

Fine Motor Development 0-6 Months

Fine Motor Milestones

0-3 months

- Grasping your fingers when placed in their palm
- Grabbing or pulling at clothes
- Briefly holding onto something placed in the hand

3-6 months

- Holding toys with a firm grasp
- Using a raking motion to pick up smaller objects
- Picking up a toy with one hand
- Bringing toys to the mouth
- Holding toys up in the air

What is important during this age?

Fine motor development in the first few months begins with your baby grasping objects placed in their palm and continues to them being able to pick up small toys and eventually food.

What can you do to support fine motor development?

Offering your baby toys during play will help promote interest in eventually grasping these objects. Around 5-6 months, babies will hold onto toys for about 1 minute, often bringing them to their mouths for more exploration and learning. Playtime and feeding is a great time to help babies practice using their hands and fingers.

Safety Tip

Babies naturally bring objects to their mouths to explore taste and texture. As fine motor skills strengthen, your baby will begin to be able to pick up smaller objects and bring them to their mouth. It is important to keep any small objects off of the floor and be sure any solid foods offered to older babies are soft and cut in small pieces to avoid choking.

Gross Motor Development

0-6 Months

Milestones:

0-3 Months

- Lifting head and chest when on stomach
- Pushing down on legs when held up on a solid surface
- Reaches for dangling objects
- Kicks legs when laying on back and stomach
- Bringing hands to mouth

3-6 Months

- Pushing chest up from floor
- Holding head up and looking side to side during tummy time
- Increasing head control and smoother movement in limbs
- Holding on to toys
- Reaching out for toys while supported in sitting
- Rolling from back to tummy
- Beginning to use arms to support body while sitting

What is important during this age?

Gross motor development in the first few months relates to how your baby begins to strengthen and use the larger muscles in their body to be able to support their heads, reach for toys, roll over, and begin to use muscles needed to sit.

What can you do to support motor

development? Tummy time is a great way to help your baby develop muscle strength needed to meet milestones. Encourage your baby to lift their head by speaking to them, using toys, and helping to keep their arms in a supportive position. As your baby gets stronger, you can encourage reaching and rolling.

Helpful Tip

Try tummy time when your baby is alert and happy. Place baby on a firm surface, a blanket spread on the floor is great! At first, your baby may only tolerate a few minutes at a time and that is okay, frequent sessions can help increase strength. Having trouble remembering tummy time? Try doing a few minutes after each diaper change; this will help to create a routine.

Social & Emotional Development

0-6 Months

Milestones

0-3 Months

- Watches and then imitates simple expressions
- Prefers to be near others

3-6 Months

- Social Smiling
- Begins Laughing
- More responsive with movements and facial expressions
- Watches other people including siblings

What is important during this age?

Infants are building attachment with caregivers through everyday interactions including communication, care, and nurturing. When you respond to your baby's needs, they are building a secure attachment which becomes a great base for healthy social and emotional development. Every interaction through both care and play helps support this development.

What can you do to support Social and Emotional development?

Talk, read, and sing to your baby every day. Smile at your baby and watch for their response. Play simple games like peek a boo, get down on the floor to talk with them and show them toys during tummy time. Talk to your baby while you are doing household chores or grocery shopping.

Self-Help Skills

0-6 Months

Milestones

- Increasing head control
- Showing interest in foods and eating
- Opening mouth for a spoon
- Developing control of tongue and swallow
- Doubling of birth weight (around 4 months of age)
- The first tooth usually erupts about 6 months, use a baby toothbrush to clean teeth twice a day and don't put baby to bed with a bottle in order to prevent decay.

What is important during this age?

Around 6 months, your baby will likely show signs of readiness for introduction of their first solid foods such as an infant cereal prepared with breast milk, formula, or water.

What can you do?

Watch for solid-food readiness signs from your baby. They should have established good head control while they are sitting in a high chair or infant seat. They may watch you closely while you are eating, reach out for your food, and open their mouth if you bring a spoon to their mouth. It's normal for a baby to spit, drool, and dribble while first starting solid foods. Thin consistencies and small amounts can help your baby practice moving food to the back of the mouth to swallow. You may try starting with a short feeding of breast milk or formula, a teaspoon amount of food given in half spoonful amounts at a time, and finishing with formula or breastmilk. Gradually thickening mixtures and increasing amounts can be used as they improve this skill.

Speech and Language Development

0-6 Months

Language Milestones

0-3 Months

- Watches a speaker's mouth
- Turns in response to speaking
- Responds to caregiver's voice
- Cries, gurgles and coos

3-6 Months

- Smiles at others
- Laughs
- Babbles
- Makes noises for attention
- Shows happiness and sadness with vocalizations

What is important during this age?

Your baby is learning language through all of your daily interactions. You will notice that they respond to familiar voices and may be interested in new voices. By six months they will smile, laugh, make gurgling noises, and babble sounds such as mama and dada.

What can you do to support language development?

Talk to your baby throughout the day. Communicate as often as possible during play, while completing housework, and running errands. Reading is an excellent way of introducing new words. Talking, singing, rhyming, and reading every day are excellent ways of promoting language development.