

Understanding Your Child's Developmental Needs



KEY MILESTONES BEFORE STARTING SCHOOL

Support your child's growth by recognizing **key milestones** such as language, motor skills, and social interaction. Engage in play and reading, and seek resources to ensure successful **school readiness**.

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<https://osepartnership.org/about>



New York State Education Department
Office of Special Education
Educational Partnership
Family and Community Engagement Center
NORTH COUNTRY

Checklist for Growing Children

**Developmental milestones are things most children can do by a certain age.
Here's what most children do by this age:**

Milestones at Age 2 months

- ☐ Calms down when spoken to or picked up
- ☐ Looks at your face
- ☐ Smiles when you talk to or smile at them
- ☐ Makes sounds other than crying
- ☐ Reacts to loud sounds
- ☐ Watches you as you move
- ☐ Looks at a toy for several seconds
- ☐ Holds head up when on tummy
- ☐ Moves both arms and both legs
- ☐ Opens and closes hands

Milestones at Age 4 months

- ☐ Chuckles (not yet a full laugh) when you try to make them laugh
- ☐ Looks at you, moves, or makes sounds to get or keep your attention
- ☐ Makes sounds like “oooo” and “aahh” (cooing)
- ☐ Turns head towards the sound of your voice
- ☐ Makes squealing noises
- ☐ If hungry, opens mouth when they see breast or bottle
- ☐ Looks at their hands with interest
- ☐ Rolls over from stomach to back
- ☐ Holds head steady without support when you are holding them
- ☐ Holds a toy when you put it in their hand

Milestones at Age 6 months

- ☐ Knows familiar people
- ☐ Likes to look at self in a mirror
- ☐ Turns toward the source of normal sound
- ☐ Blows “raspberries” (sticks tongue out and blows)
- ☐ Copies sounds you make
- ☐ Bangs small objects on a surface
- ☐ Reaches to grab a toy they want
- ☐ Closes lips to show they do not want more food
- ☐ Rolls over from back to stomach
- ☐ Sits up briefly without support
- ☐ Picks up small objects with whole hand
- ☐ Passes a toy from one hand to the other

Milestones at Age 9 months

- ☐ Shows several facial expressions, like happy, sad, angry, and surprised
- ☐ Reacts when you leave (looks, reaches for you, or cries)
- ☐ Looks when you call their name
- ☐ Looks around when hearing things like, “Where is your blanket?”
- ☐ Makes different sounds like “mamamama” and “bababababa”
- ☐ Looks for objects when dropped out of sight (like their spoon or toy)
- ☐ Plays peek-a-boo and pat-a-cake
- ☐ Crawls on hands and knees
- ☐ Sits without support
- ☐ Transitions between sitting and standing
- ☐ Lets go of objects intentionally
- ☐ Uses fingers to “rake” food toward themselves

Milestones at Age 12 months

- ☐ Understands “no” (pauses briefly or stops when you say it)
- ☐ Waves bye-bye
- ☐ Follows directions with gestures, such as motioning and saying, “Give me (object)”
- ☐ Calls a parent “mama” or “dada” or another special name
- ☐ Puts something in a container, like a block in a cup
- ☐ Looks for things they see you hide, like a toy under a blanket
- ☐ Stands without support
- ☐ Walks, holds onto furniture (cruising)
- ☐ Picks up food and eats it
- ☐ Picks up small objects with pointer finger and thumb

The written content in this chart was adapted from the following resources: 1. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2023, June 6). CDC’s developmental milestones. Retrieved November 6, 2023, from <https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly/milestones/index> 2. Hagan JF, Shaw JS, Duncan PM, eds. Bright Futures: Guidelines for Health Supervision of Infants, Children, and Adolescents [pocket guide]. 4th ed. Elk Grove Village, IL: American Academy of Pediatrics; 2017

Milestones at Age 15 months

- ☐ Copies other children while playing, like taking toys out of a container when another child does
- ☐ Drinks from a cup without a lid and may spill sometimes
- ☐ Shows you affection (hugs, cuddles, or kisses you)
- ☐ Points to ask for something or to get help
- ☐ Uses 3 words other than names
- ☐ Tries to use things the right way, like a phone, cup, or book
 - ☐ Looks around when you say things like, “Where’s your ball?” or “Where’s your blanket?”
- ☐ Crawls up stairs
- ☐ Squats to pick up objects
- ☐ Uses fingers to feed themselves some food

Milestones at Age 18 months

- ☐ Moves away from you, but looks to make sure you are close by
 - ☐ Points to show you something interesting
 - ☐ Helps you dress them, by pushing arm through sleeve or lifting their foot up
- ☐ Can identify 2 body parts
- ☐ Names at least 5 familiar objects
 - ☐ Copies you doing chores, like sweeping with a broom
- ☐ Plays with toys in a simple way, like pushing a toy car
- ☐ Can throw a small ball while standing
- ☐ Walks up steps with 2 feet per step with their hand held
- ☐ Walks backwards
- ☐ Tries to use a spoon
- ☐ Scribbles
- ☐ Follows one-step directions without any gestures, like giving you the toy when you say “Give it to me”

Milestones at Age 24 months

- ☐ Notices when others are hurt or upset, like pausing or looking sad when someone is crying
- ☐ Looks at your face to see how to react in a new situation
- ☐ Plays alongside other children
- ☐ Says at least two words together, like “More milk.”
- ☐ Tries to use switches, knobs, or buttons on a toy
- ☐ Plays with more than one toy at the same time, like putting toy food on a toy plate (combines toys in play)
- ☐ Runs
- ☐ Walks (not climbs) up a few stairs with or without help
- ☐ Kicks a ball
- ☐ Eats with a spoon

Milestones at Age 30 months

- ☐ Uses things to pretend, like feeding a block to a doll as if it were food
- ☐ Takes off some clothes by themselves, like loose pants or an open jacket
- ☐ Names things in a book when you point and ask, “What is this?”
- ☐ Says two or more words together, with one action word, like “Doggie run”
- ☐ Shows they know at least one color, like pointing to a red crayon when you ask, “Which one is red?”
- ☐ Shows simple problem-solving skills, like standing on a small stool to reach something
- ☐ Follows two-step instructions like “Put the toy down and close the door.”
- ☐ Runs well without falling
- ☐ Walks up steps using one foot, then the other
- ☐ Uses hands to twist things, like turning doorknobs or unscrewing lids
- ☐ Eats food with a fork
- ☐ Grasps a crayon with thumb and fingers instead of fist
- ☐ Says about 50 words

If your child is having trouble doing some of these things, it may put your mind at ease to talk to someone. Early help makes a difference! Talk with your doctor and call your local Early Intervention Program. (315) 386-2325.

What Help Is Available?

The New York State Early Intervention Program (EIP) provides services to eligible babies and toddlers under three years of age who are not developing like other children. You can refer your child for an evaluation. If your child qualifies for services, your local program will help you get them. There is no cost to families.

Services may include:

- Speech-language, physical, and occupational therapies
- Special instruction
- Audiology (hearing) and vision services
- Family support (social work, groups, training)

Which Children Need Early Help?

Any child under three years of age who may not be developing like other children due to a developmental delay, or a disability may need help.

Developmental Delay

A developmental delay means a child is behind in some area of development, such as growth, learning, thinking, or communicating.

Disability

A disability means that a child has a diagnosed physical or mental condition that affects their development.

New York State EIP services can be provided at home, at childcare, or anywhere your child spends their day.

This will help you and your family:

- Support and promote your child's growth
- Include your child in family and community activities

**Contact the Early Intervention Program at
(315) 386-2325.**

The Importance of Reading to Your Child



Kids who read only one book a day will hear about **290,000 more words by age 5** than those who aren't read to.

Children who have a larger vocabulary are better prepared to see those words in print when beginning to read.

Each picture book contains an average of **228 words**.

Exposure to reading of any kind is helpful!

Reading aloud or audio books can help.

Books to Help Build Vocabulary

"My First" books

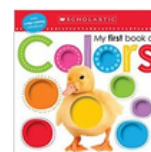
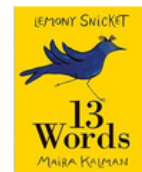
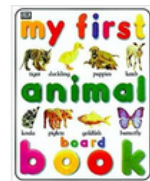
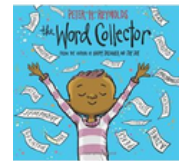
"The Boy Who Loved Words" by Roni Schotter

"The Word Collector" by Peter H Reynolds

"Thesaurus Rex" by Laya Steinberg

"The Incredible Ned" by Bill Maynard

"13 Words" by Lemony Snicket



Potsdam Public Library

Address

2 Park Street
Potsdam, NY 13676

Hours

Monday through Thursday: 9 AM – 8 PM
Friday and Saturday: 9 AM – 4 PM
Sunday: 12 PM – 4 PM

Story Times

2025 Story Time Sessions
Tuesdays/Thursdays
11AM – PPL Main Floor

Early literacy story times develop young children's vocabulary, motor skills, and background knowledge using books, rhymes, and movement activities to support reading readiness.



Language & Communication

From the very beginning, children are learning how to communicate by watching, listening, and trying things out. You don't need flashcards or fancy tools—just everyday conversations and play!

Talk, Talk, Talk

- Talk about what you're doing as you go through your day:
"We're putting on your shoes. One foot then the other!"
- Use real words and simple sentences—children learn language by hearing it used often.
- Talk during diaper changes, mealtimes, bath time, and while driving or walking.

Use Gestures and Visuals

- Use simple gestures like waving "hi" or "bye," or pointing to show interest.
- Show pictures, objects, or toys while talking about them—this helps connect words to meaning.

Make It Fun

- Play games like "I Spy," name body parts, or talk about what you see on a walk.
- Encourage pretend play with stuffed animals or dolls—it boosts storytelling and conversation.

Listen and Respond

- Pay attention to your child's sounds, words, and gestures.
- Respond like it's a conversation, even if they're not using real words yet.
- Repeat and build on what they say:
Child: "Ball!"
You: "Yes, that's a big red ball! Let's throw it!"

Read and Sing Together

- Read every day, even just for a few minutes. Point to pictures and talk about what's happening.
- Sing songs with hand motions (like "Itsy Bitsy Spider" or "Wheels on the Bus")—these build vocabulary and rhythm.
- Repetition helps! Children love hearing the same story or song over and over.

When to Seek Help

If your child is not:

- Babbling by 12 months
- Saying a few words by 18 months
- Using short phrases by age 2–3

Consider reaching out to your local Early Intervention program or pediatrician. Early support makes a big difference!

Learning Through Play

How play helps your child grow

Why Play Matters

Play is crucial for your child's development. It helps build essential **problem-solving skills**, fosters **creativity**, and boosts **confidence**. Through play, children develop **social, emotional, cognitive, and physical skills**.

Types of Play

Sensory Play: Exploring textures, sounds, and smells (e.g., playing with sand, water, or playdough).

Constructive Play: Building and creating things (e.g., blocks, LEGOs, or art projects).

Pretend Play: Role-playing and using imagination (e.g., playing house, doctor, or superheroes).

Physical Play: Moving and being active (e.g., running, jumping, climbing, or dancing).

Social Play: Interacting with others and learning to share, cooperate, and negotiate.

Everyday Play Ideas

Create a Treasure Box: Fill a box with interesting objects for your child to explore.

Build Forts: Use blankets, pillows, and furniture to create a cozy hideaway.

Play 'Follow the Leader': Take turns leading and imitating each other's actions.

Make Music: Use pots, pans, and spoons to create a band.

Follow Their Lead

Let your child choose the play activity and follow their interests. Ask open-ended questions like, "What are you building?" or "Tell me about your game." Let them lead and provide your support.

Keep It Simple

Children don't need fancy toys to have fun. Everyday objects like cardboard boxes, pots and pans, and wooden spoons can spark their creativity and imagination.

Screen-Free is Best

Real play is more beneficial than screen time for babies and toddlers. Encourage active, hands-on play to support their development.

Remember

Play is essential for children to make sense of the world around them and learn through exploration and discovery. Enjoy this precious time with your child!

Social and Emotional Growth

SUPPORTING YOUNG CHILDREN'S DEVELOPMENT

Helping children understand their feelings and connect with others is just as important as helping them learn to talk, walk, or count. Social and emotional development lays the foundation for healthy relationships, school readiness, and lifelong success.

What is Social & Emotional Development?

Learning to name and manage feelings. Developing empathy and understanding others. Building relationships with caregivers and peers. Learning to follow routines, take turns, and handle frustration.

How You Can Help

Offer comfort and reassurance when your child is upset. Talk about emotions:

"You look sad. Did something happen?"

Model calm behavior and problem-solving.

Use stories, books, and songs that explore feelings.

Build Connections Through Play

Play pretend games that involve different emotions or social roles. Practice taking turns and sharing in play. Celebrate cooperative play and kind behavior.

Routines Build Security

Consistent routines (meals, bedtime, etc.) help children feel safe.

Predictable schedules make transitions easier. Use visual schedules or simple pictures for support.

Teach Problem-Solving

Support your child in figuring out solutions: "What could we do instead?" Praise efforts to manage emotions or resolve conflicts. Help label feelings: happy, sad, angry, frustrated, excited.

When to Look for Help

⚠️ If your child:

Has ongoing trouble calming down or managing frustration.

Shows little interest in connecting with others.

Struggles with changes in routine or shows extreme behaviors.

Talk to your child's doctor or reach out to local early childhood resources. Early support can help! Every feeling is okay. With love and guidance, children learn to understand themselves and build strong, healthy relationships.

Supporting Movement and Motor Skills

What are Motor Skills?

Motor skills are the abilities that allow us to move and interact with the world around us. These skills are crucial for children's development, influencing everything from their physical health to their cognitive and social-emotional growth.

There are two main types of motor skills:

Gross Motor Skills: These involve large muscle movements, like running, jumping, and climbing.

Fine Motor Skills: These involve smaller muscle movements, particularly in the hands and fingers, like writing, drawing, and buttoning clothes.

Fine Motor Skills Activities

Playdough: Rolling, squeezing, and shaping playdough.

Bead stringing: Threading beads onto a string.

Cutting: Using safety scissors to cut paper.

Drawing and coloring: Using crayons, markers, or pencils.

Puzzles: Manipulating puzzle pieces.

Fine motor activities help children develop the small muscles in their hands and fingers.

This is essential for tasks like writing, using utensils, and buttoning clothes.

Encourage children to practice these skills regularly through play and everyday activities. Provide a variety of materials and tools to keep them engaged and challenged.



Gross Motor Skills Activities

Gross motor activities help children develop their large muscles, balance, and coordination. These skills are important for physical fitness, sports, and everyday movements. Create opportunities for children to be active and move their bodies throughout the day. Outdoor play is especially beneficial for gross motor development.



Running and jumping: Playing tag or jumping rope.

Climbing: Using playground equipment or climbing stairs.

Throwing and catching: Playing catch with a ball.

Dancing: Moving to music.

Riding a bike or scooter: Developing balance and coordination.



Tips for Parents

Provide plenty of opportunities for movement: Encourage active play and limit sedentary activities like watching TV or playing video games.

Create a safe environment: Make sure the play area is free of hazards and provides enough space for movement.

Offer a variety of activities: Expose children to different types of motor activities to develop a range of skills.

Be patient and supportive: Children develop at different rates, so be patient and encourage them to keep practicing.

Make it fun! The more enjoyable the activity, the more likely children are to participate and improve their skills.

Movement is fundamental to a child's development. It not only enhances physical health but also boosts cognitive abilities, social skills, and emotional well-being. Encouraging movement and supporting motor skills from a young age lays a strong foundation for a child's future success.

Healthy Habits for Kids

BUILDING ROUTINES FOR HEALTH

Building healthy habits early in life sets the stage for a lifetime of well-being. This guide offers simple, actionable steps parents can take to foster health and independence in their children.

Establish Daily Routines

Consistent routines provide children with a sense of security and predictability, making it easier for them to adopt healthy habits. Structure your child's day with set times for meals, activities, and bedtime.

Morning Routine:

- Wake up
- Brush teeth
- Get dressed
- Eat breakfast



Evening Routine:

- Dinner
- Bath
- Brush teeth
- Read a book
- Bedtime



Oral Hygiene

Brushing teeth twice a day is crucial for preventing cavities and maintaining healthy gums. Make it a fun activity by letting your child choose their toothbrush and toothpaste.

Brush in the morning after breakfast and **before bedtime**.

Use a **pea-sized amount** of toothpaste.

Supervise brushing until your child can brush effectively on their own (around age 7-8).

Replace toothbrushes every **3 months** or sooner if the bristles are frayed.

Handwashing Heroes

Frequent handwashing is one of the most effective ways to prevent the spread of germs. Teach your child to wash their hands properly and make it a regular part of their day.

Wet hands with **clean, running water**.

Apply **soap**.

Lather for at least **20 seconds** (sing "Happy Birthday" twice!).

Rinse thoroughly.

Dry hands with a clean towel or air dry.



Healthy Snacking

Offer nutritious snacks between meals to keep energy levels stable and prevent overeating at meal times. Avoid sugary drinks and processed snacks.

Healthy Snack Ideas:

Fruits (apples, bananas, berries)

Vegetables (carrot sticks, cucumber slices)

Yogurt

Cheese

Whole-grain crackers

Limit These Snacks:

Candy

Chips

Sugary drinks (soda, juice)

Cookies

Processed foods

Calming Bedtime Routine

A consistent bedtime routine helps children wind down and prepare for sleep. Avoid screen time (TV, tablets, phones) at least one hour before bed.

Take a **warm bath**.

Read a **book** together.

Listen to **calming music**.

Dim the lights.

Avoid **stimulating activities** before bed.



By implementing these simple strategies, you can help your child develop healthy habits that will benefit them for years to come.

Remember to be patient, consistent, and make it fun!

Local Resources for Families

Headstart

Head Start is a federally funded school readiness program for children ages 3–5, including those with special needs. Certified teachers provide a safe, healthy, and nurturing environment where children develop skills in math, science, literacy, language, social-emotional growth, and physical health through hands-on learning and play.

Head Start offers full-day, part-day, and home-based options. Home-based services deliver the same high-quality curriculum through weekly visits and twice-monthly group socialization experiences.

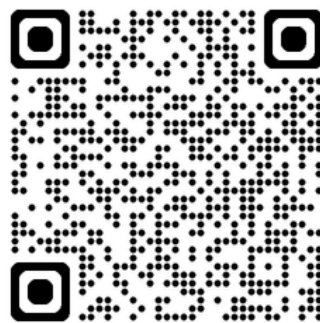
<https://slccdp.org/head-start/>



North Country Prenatal/Perinatal Council (NCPPC)

The NCPPC is dedicated to strengthening maternal and family health across Jefferson, Lewis, and St. Lawrence Counties. They offer a variety of programs and services designed to support families through education, resources, and community collaboration.

Healthy Families Program
Maternal and Infant Health Program
Youth Services Program
Community Education & Professional Development
Population Health Program
Health Insurance Assistance



<https://ncppc.org/>

Local Resources for Families Cont'd

North Country Children's Museum 10 Raymond Street, Potsdam, NY

The North Country Children's Museum offers hands-on, interactive exhibits and programs designed to engage children and families in STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics) learning through play.

Interactive Exhibits

Camps & Classes

Weekend Programs & Events

Community Education & Professional Development

Membership Options



Free Internet Resources

Khan Academy Kids ([khankids.org](https://www.khankids.org))

Completely free. Offers a full app with interactive activities, stories, and learning paths for children ages 2–8.

Funbrain Jr. ([funbrainjr.com](https://www.funbrainjr.com))

Free site with games, stories, and printables to help preschoolers build early math and reading skills.

Scholastic Early Learners ([scholastic.com](https://www.scholastic.com))

Free resources, articles, and activity ideas to help parents prepare children for kindergarten.

Free Apps

Khan Academy Kids

Joyful learning starts here!

Inspire a lifetime of learning and discovery with our free, fun educational program for children ages two to eight.



100% FREE! No ads, no subscriptions.



PBS KIDS Games

App

The PBS KIDS Games app makes learning fun and safe with amazing games featuring favorites like Daniel Tiger, Wild Kratts, Donkey Hodie, Alma's Way, and more! Play hundreds of free educational games designed for your child and watch as they learn with their favorite PBS characters.



Learning Letters Puppy App

Product: Y4984
Released: 2012
Battery Info: No Batteries Required
Ages: 6 Months and Up

Product Description

The Learning Letters Puppy App is a fun-filled learning activity featuring baby's favorite Laugh & Learn character. Baby is accompanied by internet with session.com. More



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Starfall™ games, movies, and songs. Where children have fun learning!



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FOLLOW US ON FACEBOOK!

- ? Are you feeling overwhelmed by the Special Education process?
- ? Confused about IEPs, 504 Plans, or your child's rights?
- ? Wondering how to better support your child's learning at home and school?

WE'RE HERE TO HELP—GET IN TOUCH!

- ✓ Direct Parent Consultation to provide support, education, and assistance on all aspects of the Special Education process.
- ✓ Live in person and/or virtual learning opportunities on important Special Education topics and processes.
- ✓ Encourage families to take meaningful action in education while fostering collaboration between schools, communities, and caregivers.

**WE SUPPORT FAMILIES, CAREGIVERS, SCHOOLS, AND COMMUNITIES IN
HELPING STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES SUCCEED.**

ALL SERVICES ARE PROVIDED AT NO COST!



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