

Month 7

Your baby is ready to begin moving around the house so start putting away potential hazards now! It's a good idea to warn the grandparents and other caregivers too so that baby is never in harm's way no matter where he/ she is.

What to expect from your child:

Physically and mentally

- Looks for something that has dropped
- Adjusts position of hand using visual control
- Sits well
- Lunges forward from sitting position to grasp an object
- Feeds himself/ herself a cracker
- Grasps sippy cup more confidently with fingers around cup
- Gets up on all fours and rocks back and forth
- May begin to crawl or shuffle bottom

Language and emotions

- Able to blow kisses and repeat act if praised
- Recognises name and other familiar sounds such as favourite music
- Begins to understand meaning of "No"

Feeding

Baby is ready to be placed on his/ her high chair at mealtimes. Always be watchful, especially if baby loves to lunge forward. Because their meals are supplemented with solids, babies at this age may drink less milk—an average of 18 to 24 ounces a day.

Sleep

Is baby having trouble sleeping? Walk him/ her around the house at bedtime, saying goodnight to each favourite object. This is both soothing and an excellent way to increase his/ her vocabulary.

Ideal toys for this age

- Stacking and nesting toys
- Shape-sorting toys
- Toys that encourage crawling/ standing

Useful tips

Although seven-month-olds are far from social animals, it's not a bad idea to organise play dates with babies of similar age. The benefits are manifold. It can improve your child's cognitive and emotional development. It also serves as a social zone for new parents seeking friends to exchange ideas and experiences with.

Month 8

Baby is in a busy phase now, ready to use his/ her hands for a variety of meaningful gestures. He/ she is quite the explorer now too so always keep a close eye on baby's movements! Keep in mind that each child is different. It's normal for babies to achieve these milestones a little later than others. Do consult your child's paediatrician if you are worried.

What to expect from your child:

Physically and mentally

- Understands object permanence—that his/ her toys don't disappear when hidden
- Crawls easily, even when holding an object
- Uses thumb and index finger (pincer grasp) to pick up or move toys around and also investigate small spaces
- Remembers recent events
- May attempt to stand, while holding onto a chair or table

Language and emotions

- Begins to show signs of extreme attachment to main caregiver – also called 'separation anxiety'
- Experiments with a variety of vowel and possibly, consonant sounds

Sleep

Babies at this age may wake up at night all over again. It can be frustrating for parents who have gotten used to getting some sleep at last. But be patient. Your baby will soon be getting more active and as a result, tire more easily and sleep better too.

Ideal toys for this age

- Toys with attachments like levers and buttons that produce sounds when pressed
- Baby-friendly snap-together toys
- Board books that encourage pointing, touching, stroking etc

Useful tips

Encourage your baby to get physically involved with toys. If he/she drops a toy, teach baby to lunge, reach for it or roll it to you on his/ her own. Help to show baby what happens when he/ she pushes a button or lever. These exercises will help to strengthen your child's muscles for other physical changes to come.

Month 9

Watch out for an increasingly independent child! Your baby may move so quickly that you won't realise he/ she is already across the room in mere seconds. You'll also find that objects placed out of reach previously are no longer safe as baby begins pulling himself/ herself up to a standing position.

What to expect from your child:

Physically and mentally

- Sits, crawls and shuffles more easily and confidently
- Stands by pulling himself/ herself up while holding onto something
- Has more developed pincer grasp
- Shakes, bangs, drops and throws things
- Waves goodbye
- Begins to enjoy peek-a-boo and other simple games
- May walk while holding onto furniture (also called cruising)

Language and emotions

- Understands simple words and possibly even phrases
- Baby's personality and likes and dislikes are easier to determine
- May become emotionally attached to a "security" object like a doll, plush toy or blanket

Feeding

Your baby will now have a distinct preference for certain foods. While this can be helpful at feeding time, you will still need to encourage variety by introducing new, healthy ingredients. Baby may also want to exert new-found independence by feeding himself/ herself. One solution is to present baby an extra spoon during mealtimes to prevent potential tussles.

Ideal toys for this age

- Toys that encourage standing/ cruising
- Role-play toys such as toy telephones
- Toys that encourage language development

Useful tips

Speak to baby often to encourage speech. Reserve "No" for situations that really demand it. This ensures that your baby develops the self-confidence and independence to try something new on his/ her own.