

# **CHILDREN'S DEVELOPMENT SIX TO NINE MONTHS**

*While reading this information, please keep in mind that all children are unique. While the sequence of development is practically the same for all children (for example, most children learn to crawl before they learn to walk), each child's rate of development is different. There is a wide variation in normal development. Some children reach developmental milestones earlier than others. Some reach them later than others. Rarely does a delay in reaching a developmental milestone mean that there is a problem. In most cases, delays turn out to be normal. Remember that premature infants generally reach developmental milestones later than other infants of the same birth age. Parents with any questions or concerns about their children's development should contact their children's health care provider.*

## **Highlights in Physical Development**

**\*Eye/Hand Coordination.** By six months of age many infants will begin reaching for objects quickly without jerkiness and may be able to feed themselves a cracker or similar food. Not only do infants this age try to get objects within their reach but also objects out of their reach. Many infants are also able to look from hand to object, to hold one object while looking for a second object, and to follow the movements of their hands with their eyes. At this age

many infants begin to poke at objects with their index fingers. After six months many infants may be able to manipulate a cup and hold it by the handle. Many infants this age begin to reach for objects with one arm instead of both. At about eight months of age, as dexterity improves, many infants will use a pincher movement to grasp small objects, and they will begin to clap and wave their hands. After they begin to clap their hands, they will then begin to transfer objects from hand to hand, and bang objects together.

**\*Feeding/Eating.** During about the sixth month of age, most infants begin to chew. This new ability, combined with increasing eye/hand coordination, allows infants to begin feeding themselves. At about six months of age, many children begin to develop preferences for certain foods, and by eight months, many insist on feeding themselves most of the time.

**\*Rolling.** After six months of age, many infants are able to twist and turn themselves in all directions, and many can roll over from their backs to their stomachs.

**\*Sitting.** At six months of age, the ability to sit is gradually improving. At this age infants may be able to sit unsupported for a few seconds, and by the seventh month most infants will be able to sit for longer periods of time, though they will still be unsteady and may have to bend forward to balance

themselves. By eight months most infants will be able to sit up completely unsupported, and they will be able to turn around while sitting.

**\*Crawling/Walking.** At six months of age, most infants begin to support the top half of their bodies on their outstretched arms. One of the first signs of crawling behavior is the ability to bend the knees below the body. After six months of age, many infants will begin to creep by propelling on the stomach with the legs and steering with the arms. Infants may begin to crawl forward, backward, or both. As infants practice and perfect the art of creeping and crawling, they will begin to push up on their knees and rock back and forth, usually during the seventh month. At this time, most infants are also able to creep with an object in one or both hands. Between seven and eight months, some infants may be able to pull themselves up to a standing position from a sitting position, get into a sitting position from lying on the stomach, and walk holding on to furniture.

### **Highlights in Cognitive/Language Development**

By six months of age most infants begin babbling with active vocalization, and these vocalizations will be in increasingly speech-like syllables. It is during this stage that infants listen to their own vocalizations, and many will amuse themselves by making sounds. As language skills develop, infants will

respond to their own names, and they will be able to tell different voices apart. At this age, many infants will appear to recognize words like "Daddy," "Mama," and "bye-bye," and they may be able to say these words during the seventh month, but without meaning. By eight months of age, most infants will continue to babble, but they will also be able to shout to attract attention.

At six months of age, many infants will begin to show preferences for certain foods. Some will be able to sleep through the night by this time.

During the seventh month of age, many children begin to learn the implications of familiar acts. As they approach the eighth month of age many will be able to recall a past event or action of their own.

### **Highlights in Social Development**

By six months of age, social behavior in infants becomes much more active. Infants begin to pay much more attention to detail, and they are very interested in the people around them. Infants at this age may pull the hair of people who are holding them, rub their noses or pat their faces.

During the sixth month, many children will smile and laugh spontaneously. As children approach seven months of age, they will begin to smile at familiar

people, and will often stop crying when someone speaks to them.

Six months of age is the time when many infants begin to cry when left by their mothers. This is because infants are beginning to recognize that there is a difference between parents and strangers. This is one of the first stages of stranger anxiety. Separation anxiety also begins after six months of age, and children often protest and become upset whenever they are left by their mothers.

This is a very important period for the social development of children. It is at this age that many infants begin playing simple games like pat-a-cake, and waving bye-bye. Many children begin to show a great desire to be included in social interaction, and will probably wiggle and squeal with delight in anticipation of play. Children this age seem to enjoy mirror play, and they may smile at their own images.



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