

Tips to Help Your Growing Baby Develop Age-Appropriate Skills



During the first two years, your baby will develop many skills to begin talking, thinking, moving and playing.

You can help your baby do even more as she or he grows by knowing what to expect at various ages, and what to do to enhance that development.

BIRTH TO 6 MONTHS:

Your baby makes eye contact and cries to indicate wetness, hunger or pain. He or she kicks, rolls over, smiles, laughs and sleeps a lot. Your baby also turns his head to follow movement and sounds.

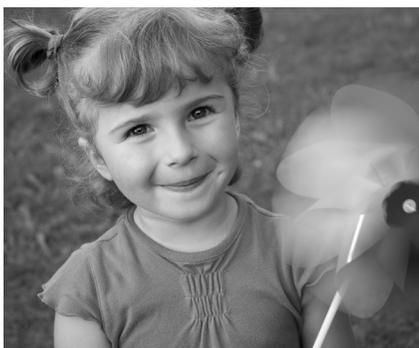
Help your baby by not shaking or throwing him or her in the air. Stroke the baby's head and skin. Talk and sing with a gentle voice. Keep the baby away from loud noises. Don't allow the head to wobble. Quickly change wet or dirty diapers. Speak softly to quiet crying.



6 TO 12 MONTHS:

Your baby recognizes and imitates you. He or she can drink from a cup and eat solid foods with aid. The baby knows his or her name and understands "no." The baby crawls, holds objects and moves them in and out of a container.

Help your baby by reading books with colorful photos, singing songs with repeated verses and playing games like "Pat-a-Cake." Provide toys safe to throw, shake and bite. Provide space so the baby can move. Keep objects that can cause choking out of reach.



Know what your baby should be able to do and when to protect and promote your child's development.

12 TO 18 MONTHS:

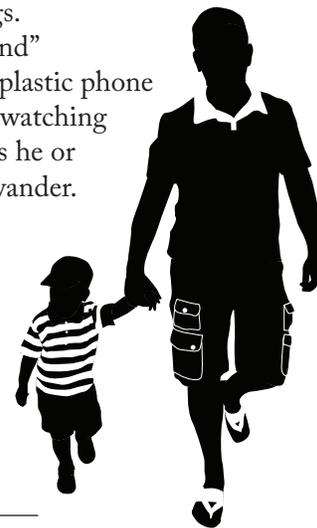
Your baby says a dozen words, crawls and walks, and may throw tantrums. He or she can turn a book page and will miss you when you leave. Your baby responds to questions and can walk without help.

Help your baby by going on walks, playing finger games and encouraging him or her to carry, push and pull toys and other items. Talk about what your son or daughter sees, hears, smells, tastes and feels. When upset, urge your child to use words to express feelings. Offer choices and frequent praise.

18 TO 24 MONTHS:

Your baby names and points at body parts, dances, imitates sounds and says short sentences. She or he uses new words each month. Your baby wants to dress and undress. He or she takes the stairs with help. Your baby can jump, run, climb and walk.

Help your baby by teaching your son or daughter how to use a spoon and straw. Encourage your baby to find objects in the pictures accompanying books you read. Help your child express feelings. Provide "pretend" toys such as a plastic phone or food. Keep watching your toddler as he or she wants to wander.



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800-Children (800-244-5373) Parent Helpline