9 to 12 Months

Your Baby's Development

Babies are becoming good communicators as they get closer to turning 1 year old. This makes it a delightful time for parents. Babies can use their actions and sounds to let loved ones know what they want, like handing a book to a parent so that she'll read it aloud. ***How does your baby "tell" you what he wants?***

What Your Baby Can Do	What You Can Do
I can understand more words than I can say. • I am starting to understand what you say to me. I can even follow simple directions like *Go get the ball.* • I tell you what I want with my sounds and body movements. I may say a word or two, like *mama*.	**Tell your baby what is happening and what you will do next:** *After your milk, it is time for a nap.* This helps her learn language. Routines also let her know what to expect. **Put your baby's sounds and actions into words.** *You are pushing your food away. I think you are telling me you are all done.* **Name things your baby looks at or points to:** *That's the moon. The moon comes out at night.*
I can creep and crawl. • I have found my own way of crawling—on my hands or knees, on my stomach, "crab crawling" by moving backwards and sideways, or even scooting on my bottom! • I walk while holding on to furniture or your hand. I may even start walking on my own.	**Give your baby lots of time and a safe place to practice new skills** like crawling and walking. **Make a "trail of toys" in a child-safe place in your house.** Line up several interesting objects (a wooden spoon, a plastic bowl, a brightly colored dishcloth) that your child can crawl to and explore.
I know that things still exist even though I can't see them—especially you! • I may cry when you leave because I know you are still out there somewhere and I want you to come back!	**Play hide-and-seek games.** This helps your baby learn that things that disappear also reappear. **Be sure to say good-bye to your baby.** Never sneak out. This builds his trust in you and helps him learn to deal with difficult feelings.
I love to do things over and over again. • This is how I practice and figure out how things work. • Repetition also helps build my memory.	**Help your child take the next step in her play.** If she is banging two blocks together, see if she'd like to try stacking them. **Offer your child a ball to toss, a rattle to shake, or a scarf to swing.** These activities help children learn how things work. They also build the muscles in their hands that will help them learn to write.

ZERO TO THREE
National Center for Infants, Toddlers, and Families

As you use this resource, remember that your child may develop skills faster or slower than indicated here and still be growing just fine. Talk with your child's health care provider or other trusted professional if you have questions.

Your family's cultural beliefs and values are also important factors that shape your child's development.

For more information on parenting and child development, go to: **www.zerotothree.org**.

Spotlight on How Babies Connect Their Thoughts and Actions

What's on Your Mind

Yesterday my 1-year-old picked up my cell phone and babbled into it. How did she learn that?

Between 9 and 12 months, your baby is developing a better memory. She can now imitate something she has seen others do—like chat on the phone. Your baby is also learning how objects are supposed to be used. From watching you, she knows a phone is for talking. One way you help your child figure out how the world works is by letting her play with safe objects—like a hairbrush or sponge—and talk about how they look and feel and what they do.

Between 9 and 12 months, babies take action with a goal in mind. For example, your child may crawl off as fast as he can when he sees you holding a clean diaper. He doesn't want a diaper change so he crawls away to avoid it! It's important to understand that babies don't do this to make us angry. They simply want to make their needs and feelings known. These purposeful actions also show that babies have developed a better memory. They remember that they don't like lying still or feeling those cold, wet wipes!

What You Can Do

To support your baby's growing thinking skills, you can:

Show your child how *cause-and-effect* works, like letting her press the doorbell or turn on the light switch.

Follow your baby's lead. Notice what your child is interested in and let him (safely) explore an object in his own way.

Encourage your baby to use all her senses to learn. Let her touch an ice cube. Notice when it melts. Crinkle leaves in your hands and see what happens. Let her shake a plastic container of dry rice and one full of dry beans. How do they sound different?

Child-proof yet again! Now that babies have a goal in mind, like touching the television remote, they are harder to distract. Make your home child-safe so you spend more time playing, and less time saying *No*.

Did You Know…

The more parents respond to their 1-year-olds during playtime—showing their own enjoyment and excitement in their child's play and noticing what their child is interested in—the better their child's language skills are at age 3.[1]

What It Means for You:

When you and your child take turns talking and listening, your child is learning to tell the difference between sounds. Later, he will put these sounds together into words. To build your 1-year-old's early language skills during playtime, talk with him about what the two of you are doing together.

Follow your child's lead about what interests him. When a child is engaged and having fun playing, he is learning. Offer new challenges as your child masters new skills—like suggesting he try to stack more blocks on top of his three-block tower.

What captures your child's attention?

ZERO TO THREE
National Center for Infants, Toddlers, and Families

Authors: Rebecca Parlakian and Claire Lerner, LCSW, ZERO TO THREE
www.zerotothree.org

Endorsed by:
American Academy of Pediatrics
DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN™

This handout was made possible by a generous grant from
MetLife Foundation

Copyright 2008 ZERO TO THREE
All rights reserved.
Printed in the United States of America.
ISBN 978-1-934019-28-3

1- Silven, N., Niemi, P., Voeten, M. 2002.

Photo credit:
Eyewire/Parenting Today/Getty Images