

# Developmental Skills for Ages 3–6 Months

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Following are developmental skills typically seen in infants 3–6 months of age.

## Sensory Development

- The baby uses her hands and mouth for sensory exploration of objects.
- The baby enjoys movement and touch, and uses various actions in play.
- The baby searches with her eyes for sound and scans objects briefly.
- The baby finds tactile input by searching for objects touching her body.

- The baby begins to reach for fallen objects.
- The baby grasps a small object using her palm and fingers, but not her thumb.
- By 6 months, the baby holds a tiny object with her palm, fingers, and thumb.
- The baby brings her hands to midline (i.e., places both hands on her bottle during feeding).
- At about 6 months old, the baby no longer stares at her hands.

## Gross Motor Development

- While lying on his stomach, the baby can straighten his arms and bears weight on his hands.
- The baby's head is in a more midline position than when younger.
- While lying on his back, the baby brings his feet to his mouth.
- When on his back, the baby raises his hips by pushing down on the floor with his feet.
- The baby rolls by himself.
- The baby holds his head steady while in supported sitting.
- The baby begins sitting independently.

## Language/Social Development

- The baby recalls familiar persons and routines.
- The baby watches for the reappearance of disappearing objects.
- The baby awakens to his parents' or steady caregiver's voice.
- The baby begins to discriminate strangers from familiar people.
- The baby becomes aware of strange situations or different environments.
- The baby vocalizes pleasure and displeasure.
- The baby smiles and looks at you when you speak to him.
- The baby laughs when his head is covered and uncovered with a cloth, such as during a game of peek-a-boo.
- The baby swallows pureed or strained foods and starts to move food in his mouth with his tongue.
- The baby responds to music by cooing.

## Fine Motor Development

- While in supported sitting, the baby begins to follow moving objects using her eyes without moving her head.
- The baby looks at objects a few feet away.
- The baby holds her hands together.
- The baby reaches for a toy using both her arms and holds it briefly.

## Activities for Ages 3–6 Months

Following are activities you can perform to encourage development in infants 3–6 months of age.

### *Sensory Development*

- Choose a time when your baby is in a quiet but alert state. Put on a soothing audiotape. Massage lukewarm lotion into your baby's back and body.
- Provide aromatherapy, using various scents. Place your baby in a reclining-to-upright supported position. Wave scents (i.e., flowers, fruit, food) across the baby's nose at least ½ inch away. Watch for and comment on her response.
- Rock your baby as you sit in a rocking chair. Play or sing lullaby music.
- While your baby is quiet, place her on her stomach across your lap. Turn her head sideways. Brush her hair with an infant brush, going forward, backward, upward, and downward for at least 5 minutes.
- Place your baby in supported sitting or reclining position. Hand her different textured toys (i.e., stuffed animals, balls, rattles). Encourage her to explore the toys with her hands.
- Secure your baby in a carrier or crib. Place a musical mobile above her to keep her entertained.
- Take your baby for a ride in the stroller around the neighborhood.

### *Gross Motor Development*

- Sit on the floor with your baby in front of you, lying on his back. Place a folded towel or small pillow under his head. Encourage him to lift his legs and feet in the air. Rub his feet with your face or kiss them. Put a toy around his foot or leg to encourage him to reach and touch them.
- Stimulate rolling by bending your baby's hips and knees as he lies on his back. Slowly move the knees to one side, then back to the middle. Repeat on the other side.
- Play with your baby on the floor. Dangle a toy in front of him while he lies on his stomach. Try to get him to push up on extended arms as he bears weight on the palms of his hands.

- Sit on the floor with your legs straight and your back supported on a couch or wall. Place your the baby on his stomach across your legs. Bring his arms forward and put his hands on the floor. Secure the baby by placing your hand on his buttocks. Encourage him to lift his head and push down on the floor with his hands.

### *Fine Motor Development*

- Lay your baby in a safe area on her back or in a reclining position. Dangle a blinking or colorful toy in front of her. Have her reach, touch, and grab the toy using both hands. Move the toy to one side to encourage her to reach with one hand, then repeat on the other side.
- Place your baby in a carrier facing you. Give her a rattle to hold. Take another rattle and shake it. Encourage the baby to shake her rattle.
- Place your baby in a secured reclining or seated position. Sit or stand a few feet away. Show her bright and colorful small objects. Move the objects in horizontal, vertical, and circular motions.
- Hold your baby on your lap, facing a table. Put tiny bits of a cracker on the table. Encourage her to pick up the cracker bits with her fingers and thumb. Take turns picking up bits and eating them.

### *Language/Social Development*

- Hold your baby in your arms as you feed him his bottle. Place both of his hands on the bottle, as you tell him, "Hold your bottle." Help him keep his hands on the bottle briefly. Repeat several times during feeding.
- Talk to your baby about what you are doing when you are bathing, grooming, and dressing him. Name his body parts and the objects that you are using.
- Play peek-a-boo with your baby, first by covering and uncovering your face, then the baby's face.
- Encourage your baby's babbling by repeating what he says and then adding more syllables to the babbling. For example, if your baby says, "Ba," you say, "Ba," then "Ba Ba."