

2 Month Boy

Key Thought

You and your baby are establishing routines. These routines help your baby learn trust and to calm himself. Even though a diaper change comes first, he learns he can trust he will be fed next. In the rhythm of day and night he will be learning at night you keep the lights low, you don't play, and you aren't as talkative. He learns night is the time to be quiet and sleep.

What Your Baby is Learning

Physically:

He practices lifting his head and chest off the floor while on his stomach and to hold his head straight forward steadily. He is learning the "Superman" pose (holding his head and legs up when held under his stomach). His head will still bob when held erect in a sitting position, however.

Both eyes will focus while following an object from side to side and begin to follow up and down motion too. This is the first step to developing hand-eye coordination.

Your baby can differentiate familiar voices from other sounds. He looks to see where noises come from.

The jerky arm and leg movements of the newborn are being replaced with smoother, more circular movements. He will begin to grab objects voluntarily now.

He may start drooling. He is putting everything in his mouth, and he is producing more saliva than he can swallow. But this doesn't mean he has started teething yet. His drool coats his toys with disease preventing proteins.

Language:

Your baby will not only coo and gurgle but may begin to babble. Babbling is deliberately practicing sounds that please him. He will repeat the sounds in a regular rhythm or pattern. He is learning that the sounds he hears and the sounds he makes have a relationship. He may watch your mouth while you talk to him. He is becoming fascinated by how it works.

He is learning that certain sounds he makes cause other things to happen. When he cries, you come to meet his needs. When he babbles, you talk back to him and show affection. This is the beginning of his learning about communication and its importance.

Continuing your conversation with your baby, even when he cannot see you, helps him develop a sense of space.

Social:

By distinguishing the sounds around him, your baby is learning which ones are important and which ones are not important. He will recognize his parents' voices.

He will begin to respond differently to mom and dad. Generally, he will become calmer when mom is around, knowing he will have his physical needs met. He will get more excited when dad is around, as if to say, "There's Dad, it's party time!"

He will lock eyes with you and is learning the relationship between voices and faces.

His first big, beaming, toothless smiles are a great reward for all the diapering, feeding, bathing, and cuddling you've been doing.

Ways You Can Help

Eye focus practice.

Hold a brightly colored object 8-12 inches (20-30 cm) from your baby's face and move it from side to side and up and down. Pretty store-bought rattles are nice; use the ones you were given as baby gifts. But any household object will work just as well! Show your baby, shiny foil or a bright plastic measuring spoon.

Your baby is beginning to enjoy more complex patterns. Last month the face and black and white images fascinated him. This month start showing him polka dots and brightly colored objects. Let him watch and touch a wide variety of objects, like soft balls and plastic cookie cutters.

Make a mobile from natural materials, bright objects, or collections from the beach. Hang the mobile over your baby's bed for him to look at when in bed, but not asleep.

Spend lots of time engaging your baby in eye contact. He loves to look at your face and especially your eyes. He sees you best, about 8-12 inches (20-30 cm) away.

Establish routines.

You don't need to hold to a rigid time schedule but attend to your baby's needs in a regular pattern. That pattern will help your baby learn to trust that his needs will be met. He doesn't need to continue to scream when he learns you will be feeding him after you change him. He begins to learn to calm himself when he hears your voice.

Reward your baby for any effort. At this early age your baby is learning when he does something you like, you cuddle him and shower him with affection. Your happy tone of voice and pleasant touch encourage him to repeat the effort.

Safety First.

Your baby is totally dependent on you to protect him. Check the following items:

- Be sure to use a properly installed car seat. If you aren't totally sure yours is safe, in America, your local fire station will check it for you.
- Never leave your baby unattended on a bed or other surface without side rails. One day very soon he will be able to move enough to fall off.
- Never leave your baby alone in a car.
- Don't let your baby play with anything that is small enough to pass through the tube of a toilet paper roll. Anything smaller than that could lodge in your baby's throat.
- Never carry your baby when you are cooking or carrying boiling liquids.
- If you are not sure of your child's safety, let the phone ring. Your friends can leave a message or call back later.

Establish healthy sleep habits.

Your baby will probably be sleeping for about 15 hours a day, but rarely longer than four hours at a time. You will probably still need to feed and change him at least once in the night for another month or so.

But you should begin to be able to recognize the signs that he is getting tired. When he begins to rub his eyes, pull on his ear, or develop faint dark circles under his eyes, take him to his crib right away. You will begin to know instinctively when it is time for a nap.

Start to teach your baby the difference between night and day. When he is awake and alert during the day, keep the room bright, play with him as much as you can, and don't minimize the household noise. If he falls asleep during a feeding, wake him up to finish. When he wakes at night for a feeding, keep the lights dim, the house as quiet as possible, and don't talk to him much during his feeding, and don't rock him after his feeding. Put him to bed as soon as he is burped.

Begin letting your baby fall asleep on his own. Put him down when he is sleepy but still awake. Don't rock or nurse him to sleep. If you rock your baby to sleep every night, why would he expect anything different as he gets older? He should learn that going to sleep alone and in bed is comfortable and pleasant.

What to Expect Next

- Laughs and squeals
- Recognizes parents' voices

- Does mini pushups
- Turns head toward loud sounds

Sensory Overload

Before birth your baby lived in a watery world of muted sounds and faint color. Now your baby is experiencing bright lights, loud noises, and a wide variety of other sensations. Your baby can receive too much stimulation and “overload” his circuits. He has ways to tell you he has had enough and needs a break.

Symptoms of sensory overload:

- Irritability
- Turns away
- Tenses up and arches his back
- Extends his arm and hand as if motioning “Stop!”
- Avoids your gaze
- Intentionally ignores a toy or activity
- Closes his eyes or even goes to sleep when he shouldn’t be ready to sleep

What you can do:

You can avoid sensory overload by carefully watching your baby’s reaction during interaction. You will begin to know his preferences and his level of tolerance for certain activities or experiences. Every child is different and may respond differently at various times.

Learn how your baby responds:

- To the brightness of the room, new things to look at, and color.
- To whether certain pitch or volume sounds calm or excite him.
- To what rhythms relax or energize him.
- To gentle or firm touch on different parts of his body.
- To being held vertically or horizontally, facing up or down.
- To gentle rocking or more rapid movements.
- To odors in and outdoors.
- To different people.
- When he is hungry, tired, sick, or happy

Some children seem hypersensitive to their environment. Premature babies are especially vulnerable. If your baby seems to experience sensory overload easily, you should expose him to only one kind of stimulus at a time, like a certain sound, an interesting sight, or being held and cuddled. You can gradually build his tolerance by adding more than one type of stimulation at a time. What he doesn’t enjoy today may be his favorite entertainment in a week or so.

Swaddling your baby when exposing him to a new kind of stimulation may make him feel more secure and less overwhelmed. Encouraging your baby to suck his thumb or use a pacifier or hold a favorite blanket or stuffed toy during times of stress may help him experience less overload.

It is important to respond by calming your baby when he shows signs of overload so that he doesn't cry excessively, withdraw from contact with people, or attempt to escape into sleep. Don't fret if you miss the signs from time to time. All parents do. But everyone will be more peaceful when you can predict and prevent sensory overload.

Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank you for that beautiful smile on my baby's face. I see now why my praise to You pleases You so much. Help me to continue to learn about You as I care for the baby You gave me. In Jesus' name. Amen.