

# It's Better to Know!

Learn the Signs. Act Early.



Learning About Developmental Milestones



**Centers for Disease  
Control and Prevention**  
National Center on Birth Defects  
and Developmental Disabilities



All of us want our children to be happy and healthy. We want what is best for them. This story is about my family as we learn that "It's Better To Know" about developmental milestones.



Developmental milestones are things most children can do by a certain age. Children reach milestones in how they play, learn, speak, and act. Milestones offer important clues about a child's development. The developmental milestones you will learn about in this fotonovela will give you a general idea of what to expect as your child grows. Not reaching these milestones, or reaching them much later than other children, could be a sign of a developmental delay.

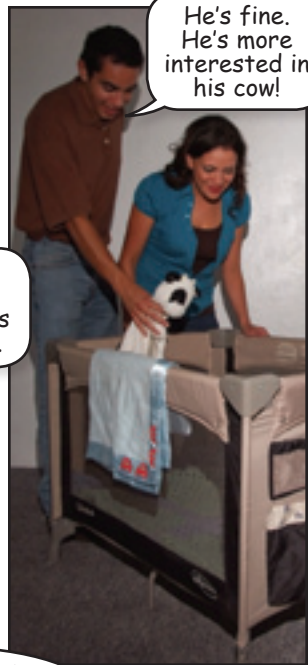
Trust your instincts. If you have concerns about your child's development, the best thing to do is talk with your doctor.

It's Better To Know! was produced by the Organization for Autism Research with funding provided by the Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.



Hi Carlitos!

C-a-r-l-i-t-o-s. He doesn't always look at us when we call his name. I wonder why.



He's fine. He's more interested in his cow!



How's my baby boy doing?

He's okay, mom, but he doesn't always look up when we call him.



Have you talked to the doctor about that?

No, why, should I?



Do you really think there could be something wrong with him, mom?

Remember the last time we took him for a well-baby check-up and 9-month developmental screening? I picked up this pamphlet in the waiting room. It talks about developmental milestones. Did you get a chance to look at it?



Please don't be upset, dear. I'm just saying that it's good to know how babies develop learn, and change. That's all.

This has some good information about signs to watch for. It's good to learn as much as you can about your baby!



I'll look at it later...



I have to run some errands, but I'll be back and we can take Carlitos to the park.

That afternoon...



Mom thinks we should talk to the doctor because Carlitos doesn't always respond when we call his name.

He's fine, Consuelo. You and your mom worry too much.



It's not just that, Carlos. My heart is telling me we need to look into this.

It's probably just a phase he's going through. It's not anything to worry about.



But what if there's something we should be paying attention to?

Give him time. You'll see...



I need you to listen to me, Carlos.

**Consuelo meets her Friends at the park...**



You have gotten so big!

Not too big, I hope. I want my baby to be healthy.



Oh, Consuelo, I'm so glad to see you and your baby! May I hold him?



Oh, he is such a good baby.




He's a sweetie!



I'm beginning to worry a little. Mom picked up this pamphlet from Dr. Garcia's office that says Carlitos should be responding to his name but he doesn't always look at us.




This is good information. It's important to know what to look for in the different stages of your child's development.




I could've used this when Panchito was a baby. We would have talked with the doctor earlier.

I didn't know Panchito had any problems.


You would never know that from seeing him today.



He didn't start talking until he was much older. My sister noticed it, and I got angry at her.




I hope my baby is okay!



He's doing well now but he didn't start talking when other kids did. We had a hard time facing the truth. We were hoping that he would just start talking on his own. Honestly, I think we waited too long to get help.

The pamphlet that mom brought home from the doctor says a baby his age should be looking up when he hears his name...



Consuelo, let me give you some advice. If you have concerns, ask your doctor. Trust your instincts and act on them.





The important thing is to educate yourself. It's better to know.



Where do we start? How do I find out more?

Start with your family doctor. Tell him why you're concerned. Before you go, sit down with Carlos and write down a list of questions to ask.



I can see that you learned to be a woman of action. Good for you!

I wish I had acted earlier. At least now I know what's going on. I will do anything for him!



My doctor is always so busy. Do you think he'll have time to listen to me?

You need a doctor you can talk to who will listen to your concerns about your child.



Now, I'm worried too.

You don't need to worry dear. Just be well-informed. It's better to know.

Meanwhile, Carlos talks to his friend at work...





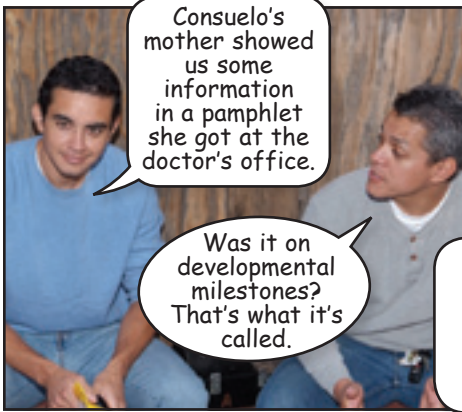
Maybe Consuelo is right!

Look, I thought he would grow out of it. But Lorena was right, and Panchito got the help he needed. It's better to know.



Now you have me all worried...

That's not what I want. Listen to what I'm saying. Just be smart, man, and get some information.



Consuelo's mother showed us some information in a pamphlet she got at the doctor's office.

Was it on developmental milestones? That's what it's called.



Developmental milestones?

Milestones are things your little kid should be doing by certain ages as he develops and grows. Think of them like road signs to look for when you drive. If your baby misses one of those road signs, don't wait. Just go to the doctor, and ask about it.



Look, there's probably nothing to worry about. But you should have him checked by a doctor. Take it from me. It's better to know.

That afternoon after work...

I had lunch with Antonio today. Did you know that his son didn't start talking until he was 3 years old?

Yes, I saw Lorena and Panchito at the park and she told me. You'd never know that by seeing that little boy today.



Antonio gave me some good advice.

And what was that?



He said to trust your eyes and ears. If your child is not doing the things other kids his age are doing, ask for help. He also said that learning about developmental milestones really helped Lorena and him.

Lorena also encouraged me to ask the doctor if it's normal for Carlitos not to respond when we call his name.



Seeing the doctor doesn't mean there's anything wrong. It's just better to ask and be sure.





I want to thank you, Doña Emma, for making us more aware of developmental milestones.



I didn't want to butt in, but it is better to be well-informed.

Of course you're right: It's better to know.

**At the clinic**



I'm concerned that Carlitos doesn't always look at us when we call his name. Is that a sign that something's wrong?

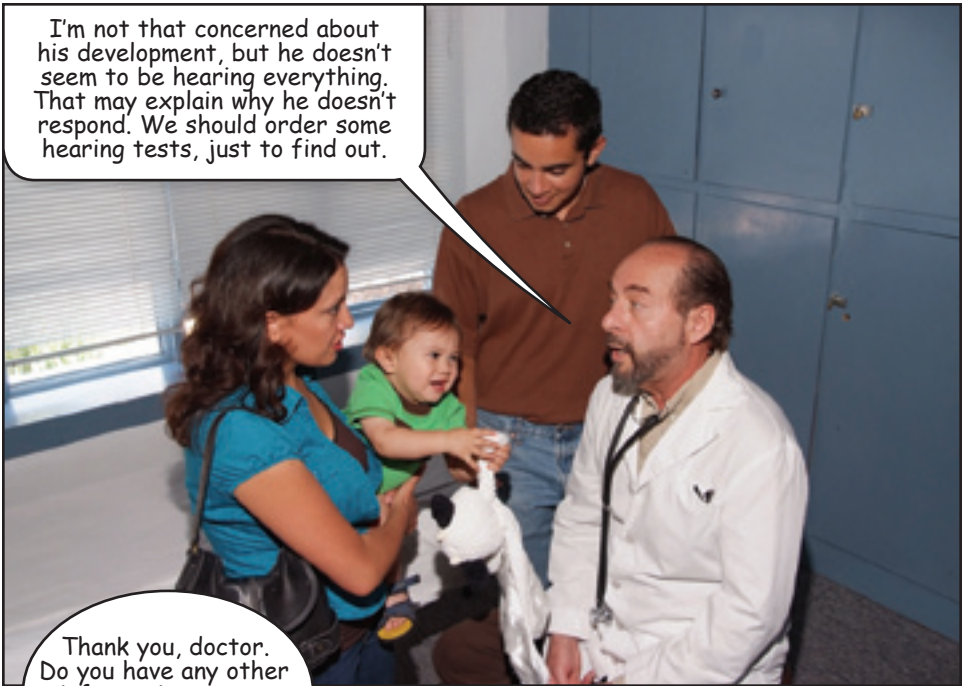
Your baby's development is not that black and white. Before I answer your question, let me ask you some other questions, and then let's see where we are.

**The doctor examines the baby and asks several questions about Carlitos' development...**



You were wise to bring Carlitos in. It's better to be sure, especially with a young child. He crawls, is pulling up, points with his index finger, and has a beautiful smile. These are all good signs to see in a 12-month-old baby.

I'm not that concerned about his development, but he doesn't seem to be hearing everything. That may explain why he doesn't respond. We should order some hearing tests, just to find out.



Thank you, doctor. Do you have any other information we can read regarding child development?



Yes, of course, Carlos. I'm very glad to see you're interested in learning more about how your baby will develop.

Look who's here!



I'm here for my check-up.

Is Carlitos okay?



Yes, he had a good check-up, but we need to take him in for hearing tests, just in case.

Consuelo and I are glad we did this!

Three weeks later...



So we took Carlitos in for his hearing tests and they did find something that affected his hearing and needs attention, but it's going to be fine. I'm so relieved, and so glad we checked.

Information always helps.



Healthy growth is so much more than the physical signs, isn't it? I'm going to learn from you and start talking to my husband about the milestones right away so we'll both know the signs when our baby comes.



Our son had a speech delay and avoided playing with other kids. The earlier you can identify these things, the sooner you can help your child. It has worked out well for Panchito. But, we learned our lesson about the importance of knowing about developmental milestones.



Now that we know, we do our best to take care of our son's needs and share our experience with other parents. Our message to you is "It's better to know." If you learn the signs, you can act early and get the help you need for you child and your family!

# It's Better to Know!

## Learn About Developmental Milestones

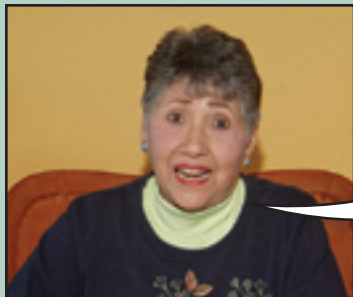
Developmental milestones are things most children can do by a certain age. Children reach milestones in how they play, learn, speak, and act. Each baby develops at its own pace, so it's not possible to tell exactly when your child will learn a skill. Knowing what to look for is important. The developmental milestones you will learn about in this fotonovela will give you a general idea of what to expect as your child grows. Not reaching these milestones, or reaching them much later than other children, could be a sign of a developmental delay. Trust your instincts. If you have concerns about your child's development, the best thing to do is talk with your doctor.



At 2 months, I will expect my baby to pay attention to faces, coo, gurgle, and smile at people. I know I should be concerned if she doesn't turn her head towards sounds, doesn't watch things as they move, or can't hold her head up.



When Carlitos was 6 months old, he could sit without support, copied some of the sounds we made, and liked to play with others. He also babbled and laughed, rolled over in both directions, and showed curiosity about things that were out of reach. We know now that he should have been responding to his name as well.



Carlitos is now 1 year old and he makes simple gestures, has favorite people and toys, pulls up to a standing position, says "ma-ma" and "da-da," finds hidden objects, follows simple directions, and tries to copy words. Yet, Carlitos often does not respond to his name. This concerned us, so I urged Carlos and Consuelo to talk to the doctor about it. We are all so glad they did!



# It's Better to Know!

## Learn About Developmental Milestones



By 2 years old, Panchito was excited to play with other children, showed more and more independence, used sentences with two to four words, followed two-step instructions, walked up and down stairs without help, ran, kicked balls, and climbed. However, we were concerned because Panchito was not yet talking. Most 2-year-old children are already using two-word sentences. We took him for a check-up and shared our concerns with his doctor. We were happy we did. If your 2-year-old child isn't talking; doesn't walk steadily; or doesn't know what to do with common things, like a brush, phone, fork, or spoon, it's important to talk with your child's doctor.

I cannot wait for Carlitos to turn 3 years old so I can teach him to play soccer! He will begin to show affection for playmates, carry on a conversation using two to three sentences, and enjoy playing make-believe. His development might be off track if he can't speak in full sentences, can't work simple toys, or isn't interested in playing with other children.



Panchito is 4 years old and, thanks to the early help we got him, he overcame his speech delay. Anyone can understand him now! He hops and stands on one foot, describes what he likes to do, tells stories, names colors, and counts. He's never had any problems playing with other kids, using "me" and "you" correctly, sleeping, and using the toilet. If he had experienced a delay in these activities, it would have been cause for concern. My baby is growing up!

Knowing about these developmental milestones is a way you can make sure your baby is on track. To learn more about developmental milestones, visit [www.cdc.gov/actearly](http://www.cdc.gov/actearly). Remember, it's better to know!



Developed in collaboration with  
the Organization for Autism Research.

# It's time to change how we view a child's growth.

As they grow, children are always learning new things. Below are just some of the things you should look for as your child grows. Use this as a guide, and if you have any concerns, talk with your child's doctor and call **1-800-CDC-INFO** to get connected with your community's early childhood intervention system.

- ▶ **At 6 months, many children**
  - respond to own name
  - respond to other people's emotions and often seem happy
  - copy sounds
  - like to play with others, especially parents
- ▶ **At 1 year (12 months), many children**
  - use simple gestures, like shaking head "no" or waving "bye-bye"
  - say "mama" and "dada" and exclamations like "uh-oh!"
  - copy gestures
  - respond to simple spoken requests
- ▶ **At 1 ½ years (18 months), many children**
  - play simple pretend, such as feeding a doll
  - point to show others something interesting
  - show a full range of emotions, such as happy, sad, angry
  - say several single words
- ▶ **At 2 years (24 months), many children**
  - say sentences with 2 to 4 words
  - follow simple instructions
  - get excited when with other children
  - point to things or pictures when they are named
- ▶ **At 3 years (36 months), many children**
  - show affection for friends without prompting
  - carry on a conversation using 2 to 3 sentences
  - copy adults and friends
  - play make-believe with dolls, animals, and people
- ▶ **At 4 years (48 months), many children**
  - tell stories
  - would rather play with other children than by themselves
  - play cooperatively with others
- ▶ **Questions to ask your child's doctor:**
  - Is my child's development on track for his or her age?
  - How can I track my child's development?
  - What should I do if I'm worried about my child's progress?
  - Where can I get more information?

Adapted from CARING FOR YOUR BABY AND YOUNG CHILD: BIRTH TO AGE 5, Fifth Edition, edited by Steven Shelov and Tanya Remer Altmann © 1991, 1993, 1998, 2004, 2009 by the American Academy of Pediatrics and BRIGHT FUTURES: GUIDELINES FOR HEALTH SUPERVISION OF INFANTS, CHILDREN, AND ADOLESCENTS, Third Edition, edited by Joseph Hagan, Jr., Judith S. Shaw, and Paula M. Duncan, 2008, Elk Grove Village, IL: American Academy of Pediatrics.

[www.cdc.gov/actearly](http://www.cdc.gov/actearly) | 1-800-CDC-INFO

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