



0 - 3 Months

Your baby was born relationship ready and in her first three months of life is actively trying to make sense of her world. Before she can even speak, your baby is communicating with her facial expressions, voice and body language. As you and your baby get to know each other, she will depend on you to recognize her cues and respond to her needs in a sensitive, timely and consistent way. This is the beginning of a trusting relationship that will form the basis of all of her relationships and experiences and will lay the foundation for her mental health now, throughout her childhood, and well into her adult years.

Over the first three months, your baby will:

- **Gaze at your face and look in the direction of your voice.**
Bring your face close so that baby can see your features and expressions. Baby may not initially make eye contact since her vision has not fully developed, but she will enjoy looking up and seeing your face.
- **Smile spontaneously.**
By 2 - 3 months, your baby's social smiles are signs that she knows who you are.
- **Recognize a familiar voice.**
For months before your baby was born, mother's voice was what she heard most. She will follow that voice, turning her head in that direction, and will prefer it over others.
- **Make cooing sounds when she is happy, contented and communicative.**
- **Be soothed when picked up and comforted (most of the time).**
- **Express her emotions and needs through her cries and actions.**
Your baby will find a way to let you know that she needs attention when hungry, tired or uncomfortable, e.g., in need of a diaper change.



4 - 6 Months

With loving, nurturing early relationships, your baby is beginning to understand his physical and social surroundings and is learning to discover his world. He knows who you are and who he can trust to respond to his needs. This is the start of the attachment relationship and will be dependent on how well you provide consistent, responsive and appropriate care. As your baby continues to learn about his world and to make sense of the things around him, you need to continue to provide loving and responsive relationships to help guide him through those experiences.

By 6 months your baby will begin to:

- **Intentionally express his emotions.**
He will cry or get agitated when he wants attention, e.g., he may laugh and smile while interacting with you or he may show that he is excited by quickly waving his arms and legs around.
- **Recognize his primary caregivers.**
Your baby feels safest around his primary caregivers and seeks a familiar presence. He knows who you are and that you will respond to his needs.
- **Make eye contact.**
Your baby will begin to focus for longer periods of time as his vision has developed more since birth and he can now see things more clearly and farther away. When you sing, babble or imitate the sounds your baby makes, your baby will look at you and make eye contact. He engages by cooing and babbling back.
- **Read facial and vocal expressions and learn what different forms of interaction mean.**
When you engage with him, e.g., talking, singing, cooing or babbling, your baby will respond and make eye contact. When he hears you getting angry and speaking in a voice that is louder than normal, he might become scared and cry. He will know something is not right and may become agitated and seek your attention.
- **Form an attachment with his primary caregivers.**
When you respond to your baby's needs especially when he is distressed, your baby will know he can trust and depend on you. With positive, consistent care, he will form secure attachments with you.



7 - 12 Months

By the age of one, your baby is learning more about her world and may even have an opinion about things she likes or dislikes. She is beginning to get around by crawling, walking by holding onto furniture or perhaps even on her own with no support. She is curious to learn about the things around her and can now actively explore. Your baby can now understand simple language and words like “no,” “bye,” or “shoes.”

Your baby will:

- **Begin to intentionally tell you what she wants.**
Your baby will make gestures or point at objects that she wants. She will begin to put her arms out or up when she wants to be picked up. She will begin to babble more and may even say a couple of words to interact and communicate.
- **Begin to miss you when you are not around.**
When you leave the room your baby will notice, become upset and may begin to cry. She misses you when you're not there and looks for you.
- **Begin to seek comfort from you.**
When your baby gets upset or hurt she will want and need to be comforted by you. It is important to respond to your baby's distress by comforting her and giving her words to help her label her feelings.
- **Show you her emotions.**
When your baby gets scared she will want to be near you and may cling to you. When she gets mad she might make a frustrated face. Or when she feels shy she may hide behind you or try to cover her face.
- **Begin to show affection towards you.**
Your baby will want to be hugged and kissed and in return she will hug and kiss you back. She will begin to understand the words “hug” and “kiss” and do these things spontaneously.
- **Develop a sense of herself as a separate person with her own likes and dislikes.**
Your baby is starting to have dislikes and likes about her experiences, her toys and the people around her. She will let you know what she enjoys doing and being around, and what she does not like to do.



13 - 18 Months

Your baby is starting to understand more of what he hears and is enjoying the use of language. He enjoys hearing short stories and simple songs. He will point at pictures in books and try and sing along to songs he is familiar with. Your baby enjoys reading the same books and hearing the same songs over and over; he enjoys knowing what will happen next in the book or song. Repetition helps him memorize simple songs which will help him build his vocabulary.

You baby will:

- **Become more confident and have a greater sense of himself.**
Your baby has more likes and dislikes when it comes to what he plays with, who he wants to play with and when he wants to interact with people.
- **Begin to take ownership of objects belonging to him, such as toys.**
Your baby will have a difficult time with sharing since his toys right now belong to him. You will hear him using words like “no,” “mine,” etc.
- **Notice his peers.**
Your baby is becoming interested in what others are doing or what they are playing with. He may not join in and play with them but rather sit beside them and play on his own. He will watch his friends but may not initiate any interaction with them.
- **Express his emotions to you.**
Your baby will still feel a lot of emotions, so you should comfort him and help him label his feelings. Labeling feelings will give your baby responsibility for his emotions, and with time he will learn how to express them.



19 - 24 Months

Your baby is growing into an independent toddler. She is mastering things on her own and seeks less help from you. She is beginning to engage in imaginary play. As she watches and observes her surroundings, she will begin to imitate the actions of others and try to role-play. She might pick up a broom to “houseclean,” or play “mom” with her dolls, etc. She is beginning to use simple sentences with the words she knows and is beginning to communicate and use language more easily. She notices her friends around her and enjoys their company but may need help mastering her social play skills, like sharing and turn taking.

Your toddler will:

- **Begin to learn about others’ feelings and the concept of empathy.**
Your baby is aware of her friends and is beginning to understand they have feelings just like she does. When someone takes a toy away from a friend or hits a friend, it hurts her and she may cry too. She is beginning to develop empathy for the people she cares for and realizes other people also get sad. Your baby is developing the ability to take another person’s perspective.
- **Want to make her own choices and decisions about how she does things.**
Your baby is becoming more independent as she masters doing things on her own. She will still look for assistance from you when she needs help. She is still dependent on you and knows you will comfort her and respond to her when needed.
- **Begin to develop a sense of imagination as she takes on different roles and engages in pretend play.**
- **Have more words that she uses to express herself and to get what she wants.**
By the age of two, your baby’s communication will evolve from using simple two-word sentences to more complex complete sentences.
- **Parallel play starts with toddlers playing next to each other.**
They may not share or be doing the same activity but they will play next to each other.



25 - 36 Months

Your toddler is confidently exploring the world, and when given the chance, is socially engaged with other children and adults. He is beginning to understand the children's stories you read to him and is talking about his own personal experiences. He is also engaged in more complex imaginary play, from watching and imitating people around him to pretending to be characters he hears about in the books you read to him.

Your toddler will:

- **Be actively forming friendships with his peers when given the chance.**
Your toddler may have one specific friend that he always plays with and prefers to be around. He learns to play, engage and interact with others. Make sure he has consistent play experiences. This is important for his development.
- **Use more language between these months.**
Your toddler will communicate what he wants and how he feels. He is starting to have conversations with friends and adults he's around, sharing details about himself and his adventures. He has a grasp of language and his speech is now more easily understood. His use of words, complete sentences and overall vocabulary will increase significantly.
- **Begin to use words to express his feelings.**
You will know when your toddler is happy, scared, sad or mad. With encouragement he will try and use words to express these feelings, but of course, he will still use gestures, such as walking away, crying or throwing something.
- **Engage in more imaginative play.**
Not only will your toddler imitate the people around him, but he will begin to use his imagination with several objects. He will enjoy pretending different objects symbolize something else—a block turns into a train or play dough turns into a dinosaur.
- **Become more aware of peers and will be increasingly sympathetic toward them when they are upset.**
Your toddler will recognize others' feelings and might even comfort friends when he sees they are upset.
- **Become more engaged in social play skills.**
Your toddler is beginning to learn how to share and take turns. Cooperative play may still be difficult but he is learning to play with others and enjoy their company.