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INFORMATION FROM YOUR PEDIATRICIAN

Know baby's firsts; ask your doctor about any concerns

Developmental milestones are things most children can do by a certain age, like taking a first step, smiling for the first time and waving good-bye. Your child reaches new milestones every day.

Starting at 9 months, most babies will understand “no” and play peek-a-boo. At 18 months, babies usually can say several words, point to show someone what they want and walk alone.

If you're concerned about the way your child plays, moves, acts or talks, your pediatrician can help. Make an appointment to talk about your child's development, and be sure to fill out a milestones checklist (www.cdc.gov/milestones) before the visit. The checklists outline milestones reached by most children from ages 2 months to 5 years.

Your pediatrician may want to screen your child to find out if he or she needs extra help. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that pediatricians screen all children for developmental delays and disabilities during well-child visits at 9 months, 18 months and 24 or 30 months.

If your pediatrician shares your concerns, your child will be referred to a specialist for evaluation. At the appointment, ask all the questions you may have about what to do next. The earlier a diagnosis is made, the faster your child can receive support.

If your doctor advises you to wait and see how your child develops but you feel uneasy, get a second opinion and find out if your child qualifies for services. You do not need your doctor's referral to have a child under 3 years old evaluated for services. Go to www.cdc.gov/findEI or call 800-232-4636 and ask how to contact your state's early intervention provider. For children ages 3 and up, contact your local public school system to request an evaluation. For more information, visit www.cdc.gov/ActEarly and www.cdc.gov/Concerned.

— *Trisha Koriath*

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