

3 Months Girl

Key Thought

It is important that your baby begins to understand that her actions cause responses. She is learning that her cries bring relief from discomfort, her smiles trigger smiles from her family and pulling on her mobile makes the objects move. All these responses encourage her to try new things and to see the effect. Cause and effect are one of the first steps to learning that your baby takes.

What Your Baby is Learning

Physically:

She is learning to reach, grasp, and bat accurately at objects. She is beginning to be able to put her hands together and will begin to bring objects to her mouth to explore. Place a simple mobile on her bed so that your baby can reach and pull items into her mouth. A homemade mobile that allows you to change objects often will keep her from getting bored and will encourage her muscle development and hand-eye coordination.

Lifting her head and shoulders high using her arms for support is strengthening the muscles she'll use to roll over. She may amaze both you and her when she flips from her back to her front or vice versa. It may be about a month until she does this regularly.

She is learning to follow you with her eyes as you move around the room. She will begin staring at movements and changes in scenery. Provide your baby with a change of perspective by moving her to different areas of the house.

She is beginning to be able to bear some of her weight on her legs. Holding her up and letting her feel some of her weight on her legs will strengthen the muscles.

She is learning to turn her head toward loud sounds. Until now she usually just had a startle reflex to loud sounds.

Socially:

She is learning to respond to familiar faces by smiling, trying to talk, and moving her arms and legs a lot. She is beginning to recognize family members and show pleasure when they interact with her. She will begin to enjoy playing peek-a-boo.

When your baby wakes at night, allow her five to ten minutes to calm herself and go back to sleep. Often, she will wake up due to light sleep patterns and cry out, but not need to be fed or changed. Although you don't want your baby to feel abandoned or uncomfortable, she needs to learn how to go back to sleep on her own.

Language:

From birth your baby's response to voices was physical. She would stop moving her arms and legs or she would cry. But now she will begin to respond to speech by making sounds. She has probably been cooing and babbling for a few weeks, but now when you speak to her, she will babble back. Your enthusiastic response to her attempts at "speech" will encourage better imitation on her part. This is the next step to her being able to talk.

Babies whose parents speak to them often and with a wide vocabulary have significantly higher IQs and better vocabulary when they get older.

Ways You Can Help**Cause and Effect:**

Your baby's mental growth is directly affected by the way her parents and family respond to her. Your baby learns more and faster when those who care for her answer when she cries, smile at her when she smiles, talk to her when she coos, and play with her.

Your baby learns a few things when you answer her cry by coming to her, picking her up, cuddling her, talking softly to her, and meeting her need for a diaper change or food. The first thing she learns is that there is a predictable pattern: discomfort, crying, mother, comfort. The second thing she learns is that a specific action on her part results in a specific action on the part of her mother. This causes her to want to try some other action and see what the response will be.

When she learns that what she does influences what happens to her, she is encouraged to explore more. This is the first building block for self-confidence and a willingness to work to achieve a goal. The child whose needs are neglected does not learn as early or as easily that she can affect what happens to her. The child whose every need is anticipated is equally deprived of learning this relationship. If she never gets to cry and then see her needs met, she will not learn as early or as easily so that she can effect what happens to her, too.

Physical Development:

Be sure to provide some time every day with just a diaper on to encourage free movement of arms and legs. Gently hold one foot at a time so she must pull or push to free herself. Don't frustrate her by holding too tightly but give her some resistance exercise.

Place your baby on her back and slowly pull her up by her hands to a sitting position. Slowly ease her back down. She should be able to hold her head in line with the rest of her body as it is pulled up.

Play with your baby in the mirror. Call her by name and point to facial features by name: eyes, mouth, nose, ears and hair.

Slow dance while holding your baby. She will delight in the smooth rhythmic movements. The motion will stimulate the sense organs deep in your baby's ears that sense position and balance she will need to stand and walk.

Nurture your baby's sense of touch with a variety of tactile experiences. Touching your baby, skin to skin, massaging and playing is relaxing to her. It tends to make her more alert and has a longer attention span.

When you worry about how your baby is developing

Most mothers worry about how their baby is developing from time to time. Although this is normal, you shouldn't be living under a cloud of concern.

If you have concerns, you should be prepared to talk to your baby's doctor about them. It is best to keep a written list, so you don't forget your important concerns when you are with your baby's doctor. You get prepared by carefully observing your baby and recording specific things that concern you. Be careful to record what happened as objectively as possible. For instance, if your baby cries for ten minutes after every feeding, write down the date and time it happens. Don't just write down that your baby doesn't like her food. You may also note what you think it means or why you think it happened. Be ready to tell your doctor you worry that your baby doesn't like her food. But your doctor can evaluate whether she is gaining weight properly and may suggest other reasons she may be crying and what to do about it.

If, however, it does turn out that your baby has serious problems then it is very important that you don't panic. Your baby needs you to function at your peak so that you can get the best help possible for her. You will find it much easier to get the right kind of help if you have learned to make good, clear observations. The doctor only sees your baby for a short while, you can observe her in a wide range of situations over many days. Report on those observations to your doctor who will assist you in finding the right kind of professionals to help you and your baby.

Remember every baby is different. They grow at different rates. They develop skills at different rates. Developmental milestones help you to know what to expect next, but not every baby meets each of these markers at precise times. Your doctor is best qualified to tell you when differences from the average symptoms are to be concerned about.

There are a few articles on [Developmental Delays](#) on the Resources page.

What to Expect Next

- Reaches, grasps with both hands and puts things in her mouth.
- Rolls over both directions
- Imitate speech sounds like: baba, dada

Toys

The many advantages of making your own toys for your baby:

- Toys you make usually don't cost as much as store-bought toys.
- Store bought toys often do only one thing and have limited appeal to a baby.
- You can make toys that please your baby.
- Most babies prefer bright colors and high contrast of light and dark better than pastel pink and blue.
- You tend to be more observant of your baby's development and interests when you make her toys.

Things to keep in mind for any toy you let your baby play with:

- Does the toy have sharp points or edges?
- Are any pieces smaller than two inches (5cm) and could get lodged in a baby's throat?
- Are the paint and glue used nontoxic?
- Is the toy positioned safely and securely.
- Do older children play with the toy in a way it was not designed to be used. If they break it, it might no longer be safe for a baby.

Which toys should you offer to your baby?

Babies have preferences too. A toy one child likes another will ignore. Experiment with your baby's choice of toys.

Don't overwhelm your baby with toys. Put some away and bring out a different selection from time to time. Toys have new appeal if they are not always available.

Ideas for homemade toys:

A mobile for over her bed using a piece of dowel rod across the crib rails, heavy gauge fishing line holding a piece of rubber hose and two small toys that are safe for her to pull to her mouth. Change the toys often to keep up her interest.

Take an empty plastic pop bottle, remove the label, wash it thoroughly and fill it with water. Place small pieces of different colored sponge in the bottle and seal it well. A piece of duct tape will ensure it won't leak. Let your baby push this around to see the sponges float in the water.

Your Baby's Four-Month Doctor Visit

What will happen to your baby:

- Your baby will be weighed and measured, including her head, to make sure she is growing at a healthy and steady rate.
- Your baby will receive several vaccinations. Probably DTP- diphtheria, tetanus, and pertussis (whooping cough), Hib- Hepatitis B, and polio.
- Your baby's eyesight and hearing will be checked

What your doctor may ask:

1. How is your baby sleeping? How many hours does she sleep at night?
2. When, how and how often is your baby eating?
3. What are your baby's bowel movements like? If your baby has had frequent, smelly, watery, mucus-streaked stools it is probably diarrhea and your doctor should know about it.
4. Can your baby roll over one way or sit with support? Your baby is probably beginning to develop these skills.
5. Can your baby do a mini pushup? If your baby is still having difficulty controlling or lifting her head, tell your doctor.
6. What sounds does your baby make? She is probably babbling, squealing and laughing. She is probably drooling and blowing bubbles too. If your baby is making fewer sounds than previously, tell your doctor.
7. What are your baby's new motor skills? She should be reaching for and grabbing objects, bringing both hands together in front of her, kicking with both legs and bouncing on them when held upright. If your baby uses one hand more than the other or keeps her legs stiff and straight, tell your doctor.

8. How is your baby's vision? She is pretty good at following large and small objects with her eyes. If she doesn't follow you with her eyes or seem to notice things until they're very close to her, tell your doctor.

9. How is your baby's hearing? Your baby should be able to recognize her parents' voices. If she doesn't respond to you or turn her head toward sounds, particularly when you talk, tell the doctor.

My questions for the doctor:

1.

2.

3.

Prayer

Heavenly Father, please help us to be the best parents we can be to this child. In so many ways we feel inadequate for the job. Please help us when we don't know what to do for her. Thank you for giving us the wisdom we need. In Jesus' name, Amen.