

# How to Identify Global Developmental Delay in Children

Children grow and develop at their own pace, but there are expected milestones they typically reach within a certain age range. When a child lags behind in multiple developmental areas such as speech, motor skills, cognition, and social behaviour, it may be a sign of Global Developmental Delay (GDD). Identifying these signs early is crucial for ensuring the child receives the appropriate support and interventions.



## What Is Global Developmental Delay?

[Global Developmental Delay](#) refers to a condition where a child shows significant delays in two or more developmental domains. These may include:

- **Motor skills** (both fine and gross)
- **Speech and language**
- **Cognitive abilities**
- **Social and emotional interaction**

- **Daily living activities**

While every child grows at their own rhythm, GDD becomes a concern when the gap between the child's progress and typical developmental expectations continues to widen over time.

## Early Signs to Watch For

### Delayed Physical Milestones

One of the earliest ways to recognise GDD is through physical development:

- By **4 to 5 months**, a baby should begin rolling over and holding up their head steadily. If a child isn't showing signs of basic movement or continues to have trouble holding up their head past this age, it might be a red flag.

### Lack of Early Communication Skills

Language and sound recognition are essential parts of a child's development:

- By **3 to 4 months**, babies typically start responding to loud sounds, murmuring, and imitating noises.
- Around **7 months**, they usually turn towards sounds and show awareness of voices and other auditory stimuli.
- By **12 months**, children often begin to say basic words like "mama" or "dada," and should show attempts at verbal communication.

### Limited Verbal Growth by Age Two

By the age of two, a child should typically:

- Use **at least 15 words** regularly
- Begin forming **two-word phrases** (e.g., "want juice," "go car")
- Express needs verbally instead of through actions like pointing or pulling

If your child is not meeting these communication milestones and continues to rely heavily on non-verbal cues, this may indicate developmental concerns.

# How to Use a Developmental Checklist

Parents and caregivers can track progress using simple checklists to compare their child's abilities with age-based norms. While occasional delays are normal, consistent and wide-ranging delays across more than one domain may suggest the presence of [global developmental delay in children](#).

Here is a brief checklist based on common milestones:

Age	Expected Milestone
3–4 months	Responds to loud sounds, starts cooing or murmuring
7 months	Reacts to sound, turns head toward voices
12 months	Says simple words like "mama" or "dada"
24 months	Speaks at least 15 words, uses two-word phrases

This list serves as a general guide. It's always best to consult with a paediatrician or developmental specialist if you have any concerns.

## Why Early Diagnosis Matters

Timely recognition of GDD can significantly improve a child's developmental path. Early intervention may include:

- Speech and language therapy
- Occupational therapy for motor skill development
- Behavioural therapies to improve social and emotional functioning

Starting these services as early as possible can help the child build essential skills and confidence to manage daily life.

## Seek Professional Support

If your child consistently misses multiple developmental milestones, don't wait or assume they will "catch up." A professional evaluation can determine whether further assessment or therapy is needed. In many cases, early support helps reduce long-term challenges and improves quality of life.

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**Tomatis® Australia** offers tailored programs for children diagnosed with Global Developmental Delay. Their sound therapy and neuro-sensory programs are designed to stimulate brain function and improve communication, learning, and emotional wellbeing.

To explore [global delay development treatment](#) and learn more, visit [Tomatis® Australia](#).