



Baby Brain Development

Your baby's brain

We know a lot more about baby's early brain development thanks to research and the development of technologies such as PET (positron emission tomography) and MRI (magnetic resonance imaging) scans. The early years of a child's life are when your baby's brain sets down the blueprint for their future.

1. Provide a secure base

During the first three years of life, your baby's brain will undergo an incredibly rapid period of development. A baby's brain needs exposure to simple everyday skills and experiences. Babies are intelligent learners especially when interacting with those that love and care for them. Be available to your baby during their awake time and always respond positively to your baby with lots of cuddles and attention. This will help your baby to gain a strong sense of security and a secure base. One of your roles as a parent is to be a reliable source of comfort for your baby.

2. Stay in tune with your baby

By noticing little things about your baby's facial expressions, their body language and emotions you will feel more connected to your baby and understand what they are trying to tell you. For example:

- When they are feeding and grasp your finger and look into your eyes
- When you receive your first recognisable smile
- When they follow you around the room with their eyes
- When they have an intense conversation with you, making sounds, leaving spaces for you to talk and respond

These are just some of the joyous moments that provide the glue for a relationship with your baby.

3. Enhancing your baby's development

- Babies love books and music, research shows they can help your baby's brain development, so talk, sing and read to your baby from an early age.
- Support your newborn baby by helping them settle to sleep in a caring and responsive way so as to minimise distress.
- Babies respond well to having a routine or pattern to their day as routines make their world more predictable, but routines need to be flexible and baby-led wherever possible.

Baby milestones 0-3 months

'Development' is used to describe the sequence of physical, emotional and social changes a baby is expected to achieve, while on the other hand 'Milestones' is a term used to describe the developmental expectations at specific time periods. Here's a guideline to some 'milestones' you can expect from your baby between birth and three months. All children are different and develop at their own pace.

Birth

- No or minimal head control
- When held in as sitting position, their back is curved and their head will fall forward
- Close their eyes to sudden light
- May focus on a slowly moving object 22 to 30cm away in a range of 45 degrees
- Will gaze at a face or object within 22 to 30cm

Around one month

- When lying on their back, keeps head to one side
- Hands are predominantly closed
- Moves arms and legs in large jerky movements
- Gaze caught and held by a bright dangling object gently moved in their line of vision
- Gazes at an object that is slowly moved towards and away from their face
- Turns to a diffuse light source, e.g. a lamp

Around three months

- Has good head control
- Hands loosely open
- Needs shoulder supported when being bathed or dressed

- Lying on their front, they can lift head and front portion of their chest to a 90 degree angle, taking their weight on the forearms
- Can start to sit for short periods of time in a well supported sitting position
- Waves arms symmetrically
- Shows a desire to grasp an object
- If a rattle is placed in their hand, baby will actively hold onto it
- Grasp is no longer a reflex, it is now a voluntary action

For more information see my Personal Record "Blue Book"

Importantly, if you are concerned about any aspect of your child's development, contact your Child and Family Health Nurse or GP.

Tresillian Day and Residential Services support families experiencing a range of early parenting challenges including:

- Sleep and settling difficulties
- Adjustment to parenthood
 - Breastfeeding
 - Infant nutrition
 - Toddler behaviour
 - Multiple babies
- Emotional and psychological health & wellbeing
 - Postnatal depression and anxiety

For Parenting Support or to Self Refer to a Tresillian Service call:

Tresillian Parent's Help Line
1300 272 736

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