

9-Month Visit

Language

Babies this age make lots of new sounds and use their whole bodies to communicate.



During feeding time your baby may shake their head or look away when they are done. You can ask, “All done?” or use short phrases to name baby’s actions. If your baby is slow to warm up to eating, it’s OK to keep offering food after a few rejections. But if your baby keeps turning away, respect what they are saying through their body and stop feeding them. This way you show you understand what they mean.

Science and Math

Now that your baby can sit (maybe with support), offer some blocks or other child-safe toys. Put them in a container and watch what happens. Do they get dumped out? Most babies love this game. Talk about what you see using math language: “You dumped them out, all gone!” or “You are holding two blocks—one, two.”



Managing Feelings

You may notice that your baby reacts to new people and places in similar ways each time.



This may be part of their temperament. Temperament is how a baby responds to their surroundings and the people in it. Some babies are shy while others are outgoing. Respect and name your baby’s feelings. For example, “You seem a little scared of the doggie. You can watch from my arms.” Or, “You seem curious about the dog. Let’s ask if we can pet him.” It’s also common for babies this age who have been easy-going to have reactions to new people. This period of “stranger anxiety” usually passes gradually over time.

Problem-Solving

Your baby may now be noticing cause and effect. Baby has learned, “If I spit up, Mommy wipes my face,” and “If I drop my spoon, someone picks it up.” Play games that let them test the concept. Use two light foam blocks or empty food boxes (crackers or cereal) and stack one on top of the other. Say, “What will happen if I *poke* one?” Then give a little poke until it falls over and say, “It fell over!” Then restack it so baby can poke it and enjoy knocking it over too.



Physical Skills

Babies this age have gained more control over their bodies, including their fingers and hands. Try offering O-shaped cereal and see if they use their thumb and pointer finger to pick it up instead of their whole hand. If they pick one up, describe what is happening. Say, “You got that O!” Be aware that babies love to practice this new skill and will pick up small things from the floor.



Art and Music

Make a mixture of cornstarch and water for some sensory fun.



Put a small amount on baby’s highchair tray and let them explore. Talk about how it feels *sticky*, *wet*, and *cool*. Offer a spoon or block for pushing it around. It’s edible but if your baby can’t keep it out of their mouth better to move to a different activity.

Good books to read at this age:

- *Guess How Much I Love You* by Sam McBratney
- *Black & White* by Tana Hoban
- *Toes, Ears, & Nose!* by Marion Dane Bauer (or any Lift-the-Flap book)
- *10 Little Rubber Ducks* by Eric Carle