

AGES & STAGES

0–12 months



Babies learn and grow so quickly. By the end of this year your baby will have almost tripled in size. He or she will be crawling and maybe even taking a timid first step! Try to spend lots of time holding, cuddling, and playing with your little one. You will be richly rewarded with babbles, smiles, and squeals of laughter.

BY 4 MONTHS

Growing and Moving

WEIGHT: 10-18 pounds

LENGTH: 23-27 inches

- sleeps about 6 hours before waking during the night
- sleeps 14-17 hours daily
- lifts head and chest when lying on stomach
- holds both eyes in a fixed position
- follows a moving object or person with eyes
- grasps rattle or finger
- wiggles and kicks with arms and legs
- rolls over (stomach to back)
- sits with support

Thinking, Learning, and Talking

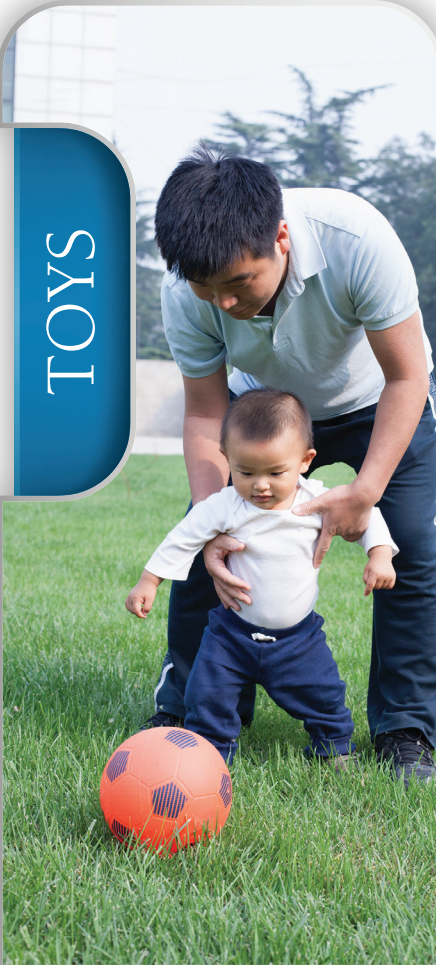
- explores and learns about objects with mouth
- plays with fingers, hands, toes
- reacts to sound of voice, rattle, bell
- turns head toward bright colors and lights
- recognizes familiar people and things at a distance
- babbles or coos
- cries (with tears) to communicate pain, fear, discomfort, or loneliness

Feeling and Relating

- loves to be touched and held close
- loves to look at faces
- returns a smile
- responds to peek-a-boo games



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Toys

- mirror (child-safe)
- pictures on wall
- measuring cups
- spoons
- soft, washable dolls or animals
- soft, squeezable ball
- musical toys and rattles
- bath toys
- stacking rings
- board or cloth picture books
- large plastic cars, trucks

BY 8 MONTHS

Growing and Moving

WEIGHT: 14-23 pounds

LENGTH: 25-30 inches

- first teeth begin to appear
- drools, mouths, and chews on objects
- reaches for cup or spoon when fed
- drinks from a cup with help
- enjoys some finely chopped, solid foods
- closes mouth firmly or turns head when no longer hungry
- may sleep 11-13 hours at night although this varies greatly
- needs 2-3 naps during the day
- develops a rhythm for feeding, eliminating, sleeping, and being awake
- true eye color is established
- rolls from back to stomach and stomach to back
- sits alone without support and holds head erect
- raises up on arms and knees into crawling position; rocks back and forth, but may not move forward
- uses finger and thumb to pick up an object
- transfers objects from one hand to the other
- hair growth begins to cover head



Thinking, Learning, and Talking

- explores objects by touching, shaking, banging, and mouthing
- learns by using senses like smell, taste, touch, sight, hearing
- focuses eyes on small objects and reaches for them
- enjoys dropping objects over edge of chair or crib
- looks for ball rolled out of sight
- searches for toys hidden under a blanket, basket, or container
- cries in different ways to say he or she is hurt, wet, hungry, or lonely
- makes noises to voice displeasure or satisfaction
- recognizes and looks for familiar voices and sounds
- imitates sounds, actions, and facial expressions made by others
- squeals, laughs, babbles, smiles in response
- babbles expressively as if talking

Feeling and Relating

- shows fear of falling off high places such as table or stairs
- spends a great deal of time watching and observing
- responds differently to strangers and family members
- shows fearfulness toward strangers; is friendly to family members
- shows distress if toy is taken away
- likes to be tickled and touched
- smiles at own reflection in mirror
- raises arms as a sign to be held
- recognizes family member names
- responds to distress of others by showing distress or crying
- shows mild to severe stress at separation from parent



Books for Children

Baby Faces
Margaret Miller

The Rock-A-Bye Collection
(audio tape and book)
J. Aaron Brown & Associates, Inc.

*Brown Bear, Brown Bear,
What Do You See?*
Bill Martin Jr. and Eric Carle

Colors
Marie Vendittelli

Moo Baa La La La
Sandra Boynton

Ten Tiny Toes
Caroline Jayne Church

Touch and Feel Farm
DK Books

*Where is Baby's Belly Button,
(lift the flap)*
Karen Katz

You are My Sunshine
Jimmie Davis and Caroline Jayne Church

BY 12 MONTHS

Growing and Moving

WEIGHT: 17-27 pounds

LENGTH: 27-32 inches

- sleeps 11-13 hours at night; but may still wake up during the night
- takes naps—some babies will stop taking a morning nap, others will continue both morning and afternoon naps
- begins to refuse bottle or wean self from breast during day
- needs at least 3 meals a day with 2 snacks in-between
- enjoys drinking from a cup
- begins to eat finger foods
- continues to explore everything by mouth
- enjoys opening and closing cabinet doors
- crawls well
- pulls self to a standing position
- stands alone holding onto furniture for support
- walks holding onto furniture or with adult help
- "dances" or bounces to music



Thinking, Learning, and Talking

- responds to name
- says first word
- says da-da and ma-ma or equivalent
- interested in picture books
- pays attention to conversations
- claps hands, waves bye, if prompted
- likes to place objects inside one another

Feeling and Relating

- copies adult actions such as drinking from a cup, talking on phone
- likes to watch self in mirror
- expresses fear or anxiety toward strangers
- wants caregiver or parent to be in constant sight
- offers toys or objects to others, but expects them to be returned
- may become attached to a favorite toy or blanket
- pushes away something he or she does not want



IDEAS FOR GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

- **Baby proof everything!** Store toxic substances such as dishwasher detergent, make-up, paint, or medicine up high. Put safety latches on cabinets, and covers on electrical outlets. Lower crib mattresses so an older infant can't fall over the rail. Cover sharp corners of tables or shelves that your infant might bump into.
- **Help babies develop a sense of movement and balance.** Hold baby close as you rock, dance, sway or move.
- **Give your baby the freedom to move around.** Young infants enjoy being on their back so they can kick, wiggle, and look around. Supervised tummy time is needed to strengthen neck, arm, and shoulder muscles. Older infants need space and time to practice crawling, creeping, pulling up, and walking. Spending too much time in a walker, play pen, or infant swing may inhibit the development of these important skills.
- **Provide interesting objects for baby to mouth and explore.** Square scarves, plastic measuring cups, large wooden spoons, and colorful washcloths are favorite household toys.
- **Keep easy-to-swallow objects out of infant's reach.** Baby should not be allowed to play with anything smaller than a half dollar (about 1 1/4 inch).
- **If baby is bottle fed, be sure to hold him or her while feeding.** Even if your baby holds the bottle, being held and cuddled helps develop a strong nurturing parent-child relationship. Do not prop an infant drinking from a bottle as it may cause choking.
- **Respect your baby's natural schedule.** Most babies will settle into a regular routine for eating, sleeping, and soiling their diapers, but the schedule will vary depending on the baby. Some babies need to eat more frequently than others. Some will sleep through the night early on, others will continue to wake briefly well into their second year.
- **Talk to your baby.** Talk about what you are doing, familiar objects, sounds or smells. You may even want to babble back or echo sounds your baby makes much as you would in a regular conversation. Even though your infant cannot understand everything you say, he or she will be learning many words that will form the basis for language later on.
- **Read to your baby.** Babies enjoy cuddling on your lap, looking at colorful picture books, and hearing the rhythm of your voice. With time they begin to understand that words have meaning and can be used to identify objects.
- **Encourage older infants to feed themselves.** Begin by offering pieces of banana and soft bread. Give your baby a spoon with some mashed potatoes or other sticky food and let him or her practice eating with a spoon. Yes, it will be messy! Be patient. Learning this skill takes lots of practice!
- **Play peek-a-boo.** Hide your face behind a blanket, then peek out at your baby. Older babies will learn to do this themselves and will enjoy this game for a long time.
- **Help babies be "people watchers."** Place babies in new places and positions so they can see you and others from different angles.
- **Help your baby develop a sense of trust and security by responding to baby's cries.** Feeling secure encourages your baby to try new things. Be consistent so your baby knows what to expect.
- **Stay with your baby when someone new is around.** Encourage strangers to approach slowly. Introduce your infant, and let him or her explore someone new in the safety of your presence.



A Word on Development

Every child is unique. Each child's learning and growth rates may differ slightly from other children the same age. If, however, you notice a child is unable to do many of the skills listed for his or her age group, you may wish to talk with a health professional. In Iowa, you may request a free evaluation and assessment from **Early ACCESS** at 1-888-425-4371.

www.iafamilysupportnetwork.org/early-access-iowa

If your child has special needs, early help can make a difference.

Resources

Iowa State University Extension and Outreach

- Human Sciences www.extension.iastate.edu/humanosciences
- Extension Store store.extension.iastate.edu
Search "Ages and Stages" for information about specific development milestones.

The developmental information provided in this bulletin has been combined from a variety of professional resources to help you understand your child's overall growth. It is not a standardized measurement tool.

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Ages & Stages 0-12 months is available online at: store.extension.iastate.edu/Product/5020.

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