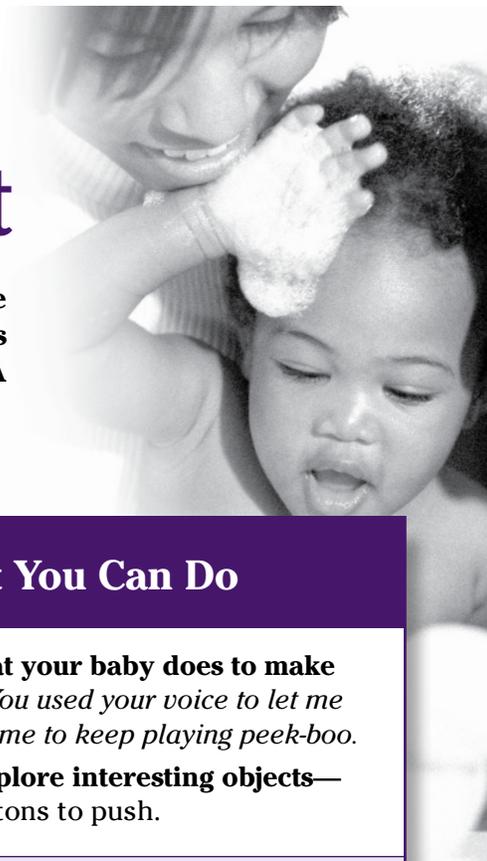


# Your Baby's Development

This is a time of great fun for parents as they watch their babies become eager explorers who are thrilled to discover that they can make things happen. A 7-month-old knows, *When I smile, mommy smiles back!* A 9-month-old lifts her arms to tell her dad, *I want you to pick me up.*

*How is your baby making things happen?*



What Your Baby Can Do	What You Can Do
<p><b>I am learning to think and solve problems.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When a toy drops to the floor, I look to see where it went.</li> <li>• I figure out how things work by copying what I see you and others do.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Comment on what your baby does to make things happen.</b> <i>You used your voice to let me know you wanted me to keep playing peek-boo.</i></p> <p><b>Let your baby explore interesting objects—</b> like toys with buttons to push.</p>
<p><b>I can control my body.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I can pick up small objects using my thumb and other fingers.</li> <li>• I can sit on my own, which helps me explore in new ways.</li> <li>• I may crawl or scoot to get around. I might even pull up on furniture to stand.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Begin letting your child practice picking up baby-safe foods like slices of banana,</b> if you'd like your child to learn to feed himself.</p> <p><b>Give your baby time to move around on his own.</b> This builds muscle strength and coordination.</p>
<p><b>I am working hard to communicate with you.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I babble a lot. When someone talks to me, I make sounds back.</li> <li>• I use my voice to express feelings, like joy and anger.</li> <li>• I copy actions you make, like waving “bye-bye” and shaking my head “no-no.”</li> </ul>	<p><b>Use words to describe your baby's feelings:</b> <i>You are mad that Daddy took away the crayon. You can chew on this rattle instead.</i></p> <p><b>If your baby is looking at something, point at it and explain:</b> <i>That's a radio. It plays music.</i></p> <p><b>Copy your baby's sounds and actions.</b> If she waves, wave back and say <i>Hello!</i></p>
<p><b>My personality is starting to show.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I may love to meet new people or need time to feel comfortable with someone I don't know yet.</li> <li>• I may like lots of sound and activity or I may prefer things to be more quiet and calm.</li> <li>• I may be very active or more interested in watching.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Notice how your baby likes to play and explore.</b> Does she like to move or does she prefer to sit and watch the world around her?</p> <p><b>See how your baby reacts to sounds, sights, and social activity.</b> What does she seem to enjoy? What does she seem to dislike or get overwhelmed by?</p>



As you use this resource, remember that your child may develop skills faster or slower than indicated here and still be growing just fine. Talk with your child's health care provider or other trusted professional if you have questions.

Your family's cultural beliefs and values are also important factors that shape your child's development.

For more information on parenting and child development, go to: [www.zerotothree.org](http://www.zerotothree.org).

### What's on Your Mind

**My 8-month-old used to love when my mother babysat but now she sobs when I leave!**

This sounds like *separation anxiety*. Starting at around 8 or 9 months, babies may become upset and fearful when separated from a loved one. This happens because babies are beginning to understand that people still exist even when they can't see them. So they naturally protest to try to make their special person stay. To help your baby adjust to separations, read stories about saying good-bye (like *Owl Babies* by Martin Waddell). And use a good-bye routine with your baby each time you leave—like a song, a kiss, and a big wave. Routines help babies feel safe. To help your child make the transition to her caregiver, suggest that the three of you play with one of your child's favorite toys or books before you leave. Most importantly, be sure to say a real good-bye to your baby. Sneaking out makes babies worry that you may disappear at any time without warning. This makes separations even harder and can create feelings of mistrust.

## Spotlight on Helping Your Baby Learn to Sleep Through the Night

By 6 months, most full-term, healthy babies are able to sleep through the night. (Certainly check with your health care provider to be sure.) If you'd like your baby to learn this skill, it's important to be patient and consistent with how you handle bedtime and night-wakings. This helps your baby learn to soothe himself and go back to sleep more easily and quickly.

### What You Can Do

**Use a bedtime routine.** Loving and relaxing bedtime routines (like bath, story, milk, teeth-cleaning, and then lullaby) help babies settle down and learn when it's time to go to sleep. (Just be sure not to leave a cup or bottle in the crib or bed.)

**Put your baby to bed while he's sleepy but still awake.** We all wake up to some degree during the night as we move through different stages of sleep. If children are fed or comforted by a loved one to fall asleep, when they wake up in the middle of the night, they depend on that same kind of comfort to fall back to sleep.

When you put your baby down sleepy but awake, he learns how to fall asleep on his own.

**Plan for protests.** Make a plan for what to do if your baby cries while she is learning to fall asleep. Some parents choose to check on their child several times until she falls asleep. Other parents say a clear goodnight and do not return until morning. (For some children, having their parents come in and out can make it harder for them to calm down and fall asleep.) There is not one "right" way to help babies learn to sleep through the night.

### Did You Know...

**Your baby is watching and learning from you?**

#### What It Means for You:

At this age, babies begin to look to loved ones for clues about how to feel about a situation. For example, when a new person comes to the house, a baby looks to his parents to see how they respond: *Are they smiling and happy? Is this person okay? Can I trust him?* To help your baby adjust when meeting a new person, show with your own face, voice, and actions that he or she is nice and trustworthy.

*How have you seen your baby observe and react to your signals?*



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# Starting Solid Foods



Until now, your baby's diet has been made up of breast milk and/or formula. But once your baby reaches 4 to 6 months of age, you can begin adding solid foods. Read on to learn more about introducing solid foods.

## When can my baby eat solid foods?

Most babies are ready to eat solid foods at 4 to 6 months of age. Before this age instead of swallowing the food, they push their tongues against the spoon or the food. This tongue-pushing reflex is necessary when they are breastfeeding or drinking from a bottle. Most babies stop doing this at about 4 months of age. Energy needs of babies begin to increase around this age as well, making this a good time to introduce solids.

You may start solid foods with any feeding. Try scheduling feedings during family meals. Or if your baby is easily distracted, you may want to pick a quiet time when you can focus on feeding your baby. However, keep in mind that as your child gets older, she will want to eat with the rest of the family.

## Feeding your baby solid foods

To prevent choking, make sure your baby is sitting up when you introduce solid foods. If your baby cries or turns away when you give him the food, do not force the issue. It is more important that you both enjoy mealtimes than for your baby to start solids by a specific date. Go back to nursing or bottle-feeding exclusively for a time before trying again. Remember that starting solid foods is a gradual process and at first your baby will still be getting most of his nutrition from breast milk and/or formula.

It is important for your baby to get used to the process of eating—sitting up, taking bites from a spoon, resting between bites, and stopping when full. Always use a spoon to feed your baby solid foods. These early experiences will help your child learn good eating habits throughout life.

Some parents try putting baby cereal in a bottle. This is not a good idea. Feeding your baby this way can cause choking. It also may increase the amount of food your baby eats and can cause your baby to gain too much weight. However, cereal in a bottle may be recommended if your baby has reflux. Check with your child's doctor.

## How to start

Start with half a spoonful or less and talk to your baby through the process ("Mmm, see how good this is!"). Your baby may not know what to do at first. She may look confused, wrinkle her nose, roll the food around her mouth, or reject it altogether. This is a normal early reaction to solid foods.

One way to make eating solids for the first time easier is to give your baby a little breast milk and/or formula first, then switch to very small half-spoonfuls of food, and finish with more breast milk and/or formula. This will prevent your baby from getting frustrated when she is very hungry.

Do not be surprised if most of the first few solid-food feedings wind up on your baby's face, hands, and bib. Increase the amount of food gradually, with just a teaspoonful or two to start. This allows your baby time to learn how to swallow solids.

## What kinds of foods should my baby eat?

For most babies it does not matter what the first solid foods are. By tradition, single-grain cereals are usually introduced first. However, there is no medical evidence that introducing solid foods in any particular order has an advantage for your baby. Though many pediatricians will recommend starting vegetables before fruits, there is no evidence that your baby will develop a dislike for vegetables if fruit is given first. Babies are born with a preference for sweets, and the order of introducing foods does not change this. If your baby has been mostly breastfeeding, he may benefit from baby meat, which contains more easily absorbed sources of iron and zinc that are needed by 4 to 6 months of age. Please discuss this with your child's doctor.

Baby cereals are available premixed in individual containers or dry, to which you can add breast milk, formula, or water. Premixed baby cereals are convenient, while dry cereals are richer in iron and allow you to control the thickness of the cereal. Whichever type of cereal you use, make sure that it is made for babies because these cereals contain extra nutrients your baby needs at this age.

## Using a high chair

The following are safety tips when using a high chair:

- Make sure the high chair you use cannot be tipped over easily.
- If the chair folds, be sure it is locked each time you set it up.
- Whenever your child sits in the chair, use the safety straps, including the crotch strap. This will prevent your child from slipping down, which could cause serious injury or even death. Never allow your child to stand in the high chair.
- Do not place the high chair near a counter or table. Your child may be able to push hard enough against these surfaces to tip the chair over.
- Never leave a young child alone in a high chair and do not allow older children to climb or play on it because this could also tip it over.
- A high chair that hooks on to a table is not a good substitute for a freestanding one. If you plan to use this type of chair when you eat out or when you travel, look for one that locks on to the table. Be sure the table is heavy enough to support your child's weight without tipping. Also, check to see whether your child's feet can touch a table support. If your child pushes against the table, it may dislodge the seat.



## FOODS APPROPRIATE FOR BABIES 6-9 MONTHS OLD

Mashed bananas or small slices	Yogurt (whole milk)*
Applesauce	Cheerios (fruit/veggie puffs)
Canned pears and peaches	Toast
Soft cooked/mashed vegetables	Graham Crackers
Iron fortified infant cereals	Arrowroot cookies
Chopped meat*	Zwieback toast
Cottage cheese*	Plain rice cakes (wagon wheels)

\*Meat and dairy products are introduced more toward 7-8 months. Remember the infant is getting plenty of protein from breast milk and/or formula.

"Finger foods" are introduced once the infant has become a more proficient eater, about 8-9 months. Larger pieces of table foods like toast and rice cakes can be started earlier and often assist with positive oral reinforcement for the texture sensitive infant and help with teething.

Homemade baby foods: Avoid spinach, beets, turnips, and collard greens. These foods may contain excessive nitrates.



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## **Television and Video Viewing**

### **Children Ages 0-2**

- Research shows that most infants and toddlers watch between 1-2 hours of television/videos per day. Television is likely on in the background much more than one realizes. No evidence has shown that TV is beneficial or educational for young children.
- Before the age of 2 years, children develop important listening skills, social skills, play skills and language skills. Children at this age learn through playing and exploring their environment and interacting with others. When the TV is on even just in the background, children tend to vocalize less. When children are watching television/videos they are not moving, exploring and learning through play or interacting with anyone! They also tend to "tune out" other sounds and become less responsive listeners. Also children learn through real-life experiences much better than through television.
- The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that children under 2 years of age should not be exposed to television and videos. Some harmful effects of television/video watching include difficulty learning words or language delay, attention problems in later childhood, and decreased social interactions.
- Research done on children under age 2 who regularly watched Baby Einstein DVDs showed a decrease in language skills when compared to children who did not watch these videos.
- As a part of our developmental evaluations at the Developmental Clinic, we recommend turning television and videos off until your child can have a conversation with you about what they watch. Instead, play turn-taking games, describe their play activities in simple language, encourage their imaginations, go for walks, or read with your child.