

The Growing Years

Healthy Start... *where good results begin*

Months 7 and 8

Your Baby Wants You to Know

How I Grow:

- I creep on my stomach; I may even crawl.
- I can get around on my back by lifting my bottom and pushing with my feet.
- I balance myself and sit for a while with no support.
- I keep my legs straight when you pull me up, and try to stand by myself.
- I explore my body with my mouth and hands.
- I can keep my diaper dry for up to two hours.
- I may have some teeth.
- I feed myself finger foods, but I'm pretty messy!
- I play with a spoon and cup, but I'm not so good at using them yet.
- I may crawl backwards and forwards on my stomach.
- I hold onto a toy, like a rattle, for several minutes.
- I pick up small things, like pieces of string.

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How Baby Is Changing

Your baby's sitting is getting better as her lower back is stronger. She may be able to keep herself busy for a while playing with toys on the floor.

She's ready to get moving! Soon, you'll see her pushing up on hands and knees and creeping along the floor.

If your baby isn't moving along on her tummy yet, you can encourage her. Sit in front of her and put a favorite toy just out of her reach. Praise her when she tries to get it. When baby rocks back and forth on her hands and knees, crawling isn't too far off.

Watch your baby's hands. She can pass a toy from one hand to the other. Try giving her two at a time. What does she do when you hand her a third?

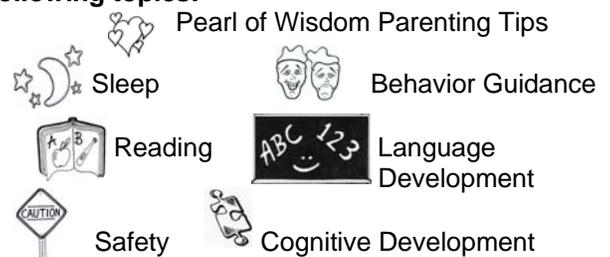
Your baby is also trying out new sounds. Keep listening! She may choose a favorite or two that she says often. Imitate her sounds so that she can hear you saying her "words".

Have you noticed that your baby understands more of what you say to her? When you say, "look at the kitty" baby listens, and then looks around until she finds it. She is beginning to grasp whole ideas, and is linking her eyesight and hearing together.

Your baby may notice when something new is put in her room. She remembers what the whole room looks like, so she sees the new item right away. Try it.

Does your baby move toward the door before daddy walks through it? Does she drop a toy and cover her ears, waiting for the noise it will make? She is developing mentally.

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



Have You Met Other Parents?

Out for a walk or in the supermarket, you may meet other parents with their babies. Stop and talk. Ask how old their baby is. It's really fun to compare notes. Try asking them:



- How has your baby changed in the last week or two? Has she learned anything new?
- What is her favorite time of the day? What does she enjoy doing the most?

You will have your own questions, too. Perhaps they know a trick to soothe a crying baby or to make feeding easier. Ask them. They are like you. They have learned a lot, and they'll love to talk about their baby.

New Foods for Baby

Protein Foods:

Between 8 and 9 months, you can start adding meats, poultry and fish to your baby's daily diet if baby's doctor recommends it. You can either buy it or prepare the food at home.



Prepare or buy only plain, single-ingredient meats, such as strained chicken, strained beef, strained liver and strained fish. There is as much protein in one jar of strained chicken as there is in more than four jars of strained chicken and noodles.

Breads:

You can try giving baby up to one serving each day of whole grain or enriched breads such as toast, crackers, hard biscuits, a bagel half, rice or tortillas.

About Weaning:

Some mothers begin to wean their babies from the breast (or bottle) about now. Others wait until later on. Some babies lose interest in nursing as they become more active. When you wean your baby, replace the feeding he is least interested in with a bottle or cup feeding. After a week or two, replace another. Do this gradually until baby is weaned. During the weaning period, be sure to give your baby extra hugs and kisses. Your child should be completely weaned from bottles by 12-14 months.

Your Baby Wants You to Know (Continued)

How I talk:

- I may begin to imitate the sounds I hear; that's how I learn.
- I say several sounds like "ma," "mi," "da," "di," and "ba," in one breath.
- I let you know I am happy, sad or scared by the sounds I make.
- I still babble a lot and shout to get attention.
- I may recognize some words.
- I watch and try to imitate your mouth movements.

How I Respond:

- I want to be included in all family activities.
- I like to see and touch myself in the mirror.
- I get excited at pictures of babies.
- I like to grab, shake and bang things, and put them in my mouth.
- I turn and listen when I hear familiar sounds, like the telephone or my name.
- I love to imitate people I know.

How I Understand:

- I concentrate better now and spend lots of time examining things.
- I can tell if something is near or far.
- I can tell when people are angry or happy by the way they look or talk.
- I am very curious and want to explore everything.
- I know how to solve simple problems, such as making a toy bell ring.
- I remember events that just happened.

How I Feel

- I'm afraid of strangers, so stay with me when they are around.
- I feel strongly about what I want and don't want to do.
- I feel playful and like to tease.
- New experiences and new people frighten me.
- I may be upset when you leave me, even for a short time.
- I feel so relieved when you return (some babies show this less than others).
- I'm upset when people make a lot of fuss over me.



- I get frustrated or lose my temper when I can't find something.

How You Can Help Me Learn

- Give me toys that make noise, like bells, music boxes, or rattles.
- Let me try to feed myself, even though it is messy.
- Say different sounds for me to imitate.
- Read books to me. Point out pictures of things I see each day. For example, show me a picture of a ball and give me my toy ball at the same time.
- Hide a small car under a cup or cloth for me to find.
- Take me for a walk outside to see the leaves and flowers or icicles and snowmen.

Children can be very different from each other. Don't worry if your child is "early" or "late" in growth. This is important: look for and notice your child's growth in each area. Then you can encourage each new ability as it develops.

Keeping Calm While Guiding Behavior

When baby is pulling leaves off your favorite plant one by one, or smearing cereal in his hair, it is hard to keep your cool. Keep these things in mind.

If tempting things like plants or wastebaskets are left in baby's reach, he will explore them. The easiest way to keep calm and keep baby out of trouble is to put things where he can't get them.

Babies do things that are upsetting to parents, but they don't do them on purpose. They are curious and are learning cause and effect.

Feeding babies is messy. They like to help, and their efforts help them learn to feed themselves. You can reduce the mess, though.

Let baby help with messy foods. Feed only as much finger food at a time as you're willing to pick up off the floor. Try giving baby two cubes of cheese. When he finishes, give two more. Remember, baby does not drop food to upset you, he is just learning when things go where they fall.

Language Games

Has your child learned to blow air? Does she use her tongue on the roof of her mouth to make clicking sounds?



These are two important tricks for good language development. If you make a game out of blowing air and clicking your tongue, your child will try to imitate you.

Put a small ball on baby's highchair tray and blow on it until it rolls toward her. See if she'll blow it back to you.

Now is also a good time to play the "touch and name" game. Touch different parts of your baby's body and name them: "This is Sally's foot. Here is Sally's nose. Where are Sally's fingers?"

Touch your own or your partner's body parts and do the same thing. "Here is Mommy's nose. Here is Sally's nose."

This game helps baby learn about herself and her body, understanding the connection between words and objects and practice language.

Most infants cannot point to a named body part until 18 months of age but research shows that beginning to play language games now will help your child learn.

Baby's Eyes

Since babies learn a lot by looking, it is helpful for you to know about baby's eyes and vision.

Vision specialists say it is normal for an infant's eyes to look crossed for a moment occasionally during the first 5 to 6 months of life. This can last up to 18 months.

It takes time to develop "binocularity" or having both eyes work together. If baby's eyes are crossed often, or he isn't getting better at using both eyes together, talk to his doctor or an eye specialist.

Children should have regular eye exams starting at age 3. Keep these thoughts in mind:



1. Put baby in the crib different ways so neither eye is favored when he looks around the room.
2. Play with him in ways that use both eyes and both sides of his body.
3. Take him for walks, or even to the store so he gets to see different things. Zoos, parks, flea markets, and museums are fun places for you and your baby to see new things together.

Sun Safety

Babies need fresh air and light. But too much sun can be harmful. Baby skin is delicate and burns easily.



Researchers have recently found that severe sunburns in childhood can lead to greater risk of the most deadly form of skin cancer (malignant melanoma) later in life. Some simple steps can help you and baby enjoy the sun without sunburns.

- For infants under 6 months – avoid sun exposure. Use of sunscreen is not recommended for infants under 6 months.
- Stay out of the sun from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. when the sun's rays are strongest.
- Keep baby in the shade.
- Put a hat on baby.
- Always put a sunscreen lotion with a 15 or higher SPF (Sun Protection Factor) on baby and yourself when you'll be in the sun. Put lotion on 30 minutes before you go out. Reapply every two hours.
- If you use a stroller, keep the sunshade on.
- If you or baby do get sunburned, put cool wet towels on the burns. Call the doctor for burns with fever or blisters.

Travel With Baby

Becoming a parent doesn't have to mean giving up vacations. With a little extra care, you can travel with children, even babies.

General Tips:

- Make a checklist of everything you'll need, and use it.
- Try to stick to normal routines for mealtimes and bedtimes.
- Take along a favorite blanket or stuffed animal to help baby feel more secure.

- Call ahead to reserve a crib if you'll be staying at a motel, or bring your own crib or playpen if it is portable.
- Bring a thermometer, bandages, your doctor's phone number, any medicines baby is taking (in the original bottles) and disposable diapers.

Travel by Car:

- Always use an approved child safety seat. If baby is unhappy, stop. Don't take him out of the child safety seat when the car is moving.
- Bring toys for baby to play with in the child safety seat, but give him only one or two at a time. Save some for later.
- Allow more travel time than you think you'll need, and stop often for a change of scene and a stretch at least every two hours.
- Bring a tape-recorder and tapes of yourself reading stories or singing baby's favorite songs to play in the car.
- Be sure the passenger area is free of heavy things that could fly around and injure someone in a sudden stop.

Travel by airplane:

- Travel at non-peak times to improve your chance of having an empty seat next to you for your child.
- Call the airline to ask if your child safety seat is approved for air travel, and whether you need to reserve another seat or bring it as luggage. Rental car agencies may not have child safety seats
- Baby may not get a meal unless you ask ahead. Bring baby food along. Check with the airlines for rules regarding baby bottles and formula because they change frequently.
- Change baby in the airport restroom before boarding the plane. There is more room there than in the plane.
- Pack your carry-on bag with: baby's medicine, small toys, a change of clothes for yourself and baby, non-messy snacks, or baby food for each meal and enough disposable diapers to last until the next day.
- Sucking a bottle or pacifier, or nursing may help keep baby's ears from clogging up



painfully before and during take-offs and landings or try yawning for the baby to copy.

Grasping and Holding

In the early months, your baby held things in her hands in a single clumsy way, no matter what the object was shaped like. Slowly, she has learned to hold different things different ways. By now, she may be able to hold things between her thumb and forefingers and turn them skillfully around.

At first, baby is interested in the size, shape and texture of things. By now, she may also want to know how things fit together. If a toy has several parts, it will hold your baby's interest.

Give baby nesting cups (like plastic measuring cups) to play with. Babies this age also like to put things into a container. Try a bowl with canning jar rims or small blocks.

At 7 or 8 months, most babies will put one thing down before picking up another. But your baby is learning to use each hand by itself. She may be able to pass a toy from one hand to the other now. This will let her do many new and exciting things.

At around 9 months, she will hold up and compare two toys, bang them and try to fit them together or put one inside the other.

Using Words to Guide Baby

Your baby can't talk yet, but he's starting to learn that words have meaning. You can use this to help her behave.



If you see baby crawling toward your slippers (and you know they'll go in her mouth), say "tastes bad" and move her to a different spot.

If she tries to touch the oven, say "hot" and move her away.

Don't just say "no" to things baby does. Give her one or two word explanations to help her learn why she can't behave in certain ways. Research shows that this really helps.

As she gets older, you can make the explanations a little longer, three or four words instead of one or two.

Baby's memory is not as good as yours. Remember how many tries it took her to learn pat-a-cake or peek-a-boo? Don't expect her to learn to stay away from dirty slippers or hot stoves because you tell her once, or even 20 times.

Baby's Sleep

Many 8-month-olds have trouble settling down to sleep. They're so excited about sitting, creeping, crawling and exploring that they don't want to go to bed!



Parents need time to themselves. Don't feel guilty about wanting to enjoy some peace and quiet or time with your partner. Baby's bedtime is your decision.

Here are a few tips to make bedtime easier:

- Always put baby to bed at around the same time.
- Put him to bed in the same room he'll wake up in.
- Spend some time each evening cuddling, reading, singing, or talking to baby at bedtime. Routines (doing the same thing in the same way) help children settle down to sleep.
- Put a night-light in baby's room.

Some babies make a game of calling out for you or dropping toys out of the crib for you to pick up. If you don't stop these habits right away, baby may wake you up a few times a night.

When baby cries after you put him to bed, check him but keep the lights dim, and don't pick him up. If he's OK, put him on his back, pat him for a minute or two, and leave. The less you talk to baby at this time the better.

Please note: To help prevent SIDS, put baby to bed on his/her back, not on sides or tummy.

If you try this for a few weeks and baby still wakes and cries during the night, you may try



letting him cry. Here is a way that works for many parents. Pick a weekend night. When baby cries, go in and check on him and rub or pat his back, then tell him you'll be back in 10 minutes.

Check on him every 10 minutes until he falls back to sleep, even if he's still crying. It probably won't take more than a night or two to end the habit for good.

Letting baby cry like this can be hard on you. Be sure you are up to it. He may cry for hours. If you give in after an hour of crying you could be training him to cry for long periods.

Showing Fear of Strangers

Sometimes at around 8 months, many babies show a fear or wariness of people they don't know well. As your baby can move around more, he can be separated from you.

This can be scary, so he clings to you more and avoids strangers. He is also becoming aware of who he knows and who he doesn't. He may need more reassurance when he is away from you, especially when he is tired, bored, or frustrated. A pacifier, blanket, stuffed toy, or thumb may help him feel more secure.

Crying or trying to get away from an unfamiliar person is less common than neutral reactions, like a serious, watchful stare.

Some babies even look at the new person, and then look away a few times before warming up and smiling.

Grandparents or friends may have a hard time understanding why baby gets upset when they see him or pick him up. Take it slowly.

Don't just hand baby to someone he doesn't know well. Hold him while he gets to know the person. Have the "stranger" offer baby a favorite toy. Let baby make new friends at his own pace.



Spanking Baby Doesn't Work

Every parent uses some form of discipline with children, like taking away a toy.



But no one should ever hit a child. No baby should ever be spanked. In many countries this is even against the law.

Spanking a baby is dangerous. Many babies are injured this way every year. Also, spanking seldom works. Babies are too young to understand, so they don't learn from spanking. It just makes baby cry more, and it will make you feel bad. When your baby does something you don't like, redirect him to an activity you do like. Show your baby a better way.

Your baby may upset you by waking you up at night, crying a lot or messing up his diaper just as you put a fresh one on. Remember: he doesn't do this on purpose to make you mad. He's not smart enough for that. He can't help it, so it makes no sense to get mad at him.

What can you do? Call a friend and ask what she would do. You can also call your local school district Early Childhood Family Education (ECFE) program. ECFE provides parents with an opportunity for families to play with their children and get support and friendship from other parents. They have classes, and special events for parents that are led by qualified early childhood professionals. Here are your local school districts' ECFE telephone numbers:

Anoka-Hennepin ISD #11: 763-506-1275

Centennial ISD #12: 763-792-6120

Columbia Heights ISD #13: 763-528-4515

Elk River ISD # 728: 763-241-3524

Fridley ISD #14: 763-502-5123

Forest Lake ISD #831: 651-982-8300

St. Francis ISD #15: 763-753-7170

Spring Lake Park #16: 763-786-1338

Tooth Care

By now, your baby may have one or more teeth or may be teething. In about two years, he will have 20 baby teeth.



If any of these teeth are decayed, the child may have what dentists call "Nursing Bottle Mouth." Bacteria in baby's mouth react with sugar to make acid.

When baby is awake, swallowing helps to wash the acid away. When baby sleeps, more acid stays on the teeth to cause cavities. So don't give baby a bottle in bed.

Even though your child will lose his baby teeth, it is important to keep them healthy. Baby teeth help keep space open in the mouth so adult teeth aren't crowded.

You can take care of baby's new teeth by giving him a balanced diet and wiping his teeth with a clean washcloth or gauze pad after each meal.

The American Dental Association recommends:

- Do not put baby to bed with anything but water in a bottle. No milk, juices or soft drinks.
- Don't feed babies sugar-coated food. Avoid sugar whenever you can.
- Don't put sweets on the pacifier.

Car Safety

Baby still needs to be sitting in a rear facing car seat. When baby is **12 months and 20 pounds** she can be moved to a forward facing child safety seat.



Car accidents are the most serious threat to your baby's safety. Here are a few points to keep in mind to help you keep your whole family safe in the car:

- Use baby's child safety seat for every ride. It won't protect him if he isn't in it.
- All passengers and the driver should wear seatbelts.
- Don't allow yelling, horseplay, or other distractions when you drive. If your child needs attention, pull off the road and stop. Never turn around in your seat when you're driving.
- Never let children play with the car controls, even when the car is parked.
- Keep a flashlight, first-aid kit, and emergency flares in the car.

- On long trips, provide quiet games to keep children busy. Tape-recorded stories or favorite songs are good too.
- Stop at least every two hours. Don't try to go too far in one day.
- Never leave children alone in a car for even a few minutes.

Games for Growing

Here are some games babies may enjoy:

Hiding and Chasing: Big brothers and sisters can do the hiding. You can say, "Where is _____?" and baby can try to help find the missing one.

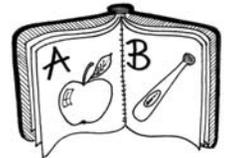
How Big is Baby? So Big! At first you might need to show your baby (gently) how to raise his arms up over his head while you say "So Big."

Hiding Things: Let baby watch you as you hide a small toy under a cloth or cup, or in your pocket. Does he try to find it?

Music Fun: Your baby will like listening to many kinds of music with you and trying to dance. Inexpensive music boxes can be fun, and baby can learn to start and stop the music all by himself.

Activity: Reading to Baby

Showing books to your baby is a great way to help him feel good about reading. Success in school and in later life depends on good reading skills.



Pick a time when your baby can sit still for a while. Bedtime is good. Use books with big, colorful pictures. Don't worry about the story. You can just talk about the pictures or make up stories.

Babies like books with pictures of everyday things he knows about, like clothes, food, trees, cars and animals. Point to a picture and tell baby about it. "Look, this is a kitty. Do you see the kitty? Kitty says MEOW."



You can make a book for your baby:

1. Cut sturdy fabric or cardboard into eight or ten square pieces.
2. Glue a large, colorful picture and, if you want, write a single word or phrase in big letters on each page.
3. Sew the book together or punch holes and tie it with yarn.

Here are some suggestions for pages:

- Pictures of baby, other family members and pets.
- A small unbreakable mirror.
- A picture of baby's favorite toy.
- A picture of baby's favorite food.
- Pictures of plants or flowers like ones that grow nearby.
- A bunny made from fake fur.
- A shoe made from a scrap of leather, with holes and laces.
- A piece of sandpaper.
- Pictures of familiar things cut out from magazines.

Here are a few book suggestions from your local library that you can enjoy with your baby:

Brown Bear, Brown Bear By Bill Martin

Maisy's Colors by Lucy Cousins

Where is Baby's Belly Button? By Karen Katz

Twinkle Twinkle by Jeanette Winter

Big Little by Leslie Patricelli

I Love You Sun, I Love You Moon by dePaola



Pearl of Wisdom A New Baby

If you give your child the blessing of tender loving care,

And show him too the joys there are when families give and share.

If you can help him see the rainbow when a cloud comes into view,

Encourage him with hopes and dreams and help them to come true.

If you can teach your child to see the good in everything,

You'll have given him the perfect gift- the love that parents bring.

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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 newsletter gives 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. Fathers, partners, and other significant adults all play an important role during pregnancy and in childrearing. When we specifically refer to "fathers," the information may also apply to partners and/or other significant adults involved in childrearing.

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