

Developmental milestones

Birth to 6 months

As babies grow, so do their skills. While not specific to your child, this education sheet can help you know what skills your baby is likely to develop at what age.

Babies develop at their own rate, learning some skills much quicker than others. Progress also starts and stops. As some skills are learned, your baby might go back to an earlier stage in some other areas for a time. If you have any questions or concerns about your baby's development, talk with your doctor or nurse practitioner.

Gross motor skills

— skills that use large muscles (legs, arms, trunk, and neck):

- **1 month:** head bobs when held upright, kicks feet when on back
- **2 months:** lifts head briefly when placed on tummy
- **3 months:** lifts head 2 to 3 inches off surface and pushes up with forearms when placed on tummy
- **4 months:** straightens legs when feet touch a flat surface; when on tummy, lifts head and chest off surface while looking forward
- **5 months:** rolls from tummy to back (always supervise to avoid falls); pulls self forward to sitting position when you hold baby's hands
- **6 months:** sits briefly without support; rolls from back to tummy
- **Remember:** Infants should only be on their tummies when they are awake. If your baby falls asleep, turn him or her onto the back for safe sleeping.

Fine motor skills

— skills that use small muscles (hands and fingers):

- **1 month:** hands are in fists most of the time
- **2 months:** holds a rattle when placed in their hand
- **3 months:** reaches toward dangling objects and people's faces
- **4 months:** holds and shakes rattle, plays with and watches their own fingers
- **5 months:** reaches for a toy with two hands; uses whole hand to grasp a toy
- **6 months:** passes a toy from one hand to another; bangs toy on table

Self-help skills

— skills that help children become more independent:

- **1 month:** coordinated suck from breast or bottle nipple
- **2 months:** opens mouth when seeing breast or bottle nipple
- **3 months:** anticipates feedings, shows interest or excitement when seeing breast or bottle nipple
- **4 months:** brings toy to mouth
- **5 months:** places both hands on breast or bottle when nursing
- **6 months:** holds own bottle or cup during feedings

Cognitive skills

— mental skills (thinking, learning, problem solving):

- **1 month:** looks at mobiles and people's faces; becomes quiet when picked up; cuddles when held
- **2 months:** eyes follow moving person or object; stays awake for longer periods; beginning to smile
- **3 months:** looks at own hands; feels objects with hands and mouth; turns eyes or head towards sounds; enjoys playful interaction; smiles at familiar people
- **4 months:** focuses eyes towards sounds; looks at toy held in hands; smiles at self in mirror; laughs
- **5 months:** finds a toy that is partially hidden under a cloth; makes sounds to get social attention; notices strangers
- **6 months:** reaches for a toy out of reach; likes to be with people

Speech skills

See the education sheet, "Speech and language development: Birth to 12 months".

Questions?

This sheet is not specific to your baby, but provides general information. If you have any concerns about your baby's development, ask your doctor, nurse practitioner, or therapist.

For more reading material about this and other health topics, please call or visit the Family Resource Center library, or visit our website: childrensMN.org/A-Z.