

Social & Emotional Development in Infancy

AGES BIRTH-12 MONTHS

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What to Expect & When to Seek Help

 A **Bright Futures** Developmental Tool for Families and Providers

What Parents Want to Know...

From the moment of birth, parents want to know: *Is my baby "OK"?* You'll ask this question again and again as your baby grows from infant to toddler to teen.

All babies are born with different strengths and abilities, and no other baby will develop exactly like yours. Health, personality, and early experiences are important to your baby's development; family, community, and cultural traditions also play important roles. For example, feeding and sleeping practices may differ in various cultures.

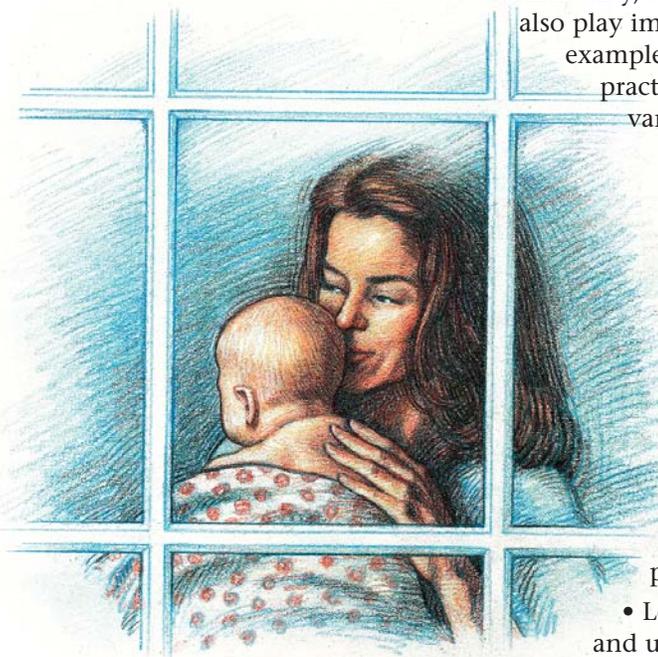
Although each baby is unique, *all* parents want to help their babies achieve social and emotional milestones such as:

- Learning to trust and respond to your love and attention
- Learning to express emotions such as pleasure and distress
- Learning to smile, coo, and use gestures, sounds, or words to communicate

As parents, you are becoming experts at knowing and meeting your baby's needs. This tool can help by providing:

- A "snapshot" of what to expect as you and your baby learn and grow together
- A way to identify your baby's strengths and your abilities as parents
- A starting point for talking with others about your baby's development
- Tips for when, where, and how to seek help

If you have questions or concerns about your baby, "check it out." Ask a trusted friend, family member, or member of your faith or cultural community; talk with your baby's health care or child care provider; or contact your local health department or social service agency. Help is available in your community. See the last page to learn more about services and support for you, your baby, and your family. Finding answers to your questions early will help your baby develop in the healthiest way possible.



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Beginning the Conversation

Written in family-friendly language, the tools may be used by families and child development professionals in a range of disciplines, including health, education, child care, and family services.

Throughout the tools, a strong emphasis is placed on strengths as well as concerns. The information under “What to Expect” not only offers a guide to healthy development and parenting, but provides information that parents can find reassuring about their child’s behavior and their own parenting.

The tools provide an opportunity to identify concerns at an early stage. The information under “When to Seek Help” includes issues that might be addressed with additional information, as well as those that signal the need for further assessments and services. Space is provided for families to write down their concerns as well as to create their own list of community resources and services.

The *What to Expect & When to Seek Help: Bright Futures Developmental Tools for Families and Providers* are guided by the following principle:

Every child and adolescent deserves to experience joy, have high self-esteem, acquire a sense of efficacy, and believe that she can succeed in life. —BRIGHT FUTURES CHILDREN’S HEALTH CHARTER

Based on *Bright Futures in Practice: Mental Health*, the Bright Futures developmental tools offer a framework for providers and families to begin a conversation together about how best to support healthy social and emotional development in children and teens. The tools are part of a coordinated set of print and Web materials, including the Referral Tool for Providers and the electronic Community Services Locator. The tools gently encourage families who have any questions or concerns about their child’s development to “check it out”—and offer a number of tips for when, where, and how to seek help through local, state, or national resources.

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To learn more about the tools, download a copy, or inquire about training, consultation and technical assistance, visit www.brightfutures.org/tools

Feeding

What to Expect

Baby:

Birth-3 months

- Enjoys feeding, feels comfortable and safe (sucks and swallows easily, gains weight, seems content)
- Gazes at or turns toward parent, nuzzles or cuddles while feeding

3-6 months

- Sometimes shows more interest in sights and sounds around him than in feeding

6-9 months

- Explores breast or bottle during feeding; touches, tastes, and plays with different foods; tries to hold feeding spoon

9-12 months

- Gains more confidence and control during feeding (feeds herself with her fingers, holds and drinks from a cup)

Parents:

- Learn baby's hunger cues and respond promptly and lovingly
- Are sensitive to baby's cues when feeding (pause or stop when baby is drowsy, turns head away, or sucks less vigorously)
- Hold, cuddle, and talk to baby during feedings
- Keep feeding and sleep schedules somewhat regular to help baby feel secure
- Encourage baby to touch and taste different foods, feed herself with her fingers, and hold and drink from a cup (9-12 months)

When to Seek Help

If your baby:

- Lacks interest or enthusiasm in feeding
- Is often fussy or upset during or after feeding
- Does not cuddle or respond to you during feeding
- Has poor weight gain or other feeding problems (has trouble sucking and swallowing, or spits up a lot after feeding)
- Shows no interest in finger-feeding or using a cup (by 12 months)

Or if you, as parents:

- Feel uneasy holding, cuddling, or feeding your baby
- Are not sure when to feed your baby
- Think you may be feeding your baby too little or too much
- Are trying to keep your baby on an exact feeding schedule

Sleeping

What to Expect

Baby:

- Usually sleeps after feeding, wakes when hungry (newborn)
- Settles into a routine of sleep/wake times; takes 2-3 naps during the day, sleeps more at night (3-6 months)
- Stays awake much of the day, sleeps most of the night (6-12 months)
- Feels secure with a comforting bedtime routine
- Gradually adapts to family's sleep patterns
- Learns self-soothing behaviors (sucking fingers, holding comfort item like soft toy or blanket) to settle down for sleep

Parents:

- Respond to cues that baby is sleepy or overtired; help baby settle down for sleep
- Create a comforting bedtime routine (spend quiet time cuddling, singing, reading, or softly talking to baby before bedtime)
- Encourage baby to use self-calming behaviors to fall asleep on his own; offer a comfort object
- Provide a quiet room and safe sleep setting (always place baby on his back to sleep; avoid loose bedding or spaces that could trap or smother baby)

When to Seek Help

If your baby:

- Has a hard time calming down at bedtime; needs a lot of help to fall asleep
- Has trouble settling into a good routine of sleep and wake times
- Wakes and cries often at night, is not able to fall back to sleep on her own (by 6 months)

Or if you, as parents:

- Have a hard time helping your baby fall asleep or stay asleep
- Have trouble keeping a regular bedtime routine for your baby (6-12 months)
- Need ideas for keeping your baby safe in a crib or while sharing a bed
- Are usually exhausted or upset because you do not get enough sleep
- Are smoking, drinking, or using drugs while in bed with your baby

Crying and Comforting

What to Expect

Baby:

Birth-3 Months

- Cries to express her needs and feelings (hungry, wet, tired, lonely, in discomfort)
- Can usually be calmed or comforted within a few minutes (by 3 months)
- May have colic or fussy periods caused by stomach pains or discomfort (1-4 months)

3-6 months

- Feels calm, content, and secure as his needs are met

6-12 Months

- Begins to soothe herself some of the time by sucking her fingers or holding a comfort object (soft toy or blanket)

Parents:

- Hold, rock, and softly sing or talk to baby to help comfort him
- Learn baby's different cries, and how best to respond
- Always respond quickly to cries of distress or discomfort
- Encourage self-soothing behaviors (offer comfort object or toy, wrap or dress baby so his hands are free and he can suck her fingers)

- Allow baby a few minutes to calm down on his own when he is tired or fussy (6-9 months)
- May feel frustrated if unable to comfort baby despite best efforts

When to Seek Help

If your baby:

- Does not turn to you for comfort or respond to your efforts to console him
- Seems fretful and unhappy much of the time
- Cries for hours at a time and is very hard to calm
- Is not able to calm himself some of the time (6-12 months)

Or if you, as parents:

- Have a hard time knowing what your baby's different cries mean and how you should respond
- Have concerns that you might "spoil" your baby if you give him attention every time he cries
- Allow your baby to cry for a long time without trying to calm her or make her feel better
- Get upset and feel like shaking or hitting your baby when she cries
- Need ideas to help your baby learn how to calm herself

Discovering Self and Others

What to Expect

Baby:

Newborn-3 months

- Looks at faces and follows with his eyes (newborn); can maintain eye contact (by 1 month)
- Smiles and coos in response to others (by 2 months)
- Shows interest in life around her (sights, sounds, people, pets, movements)

3-6 months

- Enjoys social play (babbling, giggles, laughs)
- Delights in playing with his hands and feet
- Shows range of feelings like joy, surprise, anger, fear (by 5-6 months)

6-9 months

- Responds to her name, smiles at her image in mirror
- Plays games like peek-a-boo or pat-a-cake
- "Talks" by babbling and trying to imitate sounds
- Reaches for familiar persons (6 months); may become fearful with strangers (7-9 months)



9-12 months

- Imitates actions (talking on phone, waving bye-bye)
- Learns that his actions have an effect (drops, dumps, rolls, pushes and pulls toys)
- Grows more independent (crawls, pulls to stand, may take a few steps)

Parents:

- Hold and cuddle baby; gently and playfully move her arms and legs
- Provide a variety of sights, sounds, colors, textures (safe toys, rattles, mobiles, crib gyms, music)
- Talk, sing, read, show pictures to baby; play games such as peek-a-boo with baby
- "Teach" baby to imitate sounds, words, movements
- Learn to be "in tune" with baby's needs and feelings
- Let baby lead playtime, and respond to her interests
- Help baby play safely and explore new things
- Gently encourage baby to try doing things on his own; stay nearby to keep him safe
- Help baby feel secure in new situations (reassure through touch, eye contact, words)

When to Seek Help**If your baby:**

- Does not respond when held or cuddled
- Seems to "shut down" (does not smile or make eye contact)
- Does not coo or make sounds when you talk to him
- Shows no response to people's faces or voices
- Does not react to sound, light, or movement
- Shows little interest in exploring her surroundings

Or if you, as parents:

- Think your baby is not developing as he should
- Have concerns because your baby does not seem to be doing things that others her age can do
- Want ideas for making playtime safe, fun, and creative
- Are not sure about the kinds of toys or objects your baby should look at and play with
- Need help making your home safe for your baby to move around and explore

Becoming A Family**What to Expect****Baby:***Newborn-1 month*

- Looks at parent's face, maintains eye contact briefly

1-3 months

- Smiles and coos in response to parents (4-6 weeks)
- Learns to trust that parents will meet his needs

4-6 months

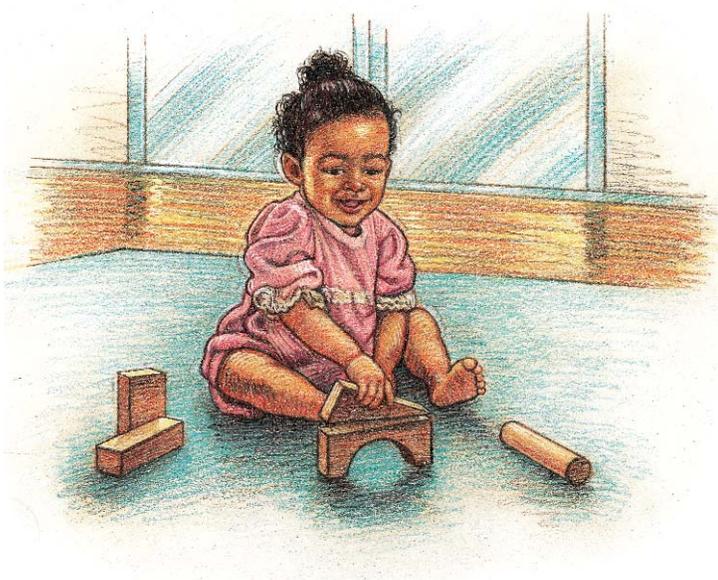
- Knows parent's face, voice, and touch
- Laughs and babbles

6-8 months

- Begins to become aware of strangers
- Seeks comfort and security from her parents

9-12 months

- May say da-da or ma-ma
- Is upset or fearful when parents leave (separation anxiety)
- Turns to parent after exploring, or when upset and seeking comfort

*continued*

Becoming a Family Continued

Parents:

- Hold, cuddle, and comfort baby, help baby feel secure and loved
- May feel overwhelmed or have the “baby blues” in early weeks; gradually feel more confident as parents
- Start to “read” and respond to baby’s different cries and signals (hunger, sleep, discomfort)
- Give baby lots of time and attention; talk, sing, read, and play with baby; talk about everyday events, name objects and feelings
- Celebrate baby’s achievements
- Allow baby to explore surroundings, set safe limits
- Spend special time with each child in the family
- Encourage older children to play with and help care for baby

When to Seek Help

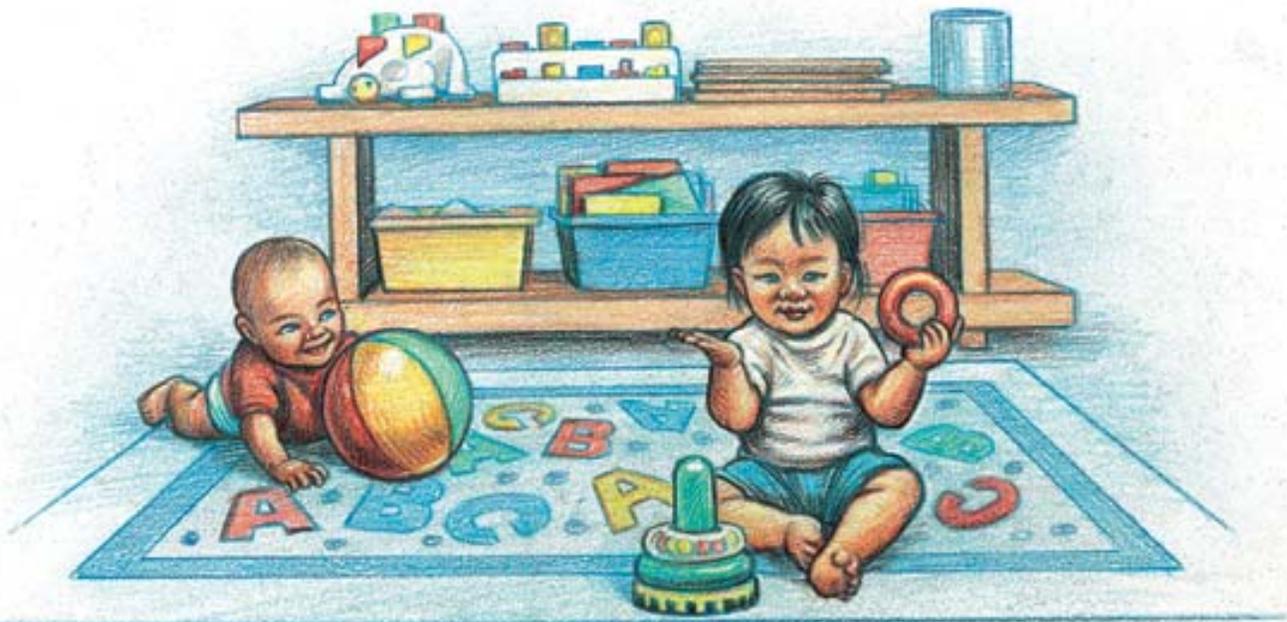
If your baby:

- Resists your efforts to hold, cuddle, or comfort her, or does not respond
- Does not coo, babble, or show delight when you talk or play with him

- Does not seem to know or respond to other family members
- Has little or no reaction when you leave the room for a while or when you return (at 6 - 9 months)
- Does not look to you for comfort or security after exploring or when upset

Or if you, as parents:

- Feel very tired, depressed, worried, or overwhelmed, and these feelings do not go away
- Have trouble knowing when your baby is hungry, sleepy, needs attention, or needs quiet time
- Do not enjoy spending time with your baby
- Feel that your baby’s personality doesn’t “fit in” with the rest of the family
- Often think that your baby is “naughty” or bad on purpose
- Want tips to help older children adjust to baby
- Face major stresses or changes in your family (job, money, housing, illness)



NAME _____ AGE _____

Your Questions and Concerns

Feeding

Sleeping

Crying and Comforting

Discovering Self and Others

Becoming A Family
