

# Your Child at Three to Six Months

**THIS IS AN EXCITING PERIOD OF DEVELOPMENT** because your baby will begin to show his or her unique personality. Babies this age also begin to establish regular eating and sleeping patterns. Continue cuddling, playing, reading and talking with your baby as much as you can because every interaction will continue to stimulate brain development. Your baby needs an interested audience and a chance to use his or her social skills!

**Sleep** At this age, babies sleep about 15 hours per day. Your baby may be taking two or three daytime naps and may be waking twice per night for feedings. Although babies can now roll over on their own, you should still place your baby to sleep on his or her back. It's fine if babies roll over on their own during sleep. Now is a good time to lower the crib mattress to its lowest level to prevent falls. Remember, it is still not safe to put toys, pillows or blankets in the crib with your baby.

**Nutrition** Discuss your baby's nutritional needs with your medical provider during your baby's four-month well-child visit. Breast milk and formula are still the main sources of nutrition.

## Physical Development

- › Rolls over from back to stomach and stomach to back
- › Tries to grab objects with hands
- › Opens and closes hands and brings hands to mouth
- › Wiggles arms and kicks legs
- › Sits with support
- › Drools a lot
- › Begins to cut teeth

## Social and Emotional Development

- › Enjoys social play and will become more active in getting your attention
- › Responds differently to an unfamiliar voice than to the voice of a familiar person
- › Shows interest in mirror images and begins to smile at mirrors
- › Responds to other people's expressions of emotion and often appears joyful
- › Cries when upset, afraid or scared

## Cognitive Development

- › Uses eyes and hands together
- › Uses verbal and non-verbal cues to signal needs
- › Explores objects with mouth
- › Begins to reach for objects such as rattles, caregiver's face and mobiles

## ADDITIONAL SAFETY TIPS FOR YOUR BABY AT THREE TO SIX 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 strangulation by removing or shortening any cords that your child can reach
- › Prevent electrocution by installing protective covers on all electrical outlets
- › Prevent poisoning by moving all poisonous liquids, such as cleaning supplies, to upper cabinets and shelves
- › Prevent falls by keeping babies away from open windows and installing window guards on all upper-level windows

## Positive Parenting Activities that Promote Nurturing and Attachment

- › Singing while interacting with your baby, such as patty-cake and peek-a-boo
- › Rocking your baby while singing lullabies



## 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 four months your child:

- › Doesn't bring objects to mouth
- › Begins babbling, but doesn't try to imitate any of your sounds
- › Doesn't push down with legs when feet are placed on a firm surface
- › Has trouble moving one or both eyes in all directions
- › Crosses eyes most of the time (occasional crossing of the eyes is normal in these first months)
- › Doesn't pay attention to new faces, or seems very frightened by new faces or surroundings

## HERE'S HELP



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