

Growth & Development

High-yield milestones, psychosocial theory, safety priorities, and nutrition for the Infant & Toddler stages — everything the NGN test plan expects you to recognize at a glance.

INFANT • 0-12 MO

TODDLER • 1-3 YR

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The Infant

01

BIRTH — 12 MONTHS

Rapid physical growth & trust-building. Everything is *cephalocaudal* (head-to-toe) and *proximodistal* (center-out).

The Toddler

02

1 — 3 YEARS

Growth *slows*, autonomy *explodes*. Ritualism, negativism, and parallel play define this stage.

i. Physical Growth — *the body*

VITALS • FONTANELS • DENTITION



Infant Growth

HC > CHEST UNTIL 2 YR

- ▶ **Weight:** **2×** by 6 mo • **3×** by 12 mo
- ▶ **Length:** increases ~50% by 12 months
- ▶ **Head circumference:** grows ~33% in first year
- ▶ **Posterior fontanel** closes by **2-3 mo**
- ▶ **Anterior fontanel** closes by **12-18 mo**
- ▶ **First tooth:** erupts around 6 mo (lower central incisors)
- ▶ **HOT** Bulging fontanel → ↑ICP • Sunken → dehydration



Toddler Growth

GROWTH SLOWS ↓

- ▶ **Weight gain:** only **4-6 lbs/yr** (slows!)
- ▶ **Height:** ~3 inches per year
- ▶ **Anterior fontanel** fully closed by **18 mo**
- ▶ **Dentition:** 20 primary (deciduous) teeth by ~**30 mo**
- ▶ **Pot belly + lordosis** = *normal* body shape
- ▶ Bow-legged appearance until about 2-3 yr
- ▶ **HOT** Physiologic anorexia → expect ↓ appetite

ii. Gross Motor — *big movements*

CEPHALOCAUDAL • HEAD → FEET



Infant Gross Motor

LIFT · ROLL · SIT ·
CRAWL · WALK

- 2 mo** Lifts head 45° when prone
- 4 mo** Rolls *front* → *back*; holds head steady
- 5 mo** Rolls *back* → *front*; sits with support
- 6 mo** Tripod sits; bears weight on legs
- 8 mo** Sits unsupported
- 9 mo** Crawls on hands & knees
- 10 mo** Pulls to stand; cruises furniture
- 12 mo** Walks with one hand held



Toddler Gross Motor

RUN · JUMP ·
PEDAL

- 15 mo** Walks alone steadily
- 18 mo** Runs (clumsily); climbs stairs with help
- 2 yr** Runs well; kicks ball; jumps in place
- 2.5 yr** Jumps with both feet; stands on one foot briefly
- 3 yr** Rides tricycle; alternates feet up stairs
- 3 yr** Balances on one foot 2–3 sec

Tip Alternating feet up-stairs = 3 yr · down-stairs = 4 yr

iii. Fine Motor & Language — *hands & words* — GRASP · BABBLE · PHRASE



Infant Fine Motor + Language

- 2 mo** **Coos**; social smile
- 3 mo** Hands to midline; laughs
- 4 mo** Grasps rattle voluntarily
- 6 mo** **Babbles** ("ba-ba-ba"); palmar grasp
- 7 mo** Transfers object hand-to-hand
- 9 mo** **Pincer grasp** begins (crude)
- 10 mo** "Mama/Dada" *non-specific*
- 12 mo** Neat pincer · **2–4 words** specific · waves bye



Toddler Fine Motor + Language

- 15 mo** Tower of **2 blocks**; 4–6 words
- 18 mo** Tower of **3–4 blocks**; 10–20 words
- 2 yr** Tower of **6–7 blocks**; **50+ words**; 2-word phrases ("me go")
- 2 yr** Turns pages one at a time; removes shoes
- 3 yr** Tower of **9–10 blocks**; copies a ○
- 3 yr** **300+ words**; 3-word sentences; asks "why?"

Rule of thumb Speech should be **75% intelligible** by age 3.

● Erikson · Psychosocial

Infant **Trust vs Mistrust**

Consistent, responsive caregiving builds **trust**. Feeding is the central trust event. Unmet needs → mistrust, withdrawal.

Toddler **Autonomy vs Shame/Doubt**

Child asserts independence ("I do it!"). Support **choices within limits**. Shaming → self-doubt & hesitation.

● Piaget · Cognitive

Infant **Sensorimotor (0–2)**

Object permanence emerges ~9 mo → why peek-a-boo is thrilling. Learns through senses & motion.

Toddler **Preoperational begins ~2 yr**

Egocentric & magical thinking. Symbolic play (banana = phone). Cannot yet take another's perspective.

iv. Play & Social-Emotional — *the "why" behind behavior*

ATTACHMENT · PLAY TYPE ·
REGULATION



Infant Social / Play

SOLITARY

- ▶ **Social smile:** 2 months (responsive)
- ▶ **Stranger anxiety:** begins **6–8 mo**
- ▶ **Separation anxiety:** **9–18 mo** (peaks around 15 mo)
- ▶ **Play type:** **Solitary** plays alone
- ▶ Toys: mobiles, mirrors, rattles, soft blocks, textured books
- ▶ **NGN** Hospitalized infant → keep primary caregiver present; consistent nurse assignment



Toddler Social / Play

PARALLEL

- ▶ **Play type:** **Parallel** plays *beside*, not with
- ▶ **Negativism:** "NO!" is a normal autonomy response
- ▶ **Ritualism:** routines feel safe — honor them in hospital
- ▶ **Temper tantrums:** peak 2–3 yr; ignore unsafe behavior, do not reason mid-tantrum
- ▶ **Regression** common during hospitalization — reassure parent it's expected
- ▶ Toys: push/pull, stacking rings, large crayons, pretend kitchen



Safety — Unintentional Injury = #1 Cause of Death Ages 1–4

NGN
PRIORITY

● Infant Safety Priorities

- ✓ **Back to sleep** — supine, firm mattress, no loose bedding/bumpers (SIDS)
- ✓ Share a **room**, not a **bed**, for first 6 mo
- ✓ Rear-facing car seat **until age 2** (or per max weight/height)
- ✗ NO honey before **12 mo** → infant botulism
- ✗ NO cow's milk before **12 mo** → GI bleed, anemia
- ✗ NO infant walkers (AAP contraindicated)
- ✗ Choking: keep objects < **1.25 in** away (toilet paper tube test)
- ✗ NEVER leave unattended on changing table, couch, or in tub

● Toddler Safety Priorities

- ✓ **Drowning** is the leading injury death 1–4 yr → close supervision near ALL water (bath, toilet, pool, bucket)
- ✓ Car seat: rear-facing to 2 yr, then **forward-facing 5-point harness**
- ✓ Poison Control: **1-800-222-1222** · meds in locked, climbed-to cabinets
- ✗ Outlet covers, cabinet locks, stove-knob guards, window guards
- ✗ Avoid small foods: hot dogs, grapes, nuts, hard candy, popcorn
- ✗ Sunscreen, helmet for trike, fence around pool w/ self-latching gate
- ✗ No plastic bags, cords, blinds within reach



Developmental Red Flags — Refer for Evaluation

Infant Red Flags

- ⚠ No social smile by **3 mo**
- ⚠ Doesn't follow objects with eyes by **4 mo**
- ⚠ Head lag persists beyond **4 mo**
- ⚠ Not babbling by **9 mo**
- ⚠ Not sitting unsupported by **9 mo**
- ⚠ No words or gestures (wave/point) by **12 mo**
- ⚠ Any loss of previously acquired skill

Toddler Red Flags

- ⚠ Not walking by **18 mo**
- ⚠ < 15 words or no 2-word phrases by **24 mo**
- ⚠ Speech unintelligible to strangers at **3 yr**
- ⚠ Does not engage in pretend play by **24–30 mo**
- ⚠ Persistent toe-walking / abnormal gait
- ⚠ No eye contact, social smile, or joint attention
- ⚠ Regression in language or social skills



Nutrition — High-Yield NGN Points

Infant Feeding

- **0–6 mo:** Breast milk or iron-fortified formula *exclusively*
- **6 mo:** Start solids — **iron-fortified rice cereal** first
- Introduce one food every **3–5 days** to monitor for allergies
- Finger foods ~8–9 mo; cup introduced ~6–12 mo
- **12 mo:** Transition to whole cow's milk (needs fat for brain dev)
- Signs of readiness: good head control, sits supported, opens mouth for spoon, doubled birth weight

Toddler Feeding

- **Physiologic anorexia** — decreased appetite is *normal*
- "Food jags" common — offer variety, do not force-feed
- Whole milk **16–24 oz/day max** (> 32 oz → iron-deficiency anemia)
- Serving size: **1 Tbsp per year of age** per food group
- Self-feeds with spoon by 18 mo; uses cup well by 2 yr
- No juice or honey-limited; avoid choking foods (whole grapes, hot dogs, nuts, popcorn)



Memory Aids — *remember on test day*

2•4•6•9

INFANT MILESTONES

2=smile · **4**=roll f→b ·
6=sit/babble ·
9=crawl/pincer

T•R•U•S•T

ERIKSON INFANT

Take turns · **R**espond
consistently · **U**se comfort ·
Soothe · **T**hrough feeding

SIDS

PREVENTION "ABC"

Alone · **B**ack · **C**rib —
firm mattress, no
bumpers, pacifier OK,
room-share not bed-
share

NO!

TODDLER TRUTH

Negativism · **O**bstinate
ritualism. Offer **2**
choices, not open-
ended. Ignore tantrums
that are safe.