

Guidelines for Development: Birth to Two Years



Birth – 3 Months

Babies like to:

- lift head when held at shoulder
- raise head slightly when on tummy
- briefly look at people
- begin to make eye contact
- coo and vocalize when you talk to them
- make vowel sound e.g. "ah" and "eh"
- smile when you smile and talk to them
- hold a rattle briefly
- hold a rattle and look at it
- look at toys and follow their movement

Activities and/or Toys

- place baby on floor and tummy with bright toy to see
- look in mirror with baby, smile and talk
- copy baby's sounds
- use light rattles and links
- mobile over crib
- face to face play



3 – 6 Months

Babies like to:

- lay on tummy, chest up and weight on forearms
- turn back to side, eventually roll from back to tummy and vice versa
- sit propped on hands, head steady
- kick with legs
- bring hands together and watch finger plays
- reach for, grasp and shake toys
- put hands and toys to mouth
- transfer toy from one hand to other
- smile and laugh; squeal at games with parents
- look around at people, look at pictures of baby faces and things in environment
- play with dangling toys
- copy adult sounds, especially vowel/consonant
- babble to self

Activities and/or Toys

- play on floor on tummy and back
- sit with baby on lap or on floor with support
- books with "real-life" baby faces
- ring type rattle e.g. "keys"
- mirror
- play peek-a-boo, pat-a-cake, etc.
- play gym with toys to hit, grasp, squeeze
- squeaky toys with different textures
- nursery rhymes and songs

6 – 9 Months

Babies like to:

- sit to play, eventually with hands free for toys
- pivot on tummy
- crawl on tummy or "all fours"
- stand at furniture
- hold a toy in each hand, bang together
- bang toys on surface
- explore and examine toys with mouth and hands
- drop toys and look to see where they go
- be near caregiver, may "make strange" with others
- babble and copy sounds, use two syllable sounds e.g. ba-ba, da-da
- copy your actions
- play with simple cause/effect toys

Activities and/or Toys

- squeaky toys
- balls of different sizes
- blocks
- pop-up toy
- books with stiff pages (real-life pictures of faces/objects)
- drum or xylophone to bang
- mirror
- play peek-a-boo, pat-a-cake



9 – 12 Months

Babies like to:

- move in and out of sitting position
- crawl around and explore the environment
- pull self to stand at furniture
- stand at and walk along furniture
- walk with hands held
- stand alone; may try few steps alone
- pick up small things with refined grasp; probe with index finger
- finger feed soft foods and sip from an open cup
- give hugs; may give or blow a kiss
- turn when name is called
- wave bye-bye
- copy silly faces and sounds e.g. phony cough, raspberries, lip smacks
- look at pictures in book
- copy actions of others
- clap hands
- practice small vocabulary e.g. da-da, ma-ma, bye-bye
- try new sounds and "jabber" to self and toys
- see how things work
- discover results of their actions
- find hidden toy

Activities and/or Toys

- push toy to walk behind
- finger foods e.g. cheerios, soft fruit, teething biscuits
- action songs
- car to push
- pots and pans to bang
- balls
- blocks
- picture books
- cause/effect toys
- talk about activities and label toys and household objects
- containers and toys to put in and take out

Guidelines for Development: Birth to Two Years



12 – 15 Months

Toddlers like to:

- crawl and climb
- walk with assistance and alone
- play ball
- actively explore environment
- show interest in how things work and fit together
- mark with a crayon
- empty and fill
- imitate simple actions
- find hidden toy
- show interest in primary caregiver
- feed self independently with fingers and spoon
- begin to help with dressing by pushing arm or leg out
- understand simple language
- say 4-5 words

Activities and/or Toys

- push/pull toys
- chasing/hiding games
- balls of different sizes and shapes
- blocks
- stacking/nesting toys
- rings on a post
- cause/effect toys (e.g. "pop-up")
- peg type toys
- bath toys
- large crayons
- books with stiff pages
- games and songs with simple actions
- water play



15 – 18 Months

Toddlers like to:

- explore, get into everything
- put objects into containers and take them out, put lids on
- imitate adult actions
- rough house play
- use single words to make their wants known
- point
- follow simple directions
- identify a few body parts
- use several gestures (e.g. give 5, blow kiss)
- move to music
- walk carrying, pulling, and dragging things
- climb stairs
- oppose you with "NO"
- get what they want now!

Activities and/or Toys

- sand and water play
- crayons
- shape sorters, nesting boxes
- containers and lids
- opportunities to "help" you with housework
- toy telephone
- time with you on the floor—chasing games
- your conversation—simple sentences
- cardboard picture books
- dolls
- balls
- megablocks
- your singing, children's music
- stairs with rails
- large soft toys
- push/pull toys
- your patience
- your watchfulness



18 – 21 Months

Toddlers like to:

- run and climb
- push and pull large objects
- be more independent—say "NO"; want to do things for themselves
- begin to play alone for short periods
- imitate household activities
- babble with sentence-like intonation; imitate words; point to familiar objects or pictures
- put lids on boxes
- pour water from one cup to another
- draw lines with crayon

Activities and/or Toys

- ride-on toys
- large ball to kick
- containers with lids to screw on and off; knobs to turn
- simple inset puzzles with knobs or shape sorting box
- dolls to dress/undress and to engage in "pretend" play
- trucks and cars to push by hand
- outdoor toys—e.g. sandbox, wading pool
- child-size props—e.g. broom, doll carriage, shopping cart, plastic dish set
- crayons and paper
- board books with simple pictures and stories
- mega blocks



21 – 24 Months

Toddlers like to:

- push/pull and ride on large wheeled toys
- run and climb everything
- enjoy junior sized slides, swings, etc.
- toss balls
- dance, bounce, jump
- play contentedly alone near adults, start parallel play at around 24 months, enjoy other children
- dig, fill and dump containers with sand
- play in water
- build and knock down block structures
- use play-doh, finger paint and glue, etc.
- take things apart and put them back together
- open screw type toy and reassemble
- play with action toys
- imitate household tasks, parents' behaviors and words
- pretend play (e.g. wrap teddy bear in blanket and tuck into bed)
- label body parts and familiar pictures
- mark on paper—circles and lines
- mine stage—everything is "mine"
- understand well
- listen to stories, rhymes, songs
- vocabulary increasing rapidly
- make wants known

Activities and/or Toys

- small wagons, doll carriages, ride-on toys
- swings, slides, rocking horse, rocking chair
- big boxes to crawl through
- large wooden beads to string
- small children's chair/table
- surprise box—anticipation of what's in box
- books, puzzles, crayons and paper
- balls of all shapes and sizes
- toy cars, trucks
- pots and pans, empty boxes, containers
- water play, pails and buckets to fill and empty
- craft materials—play-doh, glue, paint
- dress up clothes
- pretend play props e.g. broom, shovel, purse, dolls to dress/undress, pretend food
- toys to manipulate with fingers; fit together



Durham Health Connection Line
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If you require this information in an accessible format, contact 1-800-841-2729.

