



infant development

Your baby will go through many changes during the first year. This handout offers suggestions on what to look for, as well as helpful tips to make this time of change easier for both you and baby.

Birth to 1 month: You can expect baby to: eat small amounts, so she will eat often; only suck and swallow breast milk, formula, or water because her tongue cannot handle any foods; be unable to control neck, so baby needs to be held. *Tips: Unwrap baby from his blanket a few times a day and remove him from his infant seat or baby carrier when possible - baby loves to stretch!*

1 to 2 months: You can expect baby to: sleep a total of 18-22 hours a day; use 10 or more diapers and cry up to 2 hours a day; continue to develop reflexes and sense of touch (hearing is developed); have runny, irregular bowel movements (unless breast-fed); smile at you; respond to your voice; be unable to control head, neck or body very well. *Tips: Help baby explore movement while lying on her back by helping her “pedal” her legs. Remember new cribs are safer than old cribs and to avoid suffocation, never put a pillow in your baby’s crib.*

2 to 3 months: You can expect baby to: sleep about 6 hours at night; begin to lift head and neck; follow objects or people with his eyes; cry slightly differently when hungry or uncomfortable; be unable to manage food - not even cereal. *Tips: Talk to your baby often. Begin thinking about immunizations. To prevent diaper rash change diapers whenever necessary. Avoid baby clothing with long strings which could be a choking hazard. Baby may eat every 3-4 hours, even through the night. Baby generally cries when she is uncomfortable and needs you. It is important to always go to her when she cries.*

3 to 4 months: You can expect baby to: kick; hold head up briefly; may sleep through the night (a good time to move baby to his room); smile, laugh or squeal; permanent eye color begins to develop; enjoy bright colors and different stimuli; enjoy a daily routine (this may reduce irritability). *Tips: Play-Pen styles with drop-sides can be a suffocation hazard if used incorrectly. Mesh netting on the sides should have “holes” smaller than buttons on baby’s clothing. When baby learns to stand and climb, remove cushions or toys that*

could be used for climbing out and limit Play-Pen use to 30-60 minutes per day.

4 to 5 months: You can expect baby to: sit up with support; roll from side to back or vice versa, splash his hands and feet in the tub; drool (hasn’t learned to swallow saliva yet); plays with hands and feet; control head and upper body and sit with support. *Tips: Introduce baby to music and watch her reactions to different types. Babies have different temperaments. Don’t confuse temperament with misbehavior. Babies do not intentionally act out, so any type of punishment is out of the question.*

5 to 6 months: You can expect baby to: recognize faces and voices; suck on his toes; stand and move body up and down with underarm support; reach and grasp objects with fairly good aim; take in a spoonful of food (i.e. strained vegetables, fruit or baby cereal); possibly get a first tooth. *Tips: Water is okay for baby to drink but do not add sweeteners, also never give a baby coffee, tea or soft drinks. These are not nutritious and can be harmful to babies. Baby’s brain is developing rapidly in the first few months. Babies learn by both copying their parents and by exploring their environment, so be sure to “baby proof” your home.*

6 to 7 months: You can expect baby to: respond to facial expressions; imitate sounds and actions; possibly show toy preferences; sit without support; have vision near 20/20; grasp objects and may want to feed self; eat from a spoon; hold a bottle and drink small amounts from a cup; chew soft foods such as mashed banana. *Tips: Remember certain immunizations are due this month. Baby teeth are coming in so for sore gums try a teething ring and wash baby’s teeth with a soft cloth. You may begin an iron-fortified cereal such as rice. After 5 days try a different cereal such as oatmeal or barley. Add one new food at a time to make sure your baby does not have a food allergy. Vegetables and fruits are usually started after cereals.*

(continued on back)

7 to 8 months: You can expect baby to: support himself on one arm; suck her thumb; have increased energy; attempt to feed himself with his hands, so prepare for messes; eat mashed foods. *Tips: Provide lots of things for your baby’s mental development such as things to hear, see, feel, taste and touch. Do not prop the bottle in baby’s mouth while napping. This can cause an attachment to the bottle which can make the transition to solid foods more difficult.*

8 to 9 months: You can expect baby to: be very curious; continue to imitate; transfer objects from one hand to the other; get into sitting position alone; have pincer grasp (thumb and forefinger together); begin to crawl. *Tips: Baby is more temperamental this month. Sleeping may be an issue, so put baby to bed at the same time, in the same room and same bed where he will awaken. Try “slow down” activities such as a bath, reading a book, and cuddling for a few minutes before bed-time (routines are very helpful). Most babies will be ready for strained meat and egg yolks (no egg whites until around 1 year old) and now that baby is more active, be sure to use baby latches where necessary.*

9 to 10 months: You can expect baby to: turn around; crawl while holding something in one hand; possibly get down from a standing position; possibly give up morning nap; get bored with repeated stimuli; anticipate rewards (her memory is developing); maybe start role-playing (dramatic play is a good way for children to work through fears and anger); drink from a covered cup; transfer objects from hand to mouth. *Tips: This is a common time for fears and insecurities. Parents are encouraged to be concerned but not to overreact. When baby begins to pull himself up to a standing position, this is the time to remove side bumper pads in his crib. These could be used as*

“stepping stones” for a baby to climb over the side of the crib.

10 to 11 months: You can expect baby to: climb up and down on furniture; speak a few words with a purpose (“ma ma”); begin using one hand more than the other (however hand preference may not become clear until age 4 or 5); pull self up to a standing position; eat chopped food and small pieces of soft, cooked table food by herself. *Tips: If you are still breast feeding, you may be thinking about when to wean your baby (if done before one year, switch to an infant formula. If done after one year switch to whole milk and be sure to check with your doctor before making either switch). Use safety gates across the top and/or bottom of stairwells. It is too early for potty training because your baby is not physically or emotionally ready for this yet. Late in her 2nd year or into her 3rd year is the usual time to begin. Muscle development of boys may take longer than girls, so be prepared for this difference in potty training.*

11 to 12 months: You can expect baby to: squat; sit in a chair; babble short sentences; understand much of what is said so be careful of what you say; need about 12 hours of sleep (may resist this so try late morning or early afternoon naps and help with relaxation before bed-time); pick up small objects; have about 6 teeth; possibly climb out of playpen or crib; drink from a covered cup alone and no longer need to use a bottle; wave bye-bye. *Tips: Temper tantrums may surface. If the child isn’t hurting himself, try ignoring the tantrum, this should result in the child calming down and engaging in normal activity. Encourage your child’s acceptable attempts in dealing with stress and help him find ways to calm down before he loses control. In addition to using safety locks, make sure that hazardous materials are placed up high and/or locked up.*

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Compiled from the following resources:

- *Baby Bouncer: 1st Month – 12th Month*, by Don Bower, the University of Georgia Cooperative Extension Service, Leaflets CHFD-E 39-01 through CHFD-E 39-12, September 2000.
- *Little Lives: A Parent’s Guide to Development, Birth through 12th month*, by Madeleine Sigman-Grant, Ph.D., R.D.; Sally Martin, Ph.D.; Jamie Benedict, Ph.D., R.D.; Nora Constantino, Ph.D., the University of Nevada-Reno, Cooperative Extension, FS-02-71 through FS-02-82.

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