

What You May See When

All children develop at their own pace; below are some general guidelines of healthy development.

Newborn

- Prefers caregiver's face, voice, touch, and even smell more than anything else.
- Would rather listen to talking or singing than any other kind of sound.
- Recognizes mother's scent

3 months

- Looks at people and watches their faces
- Startles at loud noises
- Recognizes faces and/or voices
- Smiles; can express joy and sadness

6 months

- Cries when hungry or uncomfortable
- Laughs, babbles and/or squeals
- Turns head toward sounds
- Can express anger and surprise; recognizes fear in others

9 months

- Can reproduce events from the day before—this shows the development of memory
- Responds to own name
- Knows the difference between caregivers and strangers and begins to express stranger anxiety
- Has ability to express fear
- Seeks caregivers for comfort, support, and safety
- Begins to protest separation from caregivers

12 months

- Shows affection
- Prefers certain people and toys over others
- Shows likes and dislikes (shakes head)
- Tries new ways to get your attention

18 months

- Likes to help
- Can let you know what they want
- Can tell when someone else is happy or mad

Between ages of 2 and 4

- Begins to realize that they are a boy or a girl

2 years

- Likes to do things themselves
- Does not understand how to share
- Copies other children in play
- Develops fears (like of the dark or large animals)

3 years

- Begins to share and take turns
- Can identify feelings from simple pictures
- Can link feelings to events, for example, "A birthday party makes Johnny feel _____"
- Begins to explore ways to solve problems
- Begins make-believe play
- Shows more sensitivity to others' feelings
- Changes mood quickly

4 years

- Begins to realize they can have more than one feeling at a time (sad they can't go to the zoo but glad they can go to the kids' museum)
- Begins to learn to control frustration
- Likes everyone to do things the "right" way
- Becomes more independent and likes to play with other children

5 years

- Can talk about rather than act on their feelings
- May make up excuses or stories to stay out of trouble
- Takes turns but doesn't always want to

Sources

- "BrainWonders" fact sheets, available at www.zerotothree.org/brainwonders
- *A Guide to the Use of ZERO TO THREE's Diagnostic Classification of Mental Health and Developmental Disorders of Infancy and Early Childhood (DC:03 Casebook)*
- "Minnesota's Early Childhood Intervention: A Guide to Your Child's First Five Years," available from Minnesota Department of Health
- "Plays Well with Others: A Guide to a Young Child's Social Emotional Development," available from Hennepin County Early Childhood Services

