Growth and development

Milestones, Erikson and Piaget, feeding, sleep and safety from birth to 17

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1 AT A GLANCE

Development runs head to toe, and from the center outward. A missed milestone means talking with the provider: problems found early respond best to help.

Milestones, birth to 2

Age	Expect
2 mo	Lifts head on tummy; smiles at voices; calms when picked up
★ 4 mo	**Head steady without support**; brings hands to mouth; coos
6 mo	Rolls front to back; sits leaning on hands; starts to know strangers
9 mo	Sits without support; passes toys hand to hand; looks for hidden things. Stranger anxiety is normal
1 yr	Pulls to stand and cruises; picks things up with thumb and finger; says mama and dada
18 mo	Walks alone; scribbles; eats with a spoon; about 3 words besides mama and dada
2 yr	Runs, kicks a ball, walks up stairs; word pairs

Screening: Development at 9, 18 and 30 months; autism at 18 and 24 months.

Growth

- ★ Birth weight about **doubles by 5 months and triples by 1 year**: a 7 lb newborn is about 21 lb at one.
- Fontanelles: posterior closes by about 2 months, anterior by about 18 months.
- Head circumference at every well visit: unusual growth can point to a developmental problem.
- Growth charts show the trend: a child normally follows the same percentile line. Weight falling behind height may mean too few calories.
- By 2, about half of adult height. Growth slows in the second year.
- School age: growth slows; children slim down and gain strength. Baby teeth start falling out around 6.
- Puberty: growth spurt, hands and feet first, then arms and legs, then the trunk.

Erikson and Piaget

Age	Erikson	Piaget	What you see, what helps
Infant, to 12 months	Trust vs mistrust	Sensorimotor (birth to 2): learns through the senses; object permanence by about 9 months	Food, warmth, safety and comfort that come reliably build trust
Toddler, 1 to 3	Autonomy vs shame and doubt	Sensorimotor to 2, then preoperational	No, tantrums, testing limits. **Offer simple choices**: the red book or the blue one?
Preschool, 3 to 5	Initiative vs guilt	Preoperational (2 to 7): words and symbols, but not logical yet	Magical thinking; may think illness is a punishment. **Reassure: it isn't their fault**
School age, 6 to 11	Industry vs inferiority	Concrete operational (7 to 11): logical about real things; conservation	Want to accomplish things, and compare themselves with peers. Praise effort
Teen, 12 and up	Identity vs role confusion	Formal operational (from about 12): abstract ideas	Peers central; risk-taking. Talk openly; independence within limits

Safety by age

	Teach
★ Safe sleep, to age 1	**On the back, every sleep**, even preterm babies and babies with reflux. Firm, flat, level surface with only a fitted sheet. Share a room, not a bed, for at least the first 6 months. Car seats and swings aren't for sleep
Infant car seat	Rear-facing, in the back seat, never in front of an active airbag. Harness snug, chest clip at nipple level, no bulky coat
★ Harness, then booster	Forward-facing harness until its height or weight limit. Then a **booster in the back until the adult belt fits**: back against the seat, knees bending naturally, lap belt on the upper thighs, shoulder belt across the chest, and they keep that fit the whole trip
Home	Water heater at 120 °F or lower. Never leave a baby alone in the bath: a baby can drown in an inch of water. Lock up medicines; button batteries out of reach
Play and sport	Helmets; swimming lessons and life jackets. Possible concussion: **stop playing right away** and get checked promptly
Teens	Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of accidental death: clear rules against texting while driving. Firearms locked, unloaded, stored apart from ammunition

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Growth and development

1 AT A GLANCE, CONTINUED

Preschool milestones

Age	Expect
3	Uses a fork; draws a circle when shown; strangers understand their speech most of the time
4	Rides a tricycle; catches a big ball; holds a pencil between fingers and thumb. Most dress and use the toilet on their own
5	Hops on one foot, skips, writes some letters, counts to 10, knows name and address

Play: Alone, then side by side (parallel), then sharing, then working together on a game.

Sleep needs

Age	Per day
Toddler	11 to 14 hours, naps included. Routines help
Preschool	10 to 13 hours. Nightmares and night terrors are common
School age	9 to 12 hours, and at least an hour of physical activity every day
★ **Teen**	**8 to 10 hours.** The body clock shifts later, so many are short on sleep

Feeding

- Breast milk alone for about the first 6 months, continuing alongside food to at least a year. Breastfed babies need vitamin D drops.
- Formula is iron-fortified, used until 12 months. Never heat a bottle in the microwave: hot spots burn.
- Solids at about 6 months, when the baby can sit with support, control the head, and swallow instead of pushing food out. One single-ingredient food every 3 to 5 days.
- ★ **No honey before age 1**: infant botulism.
- Choking: supervise every meal, feed sitting up, cut round foods and hot dogs into pieces under half an inch. Anything that fits through a toilet paper tube is a hazard until about age 3.
- Appetite drops as growth slows. Offer healthy food again and again and let the child decide how much. No clean-plate rule, no food as reward or punishment.

Screen, report and treat

- ★ **Lazy eye (amblyopia): correct the underlying vision problem first**, often with glasses. Patching or atropine may follow.
- Report squinting or head tilting. Screens: about an hour a day of good children's programs.
- Scoliosis signs: an uneven shoulder or hip, or a rib hump on bending forward. Report them. Screening isn't universal: the USPSTF finds too little evidence to screen teens 10 to 18 without symptoms.
- Teething usually starts at 4 to 7 months. Clean the mouth twice a day; see a dentist by age 1.

2 PRIORITY AND SAFETY CALLS

A missed milestone needs follow-up: a 9-month-old who doesn't hold her head steady (expected by 4 months) is reported to the provider.

★ Watch teens for depression, anxiety and eating disorders. A teen who seems very sad: **ask directly about suicidal thoughts**.

Preschool fears like monsters: work with the fantasy, like a magic spray, rather than arguing with logic.

Never leave a child alone in a car: the temperature inside can rise fast enough to kill.

Prevent falls: a hand on the baby on the changing table, safety straps, a stationary activity center instead of a walker.

3 EXAM ANCHORS

1. Weight doubles by 5 months and triples by a year. Follow the growth chart's trend.
2. Erikson: trust, autonomy, initiative, industry, identity. Piaget: sensorimotor, preoperational, concrete, formal.
3. Safe sleep traps: side-sleeping for reflux, tummy sleeping, an inclined surface, crib bumpers.
4. Feeding traps: honey before age 1, whole grapes, and arguing with a toddler instead of offering a choice.
5. Traps: reasoning away a preschooler's magical fears, a clean-plate rule, a seat belt too soon, playing on after a head injury.

4 SELF-QUIZ

1. The anterior fontanelle closes by about _____ months.
2. A baby has object permanence by about _____ months.
3. No honey before age 1, because of the risk of infant _____.
4. A preschooler is in Erikson's stage of initiative versus _____.
5. Teens need _____ hours of sleep a day.
6. Set the water heater at _____ °F or lower.

ANSWER KEY 1. 18 · 2. 9 · 3. botulism · 4. guilt · 5. 8 to 10 · 6. 120

5 SOURCES

1. NICHD Safe to Sleep, Ways to Reduce Baby's Risk. safetosleep.nichd.nih.gov/reduce-risk/reduce
2. NHTSA, Car Seats and Booster Seats. nhtsa.gov/vehicle-safety/car-seats-and-booste…
3. National Eye Institute, Amblyopia (Lazy Eye). nei.nih.gov/eye-health-information/eye-conditio…
4. CDC, About Sleep. cdc.gov/sleep/about
5. USPSTF, Adolescent Idiopathic Scoliosis: Screening. uspreventiveservicestaskforce.org/uspstf/recommendation/adolescent-id…
6. Open RN, Health Promotion, 13.3 Stages of Child Development. wtcs.pressbooks.pub/healthpromo/chapter/13-3-stages-of-…

Built from RN PocketPal course lessons: Growth and development: birth to 2 years (c04-l04); Growth and development: ages 3 to 17 (c04-l05). Every line on this sheet comes from those lesson scripts.

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