



GCAPP PARENT TOOLKIT:

The Early Years: Your Child at 5 Years Old

Milestone Matters!

Your child's early development sets the stage for lifelong learning, behavior, and health. How your child plays, learns, speaks, moves, and interacts with others gives important clues about their growth. Use this guide to check the milestones most 5-year-olds reach and talk with your child's doctor at every well-child visit about their progress and what comes next.

► SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL

- Wants to please and be like friends
- More likely to follow rules
- Enjoys singing, dancing, and acting
- Aware of gender differences
- Can distinguish between real and make-believe
- Shows increasing independence (e.g., may visit a neighbor with supervision)
- May be cooperative one moment and demanding the next

► LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION

- Speaks clearly and in full sentences
- Tells simple stories
- Uses future tense (e.g., "Grandma will come.")
- Can say full name and address

► COGNITIVE (LEARNING AND THINKING)

- Counts 10 or more objects
- Can draw a person with at least 6 body parts
- Prints some letters and numbers
- Copies shapes like triangles and other geometric forms
- Understands everyday items (e.g., money, food)

► MOTOR (PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT)

- Stands on one foot for 10 seconds or longer
- Hops and may be able to skip
- Can do a somersault
- Uses a fork and spoon (and sometimes a table knife)

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- Uses the toilet independently
- Enjoys swinging and climbing

You Know Your Child Best

It's never too early to speak up if something doesn't seem right. Act early if your child:

- Is missing developmental milestones
- Doesn't show a range of emotions
- Has extreme behavior (e.g., unusually shy, sad, fearful, or aggressive)
- Seems withdrawn or not very active
- Is easily distracted or can't focus on one activity for more than 5 minutes
- Doesn't respond to people or only gives minimal responses
- Struggles to tell what's real and what's make-believe
- Doesn't play a variety of games or engage in imaginative play
- Can't state first and last name
- Misuses plurals or past tense consistently
- Doesn't talk about daily events or experiences
- Doesn't draw pictures
- Can't brush teeth, wash hands, or undress without help
- Has lost skills they once had

What to Do If You're Concerned

- Talk with your child's doctor or nurse and ask for a developmental screening.

- If there are still concerns:

1. Ask for a referral to a specialist (e.g., developmental pediatrician, speech therapist).
2. Contact your local public elementary school for a free evaluation. Your child may qualify for services that can help

HELPFUL RESOURCES:

- Learn the Signs. Act Early:
www.cdc.gov/ActEarly
- Call: 1-800-CDC-INFO
(1-800-232-4636)



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