

Baby Milestones: The First Six Months

by Ann Douglas, author,
**The Mother of All
Baby Books**

LEARNING ABOUT INFANT DEVELOPMENT PROVIDES YOU WITH A ROADMAP TO GUIDE YOU AS YOU JOURNEY WITH YOUR CHILD. IT'S NOT A JOURNEY WITH A FIXED ITINERARY, OF COURSE. THAT'S WHAT MAKES HUMAN DEVELOPMENT SO FASCINATING TO OBSERVE: THERE ARE MILLIONS OF VARIATIONS ON THE SAME THEME PLAYED OUT EACH YEAR.

BY AGE TWO MONTHS

PHYSICAL AND COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT

- Baby is starting to seem more like a baby and less like a newborn. The stepping reflex (baby "walks" when supported in an upright position on a solid surface) and the grasping reflex (baby grabs your finger when you place it in his hand) have started to fade.
- Baby can lift his head to an almost 45 degree angle when placed on his stomach.
- Baby has developed a fascination with his hands. They're just the right distance away for him to play with and examine.

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- Baby has developed an entire repertoire of sounds and cries to express various emotions.
- Baby spends an increasing amount of time cooing and making other sounds

(vocalizations). • Baby has developed a winning smile.

BY AGE FOUR MONTHS

PHYSICAL AND COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT

- Baby is able to sit up straight, if propped.
- Baby is able to raise his head to a 90 degree angle if placed on his stomach. He may even be able to push part of his chest off the floor.
- Baby will bat at objects that are held out in front of him.
- Baby can roll from front to back.
- Baby will play with a toy if it is placed in his hands, but he won't be able to pick it up if he drops it.
- Baby can anticipate and remember important events (the cues that indicate he's about to be fed).
- Baby's hand-eye coordination is starting to develop.
- Baby likes to put objects in his mouth so he can explore them with further. He wants the full-sensory data on everything in his world.
- Baby starts to make sense of the information his senses are providing.
- Baby starts to become aware of the patterns and routines and patterns that provide structure to his day.

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- Baby is beginning to tune in more to the world of people, with particular attention being focused on the people he knows best.
- Baby has learned to tell the difference between familiar people and unfamiliar people and may protest when a stranger tries to pick her up – or comes too close.
- Baby is beginning to express emotional reactions spontaneously, like smiling

and frowning and fussing. He can even laugh out loud.

- Baby starting to use facial expressions, gestures, and sounds to communicate with others and to respond to others' communications.
- Baby is becoming aware of the impact that her communications have on others (how a two-way "conversation" works).

BY AGE SIX MONTHS

PHYSICAL AND COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT

- Baby's legs are strong enough to support most of her own weight when she is held in a standing position.
- Baby can pick up an object that has been dropped (provided it's within her reach).
- Baby can roll from back to front.
- Baby is drooling a lot – a sign that teething is now underway.
- Baby has doubled her birth-weight.
- Baby is mastering the concept of object permanence (the idea that objects still exist even when we can't see them).

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- Baby is becoming quite the conversationalist. She is fascinated by the sound of her own voice.
- The sounds she makes sound like single syllable words (ma, ba, da).

Note: Use your baby's developmental age rather than her chronological age if your baby was born prematurely.

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