

t some point, you might ask, "How do I know if my child is developing normally?" and you may compare your child's physical, intellectual and behavioural development to that of your relative or neighbour's child of the same age.

What is normal development for a preschooler

A preschooler likes to explore the world around him by jumping, running and playing. He learns to do many things on his own, like feeding and dressing himself, and may prefer to use the toilet alone. Speech-wise, he progresses from single words to complete sentences. Socially, he will be more aware of his environment and learn how to interact with people and establish relationships with family members and peers.

Awareness and early detection of developmental delays and disabilities

We know some children cannot sit still. cannot pronounce words well, do not follow instructions no matter how you phrase them, or blurt out inappropriate comments at inappropriate times. Some children who display such behaviours may have developmental delays or developmental disabilities.

You can track your child's developmental milestones using the Student Health Booklet, or by using the checklist on the next page.

What is a developmental delav

The term "developmental delay" is used to describe a child who is slower to

reach developmental milestones than other children in the way he moves, communicates, thinks, learns and behaves. Developmental delays can be temporary or permanent.

What is a developmental disability

Developmental disability is a term that refers to a permanent mental and/or physical impairment that occurs in the early years of life. This disability usually results in the child being affected in the way he moves, communicates, thinks, learns and behaves. Common developmental disabilities are Autism Spectrum Disorder, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and Dyslexia.

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Red Flags for Autism Spectrum Disorder

Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) have difficulties in communication, problem-solving and social skills.

Below are the red flags for ASD in the areas of social interaction, communication, behaviour and sensory experiences.

- does not consistently respond to his name.
- does not show interest in other children.
- does not enjoy or engage in games.

In terms of communication, a child with ASD

- does not use eye contact to get someone's attention.
- does not point to show people things or indicate that he wants something.
- does not sound like he is having a conversation with you when he babbles.
- does not understand simple onestep instructions, eg. 'Give the block to me'.

Behaviour-wise, a child with ASD

- focuses narrowly on objects and activities, such as turning the wheels of a toy car only.
- is easily upset by change and must follow routines, for example, leaving the house must be done in the same way every time.

For sensory experiences, a child with ASD

seeks sensory stimulation, for example, he may like to rock himself back and forth for hours.

Red Flags for Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)

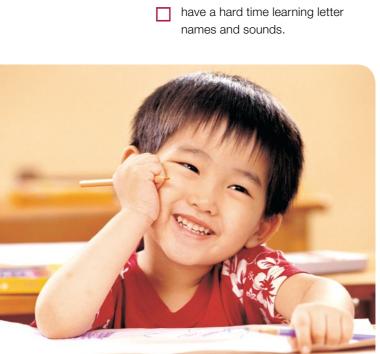
Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) children are over-active and display impulsive and inattentive behaviour. This behaviour is generally more frequent and intense than in other children of the same age.

A child with ADHD may

be unable to sit through games, stories, and circle time. He may roll around on the floor or crawl under tables.

	constantly asks questions but races off before the answer is given. be constantly on the go, stopping only to collapse from exhaustion. bang into objects and people, or climb and jump off furniture. have frequent injuries often requiring	
	hospitalisation (head injuries, fractures). be seemingly unaware of preschool routines, rules and expectations, even after several months in school. fail to meet academic and social expectations at the preschool and kindergarten. has a weak memory. has difficulties controlling his	You can consider waiting and watching if your child's behaviour is recent and inconsistent. appears at a single place or time. occurs primarily during group times when prolonged sitting is required. may be the result of recent life events, such as the birth of a new sibling.
	behaviour. has problems understanding the instructional language used in the classroom. has problems verbalising organised and focused responses to the teacher's questions.	is indicative of the child picking up new skills. allows him to interact and make friends. varies in the presence of different adults. appears purposeful or attentiongetting.
beh	can seek help when your child's aviour exhibits problems with several as highlighted in the above checklist has been observed for six months. occurs during independent and group activities. cannot be explained by other circumstances or disabilities. interferes with learning.	Red Flags for Dyslexia Dyslexia is a reading disability that occurs when the brain does not properly recognise and process certain symbols. It is not caused by vision problems. Most people with dyslexia have normal or even above-average intelligence. A child with dyslexia may have difficulties
	affects peer relationships and social development. is inappropriate despite clear and consistent age-appropriate expectations. appears out of the child's control.	writing and counting, as these aspects use symbols to convey information. Dyslexia often runs in families. Below are the red flags for dyslexia.

A 3-	5 year-old child with dyslexia may seem uninterested in playing games with language sounds, such as repetition and rhyming.	
	have trouble learning nursery rhymes.	
	frequently mispronounce words and persist in using baby talk.	
	fail to recognise the letters in his name.	
	have difficulty remembering the names of shapes and colours, letters and numbers.	
A 5-6 year-old child with dyslexia may		
	fail to recognise and write letters,	
	use inverted spelling for his name and other words.	
	have trouble breaking spoken words into syllables, such as "cowboy" into	
	"cow" and "boy". have trouble picking out or	
	recognising words that rhyme, such as "cat" and "bat".	
	fail to connect letters and sounds, such as "b" makes the sound "ba".	
	have a hard time learning letter	
	names and sounds.	



Α6-	-7 year-old child with dyslexia may
	have difficulty recognising letter
	names and sounds.
	fail to read common one-syllable
	words, such as "mat" and "top".
	make reading errors that suggest
	a failure to connect sounds and
	letters.
	fail to recognise common, irregularly-
	spelled words, such as said, "two"
	and "where".
	complain about how hard reading is
	and refuse to do it.
	have a tough time learning to write
	his name.
	have problems with fine motor skills,
	such as colouring and writing.

How to seek help

You may wish to speak to your child's caregivers and preschool teachers to check your observations against different settings. You might want to find out about your child's behaviour and learning during lessons, and how he gets along with his classmates.

You may wish to bring your child to your family doctor, doctor at the polyclinic or paediatrician for a check-up. Developmental screening is provided freeof-charge at the polyclinics for Singapore Citizens. Permanent Residents (PRs) will bear 50% of the screening cost.

The doctor may refer your child to one of the following for follow-up:

- Department of Child Development, KKH
- Child Development Unit, NUH
- Child Guidance Clinic
- Private paediatricians/ child psychiatrists/ psychologists.