

# Developmental Skills for Ages 9–12 Months

Belinda Anderson, M.Ed., M.S., OTR/L

Following are developmental skills typically seen in infants 9–12 months of age.

## ***Sensory Development***

- The baby drools less, except when her teeth are coming in.
- The baby eats a variety of textured and flavored foods using her fingers.
- The baby tolerates clothing and helps with dressing and undressing.
- The baby enjoys moving her body to different rhythms.

## ***Gross Motor Development***

- The baby likes to be in an upright position.
- The baby stands alone for 1–3 seconds with his feet spread wide apart and his arms up in the air.
- The baby crawls independently.
- The baby begins to kneel.
- The baby walks with both hands held and starts walking alone briefly.
- The baby walks sideways while holding onto furniture.

## ***Fine Motor Development***

- The baby attempts to imitate new gestures.
- The baby pokes and points at things, using her index fingers.
- The baby grips objects using the tip of her finger and her thumb.
- By 12 months, the baby grabs crayons in her fist, not fingers, and may scribble.
- The baby releases items voluntarily and places objects into a container.
- The baby uses both hands and begins to show preference for one.

## ***Language/Social Development***

- The baby engages in symbolic play (i.e., wraps a doll in a blanket, feeds a doll).
- The baby throws objects and watches what happens to them.
- The baby likes looking at pictures in books.
- The baby reacts to “no” or “no-no.”
- The baby listens to familiar words and responds to simple one-step commands.
- The baby begins to use “Da-da” or “Ma-ma” meaningfully.
- The baby babbles when spoken to and can say 2–5 words.
- The baby babbles when playing alone.
- The baby extends toys to people but will not release them.
- The baby feeds himself finger foods, holds a spoon, and holds a cup to drink.
- The baby repeats gestures or sounds in reaction to laughter.

## Activities for Ages 9–12 Months

Following are activities you can perform to encourage development in infants 9–12 months of age.

### *Sensory Development*

- Chill a teething ring in the refrigerator. Do not freeze it. Place the teething ring in your child's mouth and rub it on her gums. Let her chew on it to alleviate teething pain.
- Hold your child around her chest. Bring her close to your chest. Extend your arms and lift her in the air. Bring her close to your chest again. Repeat.
- Give your child a variety of food textures. Make sure that the pieces are large enough to prevent choking (e.g., teething cookies, teething pretzel rods, oatmeal).

### *Gross Motor Development*

- Have “floor time” with your child. Clear the area of any tiny items, and electrical and telephone cords. Make sure there is nothing he can pull or push down. Place 2–3 toys in different areas of the floor. Allow your child time to move toward the toys and play with them.
- Sit on the floor with your child standing between your legs. Support him at the hips. Put a favorite toy on the floor. Have him bend his knees to squat and pick up the toy. Let him play with it.
- Sit face-to-face with your child, at least 1 foot apart. Have him copy gross hand and arm movements. Raise both hands in the air, raise one hand in the air, wave your hand(s), touch the top of your head, touch your mouth, clap your hands, cover your eyes, cover your ears, or put your hands on your stomach.
- Play with your child on the floor. Hand a tennis or playground ball to him, then tell him to give you the ball. Encourage him to throw or roll the ball to you.
- To encourage your child to walk, place his feet on top of yours and hold his hands. Slowly step forward, moving your child's legs as you move yours.

### *Fine Motor Development*

- Have your child pretend to wipe a table, put a blanket on a doll, put on a big hat, or unwrap a present. Encourage her to use both hands.

- Seat your child in a high chair. Put four or five cubes on a hard surface. Show her how to pick up a cube in one hand and another cube in the other hand. Bang the cubes together. Encourage her to copy your actions.
- Seat your child in a high chair. Place up to nine blocks and a plastic mug on the tray. Put the blocks into the mug, one at a time, then empty the cup. Help your child put the blocks back into the cup.
- Have the child sit on the floor or stand in front of a low table. Place a ringstand in front of her. Show her how to take rings off the stand. Let her practice.
- Hold your child in your lap, sitting facing a table. Put a piece of paper and a large crayon in front of her. Show her how to make strokes on the paper. Have her pick up a crayon to make marks on the paper.

### *Language/Social Development*

- Play house with a doll. Have your child brush the doll's hair, feed the doll, or bathe it.
- Have your child start drinking from a sipper cup (a cup with a spouted lid) rather than from a bottle.
- Place a drop cloth under your child's high chair. Let him practice using a spoon to eat his food.
- Allow your child to get off your lap in a familiar and safe environment. Let him explore his surroundings and come back to you as needed. He may turn to see if you are still there.
- Give your child opportunities to talk when spoken to. Encourage him to talk more by asking him to identify objects to which you point.