What's Up? Your Baby's Development

HealthySteps®
PEDIATRIC CARE • SUPPORTING • PARENTING
A Program of ZERO TO THREE

4-Month Visit

This time is all about parents and babies connecting more.

4–6 MONTHS: What's Happening?

What Your Baby Can Do

I am learning to control my body.

- I push myself up to see the world around me. I roll to try to get closer to you or to an interesting toy or object.

- I can sit with help and hold my head steady.

- I may start to rock back and forth on my hands and knees to get ready to crawl.

I use my hands and fingers to explore.

- I reach for and grasp objects and toys. I explore them with my fingers, hands, and mouth to figure out what they can do.

What You Can Do

Place your baby in different positions to help them develop new skills such as rolling, creeping, and crawling.

- Make sure they get time on both their back and stomach and help them sit with support.

- This allows them to explore environments and objects in new ways.

- Always put them to sleep on their back.

Offer your baby toys to explore. Pick ones that have different shapes, sizes, textures, and sounds. Show them ways to use these objects by shaking, banging, pushing, and dropping.

Watch and respond to your baby's signals. "You are smiling. I think you like looking in the mirror. Do you want to look at yourself again?"

As you use the HealthySteps handouts, remember that your child may develop skills faster or slower than noted and still be growing just fine. Every child develops at their own pace. Your HealthySteps Specialist will be available to answer any questions. Your family's cultural beliefs and values are also important factors that shape your child's development.

What's Happening?

What Your Baby Can Do

I communicate by using sounds, actions, and facial expressions.

- When you shake my rattle, I may smile and move my arms and legs to let you know I want to keep playing.

- I make some different sounds in response to your sounds. I babble, coo, and gurgle.

I am getting used to the world around me.

- I may be starting to develop a more regular eating and sleeping schedule.

- I am starting to notice daily routines. When you turn the lights down, I am learning it is time for sleep.

What You Can Do

Have back-and-forth "conversations" with your baby. When you reply to their babbles, they know you care about what they are saying. This helps them learn to talk.

Create routines for your baby.

- Help your baby know it's time for sleep by doing the same things in the same order. For example, you can do bath, feeding, and then a lullaby.

- Make up a song and sing it as you are getting ready to feed your baby. Each time they hear it they'll know milk is coming. This may calm them and help them learn to wait.

Other Things to Know and Try

Responding to your baby's cries is not spoiling. When caregivers respond to their babies' signals they help their children gain stronger thinking and social-emotional skills.[1] These three steps help you understand what your baby is saying.

- ❑ **Watch and listen.** Look for patterns in their cries, sounds, facial expressions, and body movements. For example, does your baby suck their fingers when they are hungry?

- ❑ **Understand.** Use your baby's signals to figure out what they need or want. For example, your baby may pull on their ear lobes when sleepy.

- ❑ **Respond.** Use your baby's cues to help you choose how to respond. You might take a break from playing when they arch their back and look away because you know that means they are overwhelmed.

At this visit the pediatric team will measure your baby's length, weight, and head. They will listen to your baby's heart and look at their eyes, ears, nose, and mouth. Your baby will get any needed vaccines. We will talk about your baby's development and routines such as sleeping and eating. We will also review safety tips. And, of course, we will make time to discuss any questions or concerns you might have!

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1. Hart, B. & Risley, T. (1995). *Meaningful differences in the everyday experience of young American children*. Baltimore, MD: Brookes.