

## Parents' Role in Helping Children with Developmental Delays Catch Up with Normal Developmental Milestones

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### Abstract

Developmental milestones are a set of functional skills or age-specific tasks that most children can do at particular age ranges. Children reach these milestones in how they play, learn, speak, behave, and move. Therefore, a child's ability to play, learn, speak, and act offers important clues about the child's development. Globally, it is estimated that approximately 5% to 15% of children experience some kind of developmental delay. Over 250 million, approximately 43% of children living in low- and middle-income countries have some form of developmental delay. Early childhood is the most vulnerable period for the occurrence of developmental delays. Developmental delay occurs when a child fails to reach a set of developmental milestones either regarding movement and/or speech, social interaction, behavioral function, as well as cognitive ability as expected of him or her, compared to children of the same age. The delay can be mild, moderate or severe, which may be due to genetic and/or chromosomal abnormalities, infections, difficulties during birth, problems occurring after birth, and in some cases the cause is unknown. Certain disorders such as autism are strongly associated with delays in multiple developmental domains; however, developmental delays differ from developmental disorders, which are lifelong conditions. Parents are always anxious, feel stigmatized, and turn to withdraw from friends and other family members when their child lags behind or fails to reach a set of developmental milestones. Nurses and midwives are expected to educate parents on the normal changes that occur at each stage of the child's development, and what to do to enhance normal development. The role parents can play in helping their children attain normal developmental milestones cannot be over emphasized. A developmental delay can be reversed or the effect reduced if recognized and support given early. Specific problems like autism and related disorders need a multidisciplinary team to fully evaluate and intervene in order to allow the child to develop to his/her full potential. Some children may significantly improve with intervention, while others may require rehabilitation services and other therapies alongside special education programs to address learning difficulties. These services if made accessible will allow for early identification and support. This paper presents tips on how parents should assist children achieve normal developmental milestones and reduce the incidence of developmental delays.

**Keywords:** Developmental Milestones; Developmental Delays; Child Development; Parents' Role

### Introduction

Overall, approximately 15% of children experience some form of developmental delay, which may include multiple affected areas [1]. The recent Lancet Series on early childhood developmental delay reported that approximately 250 million children under 5 years are at risk of not reaching their developmental potential [2]. Globally, it is estimated that approximately 5% to 15% of children experience some kind of developmental delay [3]. Approximately 43% of children living in low- and middle-income countries have some form of developmental delay [4]. Developmental delays are a major public health concern, with affected children often having higher health-related needs and facing challenges that may impact their lifelong development and achievement [5].

The first three years of life is a significant period in child development during which rapid growth and development occur as the body's organs mature, mental capacities grow, and fundamental language and motor skills are learned [6,7]. During this period the child is expected to start displaying signs of attaining normal developmental milestones. These are a set of functional skills or age-specific tasks that most children can do at a certain age group [8]. For example, skills such as smiling, babbling, rolling over, crawling, saying "mama" or "dada," and putting two words together, taking a first step, walking, and waving "bye bye" are called developmental milestones. Hence, developmental milestones are classified into social and emotional, speech and language, cognitive, and movement/physical domains. They are developmental norms that spell out the identified pattern of development that children are expected to follow [9].

Children reach these milestones in how they play; for example, the baby at 2 months should be able to smile back at the parent. Also, it is evident that the child is learning when he/she can note the mother's presence from her perfume or recognizes her voice, or people in the house at 6 months. Thus, a child's ability to play, learn, speak, and act offers important clues about his/her development. As a result, developmental milestones are yardsticks used to monitor the child's development to determine if the child is developing normally because some children face difficulties to grow and acquire the necessary skills as expected; they lag behind their peers. A developmental delay describes a situation where a child fails to gain the developmental skills expected of him or her, when compared to children of the same age [10]. The delay may occur in the areas of motor function, speech and language, cognitive, play, and social skills.

If the child has significant delays in two or more of these areas of development, it is termed global developmental delay. It is important to note that each child develops in a unique way; however, these standards help in understanding these general patterns of development while recognizing the wide variation between individuals. Although each milestone has an age range, the actual age when a normally developing child reaches that milestone can vary, because each child is unique [11]; however, there is a normal range in which a child may reach each milestone. As mentioned earlier, it is worth noting that the age at which children reach milestones varies from child to child and some children, especially girls develop faster. Also, if a child is a preemie, he/she will likely reach milestones at his/her "adjusted" or "gestational" age, which takes into account that the said child is developmentally younger than his/her peers, but most preemies do catch up by age 2 or 2.5 years).

The causes for delays in development vary [12]; factors that may contribute can occur before a child is born, during the birth process, and after birth. These may include genetic or hereditary conditions like Down Syndrome, Metabolic Disorders such as phenylketonuria (PKU), and trauma to the brain, such as shaken baby syndrome. Also, premature birth, severe psychosocial trauma, such as post-traumatic stress disorder and some very serious infections may all lead to developmental delays. In addition, exposure to certain toxic substances like prenatal alcohol or lead poisoning, deprivation of food, and in some cases the cause may not be known [13,14]. There exist many different symptoms and signs of delay in children, which often vary depending on specific characteristics. Sometimes the symptoms may occur in infancy, while in other cases they may not be noticeable until the child reaches school age. Some of the most common symptoms and signs may include much delay in performing skills such as rolling over, sitting up, crawling, or walking when compared to typically developing children. Also, the child may have difficulties talking or may talk late, difficulty communicating or socializing with others, and have problems remembering things [15]. Other signs and symptoms include inability to connect actions with consequences, difficulty

with problem-solving or logical thinking, trouble learning in school and inability to do everyday tasks such as getting dressed or using the restroom without help.

Parents can play a crucial role in enhancing normal developmental milestones and prevent delay or mitigate its effects on the child. Unfortunately, most parents may not understand the concept of developmental milestones. According to a study conducted by Awad., *et al.* [16] most parents (76.0%) demonstrated a poor level of knowledge regarding developmental milestones. Also, a study conducted by Asad., *et al.* [17] revealed that parents showed poor levels of knowledge in all four domains of developmental milestones. It is worth noting that the Parents' Evaluation of Developmental Status (PEDS) are widely used as part of early detection of developmental delays tools; routinely used as developmental surveillance and standardized screening tools [18]. Therefore, parents are supposed to be empowered to identify the early signs of developmental delay given that they are part of the diagnostic team.

It is important to note that these tools are designed to be parent-reported and help identify children who may be at risk for delays in areas like communication, motor skills, social interaction, and cognition. The tools are complemented through observation made by pediatricians and interviews with parents, which provides a comprehensive view of a child's development [13]. According to Coker., *et al.* [19] Statistics indicate that early screening can detect developmental delays in nearly half of the cases before a child turns three years. Recognizing the signs of developmental delay early and implementing the right support can make a significant difference in helping the child reach their full potential [20].

Hence, nurses and midwives are expected to educate parents on normal developmental milestones; what the child is displaying, how to take care of the child, what to expect next and what to do if any stage is seriously delayed. Instead, most parents rely on relatives and friends for information regarding their child development [17]. Despite the fact that early support can address developmental delays most parents are not aware of the significant role they can play in helping their child achieve normal developmental milestones and perform to their full potential. Thus, this paper presents the different skills a child is expected to display at each stage of development and the role of the parent in promoting normal developmental milestones. This is in order to educate parents so that they can in turn assist their children catch up with delays, enhance early identification of developmental issues and intervene accordingly. Specifically, this paper describes developmental milestones from 0-5years, state the early signs of developmental delay and the available therapies for supporting children with developmental delays grow to their full potential.

### Developmental milestones from 0 - 5 years

The subsequent sub-sections present the classification of developmental milestones, skills children are expected to achieve and parental support tips to assist children experiencing developmental delays.

### Classification of normal developmental milestones

According to Zubler, *et al.* [9] and Cleveland Clinic [21] developmental milestones are classified into four domains as presented below:

- **Social and emotional skills:** Here the child is expected to display skills in social interaction such as interacting with others, having relationships with family, friends and teachers, cooperating and responding to the feelings of others. It is important to note that the child's emotional, mental health and wellbeing, do not just mean being 'happy' but feeling 'in control' or 'feeling balanced'. It's about the child "having the resilience, self-awareness, social skills and empathy required to form relationships, enjoy one's own company and deal constructively with the setbacks that everyone faces from time to time in life". Improved emotional, mental health and wellbeing is associated with a range of better outcomes for children of all ages and backgrounds. These include improved physical health and life expectancy, better educational achievement, increased skills, reduced health risk behaviors such as smoking and alcohol misuse, reduced risk of mental health problems and suicide. Achieving milestones in this domain will enhance the sense of responsibility and productivity, reduce anti-social behavior and criminality, and promote higher levels of social interaction and participation in building the society are future benefits.

- **Speech and language skills:** This refers to tasks such as speaking using body language and gestures, communicating and understanding what others say.
- **Cognitive skills:** This domain measures the child's thinking skills such as learning, understanding, problem-solving, reasoning and the ability to remember.
- **Movement/physical skills:** In this domain, the developmental milestones to be acquired involves Gross motor skills that is, using large groups of muscles to sit, stand, walk, and run; keeping balance and changing positions. This domain also entails acquiring fine motor skills, which involves using hands to eat, draw, dress, play, write and do many other things.

### Skills children are expected to achieve from 0 - 5 years

This sub-section presents important milestones (according to the four domains) from 0-5years, and parental tips for supporting children with developmental delays catch up; in order to grow to their full potential [22-25]. Also, the red flags to be reported at each stage of development in order for screening to be done early are summarized in table 1-11 respectively.

| Normal Developmental Milestones |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | Parental Support Actions                                                                                                                                                                                                          | Red Flags and Next Steps                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Domain                          | Skills                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| Social and Emotional            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Begins to smile at people</li> <li>-Tries to look at mother's face</li> <li>-Can briefly calm self; may bring hands to mouth and</li> </ul>        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Respond positively to the baby by acting excited, smiling, and talking to him when he makes sounds. This teaches them to take turns; "talking" back and forth in conversation.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*If your child does not do any of the following: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Respond to loud sounds</li> <li>2. Smile at people</li> <li>3. Bring hands to mouth</li> <li>4. Hold head up when pushing up when on tummy.</li> <li>5. Make sounds other than crying</li> </ol> </li> <li>*REPORT to your health care provider</li> </ul> |
| Language or Communication       | <p>Babies usually start cooing at around 2 months</p>                                                                                                                                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Talk, read, and sing to the baby. These activities help the child to develop and understand language.</li> </ul>                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| Movement or Physical            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Holds head up when on tummy</li> </ul>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Moves both arms and legs</li> <li>-Opens hands briefly</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Spend time cuddling and holding your baby. This will help him feel safe, loved and cared for.</li> </ul>                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |

**Table 1:** Skills expected of the child at two months and parental support actions.

| Normal Developmental Milestones                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | Parental Support Actions                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | Red Flags and Next Steps                                                                                                                                                                             |
|-------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Domain                                          | Tasks                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Social and Emotional                            | Smiles spontaneously, especially at people                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | *Spend quality time talking, singing and playing with your child                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | <div>*</div> <div>1. Poor head control</div> <div>2. Child not responding to sounds</div> <div>3. A lack of social smiling or eye contact</div> <div><br/>*REPORT to your health care provider</div> |
|                                                 | Likes to play with people and might cry when playing stops                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | These assist in social and cognitive growth                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|                                                 | Imitates some movements and facial expressions, like smiling or frowning <div></div>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | *Respond positively to your baby. Act excited, smile, and talk to him when he makes sounds. This teaches him to take turns “talking” back and forth in conversation.<br><br>*Provide safe opportunities for your baby to reach for toys, kick at toys and explore what is around her. For example, put her on a blanket with safe toys. |                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Language or Communication                       | <div>-Begins to babble</div> <div>-Babbles with expression and copies sounds he hears</div> <div>-Cries in different ways to show hunger, pain, or being tired</div>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | <div>*Allow your baby to put safe things in his mouth to explore them. This is how babies learn. For example, let him see, hear, and touch things that are not sharp, hot, or small enough to choke on.</div>                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Cognitive (learning, thinking, problem-solving) | <div>-Lets you know if she is happy or sad</div> <div>-Responds to affection</div> <div>-Reaches for toy with one hand</div> <div></div> <div>-Uses hands and eyes together, such as seeing a toy and reaching for it</div> <div>-Follows moving things with eyes from side to side</div> <div>-Watches faces closely</div> <div>-Recognizes familiar people and things at a distance</div> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Movement or Physical                            | <div>-Holds head steady, unsupported</div> <div>-Pushes down on legs when feet are on a hard surface</div> <div>-May be able to roll over from tummy to back</div> <div>-Can hold a toy and shake it and swing at dangling toys</div> <div>-Brings hands to mouth</div> <div>-When lying on stomach, pushes up to elbows</div>                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                      |

Table 2: Skills expected of the child at four months and parental support actions.

| Normal Developmental Milestones                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | Parental Support Actions                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | Red Flags and Next Steps                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|-------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Domain                                          | Tasks                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| Social and Emotional                            | Knows familiar faces and begins to know if someone is a stranger<br><br>Likes to play with others, especially parents<br><br>Responds to other people’s emotions and often seems happy<br><br>Likes to look at self in a mirror                                                                                                                                                                                           | *Use “back and forth” play with your baby. When your baby smiles, you smile; when he makes sounds, you copy them. This helps him learn to be social.<br><br>* “Read” to your baby every day by looking at colorful pictures in magazines or books and talk about them.<br>*Respond to her when she babbles and “reads” too. For example, if she makes sounds, say “Yes, that’s the doggy!”<br><br>*Point out new things to your baby and name them. For example, when on a walk, point to and call out cars, trees, and animals as you see accordingly. | *If child doesn’t try to:<br><br>1. Get things that are in reach<br><br>2. Show affection for caregivers<br><br>3. Respond to sounds around him<br><br>4. Get things to mouth<br><br>5. Make vowel sounds (“ah,” “eh,” “oh”)<br><br>6. Roll over in either direction<br><br>7. Laugh or make squealing sounds<br><br>*If child seems:<br><br>8. Very stiff, with tight muscles<br><br>9. Very floppy, like a rag doll<br><br>10. To lack social smiles and expressions<br><br>*REPORT to your health care provider |
| Language or Communication                       | Responds to sounds by making sounds<br><br>Strings vowels together when babbling (“ah,” “eh,” “oh”) and likes taking turns with parent while making sounds<br><br>Responds to own name<br><br>Makes sounds to show joy and displeasure<br><br>Begins to say consonant sounds (jabbering with p“m,” “b”)<br><br>Pays attention to music<br><br>Usually speaks in gibberish, called jargon (speak rapidly and indistinctly) |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| Cognitive (learning, thinking, problem-solving) | Looks around at things nearby<br><br>Brings things to mouth<br><br>Shows curiosity about things and tries to get things that are out of reach<br><br>Begins to pass things from one hand to the other<br>                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| Movement or Physical                            | Rolls over in both directions (front to back, back to front)<br><br>Begins to sit without support<br><br>When standing, supports weight on legs and might bounce<br><br>Rocks back and forth, sometimes crawling backward before moving forward                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |

Table 3: Skills expected of the child at six months and parental support actions.

| Normal Developmental Milestones                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | Parental Support Actions                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Red Flags and Next Steps                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|-------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Domain                                          | Tasks                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Social and Emotional                            | <p>May be afraid of strangers</p> <p>May be clingy with familiar adults</p> <p>Has favorite toys</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | <p>*Repeat your baby’s sounds and say simple words using those sounds. For example, if your baby says “bababa,” repeat “bababa,” then say “book.”</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | <p>*</p> <p>If your child doesn’t:</p> <p>Bear weight on legs with support</p> <p>Sit with help</p> <p>Babble (“mama”, “baba”, “dada”)</p> <p>Play any games involving back-and-forth</p> <p>Respond to own name</p> <p>Seem to recognize familiar people</p> <p>Look where you point</p> <p>Transfer toys from one hand to the other</p> <p>*REPORT to your health care provider</p> |
| Language or Communication                       | <p>Understands “no” (so at this level the child shouldn’t be confused between ‘No’ and ‘yes’</p> <p>Makes a lot of different sounds like “mamamama” and “baba-bababa”</p> <p>Copies sounds and gestures of others</p> <div></div>      | <p>*Place toys on the ground or on a play mat a little out of reach and encourage your baby to crawl, scoot, or roll to get them.</p> <p>*Celebrate when she reaches them.</p> <p>*Teach your baby to wave “bye-bye” or shake his head “no.” For example, wave and say “bye-bye” when you are leaving</p> <div></div> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Cognitive (learning, thinking, problem-solving) | <p>Uses fingers to point at things</p> <p>Watches the path of something as it falls</p> <p>Looks for things he sees you hiding</p> <p>Plays peek-a-boo</p> <p>Puts things in her mouth</p> <p>Moves things smoothly from one hand to the other</p> <p>Picks up things like cereal o’s between thumb and index finger</p> | <p>*You can also teach simple baby sign language to help your baby tell you what he wants before he can use words.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Movement or Physical                            | <p>Stands, holding on</p> <p>Can get into sitting position</p> <p>Sits without support</p> <p>Pulls to stand</p> <p>Crawls</p>                                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |

Table 4: Skills expected of the child at nine months and parental support actions.

| Normal Developmental Milestones                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | Parental Support Actions                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Red Flags and Next Steps                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|-------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Domain                                          | Skills                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Social and Emotional                            | Is shy or nervous with strangers<br>Cries when mom or dad leaves<br>Has favorite things and people<br>Shows fear in some situations (e.g. loud sound)<br>Hands you a book when he wants to hear a story<br>Repeats sounds or actions to get attention<br>Puts out arm or leg to help with dressing<br><br>Plays games such as “peek-a boo” and “pat-a-cake”                                                                                                                              | <p>*Teach your baby “wanted behaviors.” Show her what to do and use positive words or give her hugs and kisses when she does it. For example, if she pulls your pet’s tail, teach her how to pet gently and give her a hug when she does it.</p>  <p>*Talk or sing to your baby about what you’re doing. For example, “Mommy is washing your hands” or sing, “This is the way we wash our hands……”</p> | <p>*</p> <p>If your child</p> <p>Doesn’t crawl</p> <p>Can’t stand when supported</p> <p>Doesn’t search for things that she sees you hide</p> <p>Doesn’t say single words like “mama” or “dada”</p> <p>Doesn’t learn gestures like waving or shaking head</p> <p>Doesn’t point to things</p> <p>Loses skills he once had</p> <p>*REPORT to your health care provider</p> |
|                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
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| Language Or Communication                       | Responds to simple spoken requests<br>Uses simple gestures, like shaking head “no” or waving “bye-bye”<br><br>Makes sounds with changes in tone (sounds more like speech)<br>Says “mama” and “dada” and exclamations like “uh-oh!”<br><br>Tries to say words you say                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | <p>*Build on what your baby tries to say. If he says “ta,” say “Yes, a truck,” or if he says “truck,” say “Yes, that’s a big, blue truck.”</p> <p>*Create a stimulating environment:</p> <p>Playing with toys and stacking blocks can boost motor skills and cognitive development</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Cognitive (learning, thinking, problem-solving) | Explores things in different ways, like shaking, banging, throwing<br>Finds hidden things easily<br>Looks at the right picture or thing when it’s named<br><br>Copies gestures<br><br>Starts to use things correctly; for example, drinks from a cup, brushes hair<br>Bangs two things together<br>Puts things in a container; takes things out of a container. Lets things go without help<br>Pokes with index (pointer) finger<br><br>Follows simple directions like “pick up the toy” |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Movement or Physical                            | Gets to a sitting position without help<br><br>Pulls up to stand, walks holding on to furniture(“cruising”)<br>May take a few steps without holding on<br>May stand alone                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |

Table 5: Skills expected of the child at one year and parental support actions.

| Normal Developmental Milestones                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | Parental Support Actions                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Red Flags and Next Steps                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|-------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Domain                                          | Skills                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Social and Emotional                            | <p>Shows you an object she likes</p> <p>Copies other children while playing, like taking toys out of a container when another child does</p>  <p>Claps when excited</p> <p>Hugs stuffed doll or other toys</p> <p>Shows you affection (hugs, cuddles, or kisses you)</p>     | <p>*Help your child learn to speak; note a child's early words are not complete.</p> <p>*So repeat, complete and add to what he says.</p> <p>*He may say "ba" for ball and you can say "Ball, yes, that's a ball."</p> <p>*Tell your child the names of objects when he points to them and wait a few seconds to see if he makes any sounds before handing it to him.</p> <p>*If he does make a sound, acknowledge him, and repeat the name of the object. "Yes! Cup", for example</p> <p>*Find ways to let your child help with everyday activities.</p> <p>*For example, let her get her shoes to go outside, help put the snacks in the bag for the park, or put the socks or other items in the basket.</p> | <p>*</p> <p>If there is a complete lack of spoken words.</p> <p>An inability to point or gesture</p> <p>Not responding to his name</p> <p>An inability to stand or walk with support.</p> <p>*REPORT to your health care provider</p> |
| Language or Communication                       | <p>Tries to say one or two words besides "mama" or "dada," like "ba" for ball or "da" for dog</p> <p>Looks at a familiar object when you call it</p> <p>Follows directions given with both a gesture and words. For example, he gives you a toy when you hold out your hand and say: "Give me the toy."</p> <p>Points to ask for something or to get help</p> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Cognitive (learning, thinking, problem-solving) | <p>Tries to use things the right way, like a phone, cup, or book</p> <p>Stacks at least two small objects, like blocks</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Movement or Physical                            | <p>Takes a few steps on his own</p> <p>Uses fingers to feed self</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |

Table 6: Skills expected of the child at 15 months and parental support actions.



| Normal Developmental Milestones                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Parental Support Actions                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Red Flags and Next Steps                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|-------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Domain                                          | Tasks/Skills                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Social and Emotional                            | Copies others, especially adults and older children<br><br>Gets excited when with other children<br><br>Shows more and more independence (want to bathe or eat)<br><br>Shows defiant behavior (doing what he has been told not to)<br><br>Plays mainly beside siblings, but is beginning to include other children, such as in chase games                                                                                                           | *Talk while doing things and going to places.<br><br>*When taking a walk for example, point to familiar objects (e.g., cars, trees, and birds) and say their names.<br><br>*"I see a dog. The dog says ‘woof.’ This is a big dog. This dog is brown.”<br><br>*Use simple but grammatical speech that is easy for your child to imitate.<br><br>*Take a sound walk around your house or in the baby’s room. Introduce him/her to Timmy Clock, who says “t-t-t-t.”                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | *If your child doesn’t:<br><br>Use 2-word phrases (e.g, “no want”)<br><br>Know what to do with common things, like a brush, phone, fork, spoon, comb                                                                             |
| Language or Communication                       | Points to things or pictures when they are named<br><br>Knows names of familiar people and body parts<br><br>Says sentences with 2 to 4 words (“Papa go”, “mama play”, “mama go market”, “mama go buy biscuits”)<br><br>Follows simple instructions<br><br>Repeats words overheard in conversation<br><br>Points to things in a book                                                                                                                 | *Listen to the clock as it ticks. Find Mad Kitty Cat who bites her lip and says “f-f-f-f” or Vinnie Airplane who bites his lip, turns his voice motor on and says “v-v-v-v.”<br><br>These sounds will be old friends when your child is introduced to phonics in preschool and kindergarten.<br><br>*Make bath time sounds like “playtime” as well.<br><br>*Be at eye-level with your child. Play with Peter Tugboat, who says “p-p-p-p.” Let your child feel the air of sounds as you make them.<br><br>*Blow bubbles and make the sound “b-b-b-b.” Feel the motor in your throat on this sound. Engines on toys can make a wonderful “rrr-rrr-rrr” sound.<br><br>*Expand on words. For example, if your child says “car,” you respond by saying, “You’re right! That is a big red car.”<br><br>*Continue to find time to read to your child every day. | Copy actions and words<br><br>-Follow simple instructions<br><br>Walk steadily<br><br>* If your child:<br><br>Says fewer than 50 words by 24 months<br><br>Loses skills she once had<br><br>*REPORT to your health care provider |
| Cognitive (learning, thinking, problem-solving) | Finds things even when hidden under two or three covers<br><br>Begins to sort shapes and colors<br><br>Completes sentences and rhymes in familiar books<br><br>Plays simple make-believe games<br><br>Builds towers of 4 or more blocks<br><br>Might use one hand more than the other<br><br>Follows two-step instructions such as “Pick up your shoes and put them in the closet.”<br><br>Names items in a picture book such as a cat, bird, or dog |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Movement or Physical                            | Stands on tiptoe<br><br>Kicks a ball<br><br>Begins to run<br><br>Climbs onto and down from furniture without help<br><br>Walks up and down stairs holding on<br><br>Throws ball overhand<br><br>Makes or copies straight lines and circles                                                                                                                                                                                                           | Have your child point to pictures that you name.<br><br>*Ask your child to name pictures. He or she may not respond to your naming requests at first.<br><br>*Just name the pictures for him or her. One day, he or she will surprise you by coming out with the picture’s name.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |

Table 8: Skills expected of the child at two years and parental support actions.

| Normal Developmental Milestones                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | Parental Support Actions                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | Red Flags and Next Steps                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|-------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Domain                                          | Tasks/Skills                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Social and Emotional                            | Copies adults and friends<br>Shows affection for friends without prompting<br>Takes turns in games<br>Shows concern for crying friend<br>Understands the idea of "mine" and "his" or "hers"<br>Shows a wide range of emotions<br>Separates easily from mom and dad<br>May get upset with major changes in routine<br>Dresses and undresses self                                                                                                         | *Help your child learn how words sound, even if he can't say them clearly yet. For example, if your child says, "or nana," say "You want more banana."<br><br>*Watch your child closely during playdates. Children at this age play next to each other, but do not know how to share and solve problems.                                                                                            | *<br><br>Your child falls down a lot or has trouble with stairs<br><br>Drools or has very unclear speech<br><br>Can't work simple toys (such as peg boards, simple puzzles, turning handle)<br><br>Doesn't speak in sentences<br><br>Doesn't understand simple instructions<br><br>Doesn't play pretend or make-believe |
| Language or Communication                       | Follows instructions with 2 or 3 steps<br>Can name most familiar things<br>Understands words like "in," "on," and "under"<br>Says first name, age, and sex<br>Names a friend<br>Says words like "I," "me," "we," and "you" and some plurals (cars, dogs, cats)<br>Talks well enough for strangers to understand most of the time<br>Carries on a conversation using 2 to 3 sentences                                                                    | *Show your child how to deal with conflicts by helping her share, take turns, and use words when possible.<br><br>*Have your child help you get ready for mealtime, by letting him carry things to the table, such as plastic cups or napkins. *Thank your child for helping.<br><br>*Encourage "free play," where your child can follow her interests, try new things, and use things in new ways. | Doesn't want to play with other children or with toys<br><br>Doesn't make eye contact<br><br>Loses skills he once had                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Cognitive (learning, thinking, problem-solving) | Can work toys with buttons, levers, and moving parts<br><br>Plays make-believe with dolls, animals, and people<br><br>Does puzzles with 3 or 4 pieces<br><br><br>Understands what "two" means<br>Copies a circle with pencil or crayon<br>Turns book pages one at a time<br>Builds towers of more than 6 blocks<br>Screws and unscrews jar lids or turns door handle | *Use positive words and give more attention to behaviors you want to see ("wanted behaviors"), than to those you don't want to see. For example, say "I like how you gave John the toy."<br><br>*Give your child food choices that are simple and healthy. Let him choose what to eat for a snack or what to wear.<br><br>*Limit choices to two or three.                                           | Doesn't make eye contact<br><br>Loses skills he once had<br><br>*REPORT to your health care provider                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| Movement or Physical                            | Climbs well<br><br>Runs easily<br><br>Pedals a tricycle (3-wheel bike)<br><br>Walks up and down stairs, one foot on each step                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |

Table 9: Skills expected of the child at 2 -3 years and parental support actions.

| Normal Developmental Milestones                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | Parental Support Actions                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | Red Flags and Next Steps                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|-------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Domain                                          | Tasks/Skills                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Social and Emotional                            | <p>Enjoys doing new things</p> <p>Plays “Mom” and “Dad”</p> <p>Is more and more creative with make-believe play</p> <p>Would rather play with other children than by himself</p> <p>Cooperates with other children</p> <p>Often can’t tell what’s real and what’s make-believe</p> <p>Talks about what she likes and what she is interested in</p>       | <p>*Help your child be ready for new places and meeting new people. For example, you can read stories or role play (pretend play) to help him be comfortable.</p> <p>*Read with your child. Ask him what’s happening in the story and what he thinks might happen next.</p> <p>*Help your child learn about colors, shapes, and sizes. For example, ask the color, shapes, and size of things she sees during the day.</p>  | <p>*</p> <p>If your child:</p> <p>Can’t jump in place</p> <p>Has trouble scribbling</p> <p>Shows no interest in interactive games or make-believe</p> <p>Ignores other children or doesn’t respond to people outside the family</p> <p>Resists dressing, sleeping, and using the toilet</p> <p>Can’t retell a favorite story</p> <p>Doesn’t follow 3-part commands</p> <p>Doesn’t understand “same” and “different”</p> <p>Doesn’t use “me” and “you” correctly</p> <p>Speaks unclearly</p> <p>Loses skills he once had</p> <p>*REPORT to your health care provider</p> |
| Language or Communication                       | <p>Knows some basic rules of grammar, such as correctly using “he” and “she”</p> <p>Sings a song or says a poem from memory such as the “Twinkle Twinkle little star” or the “Wheels on the Bus”</p> <p>Tells stories</p> <p>Can say first and last name</p>                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Cognitive (learning, thinking, problem-solving) | <p>Names some colors and some numbers</p> <p>Understands the idea of counting</p> <p>Starts to understand time</p> <p>Remembers parts of a story</p> <p>Understands the idea of “same” and “different”</p> <p>Draws a person with 2 to 4 body parts</p> <p>Uses scissors</p> <p>Starts to copy some capital letters</p> <p>Plays board or card games</p> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Movement or Physical                            | <p>Hops and stands on one foot up to 2 seconds</p> <p>Catches a bounced ball most of the time</p> <p>Pours, cuts with supervision, and mashes own food</p>                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |

**Table 10:** Skills expected of the child at four years and parental support actions.

**Citation:** Eta née Enow Vivian Ayamba., *et al.* “Parents’ Role in Helping Children with Developmental Delays Catch Up with Normal Developmental Milestones”. *EC Paediatrics* 15.10 (2026): 01-17.

| Normal Developmental Milestones                 |                                                                                                                      | Parental Support Actions                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | Red Flags and Next Steps                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|-------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Domain                                          | Tasks/Skills                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Social and Emotional                            | Wants to please friends                                                                                              | <p>*Your child might start to “talk back” in order to feel independent and test what happens.</p> <p>*Limit the attention you give to the negative words.</p> <p>*Find alternative activities for her to do that allow her to take the lead and be independent.</p> <p>*Make a point of noticing good behavior. “You stayed calm when I told you it’s bedtime.”</p> <p>*Ask your child what she is playing.</p> <p>*Help her expand her answers by asking “Why?” and “How?” For example, say “That’s a nice bridge you’re building. Why did you put it there?”</p> <p>*Play with toys that encourage your child to put things together, such as puzzles and building blocks.</p> | <p>* If your child:</p> <p>Doesn’t show a wide range of emotions</p> <p>Shows extreme behavior (unusually fearful, aggressive, shy or sad)</p> <p>Unusually withdrawn and not active</p> <p>Is easily distracted, has trouble focusing on one activity for more than 5 minutes</p> <p>Doesn’t respond to people, or responds only superficially</p> <p>Can’t tell what’s real and what’s make-believe</p> <p>Doesn’t play a variety of games and activities</p> <p>Can’t give first and last name</p> <p>Doesn’t use plurals or past tense properly</p> <p>Doesn’t talk about daily activities or experiences</p> <p>Doesn’t draw pictures</p> <div><p>Every child develops at their own pace.</p><p>It’s okay to seek support when your child needs extra help.</p><div><div><p>Doesn’t draw pictures</p><p>What this might look like:</p><p>Your child shows little interest in drawing or scribbling or avoids using crayons or pencils.</p><p>What you can do:</p><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Encourage play with toys, blocks, and puzzles.</li><li>• Offer lots of praise for effort.</li><li>• Try fun art activities like coloring, finger painting, or drawing together.</li></ul><p>Remember:</p><p>Every child has their own strengths and interests. Celebrate small steps and keep encouraging exploration and play!</p></div><div><p>Can’t brush teeth, wash and dry hands, or get undressed without help.</p><p>What this might look like:</p><p>Your child may struggle with everyday self-care tasks and need help to complete them.</p><p>What you can do:</p><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Break tasks into small, easy steps.</li><li>• Use visual routines (pictures or charts).</li><li>• Be patient and consistent.</li><li>• Celebrate progress, no matter how small.</li></ul><p>Tips for Building Independence</p><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Create a daily routine so your child knows what to expect.</li><li>• Let your child practice with simple tasks like taking off a jacket or pulling up pants.</li><li>• Offer praise and encouragement for every effort.</li><li>• Seek support from your pediatrician or therapist if you’re concerned.</li></ul></div></div></div> |
|                                                 | Wants to be like friends                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|                                                 | More likely to agree with rules                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|                                                 | Likes to sing, dance, and act                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Language or Communication                       | Shows concern and sympathy for others                                                                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|                                                 | Is aware of gender                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|                                                 | Can tell what’s real and what’s make-believe                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|                                                 | Shows more independence (for example, may visit a next-door neighbor by himself [adult supervision is still needed]) |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Cognitive (learning, thinking, problem-solving) | Is sometimes demanding and sometimes very cooperative                                                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|                                                 | Speaks very clearly                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|                                                 | Tells a simple story using full sentences                                                                            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|                                                 | Uses future tense; for example, “Grandma will be here.”                                                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Movement or Physical                            | Says name and address                                                                                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|                                                 | Counts 10 or more things                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|                                                 | Can draw a person with at least 6 body parts                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|                                                 | Can print some letters or numbers                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|                                                 | Copies a triangle and other geometric shapes                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|                                                 | Knows about things used every day, like money and food                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|                                                 | Stands on one foot for 10 seconds or longer                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|                                                 | Hops; may be able to skip                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|                                                 | Can do a somersault                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|                                                 | Uses a fork and spoon and sometimes a table knife                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|                                                 | Can use the toilet on her own                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|                                                 | Swings and climbs                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|                                                 |                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | <p>Loses skills he once had</p> <p>*REPORT to your health care provider</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |

Table 11: Skills expected of the child at five years and parental support actions.

\*This information presented represents on average, the age by which *most* monolingual speaking children will accomplish the listed milestones. Children typically do not master all items in a category until they reach the upper age in each age range. Eg from 0 to one year, one to two years etc.

\*Just because a child has not accomplished one skill within an age range does not mean the child has a disorder. However, if your child did not display the majority of skills in a particular age range, then report, so that screening can be done.

\*If your child is temporarily lagging behind it is not call developmental disorder, it is a delay; the child can catch up with your support.

\*If the child is seriously delayed is a cause for concern, the child may need to start therapies as early as possible for better prognosis or results.

### Treatment of developmental delays

Although there is no cure for developmental delays, therapies targeting specific area of delay are very effective in helping children catch up to their peers. This only effective by early identification and the institution of early interventions such as speech, occupational and physical therapies [26,27]. Speech and language therapy help in developing language skills and verbal communication. Speech therapy is usually used to address problems in the areas of understanding and producing language and speech sounds. Occupational therapy focuses on sensory processing and self-help issues as well improving fine motor skills like buttoning a shirt or holding a pencil firmly while writing. Physical therapy helps to enhance gross motor skills such as running, jumping and climbing. In addition, behavioral therapy may be needed in some children with behavioral difficulties that affect socially appropriate behaviors [28], as well as stem cells therapy may be used to stimulate the body's own repair processes and promoting recovery [29,30].

Intervening early using these evidenced-based interventions can lead to significant improvements in children's development [31]. Furthermore, assistive devices and special education programs directed to the child's unique needs are mandatory for school aged-children. Early childhood special education provides stimulation for early developmental skills, including play skills. Technology provides important information for addressing parents' concerns; parenting forums or support groups where they can share and gather experiences. There also exist Health Assessment Apps like the Family Health Checker App which can assess developmental and genetic concerns direct next steps accordingly. Some children may significantly improve with intervention, while others may require rehabilitation services and other therapies alongside special education programs to address learning difficulties [32,33].

It is worth stating that specific problems like autism and related disorders if identified need a multidisciplinary team to fully evaluate and intervene in order to allow the child to develop to his/her full potential.

### Conclusion

Developmental milestones are important skills used to measure how well children grow and develop. However, not all children will develop as expected for age; some lag behind their peers and this may be challenging to parents. It is essential for nurses and midwives to educate parents on developmental milestones and developmental delays in order for them to equipped with knowledge and skills to better assist their children catch up with developmental delays. This is because a delay can be reversed through parental support if identified early and the child supported accordingly. Where the child is severely delayed therapies targeting specific area of the delay are used to enable the child to reach full potential.

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