

The Growing Years

Healthy Start . . . where good results begin

Months 5 and 6

Your Baby Wants You to Know

How I Grow:

- I rock, roll and twist my body.
- I kick my feet and suck my toes.
- I stand up (if you hold me under my arms), jump up and down, and stamp my feet.
- I have pretty good aim when I grab something.
- I can roll over.
- I turn and twist in all directions
- I sometimes sit up for several minutes.
- I creep backwards and forwards with my stomach on the floor.
- I hold onto an object with my hand and then put it in the other hand.
- I hold one building block, reach for a second one and look for a third one right away.
- I grab for an object when it drops.

How I Talk:

- I watch your mouth and try to imitate you when you talk to me.
- I make sounds like "ee," "ah," "th," "dada." "bye-bye," "v," "sh," "s," and "mama."
- I babble to myself, to my toys and to people. I get attention that way.
- I may begin to understand some words by the tone of your voice.

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How Baby Is Changing

Baby has lots of energy! She seems to be moving all day long when she isn't asleep. Many 5-month olds can move around by rolling or wriggling. You'll need extra patience to keep up with her.

She knows her mom and dad from strangers and may cry when one of you leaves. Don't sneak out! Tell her you'll be back.

Soon she will show signs of being afraid of people she doesn't know well. Let her get used to new people slowly.



Baby may like toys that make noises now. Ring a bell or squeeze a squeaky toy and watch her try to find out where the sound came from. Then let her try to find it herself. Say different sounds. Does she copy you?

Baby has discovered her feet and may love to suck on her toes. She's getting stronger and may start to push up on hands and knees. For safety, remove toys that are strung across her crib; like crib gyms.

From this age on, your baby will be very interested in toys that she can touch, look at, chew, suck and bang together.

Teething often happens during the sixth month. Baby may drool more than usual and be uncomfortable and fussy. Cold teething rings and teething biscuits can soothe sore gums.

Baby may be able to roll from stomach to back and then over to his stomach again, with a rest in between. Some babies can get across a room this way.

Her legs are getting stronger, and she probably loves to stand up with you holding her under his arms. She may even bounce up and down. These exercises help his legs get ready for crawling and walking.

Some babies will begin learning to sit up. Be sure she has soft surfaces to fall on. Keep an eye on her. She may get stuck in an uncomfortable position.



What Is Your Baby Like?

Now that you've had a few months to get to know your baby, you're probably noticing that he has a personality all his own. The part of personality he was born with is called temperament. Research on temperament shows that babies may differ in these ways:

Rhythmicity/Routines: Some babies eat, sleep, even go to the bathroom at around the same time each day. Others never do things at the same time from one day to the next.

Approach/Withdrawal: Does baby shy away from new things, or does he like them?

Adaptability: Some babies won't take their formula if it isn't just the right temperature, and can only sleep in their own cribs. Others seem to do fine wherever they are.

Intensity of Reaction: Some babies whimper quietly if they're cold or hungry. Others howl as soon as they're unhappy.

Threshold of Responsiveness: Some babies notice the tiniest change in their surroundings. Others can sleep through thunderstorms.

All these together make up your baby's temperament.

Some combinations are easier to live with than others.

"Easy babies" are somewhat active, have regular body functions, adapt easily to change and are usually happy.

"Slow to warm-up babies" have variable body functions, withdraw from new situations, adapt slowly to change.

"Spirited babies" tend to have irregular body functions, withdraw from new situations, adapt slowly to change and react very strongly. If your baby is spirited, remember these three things.

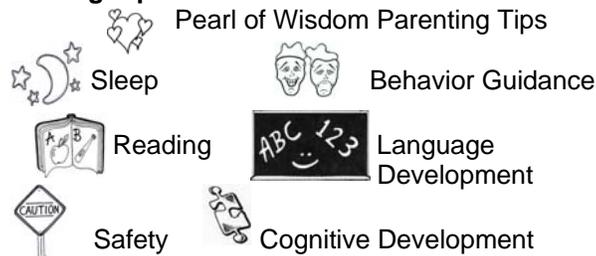
1. He's not difficult on purpose, and he is not a bad baby.

2. He may change as he grows.

3. A spirited baby needs a more caring and patient parent who will accept him and help him learn.

To help this kind of baby, introduce new things slowly so he can get used to them. For example, try new foods a week later if he doesn't like them at first. Praise him when he accepts something new. He needs to learn how to adapt.

Watch for these symbols to find articles on the following topics:



Your Baby Wants You to Know (Continued)

How I Respond:

- I may cry when I see strangers.
- I smile at faces and voices I know.
- I look around when I hear sounds.
- I make sounds and interrupt your conversations because I want attention.
- I want to touch, hold, turn, shake and taste everything.
- I put a lot of energy into everything I do.
- I pick up things, shake them, and listen to the sounds they make when I drop them.
- I play games with people I know.
- I coo, hum, or stop crying sometimes when I hear music.
- I keep very busy doing something all the time.

How I Understand:

- I recognize my name.
- I can tell the difference between others and myself in the mirror.
- I remember what I just did.
- I know that I have to use my hands to pick up something.
- I look at and study things for a long time.
- I turn objects upside down to just get another view of them.



- I may have one favorite toy or blanket.

How I Feel:

- I usually cling to you when you hold me.
- I stop crying when you talk to me.
- I show fear, anger and disgust.
- I haven't learned how to control my feelings yet.
- I complain and howl when I don't get my way.
- I giggle, coo, and squeal with joy when I'm happy.
- I may have very strong likes and dislikes about food.

How You Can Help Me Learn:

- Talk to me in complete sentences about what you're doing.
- Face me so I can watch your lips when you talk. Then I can try to imitate you.
- Play peek-a-boo with me.
- Let me listen to the radio for short periods of time. Let me have quiet times, too.
- Take me to see other babies.
- Blow bubbles for me to watch on a sunny day.
- Read nursery rhymes and stories to me. Sing me lullabies.
- Float a toy in my bathtub for me to play with. I'd like something to pour water out of, too.
- Give me things to play with that make noise, like a crinkly paper bag, or blocks I can bang together.

Introducing the Cup

Many 5-6-month-old babies are ready to start learning how to drink from a cup, although they still need to use a bottle most of the time.

Choose a non-breakable cup with handles to hold onto. A small cup is best, as a large cup could cover her eyes when she drinks from it and scare her.

Try these steps:

- Give baby the empty cup to hold and look at.
- Let her watch you and her brothers or sisters drinking from a cup.
- Put a spoonful of water or juice in the cup and let her help you tip it so she can drink.

As she gets better, put more in the cup, and encourage her to hold the cup herself. Be ready for spills and drips! Practice in the bath.

If your baby rejects the cup, don't force her. She'll have lots of time to learn later. By 12-14 months your baby should be drinking only from a cup, not a bottle.

Babies Love Babies

When you are around town you will meet other parents with their babies. Have you noticed how much babies like to look at each other? Babies really like other babies.

Your school district Early Childhood Family Education (ECFE) program offers classes about babies and parenting. These classes are great opportunities for connecting with other parents. Make a date to meet another parent and baby at the park, at an ECFE class or at your home. Make it a fun time. See what the babies will do with each other.

It's great to watch another parent and baby together. You can learn a lot just by watching, and they learn from you, too. Sometimes, it's just fun to laugh together about the good times and the hard times with a baby!

You can use each other for emergency babysitting, too. Every parent has days when her baby drives her crazy. It helps to have a friend you can call on for an hour or so if you need to run an errand, or even if you just have to have some time alone. No one raises a baby without help. Who can you count on?

New Foods For Baby

Remember to start new foods one at a time and wait 5 days between new foods. Single-ingredient foods are best to start. If baby gets a tummy ache or rash, you'll know which food may be to blame. Single ingredient foods also tend to be more nutritious and have fewer preservatives. Check with your baby's doctor to find out what foods to offer first.



Many babies are ready to begin rice cereal at about 5 months. Talk to your baby's medical



provider about this if you have not done so already. Don't put cereal in a bottle to feed your baby. This can lead to choking and over-feeding. It is important that your baby learns to eat from a spoon. This will take practice, but be patient. Feed your baby in a high chair.

Other solid foods are usually introduced in this order:

6 months...vegetables

7 months...fruits (not fruit desserts)

8-9 months...meats (plain, not mixed dinners)

Commercial Baby Foods

Babies just starting on solids need foods that are pureed or mashed so they are very soft and fine-textured. You can buy baby food at the grocery store in jars.

Don't feed baby straight from the jar. Saliva from the spoon can spoil the leftover food. Put a small amount into a dish instead. If food is left over from the dish throw it out.

Refrigerate the rest of the jar and use it up within three days.



Avoid using regular canned foods for your baby. They have too much salt and may have preservatives or artificial colors that are not good for babies.

Homemade Baby Foods

You can use a blender, food mill or sieve to make baby food yourself. Use foods that are steamed, boiled, roasted, broiled or cooked in a microwave with no added fat, salt, or sugar. Extra liquid may be needed to puree the food smoothly. Peel vegetables and fruits and remove seeds.

Some vegetables are dangerous for babies because they have high amounts of nitrates. Do not fix homemade beets, spinach or cabbage.

Clean hands for 15 seconds thoroughly. Wash between fingers, under fingernails and up to the wrist in soapy water. Dry with a clean towel.

For cutting boards, use a non-porous, smooth surface. Glass is best; hard plastic is good. Wood is fine as long as it is cleaned properly. To clean, put cutting boards in dishwasher and run through the complete cycle, including the steam dry process. If a dishwasher is not available, hand wash cutting boards by scrubbing in hot, soapy water and rinse in clean water. If automatic dishwashing is not available only scratch-free cutting boards are to be used.

Your county Extension office (763-755-1280) has more information on nutrition and food preparation.

Highchair Safety

Here are some things to look for to be sure the highchair is safe for your baby:

- It should be sturdy, with a wide base so it won't tip easily.
- There should be a seatbelt with a crotch strap to go between baby's legs to keep him from sliding out.
- The tray should lock securely on both sides, with no sharp edges.
- Belt buckles and tray locks should be easy for you to use, but not for baby.
- The seat should not be slippery. If it is, put rubber bathtub stickers or other nonslip material on it so your baby does not slide around.



Do's and Don'ts for Using a Highchair:

- Do always use the seatbelt and crotch strap.
- Do lock the tray into place.
- Do keep the highchair at least 12 inches away from the counter or table when baby is in it. He could push off and tip over.
- Do watch baby closely when he is in the highchair. Some babies have slipped down between the leg straps and choked.
- Don't let your baby stand up in the highchair.
- Don't let other children climb on the highchair.



Now that baby is securely buckled in her highchair, pull her up to the table and eat your meals together! Research shows that sharing meals builds stronger, healthier families in many ways. This is a great time to connect, share experiences from your day, and to role model healthy eating habits to your baby.

Baby Gets Moving

Baby's first year is filled with milestones: his first smile, first tooth, first time sitting alone. In the last newsletter, you read that learning to talk is a process with many steps. Physical development is the same way.

In between the milestones of sitting, crawling, standing, and walking are smaller steps. Physical development follows a fixed order. Baby's control moves from head down to feet and from trunk outward to hands and feet.

One baby may sit sooner than another, but every baby first holds up his head and neck, then learns to use his arms and hands and finally his body, legs and feet.

If your baby seems to be developing more slowly than other babies, remember he has to do things in order and on his own schedule.

Some babies take turns, first working on language then grasping, and later on sitting and crawling, for example.

Speedy physical development by itself does not mean baby is advanced in other areas. And slow physical development alone does not mean baby is slow in other areas. If you are concerned about your baby's development, contact your doctor for a consultation.

Think Twice About Baby Walkers Jumpers & Saucers

The next few months will be a fun time for your baby and you. Playing with toys on the floor is very important as your baby starts rolling, sitting and eventually crawling.

Baby walkers and jumpers cause serious or fatal injuries each year. Avoid using them.

Baby saucers may be fun for your baby, but he should not spend too much time in them. They limit your baby's chances to strengthen chest, back and leg muscles. They can also promote "toe walking" which makes it harder for your baby to learn to walk alone. If your baby spends time in a saucer, make sure to provide twice as much floor time.

Try these suggestions:

Provide safe and open floor space for your baby to practice rolling, rocking back and forth on knees, pulling up and making crawling movements.

When you hold your baby on your lap, have him stand on your thighs and bounce up and down. This will make his walking muscles strong.

Home Safety for Baby

As a parent, it's your job to make baby's world a safe place for him to learn and grow. Baby proofing helps protect him from dangerous things in your home, and helps protect your precious objects from damage.



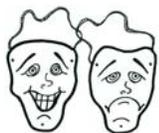
Start by getting on your hands and knees and look around your home from a baby's eye view. Watch out for:

- Small or sharp things: anything baby can reach will go into his mouth. Keep floors and tables clear of coins, cigarettes, dust balls, paper clips, staples, and anything else smaller than ½ inch that you do not want him to eat. If the knobs on your TV or stereo are small and come off, electric stores sell larger ones that babies can't choke on.
- Keep knives, scissors, and razor blades out of baby's reach. Throw out broken glass and other sharp objects right away. Don't leave them in open wastebaskets.
- Cover unused electrical outlets with plastic plugs you can buy at the hardware store. Keep lamp cords out of the way behind furniture. Move fans up high.
- In the kitchen, don't leave cords dangling. Turn pot handles toward the back of the stove.



- Poisons: If you can, move cleaning supplies to a high place. Put childproof locks on cupboards with dangerous chemicals. Post the Poison Control number near your telephone (1-800-222-1222).
- Children drink things just to try them, even if they taste bad.
- Some household plants are poisonous. Check a plant book.
- If you have a party, pour leftover drinks down the sink. It takes very little alcohol to poison a child. Cigarettes can also poison children who eat them.
- Medicine cabinets should lock. Don't take medicine in front of your child, and never tell him medicine is "candy". Even aspirin, Tylenol, or vitamins can kill in large amounts.
- Plastic bags: the thin plastic bags that cover dry-cleaned clothes or from groceries are very dangerous. A baby can get the bag over his mouth and nose and suffocate. Balloons can choke babies (except the shiny Mylar kind). Throw broken balloons out immediately.
- Stairs: install safety gates at the top of open stairways, and be sure to keep them fastened all the time when baby is around.
- Valuables: it's easier to change your home than to change your baby, and it saves you lots of saying "No, don't touch that."

Call Poison Control if you suspect your child has eaten any non-food item.



Discipline Is Teaching

Babies this age do not willfully obey or disobey us. Their minds are not developed enough for them to know right from wrong. But they may do things that are unsafe or that you think are wrong.

For the next year or so, we need to help infants learn how to behave. Discipline really means teaching, not punishment.

If you are a warm and loving parent, your infant learns how to trust you. The more your baby trusts you, the more easily he will accept the occasional limits you set for him. Research

with older children shows, that discipline works best for parents who have a warm relationship with the child.

Here are some ways to teach your baby what is acceptable:

- Praise your baby when he does things you like. Infants like adult attention, words, hugs, or smiles. The more positive you are when your baby is good, the more he'll tend to listen when you disapprove.
- Ignore misbehavior if it is not harmful (like spitting food). Don't look at, smile at, or scold him. Pretend he isn't there until he stops.
- If your baby is doing something dangerous, pick him up and move him to something safe. For example, put him in the middle of the room and say, "you can crawl here." This is called redirecting.
- Remember to praise your baby for doing something that is OK after you have ignored or redirected him.
- Baby proof your home so baby has safe places to explore and move around.
- Good parents try to prevent problems. If baby gets into trouble, blame yourself, not baby!

Building good Food Habits

Did you ever stop to think why you don't like some foods? The food habits of a lifetime are usually formed in childhood. If a variety of foods are offered in the early years, most children will eat a variety of foods throughout life. Consciously offer foods you don't like; baby may enjoy things you don't.

Children copy their parents, brothers and sisters. If baby sees his family eating healthy foods, he probably will, too.

Here are some ways to help your baby develop good eating habits:

1. Provide a pleasant, relaxed mealtime.
2. Feed baby with the rest of the family. He will feel like he belongs, and can see family members eating different foods.
3. Don't make him eat more than he wants to. His appetite will vary from day to day. Don't make meal time a battleground.



4. Give foods from the basic food groups for meals and snacks.
5. Plain fruits and meats have more nutrition than fancy desserts or elaborate casseroles. Read baby food labels.
6. Use colorful foods to make eating more fun.
7. Give different textures to help chewing skills.

Baby's Hearing

Much of baby's first year is spent learning how to listen. Through listening, he learns about the world, makes sounds and learns to talk. In Minnesota, many infants are screened at birth for any hearing loss. If you suspect your child has a hearing problem, tell his doctor right away. A hearing problem interferes with a baby's ability to communicate and learn.

A lot of language learning happens in the first five years, so it is very important to treat problems early. Don't wait until your child is school-aged.

The checklist shown here will help you follow your child's progress. It gives behaviors generally expected of children at different age levels. If your child often does not act as the checklist suggests, there may be a problem needing further testing by a doctor. But remember, a tired, hungry, or sleepy baby may not respond the way she would if she were wide awake and content.

A Hearing Checklist

3 to 6 months:

- What does baby do when you talk to him?
Behavior: Awakens or quiets to sound of mother's voice.
- Does baby react to your voice even when he can't see you?
Behavior: Typically turns eyes and head in the direction of the source of the sound.

7 to 10 months:

- When baby can't see, how does he react to the familiar footsteps, the dog barking, the phone ringing, candy paper rattling, someone's voice, his own name being called?
Behavior: Turns head and shoulders toward familiar sounds, even when he can't

see what is happening. Such sounds do not have to be loud to cause the response.

11-15 months:

- Can baby point to or find familiar objects or people when asked to?
Examples: "Where is Jimmy?" "Find the ball."
Behavior: Shows understanding of some words by appropriate behavior; for example, points to or looks at familiar objects or people on request.
- Are there different responses to different sounds?
Behavior: Jabbers in response to a human voice; is apt to cry when there is thunder; may frown when scolded.
- Does baby enjoy listening to some sounds and imitating them?
Behavior: Imitation means that baby can hear sounds and match them.



Changing Child Care Providers

When your baby has many different childcare providers, she may have a hard time forming close bonds. She needs a provider who will care for her needs quickly and sensitively, someone she will learn to trust. So try to find a provider who enjoys your baby and will be available on a regular basis. If you need to change providers for a good reason, that's OK. But try to keep the changes to a minimum.

There are many reasons to change your childcare. You may find one that is of higher quality or more convenient. What will your baby think about the change?

Babies need more regularity or sameness in their lives than the rest of us, especially when it comes to the people who meet their everyday needs.

A baby needs to trust the people she counts on. This trust is the basis for good relationships later. She will form this trust with you and others who meet her needs, including child care providers.



This is important. Your baby needs to feel secure in every place where she spends time.

- Show baby a favorite toy, then turn her away so she can't see it. If she turns her head or body to look for a toy, praise her and help her get it.
- Show her a toy, and then cover it (slowly at first) with a cloth or cup. Does she try to pull the cover off?
- Play peek-a-boo to help baby learn that you come back to her when you go away. Now she's learning that you exist even when she can't see you, and she may get upset when you leave. Be sure to tell her good-bye and that you will be back. Don't sneak out to fool her as it will scare her.

Questions and Answers

Q. Does my baby need to wear shoes?



A. Shoes protect feet from rough or sharp surfaces. They don't help baby to stand or walk. Until baby starts walking in places that might hurt her feet, she doesn't need to wear shoes.

Socks, booties, or clothes with feet are enough. Bare feet are fine unless it's cold in your home. When baby starts to walk, going barefoot around the house or in sand or grass is good exercise.

When baby does need shoes, be sure they are well fitted. There should be ½ inch of

room in front of her toes. Too-big shoes can cause falls, too-small shoes can cramp growing feet.

Buy shoes that fit. A 1 year old will outgrow them every six to eight weeks. Change socks sizes when you change shoe sizes.

Soft, flexible shoes are best for walking. The sole should bend easily. High topped shoes are not needed to support baby's ankles.

Finally, hand-me-downs are fine except in the case of shoes. A worn shoe molds to a child's foot. Used shoes can cause walking problems.

Books for Babies

Busy Barnyard by John Schindel

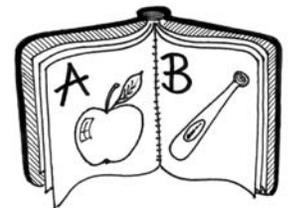
Goodnight Moon by Margaret Wise Brown

Are You My Mother? by P.D. Eastman

Dinosaur's Binkit by Sandra Boynton

Everywhere Babies by Susan Myer

Enjoy reading to your baby! While you read, make your baby feel loved and special.



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Remember, this developmental mailing describes a typical child at each age. Each child is special and each child develops at his or her own pace. Perfectly normal children may do things earlier or later than those described in this mailing. If you are concerned about your child's development, see your medical provider.

This developmental mailing give equal time and space to both sexes. That's why we take turns referring to children as "he" or "she". When we use he or she, we include all children. When we specifically refer to "fathers", the information may also apply to partners and/or significant other adults involved in childrearing.

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