

Healthy Baby Development and Behavior



Below are milestones most babies will reach between now and 12 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

- Plays games with you, like patty-cake

Language and Communication Milestones

- Waves "bye-bye"
- Calls a parent "mama" or "dada" or another special name
- Understands "no" (pauses briefly or stops when you say it)

Thinking and Learning Milestones

- Puts something in a container, like a block in a cup
- Looks for things they see you hide, like a toy under a blanket

Physical Development Milestones

- Pulls up to stand
- Walks, holding on to furniture
- Drinks from a cup without a lid as you hold it
- Picks things up between thumb and pointer finger, like small bits of food

Healthy Ways to Help Your Baby Learn and Grow

Development

- Repeat the sounds your baby makes and use those sounds to say a simple word. For example, if your baby says "bababa," repeat "bababa," then say "ball."
- Encourage your baby to crawl, scoot and roll on the ground by placing toys a little out of reach.
- Hold and cuddle your baby often, giving praise and lots of loving attention.
- Teach your baby to wave "bye-bye" when someone leaves and to shake their head "no" or "yes" to answer questions. Consider using baby sign language to help your baby communicate with you as they learn words.
- Read books and talk about the pictures. Sing songs and play with your child often (for example, using blocks and balls, stacking cups and playing peek-a-boo).

Behavior

- Distract your baby with a favorite toy or move your baby when you need to change their behavior. Try to use "no" only for behaviors that are unsafe. When you say "no," say it firmly.
- Use positive language to ask for behaviors that you want, such as saying "time to sit" instead of "don't stand."
- Your baby may cry and be anxious when separated from you. Say a cheerful goodbye before leaving instead of sneaking away. Your baby may cry but will learn to calm themselves. When you return, greet your child happily.

Feeding

- Breast milk or infant formula should continue to be your baby's main source of nutrition until 1 year of age. Other types of milk are not recommended for infants because they don't have the proper nutrition that infants need.
- Offer your child healthy foods. Provide 3 meals and 2–3 healthy snacks daily. Encourage your baby to try new table foods that vary in taste and texture. Foods should be smooth, mashed or finely chopped to prevent choking. Avoid honey until 1 year of age.
- Allow your baby to practice feeding themselves with their fingers, even if it becomes messy. Teach your baby to use a cup with a small amount of water, breast milk or formula.

Sleep

- Your baby may sleep 12–16 hours each night, with 2–3 naps during the day. Remember to lay your baby on its back to sleep. Lower the mattress of the crib to the lowest setting.
- Calm or rock your baby before bed until they are tired. It is good for babies to be drowsy when put down for bedtime, but allow them to fall asleep on their own.
- Follow a nighttime routine to help your baby feel safe and secure before sleep.

Digital Media Use

- Avoid screen time, including TVs, smartphones and tablets. Children learn best by playing and interacting with others.

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

- Use electrical outlet covers and keep hot, sharp and breakable items out of reach.
- Lock up medicines and cleaning supplies. Save the Poison Help Line number (1-800-222-1222) in all phones.
- Block stairs with a small gate. Keep furniture away from windows and install window guards.
- Keep cords, latex balloons, plastic bags and small objects like coins, marbles and batteries away from your child.
- Drowning is silent and can happen quickly. Do NOT leave your child alone near any water (including buckets, bathtubs, toilets, pools, ponds, whirlpools). Install a 4-foot-tall fence with a self-closing and self-latching gate around home pools. Learn more about water safety. *Scan the QR code*
- Crawling babies love to explore. Learn more ways to keep them safe at home. *Scan the QR code*

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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