

# Know the numbers



Your child's doctor may explain how your child is growing using a few different measurements

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## Percentile

A percentile on a growth chart indicates children's average heights for their age group. The doctor will compare your child's height to average heights of other children the same age.

Most children fall between the 3rd and 97th percentiles on the growth chart. If your child is below the 3rd percentile, he or she may be referred to a specialist. It may mean that your child has an underlying medical condition.

What does your child's height percentile mean? After your child is measured, your doctor may tell you what percentile your child falls into on a growth chart. This represents the percentage of children at the same height or weight for that age group. For example, if your 9-year-old daughter is in the 30th percentile for height, that means that out of a hundred 9-year-old girls, 70 are taller and 30 are the same height or shorter.



## Growth Velocity

A child's annual growth rate is often referred to as growth velocity. The doctor will most likely look at the change in your child's height from year to year and see if he or she is growing at a normal rate. Your child is expected to grow at a fairly standard rate every year.

- From birth to 1 year of age, children grow about 10 inches (25.4 cm)
- From ages 1 to 4, children grow about 4 inches (10.2 cm) per year
- Most children grow 2-3 inches (5.1-7.6 cm) every year from ages 4-12

The next peak in growth occurs during puberty. For girls, puberty usually starts at around 11 years old, and for boys, puberty starts at about 13 years old. If your child is growing less than 2 inches (5.1 cm) per year, it may be a sign of growth failure and you may need to go to a specialist to have your child evaluated.

Things your doctor might do!

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## Bone Age X-Ray

By taking a simple X-ray of your child's left hand and wrist, a radiologist can see if your child's bone age matches their chronological age. Whether the bone age is delayed or advanced will determine the next steps.



## Mid-Parental Target Height

A child's mid-parental target height is a method used to estimate the target height based on both parents' heights. This number helps the doctor evaluate whether your child is growing at a proper rate.