

Childhood CHECKLIST



Developmental delays, red flags, and problem areas to watch for

The American Academy of Pediatrics publishes a checklist of developmental and potential problem areas that parents can be on the lookout for through the ages and stages of life.

Note: Because each child develops at his own pace, these are just guidelines. Alert your pediatrician, however, if your child displays any of the following warning signs listed in his age group.

TODDLERS

(Ages 15 months to 2 years)

Developmental Warning Signs

- ☒ Cannot walk by 18 months.
- ☒ Does not speak at least 15 words by 18 months.
- ☒ Does not use two-word sentences by age 2.
- ☒ Does not seem to know the function of household items, such as a brush, telephone, bell, fork, or spoon, by 15 months.
- ☒ Does not follow simple instructions by age 2.
Cannot push a wheeled toy by age 2.

TODDLERS

The average 2-year-old can run, kick a ball, stand on their tip toes, and say two- to four-word sentences.

PRESCHOOLERS

(Ages 3 to 4)

Developmental Warning Signs

- ☒ Cannot throw a ball overhand, jump in place, or ride a tricycle.
- ☒ Cannot grasp a crayon between his thumb and fingers.
- ☒ Has difficulty scribbling and cannot copy a circle.
- ☒ Cannot stack four blocks.
- ☒ Still clings or cries whenever his parents leave him.
- ☒ Shows no interest in interactive games or ignores other children.
- ☒ Does not respond to people outside the family.

AGE 3

Most 3-year-olds can ride a tricycle, unscrew a jar, climb stairs, and say four- to five-word sentences.

- ✓ Resists dressing, sleeping, or using the toilet.
- ✓ Lashes out without any self-control when angry or upset.
- ✓ Does not use sentences of more than three words.
- ✓ Does not use “me” and “you” appropriately.

PRE-K

(Ages 4 to 5)

Developmental Warning Signs

- ✓ Exhibits extremely fearful, timid, or aggressive behavior.
- ✓ 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.
- ✓ Refuses to respond to people in general or responds only superficially.
- ✓ Seems unhappy or sad much of the time.
- ✓ Avoids or seems aloof with other children and adults.
- ✓ Does not express a wide range of emotions.
- ✓ Has trouble eating, sleeping, or using the toilet.
- ✓ Cannot differentiate between fantasy and reality.
- ✓ Cannot understand two-part commands using prepositions, such as, “Put the cup on the table,” or, “Get the ball under the couch.”
- ✓ Cannot correctly give her first and last name.
- ✓ Does not use plurals or past tense properly when speaking.
- ✓ Does not talk about her daily activities and experiences.
- ✓ Cannot brush her teeth efficiently.
- ✓ Cannot wash and dry her hands.

AGE 5
Usually knows their name and address, colors, and can stand on one foot for 10-plus seconds.

SCHOOL AGERS

(Ages 5 to 12)

Warning Signs of Low Self-Esteem

- ✓ Avoids a task or challenge without even trying.
- ✓ Quits soon after beginning a game or a task, giving up at the first sign of frustration.
- ✓ Cheats or lies when he's going to lose a game or do poorly.

School Agers
Set up a meeting with your child's school counselor or get a referral to a child psychologist if you suspect self-esteem issues.

- ✓ Makes excuses or downplays the importance of his actions and places blame on others.
- ✓ Drastic decrease in grades or loss of interest in usual activities.
- ✓ Withdraws socially and has less contact with friends.
- ✓ Experiences mood changes, sadness, crying, angry outbursts, frustration, or quietness.
- ✓ Makes self-critical comments and puts himself down.
- ✓ Has difficulty accepting either praise or criticism.
- ✓ Becomes overly concerned or sensitive about other people's opinions of him.
- ✓ Adopts negative attitudes and behaviors.

TEENAGERS

(Ages 13+)

Watch for these top three areas of concern affecting today's teenagers and the symptoms of each.

TEENS
Excessive sleeping, beyond the usual fatigue, could indicate depression, substance abuse, insomnia, or other disorders.

1. Depression

- ✓ Changes in sleep patterns.
- ✓ Unexpected weeping or excessive moodiness.
- ✓ Expressions of hopelessness or worthlessness.
- ✓ Paranoia and excessive secrecy.
- ✓ Self-injury or mention of hurting himself or herself.
- ✓ Obsessive body-image concerns.
- ✓ Excessive isolation or abandonment of friends.

2. Eating Disorders

- ✓ Anorexia: Avoidance of food and noticeable changes in eating habits should trigger concern.
- ✓ Bulimia: Purging (forced vomiting) after eating - Includes both dramatic weight loss without changes in eating habits and also immediate trips to the bathroom or other private spots after a meal.

3. Drug and Alcohol Abuse

- ✓ Look for drug and alcohol paraphernalia, hangovers, slurred speech, and other signs.
- ✓ Be alert for prescription drug abuse - the most commonly abused prescription drugs include Vicodin and Xanax.
- ✓ Keep tabs on over-the-counter medications, including cough and cold medications.