

GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF NORMAL DEVELOPMENT

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KEY CONCEPTS:

- ✓ Variation in development is normal
- ✓ Personality plays a part in development
- ✓ All kids go through “autistic stages”, but they don’t have other accompanying symptoms (i.e., they will look when you call their name) and the stages don’t last. Some normal “autistic stages” include looking at fans, turning lights on/off, opening and closing doors, and between 2-3 most kids become ritualistic.
- ✓ Infants/toddlers can’t develop multiple skills at one time. It is normal to be working on gross motor tasks (such as running) and not be able to make progress in language skills
- ✓ Most kids temporarily “lose” skills when they are going through a developmental leap. These skills come readily back without prompting. If skills don’t come back within 4 weeks or the child loses multiple skills, you should be concerned.
- ✓ Boys develop slower than girls and are generally more aggressive by nature.
- ✓ Non-compliance, refusal, and saying “no” are normal developmental stages

WHEN TO BE CONCERNED

- ❑ If the “autistic stages” consume the child’s entire day or interfere with social interaction (i.e., the child wakes up in the middle of the night and wants to flip on/off the lights or the child doesn’t do anything else but want to look at fans)
- ❑ If the child continuously loses skills and doesn’t gain them back
- ❑ If the child cries all the time
- ❑ No babbling by 12 months
- ❑ By 12 months the child doesn’t point to objects (to share interest – not just to get things – i.e., pointing to the sky and looking at the adult as if to say, “look at the airplane”)
- ❑ When you call the child’s name by the 2nd time they don’t respond
- ❑ Lack of eye contact
- ❑ By 14 months child should bring you objects (to show you)
- ❑ By 8 months child should imitate facial expressions (this is called echopraxia)
- ❑ If you point at something and say, “look over there”, the child should turn his/her head to look (it’s important that the phrase is “over there” vs. “at the elephant” because if the phrase is vague then you are isolating your finger whereas if you tell the child what you are looking at, s/he might just know where the object is).
- ❑ The child should be looking at other kids, imitating what they are doing, and want to be around them.



A-TYPICAL CHILD DEVELOPMENT:

- ✓ **Delay:** When skills are coming in typically, but they are not coming in on time. I.e., normal speech, but the child begins to talk around 18 months
- ✓ **Disorder:** When skills are coming in and developing a-typically.

Skills can be delayed (they are behind), disorders (they are atypical) or delayed and disordered (skills come in late and are not normal). Delays and Disorders can be in one area (i.e., just speech) or in multiple areas (speech, social, motor, etc.)