



Parenting the First Year

MONTH

11-12

How baby is changing

Standing and cruising around the room by holding furniture keeps your little one very busy. Baby may even take a few steps on her own. Some babies like standing so much they refuse to sit down! This will wear off eventually.

In the meantime, you may have to diaper your baby while she is standing or keep a special toy just for diapering to get her to lie down. Do not let her stand in a high chair, grocery cart, or stroller.

Your baby may be able to say several words, and she understands many more. She learns new words by hearing you talk to her. Point out colors and objects to help her learn.

Your baby may recognize people, even if they change their hair or glasses or grow a mustache. Her memory for people is improving. She trusts and likes some people more than others. Don't be surprised if she is afraid of strangers.

By now, baby can make a tower out of two blocks, and understands some complicated ideas like "up and down" and "big and small." Toys — like shape-sorters that let her fit small pieces into bigger ones — are special favorites at this age.

Recliner chair safety warning

Several children have been hurt or killed in recliner chair accidents. These children were between 12 and 30 months old, alone in a room, and climbing on the chair's leg rest.

A child's head and neck can become trapped between the leg rest and chair if the chair folds up.

If you have a recliner chair, be sure to:

- Always keep an unused chair in an upright position.
- Keep children from playing on the leg rest, even with an adult sitting in the chair.

Report any accident with recliner chairs — or with any baby products — to the Consumer Product Safety Commission at **(800) 638-CPSC** or www.cpsc.gov.

Paper shredder alert

- Keep paper shredders up on a desk, away from curious fingers.
- Keep the shredder turned off when not in use.

- Never let a small child use the shredder. Even if a parent is supervising, a child may not let go of the paper and get her fingers caught in the shredder.

Two minutes to fun

Some parents think they must set special times aside to play with the baby or to teach him new things. That's a good idea. But sometimes you don't have time in big blocks.

Children are happy with lots of little bits of your time and attention. They learn to amuse themselves, with your help.

It takes less than 2 minutes to:

- ♥ Give your child a hug and a kiss.
- ♥ Tweak baby's toes.
- ♥ Play pat-a-cake or peek-a-boo.
- ♥ Show baby his nose or chin, or your nose.
- ♥ Admire baby's shoes.
- ♥ Show baby a picture or two in a book.
- ♥ Tickle baby's tummy at bath time.
- ♥ Lift him up over your head.
- ♥ Point out a pretty leaf or flower.
- ♥ Give baby a big smile.

Children can be very different from each other. Don't worry if your child is "early" or "late" in growth. **This is important:** Look for and notice your child's growth in each area. Then you can encourage each new ability.

Baby reads your cues

Babies are sensitive to what you say and **how** you say it, such as your facial expressions and tone of voice (non-verbal cues).

For example, research shows that babies can tell the difference between talk that praises and talk that criticizes, even when the words are in different languages. Babies smile and respond positively to praise, but frown or get tense when they hear scolding.

Make sure the words you say and your non-verbal messages match. This helps baby learn language better.

Your baby wants you to know:

How I grow:

- ♥ I stand by myself for a moment or two!
- ♥ I hold a toy in one hand and pull myself up to my feet with the other hand.
- ♥ I may even wave and turn around while standing, without falling down.
- ♥ I walk if you hold one or both of my hands.
- ♥ I hold a pencil or crayon, and I love to make marks.

How I talk:

- ♥ I know that words are used to identify things.
- ♥ I may use one word to mean a whole thought.
- ♥ I babble and mumble gibberish a lot.

How I respond:

- ♥ I copy everything I see, and then I do it my own way.
- ♥ I try to get your approval, and I hide when I know you're not pleased.
- ♥ I may test you to see what I can get away with.

How I understand:

- ♥ I see your expression and copy it. I'm learning from you!
- ♥ I try to bark or meow when I see a dog or cat. I am learning how people, animals, and things work.
- ♥ I like to look at pictures in books and magazines.
- ♥ I know that tools will help me. For instance, I push a chair in front of me to steady myself while walking.

How I feel:

- ♥ I may cling to you, especially in new situations.
- ♥ I love to shake my head and to say "No," even when I mean "Yes."
- ♥ I may cry, scream, and have tantrums if I don't get my way.
- ♥ I feel guilty when I do something wrong.

How you can help me learn:

- ♥ Roll a ball on the floor for me to crawl after.
- ♥ Let me help you! Leave a dishrag or plastic cup out, so I can bring it to you.
- ♥ Help me practice turning pages of cloth or cardboard books. Soon I'll be able to do it alone.
- ♥ Let me hold cans and boxes of food at the grocery store. Show me the pictures, and tell me what they are.

Child guidance: Coping with baby's frustration

Babies get frustrated and mad sometimes when they can't do what they want. Sometimes, getting stuck halfway up the stairs or not getting a cookie can trigger a baby's temper.

What can you do when your baby is howling, screaming, and kicking? That depends. If she is upset because she can't get back down the stairs or sit down when standing, teach her **how**. Soon her abilities will match her desires.

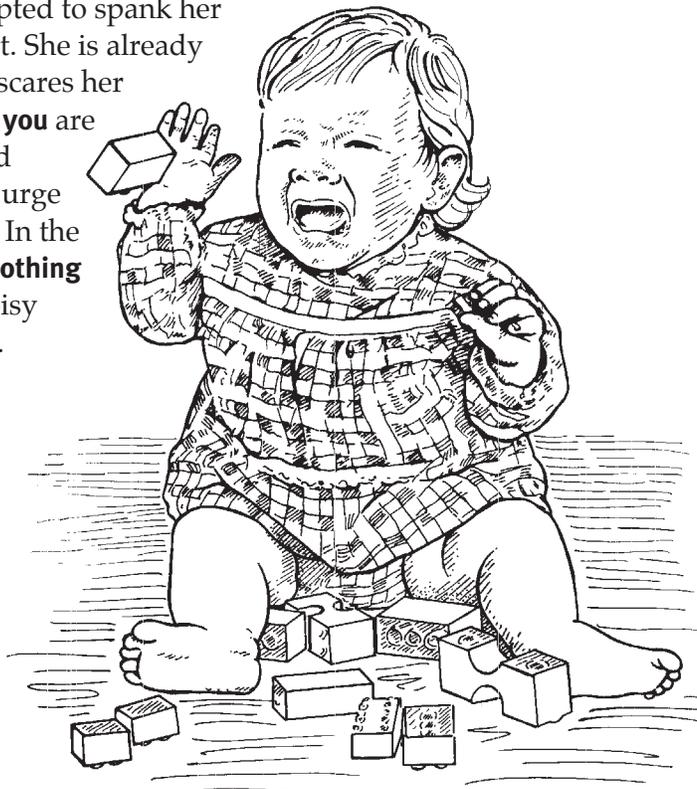
If baby is upset because she can't have a cookie or play with your glasses, try to interest her in a different activity or object. If this doesn't work, **pretend to ignore her** as you straighten the room or wash dishes. Stay nearby and be patient.

When she sees that you're not paying attention, she will eventually quiet down. **Once baby is calm, give her a hug and a little understanding.** Her strong emotions are no fun for you, but they are scary for her.

What if your baby gets upset in a public place, like the grocery store? This is harder. Once again, try to interest her in something else, like a toy or a picture on a cereal box. Once she gets frustrated, you may have to put up with the results. Or pick her up and leave the store.

Your child is not the first to scream or cry in public, and she won't be the last. Even the people who frown or make comments have probably gone through this themselves. Ignore them.

Don't be tempted to spank her when she is upset. She is already out of control. It scares her even more when **you** are out of control and angry. Resist the urge to do something. In the long run, **doing nothing** will end these noisy outbursts sooner.



Is your baby highly active?

Is your baby always on the move, not wanting to stop to eat, rest, or get his diaper changed? All babies move around, but some are more active than others.

Having an energetic baby can seem like a blessing at times and a trial at others. Your active baby may already be walking, which is exciting to see, but keeping him off the table or counters may become a challenge.

If you are also an active person you may take special delight in having an active child and may find it easy to keep up with him. If you are less energetic, baby may tire you out more easily. You will need to find **acceptable outlets** for all that energy.

Here are some ideas:

- ♥ Take baby often to the park or playground to run and play.
- ♥ Provide a tunnel for baby to crawl through made from a large cardboard box.
- ♥ Play active games with baby; roll a ball for him to chase or pretend to chase him.
- ♥ Give baby toys that he can push, pull, or climb on.

Remember, you need to set limits on what baby can do. But providing your active child with safe ways to let out his energy will keep everyone happy.

Expert advice: Talk about parenting

Who can you talk with about your baby? Research shows that the most skilled parents have people they can talk with and learn from.

If you use child care, consider talking with your child care provider.

Providers have experience with lots of children and families. So they usually know what is normal and what is not. They often know dozens of ways to start new foods or to get a child to sleep. They have learned from other parents like you.

Your child care provider also knows your child very well and cares about you. Most providers welcome a chance to talk with parents. So find a time to talk about what's working for you and what isn't. See what you can learn.

Baby shots reminder

Your baby may be due for more baby shots in the next few months. Baby will need shots for influenza type B (Hib); measles, mumps, rubella (MMR); pneumonia (PCV); chickenpox; diphtheria / tetanus / pertussis (DTaP); and hepatitis A.

If you aren't sure what shots your baby needs, call your doctor, clinic, or tribal maternal-child specialist. These shots are a lot safer than the diseases would be.

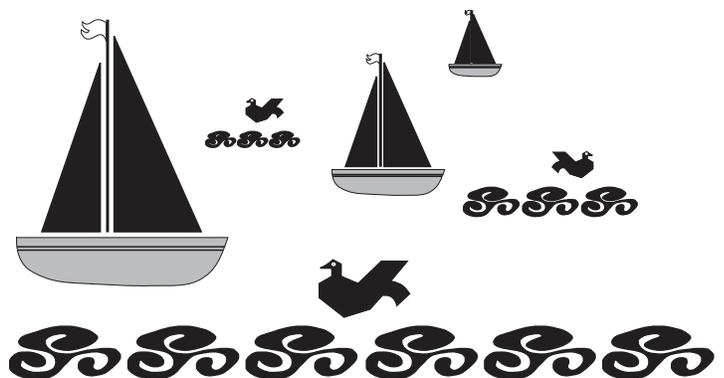
The American Academy of Pediatrics Immunization Schedule is available online: www.aap.org/immunization/IZSchedule.html.

Water safety

Water play in the bathtub, pool, or beach can be a lot of fun for your baby. But water can be dangerous.

Here are some tips to make water time safe and fun:

- ♥ Swimming lessons for toddlers can be a fun way to introduce children to the water. The greatest risk of swim lessons is that parents may develop a false sense of security. The American Academy of Pediatrics does not recommend lessons for children less than 1 year of age. Visit their website on water safety at www.healthychildren.org/English/safety-prevention/at-play/pages/Water-Safety-And-Young-Children.aspx.
- ♥ Don't let your baby swallow lots of water at the pool or beach; it could make baby sick.
- ♥ Floating toys are fun, but they can deflate suddenly; so they don't substitute for a watchful parent or prevent drowning. **NEVER** leave a young child alone near water, even for a minute. Keep your baby or toddler within your reach — "touch supervision." Teach your child to wait for an adult before getting into water.
- ♥ If you have or use a pool, teach proper pool-side behavior. Don't allow running or rough play around the pool. Never leave a pool half-covered. A child could get trapped under the cover.
- ♥ Avoid swimming with your baby in ponds. Their bodies are not yet good at fighting some diseases that are easily passed in the water.
- ♥ To prevent sunburn, use a waterproof sunscreen with SPF (sun protection factor) 15 or higher. Reapply it at least every 2 hours.
- ♥ Watch out for shallow water. Babies have drowned in buckets and toilet bowls because their heavy heads became trapped when they fell in. Babies can drown in less than 2 inches of water.
- ♥ Learn infant CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation) so you are prepared for an accident. Ask your doctor, clinic, or local American Red Cross about classes. You can also sign up for a class online at www.redcross.org/. See *Parenting the First Year*, Month 6-7.



Build your child's self-esteem

How do you want your child to feel about himself? Do you want your baby to grow up thinking he is a good person who is able to handle things in life? Do you want him to get along with others and to share his feelings?

The way a person feels about himself is called **self-esteem**. High self-esteem means feeling good about yourself.

Children with high self-esteem do better in school and in life.

Self-esteem begins at home. If you want your child to develop high self-esteem, you have to feel good about him and let him know. How can you do this? Tell your baby you think he is a great child. Tell him he is important to you. Share lots of hugs, kisses, and smiles. Give him some of your undivided attention each day and really listen to him.

When your child does something you don't like, you can choose to correct him in a way that won't hurt his self-esteem. Don't yell at your child or tell him he is a rotten child. Instead, say: "I get angry when you... ." Your baby will learn, without feeling like a failure. Be fair and consistent. Teach him to make good choices.

Try to point out at least five things your baby does **right** each day. Instead of saying "Nice job," describe what your child has done. You can say, "I like the gentle way you are petting the kitty," "You picked up your clothes," or "You ran really fast." Keep your praise specific, but don't overdo it. Empty praise is not helpful.

Say "please" and "thank you" to your children. Children are people, too. When you say please and thank you, they learn to respect themselves and others.

Take baby shopping

Do you take your baby to the market with you? Some children really enjoy this. Others are over-excited by all the colors, smells, and noises and may "act up" with bad behavior.

If your child can handle the stimulation, grocery shopping can be a fun outing. Plan trips after meals/naps, if you can, when baby is well rested and not hungry. Tell baby, before you leave, where you are going and what you will be doing.

You can help your baby learn by talking to her and pointing out different foods. When you choose some apples, you can say, "We need four red apples. See? One, two, three, four." When you get cereal, show her the box, shake it, and let her see what is inside it when you get home.

Research shows that smart children have parents who give them this kind of stimulation.

You might want to bring a toy or a nutritious snack from home or let her hold something unbreakable to keep those little hands busy.

Don't let her stand in a grocery cart. Use the seat strap to keep her seated.

Never leave baby alone in the car, even for a minute.



Worrying about baby's eating?

If your baby is very active, you may notice a slowing down of weight gain. That occurs because your baby is using more calories for her constant activity. The fact that she may be gaining less weight now doesn't mean she isn't healthy.

Worrying about what your baby eats or doesn't eat will only make both of you nervous. Don't expect her to clean her plate or eat "just one more" mouthful. Trust her to be the best judge of how much to eat.

As your baby moves around and explores, she is becoming more independent. She may insist on feeding herself. Or she may be a little scared by the new abilities and cling to you at meal times. She may even refuse to hold a cup or spoon and demand to be fed.

Whether your little one is a clinger or a self-feeder, try to be calm and patient. Patience will pay off in fewer feeding problems now and later.

Don't use sweet treats to distract a fussy or unhappy child. This teaches the child to use food for emotional reasons, like feeling stressed or bored. This could possibly contribute to eating problems later on.

Activity: Mirror game

Here is a mirror game you can play with your baby to help him learn what he looks like.

How to play:

- ♥ Hold baby on a bathroom counter or dresser in front of a mirror. Stand behind him and point to his reflection.
- ♥ Using your baby's name, say: "I see Johnny. Where is Johnny? Find Johnny. Look at Johnny." Encourage him to point to himself in the mirror by copying you: "Here's my nose. Where's Johnny's nose?"
- ♥ Do the same thing with toys and other objects. Pick them up one at a time and move them behind his head. Bring them out into view on one side or the other; he will love this!
- ♥ Name the objects and tell him something about each one, such as: "This is a **ball**, and it's **round**."
- ♥ Ask baby, "Where is the ball?" Encourage him to point to it in the mirror.



Activity: Copy games

- ♥ Make animal sounds when you show baby pictures of animals. Baby may copy them.
- ♥ Make funny faces at baby. For example, open and close your eyes and mouth, move your head from side to side or up and down, or stick out your tongue and wiggle it. Watch baby imitate you.

Do yourself a favor...

Good days/bad days

Do you know that all parents have bad days? Every parent sometimes feels worn out.

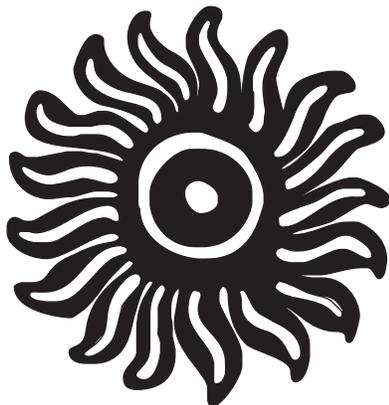
Taking care of a young child can leave you feeling that you never have a moment to yourself unless you find it after midnight, and then you may be interrupted by a small cry. Besides that, if you're like most parents of young children, you can hardly keep your eyes open after 8 p.m.

You may wonder if someone else has found an easier way to do the job. On bad days, you might secretly ask yourself if you are doing something wrong.

No one knows a shortcut to being a good parent. It's common for parents' bodies to ache a little. You may also feel emotionally bruised. Take heart: You are probably doing fine. A lot of weariness goes along with being a parent. It may help to remember that these bad days usually are followed by good days, and that all these days will pass as your little one becomes less demanding.

Young children need parents who try to be their best with them every day. But that doesn't mean we succeed all the time. Allow yourself a few mistakes without guilt every day. When you're not feeling OK, try not to worry about being a super parent or a super family. The more you can laugh about things and really **enjoy** your baby, the easier your days will be.

Infants and toddlers can be demanding. If you sometimes feel that you are at the end of your rope, call your doctor, spiritual advisor, or good friend to let off steam and to talk. Even though you sometimes feel overwhelmed, that doesn't stop you from being a good parent; you still care about and love your child. Talking about it shows that you are responsible enough to know when you need help.



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