

4-Month-Old Developmental Milestones

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 4 months of age.

Social and emotional milestones

- Smiles on their own to get your attention
- Chuckles (not yet a full laugh) when you try to make them laugh
- Looks at you, moves, or makes sounds to get or keep your attention

Language and communication milestones

- Makes sounds like “ooo” and “aaah” (cooing)
- Makes sounds back when you talk to them
- Turns their head toward the sound of your voice

Cognitive milestones (learning, thinking, problem-solving)

- If hungry, they open their mouth when they see the breast or bottle
- Looks at their hands with interest

Movement and physical development milestones

- Holds their head steady without support when they are held
- Holds a toy when you put it in their hand
- Uses their arms to swing at toys
- Brings their hands to their mouth
- Pushes up onto their elbows or forearms when they're on their tummy

Other things to share with your baby's doctor at their 4-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.

- Respond positively to your baby. Act excited, smile, and talk to them when they make sounds. This teaches them to take turns "talking" back and forth in conversations.
- Provide safe opportunities for your baby to reach for toys, kick at toys, and explore what is around them. For example, put them on a blanket with safe toys.
- Allow your baby to put safe things in their mouth to explore them. This is how babies learn. For example, let them see, hear, and touch things that are not sharp, hot, or small enough to choke on.

- Talk, read, and sing to your baby. This will help them to speak and understand words later.
- Limit your baby's screen time (looking at TV, phones, tablets) 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.
- Feed only breast milk or formula to your baby. Babies are not ready for other foods, water, or other drinks for about the first 6 months of their life. Talk to your doctor about whether or not your baby is ready to start solid foods earlier.
- Give your baby safe toys to play with that are easy to hold, like rattles or cloth books with colorful pictures for their age.
- Let your baby have time to move and interact with people and objects throughout the day. Try not to keep your baby in swings, strollers, or bouncy seats for too long.
- Set routines for sleeping and feeding.
- Lay your baby on their back and show them a bright-colored toy. Move the toy slowly from left to right and up and down to see if they watch how the toy moves.

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

Scan the QR code for more information:



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Reviewer: Sharon Kileny
Edited by: Brittany Batell, MPH MSW

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