

Your Child at Nine to Twelve Months

BY THE END OF THE FIRST YEAR OF LIFE, your baby's body weight will have tripled and body length will have doubled. Babies this age are very good at expressing their feelings with their gestures, sounds and facial expressions. They can engage in "conversation," for example, handing things back and forth or imitating sounds and actions. They also understand "cause and effect"—and that they can make something happen: "If I drop this food from my highchair, it will fall on the floor," or "If I cry, mom or dad will come get me." Following a consistent routine helps babies know what to expect and how to behave.

Sleep The sleep habits of older babies differ. Some may sleep all night and take one or no naps during the day. Others may wake up in the night but take several naps during the day. By nine months, your baby may be sleeping up to 12 hours at night. Some babies skip a morning nap altogether and start taking one long nap later in the day.

During this stage of development, it is normal for babies to cry at bedtime because they feel scared when a parent leaves the room. Establishing a bed time routine that includes quiet activities together will help lessen fear and stress. When putting babies to bed, give them some time to fall asleep on their own. If crying continues, check in on your baby, but do not pick your baby up. Instead, rub your baby's tummy and talk softly to help your baby relax and fall asleep. For more nighttime tips, turn to Safe Infant Sleep on page 4.

Nutrition By the time babies are around nine months old, they usually have the ability to pick up foods and feed themselves. They can also begin to learn to drink from a sippy cup. By their first birthday (or soon after) they can be weaned from the bottle. They should be eating three meals a day while still receiving breast milk or formula. If you haven't already, have your baby join the rest of the family at meals.

Serve foods that offer new tastes and textures; but be sure they are soft, easily gummed and digestible. Examples include Cheerios® with small pieces of bananas; pieces of cheese and well-cooked pasta; and steamed vegetables such as zucchini, peas and carrots. Cut foods into safe, bite-sized pieces and avoid any foods that need to be chewed. It is very important to supervise your child constantly during feeding times.

Some babies have food allergies. Signs of an allergic reaction include rashes, hay fever-like symptoms or breathing difficulties (sometimes severe). If your baby shows these or any other symptoms, call your doctor or 9-1-1 immediately. Foods to avoid until after your baby's first birthday include:

- › Eggs
- › Shellfish
- › Citrus fruits such as oranges, grapefruit, lemon and lime
- › Corn
- › Peanuts
- › Chocolate
- › Wheat
- › Honey

Physical Development

- › Crawls forward on belly
- › Sits up without assistance
- › Pulls self up to stand
- › Walks two or three steps without support
- › Walks holding onto furniture
- › Takes objects out of containers
- › Pokes with index finger

Social and Emotional Development

- › Offers toys or objects to others but wants them back
- › Pushes away toys or foods when not wanted
- › Becomes attached to a favorite toy or blanket
- › Cries when mom or dad leaves

Cognitive Development

- › Responds to “no”
- › Babbles with inflections, changes in tones
- › Makes sounds like “mama” and “dada”
- › Finds hidden toys and other objects
- › Begins to use things correctly (drinks from cups, listens in a phone)
- › Explores items in different ways (banging, shaking, throwing, etc.)

ADDITIONAL SAFETY TIPS FOR YOUR BABY AT NINE TO TWELVE MONTHS

A Home Safety Checklist should be completed at each stage of your child’s development. A sample check-list is provided for you on page 70.

- › Prevent cuts by keeping sharp objects out of reach (for example: cooking knives and other tools, scissors, razors, plastic wrap boxes, glass bottles or drinking glasses, knitting needles)
- › Prevent injuries by keeping children away from lawn mowers and power saws
- › Prevent electrocution by putting stereos, computers and other electrical equipment out of reach and making sure that children cannot get to the back of television sets
- › Prevent poisoning by storing medications where children cannot get them

Positive Parenting Activities that Promote Nurturing and Attachment

- › Play games like hide-and-seek and peek-a-boo to help your baby learn to cope with separation and feel secure that you always come back.
- › Respond to your baby’s cries at night, but avoid picking your baby up to rock him or her back to sleep—falling asleep in your arms makes it more difficult for your baby to learn how to get back to sleep on his or her own.
- › When saying “goodbye,” tell her you will miss her and that you will return.
- › When your baby does something you don’t like or that may be dangerous, distract him or her from the activity by quickly providing something else to do. For example, as your child reaches for a lamp, you quickly pick your child up and say, “Let’s go read this book.”
- › Redirect unwanted behavior by modeling the right way to use something. For example, if your child is drawing on books, take the books away and say, “Books are not for drawing on.” At the same time, give the child paper saying, “If you want to draw on something, draw on this paper.” If your child is throwing blocks, you can take away the blocks and give him a soft ball to throw.



When to be Concerned

While each baby develops at his or her own pace, you should be aware of certain milestones your child should be reaching. Failure to reach certain milestones may be a sign of medical or developmental problems requiring special attention. You should let your baby’s doctor know if at nine months your child:

- › Doesn’t babble
- › Drags one side of body while crawling (for over a month)
- › Doesn’t point to objects or pictures
- › Doesn’t search for objects that are hidden while he or she watches
- › Shows no interest in games like peek-a-boo
- › Shows no affection for primary caregiver
- › Doesn’t seem to enjoy being around people

HERE’S HELP

Use the **Family Resources** on **pages 72–78** to learn about a variety of family support services available in your community.

