>Movement and Physical</b>	Skips, hops, and stands on one foot for up to 2 seconds.			
	Catches a large, bounced ball most of the time.			
	Copies “plus” sign.			
	Uses toilet during the day with few accidents.			
	Pours from one container to another, cuts with supervision, and mashes own food.			

**By 60 months old**

Rating key: 1 = Fully present; 2 = Inconsistently present or emerging; 3 = Absent.

Competency Domain	Milestone	Milestone Rating	Comments	Competency Domain Rating
<b>Emotional</b>	Expresses two or more emotions at the same time.			
	Shows awareness of and interest in personal success.			
	Shows increased confidence associated with greater independence and autonomy.			
<b>Social-Relational</b>	Wants to please friends.			
	Emulates role models, real or imaginary.			
	Values rules in social interactions.			
	Participates in group activities that require assuming roles (e.g., Follow the Leader).			
	Modulates or modifies voice correctly depending on situation or listener (e.g., outside voice, to adult, other infant/young child, or younger child).			
<b>Language-Social Communication</b>	Makes all speech sounds. May make mistakes on more difficult sounds such as <i>ch</i> , <i>sh</i> , <i>th</i> , <i>l</i> , <i>v</i> , and <i>z</i> (linguistically variable).			
	Understands words denoting order such as “first,” “second,” “third,” “next,” and “last.”			
	Uses “today,” “yesterday,” “tomorrow,” “last week,” and “before” correctly.			
	Discriminates rhyming and nonrhyming words.			

**By 60 months old***Rating key: 1 = Fully present; 2 = Inconsistently present or emerging; 3 = Absent.*

Competency Domain	Milestone	Milestone Rating	Comments	Competency Domain Rating
<b>Language-Social Communication</b> <i>(continued)</i>	Recognizes words with same beginning sound.			
	Identifies individual sounds within words (e.g., “dog”: d–o–g).			
	Tells a simple story using full sentences.			
	Uses future tense (e.g., “Grandma will be here”).			
	Says full name and address.			
<b>Cognitive</b>	Counts 10 or more things.			
	Tells stories with beginning, middle, and conclusion.			
	Draws a person with at least six body parts.			
	Acknowledges own mistakes or misbehaviors and can apologize.			
	Distinguishes fantasy from reality most of the time.			
	Names four colors correctly.			
	Follows rules in simple games.			
	Knows function of everyday household objects (e.g., money, cooking utensils, appliances).			

**By 60 months old***Rating key: 1 = Fully present; 2 = Inconsistently present or emerging; 3 = Absent.*

Competency Domain	Milestone	Milestone Rating	Comments	Competency Domain Rating
<b>Cognitive</b> <i>(continued)</i>	Attends to group activity for 15 minutes (e.g., circle time, storytelling).			
<b>Movement and Physical</b>	Stands on one foot for 10 seconds or longer.			
	Copies a triangle and other geometric shapes.			
	Copies some letters or numbers.			
	Hops on one foot.			
	Uses utensils to eat.			
	Uses the toilet independently (wipes, flushes, and washes hands).			
	Swings independently on a swing.			