



## FINE AND GROSS MOTOR SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

You might be wondering if your child is reaching certain developmental milestones in an appropriate time frame. While each child is different and will develop their motor skills at different times, there are some guidelines that pediatricians and pediatric physical and occupational therapists follow.

### What are motor skills?

Motor skills are the different ways in which the body uses muscles to perform specific tasks. Crawling, sitting up, and walking are all motor skills. So are picking up a toy or grabbing onto the railing of a crib. Motor skills are grouped into two types: fine motor skills and gross motor skills.

### Fine motor skills

These motor skills use smaller muscles, specifically those in the hand and wrist. These include grasping skills as well as eye-hand coordination.

### Gross motor skills

These motor skills use larger muscles and muscle groups. They include rolling, crawling, and walking.

### What are fine and gross motor milestones?

Milestones are behaviors that indicate typical stages of growth and development. Milestones occur at every age. Many of our gross and fine motor milestones occur within a range of time, so this chart may be used as a guideline. Each child develops at their own pace and if you are concerned about developmental delay, bring these concerns to your pediatrician.



## GROSS MOTOR MILESTONES

## FINE MOTOR MILESTONES

**0-2  
MONTHS**

**Two months:** starts lifting head during tummy time, pushes up onto forearms

Closes fingers in tight grasp  
Grasps rattle with one hand briefly  
Starts to bring hands to mouth

**3-5  
MONTHS**



**Three months:** lifts head higher while on tummy, pushes up

**Four months:** sits in "tripod" position, pull to sit with chin tuck (no head lag)



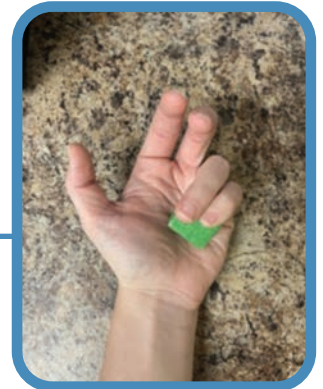
**Five months:** rolls belly to back, weight shifts and reaching on tummy, brings hands to feet on back



**Three months:** Grasps and pulls string or block, reaches up toward toy while lying on back

**Four months:** hands to midline for play

**Five to Six months:** uses ulnar palmar grasp to hold block



**6-8  
MONTHS**

**Six months:** rolls back to belly, lays on tummy pushing up onto hands, independent sitting

**Seven months:** Belly crawls  
Maintains quadruped position



**Eight months:** Crawls on hands and knees, sits quadruped, pulls to stand with support

Moves rattle in 90-degree arcs

Uses palmar grasp to hold block

Uses raking motion to grasp two small pellets



## GROSS MOTOR MILESTONES

## FINE MOTOR MILESTONES

### 12-14 MONTHS

**12 months:** creeps with hands and feet on the ground

Sit/squat to stand

Transitions from floor to stand

Independent walking

Creeps upstairs

Opens a board book

Places three pegs into pegboard

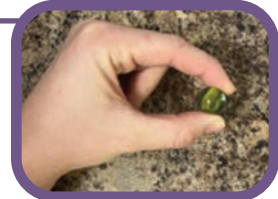


Places one shape into correct hole in shape board

**12 months:** uses superior pincer grasp to hold small objects

Holds marker with palmar supinate grasp

Attempts to use spoon to feed self



### 15-18 MONTHS

Creeps downstairs

Walks upstairs/downstairs with assist or support from wall

Walks backwards

Stacks two to three cubes

Places two shapes into correct holes in shape board

Holds marker with digital pronate grasp

### 19-24 MONTHS

Immature running

Ascends stairs with step to pattern

Turns three pages one at a time in a board book

Stacks four to six cubes

Draws a vertical line

## GROSS MOTOR MILESTONES

## FINE MOTOR MILESTONES

**2-3  
YEARS**

Balances on one leg for one to two seconds

Ascends stairs reciprocal/ alternating pattern

Descends stairs with step to pattern

Stacks eight to ten cubes

Draws horizontal line



Strings two to four beads

Draws a circle

Able to hold an object with one hand while using the other to perform an action (i.e. stabilize paper with one hand while coloring)

Unbuttons large buttons

Holds and snips with scissors

Proficient in spoon use

Demonstrates interest in using a fork

**3-4  
YEARS**

Balances on one leg for three to four seconds

Kicks a ball

Jumps

Runs



Laces three holes

Draws a cross

Buttons and unbuttons one large button

Uses tripod grasp to hold a marker

Manipulates small buttons

Uses scissors to cut a straight line



**4-5  
YEARS**

Hops on one foot

Balances on one leg for four to five seconds

Skips

Draws a square

Cuts out square and circle printed on paper

Hand preference established



### **What are developmental delays?**

Developmental delays occur when a child does not display expected milestones for his or her age. Developmental delays may occur at any time from infancy to school-age. They can occur in:

- Fine motor skills
- Gross motor skills
- Communication skills
- Adaptive skills
- Speech and language skills
- Cognitive skills

### **What to do if you notice a developmental delay in your child?**

Talk to your child's pediatrician. A pediatrician can perform simple tests with your child and refer you to specialists as needed. Specialists may include physical therapists, occupational therapists, speech therapists, neurologists, psychologists, and developmental behavioral pediatricians.