



Growth and Developmental Milestones: A Guide to Development in Young Children Birth to Age 3

Maryland State Department of Education, Division of Early Intervention and Special Education Services

Babies need more than food and water to grow up healthy. Among other things, they need love, understanding, guidance, and security. They need you to help them learn about their world, develop skills, and adjust to their changing needs. Playing an active role in your baby's development can be exciting, enriching, and rewarding. You may notice daily changes in appearance, behavior and language, and you will realize that your baby's successful development depends greatly on your participation in the process. As you observe your baby's growth, keep in mind that no two children are exactly alike. There are "typical" stages of growth, however, your baby may develop at a different pace than another baby. Your baby may develop quickly in one area, and not as quickly in another.

If you believe your baby is having difficulty in a developmental area, don't panic. Many challenges related to development can be helped through early intervention—a system of services offered to enhance a child's potential for growth and development and the family's ability to meet their child's special needs.

The information contained in this brochure is not intended to be comprehensive. It may be useful as a general guide to what your baby may be doing at a particular age. Keep it handy and refer to it often. For information about early intervention services, contact the Maryland Infants and Toddlers Program at 1-800-535-0812.

Birth–2 Months

Physical Development

- Barely lifts head to clear surface
- Keeps hands tightly fist

Speech Development

- Coos and makes grunting sounds
- Babbles

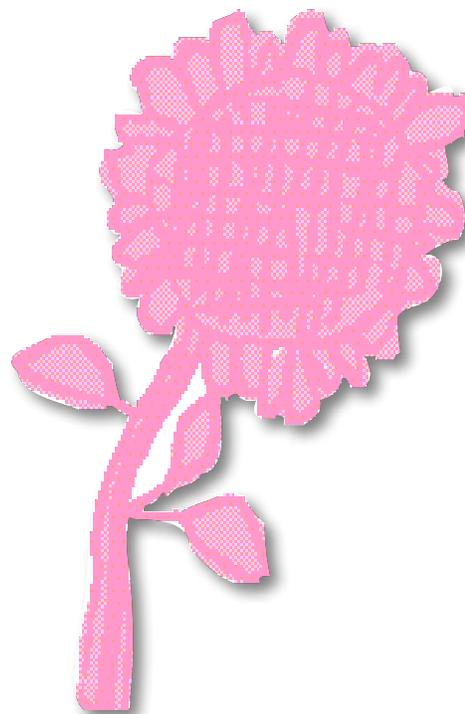
Social Development

- Sleeps a lot
- Cries a lot
- May have erratic sleeping and feeding patterns
- Quiets in response to parent's face and voice

2 Months

Physical Development

- Lifts head while lying on stomach
- Has smooth motions
- Relaxes fist, unfolds fingers
- Waves hands and kicks feet when on back



Speech Development

- Coos and gurgles increasingly, especially when talked to
- Cries differently for different needs

Social Development

- Begins to smile, show excitement and distress
- Turns to familiar voices
- Quiets when held, talked to, or rocked
- Enjoys being tickled
- Maintains brief eye contact while being fed
- May suck thumb or finger to quiet self

4 Months

Physical Development

- Can see across a room
- Sits erect when supported
- Rolls over from tummy to back
- Reaches for toys with one hand
- Holds objects
- Reaches for feet and brings them to mouth
- Turns head to localized sounds
- Follows people with eyes

Speech Development

- Laughs, squeals, and babbles
- Coos and gurgles with joy
- Says “ooh” and “ahh”

Social Development

- Loves to play with own feet
- Sees colors rather than black and white
- Fusses when wanting to be picked up and held
- Can tell the difference in family members
- Reaches out hands and arms to play
- Smiles

7 Months

Physical Development

- Sits up by self for a short time
- Holds toys and feeds self pieces of food
- Stands when held, takes some of the weight on own legs
- Reaches for objects, transfers them from hand to hand
- Begins teething, which may disturb sleep

Speech Development

- Combines vowel sounds
- Imitates sounds
- Responds to “no” and own name
- Uses body language to initiate interaction

Social Development

- Plays alone

- Plays longer with people and toys
- Enjoys other children
- Grows more responsive to sound
- Withdraws from strangers, clings to familiar caregivers

10 Months

Physical Development

- Crawls using different crawling styles
- Crawls over objects
- May stand leaning against an object
- Picks up small objects with thumb and fingers

Speech Development

- Says “bye-bye,” “dada,” and “mama”
- Uses voice to get attention

Social Development

- Is becoming more independent—may be more interested in playing alone than being held
- Imitates gestures and use of objects
- Crawls around to look for parents
- Likes to play “peek-a-boo”
- Turns handful of pages books and magazines
- Likes to play sound games
- Waves “bye-bye”
- Understands simple directions

12 Months

Physical Development

- Begins to change from a crawl to a tottering walk with legs wide apart
- Feeds self finger foods
- May begin to use a spoon
- Squats

Speech Development

- Uses “Dada” and “Mama” to refer to specific persons
- May have a vocabulary of 3 to ten “real” words
- Adds gestures to own body language

Social Development

- Loves an audience
- Scribbles with crayons
- Has more variety in play
- Exhibits stronger likes and dislikes
- Flirts with and kisses self in mirror
- Plays with dolls and stuffed animals
- Points to objects in books and identifies them

- Understands simple words and phrases like “Come to Daddy”

15 Months

Physical Development

- Stands and walks alone
- Uses a spoon to feed self
- Picks up things from a walking position

Speech Development

- Uses simple words and phrases
- Says some words spoken by parents

Social Development

- Says “no” and refuses food
- Is more aware of surroundings
- Is growing more independent
- Is very active

18 Months

Physical Development

- Runs stiffly
- Uses whole arm when playing ball
- Feeds self, eats with a spoon, tries a fork
- Takes off shoes, hat, mittens
- Loves to lug, tug, dump, push, and pull
- Goes up and down stairs without help

Speech Development

- Knows names of objects
- Uses personal pronouns

Social Development

- Loves to explore
- Often refuses foods
- Likes to listen to music and dance to rhythms

24 Months

Physical Development

- Undresses self (large items such as pajamas)
- Begins to kick
- Handles a cup well
- Takes things apart and puts them together again

Speech Development

- Speaks more clearly
- Replaces “baby” language with short sentences
- Likes to talk to self
- Repeats words others say
- Combines words and actions

Social Development

- Identifies with surroundings
- Enjoys helping Mommy and Daddy
- May enjoy cleaning up after playing

- Is very active
- May have periodic temper tantrums
- May point to named body parts

36 Months

Physical Development

- Swings and climbs
- Jumps in place
- Walks backward
- Peddles tricycle

Speech Development

- Talks in short sentences, uses plurals
- Sings short songs
- Language is understood by others besides parents
- Says own name
- Increasingly uses “no”
- Announces fears and dislikes

Social Development

- Feeds self well with spoon and fork
- Drinks from a straw
- Strings large beads
- Dresses self well
- Begins to identify gender roles
- Explores environment outside of home

Tips for Parents

- Babies learn to talk when they hear others. Talk, sing, and read to your baby.
- Babies like physical contact. Touch, rock and hold your baby.
- Babies sense tension. Responds to your baby’s cries quickly and tenderly. Be sensitive when talking to your baby and to others in his presence.
- Nature stimulates babies’ interest in the outside environment. Take frequent outdoor walks with your baby. The fresh air is also helpful.
- Provide toys that are appropriate for your child’s age and development. Mobiles, colorful boxes, push/pull toys, large blocks, big balls and musical instruments are all good ideas.
- Handle your baby with care. Babies and young children should NEVER be shaken!

Developmental Milestones



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