

## Child Development Stages

### 1-4 Weeks:

#### **Loves looking at faces**

New babies will enjoy looking at faces and start to recognise their parents. It's essential to encourage your child's learning in these early weeks, and talking to your baby is a great way to start. Your baby should also be weighed at birth and five and ten days old.

#### **Startled by sudden noises**

If your baby hears a loud noise they may be startled. You can help your child learn by holding them close, making eye contact and talking to them. They'll look back at you and begin to understand how conversations work.

### 4-6 Weeks:

#### **Starts to smile**

Your baby will begin to smile and respond to the sounds around them. You can encourage development by making faces and noises, and talking about what's going on around you.

### 4-12 Weeks:

#### **Lifts their head**

Your baby will try to lift their head while lying on their front. They'll soon start to wriggle and kick, and it's not long before they can roll over, back to front or front to back. This means they can roll off beds or changing tables, so take care not to leave them on their own.

### 3-5 Months:

#### **Reaches out for objects**

Your baby will start to reach out for objects as their muscles develop. To grow and develop, children need time and attention from someone who's happy to play with them.

### 4-6 Months:

#### **Starts making noises**

Your baby will enjoy making new and different sounds. There are many ways to help their development, through playing, reading, music and more.

Have fun singing nursery rhymes and songs, especially those with actions, like Pat-a-cake,

Row, row, row your boat and Wind the bobbin up. If you repeat the sounds your baby makes back to them, they will learn to copy you.

### 5 Months:

#### **Can hold objects**

Your baby will lift objects up to suck them. They'll enjoy shaking things that make a noise, so rattles are great. Shake one around in front of your child so they learn how to make a noise with it.

### 6 Months:

#### **Hand to hand coordination**

Your baby will learn to pass things from one hand to the other. Find toys that they can pick up and move around, as that will help them improve their co-ordination.

Singing with your baby is ideal stimulation because it involves language and music. Music without words can be good for young minds at this time too.

#### **Starts to eat solids**

Now is a good time to introduce your baby to solid food. Weaning your baby with healthy foods such as fruit and vegetables and yoghurt may increase the chance of them being healthy in the future. You can also allow your baby to feed themselves, using their fingers, as soon as they show an interest.

### 6-8 Months

#### **Sits without support**

Your baby is getting stronger and can now sit without assistance. If your baby is not able to sit unsupported by nine months, talk to your health visitor or GP.

It's a good time to remove cot bumpers as your baby may use them to pull themselves up and could fall out of the cot.

### 6-9 Months:

#### **Teething starts**

Your baby will start to get their first milk teeth. During teething your baby may become restless, but there are ways to relieve the discomfort. Give your baby something hard to chew on, such as a teething ring, a crust of bread or breadstick, or a peeled carrot. Stay nearby in case of choking

## **Starts trying to crawl**

Your baby is learning to become more mobile. Some babies learn to crawl backwards before they crawl forwards. Some learn to walk without ever crawling. Others are bottom shufflers.

As soon as your baby can crawl, fit safety gates to stop them climbing and falling down stairs.

## **Can pull themselves upright**

Your baby can use furniture to help them stand. Before you know it your toddler will be eager to discover new things and trying to climb.

Make sure low furniture is kept away from windows and that windows are fitted with locks or safety catches to stop babies climbing out.

### **7 Months:**

Responds to your voice

Your baby can respond to very quiet noises if not distracted. The more you chatter with them, the better their vocabulary and communication skills will become.

Babies under 12 months pick up the tone and warmth of the voice and listen to the tune of your conversation.

### **9-11 Months:**

#### **Learns to drop things**

Your baby can now let go of things or hand an object to someone. Encourage this new skill by playing with them. To grow and develop children need time and attention from someone.

You can start to teach your child about shape when they're around 12 months old. Toys that require your child to put different shapes through matching holes are useful.

### **10-18 Months:**

#### **Walks alone**

Although a little unsteady, your baby will start trying to walk on their own. Teach your child how to climb stairs, but never let them go up and down on their own.

Encourage your child to walk with you (using reins for safety) as soon as he or she is able. It might slow you down, but it is a great way for you both to get some exercise.

If your child is not walking by 18 months talk to your health visitor or GP.

### 11-12 Months:

#### **Enjoys finger foods**

Your baby will love trying to feed themselves with finger foods. These are small pieces of food they can pick up and hold in their hands and it is a good way to encourage them to chew. You can try firmer finger foods such as breadsticks, cucumber, raw carrots or chunks of cheese.

### 12 Months:

#### **Responds to their own name**

Your baby can say words like mama and dada. When children start to use words they will learn meaning from you. Try repeating words to them while they play.

Using repetitive language, like saying 'Where's it gone?' each time you hide something, helps to embed words in their mind.

### 12-18 Months:

#### **Takes an interest in words**

As well as saying between six and 20 recognisable words, children will start to understand many more.

They may also start to use language in play, for example when pretending to feed a teddy or doll, or talking on a toy phone.

Talk to your child about the things they can see, and read to them regularly.

### 13-15 Months:

#### **Gains more independence**

Children will start to feed themselves with a spoon around now, although it will be messy.

Your child may be fussy about what they eat and always eat the same favourite foods, but as long as they eat some food from each of the five food groups you don't need to worry. Gradually introduce other foods or, after a while, go back to the foods your child didn't like and try them again.

### 15-18 Months:

#### **Begins to build with bricks**

Your child will gradually learn to entertain themselves for some of the time, but they have to learn from you first. Spend time playing with your child to help them learn the skills they

need.

It can be hard to find time to play with your child, especially when you've got other things to do. The answer to this can be to find ways of involving your child in what you're doing. Children learn from everything they do and everything that's going on around them

### 18 Months- 2 Years:

#### **Learns to kick or throw a ball**

As they develop new skills, encourage your child and tell them they're doing well. You'll see them respond by laughing and getting excited. If you want to encourage good behaviour it's important to be as positive as you can around them.

At this age children should be physically active for at least 180 minutes (three hours) each day.

#### **Puts at least two words together**

By the age of two a child will be able to say a range of single words and many children will be talking in short sentences. If your child is trying to say a word but gets it wrong, say the word properly. For example, if your baby points to a cat and says 'Ca!' say 'Yes, it's a cat'. Don't criticise or tell them off for getting the word wrong.

### 18 Months – 4 Years

#### **Starts to have bladder control**

Most parents start thinking about potty training around now, but there's no perfect time. Every child is different.

You can't force your child to use a potty, but you can try to work out when your child is ready.

There are several signs that your child is starting to develop bladder control. They will know when they've got a wet or dirty nappy or when they're passing urine. They may also tell you in advance if they need a wee.

### 18 Months – 5 Years:

#### **Learns to hold a crayon**

Children love scribbling and painting. At first you'll need to show your child how to hold the crayon or paintbrush.

Use crayons, felt tips or powder paint and try talking to your child as they do it.

Name colours by saying, for example, "This is red". This will help your child to understand the concept of colour.

### 3-4 Years:

#### **Starts free early-years education**

Learning how to make friends is one of the most important things your child can do. Going to nursery and spending time playing with other children is a great way to do this.

Most nursery schools accept children from the age of three.

All three to four year olds in England are entitled to at least 15 hours of free education a week for 38 weeks a year.

These free sessions are available in a variety of settings in the public and private sectors, including nursery schools and classes, day nurseries, childminder networks and playgroups.

#### **Talks well in sentences**

If your child is already talking, try to use sentences that are a word or two longer than the sentences they use.

You can also increase your child's vocabulary by giving them choices such as, 'Do you want an apple or a banana?'

If your three-year-old is hard to understand mention this to your health visitor.

### 3-5 Years:

#### **Starts to use a knife and fork**

Your child may be a slow eater so be patient. Remember to praise your child for eating, even if they only manage a little.

Try to make mealtimes enjoyable and not just about food. Sit down and have a chat about other things. If you know any other children of the same age who are good eaters, ask them to tea.

