

# Baby Milestones: 1 to 7 months

As you learn what milestones your baby is likely to achieve this year, keep in mind that this is only a guideline. Each child is unique and develops at her own pace. There's a wide range of what's considered normal, and you probably don't need to be concerned unless you notice one of the red flags described below.

## Developmental Milestones at 1 month

The first days with your 1-month-old can be a blur of feeding, changing diapers, settling her to sleep, and responding to her wails. But within a few weeks, she'll start to take more notice of your voice, face, and touch.

Your baby can't focus farther than 8 to 12 inches away – just the right distance for her to gaze at your face. Black-and-white patterns also draw her attention. Her hearing is fully developed and she might turn toward familiar sounds, such as your voice.

She can lift her head briefly and turn it to the side when she's on her stomach, but when she's upright her head and neck still need support. Although her arms move jerkily, she can get her hands close to her mouth.

### Your role

- Enjoy getting to know your baby: Cuddle her, talk to her, and learn how she signals when she's sleepy or hungry. Be attentive and responsive. You can't spoil a baby!
- Give her plenty of tummy time from the start when she's awake so she can strengthen her muscles. Encourage her to look at and reach for toys.
- Make sure she gets plenty of time outside. Go for walks with her and take her to the park or playground. She'll enjoy the outdoors, relaxing with you, and being around other children.
- Get close and make eye contact with your baby when you talk, sing, and read to her.
- Play simple games when she's alert and in the mood, such as peekaboo or mimicking her sounds.
- Learn the signs that she's had enough play and needs some down time.

### Red flags

Each child develops at her own pace, but talk to your baby's doctor if your 1-month-old:

- Feeds slowly or doesn't suck well
- Doesn't seem to focus her eyes or watch things moving nearby
- Doesn't react to bright lights
- Seems especially stiff or floppy
- Doesn't respond to loud sounds

# Developmental Milestones at 3 months

By now, you're basking in the warmth of your baby's delighted smiles! Your 3-month old actively enjoys playtime now, amusing you both when he imitates your facial expressions. He's starting to babble and mimic the sounds you make.

You no longer need to support his head. When he's on his stomach, he can lift his head and chest, and even do the mini-pushups that set the stage for rolling over. He can open and close his hands, shake toys, swat at dangling objects, bring his hands to his mouth, and push down with his legs if you hold him in a standing position.

His hand-eye coordination is improving. You'll notice him closely tracking objects that interest him and focusing intently on faces. He's able to recognize you from across the room!

## Your role

- Don't worry about spoiling your baby: Responding to him promptly helps him feel secure and loved. You can help him learn to soothe himself by guiding his thumb to his mouth or offering him a pacifier.
- Continue to make tummy time part of his daily routine so he can practice his new skills and strengthen his muscles. When he's on his tummy, give him toys and safe objects he can reach for, hold, and explore.
- Give your baby lots of loving attention. Talk to him throughout the day, describing what you're doing and naming familiar objects. Read books together. Share cuddles, play games, and encourage his efforts to roll over, grab toys, and "talk" with you.

## Red flags

Each child develops at his own pace, but talk to your child's doctor if your 3-month-old:

- Can't support his head well
- Can't grasp objects
- Can't focus on moving objects
- Doesn't smile
- Doesn't react to loud sounds
- Ignores new faces
- Seems upset by unfamiliar people or surroundings

# Developmental Milestones at 4 to 7 months

Your baby is fully engaged with the world now: She smiles, laughs, and has babbling "conversations" with you. And she's on the move – by 7 months she can probably roll to her tummy and back again, sit without your help, and support her weight with her legs well enough to bounce when you hold her. She uses a raking grasp to pull objects closer and can hold toys and move them from one hand to another.

Your baby is more sensitive to your tone of voice and may heed your warning when you tell her "no." She also knows her name now and turns to look at you when you call her.

Peekaboo is a favorite game and she enjoys finding partially hidden objects. She views the world in full color now and can see farther. If you move a toy in front of her, she'll follow it closely with her eyes. Watching herself in a mirror is sure to delight her.

## Your role

- Your baby thrives on the interactions she has with you, so integrate play into everything you do with her. Shower her with smiles and cuddles, and reply when she babbles to encourage her communication skills.
- Read together every day, naming the objects you see in books and around you.
- Give her lots of opportunities to strengthen her new physical skills by helping her sit and positioning her to play on both her stomach and back.
- Before she can crawl, be sure to childproof your home and keep her environment safe for exploring.
- Provide a variety of age-appropriate toys and household objects (like wooden spoons or cartons) to explore.
- Work on establishing a routine for sleeping, feeding, and playtime.
- By 6 months, she may be ready to start solid food.

## Red flags

Each child develops at her own pace, but talk to your child's doctor if your baby:

- Seems very stiff or floppy
- Can't hold her head steady
- Can't sit on her own
- Doesn't respond to noises or smiles
- Isn't affectionate with those closest to her
- Doesn't reach for objects

# Milestones: 7 to 12 months

## Milestones

Your baby is fully engaged with the world now: She smiles, laughs, and has babbling "conversations" with you. And she's on the move – by 7 months she can probably roll to her tummy and back again, sit without your help, and support her weight with her legs well enough to bounce when you hold her. She uses a raking grasp to pull objects closer and can hold toys and move them from one hand to another.

Your baby is more sensitive to your tone of voice and may heed your warning when you tell her "no." She also knows her name now and turns to look at you when you call her.

Peekaboo is a favorite game and she enjoys finding partially hidden objects. She views the world in full color now and can see farther. If you move a toy in front of her, she'll follow it closely with her eyes. Watching herself in a mirror is sure to delight her.

## Your role

Your baby thrives on the interactions she has with you, so integrate play into everything you do with her. Shower her with smiles and cuddles, and reply when she babbles to encourage her communication skills. Read together every day, naming the objects you see in books and around you.

Give her lots of opportunities to strengthen her new physical skills by helping her sit and positioning her to play on both her stomach and back. Before she can crawl, be sure to childproof your home and keep her environment safe for exploring.

Provide a variety of age-appropriate toys and household objects (like wooden spoons or cartons) to explore. Work on establishing a routine for sleeping, feeding, and playtime.

Note: By 6 months, she may be ready to start solid food.

## Red flags

Each child develops at her own pace, but talk to your child's doctor if your baby:

- Seems very stiff or floppy
- Can't hold her head steady
- Can't sit on her own
- Doesn't respond to noises or smiles
- Isn't affectionate with those closest to her
- Doesn't reach for objects

# Milestones: 8 to 12 Months Overview

## Milestones

Look at your baby go! He's become an eager explorer, and it might surprise you how quickly he can get around when he crawls or scoots. He can sit on his own now and grabs anything he can to pull himself up to standing and "cruise." He might even take some solo steps before his first birthday.

His babbling sounds more like real conversation, and you'll hear his first words – often "mama" or "dada." Soon he'll talk in simple phrases, but in the meantime he uses gestures to indicate what he wants – or doesn't want! – and pays close attention to your words.

His hands are increasingly nimble: He amuses himself putting things in containers and taking them out again. He can use his thumb and finger in a pincer grasp to eat finger food. Your baby loves to be just like you by combing his own hair, drinking from a cup, and pretending to talk on the phone.

While he may seem outgoing, he's probably reserved around strangers. And when you leave him, he may become distraught – separation anxiety is normal at this age.

## Your role

Keep talking to your baby: This is a critical time for his language development. Describe your routine, what you're doing now and what you're going to do next, and what you see. Describing how you think your baby is feeling helps him learn emotions. Keep reading together and play peekaboo, hide-and-seek, and turn-taking games.

As he gets more active, it's important to provide a safe space to explore. He may not be walking quite yet, but you can help him get ready by holding him in a way that puts weight on his legs or by propping him up against the sofa.

Pay attention to what he enjoys, and give him the freedom to use all his senses to play and discover. Offer him crayons and paper, stacking blocks, empty food containers, and pots and pans to play with.

Praise and reward good behavior. If he gets into mischief, a brief "no" and redirection is usually enough. Although he's too young to understand and obey rules, you can start showing him which behaviors aren't allowed and helping him find more appropriate activities.

Be respectful of his separation anxiety: Build trust by giving him time to get used to new caregivers and always saying goodbye before you leave.

## Red flags

Each child develops at his own pace, but talk to your child's doctor if your baby:

- Doesn't crawl
- Seems to drag one side while he's crawling for a month or more
- Can't stand with support
- Doesn't try to find objects you've hidden in front of him
- Doesn't say any words
- Doesn't use gestures, such as shaking his head "no" and pointing

# Milestones: Your Baby at Nine Months

How your child plays, learns, speaks, and acts offers important clues about your child's development. Developmental milestones are things most children can do by a certain age. Check the milestones your child has reached by the end of 9 months. Take this with you and talk with your child's doctor at every visit about the milestones your child has reached and what to expect next.

## WHAT MOST BABIES DO AT THIS AGE:

### Social and Emotional

- May be afraid of strangers
- May be clingy with familiar adults
- Has favorite toys

### Language/Communication

- Understands "no"
- Makes a lot of different sounds like "mamamama" and "bababababa"
- Copies sounds and gestures of others
- Uses fingers to point at things\

### Cognitive (learning, thinking, problem-solving)

- Watches the path of something as it falls
- Looks for things he sees you hide
- Plays peek-a-boo
- Puts things in her mouth
- Moves things smoothly from one hand to the other
- Picks up things like cereal o's between thumb and index finger

### Movement/Physical Development

- Stands, holding on
- Can get into sitting position
- Sits without support
- Pulls to stand
- Crawls

### Act early by talking to your child's doctor if your child:

- Doesn't bear weight on legs with support
- Doesn't sit with help
- Doesn't babble ("mama", "baba", "dada")
- Doesn't play any games involving back-and-forth play
- Doesn't respond to own name
- Doesn't seem to recognize familiar people
- Doesn't look where you point
- Doesn't transfer toys from one hand to the other

# Milestones: Your Child at One Year

How your child plays, learns, speaks, and acts offers important clues about your child's development. Developmental milestones are things most children can do by a certain age. Check the milestones your child has reached by his or her 1st birthday. Take this with you and talk with your child's doctor at every visit about the milestones your child has reached and what to expect next.

## WHAT MOST BABIES DO AT THIS AGE:

### Social and Emotional

- Is shy or nervous with strangers
- Cries when mom or dad leaves
- Has favorite things and people
- Shows fear in some situations
- Hands you a book when he wants to hear a story
- Repeats sounds or actions to get attention
- Puts out arm or leg to help with dressing
- Plays games such as "peek-a-boo" and "pat-a-cake"

### Language/Communication

- Responds to simple spoken requests
- Uses simple gestures, like shaking head "no" or waving "bye-bye"
- Makes sounds with changes in tone (sounds more like speech)
- Says "mama" and "dada" and exclamations like "uh-oh!"
- Tries to say words you say

### Cognitive (learning, thinking, problem-solving)

- Explores things in different ways, like shaking, banging, throwing
- Finds hidden things easily
- Looks at the right picture or thing when it's named
- Copies gestures
- Starts to use things correctly; for example, drinks from a cup, brushes hair
- Bangs two things together
- Puts things in a container, takes things out of a container
- Lets things go without help
- Pokes with index (pointer) finger
- Follows simple directions like "pick up the toy"

### Movement/Physical Development

- Gets to a sitting position without help
- Pulls up to stand, walks holding on to furniture ("cruising")
- May take a few steps without holding on
- May stand alone

### Act early by talking to your child's doctor if your child:

- Doesn't crawl
- Can't stand when supported
- Doesn't search for things that she sees you hide
- Doesn't say single words like "mama" or "dada"
- Doesn't learn gestures like waving or shaking head
- Doesn't point to things
- Loses skills he once had

# Milestones: Your Child at Eighteen Months

How your child plays, learns, speaks, and acts offers important clues about your child's development. Developmental milestones are things most children can do by a certain age. Check the milestones your child has reached by the end of 18 months. Take this with you and talk with your child's doctor at every visit about the milestones your child has reached and what to expect next.

## WHAT MOST BABIES DO AT THIS AGE:

### Social and Emotional

- Likes to hand things to others as play
- May have temper tantrums
- May be afraid of strangers
- Shows affection to familiar people
- Plays simple pretend, such as feeding a doll
- May cling to caregivers in new situations
- Points to show others something interesting
- Explores alone but with parent close by

### Language/Communication

- Says several single words
- Says and shakes head "no"
- Points to show someone what he wants

### Cognitive (learning, thinking, problem-solving)

- Knows what ordinary things are for; for example, telephone, brush, spoon
- Points to get the attention of others
- Shows interest in a doll or stuffed animal by pretending to feed
- Points to one body part
- Scribbles on his own
- Can follow 1-step verbal commands without any gestures; for example, sits when you say "sit down"

### Movement/Physical Development

- Walks alone
- May walk up steps and run
- Pulls toys while walking
- Can help undress herself
- Drinks from a cup
- Eats with a spoon

### Act early by talking to your child's doctor if your child:

- Doesn't point to show things to others
- Can't walk
- Doesn't know what familiar things are for
- Doesn't copy others
- Doesn't gain new words
- Doesn't have at least 6 words
- Doesn't notice or mind when a caregiver leaves or returns
- Loses skills he once had

# Milestones: Your Child at Two Years

How your child plays, learns, speaks, and acts offers important clues about your child's development. Developmental milestones are things most children can do by a certain age. Check the milestones your child has reached by his or her 2nd birthday. Take this with you and talk with your child's doctor at every visit about the milestones your child has reached and what to expect next.

## WHAT MOST TODDLERS DO AT THIS AGE:

### Social and Emotional

- Copies others, especially adults and older children
- Gets excited when with other children
- Shows more and more independence
- Shows defiant behavior (doing what he has been told not to)
- Plays mainly beside other children, but is beginning to include other children, such as in chase games

### Language/Communication

- Points to things or pictures when they are named
- Knows names of familiar people and body parts
- Says sentences with 2 to 4 words
- Follows simple instructions
- Repeats words overheard in conversation
- Points to things in a book

### Cognitive (learning, thinking, problem-solving)

- Finds things even when hidden under two or three covers
- Begins to sort shapes and colors
- Completes sentences and rhymes in familiar books
- Plays simple make-believe games
- Builds towers of 4 or more blocks
- Might use one hand more than the other
- Follows two-step instructions such as "Pick up your shoes and put them in the closet."
- Names items in a picture book such as a cat, bird, or dog

### Movement/Physical Development

- Stands on tiptoe
- Kicks a ball
- Begins to run
- Climbs onto and down from furniture without help
- Walks up and down stairs holding on
- Throws ball overhand
- Makes or copies straight lines and circles

### Act early by talking to your child's doctor if your child:

- Doesn't use 2-word phrases (for example, "drink milk")
- Doesn't know what to do with common things, like a brush, phone, fork, spoon
- Doesn't copy actions and words
- Doesn't follow simple instructions
- Doesn't walk steadily
- Loses skills she once had

# Milestones: Your Child at Three Years

How your child plays, learns, speaks, and acts offers important clues about your child's development. Developmental milestones are things most children can do by a certain age. Check the milestones your child has reached by his or her 3rd birthday. Take this with you and talk with your child's doctor at every visit about the milestones your child has reached and what to expect next.

## WHAT MOST TODDLERS DO AT THIS AGE:

### Social and Emotional

- Copies adults and friends
- Shows affection for friends without prompting
- Takes turns in games
- Shows concern for crying friend
- Understands the idea of "mine" and "his" or "hers"
- Shows a wide range of emotions
- Separates easily from mom and dad
- May get upset with major changes in routine
- Dresses and undresses self

### Language/Communication

- Follows instructions with 2 or 3 steps
- Can name most familiar things
- Understands words like "in," "on," and "under"
- Says first name, age, and sex
- Names a friend
- Says words like "I," "me," "we," and "you" and some plurals (cars, dogs, cats)
- Talks well enough for strangers to understand most of the time
- Carries on a conversation using 2 to 3 sentences

### Cognitive (learning, thinking, problem-solving)

- Can work toys with buttons, levers, and moving parts
- Plays make-believe with dolls, animals, and people
- Does puzzles with 3 or 4 pieces
- Understands what "two" means
- Copies a circle with pencil or crayon
- Turns book pages one at a time
- Builds towers of more than 6 blocks
- Screws and unscrews jar lids or turns door handle

### Movement/Physical Development

- Climbs well
- Runs easily
- Pedals a tricycle (3-wheel bike)
- Walks up and down stairs, one foot on each step

### Act early by talking to your child's doctor if your child:

- Falls down a lot or has trouble with stairs
- Drools or has very unclear speech
- Can't work simple toys (such as peg boards, simple puzzles, turning handle)
- Doesn't speak in sentences
- Doesn't understand simple instructions
- Doesn't play pretend or make-believe
- Doesn't want to play with other children or with toys
- Doesn't make eye contact

# Milestones: Your Child at Four Years

How your child plays, learns, speaks, and acts offers important clues about your child's development. Developmental milestones are things most children can do by a certain age. Check the milestones your child has reached by his or her 4th birthday. Take this with you and talk with your child's doctor at every visit about the milestones your child has reached and what to expect next.

## WHAT MOST CHILDREN DO AT THIS AGE:

### Social and Emotional

- Enjoys doing new things
- Plays "Mom" and "Dad"
- Is more and more creative with make-believe play
- Would rather play with other children than by himself
- Cooperates with other children
- Often can't tell what's real and what's make-believe
- Talks about what she likes and what she is interested in

### Language/Communication

- Knows some basic rules of grammar, such as correctly using "he" and "she"
- Sings a song or says a poem from memory such as the "Itsy Bitsy Spider" or the "Wheels on the Bus"
- Tells stories
- Can say first and last name

### Cognitive (learning, thinking, problem-solving)

- Names some colors and some numbers
- Understands the idea of counting
- Starts to understand time
- Remembers parts of a story
- Understands the idea of "same" and "different"
- Draws a person with 2 to 4 body parts
- Uses scissors
- Starts to copy some capital letters
- Plays board or card games
- Tells you what he thinks is going to happen next in a book

### Movement/Physical Development

- Hops and stands on one foot up to 2 seconds
- Catches a bounced ball most of the time
- Pours, cuts with supervision, and mashes own food

### Act early by talking to your child's doctor if your child:

- Can't jump in place
- Has trouble scribbling
- Shows no interest in interactive games or make-believe
- Ignores other children or doesn't respond to people outside the family
- Resists dressing, sleeping, and using the toilet
- Can't retell a favorite story
- Doesn't follow 3-part commands
- Doesn't understand "same" and "different"
- Doesn't use "me" and "you" correctly
- Speaks unclearly
- Loses skills he once had

# Milestones: Your Child at Five Years

How your child plays, learns, speaks, and acts offers important clues about your child's development. Developmental milestones are things most children can do by a certain age. Check the milestones your child has reached by his or her 5th birthday. Take this with you and talk with your child's doctor at every visit about the milestones your child has reached and what to expect next.

## WHAT MOST CHILDREN DO AT THIS AGE:

### Social and Emotional

- Wants to please friends
- Wants to be like friends
- More likely to agree with rules
- Likes to sing, dance, and act
- Shows concern and sympathy for others
- Is aware of gender
- Can tell what's real and what's make-believe
- Shows more independence (for example, may visit a next-door neighbor by himself [adult supervision is still needed])
- Is sometimes demanding and sometimes very cooperative

### Language/Communication

- Speaks very clearly
- Tells a simple story using full sentences
- Uses future tense; for example, "Grandma will be here."
- Says name and address

### Cognitive (learning, thinking, problem-solving)

- Counts 10 or more things
- Can draw a person with at least 6 body parts
- Can print some letters or numbers
- Copies a triangle and other geometric shapes
- Knows about things used every day, like money and food

### Movement/Physical Development

- Stands on one foot for 10 seconds or longer
- Hops; may be able to skip
- Can do a somersault
- Uses a fork and spoon and sometimes a table knife
- Can use the toilet on her own
- Swings and climbs

### Act early by talking to your child's doctor if your child:

- Doesn't show a wide range of emotions
- Shows extreme behavior (unusually fearful, aggressive, shy or sad)
- Unusually withdrawn and not active
- Is easily distracted, has trouble focusing on one activity for more than 5 minutes
- Doesn't respond to people, or responds only superficially
- Can't tell what's real and what's make-believe
- Doesn't play a variety of games and activities
- Can't give first and last name
- Doesn't use plurals or past tense properly
- Doesn't talk about daily activities or experiences
- Doesn't draw pictures
- Can't brush teeth, wash and dry hands, or get undressed without help