

Healthy Baby Development and Behavior



Below are milestones most babies will reach between now and 4 months old. Talk with your doctor at your baby's next well-visit if your baby is not yet reaching these milestones or there are skills your baby no longer shows each day.

Social and Emotional Milestones

- Smiles on their own to get your attention
- Chuckles when you try to make them laugh
- Looks at you, moves or makes sounds to get or keep your attention

Language and Communication Milestones

- Makes cooing sounds like “oooo” or “aahh”
- Makes sounds back when you talk to them
- Turns their head toward the sound of your voice

Thinking and Learning Milestones

- If they are hungry, opens their mouth when they see breast or bottle
- Looks at their own hands with interest

Physical Development Milestones

- Holds head steady without support when you are holding them
- Holds a toy when you put it in their hand
- Uses arms to swing at toys
- Brings hands to mouth
- Pushes up onto elbows/forearms when on tummy

Healthy Ways to Help Your Baby Learn and Grow

Development

- Smile, talk and respond positively to the sounds your baby makes.
- Sing and play music for your baby. Read together every day to help your baby learn language.
- Hold and cuddle with your baby often, giving praise and lots of loving attention.
- Lay your baby on their tummy to play. Put toys at eye level to encourage lifting the head to see the toys. Do not leave your baby alone. Take breaks when your baby is tired.

Behavior

- Notice the signals your baby gives when feeling playful or tired. Are they trying to play with you by making sounds and looking at you, or are they yawning, getting fussy and needing to rest? Responding to your baby's cues will make your baby feel safe and loved.

- Use simple routines each day for feeding, sleeping, bathing and playing.
- Limit your screen time when caring for your baby. This helps you respond to your baby's needs and encourages your baby to learn and grow.
- Never hit or shake your baby. Your baby's brain could be damaged. Your baby could die as a result. If you need a break to calm down, put your baby in a safe place and walk away. Check on your baby every 5–10 minutes. Your baby may cry a lot in the first few months, but it will get better!
- Many infants have more periods of fussing and crying at this age. Some crying is normal, but many parents wonder if their child has colic. Talk with your baby's doctor if you have questions or concerns. Learn more about colic, as well as tips for calming your baby.
Scan the QR code on side 2

Feeding

- Feed your baby only breast milk or formula until 6 months old.
 - If breastfeeding, feed your baby on demand, usually 8–12 times in 24 hours. Give your baby vitamin D drops (400 IU a day). Continue to take your prenatal vitamins with iron and eat a healthy diet.
 - If formula feeding, feed your baby on demand, usually 6–8 times in 24 hours. Hold your baby so you can look at each other during feedings. Always hold your baby's bottle. Never prop a bottle.
- Look for signs your baby is hungry, such as putting hands to mouth, smacking/licking lips or turning the head toward the breast or bottle. Watch for signs your baby is full, such as closing the mouth or turning the head away.

Sleep

- Create a schedule for naps and bedtime.
- Remember the ABCs of safe sleep:
 - **Alone**—The safest place for your baby to sleep is alone in the crib/bassinet. It's good to have the crib/bassinet in the room where you sleep, but **don't let the baby sleep in your bed.**
 - **Back**—Always place your baby on its back to sleep to reduce the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS).

- **Crib**—Always put your baby to sleep in an empty crib or bassinet with a snug, firm mattress and tight-fitting sheet. Don't have any blankets, crib bumpers, stuffed animals, toys or sleep positioners inside the crib with your baby.
- Swaddling should not be used once your baby learns to roll over. Learn more about safe sleep for infants. *Scan the QR code*

Vehicle Safety

- Use a rear-facing car seat in the back seat of your vehicle. Learn more about car seat safety and installation. *Scan the QR code*
- Never leave your baby alone in a car. Develop safe habits that prevent you from forgetting your baby in the car, like putting your purse or cell phone in the back seat. Learn more about the dangers of hot cars and how to keep your child safe. *Scan the QR code*

Home Safety

- Learn first aid for choking and cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR).
- Never leave your baby alone in the tub, near water or in high places like a changing table, bed or couch.
- Avoid drinking hot liquids while holding your baby. Prevent tap water burns by setting the temperature of your water heater to 120°F or below.

Find more useful, healthy tips for your family:

Cincinnati Children's Blog

Visit: blog.cincinnatichildrens.org

Young & Healthy Podcast

Listen on:



This information is meant to support your visit with your child's doctor. It should not take the place of the advice of your pediatrician.

Sources: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention | *Bright Futures: Guidelines for Health Supervision of Infants, Children and Adolescents, 4th Edition* | American Academy of Pediatrics

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