

Early Signs of Developmental Delay

Parent Checklist (Dubai Edition)

By Small Steps Learning Difficulties Center

- ✓ Complete in 5 minutes
- ✓ Based on CDC & NHS developmental guidance

Important Note

This checklist is **not an official government screening or diagnostic tool**. It is intended for **early awareness only** and does not replace professional assessment. If you have concerns, consult a qualified healthcare provider.

1. Developmental Milestones (By Age)

✓ By 12 Months

- Uses gestures such as waving or pointing
- Says simple words like “mama” or “dada”
- Responds to their name and familiar voices
- Shows interest in people (smiles, engages in simple games like peek-a-boo)

✓ By 18 Months

- Says several single words (in any language)
- Points to show interest or request something
- Walks independently
- Engages with caregivers (eye contact, interaction, shared attention)

✓ By 24 Months

- Uses simple two-word phrases (e.g., “more milk”, “mama come”)
- Uses at least 50 words (may include multiple languages)
- Follows simple instructions (e.g., “give me the ball”)
- Shows interest in other children

✓ By 36 Months

- Uses short sentences (3–4 words or more)
- Speech is understood by familiar adults most of the time
- Plays alongside or with other children
- Shows a range of emotions and responds to others' feelings

2. Developmental Concerns (Discuss With a Professional)

- Loss of previously learned skills (regression)
- Limited or inconsistent eye contact
- Does not respond to their name consistently
- Not using meaningful words by around 2 years
- Limited use of gestures (pointing, showing)
- Repetitive movements or behaviors (e.g., hand flapping, lining up objects)
- Limited interest in interaction or appears socially disengaged

👉 If you notice **one or more concerns**, consider discussing them with a healthcare professional. **Early evaluation can be helpful.**

3. Dubai-Specific Considerations

- Child is exposed to more than one language (this is typical and not a cause for delay)
- Responds to at least one primary language
- Has regular opportunities for floor-based play and movement
- Has frequent interaction with caregivers (not primarily screen-based)

4. Daily Home Practices (Support Development)

✓ Communication

- Talk to your child throughout daily routines
- Label objects and actions (e.g., “This is a ball”)
- Encourage gestures, sounds, and attempts to communicate

✓ Play

- Provide daily opportunities for interactive play
- Follow your child's lead during play
- Limit screen time in line with pediatric guidance

✓ Social Interaction

- Maintain eye contact during interaction
- Encourage turn-taking (games, toys)
- Support interaction with siblings or peers

✓ Caregiver Involvement

- Parents and nanny actively talk and engage with the child
- Use simple, consistent language
- Prioritize active interaction over passive screen use

5. Parent Action Plan

If you have concerns:

- Record short videos of your child (play and communication)
- Keep a simple record of developmental skills
- Arrange a hearing check if needed
- Speak with a pediatrician or developmental specialist
- Begin increasing interactive play and communication at home

Reminder for Parents

- ✓ Children develop at different rates, but patterns of delay should be monitored
- ✓ Early support can improve outcomes
- ✓ Seeking advice is a proactive and appropriate step

Final Note

Clarity is better than uncertainty.

Seeking guidance and early assessment supports your child's development; it does not label them.

Need Guidance?

Small Steps Big Dreams – Dubai

Helping children unlock their full potential

 [Book a consultation today](#)

 [Read full milestone guide from our website](#)