

GROWTH & DEVELOPMENT: 3-6 MONTHS

Throughout the first year of life, your baby will undergo rapid social, emotional, physical, and cognitive development. He will recognize your face and imitate gestures you make, such as smiling or sticking out your tongue. Your baby will begin to crawl, and later walk, expanding his reach from just inside a crib to the entire world. He will start to babble, eventually forming sounds and then words like 'mama' and 'dada.' She'll start swatting at objects and eventually learn to grasp and even feed herself. These miraculous changes develop over time and at different rates for different children, but keep in mind the following developmental generalizations as you watch your child grow.

It is impossible to spoil your infant. Responding to your baby's needs in a loving and consistent way helps you develop a secure and positive relationship with your child. Doing so is critical since this relationship is your infant's first one, and it teaches your baby how to form healthy, trusting connections with others in the future.

How to support Your Child's Learning Process

- Your newborn baby loves to be touched, held, comforted, and talked to. Laugh and smile with your baby. By 3 months, your baby will be able to return your smile!
- Your child will begin to recognize voices and sounds. Your baby especially loves the sound of your voice. Feeding times, diaper changes, and bath times are wonderful moments to talk to your child about what you are doing together. Your voice is reassuring and familiar.
- To help your baby develop language skills, play music for your newborn to stimulate hearing. Read to your child and name objects as you point to them in books.
- Provide toys with different textures to encourage your child to explore with her fingers.
- Place your infant on her tummy while she is awake to develop neck and back muscles.
- Between 3 and 6 months your baby will begin learning to comfort herself and to stay calm after waking or when going to sleep. Forming a secure relationship with your baby helps her learn that you will be there if she needs you.

Developmental Milestones

Social and Emotional Development

- Begins to display a social smile – your baby is learning to recognize familiar faces and is eager to greet them
- Enjoys playing with others and may cry when playing stops
- Expressive and communicates more with face and body
- Drawn to image of self in mirrors
- Begins to learn how to comfort herself

Physical Development

- Raises head and chest when lying on stomach
- Supports upper body with arms when lying on stomach
- Stretches legs out and kicks when lying on stomach or back
- Opens and closes hands
- Can sit with and, later, without support
- Pushes down on legs when feet are placed on a firm surface
- Brings hand to mouth
- Takes swipes at dangling objects with hands

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Cognitive & Language Development

- Watches faces closely
- Responds to her own name
- Follows moving objects
- Recognizes familiar objects and people at a distance
- Starts using hands and eyes in coordination
- Smiles at the sound of your voice
- Begins to babble and starts to imitate some sounds
- Responds to music and turns head toward sound