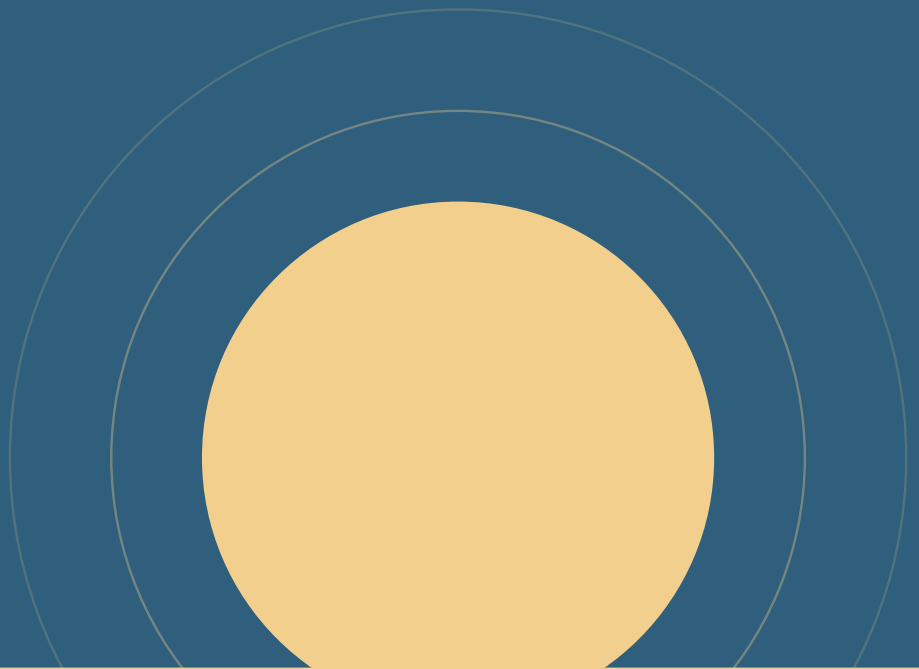


Mamavela

Milestones & Play, 0-3 Years

The CDC and WHO milestones age by age, with simple play ideas and the signs worth raising with your pediatrician.



Free sample

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Welcome: how to use this book

There is a particular kind of quiet worry that arrives with a baby. You watch your child on the play mat and wonder: should she be lifting her head higher by now? Is it normal that he isn't crawling yet? Your cousin's daughter was already saying ten words at this age... These questions are not a sign that something is wrong. They are a sign that you are paying attention, which is exactly what your child needs from you.

This book exists to turn that worry into something calmer and more useful: a clear picture of what most children do at each age, a simple way to notice and record what your own child is doing, and a generous supply of play ideas that help development along using the things you already have at home. No special toys, no flashcards, no programs to buy. Pots, spoons, cardboard boxes, your voice, your face and your time.

Where the information comes from

Every milestone list in this book is reproduced from the "Learn the Signs. Act Early." program of the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). These checklists were revised in 2022 with the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), and the method behind that revision was published in the journal *Pediatrics* by Zubler and colleagues. CDC materials are a work of the US government; we reproduce the milestones faithfully and credit the CDC each time. The motor development windows come from the World Health Organization (WHO) Motor Development Study. Guidance on screens, sleep and activity comes from the WHO, the AAP and the CDC; UK pathways and practical tips come from the NHS. Every source is listed at the end of the book with its full web address and the date we checked it: 13 October 2026.

Where official bodies disagree (screen time is the clearest example), we show you both positions side by side rather than picking one quietly for you.

What this book is, and what it is not

This book is information, not medical advice. The CDC itself is clear that its milestone checklists "are not a substitute for standardized, validated developmental screening tools". Nothing here can diagnose, rule out or replace a conversation with your pediatrician, family doctor (GP) or health visitor. If something worries you, the right move is always to talk to them, and you never need to wait for the next scheduled visit to do it.

This book is not a test of you

Ticking boxes can feel like being graded. Please do not read it that way. Children who are breastfed and children who are bottle-fed, children who go to nursery at six months and children who stay

home, children of solo parents, two mums, two dads, adoptive and foster families: all of them reach these milestones along the same broad paths. A missed play idea, a week of too much television when everyone had a cold, a day when you simply got through it: none of that shows up in your child's development the way a worried mind at 2 a.m. imagines. The milestones describe your child, not your parenting. Use them to notice, to enjoy and, when needed, to ask for help early.

How the age chapters work

Chapters 6 to 15 follow the ages of the CDC checklists: 2, 4, 6, 9, 12, 15, 18 months, 2 years, 30 months and 3 years. Each chapter has the same five parts:

- 1. **What most children do by this age:** the CDC milestones, as checkboxes you can tick.
- 2. **What is going on:** a short, plain-language picture of the stage.
- 3. **Play ideas:** a rich set of games and activities using everyday objects, built around the CDC's own suggestions and the NHS's play advice.
- 4. **Talk, read, sing:** language ideas for the age.
- 5. **Your tracker and your questions:** a page to note what you see, and a page of questions to take to the next check-up.

You do not need to read the book in order. Most parents read Chapters 1 to 5 once, then open the age chapter that matches their child, and come back every few months. If your child was born early, read the note on corrected age in Chapter 1 first.

US and UK: a quick key

United States	United Kingdom	What it means
Pediatrician, family doctor	GP, health visitor	The professionals who follow your child's development
Well-child visit, check-up	Health and development review	The routine appointment where development is discussed
Early Intervention (EI)	Health visiting team, speech and language therapy, local services	Support for children with delays
Diaper	Nappy	Same thing
Pacifier	Dummy	Same thing
Crib	Cot	Same thing
911	999 (or 112)	Emergency number
Poison Help Line 800-222-1222	NHS 111	Advice line for poisoning and urgent questions

Chapter 1. What a milestone really is

"Most children", not "all children"

The CDC defines developmental milestones as "things most children (75% or more) can do by a certain age". Read that sentence twice, because it changes how you read every checklist in this book.

The 2022 revision deliberately chose milestones that at least three out of four children reach by the age of the check-up. That has two consequences:

- **A milestone on the list is not an average.** Many children do these things earlier. The list shows what most children can already do by that age, which is why it is useful for spotting a child who might need a closer look.
- **Missing a milestone is a reason to talk, not a reason to panic.** Because the bar is set at what most children have already reached, a missed item is a signal to share with your child's doctor, who may suggest a proper screening. It is not a diagnosis.

Why the checklists changed in 2022

The expert group convened by the AAP for the CDC wanted the new lists to "clarify when most children can be expected to reach a milestone (to discourage a wait-and-see approach)".

According to the study by Zubler and colleagues, published in Pediatrics in 2022:

- the group set 11 criteria for the checklists, including using milestones that most children (75% or more) would be expected to achieve by the ages of routine check-ups and milestones that are "easily observed in natural settings";
- new checklists were added for the 15-month and 30-month visits;
- the result was a 26.4% reduction and a 40.9% replacement of the previous CDC milestones;
- about one third of the milestones kept were moved to a different age, and 67.7% of those were moved to an older age.

In plain words: if you have seen older charts (from a grandparent's baby book, an old app or a forum) that list skills at earlier ages, that is why. The current lists are designed to be fair to the normal range of children while still prompting action when it matters.

The four areas of development

Each CDC checklist is grouped into four areas. You will see them in every age chapter.

Area	What it covers	Everyday examples
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Area	What it covers	Everyday examples
Social/Emotional	Relationships, feelings, self-awareness	Smiling at you, showing affection, noticing when someone is upset
Language/Communication	Understanding and expressing	Cooing, babbling, pointing, first words, sentences
Cognitive (learning, thinking, problem-solving)	Exploring and figuring things out	Looking for a hidden toy, stacking, pretend play
Movement/Physical Development	Large and small movements	Holding the head up, sitting, walking, scribbling, using a spoon

Children rarely develop evenly across all four. A child who walks early may talk later, and the reverse is common. What you are looking for over time is steady progress in each area, not a race.

Two warning signs that never wait

The CDC repeats one message on every checklist: "If your child is not meeting one or more milestones, has lost skills he or she once had, or you have other concerns, act early." The loss of a skill your child already had (for example words they used to say, or babbling that has stopped) is always worth raising promptly with your child's doctor or health visitor, whatever the age.

If your baby was born early

The NHS explains that if your baby was born prematurely, "their developmental age will be calculated from your original due date, not from the actual date they were born, until they are 2 years old". This is called corrected (or adjusted) age.

How to work it out: take your baby's age in weeks and subtract the number of weeks they were born early. A baby born 8 weeks early who is now 6 months old (about 26 weeks) has a corrected age of about 18 weeks, so you would look at the 4-month checklist rather than the 6-month one. Your pediatrician or health visitor will tell you how they want to use corrected age for your child; ask them if you are unsure.

My baby's details

Date of birth

Original due date

Weeks born early

Use corrected age until (2nd birthday from due date)

How to observe without testing

Milestones are best seen in ordinary life. The CDC chose milestones that can be observed "in natural settings": at bath time, at the table, on the floor, at the park. A few habits help:

- **Watch rather than prompt.** Notice what your child does on their own over a few days, rather

than trying to make them perform a skill on demand.

- **Choose a good moment.** A tired, hungry or unwell child will not show you their best. The CDC's own advice on separations and feeding repeats this point: children do better when they are rested and fed.
- **Note it down.** A date and one line ("first pointed at the dog, 13 months") is enough. These notes are gold at a check-up, because memory blurs quickly when you are short on sleep.
- **Count "sometimes" as a yes in progress.** If your child does something now and then, write it down with "sometimes". That is real information for your pediatrician.

End of the sample

Thank you for reading this far. We hope these first pages already feel useful, and that you can see how the rest of the book is built: clear steps, pages to fill in, sources you can check.

The full book has 67 pages.

Get it here: <https://mamavela.com/shop/milestones-and-play-0-3/>

One-time payment, instant PDF.