

6 to 9 Months

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

During this time your baby will begin to get mobile. Very soon, she will be taking her first steps. Your job is to encourage her to explore in a safe way. You will learn more about how she likes to be comforted. She may need to be fed, held or rocked, helped to a standing position on your lap or go for a calming ride in her stroller. The two of you will learn to have conversations without words. Listen carefully. As you and your child get to know each other better, you will feel more sure you are doing a good job.

If Babies Could Talk

Watch out world. I am on the move. Don't leave me alone outside of my crib or playpen because I might fall and hurt myself.

I like to play with toys such as rattles, teething rings, and stuffed animals. Everyday things such as pots, lids and measuring spoons are just as good (if not better). I learn through play.

Sometimes I cry to relieve tension. Growing up in this exciting world is hard. I need you.

I am starting to imitate sounds. I like nursery rhymes and songs. Don't be shy about singing out of tune. I love your voice best of all.

Now I know that I am separate from you. I used to think that things I could no longer see did not exist, but now I know they are still there. Peek-a-boo is one of my favourite ways of figuring this out.

HELP YOUR BABY SUCCEED

STEPS FOR HEALTHY CHILD DEVELOPMENT (6 to 9 months)

SAFETY



- Make sure baby's bath water is warm, not hot (test it with your elbow).
- Create safe places for your baby to play and explore. Cover all electrical outlets and block off stairs.

SECURITY



- Stay calm and soothe your baby if he cries when you leave or acts afraid of other people.
- Respect your baby's unique personality. Each of us responds to people and things around us in different ways.

HEALTH



- Keep your home and car smoke-free. Babies and children who are exposed to second-hand smoke have more ear infections, asthma and other illnesses.
- Clean new teeth after the last feeding of the day with a baby toothbrush or soft cloth and water.
- Don't put your baby to bed with a bottle. It may ruin her smile.

LEARNING



- Hold your baby in front of the mirror. Point out your noses, mouths and other body parts.
- Read nursery rhymes and simple picture books to your child.

ADJUSTING



- Set some daily routines for feeding, playing and sleeping but keep the schedule flexible enough to meet both of your needs.
- Say "no" to your baby when you need to. Then distract her by giving her something else to do.

What to Expect *Remember:* Every baby develops at his or her own pace. These are guidelines only. If you are concerned about your baby's development, talk with your doctor, a public health nurse or another trusted health professional.

- Baby will sit with support, stand on your lap with help, and get on his hands and knees (and rock).
- He may start to crawl and pull himself to standing on a chair or couch. Encourage him but don't rush him. Some babies skip crawling and go straight to walking.
- She is getting better at holding things and passing objects from one hand to another. She loves to bang, splash, reach and grab for toys.
- He may cling to you and cry when you leave him with others. "Making strange" with other people is normal and will pass in a few months.
- Red gums, drooling, the urge to bite on things, crying and rubbing her face or ears are signs that baby's first teeth are coming in. Give her something to chew on (such as a cold teething ring or a breadstick), and lots of love and attention.

Take Care of You

Crying is one of the hardest things new parents have to deal with. Some babies cry a lot. Sometimes it is hard to understand why they are crying. You have fed, changed and walked him and he just won't stop.

A fussy baby is not your fault. She is not angry with you or crying to annoy you. Both of you are making big adjustments in your lives. Be patient with yourself and your baby. Try to get more rest. Forget about housework and sleep when baby sleeps.

If crying is getting on your nerves, put your baby in a safe place (such as his crib or playpen) and go to another part of your home for a few minutes. Or ask your partner, a relative or a friend to take over for a while.

Never shake or spank a baby. This can cause permanent brain damage, blindness or even death. Call a friend or distress centre immediately if you are worried that your behaviour may harm your baby.