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- Child development (4) - nine to 12 months

Child development (4) - nine to 12 months

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Tags:

- [Babies and toddlers \(0-3\)](#)
- [Babies and toddlers \(0-3\) - Growth and development](#)

Summary

- The big breakthrough in motor development is that your baby will move all on their own.
- Your baby understands the idea of conversation and, even though they may not have any recognisable words, they will 'chat' with the right voice inflections.
- They will be feeding themselves in the high chair, although they may often be more interested in squishing and feeling the food rather than eating it.

Your baby is moving around now and the pace of life has quickened somewhat. They are 'talking' and making recognisable sounds, and they will love it when you talk to them and repeat single words. Your baby may be clingy and wary of strangers, but they are forming special relationships with family members too. Their unique personality is becoming much clearer to you.

Social and emotional development

It is usually in these three months that your baby begins to understand their special relationship with you, and with relatives and friends. Developmental characteristics include:

- They start to know that when you go away, you will come back again, and that you are still there even when they can't see you - no wonder 'peek-a-boo' and 'hiding' are favourite games.
- They still think that if they can't see you, you can't see them.
- They start to understand they are a person, and can recognise themselves in the mirror.
- They have developed some definite ideas about likes and dislikes - they may kick and resist change or other restrictions to their freedom.
- They smile and babble and try to engage you in conversation.
- They can copy simple hand games like 'clap hands' or 'bye bye'.
- They are clingy and wary of strangers.

Moving around

The big breakthrough in motor development is that they will move on their own. They might pull themselves along with their arms, roll around or crawl on all fours. Safety is an important issue now. You need to baby-proof your house and make sure all dangerous or breakable items are out of reach. Developmental characteristics include:

- They will start to pull themselves to standing and support their weight by holding onto you or furniture.
- Some babies walk by themselves during these months, although many won't walk for some months yet.
- They can pick up an object with their thumb and fingers.
- They poke, point with a finger and transfer objects from one hand to the other.
- They can't control putting things down and may have to drop the object to release it from their grasp.
- They can sit on their own for quite long periods.
- They will be feeding themselves in the high chair, although they may often be more interested in squishing and feeling the food rather than eating it.
- They can drink out of a spouted cup by themselves.

Talking

Your baby understands the idea of conversation and, even though they may not have any recognisable words, they will 'chat' with the right voice inflections. Your baby:

- May be saying simple words like 'mum-mum' and 'dad-dad'
- Recognises several words
- May shake their head for 'no'
- Isn't making the huge variety of sounds anymore, because their sounds are becoming more specific to their own language
- Loves music and rhymes, and will bounce and sway to the rhythm
- Loves the repetition of songs – this helps them learn that language in itself is a musical thing.

Suggested activities

Children of this age still like being with people best of all, but they are starting to have some interest in toys that do something, like move or make a noise. Suggestions on encouraging and supporting your baby's development include:

- Make them a kitchen cupboard of their own so they can open and shut the door.
- Give them pots and spoons to bang.

- Sing songs and repeat phrases.
- Bounce them while singing songs.
- Look at simple books with clear pictures in them.
- Play 'hiding' games.
- Talk to them a lot.
- Sit them on the floor and surround them with toys to play with.
- Encourage them to push a trolley or toddle-car.
- Cuddle and roll on the floor with them.

Signs that suggest a developmental problem

All children are different and develop at different rates, so if your baby doesn't do all the things listed in this article, it may be because they are working on some different area of learning and development. However, if your baby is very different from other children, or if you are worried about their development or it seems to go backwards, seek the advice of a health professional. Signs that could suggest a developmental problem include:

- Doesn't show pleasure when seeing familiar people
- Doesn't show anxiety when separated from main caregiver
- Is not sitting by nine to 10 months of age
- Is not starting to move around by any means
- Is not interested in new objects
- Babbling has not become more complex
- Doesn't babble in 'conversation' with others.

Where to get help

- Your doctor
- Maternal and child health nurse
- The Maternal and Child Health Line is available 24 hours a day Tel. 132 229

Things to remember

- The big breakthrough in motor development is that your baby will move all on their own.
- Your baby understands the idea of conversation and, even though they may not have any recognisable words, they will 'chat' with the right voice inflections.
- They will be feeding themselves in the high chair, although they may often be more interested in squishing and feeling the food rather than eating it.

[References](#)

- Lingham, S & Harvey, D, 1988, *Manual of child development*, Churchill Livingstone.
- Allen, K & Marotz, L, 1999, *Developmental profiles*, Delmar Publishers.

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Babies and toddlers basics

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[Being immunised from an early age helps protect your child against serious childhood infections...](#)

- [Children and health services](#)

[There is a range of subsidised and free health services, including services for mental health and dental health, available for children in Victoria...](#)

- [Early support for a child with disabilities](#)

[For children diagnosed with a disability, getting the support they need as early as possible will give them the best chance of minimising the long-term effects of the disability...](#)

- [Immunisation – deciding which vaccines you need](#)

[Everyone's immunisation needs are different and are influenced by your health, lifestyle, age and occupation...](#)

- [Maternal and child health services](#)

[Your local maternal and child health service will be a great source of support after your baby is born...](#)

- [No Jab No Play](#)

[No Jab No Play – from 1 January 2016, all parents/guardians seeking to enrol their child at an early childhood service in Victoria must provide evidence that the child is fully immunised for their age...](#)

- [Parenting services](#)

[Parenting is one of the most important tasks we undertake but it doesn't always come naturally...](#)

Newborn babies

- [Baby bath - bathing \(video\)](#)

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- [Baby bath - preparation and safety \(video\)](#)

[Detailing on baby bathing from Royal Women's Hospital...](#)

- [Baby bath - skin care \(video\)](#)

[Detail on baby skin care from Royal Women's Hospital...](#)

- [Jaundice in babies](#)

[If your baby is full-term and healthy, mild jaundice is nothing to worry about and will resolve by itself within a week or so...](#)

- [Newborn bloodspot screening](#)

[Every newborn baby in Australia is offered a newborn bloodspot screening test to identify those at risk of rare, but serious, medical conditions...](#)

- [Phenylketonuria \(PKU\)](#)

[PKU is an inherited disorder that prevents the normal breakdown of a protein found in some foods...](#)

- [Phototherapy at Home](#)

[Jaundice is very common in newborns, so it's nothing to be too worried about. Treatment is very easy and safe. It all happens using blue light from a special blanket that you wrap your baby in. The...](#)

- [Premature babies](#)

[Sometimes premature labour can be delayed to increase a baby's chance of survival...](#)

- [Sudden unexpected death in infants \(SUDI and SIDS\)](#)

[You can reduce your baby's risk of sudden unexpected death by providing a safe sleeping environment and avoiding tobacco smoke...](#)

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[The Maternal & Child Health app \(MCH\) provides reliable maternal and child health \(MCH\) information that families can use every day...](#)

Feeding your baby

- [Asthma - pregnancy and breastfeeding](#)

[Pregnant women with asthma need to continue to take their asthma medication as it is important to the health of both mother and baby that the mother's asthma is well managed...](#)

- [Baby care - weaning](#)
[Be guided by your baby and let them set the pace when weaning and introducing solid foods...](#)
- [Bottle feeding - nutrition and safety](#)
[Breastmilk or commercial infant formula is necessary for all babies less than 12 months...](#)
- [Breastfeeding](#)
[Breastfeeding positioning and attachment come naturally to some babies and mothers, but many need time and practice to get it right...](#)
- [Breastfeeding and travel](#)
[Breastmilk protects your baby from illness and infection, so it is the safest drink for your baby while travelling...](#)
- [Breastfeeding and work](#)
[You can successfully combine breastfeeding with work if you have support from your employer, colleagues and family...](#)
- [Breastfeeding and your diet](#)
[Breastfeeding women need to eat regularly and include a wide variety of healthy foods in their diet...](#)
- [Breastfeeding - dealing with mastitis](#)
[Mastitis affects some breastfeeding women and may be caused by blocked milk ducts or a bacterial infection...](#)
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[Your nipples may be sensitive in the first few days after birth, but nipple pain is not a normal part of breastfeeding...](#)
- [Breastfeeding - deciding when to stop](#)
[It is up to you and your baby to decide when breastfeeding should stop...](#)
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[Let your baby feed as much as they want in the first few days to help establish good breastfeeding patterns...](#)
- [Breastfeeding - when to start](#)
[Breastfeeding within the first hour after birth allows your baby to behave instinctively and breastfeed with little intervention...](#)
- [Food for babies - tucker talk tips](#)
[Before six months, breastmilk or formula is the only food and drink that your baby needs...](#)
- [Lactose intolerance](#)
[Symptoms of lactose intolerance include bloating, gas, abdominal pain and diarrhoea...](#)

Growth and development

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[Infants in the first eight weeks have no control over their movements and all their physical activity is involuntary or reflex...](#)
- [Child development \(2\) - three to six months](#)
[Young babies still have a notion that the whole of life is happening inside themselves, and they are 'making it all happen'...](#)
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[Fun activities, such as shaking or banging objects, helps a baby understand they have an effect on the world...](#)
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[At nine months your baby is moving around by crawling or pulling along with their arms. Safety is very important now. Your baby is also 'talking' with recognisable sounds and may even say simple words...](#)
- [Child development \(5\) - one to two years](#)
[Between the age of one and two, your toddler understands they are a completely separate person from you...](#)
- [Child development \(6\) - two to three years](#)
[Parents can be tricked into thinking our toddlers are more grown up than they really are...](#)

- [Children's feet and shoes](#)

[A child learning to walk receives important sensory information from the soles of their feet, and shoes can make walking more difficult...](#)

- [Growth charts for children](#)

[Babies and young children do not usually grow in a perfectly smooth way, but instead grow in 'bursts'...](#)

- [Teeth development in children](#)

[Teething symptoms are common in children and can be managed without medications...](#)

- [The Maternal and Child Health phone app](#)

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- [Toilet training](#)

[When toilet training your toddler, praise every little success and remain calm about accidents...](#)

Behaviour and learning

- [10 tips for managing sibling rivalry](#)

[Teach your children to sort out minor differences themselves... 10 tips for managing sibling rivalry...](#)

- [10 tips to raise an optimistic child](#)

[Be a positive role model ... 10 tips to raise an optimistic child...](#)

- [Anxiety and fear in children](#)

[You can help your child overcome anxiety by taking their fears seriously and encouraging them to talk about their feelings...](#)

- [Children and shyness](#)

[If your child's shyness is especially debilitating, you may like to consider professional help from a counsellor or psychologist...](#)

- [Children and sibling rivalry](#)

[Sibling rivalry is a common problem, particularly among children who are the same sex and close together in age...](#)

- [Discipline and children](#)

[Disciplining your child means teaching them responsible behaviour and self-control...](#)

- [Dummies](#)

[Dummy sucking should stop before school age to avoid teeth or mouth problems...](#)

- [Left-handedness](#)

[If your child is naturally left-handed, don't try to force them to use their right hand...](#)

- [Tantrums](#)

[When a young child is having a tantrum, it is because the emotional \(limbic system\) part of the brain is dominating the child's behaviour...](#)

- [Thumb and finger sucking](#)

[Finger or thumb sucking should stop before school age to avoid mouth problems...](#)

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[Be guided by your baby and let them set the pace when weaning and introducing solid foods...](#)

- [Breakfast](#)

[Children who skip breakfast may lack sufficient vitamins and minerals including iron, calcium, zinc and vitamin B2...](#)

- [Childcare and healthy eating](#)

[Childcare centres should provide healthy meals for your children...](#)

- [Children's diet - fruit and vegetables](#)

[If you eat and enjoy fruit and vegetables every day, your child may eventually follow your lead...](#)

- [Eating tips for babies](#)

[First foods for babies can be prepared easily and cheaply at home without salt, seasonings and sweeteners...](#)

- [Eating tips for children \(3\) - older toddlers](#)

[Offer children the same foods as the family, with a variety of textures and flavours for balanced nutrition...](#)

- [Eating tips for young toddlers](#)

[Children have a natural ability to sense when they are hungry and when they are full...](#)

- [Soft drinks, juice and sweet drinks - children](#)

[Encourage children to drink and enjoy water. Sweet drinks such as juice, cordial and soft drinks may cause health problems for children if consumed in large amounts...](#)

- [Toddlers and fussy eating](#)

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[Taking care to restrain children correctly while travelling in a car is the best way to prevent injuries...](#)

- [Dental checks for young children](#)

[Children should have an oral health check by the time they turn two...](#)

- [Immunisations - vaccinations in Victoria, Australia \(video\)](#)

[Vaccinations are encouraged for all individuals living in the state of Victoria, Australia. The immunisation program in Victoria may be different than other countries, and individuals who have moved...](#)

- [Melissa's story \(video\)](#)

[Melissa shares her story of how her baby caught chickenpox at 5 weeks old...](#)

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[Croup is a viral infection of the throat and windpipe that causes noisy breathing, a hoarse voice and a harsh, barking cough...](#)
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[Fever is a way in which the body fights infection. A fever is not dangerous and does not always indicate a serious illness...](#)
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[Gastroenteritis or Gastro can be dangerous for very young babies. Gastro is common in young children and spreads easily. Gastro is a bowel infection which causes diarrhoea \(runny or watery poo\) and...](#)
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- [Roseola infantum](#)
[Roseola is a mild viral infection with associated fever and rash that affects babies and young children...](#)

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Young babies still have a notion that the whole of life is happening inside themselves, and they are 'making it all happen'...

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- [Child health record - Department of Health Victoria](#)

Support Groups

- [Parent-Infant Research Institute, Infant Clinic](#)

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Location:

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