

What's Up? Your Baby's Development



PEDIATRIC CARE • SUPPORTING • PARENTING
A Program of ZERO TO THREE

9-Month Visit

Babies communicate with their actions and sounds to let you know what they want.

9–12 MONTHS: What's Happening?

What Your Baby Can Do

I can understand more words than I can say.

- I am starting to understand what you say to me. I can even follow simple directions like “Go get the ball.”
- I tell you what I want with my sounds and body movements. I may say a word or two, such as “dada.”



I know that things still exist even though I can't see them—especially you!

- I may cry when you leave because I know you are still out there somewhere, and I want you to come back!

What You Can Do

Tell your baby what is happening and what you will do next:

“After your milk, it will be time for a nap.” This helps them learn language. Routines teach them what to expect.



Put your baby's sounds and actions into words. Say, “You are pushing your food away. I think you are telling me that you are all done.”

Name things your baby looks at or points to. Say, “That's the moon. The moon comes out at night.”

Play hide-and-seek games. This helps your baby learn that things that go away also come.

Be sure to say good-bye to your baby. Don't sneak out. This builds trust and helps them learn to how to cope with separations.

As you use the HealthySteps handouts, remember that your child may develop skills faster or slower than noted and still be growing just fine. Every child develops at their own pace. Your HealthySteps Specialist will be available to answer any questions. Your family's cultural beliefs and values are also important factors that shape your child's development.

What's Happening?

What Your Baby Can Do

I can creep and crawl.

- I have found my own way of crawling—on my hands or knees, on my stomach, “crab crawling” by moving backwards and sideways, or even scooting on my bottom!
- I walk while holding on to furniture or your hand. I may even start walking on my own.

I love to do things over and over again.

- This is how I practice and figure out how things work.
- Repetition also helps build my memory.

What You Can Do

Give your baby lots of time and a safe place to practice new skills such as crawling and walking. Barefoot is best. Your baby uses their toes to grip the floor.

Make a “trail of toys” in a child-safe place in your house. Line up several objects (a wooden spoon, a plastic bowl, a brightly colored dishcloth) that your child can crawl to and explore.

Help your child take the next step in their play. If they are banging two blocks together, see if they would like to try stacking them.

Offer your child a ball to toss or a rattle to shake. These activities help children learn how things work. They also build the muscles in their hands that will help them learn to write.

More Things to Know and Try

- Show your baby how cause-and-effect works, such as letting them press the doorbell or turn on the light switch.
- Follow your baby's lead. Notice what your child is interested in and let them (safely) explore an object in their own way.
- Encourage your baby to use all their senses to learn. Let them touch an ice cube. Notice when it melts. Crinkle leaves in your hands and see what happens.
- Childproof yet again! Now that babies have a goal in mind, such as touching the television remote, make your home child-safe so you spend more time playing, and less time saying “no.”

At this visit the pediatric team will measure your baby's length, weight, and head. They will listen to your baby's heart and look at their eyes, ears, nose, and mouth. Your baby will get any needed vaccines. We will talk about your baby's development and routines such as sleeping and eating. We will also review safety tips. And, of course, we will make time to discuss any questions or concerns you might have!