



Parenting the First Year

MONTH

12

How baby is changing

Your child is probably spending a lot of time mastering walking. She may be extra-clingy now. Try to give her the extra attention she needs. This will help her become more independent soon.

The desire to walk is so strong it may even interfere with eating and sleeping.

It may be hard for your baby to relax and go to sleep. She may rock or bounce in her crib. If the crib moves, take the wheels off. A back rub or a rock in a rocker may help her drift off to sleep.

Have you noticed your baby enjoys doing small errands for you, like bringing you things? She understands more than she is able to say yet.

Your little one may be able to say a few words — but words stand for whole thoughts. This makes puzzles for you. When baby says “Mama,” does it mean: “Where’s Mama?” or “I want Mama?” or “Play with me, Mama?”

What’s ahead?

By the end of the first year, your baby has developed his own personality. Baby is a full-fledged member of your family. It’s hard to imagine what life was like without him! In the months ahead, look forward to your child:

- ♥ Sleeping about 12 hours at night, and being an early riser.
- ♥ Needing a longer nap on some days than others.
- ♥ Usually wanting attention when waking up.
- ♥ Having a varied appetite, especially while teething. After 12 months, children grow more slowly and eat less.
- ♥ Having a language “explosion.” A 12-month-old may speak two or three words. A 2-year-old may know 200 to 300 words.
- ♥ Exploring and playing with genitals. This is normal curiosity.
- ♥ Starting to show independence without really knowing what he wants. You may hear “No!” and “Me do it!” a lot.

Memories

Your baby and family have come a long way!

At birth, baby probably weighed between 5 and 9 pounds. Now she has tripled that weight.

At birth, baby ate many times during the day and night. Now she eats regular meals like you, including a variety of solid foods. She can help feed herself!

At birth, your baby could barely lift her heavy head off the mattress. Now she can sit, stand, stoop, and maybe take a few steps.

At birth, baby couldn’t reach for things she saw. Now she can pick up tiny objects with thumb and first finger, swap things from hand to hand, and put one object inside another.

At birth, baby communicated only by crying. Now she smiles, laughs, frowns. Baby shows anger, fear, joy, curiosity, and love, and she may even say a few words.



By the end of 12 months, most babies are able to:

- use simple gestures (waving “bye-bye”).
- make sounds such as “ma” and “da.”
- imitate actions in their play (clap when you clap).
- respond when told “No.”

Your child might reach these milestones earlier or later than others. If you become concerned about your baby’s progress, you can seek advice from:

- CDC National Center: 1-800-CDC-INFO (1-800-232-4636) or online at www.cdc.gov/actearly
- Wisconsin Birth to 3 Program: 1-800-642-7837

What’s next?

Guiding and caring for your child these next two years will take a lot of your attention, encouragement, patience, humor — and a sense of wonder.

You can get help from another newsletter series like this. *Parenting the Second and Third Years* (B3791) provides this same child development information plus ideas for creating fun play and learning activities. Contact your county Extension office, or call toll-free: 1-877-947-7827.

If you have Internet access: <http://parenting.uwex.edu/>.

Your baby wants you to know:

How I grow:

- ♥ I may walk, but I still prefer to crawl — it’s faster!
- ♥ I also may try to do other things while walking, like wave to you or pick up my favorite blanket.
- ♥ I stand by pushing up from a squatting position.
- ♥ I climb up and down stairs if I get the chance.
- ♥ I may even be able to climb out of a play pen or crib.
- ♥ I use my hands to take lids off jars.
- ♥ I hold things in one hand while I do something else with the other hand.
- ♥ I use my index finger to point to things.
- ♥ I try to dress or undress myself, but I’m not very good at it yet.
- ♥ I insist on feeding myself.

How I talk:

- ♥ I repeat a few words I know — it’s good practice.
- ♥ I babble phrases that sound like short sentences.
- ♥ I make up my own words to describe objects or people.

How I respond:

- ♥ I trust people I know well.
- ♥ I imitate people, even if they are not around.
- ♥ I am still afraid of strangers and unfamiliar places.
- ♥ I am very definite about my likes and dislikes.

How I understand:

- ♥ I remember more because my memory is getting sharper.
- ♥ I hunt for a toy and remember where I saw it last.
- ♥ I may be able to solve a problem through trial and error.
- ♥ I follow simple directions and understand many things you say to me.
- ♥ I have favorite people and favorite toys.

How I feel:

- ♥ I’m starting to have a sense of humor, and I think some things are funny.
- ♥ I still don’t like being apart from you. I feel relieved when you return.
- ♥ I feel secure and happy eating meals with my family.
- ♥ I feel and show love and affection to my favorite people and to my favorite things.

How you can help me learn:

- ♥ Dance with me! I love to listen to music.
- ♥ Find or make for me some nesting toys to play with.
- ♥ Read to me.
- ♥ Give me simple commands to follow. I like to run little errands for you.
- ♥ Share lots of hugs and kisses with me.

When to toilet train

You have already made it through one year of diapers. Will baby be ready for toilet training soon? Probably not.

Research shows that the average child is not fully toilet trained until 2½ to 3 years. Some take longer.

If you try to toilet train too early, your child will be upset that he can't do what you want.

Sometimes a child goes on the potty once or twice by accident. Then, parents feel he is being disobedient on purpose when he won't do it again.

You can avoid a lot of problems by waiting until your child is ready — probably after his second birthday. We'll tell you more later.

Is your baby cautious?

Does your baby cling to you when strangers come near? Does she reject new foods, clothes, or toys? About 20% of babies are like this.

While many babies are wary of strangers at first, some take much more time to get used to new people, places, and things. These babies need you to:

- ♥ Introduce new things many times. Repetition is key!
- ♥ Ask friends to give baby time to “warm up” to them, before they pick her up.
- ♥ Break new situations down into smaller parts, and introduce each part several times. For example, if baby is starting child care, let her meet the new teacher; explore the new place; play with the new toys; and meet one or two of the other children—before she starts.

Be patient with your baby. Try to find a balance between giving your child plenty of time to adjust to new things—and expecting her to try them. Research shows that when parents “gently” introduce their inhibited toddler to new people, places, and things, these children become less inhibited by the time they start school.



Sex roles

Parents sometimes treat boys and girls differently. Parents may give toy trucks to boys and give dolls to girls.

Parents may get upset if a boy picks up a doll and plays with it, because they think a doll is a girl's toy. The same thing may happen when a girl plays with a toy truck or car.

Although your child is still a baby, think about your own attitudes about sex roles. Now is a good time to look at the messages you want to give about “what little boys and little girls are made of.”

Here are some questions to help you sort out your attitudes:

- ♥ Do I hold back from hugging my son just because he is a boy?
- ♥ Do I expect less toughness and drive from a daughter than I would from a son?
- ♥ What kind of adult roles should I prepare my child for? Do I expect my daughter to compete on the job? Do I expect my son to nurture his own children?

Learning starts early.

By the time children enter school, some know a lot more than others. Their families help them learn.

What you can do to help your baby learn:

- ♥ **Floor freedom** — When they were babies, bright children were allowed to explore. They were not kept in cribs or high chairs or swings all day.
- ♥ **Language** — Bright children have parents who talk more with them. Their parents explain and expand on things. For example, the child might say “Doggie,” and the parent will answer: “Yes. It’s a big, brown doggie, and he’s wagging his tail.”
- ♥ **Outings** — Bright children have been taken places — to the market, the post office, the fair, the park.
- ♥ **Just enough help** — The parents of bright children give them just enough help so they can do things. For example, the parents might put chairs together so an early walker can hold on while walking. Then, as the child gets better, the parent will move the chairs apart a bit, making it just a little harder. Another example: When the baby has trouble stacking blocks on the rug, the parent might start the stack on a book, for a firmer base that won’t fall so easily. The parent provides just enough help, then lets the baby succeed on his own.

TV and children

What do children learn from TV? The answer: Lots!

Children copy the actions of people and cartoons they see on TV. Research shows that even when 12-month-olds watch an adult playing with a toy on a small TV screen, they will later choose to play with that same toy in the same way as the person on TV. They imitate what they see.

It should be no surprise then, that children who watch a lot of TV become more aggressive than other children. They get in fights more at school. They even have more serious criminal records as adults. TV viewing is also linked to lower reading scores and becoming overweight.

Watching TV can be great entertainment. But we advise that you use the TV carefully, even with your infant.

- ♥ **Limit the amount of TV viewing.** The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that infants and toddlers under 2 years of age not watch TV. Babies and toddlers need to interact with adults and other children to learn language and develop social skills. Clear and consistent rules are easiest to enforce. For example: “We never watch TV before lunch in this house.”
- ♥ **Avoid using the TV like a baby-sitter or “plug-in drug.”** When you need both hands for cooking, don’t set baby in a rocker in front of the TV. Instead, set her rocker where she can watch you cook and talk with you.

- ♥ **Limit the kinds of TV viewing.** For example, set rules against TV content that teaches your children to be violent or to disrespect adults. Especially avoid shows in which the hero is violent, since children imitate the hero most. Also avoid scary programs (including the news) that can cause your child to become fearful, and possibly develop sleep problems. Even some children’s shows can have scary parts. Respect your child’s wishes if he or she seems frightened by a program, and turn off the TV.
- ♥ **Watch your children’s TV programs with them,** and talk about what you see. Tell your child what is real and what is phony, how special effects are done, and what the TV people did right or wrong.
- ♥ **Watch commercials with your children.** Explain that ads are trying to make you spend your money, and that toys and foods always look better on TV than in real life. Some families have a simple rule that prevents many arguments between children and parents: “We never buy anything that we see advertised on TV.”

Children will not be harmed if you throw away your TV. But you don’t have to go that far — as long as you set rules for using TV carefully.

Prevent childhood poisoning.

You know your child likes to put things in his mouth to taste them. You may not know that children will eat poisons — like mothballs or drain cleaner — even if they taste bad. Only as we get older do we learn that bad-tasting things may be harmful.

It's your job to protect your child from poisons in your home. Here is a room-by-room list of common household products that are poisonous:

Kitchen

Dishwasher soap,* oven cleaner,* floor and furniture polish, ammonia,* lye.*

Bathroom

Medicines — prescription drugs, aspirin and aspirin substitutes, vitamin and iron pills, tranquilizers, birth control pills, cold and cough medicines — cosmetics, mouth wash, perfume, drain cleaner,* disinfectants,* rubbing alcohol.

Laundry

Bleaches, detergents, fabric softeners, stain removers.

Storeroom

Kerosene, lighter fluid, gasoline, paint, paint thinner, turpentine, weed killer, pesticides, rat poison, fertilizer.

Other

Houseplants, garden and yard plants, tobacco, any alcohol, mothballs, paint chips or dust.

Think ahead to prevent poisoning:

- ♥ Store poisonous products in a locked cabinet or high out of children's sight and reach. Put them back after use.
- ♥ Keep the phone number for your local Poison Control Center, by every phone in the house: 1-800-222-1222.
- ♥ Doctors no longer recommend using syrup of ipecac for poisoning. Research failed to show that ipecac helped children who took it.
- ♥ Never put a poison in food or drink containers. Someone may think it is food and eat it.
- ♥ Don't take medicine in front of your children. Never tell children their medicine is "candy."
- ♥ Watch out — other people's homes may not be childproof.

If poisoning occurs...

1. Try to figure out what was swallowed. Keep the container and label. If the child vomits and you don't know what was eaten, keep a sample for chemical analysis.
2. **If the child is awake**, call the Poison Control Center (1-800-222-1222) or the doctor right away. Even if the child seems OK, some treatment may be needed. Time is very important.
3. **If the child is unconscious**, call the rescue squad. Begin CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation) if the child is not breathing. The American Red Cross offers infant CPR classes. You can sign up online at www.redcross.org/.
4. Never induce vomiting if a caustic substance was swallowed. These products cause severe mouth and throat burns in addition to poisoning. They burn a second time if the child is made to vomit.



* Indicates products are caustic and cause severe mouth and throat burns as well as poisoning when swallowed. **Never induce (cause) vomiting if a caustic substance is swallowed.**

Many babies want to suck.

Most babies like to suck on fingers, toys, or pacifiers. Many begin to give this up on their own at about 1 year of age. But many others do not. Is it OK?

Some babies are better soothed by sucking than by almost anything else. Breastfed babies may like to nurse for comfort. Sucking calms babies especially when they are tired and fussy. Sucking can help protect sleep, too. Noises and things that would wake a child up just make her suck harder.

One study of 12-month-olds found that when their moms left them **with** a pacifier in a room full of toys, they stayed longer, explored more, and played with more toys than 1-year-olds **without** a pacifier. A pacifier seems to calm babies' fears, so they explore more.

Will sucking hurt a baby's teeth? Doctors disagree on this. Some think that sucking on a thumb or pacifier, even at this young age, will deform baby's teeth. Some believe babies' thumbs are worse for this, and that **anatomically correct** pacifiers are OK (it will say that on the package when you buy it). Next time you visit the dentist, have them look at your baby's teeth. If there is any problem, follow the dentist's advice on pacifiers and thumb sucking.

Try to understand and respect your child's need to be comforted by sucking, or by keeping a favorite toy or blanket nearby. Your patience will help your child give up these habits on her own, when she is ready.

What to feed baby

Milk — As long as your baby is learning to eat solid foods as well as breast milk, it is OK to keep breastfeeding as long as you and baby want. When your baby is 12 months old, you may switch from breast milk or iron-fortified formula to cow's milk. Whole milk is better than low-fat or skim milk until age 2. Two-year-olds should begin to make the change to drinking low-fat milk.

Yogurt and cheese provide nearly the same nutrients as milk. So these are OK for part of the milk a child needs each day.

Other food groups — By this time, your baby should have developed a liking for many different foods. In addition to milk, yogurt, and cheese, make sure you give him foods from each of these food groups every day:

- ♥ Grain foods like bread, cereal, rice, pasta, and tortillas. This is a good time to start gradually introducing whole-grain foods to your child's diet.
- ♥ Vegetables. Continue to give baby lots of different types of vegetables each week.
- ♥ Fruits. Give your child soft pieces of whole fruit and 100% real fruit juice. Limit juice to about ½ cup (4 ounces) per day. Fruit-flavored drinks can be high in added sugar and should **not** be part of your child's daily diet.
- ♥ Meat and beans. When properly cooked and cut into small pieces, beef, pork, chicken, fish, cooked dry beans, eggs, and nuts are nutritious items. Do not give

very young children whole nuts or other foods that could cause choking.

Sweets — Babies are born with a natural liking for sweet foods. A sweet treat is OK once in a while. But be careful not to let sugary foods take over his diet.

Build healthy eating habits.

Your baby doesn't have to eat something from each food group at every meal. Most babies have fairly wild eating patterns at a given meal. They may eat nothing but beans at one meal, and nothing but bananas at the next! But they do pretty well over time if you offer them a variety of nutritious foods at each meal.

We recommend **not** forcing a child to eat specific amounts, or certain foods. In fact, when children are required to eat certain foods, they learn to dislike them.

Build good eating habits for your children:

1. Set a good example by serving and eating a variety of nutritious foods.
2. Give children positive attention when they eat the way you would like them to.
3. Set reasonable limits on sweet treats, sugary snacks, soda pop, and other sugary beverages.
4. Provide healthy food for meals and snacks and let your child eat the amount he's hungry for. If he is not feeling hungry just then, let him know that there will be another meal or snack in a couple of hours, but don't let him refuse to eat a nutritious meal in hopes of loading up on cookies a few minutes after the meal is over.

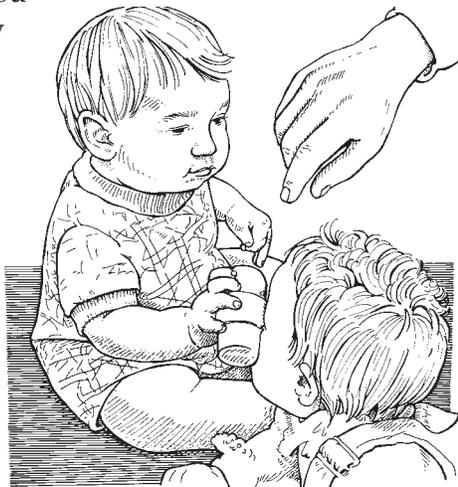
Child guidance: Setting limits

Your child understands many things you say, and may even be able to say a few words. But baby can't think ahead about what might happen, and she can only decide between the most basic choices.

This means you have a challenge ahead: to help your child learn rules so she can eventually learn to manage her own behavior. How can you do this?

Here are a few suggestions:

- ♥ **Be brief.** Your child understands short, simple phrases. Give reasons for your rules. But long, involved explanations won't help.
- ♥ **Be clear.** Baby can understand the difference between standing in her high chair and not standing. But she may be confused if the rule is "Standing in the chair is OK when I am next to you or when you hold on with one hand." Keep things black and white for now.
- ♥ **Be specific.** Tell your child what she can't do and what she can do. If baby is throwing blocks, tell her: "Blocks are not for throwing. Here, stack the blocks like this." Be ready to remove her or take away the blocks. Or, you could give her a soft toy that is OK to throw. This focuses on positive, rather than negative behavior.
- ♥ **Be consistent.** A child can adjust to small differences in rules set by two parents, or by parents and child care providers. But don't forbid an activity — like jumping on the bed — one minute, and allow it the next. It's good to be flexible sometimes. But most of the time, try to make up your mind what you want and be firm about it.
- ♥ **Admit feelings.** Sometimes children do things that make parents angry. When you feel angry, admit it. But don't make your baby feel like a bad person just because she did something bad. And don't scare her with feelings that are too scary. Say in a firm voice: "I'm really mad that you did that." She will know how you feel. When you admit your anger without yelling, calling names or hitting, you help her deal with her own angry feelings. She will learn to express anger without hurting others.
- ♥ **Lighten up.** See the humor in things. Don't make an issue out of everything. Instead, choose your battles wisely, and relax about the rest.



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