



Is my child developing on time?

All parents wonder at times if their child is developing normally. It's easy to compare your child to another of the same age and become worried about the differences you see. But is it truly a developmental delay?

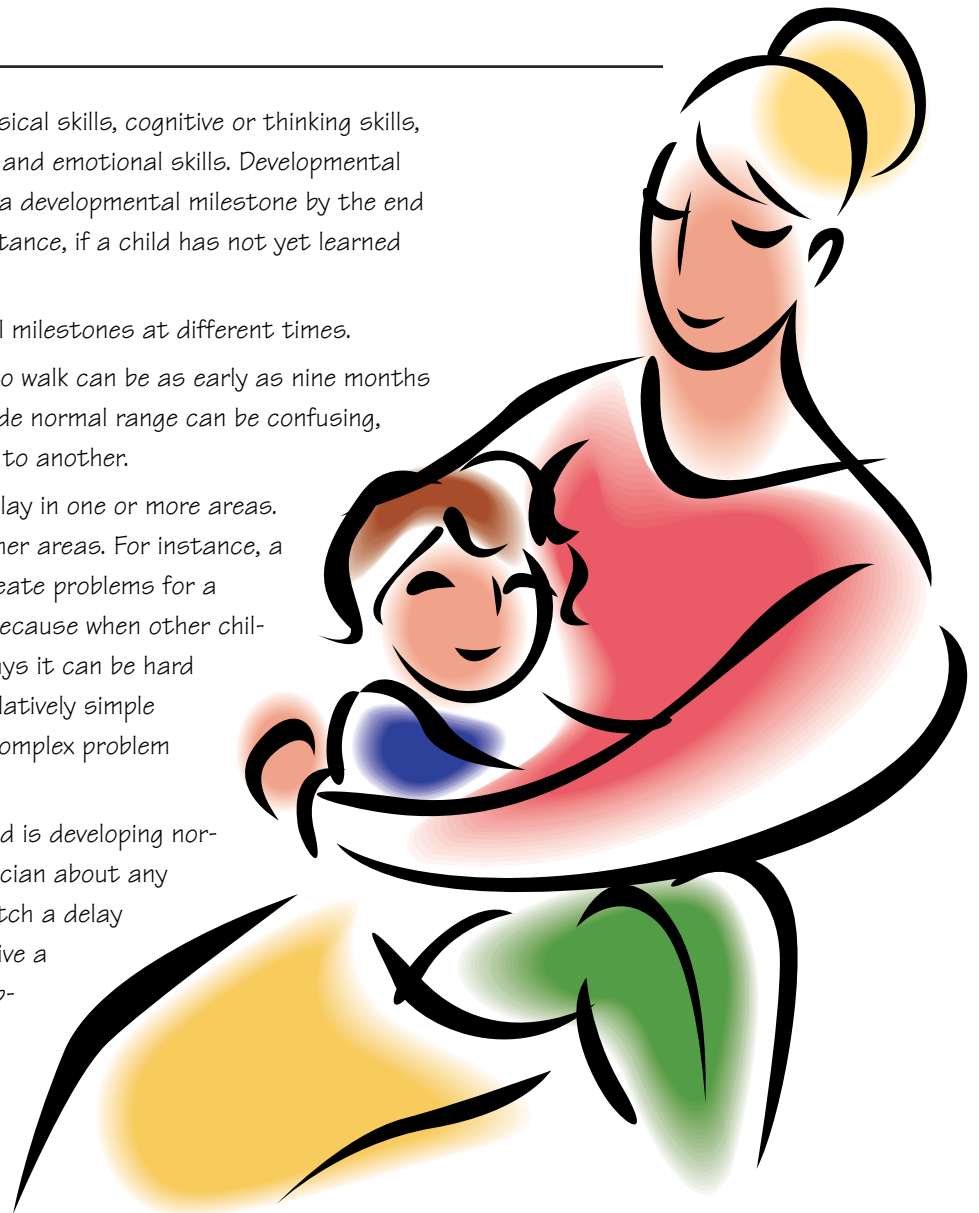
As children grow they develop new physical skills, cognitive or thinking skills, speech and language skills, and social and emotional skills. Developmental delay is when a child has not reached a developmental milestone by the end of the expected time period — for instance, if a child has not yet learned to walk by eighteen months.

Normally, children reach developmental milestones at different times.

The normal range for a child to learn to walk can be as early as nine months and as late as fifteen months. This wide normal range can be confusing, especially when you compare one child to another.

A child might have a developmental delay in one or more areas. Usually a delay in one area affects other areas. For instance, a delay in language development may create problems for a child's social-emotional development because when other children can't understand what a child says it can be hard to make friends. This means that a relatively simple problem can turn into a bigger, more complex problem when it is left untreated.

The best way to be sure that your child is developing normally is to talk to your child's pediatrician about any of your concerns. It's important to catch a delay early while there is plenty of time to give a child some special help before the problem grows more difficult to handle. So don't feel shy to ask about anything you might be wondering about. Your child may thank you one day.



Eyes and Ears

Check their eyes

Have you ever wondered if your child needs glasses? Many young children have vision problems that need to be corrected, but detecting those problems can be tricky. Children often don't know that they aren't seeing well. They also don't know the words to use to describe these problems to parents or doctors.

This is why it is important to know the signs that children with vision problems tend to show:

- If your child seems to have difficulty using her eyes to follow objects or people.
- If your child turns or tilts his head in an unusual position when trying to look at something.
- If your child seems to have trouble finding or picking up small objects dropped on the floor. (above twelve months of age)
- If your child seems to have difficulty making eye contact.
- If your child's eyes do not move together or appear to be crossed.
- If your child rubs or squints her eyes.
- If your child is straining to see, it may cause frequent headaches.
- If your child has not been seeing well all day, the effort of seeing can make her become angry or irritable at the end of the day.

If you suspect a problem, ask your child's pediatrician, who can check your child's eyes and refer you to a specialist if needed. Correcting vision problems can help your child develop and learn, so don't delay getting help for your child if you notice any of the warning signs.

Does my child have a speech, language, or hearing problem?

Communication skills are at the heart of child development. Children grow by talking and playing with others. If their communication skills are impaired it can lead to problems in their development. Communication disorders affect approximately 46 million Americans. Of these, 28 million have hearing loss and 14 million have a speech or language disorder.

Look for the warning signs below:

HEARING WARNING SIGNS

- Talks in a very loud or very soft voice.
- Doesn't respond when called from across the room, even when it is for something exciting.
- Turns body so that the same ear is always turned towards the sound.

- Has difficulty understanding what has been said at ages three and above.
- Has difficulty following directions.
- Doesn't startle to loud noises.

SPEECH AND LANGUAGE WARNING SIGNS

- Fails to use sounds or words appropriate for that age.
- People have difficulty understanding the child's speech.
- Child does not appear to be making efforts to speak.

If you think that your child has a problem, the first step is to discuss it with your pediatrician. Sometimes the pediatrician will recommend a complete check by an audiologist. This is a health care professional who specializes in identifying, assessing, and treating hearing disorders. Or the doctor might suggest a speech and language pathologist, a professional who can identify, assess, and treat speech and language problems.

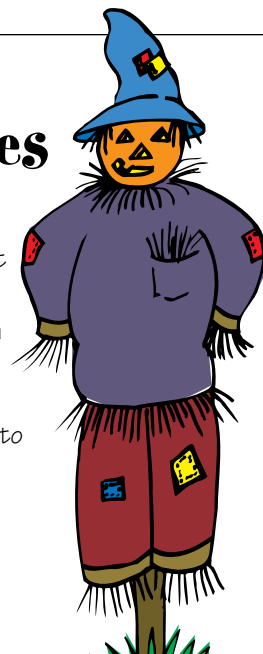
The sooner a child with a problem is assessed and treated, the better.

So don't be afraid to ask your doctor about any of your concerns.

Enjoy one or more of these fun fall activities with your child:

Remember, making or doing things is much less important than the fun you have together.

- Make a scarecrow by stuffing an old pair of pants and a shirt with newspaper. Use a pumpkin for a head, and paint the eyes, nose, and mouth on the pumpkin.
- Measure your child's height. They grow so fast and love to see how much they have grown.
- Plant bulbs to surprise and delight you in the spring.
- Enjoy some time looking at the harvest moon together.
- Make applesauce.
- Name one thing you are thankful for.



Pennsylvania Pathways

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