



Your Baby's Development

This is a time of great fun for parents as they watch their babies become eager explorers who are thrilled to discover that they can make things happen. A 7-month-old knows, *When I smile, mommy smiles back!* A 9-month-old lifts her arms to tell her dad, *I want you to pick me up.*

How is your baby making things happen?

What Your Baby Can Do	What You Can Do
<p>I am learning to think and solve problems.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When a toy drops to the floor, I look to see where it went. • I figure out how things work by copying what I see you and others do. 	<p>Comment on what your baby does to make things happen. <i>You used your voice to let me know you wanted me to keep playing peek-boo.</i></p> <p>Let your baby explore interesting objects— like toys with buttons to push.</p>
<p>I can control my body.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I can pick up small objects using my thumb and other fingers. • I can sit on my own, which helps me explore in new ways. • I may crawl or scoot to get around. I might even pull up on furniture to stand. 	<p>Begin letting your child practice picking up baby-safe foods like slices of banana, if you'd like your child to learn to feed himself.</p> <p>Give your baby time to move around on his own. This builds muscle strength and coordination.</p>
<p>I am working hard to communicate with you.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I babble a lot. When someone talks to me, I make sounds back. • I use my voice to express feelings, like joy and anger. • I copy actions you make, like waving "bye-bye" and shaking my head "no-no." 	<p>Use words to describe your baby's feelings: <i>You are mad that Daddy took away the crayon. You can chew on this rattle instead.</i></p> <p>If your baby is looking at something, point at it and explain: <i>That's a radio. It plays music.</i></p> <p>Copy your baby's sounds and actions. If she waves, wave back and say <i>Hello!</i></p>
<p>My personality is starting to show.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I may love to meet new people or need time to feel comfortable with someone I don't know yet. • I may like lots of sound and activity or I may prefer things to be more quiet and calm. • I may be very active or more interested in watching. 	<p>Notice how your baby likes to play and explore. Does she like to move or does she prefer to sit and watch the world around her?</p> <p>See how your baby reacts to sounds, sights, and social activity. What does she seem to enjoy? What does she seem to dislike or get overwhelmed by?</p>



As you use this resource, remember that your child may develop skills faster or slower than indicated here and still be growing just fine. Talk with your child's health care provider or other trusted professional if you have questions.

Your family's cultural beliefs and values are also important factors that shape your child's development.

For more information on parenting and child development, go to: www.zerotothree.org.

What's on Your Mind

My 8-month-old used to love when my mother babysat but now she sobs when I leave!

This sounds like *separation anxiety*. Starting at around 8 or 9 months, babies may become upset and fearful when separated from a loved one. This happens because babies are beginning to understand that people still exist even when they can't see them. So they naturally protest to try to make their special person stay. To help your baby adjust to separations, read stories about saying good-bye (like *Owl Babies* by Martin Waddell). And use a good-bye routine with your baby each time you leave—like a song, a kiss, and a big wave. Routines help babies feel safe. To help your child make the transition to her caregiver, suggest that the three of you play with one of your child's favorite toys or books before you leave. Most importantly, be sure to say a real good-bye to your baby. Sneaking out makes babies worry that you may disappear at any time without warning. This makes separations even harder and can create feelings of mistrust.

Did You Know...

Your baby is watching and learning from you?

What It Means for You:

At this age, babies begin to look to loved ones for clues about how to feel about a situation. For example, when a new person comes to the house, a baby looks to his parents to see how they respond: *Are they smiling and happy? Is this person okay? Can I trust him?* To help your baby adjust when meeting a new person, show with your own face, voice, and actions that he or she is nice and trustworthy.

How have you seen your baby observe and react to your signals?

Spotlight on Helping Your Baby Learn to Sleep Through the Night

By 6 months, most full-term, healthy babies are able to sleep through the night. (Certainly check with your health care provider to be sure.) If you'd like your baby to learn this skill, it's important to be patient and consistent with how you handle bedtime and night-wakings. This helps your baby learn to soothe himself and go back to sleep more easily and quickly.

What You Can Do

Use a bedtime routine. Loving and relaxing bedtime routines (like bath, story, milk, teeth-cleaning, and then lullaby) help babies settle down and learn when it's time to go to sleep. (Just be sure not to leave a cup or bottle in the crib or bed.)

Put your baby to bed while he's sleepy but still awake. We all wake up to some degree during the night as we move through different stages of sleep. If children are fed or comforted by a loved one to fall asleep, when they wake up in the middle of the night, they depend on that same kind of comfort to fall back to sleep.

When you put your baby down sleepy but awake, he learns how to fall asleep on his own.

Plan for protests. Make a plan for what to do if your baby cries while she is learning to fall asleep. Some parents choose to check on their child several times until she falls asleep. Other parents say a clear goodnight and do not return until morning. (For some children, having their parents come in and out can make it harder for them to calm down and fall asleep.) There is not one "right" way to help babies learn to sleep through the night.



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