

Ages & Stages for Caregivers

9–12 months

By the time babies reach 9 months old, they have a distinct personality, are moving around their environment more, and display many different emotions. In short, they have become more challenging *and* more fun to interact with! This *Ages and Stages for Caregivers* will give you a snapshot view of what to expect from babies this age and what you can do to support their development.

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SIGNS OF DEVELOPMENT —by 12 months

(individual development varies)

Developing Body

- Weighs 17-27 pounds
- Measures 27-32 inches long
- Sleeps 11-13 hours at night
- Can eat meat, eggs, and cheese
- Stands alone
- Walks but may still prefer crawling
- Climbs
- Can remove lids from containers
- Drinks from a cup
- May prefer one hand over the other

Developing Mind

- Can group objects that are alike
- Curious about small openings, objects that turn, switches, etc.
- Can identify many items by name, including body parts, people, toys, animals, etc.
- Can solve problems through trial and error
- Has an increasingly long memory
- Imitates action seen at another time or in another place

Developing Communication

- Can follow your line of vision and looks at what you are looking at
- Follows conversational turn-taking when interacting with others
- Uses gestures, eye contact, and sounds to direct your behavior
- May begin saying first words, experimenting with word sounds

Developing Self

- Has strong attachment to primary caregivers
- Has developed fears of strangers, separation from parents, unfamiliar objects and places
- Shows preferences for people, toys, activities, food, etc.
- Can understand the emotions of others

HOW YOU CAN HELP

Encourage baby's muscle development.

Provide safe, sturdy objects that he can climb on, crawl over, pull himself up by, and walk while holding onto.

This will also:

- Help him gain an awareness of his own body in relation to his environment.
- Help develop balance and coordination.

Build on baby's curiosity and drive to understand his world.

Make a book of photos of objects and people that he is familiar with; group them into categories (toys, friends, furniture, family, etc.).

This will also:

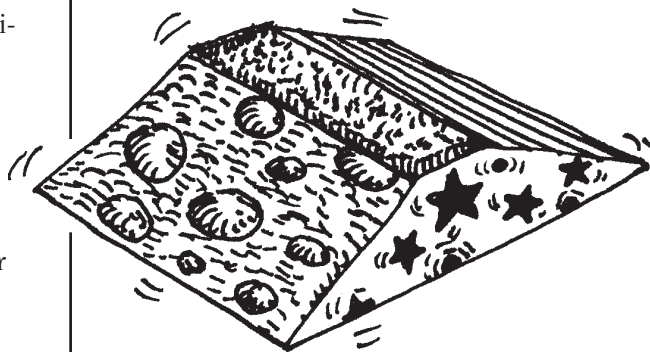
- Build his vocabulary and encourage speaking.
- Give him a sense of ownership and help develop his sense of identity.

Stimulate relationships with others.

Encourage older children to play simple games of hide-and-seek, peek-a-boo, silly faces, or chase with baby.

This will also:

- Encourage communication skills with other children.
- Strengthen coordination and muscle strength.





A Great Place to Grow

Toys and Materials

- Secure furniture for baby to pull himself up by and to cruise around
- Toys that he can pull apart and put back together
- Music tapes/CDs for him to “dance” to

Safety Tips

Baby walkers are responsible for more injuries than any other nursery product. If you do choose to use a walker with babies in your care, use extreme caution and follow these guidelines:

- Secure gates and doors leading to steps
- Keep child within view
- Keep child away from hot surfaces or containers
- Beware of dangling appliance cords
- Keep child away from toilets, pools, and other sources of standing water.

Consumer Product Safety Commission

HELP!

I have a 9-month-old who has been in my program for five months. She seemed to adjust very well when she started and things have been great. Just recently, she's started to put up a real fuss in the morning when mom drops her off. Why is she doing this now when she hadn't before?

Believe it or not, this baby is acting quite normally, given her age—her behavior is called “separation anxiety” and babies in all cultures begin to show it around this age. It makes sense if you think about concepts that she understands now that she didn't when she was younger: when Mom goes away, she still exists somewhere—just not here; her own behavior can affect Mom's behavior; and, even though she has a warm, secure relationship with you, you are not Mom.

Considering that her distress reflects healthy development, it's not behavior that you are likely to eliminate all together, or even want to. But there are ways to keep it to a minimum. Work with Mom to develop a relatively short, consistent routine for drop off time. Accept the baby from Mom with soothing, comforting words and actions. She may find comfort in holding a blanket or sleepy toy from home. While she's cuddling with you, introduce a favorite book or toy to help refocus her attention.

Working with Parents

Parents can certainly use your help when dealing with a baby going through separation anxiety. They may have conflicting emotions: they feel good that their child wants to be with them, but they also feel guilty that they have to leave them crying. Encourage them to develop a routine that they stick to, no matter what. A warm hug and kiss, then the hand off to you with a promise that they will be back later, and a final goodbye is all that's needed. For

parents who feel as though they need to stay until baby has stopped crying, reassure them that the crying will stop soon after they leave. Other parents may try leaving without letting the baby know, thinking that it will be easier on everyone. Unfortunately, it only heightens baby's fear and confusion and actually worsens the problem. For the sake of parents and baby, be patient, understanding, reassuring, and calm through this phase of development.

What to do if you are concerned about a child's development

Child care providers are often in a position to be the first to notice when a young child has a developmental delay, chronic illness, or disability. If you suspect a child's behavior is indicating a problem:

- Talk with parents in a calm way, being careful to say that there probably isn't a problem, but that it would be worth checking out further.
- Work **with** parents, comparing what you have seen in child care with what they have seen at home and talking together about what to do next.
- Suggest resources, community professionals, articles to read, etc.
- Be a compassionate listener; hearing that there may be something wrong with your baby is very tough.

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Reference: Berk, L. (2000). *Child Development* (5th ed.). Needham Heights, MA: Allyn & Bacon.