

# your child @™

highlights of what's happening  
at this stage of your child's development...

## 6 to 12 months

By the end of your baby's first year of life, she will have tripled her birth weight and doubled her length. She might already be crawling and trying to take her first steps. Remember that a warm, responsive and dependable adult caregiver is the most essential ingredient to her healthy development.

### your child's health

#### Typical immunizations at 6 months can include:

- DTaP (diphtheria, tetanus, and whooping cough)
- Hib (protects your child against meningitis)
- Prevnar (pneumococcal)

Vaccines do not usually occur at the 9 month visit, unless your child has missed earlier vaccinations.

#### The Well Visit

Your baby will probably have well visits at 6 months and again at 9 months.

#### Sleep

At this stage, your baby still needs 2 or possibly 3 naps a day—a morning, afternoon, and late day nap. Put your baby down to sleep for the night between 6–8 pm, and expect her to sleep 11 to 13 hours. However, even as late as 8 or 9 months, she may still wake for a night feeding—especially if she's being breast fed.

#### take note...

According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, you should let your doctor know if your baby at 6 months:

- Seems very stiff, with tight muscles.
- Seems very floppy, like a rag doll.
- Refuses to cuddle.
- Doesn't seem to enjoy being around people.
- Cannot sit with help.
- Does not laugh or squeal.
- Does not actively reach for objects.

...at 9 months:

- Drags one side of body while crawling (for over a month).
- Does not point to objects or pictures.
- Does not search for objects that are hidden while he watches.

#### Nutrition

Although you might have introduced cereals to your baby over the past few months, she should still be drinking about 24 ounces of breast milk or formula per day.

Once your baby adjusts to cereal at around 6 months, move on to new, single-ingredient foods—fruits and vegetables first; then introduce protein. Experiment with mashed or pureed foods, but remember to introduce only one food type at a time to detect allergies and sensitivities.

At around 9 months, your baby should eat 3 meals a day while still receiving breast milk or formula. Serve soft, easily gummed and digestible finger foods cut into safe, bite-sized pieces. He'll love small pieces of cheese, steamed vegetables and fruit or Cheerios. Avoid foods that need to be chewed. He'll also enjoy drinking from a sippy cup.

#### keep in mind...

- If your baby doesn't like a new food, don't give up—re-introduce it in a few days. Often a baby needs to try a food several times before he will eat it.
- Avoid foods that could cause choking such as whole grapes, popcorn, uncooked carrots, hot dogs, nuts or hard candy.

### your child's growth and development

#### Physically at 6–9 months, your baby will probably:

- Sit alone without support.
- Reach for a cup or spoon when being fed.
- Transfer objects from one hand to the other.

#### Physically at 9–12 months, your baby will probably:

- Crawl well.
- Triple in birthweight and double in length.
- Pull herself to a standing position.

#### Intellectually at 6–9 months, your baby will probably:

- Make noises to show displeasure or satisfaction.
- Look for a ball rolled out of sight.

#### Intellectually at 9–12 months, your baby will probably:

- Play pat-a-cake.
- Dance or bounce to music.
- Say her first word.
- Clap hands, wave goodbye.

Sources: *Your Baby's First Year* and *Caring for Your Baby and Young Child*, American Academy of Pediatrics, Steven P. Shelov, MD, FAAP, editor in chief; *Understanding Children*, Civitas and Richard Saul Wurman; *KidBasics*, Civitas; *Healthy Sleep, Happy Child*, Marc Weissbluth, MD.

Civitas thanks Parents as Teachers, an international early childhood parent education and family support program, for their ongoing support.

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## 6 to 12 months

### your child's growth and development continued

#### Socially and emotionally at 6–9 months, your baby will probably:

- Try to talk to image in mirror.
- Become distressed if a toy is taken away.
- Respond to own name and recognize family members' names.
- Show mild to severe anxiety at separation from parent.

#### Socially and emotionally at 9–12 months, your baby will probably:

- Offer toys or objects to others but want them to be returned.
- Push away toys or foods when she doesn't want them.
- Become attached to a favorite toy or blanket.

### nurturing your child



#### Attachment

Over the next months, your child will show her strong attachment to her primary caregiver by acting upset when she leaves and happy when she returns. To ease the anxiety caused by separating:

- Say goodbye, so she learns that you will come back.
- Explain that you are going to leave, but that you'll return.
- Provide a comfort object that will make her feel close to you.

#### Play

At this age, a baby will use play as a chance to develop new cognitive, physical and social skills. Watch your child—you can learn so much about your child's interests by simply observing. In addition:

- Provide tummy time to help strengthen the neck, torso, and upper body as well as time to practice walking, pushing, pulling, climbing and dumping.
- Play hide-and-seek with different objects. Your child will enjoy seeing the objects appear and disappear.

#### Discipline

At this age, a baby still doesn't understand discipline. Instead, as your child gains mobility, your focus should turn to safety and exploration:

- Distract or redirect your baby from unsafe objects or activities.
- Never use physical punishment.

#### Literacy

Between 6 and 12 months, your baby will begin to communicate with you—first by mimicking your sounds, and then by speaking his first words. To encourage his ability to talk as well as his love of reading:

- Talk and interact face-to-face so he begins to understand the connection between sounds and words.
- Point to familiar objects and people everywhere and ask him to identify them.
- Sing songs with repetitive verses and hand motions that will interest your baby, such as *The Wheels on the Bus*.
- Provide books that are made of cardboard or cloth to withstand a little chewing and make page turning easier.

### your child's safety

As your baby begins to crawl, he will want to touch everything he can—this is how he learns about his world. Therefore, make his environment safe.

- Install safety latches on cabinets, drawers, and toilets.
- Cover unused electrical outlets with outlet covers and use cleats to secure dangling cords on drapes and blinds.

#### keep in mind...

Always be aware of your baby's safety. Never leave her unattended near water, open windows, fireplaces or any electrical appliances. Watch her carefully when she is in the kitchen or bathroom where potential dangers are everywhere.

- Gate staircases and steps, cover sharp edges of furniture and ledges on fireplaces.
- Keep older children's toys out of your baby's reach. These may have small parts that can be a choking hazard for your little one.
- Keep all detergents, medicines, sharp objects out of your child's reach.
- Contact poison control immediately if you think your child has eaten or drunk something poisonous: 1-800-222-1222.

Born Learning™ is a public engagement and material distribution campaign that provides important information about what young children need every day to ensure quality early learning. Designed to support you in your critical role as a child's first teacher, Born Learning materials are made available through the efforts of United Way, United Way Success By 6 and Civitas.

For more information, visit us online at [bornlearning.org](http://bornlearning.org).



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