

Is My Child OK?



Parents often compare their own children with other children in size, personality, speech, and speed of learning, even though they know that each child is different. When should parents be concerned about those differences? Here are four areas of development that you can watch.

Physical development

Some children grow bigger and more quickly than others, but all children should grow at a regular pace. Most babies weigh approximately three times their birth weight by age 1 and about four times their birth weight by age 2. A well-baby or well-child exam from a physician or nurse can help identify many problems early.

Personality development

Your child may be one who interacts eagerly with new people and experiences or one who prefers to observe first. Personality development is affected by how much young children trust the people who take care of them. By the age of 2, your child will probably enjoy playing beside another child. By the time children are ready to start school, they typically know how to play in a group and may even have a best friend.

Speech development

Your baby will learn to speak and to understand words from the people who talk to him. He is likely to speak his first few words between 9 and 12 months of age. How early he talks is affected by these factors:

- **Hearing:** Babies with poor hearing may take longer than those with good hearing.
- **Communication with parents:** Talking to your baby can help him learn to speak. Responding to your baby when she tries to talk can help her learn to speak.
- **Other areas of development:** When he is busy learning other things (like walking), his speech development may slow down for a little while.

Brain development

Genes, nutrition, and environment work together in brain development. Use a developmental chart, available from your health care provider, to keep track of your child's learning milestones. Talking to your children; reading to them; listening to them, even when they are very young; and letting them explore their world safely are good ways to help.

 **Contact your child's doctor or health care provider**, or call 1-800-323-GROW, if your child grows at a much different rate than others of the same age, often avoids eye contact, resists being held, seems to "tune out" the world around him, loses skills he or she once had, or doesn't respond to sounds or a familiar voice as an infant.

 For related Web resources, see "Is My Child OK?" at <http://illinoisearlylearning.org/tips.htm>.

The opinions, resources, and referrals provided in this Tip Sheet are intended for information purposes only and should not be considered or used as a substitute for medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment. We advise parents to seek the advice of a physician or other qualified health care provider with questions regarding their child's health or medical conditions.

Any opinions, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed in this tip sheet are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Illinois State Board of Education.



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