

Tips for Baby Development

BIRTH-3 MONTHS

- Help baby's motor development by engaging in Tummy Time every day
- Give baby plenty of cuddle time and body massages
- Encourage baby's responses by presenting objects with bright colors and faces
- Talk to baby every day to show that language is used to communicate

4-6 MONTHS

- Encourage baby to practice Tummy Time, roll over, and reach for objects while playing
- Offer toys that allow two-handed exploration and play
- Talk to baby to encourage language development, baby may begin to babble
- Communicate with baby; imitate baby's noises and praise them when they imitate yours

7-9 MONTHS

- Place toys in front of baby to encourage movement
- Play cause and effect games like peek-a-boo
- Name and describe objects for baby during everyday activities
- Introduce "junior" and soft foods around 8 months

10-12 MONTHS

- Place cushions on floor to encourage baby to crawl over and between
- While baby is standing at sofa set a toy slightly out of reach to encourage walking using furniture as support
- Use picture books to work on communication and bonding
- Encourage two-way communication by responding to baby's giggles and coos

13-15 MONTHS

- Provide push and pull toys for baby to use as they learn how to walk
- Encourage baby to stack blocks and then knock them down
- Establish consistency with routines like mealtimes and bedtimes
- Sing, play music for, and read to your child regularly
- Ask your child questions to help stimulate decision making process



About Pathways.org

The mission of Pathways.org, since 1985, is to empower parents and health professionals with FREE tools and resources to maximize a child's motor, sensory, and communication development. The Pathways.org Medical Roundtable is instrumental in achieving this mission through strategic and supportive direction.

Pathways.org Medical Roundtable

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Pathways.org empowers parents and health professionals with FREE tools and resources to maximize a child's motor, sensory, and communication development.



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This message endorsed by the American Academy of Pediatrics, the National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners, American College of Osteopathic Pediatricians and Pediatric Section of the American Physical Therapy Association.

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Baby's Physical Development



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What Every Parent Should Know

Pathways.org’s unique chart allows you to track your child’s physical, play, and speech development. Remember to trust your instincts. You know your child best. If you feel your baby is developing at a different pace, seek help.

Early Detection is the Best Prevention!

Important Parent Ideas:

- Keep a notebook of your concerns and observations.
- Review this chart and check the signs you see in your baby.**
- Share your concerns, this chart, and your notebook with your child’s doctor or health provider.

**It is okay to check boxes in both areas of Typical Development and Signs To Watch For columns.



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BY 3 MONTHS

BY 6 MONTHS

BY 9 MONTHS

BY 12 MONTHS

BY 15 MONTHS

TYPICAL Speech DEVELOPMENT*

- Sucks and swallows well during feeding
- Quiets or smiles in response to sound or voice
- Coos and smiles
- Turns head towards sound or voice

- Begins to use consonant sounds in babbling, e.g. “da, da, da”
- Uses babbling to get attention
- Begins to eat cereals and pureed foods

- Uses increased variety of sounds and syllable combinations in babbling
- Looks at familiar objects and people when named
- Begins to eat thicker pureed and mashed table foods

- Meaningfully uses “mama” or “dada”
- Responds to simple directions, e.g. “come here”
- Produces long strings of gibberish (jargonning) in social communication
- Begins to use an open cup

- May use 5 – 10 words
- Imitates simple words and actions
- Understands 50 words
- Increases variety of coarsely chopped table foods

TYPICAL Play DEVELOPMENT*

- While lying on their back...
- Visually tracks a moving toy from side to side
 - Attempts to reach for a toy held above their chest
 - Keeps head centered to watch faces or toys

- Reaches for toys while on their tummy
- While lying on their back...
- Transfers a toy from one hand to the other
 - Reaches both hands to play with feet

- In a high chair, holds and drinks from a bottle
- Explores and examines an object using both hands and mouth
- Turns several pages of a chunky (board) book at once
- In simple play imitates others

- Finger feeds self
- Releases objects into a container with large opening
- Uses thumb and pointer finger to pick up tiny objects

- Stacks two objects or blocks
- Helps with getting dressed/undressed
- Holds and drinks from a cup

TYPICAL Physical DEVELOPMENT*



- While lying on their tummy...
- Pushes up on arms
 - Lifts and holds head up



- Uses hands to support self while sitting
- Rolls from back to tummy and tummy to back
- While standing with support, accepts entire weight with legs



- Sits and reaches for toys without falling
- Moves from tummy or back into sitting
- Starts to move with alternate leg and arm movement e.g. creeping, crawling



- Pulls to stand and cruises along furniture
- Stands alone and takes several independent steps



- Walks independently and seldom falls
- Squats to pick up toy

SIGNS TO WATCH FOR IN Physical DEVELOPMENT*



- Difficulty lifting head
- Stiff legs with little or no movement



- Pushes back with head
- Keeps hands fisted and lacks arm movement



- Rounded back
- Unable to lift head up
- Poor head control



- Difficult to bring arms forward to reach out
- Arches back and stiffens legs



- Arms held back
- Stiff legs



- Uses one hand predominately
- Rounded back
- Poor use of arms in sitting



- Difficulty crawling
- Uses only one side of body to move



- Inability to straighten back
- Cannot take weight on legs



- Difficulty getting to stand because of stiff legs and pointed toes
- Only uses arms to pull up to standing



- Sits with weight to one side
- Strongly flexed or stiffly extended arms
- Needs to use hand to maintain sitting



- Unable to take steps independently
- Poor standing balance, falls frequently
- Walks on toes

*Remember to correct your child’s age for prematurity.

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Please visit www.Pathways.org to find more FREE resources on child development.