

## **Learning about Milestones for Baby Development**

### **Conception to Newborn**

Interestingly, most women do not realize that milestones for baby development start well before birth. While pregnant, many of the developments are seen through ultrasounds, hearing the heartbeat, and other forms of technology. Once the baby is born, there are still developmental changes although not as easy to see. However, from birth to age one, your baby will go through tremendous changes, which include vision, hearing, motor skills, and even development of the cognitive system.

### **Your Baby's First Month**

In the first month of life, your baby will be going through major changes, specifically when it comes to reflex movements. For example, you will begin to see your newborn move the toes, draw up the legs, and even put his or her hand in the mouth. The baby will start using his/her new muscle control by moving the head, as the eyes try to focus more and more.

Keep in mind, even though your baby can see, his/her vision is only good up to 12 inches. Even so, you will notice the eyes trying to look around the room but your baby is not yet able to focus on anything. However, when the face is hit with bright lights, the baby will blink and find this and patterns intriguing. Even so, the sight of mom and dad's face is the baby's favorite.

During this first month, your baby will start to turn the head from side to side, react to sound, and begin to focus on familiar sounds and voices.

### **The First Three Months**

During the first three months after giving birth, there are many things going on with the baby. At this time, your baby is starting to develop and grow, and soon, you will start to notice changes to his or her body on an almost daily basis.

The baby's motor skills are becoming stronger and more focused, he/she can now lift the head off the ground when placed on the stomach, and the little hands will start to open and close as your baby discovers arms and fingers. Chances are that your baby will also try to put pressure on the legs, which results in the body pushing up.

Another huge change in the first three months of life has to do with the eyes. Your baby's vision is becoming sharper and near the start of the fourth month, he or she will actually follow mom and dad or favorite objects. At this time, your baby now recognizes people such as parents,

siblings, grandparents, and babysitters. Probably the most obvious development is the hand-eye coordination.

Your baby is also getting better with social skills. He or she will smile at things pleasant, laugh when people make faces, and even try to imitate the actions of other people.

### ***Four to Seven Months***

By the time your baby reaches six months, things are really changing. Now, without any support your baby can sit up. Some babies at this age are also able to stand with a little help, allowing the legs to support the body's weight. Even reaching and grasping for furniture, people, toys, bottles, and other items is easy.

One of the most significant changes during these months is that your baby can now see in living color. Unlike before where vision distance was limited, your baby now sees things much further away and knows whom people are from across the room. If you were to enter a room, your baby would not only know you but also follow you with his/her eyes.

The baby's cognitive thinking is also advancing. Your baby will probably respond to his/her name, repeat sounds made, and even start forming simple words. At first, the words will sound like gibberish but you can be sure your baby is creating short sentences in his or her own way.

### ***Your Child's First Year of Life***

It is hard to believe, but now your baby is turning one. Because your child is moving about, he/she is going to have spills but this will not stop the child from pursuing walking and talking skills. Most children at this age can walk several steps or go from one piece of furniture to another. Simple words are also spoken, some recognized such as *momma*, *dada*, *doggie*, *bottle*, etc.

You will also discover that at around age one your baby's cognitive skills are maturing. In fact, children will have a preference of friends, show interest in specific toys, and only want to eat certain foods, and so on. Although small and loving, your child is becoming independent. Do not be surprised if you start hearing an occasional "no" pop out of the child's mouth, as he/she tries to move from baby to toddler.

### ***Summary***

Children are amazing but very individual. Most babies will go through similar stages but every child develops at a different rate and in his or her own way. Therefore, use the milestones only

as a guideline, knowing that your child may do things earlier or later. In other words, do not assume because your friend's baby was walking at one that your child will be walking at one.