

0 – 26+
weeks

Moments and Milestones

What to expect in
baby's first year.







Introduction

Every baby has their own personality, but when it comes to their development and growth, most follow a predictable pattern. Even though the progression is generally consistent, there can be a lot of variation between individual children and their specific stage of development.

It is provided for general information only and is not a substitute for professional, individual advice. Please consult your doctor if you are concerned about your baby's health.

Areas of Development



GROSS MOTOR DEVELOPMENT

This relates to large movements of the body. In the first year, the major role of the gross motor system is to support your baby's control against gravity – demonstrated by learning to roll, sit, crawl and starting to walk.



FINE MOTOR DEVELOPMENT

Your baby will develop skills that involve the use of small muscles in their hands and fingers to precisely manipulate objects. Hand-eye coordination is an essential part of fine motor development.



SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Forming emotional attachments and connections with parents and caregivers is important. Babies build relationships by smiling, being social and responding to other people.



SPEECH AND LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

Communicating and understanding words correctly takes time and lots of practice. Learning how to talk is a complex process that is influenced by your baby's hearing, individual ability, as well as other people and their environment.



Premature Babies

Premature babies develop according to their adjusted age rather than their chronological age. Making allowances for prematurity helps provide an accurate assessment of a baby's development.

To estimate a baby's adjusted or developmental age, take away the weeks or months of prematurity from your baby's actual age. Most parents are advised to correct for prematurity until their baby is at least two years of age.

How Can I Support My Baby's Development?

CREATE A WARM, CONSISTENT AND NURTURING HOME

Providing lots of love, smiles and attention releases chemicals in your baby's body that will make them feel good and will help their brain grow. Maintaining a routine helps your baby feel safe and secure.

CARRY YOUR BABY IN YOUR ARMS, SLING OR POUCH

Newborns love to be cuddled. Being held close to your body helps build attachment and makes your baby feel loved and safe, which is essential for healthy social, emotional and cognitive development.

GIVE YOUR BABY SUPERVISED TUMMY TIME WHEN THEY ARE AWAKE

Even from the earliest days, spending some time playing on their tummy each day builds head, neck and upper body strength. Remember to follow the SIDS and Kids guidelines for safety.

PROVIDE A STIMULATING AND SAFE ENVIRONMENT THAT YOUR BABY IS KEEN TO EXPLORE

Your baby will learn a lot about how things work just by playing and interacting with what's around them, plus it gives them a chance to develop their gross motor skills. Be sure to make your home safe – you'll be surprised at what little hands can reach or how far your baby can roll or crawl!

PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES FOR CONSTRUCTIVE AND AGE-APPROPRIATE PLAY

Playing with your baby helps them learn. Providing simple toys of different sizes, colours and shapes, or activities like reading, playing music and singing, are perfect at this age.

**READ BOOKS, SING SONGS, RECITE RHYMES
AND TALK TO YOUR BABY EVERY DAY**

Activities that familiarise your baby with sounds and words build the foundation for developing language and communication skills.

**AIM FOR ACTIVITIES THAT BUILD INTERACTION
AND RELATIONSHIPS WITH PEOPLE**

Relationships influence how your baby thinks, behaves and socialises. Games like peek-a-boo strengthen attachment and develop social and emotional skills. Meeting and playing with other babies or children helps too.

**ENSURE YOUR BABY HAS A HEALTHY DIET
AND GOOD QUALITY HEALTHCARE**

When moving onto solids, provide a range of nutritious foods for optimal growth and development, including wholegrain foods, dairy, fruits and vegetables. Remember to continue your baby's usual milk until they are at least 12 months old.

AVOID SCREEN TIME

Too much time in front of the TV prevents babies from being active, which can restrict development. Children under two should not have any screen time.

AVOID OVER-STIMULATING YOUR BABY

Providing your baby with activities that help them grow is important but they also need quiet time to rest too. Be sensitive to the signals that they give you, including crying, crankiness, jerky movements and turning their head away from you.

**Make the most of
those special moments
– take pleasure in your baby and
enjoy spending time together.**

Developmental Milestones

Over the first few months of life, your baby's inbuilt survival reflexes tend to be replaced by more intentional movements as their nervous system matures. Many factors influence learning developmental skills, including genetics, environment and individual biology.

The milestones listed on the following pages are for guidance only. Development is a dynamic process; there will be months when your baby seems to be rapidly acquiring many new skills and other periods when they may not seem to be progressing very far at all. This is normal, and is due to the brain having to focus on a range of different areas of development as they all compete for energy.





1ST MONTH

YOUR BABY MAY BE ABLE TO:

- Lift their head briefly when they are lying on their tummy
- Focus on someone's face, especially yours, from 20–30 cm away
- Respond to sudden noise by crying, startling or becoming calm
- Show signs of smiling
- Still display their sucking and grasping reflexes.



2ND MONTH

YOUR BABY MAY BE ABLE TO:

- Smile – most likely in response and recognition
- Make sounds which are different to crying – cooing noises are especially delightful!
- Hold their head in their midline to look at a toy or mobile over their head, particularly when lying on their back
- Turn toward sounds
- Reach out and touch things with their hands.



3RD MONTH

YOUR BABY MAY BE ABLE TO:

- Bring both of their hands together
- Have better head control when sitting
- Follow a toy or object when it is held about 30 cm from their face and moved side to side
- Make an attempt at, and show interest in, grasping objects
- Create more organised movements like learning how to control their arms and swipe at objects
- Really enjoy their bath time.



4TH MONTH

YOUR BABY MAY BE ABLE TO:

- Turn to the sound of a voice
- Laugh out loud and become more social and interested in the world around them
- Lift their head when lying on their tummy
- Reach for an object like a rattle and grasp it
- Babble regularly
- Roll from tummy to back



5TH MONTH

YOUR BABY MAY BE ABLE TO:

- Hold their head steady when they are in an upright position
- Lift their chest when lying on their tummy and using their arms for support
- Lift their legs when lying on their back, holding and playing with their feet
- Focus their eyes on a small object and reach for it
- Squeal in delight when excited
- Become aware of other parts of their body, like their chest, knees and toes
- Change their sleeping behaviour – they may sleep less during the day and for a little longer overnight.



6TH MONTH

YOUR BABY MAY BE ABLE TO:

- Bounce or stand while being supported
- Sit unsupported
- Reach with intent and use their hands as tools to grasp, grab, bang and turn toys
- Roll both ways from front to back and then back to front
- Really start babbling in preparation for speaking
- Focus on something which has grabbed their attention, and then follow it with their eyes.



7TH MONTH

YOUR BABY MAY BE ABLE TO:

- Will be starting to move around the house - your baby may be attempting to roll, shuffle or even crawl
- Learn how to hold finger foods and feed themselves
- Coo and babble even more, and smile at others
- Protest if they have a toy taken away from them
- Reach for and work hard to get to a toy which is out of reach
- Play peek-a-boo.



8TH MONTH

YOUR BABY MAY BE ABLE TO:

- Pick up a small object, such as a toy, and then pick it up in their fist
- Stand upright when holding onto someone's hand or the furniture
- Be more mobile and able to crawl or use their bottom to shuffle around
- Recognise familiar faces, and be wary when they are near unfamiliar people
- Show interest in a variety of solid foods, and explore different tastes and textures.



9TH MONTH

YOUR BABY MAY BE ABLE TO:

- Develop object permanence – an understanding that something still exists even if it can't be seen. You can test this by watching your baby as they look for a toy which has dropped out of sight.
- Feed themselves with finger foods and small pieces of food which have been cut up – it's important feeding time is still supervised and appropriate finger foods are given to reduce the risk of choking
- Transfer a small toy from one hand to the other.



10TH MONTH

YOUR BABY MAY BE ABLE TO:

- Pull themselves into a standing position
- Stand by themselves for a short period, but will still probably need to hold onto someone or something for support
- Babbling a lot and may even say 'mama' or 'dada'
- May be crawling
- Understand what "no" means
- Start wandering around furniture but still need to hold onto something stable
- Enjoy playing peek-a-boo and familiar games.



11TH MONTH

YOUR BABY MAY BE ABLE TO:

- See and pick up small objects with their thumb and finger
- Babble for their own amusement – they may even say their first real word
- Communicate by pointing and making sounds
- Recognise when you are not with them by getting upset
- Show interest in different sounds, especially voices
- Use their fingers to feed themselves, holding onto their own sippy cup with a little help
- Show you affection
- Show signs of a sense of humour.



12TH MONTH

YOUR BABY MAY BE ABLE TO:

- Demonstrate their will by protesting and not always being compliant
- Drink from a cup independently
- Understand quite a few words and expand their vocabulary with words in their own unique language
- Move independently by either crawling or walking, though they may need to still hold onto the furniture for support
- Display interactive behaviour such as clapping their hands, waving goodbye and enjoying familiar songs and rhymes.



Developmental Delay

It's important for parents to be aware of any signs that could indicate their baby isn't reaching some of their expected milestones. If you have any concerns about any aspect of your baby's development including their vision, hearing, mobility or interaction with you, speak to a healthcare professional.

THINGS YOU CAN LOOK OUT FOR:

- Not achieving their developmental milestones or is late in a number of milestones
- Not responding to your voice or noises around them
- Not interacting with other people
- Differences of strength and movement between your baby's left and right sides
- Low muscle tone, loose or floppy movements, or alternately, feeling stiff and tense.

For more
information specific
to your baby's age, visit
meandmychild.com.au

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Important Statement

Breastfeeding is best for babies. It has benefits for the infant, such as reducing infection risk, and for the mother. It is important to have a healthy balanced diet in preparation for, and during breastfeeding. Infant formula is designed to replace breast milk when an infant is not breastfed. Breastfeeding can be negatively affected by introducing partial bottle-feeding, and reversing a decision not to breastfeed is difficult. Infant formula must be prepared and used as directed. Unnecessary or improper use of infant formula, such as not properly boiling water or sterilising feeding equipment, may make your baby ill. Social and financial implications, including preparation time and the cost of formula, should be considered when selecting a method of infant feeding.



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