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# Child Developmental Milestones



## Normal physical development: Approximately birth to 3 months

**Birth to 3 months:** Gains about 1 oz. per day after initial weight loss in first week

### Birth

- ✓ Reflexes (e.g., sucking, grasping, hands fisted, random movement, etc.)
- ✓ Vision at 8-12 inches and can lift head

### 1 month

- ✓ Can lift head to 45-degree angle
- ✓ Vocalizes and gurgles

### 2 months

- ✓ Alert to people

### 3 months

- ✓ Chuckles
- ✓ Smiles
- ✓ Whines and vocalizes
- ✓ Rolls over

## Activities that promote healthy growth: Approximately birth to 3 months

- ✓ Offer me a finger to hold. Listen to me and learn my responses. Smile and touch me when you talk to me. Tell me I am wonderful.
- ✓ Help me to develop trust. Gently hold me while talking in sweet encouraging tones. Call me by name and make eye contact.
- ✓ Pick me up when I cry and reassure me. Don't leave me alone crying and give me the impression that no one cares for me.
- ✓ Learn how to soothe me and meet my needs before I cry.
- ✓ Gently rub my back, sing to me, play music for me or bounce me gently to music. I am sensitive to sound so keep music low.
- ✓ Hold me securely in new places and protect me.
- ✓ Keep me clean, well fed and clothed appropriately for the temperature.
- ✓ Give me colorful toys that make interesting sounds.
- ✓ Sucking calms me so let me suck my fingers or a pacifier. Be gentle and don't interrupt my sucking by pulling or jiggling something I'm sucking on.

## Developmental Concerns: By the end of 3-4 months

Alert your child's doctor or nurse if your child displays any of the following signs of possible developmental delay for this age range:

- ✓ Does not seem to respond to loud noises
- ✓ Does not notice hands by 2 months
- ✓ Does not follow moving objects with eyes by 2 to 3 months
- ✓ Does not grasp and hold objects by 3 months
- ✓ Does not smile at people by 3 months
- ✓ Cannot support head well by 3 months
- ✓ Does not reach for and grasp toys by 3 to 4 months
- ✓ Does not babble by 3 to 4 months
- ✓ Does not bring objects to mouth by 4 months
- ✓ Begins babbling, but does not try to imitate any of your sounds by 4 months
- ✓ Does not push down with legs when feet are placed on a firm surface by 4 months
- ✓ Has trouble moving one or both eyes in all directions
- ✓ Crosses eyes most of the time (occasional crossing of the eyes is normal in these first months)
- ✓ Does not pay attention to new faces or seems very frightened by new faces or surroundings
- ✓ Experiences a dramatic loss of skills he or she once had

### Normal physical development: Approximately 4-6 months

**4-6 months:** Gains 5-6 oz. per week

#### 4 months

- ✓ Grasps rattle
- ✓ Pulls to sit up
- ✓ Can bear some weight on legs
- ✓ Laughs and smiles

#### 5 months

- ✓ Birth weight doubles
- ✓ Sits without support
- ✓ Feeds self cracker
- ✓ Turns toward voice

#### 6 months

- ✓ Adds 2-3 inches to height
- ✓ Sits up
- ✓ Holds 2 cubes and works to reach for desired toy
- ✓ Imitates speech sounds

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### Activities that promote healthy growth: Approximately 4-6 months

- ✓ During bath time, try washing me in a sitting position. I may also want to sit up and play. Help me sit up for 5-10 minutes and help me keep my back straight.
- ✓ Give me safe healthy finger foods at 5-6 months. (e.g., crackers)
- ✓ Lay me on a blanket on the floor and let me roll and reach.
- ✓ Spend time with me - play, smile, nod, talk and laugh with me. Give me toys or attention when I need a distraction.
- ✓ Respond to my fears and cries by holding, talking to and reassuring me. Talk to me about what I'm feeling and tell me that it's OK.
- ✓ Talk to me, sing to me or give me my favorite toy at diaper changing time. Don't scold, make loud noises or frowning faces.
- ✓ Keep me in my car seat even if I complain. Distract me with songs or toys and reassure me. Put my seat where I can see outside.
- ✓ Avoid separating me from you for days. I need consistent, reliable relationships so if you leave me for long periods expect me to be more clingy for awhile and need more reassurance.

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### Developmental Concerns: By the end of 7 months

Alert your child's doctor or nurse if your child displays any of the following signs of possible developmental delay for this age range:

- ✓ Seems very stiff, with tight muscles
- ✓ Seems very floppy, like a rag doll
- ✓ Head still flops back when body is pulled to a sitting position
- ✓ Reaches with one hand only
- ✓ Refuses to cuddle
- ✓ Shows no affection for the person who cares for him or her
- ✓ Doesn't seem to enjoy being around people
- ✓ One or both eyes consistently turn in or out
- ✓ Persistent tearing, eye drainage, or sensitivity to light
- ✓ Does not respond to sounds around him or her
- ✓ Has difficulty getting objects to mouth
- ✓ Does not turn head to locate sounds by 4 months
- ✓ Does not roll over in either direction (front to back or back to front) by 5 months
- ✓ Seems impossible to comfort at night after 5 months
- ✓ Does not smile on his or her own by 5 months
- ✓ Cannot sit with help by 6 months
- ✓ Does not laugh or make squealing sounds by 6 months
- ✓ Does not actively reach for objects by 6 to 7 months
- ✓ Does not follow objects with both eyes at near (1 foot) and far (6 feet) ranges by 7 months
- ✓ Does not bear weight on legs by 7 months
- ✓ Does not try to attract attention through actions by 7 months
- ✓ Does not babble by 8 months
- ✓ Shows no interest in games of peek-a-boo by 8 months
- ✓ Experiences a dramatic loss of skills he or she once had.

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### Normal physical development: Approximately 7-11 months

**7-11 months:** Gains 2-3 oz. per week

#### 7 months

- ✓ Plays peek-a-boo, pulls to stand, gets to sitting position
- ✓ Nonspecific "dada" or "mama"

#### 8 months

- ✓ Thumb-finger grasp is weak
- ✓ Shakes head "no" and shouts for attention

#### 9 months

- ✓ Walks holding onto furniture and plays pat-a-cake
- ✓ Shy with strangers

#### 10 months

- ✓ Stands momentarily
- ✓ Specific "dada" or "mama" and can put 2 words together

#### 11 months

- ✓ Stands alone well
- ✓ Plays ball with strangers
- ✓ May recognize words as symbols

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**Activities that promote healthy growth: Approximately 7-11 months**

- ✓ Play peek-a-boo, puppets, wave bye-bye, and teach me words and colors even if I can't repeat the words right now.
- ✓ Have a regular bedtime routine. Slow my activity an hour before bedtime, rock me, pat my back and bring my favorite blanket. Once dry, fed and well prepared for bed, leave me with a kiss. Ignore my cries for a few minutes until I am asleep.
- ✓ Encourage physical exploration within your eyesight. Keep dangerous objects away from me and baby-proof my environment. Be there to comfort me when I get hurt.
- ✓ Help me stand by holding my hands. Make sure my heels are flat.
- ✓ I may purposefully drop and throw things as an experiment. Give me safe things to drop and throw.
- ✓ Open a cupboard in the kitchen kept safe for my exploration. Keep only non-breakable objects that are baby-friendly.
- ✓ Give me something interesting on my tray to explore at mealtime. (e.g., cooked spaghetti, spoons)
- ✓ Do not force me to eat and understand that I am learning and will be messy with my food.

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**Development Concerns: By the end of one year**

Alert your child's doctor or nurse if your child displays any of the following signs of possible developmental delay for this age range.

- ✓ Does not crawl
- ✓ Drags on side of body while crawling (for over one month)
- ✓ Cannot stand when supported
- ✓ Does not search for objects that are hidden while he or she watches
- ✓ Says no single words ("mama" or "dada")
- ✓ Does not learn to use gestures, such as waving or shaking head
- ✓ Does not point to objects or pictures
- ✓ Experiences a dramatic loss of skills he or she once had

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**Normal physical development: Approximately 12-23 months**

**1 year**

- ✓ Birth weight triples
- ✓ Stoops and recovers, learning to drink from cup, pulls up to a standing position, walks holding on to furniture
- ✓ Knows 3 words other than "mama" or "dada"

**13-14 months**

- ✓ Scribbles, 6+ word vocabulary, tries to sing, points
- ✓ Walks backwards. Better cup control, spilling less
- ✓ Towers 2 cubes and begins using a spoon

**15-16 months**

- ✓ Begins using double syllable words and asks "What's that?" Learns names of body parts, objects, colors
- ✓ Removes clothes, pulls adult hand to show something

**17-19 months**

- ✓ Walks up steps, towers 4 cubes, asks for "more," 20 word vocabulary, hands toy to adult if unable to operate
- ✓ Throws ball, follows directions, helps in simple tasks

**20-23 months**

- ✓ Kicks ball forward, jumps in place, puts on clothes
- ✓ Plays with 2 toys, pedals tricycle, towers 8 cubes, washes and dries hands

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**Activities that promote healthy growth: Approximately 12-23 months**

- ✓ Learning to walk takes time. Hold my hand and encourage me to take steps when I'm ready, don't rush me.
- ✓ If I grab, hit or bite when I'm mad, don't scold me or hit me. Teach me words to use instead of hurting others.
- ✓ It will take time before I'm able to do many things. Set limits, but I will break rules many times before I learn. "No!" is not enough, please explain why. (e.g., "The stove is too HOT!" Move me and show me a safe place to play.)
- ✓ Give me choices whenever possible. Don't say "no" too often and distract me if I am refusing something. Reward me for good behavior. Ignore my "no" if I do not get a choice.
- ✓ Let me scribble with thick washable crayons or felt markers, tape a paper to the table so it doesn't slip.
- ✓ Compare colors and sizes with me (big spoon, red balloon).
- ✓ Tell me about the story, let me pat the pages and make noises, help me learn to turn pages by half lifting one.
- ✓ Building blocks, sandboxes, ride and pull toys, jack-in-the-box, music toys and balls are very important learning tools.
- ✓ Understand that me and mine are important before I can learn about you and yours. Set up a box that is mine.
- ✓ Teach me about not hurting others and sharing, but don't shame me. Be patient and encourage my empathy for others.

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### Developmental Concerns: By the end of 2 years

Alert your child's doctor or nurse if your child displays any of the following signs of possible developmental delay for this age range:

- ✓ Cannot walk by 18 months
- ✓ Fails to develop a mature heel-toe walking pattern after several months of walking, or walks only on his toes
- ✓ Does not speak at least 15 words
- ✓ Does not use two-word sentences by age 2
- ✓ By 15 months, does not seem to know the function of common household objects (brush, telephone, bell, fork, spoon)
- ✓ Does not imitate actions or words by the end of this period
- ✓ Does not follow simple instructions by age 2
- ✓ Cannot push a wheeled toy by age 2
- ✓ Experiences a dramatic loss of skills he or she once had

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### Normal physical development: Approximately 2-4 years

#### 2 years

- ✓ Average height: 32-36", weight: 22-31 lbs
- ✓ Uses short sentences and adds "ing" and plurals

#### 2 ½ years

- ✓ Average height: 33-38", weight: 24-34 lbs
- ✓ Gains muscle control for toilet training
- ✓ Asks "what, where, who" questions
- ✓ Shows interest in peers, has difficulty sharing
- ✓ Displays some self-control

#### 3 years

- ✓ Average height: 33-42", weight: 24-42 lbs
- ✓ Buttons clothes, walks downstairs and uses the toilet
- ✓ Increased vocabulary and uses past tense, asks "why"
- ✓ Has difficulty sharing and develops a basic sense of time
- ✓ Identifies preferences and increased sense of self
- ✓ Loses sway back and large abdomen of the toddler at 3 ½ years old
- ✓ Can balance on one foot briefly and walks heel to toe

#### 4 years

- ✓ Catches a ball 2 out of 3 times and cuts with scissors
- ✓ Talks to self and can share better

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### Activities that promote healthy growth: Approximately 2-4 years

- ✓ Let me do it myself when possible. Let me feed myself even if I'm messy. Give me 2 choices when you can.
- ✓ Let me make choices about the food I eat and let me refuse food. Reduce in-between snacks so I will be hungry at mealtimes. Don't use food as a reward or punishment.
- ✓ Teach me about dangerous things (matches, knives, strangers, stray animals, cars, etc.). Significant consequences should be given for dangerous behavior after giving warnings.
- ✓ Naps are still important to reduce cranky and moody behavior.
- ✓ Give me a warning that it will soon be time to move along.
- ✓ Don't hurry me too much, I need patience and time to learn.
- ✓ Read to me, color with me, teach me games.
- ✓ If there is a new baby, remember I **will** be jealous. Assure me of your love, give me special time and let me help with the baby.
- ✓ Talk to me about what I'm feeling - comfort me and don't scold me.
- ✓ Offer a hand when I'm in a new situation as a substitute for picking me up. Don't insist I have to grow up.
- ✓ Blow bubbles for me. Teach me to catch and throw a ball.
- ✓ Respect my fears and do not force me into fearful situations. Comfort me and encourage me that there is nothing to fear.

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### Strategies for potty training and tantrums: Approximately 2-4 years

#### Potty training tips

- ✓ No age is exact for toilet training. Watch for me to grimace at dirty diapers, show you my wet pants and stay dry for up to 2 hours. I need to be verbal enough to understand toilet training.
- ✓ Change me as soon as possible, tell me it's nice to be clean
- ✓ Let me have a toy to keep me happy and busy on the potty-chair. Put me on the potty briefly at first (up to 5 minutes).
- ✓ Praise my efforts and encourage me to let you know when I need to go potty. Teach me the family words for toilet training.
- ✓ Dress me in easy to remove clothing, be patient, never scold me, visit the potty before going somewhere, help me wipe, teach me to wash my hands and show me how to flush.

#### Tantrums

- ✓ Make sure I get enough sleep, eat healthy and keep a regular routine. I need physical activity during the day. Teach me to ride a tricycle, encourage running, dancing and jumping.
- ✓ Learn warning signs and distract me. Don't expect too much.
- ✓ Since tantrums are a release of frustrated feelings and a way to get attention, ignore me if I'm in a safe place. Don't reward tantrums. Stay calm and leave me reassuring me you will be back when I'm quiet. When I stop, talk to me, tell me what I'm feeling. Help me express my frustration in words.

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### Development Concerns: By the end of 3 years

Alert your child's doctor or nurse if your child displays any of the following signs of possible developmental delay for this age range:

- ✓ Frequent falling and difficulty with stairs
- ✓ Persistent drooling or very unclear speech
- ✓ Cannot build a tower of more than four blocks
- ✓ Difficulty manipulating small objects
- ✓ Cannot copy a circle by age 3
- ✓ Cannot communicate in short phrases
- ✓ No involvement in "pretend" play
- ✓ Does not understand simple instructions
- ✓ Little interest in other children
- ✓ Extreme difficulty separating from mother or primary caregiver
- ✓ Poor eye contact
- ✓ Limited interest in toys
- ✓ Experiences a dramatic loss of skills he or she once had

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### Development Concerns: By the end of 4 years

Alert your child's doctor or nurse if your child displays any of the following signs of possible developmental delay for this age range:

- ✓ Cannot throw a ball overhand
- ✓ Cannot jump in place
- ✓ Cannot ride a tricycle
- ✓ Cannot grasp a crayon between thumb and fingers
- ✓ Has difficulty scribbling
- ✓ Cannot stack four blocks
- ✓ Still clings or cries whenever parents leave
- ✓ Shows no interest in interactive games
- ✓ Ignores other children
- ✓ Doesn't respond to people outside the family
- ✓ Doesn't engage in fantasy play
- ✓ Resists dressing, sleeping, using the toilet
- ✓ Lashes out without any self-control when angry or upset
- ✓ Cannot copy a circle
- ✓ Doesn't use sentences of more than three words
- ✓ Doesn't use "me" and "you" correctly
- ✓ Experiences a dramatic loss of skills he or she once had

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### Normal physical development: Approximately 5-7 years

Average height: 40-50", weight: 34-55 lbs.

#### 4-5 years

- ✓ Paints and colors, draws figures in 6 parts, learning shapes and colors
- ✓ Climbs, runs, bike or trike riding
- ✓ Broad vocabulary, listens carefully, asks questions
- ✓ Learning letters, numbers and written name
- ✓ Recognizes differences and similarities
- ✓ Short and long term memory improves
- ✓ Develops friendships with peers, recognizes gender
- ✓ Believes rules can change to suit their own needs

#### 6-7 years

- ✓ Body proportions are similar to that of an adult
- ✓ Imagination is an important part of development
- ✓ Enjoys achieving in sports, rides a bike without training wheels and learns to skate
- ✓ Can learn to swim, swing, climb on jungle gyms and other more complex physical tasks
- ✓ Learning to read and do simple math
- ✓ Understands concepts of first, next, last, large, larger, etc.
- ✓ Understands time concepts of yesterday, today, tomorrow
- ✓ Looks forward to holidays, birthdays and annual events

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### Activities that promote healthy growth: Approximately 5-7 years

- ✓ Discuss physical gender differences with me. Teach me the proper names for body parts without shame. If I am old enough to ask the question, I am old enough to understand the answer. Don't give me more information than I ask for.
- ✓ Create a home library with interesting books about heroines and heroes, fables and fun stories. Read to me every day and let me read a part of each book, discuss the ideas in the book.
- ✓ Remember rewards works better than punishment. Have a sticker chart, give balloons, pennies for the bank, etc.
- ✓ Play children's music, sing, clap and dance with me.
- ✓ Encourage physical involvement and imaginative expression. (e.g., "Itsy-Bitsy Spider" and "I'm a Little Teapot")
- ✓ Teach me to count, sing my ABC's and write my name with lots of patience. This will take time and repetition.
- ✓ I need a bike or trike, balls, clay and play space with toys.
- ✓ Plant a garden or a pot from seed. Help me water it and watch it grow. Pick flowers for my table and let me eat the vegetables.
- ✓ Follow a routine at bedtime. Show me the clock and tell me it's time for bed. Let me pick out my bath toys, choose my pajamas, read me a story, etc. Spend time with me. Sing me a song, rub my back. Kiss me, say goodnight, I love you.
- ✓ Give me permission to say no to adults that make me feel uncomfortable. Talk with me and get to know how I'm feeling.

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### Developmental Concerns: By the end of 5 years

Alert your child's doctor or nurse if your child displays any of the following signs of possible developmental delay for this age range:

- ✓ Acts extremely fearful or timid
- ✓ Acts extremely aggressively
- ✓ Is unable to separate from parents without major protest
- ✓ Is easily distracted and unable to concentrate on any single activity for more than five minutes
- ✓ Shows little interest in playing with other children
- ✓ Refuses to respond to people in general, or responds only superficially
- ✓ Rarely uses fantasy or imitation in play
- ✓ Seems unhappy or sad much of the time
- ✓ Doesn't engage in a variety of activities
- ✓ Avoids or seems aloof with other children and adults
- ✓ Doesn't express a wide range of emotions
- ✓ Has trouble eating, sleeping or using the toilet
- ✓ Can't tell the difference between fantasy and reality
- ✓ Seems unusually passive
- ✓ Cannot understand two-part commands using prepositions ("Put the doll on the bed, and get the ball under the couch.")
- ✓ Can't correctly give her first and last name
- ✓ Doesn't use plurals or past tense properly when speaking
- ✓ Doesn't talk about her daily activities and experiences
- ✓ Cannot build a tower of six to eight blocks
- ✓ Seems uncomfortable holding a crayon
- ✓ Has trouble taking off clothing
- ✓ Cannot brush her teeth efficiently
- ✓ Cannot wash and dry her hands
- ✓ Experiences a dramatic loss of skills he or she once had

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### Normal physical development: Approximately 8-12 years

Average height: 45-58", weight: 45-85 lbs.

#### 8-9 years

- ✓ Play and imagination are still important developmental tools
- ✓ May enter puberty early
- ✓ Very verbal and asks factual questions, may request instruction
- ✓ Social roles are better understood
- ✓ School and neighborhood are important arenas for growth

#### 10-11 years

- ✓ Girls may experience a growth spurt
- ✓ Tolerates frustration better, good with time concepts, can plan and understands cause and effect, more rational and logical
- ✓ Needs affection and affirmation from adults
- ✓ Concrete thinking with a strong sense of fairness
- ✓ Begin to see conflicts between peers and parent values

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### Activities that promote healthy growth: Approximately 8-12 years

- ✓ Turn off the TV and play a game with me or talk things over. Don't let me watch PG-13 or R-rated movies.
- ✓ Bake cookies with me. We can wear aprons and don't get too upset about how messy the kitchen becomes.
- ✓ Teach me cards and board games I can play with my friends.
- ✓ Encourage outside play. (e.g., jump rope, skates, balls, etc.) Draw a hopscotch grid on the sidewalk with chalk.
- ✓ Teach me about nurturing by giving me responsibility for a family pet. Understand I may forget and remind me.
- ✓ I need to know how to swim to stay safe in water.
- ✓ Teach me about nature through camping, hiking and going to the zoo.
- ✓ Let me organize a water fight with the hose and balloons.
- ✓ Establish family traditions. Remind me about what we did last year. Tell me why it is important.

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### Strategies for child safety: Approximately 8-12 years

- ✓ Know where I am at all times. Teach me to check in and give me timelines. Provide clear instructions to me about what you believe is safe and supervise my activities.
- ✓ Make my house safe, friendly and child centered. Children can visit under your watchful eye.
- ✓ Get to know the parents in my neighborhood and my friend's parents. Teach me to keep away from places that are unsafe.
- ✓ Give me permission to say "my mom or dad wants me home" or "my mom won't let me" if they need to make an excuse to get out of an uncomfortable or pressure situation.
- ✓ Teach me about drugs, alcohol, smoking and teen pregnancy. Let me tell you how I feel about these things.
- ✓ Value me and teach me how to value and care for myself.
- ✓ Teach me to be cautious of overly friendly adults or strangers.
- ✓ Ask me how I'm feeling. Listen and keep communication open.
- ✓ Be reliable and predictable and create a safe place for me to put my trust. Forgive me when I fail and apologize when you have let me down. Teach me about respect by modeling it.
- ✓ Teach me about my bright future and celebrate each accomplishment along the way. Give me vision.

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### Normal physical development: Approximately 13-18 years

#### 13-14 years

- ✓ Challenges limit setting and parent's judgment
- ✓ Wants to be with peers more often
- ✓ Puberty has begun or been achieved
- ✓ Awkwardness and self-doubt may occur with new growth

#### 15-16 years

- ✓ Girls full stature is achieved, boys may continue some growth until age 18
- ✓ Skills are developed and refined
- ✓ Introspection and intense self-analysis
- ✓ Conflict between parents grows, will push you away as he or she attempts to take on more autonomy
- ✓ Peers values become more important
- ✓ Experimentation with social roles is expected
- ✓ Boys may experience a growth spurt.

#### 17-18 years

- ✓ Hormonal and brain development continues
- ✓ Interest in school increases or decreases
- ✓ Youth relies more on peers for affection and approval
- ✓ Individual identity forms, seeks independence
- ✓ Parents and family are still important and necessary
- ✓ Vision for the future and belief in self is essential

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### Activities that promote healthy growth: Approximately 13-18 years

- ✓ Be clear about what you expect of me. Set curfews and know where I am at all times. Make sure I check in frequently.
- ✓ Start with small freedoms, assuring me that larger freedoms will be allowed once I've proven myself capable of the smaller ones.
- ✓ Allow me to have my own music in my room.
- ✓ Encourage me to express my feelings in writing and verbally. It's OK to be angry, not mean.
- ✓ When I speak, listen to the feeling underneath along with the words. Am I scared? Or hurting?
- ✓ Peers are very important for me. Allow me to talk on the phone and have friends over.
- ✓ As much as you can, let me wear what I like as part of self-expression.
- ✓ Encourage volunteer or paid work. Instill responsibility and polite public behaviors.
- ✓ Support and encourage me to gain a special talent early in my teen years (dance, music, drama, sports, art, etc.).

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### Strategies for dealing with conflict: Approximately 13-18 years

- ✓ Understand my need for developing a separate self and do not take my struggles to gain independence personally.
- ✓ Understand that I still need supervision, guidance and protection even if I push you away or am critical of you. Troubled children often report a parent doesn't "love them enough" to wonder where they are or what they do.
- ✓ Acknowledge my feelings and maintain consistent consequences for my disobedience of clear limits you set.
- ✓ Consequences should always be related to my disobedience. (e.g., If an hour late, set the next curfew time an hour earlier.)
- ✓ Don't give up - when I make mistakes, disobey or lose my temper when you set limits, know that this is normal. Reassure me that you still care and won't give up on me.
- ✓ Give me another chance. I want your love and approval and will keep trying. Reassure me that you are still proud of me.
- ✓ Give me a vision for who I can become. Give me a reason why I should make healthy positive choices.
- ✓ Maintain communication and physical affection.

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### At Risk Adolescents

- ✓ Typical adolescent behavior taken to the extreme -- more moody, more hostile.
- ✓ Defiance. Ignoring the rules. Violating curfew.
- ✓ Totally uncommunicative to you or teachers. Only talks to peers.
- ✓ Sense of complete aimlessness or alienation.
- ✓ Destructive eating habits. Eating disorders can be life-threatening.
- ✓ Missing money or greater expenditures.
- ✓ Greater secrecy.
- ✓ Drinking or other substance abuse

### Factors that can increase risk

- ✓ Undiagnosed learning disability. This child is subject to constant personal frustration and criticism from others. Discouragement and disaffection soon follow. It's never too late for educational/psychological testing.
- ✓ Unhappy family life
- ✓ Family size
- ✓ Traumatic illness in the family
- ✓ Severe moodiness or depression
- ✓ Isolated family
- ✓ Friends that have destructive characters and behaviors

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### **Symptoms of PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder)**

#### **Play**

- ✓ Children begin to play out, draw, dramatize or tell their stories of trauma.
- ✓ Post-traumatic play is often grim, monotonous, and, at times, dangerous. Connection between the play and the trauma is usually not obvious.
- ✓ For this reason, it often goes unnoticed as a symptom by caretakers. The power to play is so strong that it impels the child to play.
- ✓ Even adolescents, well beyond the age-range of the usual "pretend" player, may play post-traumatically with art or music.
- ✓ For this reason, some "acting out" behavior in adolescents is actually post-traumatic play.

#### **Symptoms in very young children**

- ✓ Ego-centric
- ✓ Time Skew – Mis-sequencing trauma
- ✓ Omen Formation – should have seen it coming
- ✓ Bids for control

#### **Symptoms in elementary school-aged children**

- ✓ Generalized fear – stranger or separation anxiety, avoidance of situations or people associated with trauma
- ✓ Sleep disturbance
- ✓ Preoccupation with words
- ✓ Post-traumatic play
- ✓ Lost developmental skills

#### **PTSD in Adolescents**

- ✓ May begin to look like adults
- ✓ Traumatic reenactment

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