

# 12-Month-Old Developmental Milestones

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Milestones matter! How your baby plays, learns, speaks, acts, and moves offers important clues about their development. Below is a list of milestones that most babies will have achieved by 12 months of age.

## **Social and emotional milestones**

- Plays games with you, like “pat-a-cake”

## **Language and communication milestones**

- Waves “bye-bye”
- Calls a parent “mama,” “dada,” or another special name
- Understands “no” (pauses or stops when you say it)

## **Cognitive milestones (learning, thinking, problem-solving)**

- Puts something in a container, like a block or a cup
- Looks for things they see you hide, like a toy under a blanket

## **Movement and physical development milestones**

- Pulls themselves up to stand
- Walks holding onto furniture
- Drinks from a cup without a lid, as you hold it
- Picks things up between their thumb and pointer finger, like small bits of food

## **Other things to share with your baby’s doctor at their 12-month visit:**

- What are some things you and your baby do together?

- What are some things your baby likes to do?
- Is there anything your baby does or does not do that concerns you?
- Has your baby lost any skills they once had?

You know your baby best. Don't wait. If your baby is not meeting one or more milestones, has lost skills they once had, or if you have other concerns, act early. Talk with your baby's doctor, share your concerns, and ask about developmental screening.

If your doctor is concerned about your baby's development, they may refer your baby to a specialist or to Early On, which is the early intervention program in the State of Michigan (1-800-EARLYON or 1800EarlyOn.org). You can also contact Early On at any point on your own to request an evaluation.

### **You can help your baby grow and learn!**

As your baby's first teacher, you can help their learning and brain development. Try these simple tips and activities in a safe way. Talk with your baby's doctor if you have questions or for more ideas on how to help your baby's development.

- Teach your baby "wanted behaviors." Show them what to do, and use positive words or give them hugs and kisses when they do it. For example, if your baby pulls your pet's tail, teach them how to pet gently and give them a hug when they do it.
- Talk or sing to your baby about what you're doing. For example, "Mommy is washing your hands" or sing, "This is the way we wash our hands."
- Build on what your baby tries to say. If they say "ta," say, "Yes, a truck!" or if they say, "truck," say "Yes, that's a big, blue truck!"
- If your baby is getting into things you don't want them to get into, redirect them quickly and consistently by giving them a toy or moving

them. Save “no” for behaviors that are dangerous. When you say “no,” say it firmly. Do not spank, yell, or give them long explanations.

- Give your baby safe places to explore. Baby-proof your home. For example, move sharp or breakable things out of reach. Lock away medications, chemicals, and cleaning products. Save the Poison Help Line number, (800) 222-1222, in all of your phones.
- Respond with words when your baby points. Babies point to ask for things. For example, say “You want the cup? Here is the cup. It’s your cup.” If they try to say “cup,” celebrate their attempt.
- Point to interesting things you see, such as a truck, bus, or animals. This will help your baby pay attention to what others are showing them through pointing.
- Limit your baby’s screen time (looking at TV, tablets, phones, etc.) to video calling with loved ones. Screen time is not recommended for children younger than 2 years of age. Babies learn best by talking, playing, and interacting with others.
- Give your baby water, breast milk, or plain milk. You don’t need to give your baby juice. Do not give your baby other sugary beverages, such as fruit drinks, soda, sports drinks, or flavored milks.
- Help your baby get used to foods with different tastes and textures. Foods can be smooth, mashed, or finely chopped. Your baby might not like every food on the first try. Give your baby a chance to try foods again and again.
- Give your baby time to get to know a new caregiver. Bring a favorite toy, stuffed animal, or blanket to help comfort your baby.
- Give your baby pots and pans or a small musical instrument like a drum or cymbals. Encourage your baby to make noise.
- Find out about foods that are choking risks. Let your baby practice feeding themselves safe foods with their fingers and using a cup with a

small amount of water. Sit next to your baby and enjoy mealtime together. Expect that there will be spills. Learning is messy and fun!

- Make sure your baby gets enough sleep. Babies who are 4-12 months old need 12-16 hours of sleep a day (including naps). Having consistent sleep times makes this easier!
- “Read” books with your baby. Reading can be talking about pictures. Babies this age like books with things they can feel or flaps they can lift.
- Play together with blocks and other toys that encourage your baby to use their hands.
- Babies learn to calm themselves from caregivers who are calm and make them feel safe. Help your baby learn they can calm down by talking softly, holding, rocking, or singing to them. Let them suck on their fingers or a pacifier.
- Let your baby push things around, such as empty boxes, a “kiddie chair,” or “push toys,” so they can practice walking.
- Encourage your baby to practice walking on their own. Baby walkers are not recommended. Let them hold your hands or hold onto furniture that is safe.

To see more tips and activities, download CDC’s Milestone Tracker app.

Important note: this milestone checklist is not a substitute for a standardized validated developmental screening tool. These developmental milestones show what most children (75% or more) can do by each age. Subject matter experts selected these milestones based on available data and expert consensus.

This handout is adapted from [www.cdc.gov/ActEarly](http://www.cdc.gov/ActEarly)

Scan the QR code for more information:



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