

Physical Development

Stage	Age	Gross motor skill development
Infancy	6 weeks to 18 months	<p>During this time significant development takes place. The baby's neck gains strength first. This is followed by the upper limbs and torso and then finally the legs.</p> <p>A baby will begin to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reach for objects at 3 months • Hold objects from 4 months • Hold their head up from 4 months • Roll over from 5 months • Transfer objects from one hand to another at 5 months • Crawl from 6 months • Hold themselves up from 8 months • Push and pull objects from 9 months • Walk from 11 months
Toddler	18 months to 3 years	<p>During this period the child will gain a great deal of strength in their legs and arms. They will be able to walk up and down steps and ride a tricycle. Their sense of balance develops rapidly during this time. As they are just gaining these skills, the toddler will expend a great deal of energy and effort in concentration. Given drawing tools, many toddlers begin to scribble at around age 2.</p>
Preschool	3 years to 5 years	<p>Children aged from 3 to 5 years of age will continue to develop their physical skills. Walking, running, hopping, skipping, riding tricycles and catching are tasks that can be completed without any great deal of thought or effort. At this age, children begin to master drawing shapes and letters.</p>
Middle childhood	6 years to 12 years	<p>During this time the children gain greater muscle strength and increase their coordination. Their increased cognitive capacity (ability to think) means that they can participate in more complex physical activities such as swinging, and somersaulting. They are able to use motor skills in organised sports. During this stage drawings become more detailed and handwriting becomes smaller, smoother and more consistent. With the improvement in fine motor skills children are able to partake in activities such as sewing and building models.</p>
Adolescence	12-18 years	<p>This stage is marked by periods of rapid growth and the onset of puberty. Adolescents are often self-conscious about physical changes. Gender differences become more noticeable, with boys tending to be faster, stronger and bigger than girls. In this period, teens are likely to engage in some risk-taking behaviours (e.g. alcohol, cigarette and drug use) and will probably become sexually active.</p>