



Infants

Developmental Milestones

In the first year, babies learn to focus their vision, reach out, explore, and learn about the things that are around them. Cognitive, or brain development means the learning process of memory, language, thinking, and reasoning. Learning language is more than making sounds like babbling or saying “ma-ma” and “da-da”. Listening, understanding, and knowing the names of people and things are all a part of language development. During this stage, babies also are developing bonds of love and trust with their parents and others as part of social and emotional development. The way parents cuddle, hold, and play with their baby will set the basis for how they will interact with them and others. You will find the following list helpful in promoting good development in the months ahead.

- Talk to your baby. They will find your voice calming.
- Answer when your baby makes sounds by repeating the sounds and adding words. This will help them learn to use language.
- Read to your baby. This will help them develop and understand language and sounds.
- Sing to your baby and play music. This will help your baby develop a love for music and will help their brain development.
- Praise your baby and give them lots of loving attention.
- Spend time cuddling and holding your baby. This will help them feel cared for and secure.
- Play with your baby when they are alert and relaxed. Watch your baby closely for signs of being tired or fussy so that they can take a break from playing.
- Distract your baby with toys and move them to a safe area when they start moving and touching things that they shouldn't touch.
- Take care of yourself physically, mentally, spiritually, and emotionally. Parenting can be hard work! It is easier to enjoy your new baby and be a positive, loving parent when you are feeling good yourself.

Child Safety First

When a baby becomes part of your family, it is time to make sure that your home is a safe place. Look around your home for things that could be dangerous to your baby. As a parent, it is your job to ensure that you create a safe home for your baby. It also is important that you take the necessary steps to make sure that you are mentally and emotionally healthy for your new baby. Here are a few tips to keep your baby safe:

- Do not shake your baby—ever! Babies have very weak neck muscles that are not yet able to support their heads. If you shake your baby, you can damage their brain or even cause their death.
- Make sure you always put your baby to sleep on their back to prevent sudden infant death syndrome (commonly known as SIDS).
- Protect your baby and family from secondhand smoke. Do not allow anyone to smoke in your home or around your baby.
- Place your baby in a rear-facing car seat in the back seat while they are riding in a car. This is recommended by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.
- Prevent your baby from choking by cutting their food into small bites. Also, don't let them play with small toys and other things that might be easy for them to swallow.
- Don't allow your baby to play with anything that might cover their face.
- Never carry hot liquids or foods near your baby or while holding them.
- Vaccines are important to protect your child's health and safety. Because children can get serious diseases, it is important that your child get the right shots at the right time. Talk to us to make sure that your child is up-to-date on her vaccinations.

Healthy Bodies

- Breast milk meets all your baby's needs for about the first 4-6 months of life. Between 4 and 12 months of age, your baby will learn about new tastes and textures with healthy solid food, but breast milk should still be an important source of nutrition.
- Feed your baby slowly and patiently, encourage your baby to try new tastes but without force, and watch closely to see if they are still hungry.
- Breastfeeding is the natural way to feed your baby, but it can be challenging. If you need help, you can call the National Breastfeeding Helpline at 800-994-9662. We will also do all we can to provide resources to assure your baby has success with breastfeeding. Keep your baby active. They might not be able to run and play like the "big kids" just yet, but there's lots they can do to keep her little arms and legs moving throughout the day. Getting down on the floor to move helps your baby become strong, learn, and explore.
- Try not to keep your baby in swings, strollers, bouncer seats, and exercise saucers for too long.
- Limit screen time to a minimum. For children younger than 2 years of age, the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends that it's best if babies do not watch any screen media.

If you have any concerns about how your infant is progressing please discuss this at the regularly scheduled Well Child Check Up Visits or call us at any time. We want to make sure you have all necessary resources for your infant to thrive.