

your child @™

highlights of what's happening
at this stage of your child's development...

4 to 6 months

By about 4 to 6 months, your baby will be cooing and gurgling, wiggling and kicking, rolling over and trying to sit up by herself. Remember to talk, sing and read to your baby every day, and let her use soft and colorful books as toys. Your loving relationship with her will make all the difference in her learning.

your child's health

The Well Visit

At 4 months, your baby may have another well visit. Prepare for the visit by observing your baby's habits and making notes about questions you may have. Bring supplies with you such as books or toys to entertain him, a blanket to keep him warm and diapers and wipes to change him.

take note...

According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, at 4 months let your doctor know if your baby:

- Doesn't seem to respond to loud noises.
- Doesn't reach for and grasp toys.
- Doesn't babble or try to imitate any of your sounds.
- Doesn't push down with her legs when her feet are placed on a firm surface.
- Has trouble moving her eyes in all directions.
- Doesn't pay attention to new faces, or seems very frightened by new faces or surroundings.

Contact your doctor if issues about your child's health and development or illnesses arise between visits and always call your doctor if your baby is older than three months and has a temperature of 101^o F or higher. Your baby's next visit may be at 6 months.

Nutrition

Generally, you should introduce single ingredient cereals at around 4 to 6 months, although breast milk or iron-fortified formula are still the primary forms of nutrition. Basic strategies for starting solids are:

- Mix single ingredient solids like rice cereal with equal amounts of breast milk or formula.
- Start with one feeding of solids a day. Add a second when your baby can eat two to three tablespoons per feeding.
- When your baby becomes used to spoon feedings, add single ingredient smooth or pureed foods, like carrots, peas or apples, or "stage 1" baby foods in the jar.

Sleep

At this age, your baby should be sleeping about 15 hours per day. He may be taking either 2 or 3 daytime naps and may be waking twice per night for feedings. Although your baby is too young to have a regular sleep schedule, there are steps you can take to help him learn healthy sleep habits:

- Put him to bed between 6 pm–8 pm every night.
- Start a bedtime routine that you can follow consistently, no matter where you are. Activities might include giving your baby a bath, singing a song, reading a book, and hugging good night.
- Begin to teach your baby to fall asleep on his own. Although he may cry at first, he will soon learn that when he goes into his crib, it's time to go to sleep. There are different approaches to teaching a child to fall asleep on his own. One is to not respond to your baby's cries at night. Another is to respond quickly, but gradually spend less time with him. Pick the approach that feels right for you and stick to it.

safety tip...

Although the risk of SIDS decreases once your baby can roll over on his own, you should still place your baby to sleep on his back (don't worry if he rolls over on his own). Also, bring the mattress down one level if your baby can sit up; don't put toys, pillows and large blankets in the crib with your baby; and keep the temperature in your baby's room comfortable for an adult.

Typical immunizations at this age can include:

- DtaP or DTP
- Polio
- Hepatitis B
- Hib
- Prevnar (pneumococcal conjugate)



Sources: *Your Baby's First Year* and *Caring for Your Baby and Young Child*, American Academy of Pediatrics, Steven P. Shelov, MD, FAAP, editor in chief; *Understanding Children*, Civitas and Richard Saul Wurman; *KidBasics*, Civitas; *Healthy Sleep, Happy Child*, Marc Weissbluth, MD.

Civitas thanks Parents as Teachers, an international early childhood parent education and family support program, for their ongoing support.

your child @TM

4 to 6 months

your child's growth and development

safety tip...

Keep small objects that present a choking hazard away from your baby. (Anything that fits in a toilet paper tube is too small.)

Between 4 and 6 months, you will be able to observe amazing changes in your baby. Your child may:

Physically

- Try to grab things with her hands.
- Wiggle and kick with her arms and legs.
- Sit with support.
- Begin teething.
- Roll over from stomach to back and back to stomach.

Socially and Emotionally

- Respond to a shaking rattle and peek-a-boo games.
- Express herself by laughing when happy or crying or turning away to showing signs of fear, anger or disgust.

Intellectually

- Use eyes and hands together.
- Explore objects with her mouth.
- Use verbal and non-verbal cues to signal her needs.
- Understand that she can reach to touch objects.
- Try to talk to image in mirror.

nurturing your child

safety tip...

Never shake or spank your baby. Shaking can cause brain damage.

Discipline

Discipline is never appropriate for babies. Since they cannot control their actions, they should not be held accountable for them. At this age, babies simply need your attention and affection. Therefore, you should always pick up your baby when she cries, and try to read and respond to all of her needs. You cannot spoil your baby at this age.

Play

Play with your baby! Early exposure to simple toys will activate your baby's imagination and help him grow. Also, your playful loving care will help you form a strong, secure relationship with your baby. Try activities like these:

- Help your baby hug stuffed animals. Use them to touch and tickle your baby.
- Stack plastic rings and knock them down.
- Place your baby on his tummy to help strengthen his neck, torso and upper body.

Literacy

Your baby has already begun to learn language by listening to you talk, tell stories and sing songs. When she moves her mouth and makes sounds, she is trying to imitate you. Also, the first steps towards writing begin when she learns to grasp at objects. So, even at this young age, there is a lot you can do to help her skills along:

- Let her listen to songs and music with different rhythms.
- Surround your child with books by incorporating reading into your daily routines.
- Give your baby cloth or board books that have pictures with bright contrasting colors, and textures and objects to touch and feel.

your child's safety

remember...

Never leave your baby unattended anywhere near water. Babies can drown in less than 1 inch of water.

In the bath

- To prevent burns, always check the temperature of the water before setting your baby in the water. Also, never put a baby in a tub with running water since the temperature can quickly change and burn the baby.
- Fill the bath with only 2 to 3 inches of water.

In the car

Your baby must always ride in a car seat that is:

- Properly attached or secured, and rear-facing.
- In the backseat (ideally, in the middle of the backseat).
- For more information go to www.fitforakid.org.

Around the house

- Do not give your child toys with small parts to play with or chew. They present a choking hazard.
- Never leave your baby on a bed, couch or chair where she can roll off and fall. A baby may move faster than you would expect and get seriously hurt.
- Contact poison control immediately if you think your child has eaten or drunk something poisonous:
1-800-222-1222.

Born Learning™ is a public engagement and material distribution campaign that provides important information about what young children need every day to ensure quality early learning. Designed to support you in your critical role as a child's first teacher, Born Learning materials are made available through the efforts of United Way, United Way Success By 6 and Civitas.

For more information, visit us online at bornlearning.org.

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