



Our Children | أطفالنا
are Our Lives | حياتنا

4-6 MONTHS GETTING BIGGER EVERY DAY

This section includes facts, guidance, and ideas for you to try out with your baby aged 4 to 6 months. This can help you to see a bit more into the world of babies, but you know your child best; enjoy getting to know more about your baby.

In this age range you will likely notice that your baby:



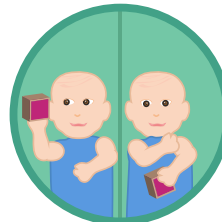
Usually able to sit with support, with you or a cushion behind them



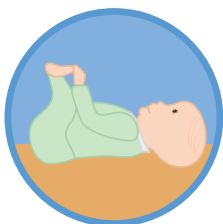
Starts to support her body on her own legs if you hold her in standing position



Rolls from back to front and front to back by 6 months



Moves object from one hand to other



Grabs at his feet and toes when lying on back



Recognizes familiar things and people



May hold out arms to be picked up



Starts to understand cause and effect



May show displeasure when object or person goes away



May recognize his or her own name



IS YOUR CHILD ON TRACK?

Babies develop at their own pace. If something worries you, seek help and guidance from a healthcare professional. It is particularly important that you bring your baby to the doctor if any of the following are true for your baby. Additionally, if your child is not on-track for whatever reason, alongside seeking medical guidance here are some things you can do to help them.

OBSERVATIONS

- Seems very stiff, tight muscles
- Seems very floppy, like a rag doll
- Head still flops back when body is pulled to sitting position—at 5 months still exhibits head lag
- Shows no affection for the person who cares for them
- Does not seem to enjoy being around people

WAYS TO SUPPORT YOUR CHILD

- Try to move her arms and legs regularly, in all directions, until they are completely bended or extended. Do this when the child is relaxed. Remember to engage with her through songs or talking.
- Stimulate her to move around, follow objects, and keep postures. Remember, it is easier for her to move her hands when she is securely held from the chest down. Alternatively, it is easier for her to move her legs when the upper chest and shoulder is fixed, or the hands are holding onto something.
- Keep your child belly-down with a rolled up towel under this chest (his hands should touch the ground near his head). Lay in front of him and try to catch his attention, stimulating him to raise his head. Play like this 5 min at a time.
- Seek a medical consultation.
- Be sure to keep talking, smiling, playing and holding her close even if she is not responding affectionately.
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- One or both eyes consistently turn in or out

- Persistent tearing, eye drainage, or sensitivity to light

- Does not respond to sounds around them

- Has difficulty getting objects to mouth

- Does not roll over (stomach to back) by 6 months

- Cannot sit with help by 6 months (not by themselves)

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- Does not laugh or make squealing sounds by 5 months

- Does not actively reach for objects by 6 months

- Seek a medical consultation.

- Encourage her to track objects with her eyes by moving them slowly in front of her field of vision.

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- Make sure she is looking at you when you talk and play with him.

- Help her move objects to her mouth. Help her grasp them and show her the motion.

- Try to help her by rolling his shoulder and stimulate her leg to roll and/or the other way around, roll her leg and stimulate her shoulder to roll.

- Put her in a situation when the back and the hips can be partially supported. Also try to fix the leg to the ground with your hand or your own leg and slowly reduce the support.

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- Play with her with sounds. Keep talking with her and also pronounce easy sounds and blow a raspberry at her!

- When playing with her, place objects or toys she likes out in front of her and encourage her to reach for them. Support her hands and arms, if necessary.



JUST PART OF WHAT MAKES THEM UNIQUE

Some babies are born with fluctuant muscle tone, which can mean that they will likely take more time to reach certain physical milestones (like supporting their head, reaching for toys, grasping, rolling) and require more stimulation of their body. Take advantage of routine tasks, like changing your baby's diaper, to provide their little body with extra stimulation. You might:

- Gently roll them slowly from one side to the other as you take care of their diaper; stimulating them to accompany the movement with legs and arms
- Hold their hands and gently move their arms
- Help them to grasp a safe object and bring it to their mouth
- When your baby is on his belly, place and hold his elbow under his shoulder and stimulate him to look up
- Remember to smile, look them in the eye and talk them through what you are doing
- Play! Find a position (posture) that allows your baby child to be more active
- Tickle, gently squeeze, stroke, or help them to move their upper body or lower body at different times. This will be easier if you secure the other part of their body. For example, it is easier to play with their hands and arms if you hold their body and legs close.

While every baby benefit from this sort of engagement, you will be more confident if you know how to support your baby according to his own abilities and needs. Talk to your healthcare professional about what specific exercises or activities you can do to help your baby thrive.

As well, it can help parents enormously to speak with parents of other babies who are the same age. All parents can share their stories of nappies and long nights, while other parents of babies with similar difficulties as your baby, can help you see your situation differently, share resources, and their experience. If you need help finding contacts, get in touch with **NATIONAL ENTITY SUPPORTING CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES** to connect with other parents.

EAT WELL

In the second three months of life...



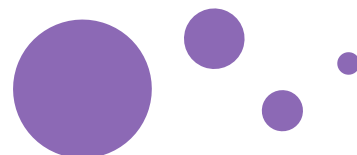
Baby brains develop quickly at this age, making them incredibly curious about everything going on around them. This is why they look around and get distracted while eating.

Babies this age often change their feeding habits; they can breastfeed or drink a lot of milk quicker than before; however, it is normal that they will suddenly want more or less milk, more frequently or at odd times.

DID YOU KNOW THAT...



Giving a baby solid food or cereals before 6 months can hurt their insides, as their bodies are not ready. Long ago people believed that babies this age cried more or woke up at night because they were hungry, so they used to try to give them solid food too soon. Today, research shows us that babies this age are unsettled as they are going through development spurts that can cause changes in appetite and sleep patterns. Have a look at **Respond** section for information on how to help everyone get better sleep.



AND HOW ARE YOU DOING TODAY?

With a baby this age who is bobbing on and off the breast, mothers can feel exhausted, and frustrated with a lack of bodily independence, breast refusal or feeds close together. This is normal, but it can be hard. It might help to express some milk and let family or friends feed your baby from a bottle or cup so you can go for a walk, take a break, or rest. Try to eat properly as you are still eating for two. See the **Respond** section for simple steps to keep calm and carry on.



HOW CAN I MAKE SURE MY BABY GETS ENOUGH MILK?

- Breastfeeding exclusively from birth to around six months is the best choice for most babies and mothers.
- Look out for signs of hunger and signs your baby is full. You cannot always feed your baby straightaway, but when you miss the signs and your baby gets very hungry, he can cry and get panicky. This upsets him and makes it harder to feed him, as he flaps his arms and thrashes about, so feeding earlier is better when you can manage it.

HUNGRY

- Puts hands to mouth
- Turns head towards breast or bottle
- Licks or smacks lips

FULL

- Closes mouth
- Turns head away from breast or bottle
- Relaxes body and hands

- If your baby gets distracted while eating, try sitting with the tv off, the phone away, give older children a book or quiet toy to play with, and feed her in a quiet and calm way.
- For more info on storing and feeding breastmilk to your baby while you are away from your baby for work, sleep, illness, or to take care of yourself, please see [NATIONAL GUIDANCE ON BREASTFEEDING AND EXPRESSING MILK](#)



Know and learn these signs of danger. Take your baby immediately to a doctor if he:

- Stops feeding, or vomits repeatedly
- Seems to have few or no tears when they cry
- Has very dry lips and a dry mouth
- Has dark yellow pee or has not had a pee diaper in last 12 hours

GROW STRONG

In the second three months of life...

Babies double their birthweight between 4–6 months, their heads grow rapidly as the brain develops, and many will drool all the time even if they have no teeth coming through.

A baby's risk of cot death or SIDS peaks at 4–6 months of age. **Always put your baby to sleep lying on their back**, ideally in their own bed in your room. Keep their sleeping space clear of toys or thick blankets, dress them for the temperature, and never allow people to smoke near them.



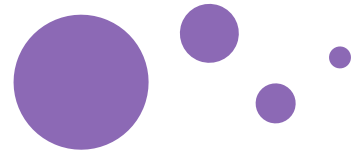
DID YOU KNOW THAT...



All babies go through development spurts at predictable moments. Here is what you need to know:

- often happens around months 3, 6 and 9,
- increased crying, grumpiness, and bad mood,
- increased appetite but sometimes picky with food,
- difficulty falling and staying asleep compared to previous weeks or months before.

This can be surprising and unsettling, but it is usually short and is often accompanied by new skills like rolling over or grabbing a toy.



AND HOW ARE YOU DOING TODAY?

Babies this age are more playful and interactive, which often makes them a lot of fun. Many parents also find this age difficult as they are exposed to different routines, changes in lifestyles and identity, for mothers and fathers, as well as shifts in your relationship. Making the effort to notice your stress, doing what you can to avoid and manage your stress can help everyone cope under pressure, so that you can take care of yourself and your family.

Try out the Fathers' and Mothers' Quizzes to get some insights into how you are both feeling and how to help, and take a look at the Respond section for evidence-based guidance on how to keep calm and work together.

HOW CAN I HELP MY BABY TO GROW STRONG AND HEALTHY?

- Place your baby lying on their tummy on a clean blanket or towel on the floor for up to 30 minutes a day, under your close supervision and not at a sleep time, to help them develop strong muscles. It is normal that they squirm a bit at first – offer a toy.
- Babies this age can grasp things with their hands and love to follow moving things with their eyes. Offer clean, safe toys or household objects like a plastic cup or spoon.



Children with a disability or with an established developmental delay, benefit from many of these ideas, and may also need specific exercises or support. Talk with **NATIONAL SERVICE** about what you can do at home to help your little one grow strong.

- Take your baby to the doctor for a wellness visit (usually around 4 months) and make sure they are up to date on all vaccines **NATIONAL VACCINATION SCHEDULE**, growth, and development screenings
- Many babies this age will catch their first cold. Babies do not understand why they feel pain or are sick, have trouble sleeping, and may be grumpy and cry more. They may not have much appetite, but do encourage them to drink, keep them close, and try to get some help from family and friends. Be watchful and visit a doctor quickly if needed.



Know and learn these signs of danger. Take your baby immediately to a doctor if he or she:

- Stops feeding well
- Convulses or has a fit since birth—arms and legs going stiff and shaking
- Breathes fast: Two counts of 60 breaths or more in one minute
- Sucks her chest in under her ribs and around her throat as she tries to breath
- Has a high temperature: 38°C or more
- Has a very low temperature: 35.4°C or less
- Moves only when stimulated, or no movement even on stimulation



PLAY HAPPILY

In the second three months of life...

Babies do not need special toys. Often they love to play with a plastic cup, a shaker, and their favourite person... you! Spending just 15 minutes every day chatting and passing clean safe objects or toys to each other is a fun break that builds your baby's brain. This is a great moment to get into a simple day-to-day routine with your baby. This does not mean being rigid or watching the clock; it just means doing things in the same order.

DID YOU KNOW THAT...



Chatting with your child or telling them stories through day-to-day activities like dressing or bathing is one of the most important things you can do to build a warm relationship with your baby and build their brain!



AND HOW ARE YOU DOING TODAY?

While you love the smiles and giggles, it is common to feel a bit lost during this time – out-of-sync with your old routine and not yet settled into a new life with a new family member. It can help to reach out to your family, friends, and other parents in your community for support, and make some routines for time alone. Even 1 hour alone every week to have a coffee, meet a friend, go for a walk, exercise, or get a haircut can give you a boost for the rest of the week. See the **Respond section** for some ideas on how to keep calm and keep smiling.



HOW CAN I SUPPORT MY BABY TO PLAY AND DEVELOP HEALTHILY?

- Make a habit of looking at a book together, chatting with your baby before nap-times, bedtimes or after a meal. Just 10min a day makes a huge difference to their learning.
- As well as playing on their tummy, babies love to lie under and play with a "baby gym," grabbing and looking at different objects. A towel under them and some clean and safe household objects work well!
- Chat with your baby as you care for her. Describe what you are doing; I am going to change your nappy now; I know it will feel cold for a moment and then you will feel all clean and lovely again.
- Listen and pay attention to your baby's "words" or invitations to chat. Answer the baby's sounds and movements, make the same noises and taking turns.
- Many babies love music and different sounds; put on a song, feel vibrations, clap hands, and dance.



LOVE DEEPLY

In the first three months of life...

Your baby's lips are full of nerves that help him get to feel what something is, so he likes to put objects in their mouths as a way of "feeling" it. But babies can choke easily so:

- Make sure everything they can access or play with is bigger than their own hand,
- Be very careful with burst balloons, small balls or hard sweets, stickers, and small toys.
- Teach your older children to keep their small toys or other things away from your baby.
- Keep wires, curtain ties, and other strings away from where they play and sleep.

DID YOU KNOW THAT...



Each baby has her own personality, interests, and dislikes just like parents. You can learn about babies and what they like from this pack, your friends, family, books, or your doctor but you can really only learn about your baby from your baby. Take the time to get to know them and build your communication so that you grow with them over these early months.



AND HOW ARE YOU DOING TODAY?

While this can be an unpredictable time with your baby, it is important that you get as much sleep as possible to keep your strength up. Avoid binge-watching tv, reduce your coffee and tea in the afternoon, read, pray, or meditate before bed, and sort out a way to share night-time parenting so that everyone gets some rest. In some families, couples share these responsibilities by being “on-call” on different nights, while other couples rotate the early and the late shift. If mum is breastfeeding it is very important that dad steps up at night in this way. Research shows that fathers’ involvement in helping their baby to sleep at this age, predicts their baby’s sleep quality and length at 12 months and supports the development of a lifelong bond of love. See **Respond section** for more ideas about babies this age and sleep.

HOW CAN YOU SUPPORT YOUR BABY TO PLAY AND DEVELOP HEALTHILY?

- Babies, like all people, show their feelings in different ways, through different expressions, flapping her limbs, smiling, and crying. Watch your baby to learn her expressions, show her you care by mirroring her joy or happiness and comforting her distress or fear.
- Always supervise your baby closely and never leave a baby this age alone on a bed, table, or high place as you never know when they start to roll or shuffle – even a low fall can be fatal.
- Show older children in the home how to be a caring big sister or brother and offer genuine praise for their efforts to be gentle. Make sure they see and hear you tell other people how great they are as a big brother or sister, and how you appreciate them for it.
- Read the Safety First sheet, and complete a basic assessment of your home and other places where your baby spends a lot of time (at grandmother’s perhaps), to identify hazards in sleeping, playing, and other spaces. Especially for this age as your baby begins to become more interactive with her environment, make sure sleeping places, materials to sleep, and changing tables are safe for your baby.

CONCLUSION

In this age range you might begin to feel like time is passing too quickly, as your baby grows and changes each new day. Whenever possible, in your own way, try to cherish the little moments with your growing baby and enjoy the process of being a parent.