



Parenting the First Year

MONTH

9-10

How baby is changing

Many babies begin crawling during the ninth month. It's exciting for babies to move around on their own, but it's scary, too!

Your baby's first efforts to crawl will probably be toward something—a favorite toy or you. Don't be surprised if she falls on her face a few times while getting started. Keep her on a soft blanket or carpet.

Once your baby crawls, pulling to a stand isn't far behind. Watch out! She may get up and not know how to get back down. She may cry to be rescued again and again. You can try to teach her to get down onto her knees or bottom. Be patient. She will learn soon.

Does your baby like to drop things from her crib or high chair for you to pick up? This can be annoying. It's a sign that her memory is developing. Now she knows that the toy or food she drops will land on the floor, and she likes to see and hear the food drop.

Baby's developing memory means she gets angry when someone takes a toy away.

Note: Do not tie toys to your baby's crib or playpen so she won't drop them. The string can strangle her.

Learning to talk

Talking to your baby makes a difference. Research shows that when you imitate and respond to your baby's sounds, it helps him learn language.

Parents who respond when baby "talks" help draw his attention to his own sounds. This makes talking more interesting and important to your infant.

Encourage him to practice talking by playing games with him. When baby makes sounds, repeat them back to him. Pause and give baby a chance to answer. Let him see your face when you talk.

Your imitation excites him and may cause him to repeat the sounds. Keep listening! You may hear certain tones of voice and sentence patterns in your child's babbling.

Your baby may have a sound, like "ba" that he uses to mean many different things. These "words" indicate talking isn't far away. Between 9 and 12 months, your baby might have a real word or two mixed in with the babbling.

Act. Don't just react.

Researchers find that babies who hear "No!" and "Don't!" all the time grow up to be less intelligent than other babies. To learn, babies and children need to be able to explore and to experiment.

Listen to yourself. If you find yourself saying "No" all the time, perhaps you need to improve how things are arranged in your home.

For example, move that glass vase to a higher shelf. Put safety latches on the kitchen and bathroom cupboards. Move the houseplants to a spot where she can't go. Figure out a way to cover the radio or TV buttons.

This will make life easier for you, and you won't have to discourage baby's curiosity so often. Besides, it's easier to change your living room than to stop your child's curiosity!

Sometimes, you have to say "No" to a baby. That's OK. Just don't overdo it.

Children can be very different from each other. Don't worry if your child is "early" or "late" in growth. **This is important:** Look for and notice your child's growth in each area. Then you can encourage each new ability.

Lead alert

Old paint often has lead in it, and tiny amounts can poison a child. Your child will not act differently right away. Lead harms memory, intelligence, and hearing.

Lead paint becomes a problem when it chips or turns to dust. It becomes dust when doors or windows rub while moving or when remodeling. Dust often collects in the well of a window and on the sill.

When baby crawls across the floor and then sucks on his fingers, he may be eating lead. If he is teething, chewing on the sill may feel good. To prevent lead poisoning, wash the dust away regularly and paint over it.

For advice, call (800) 424-LEAD.

If you have Internet access, check www.epa.gov/lead.

Your baby wants you to know:

How I grow:

- ♥ I may crawl and turn around while holding something in one hand.
- ♥ I can crawl up stairs, too. But I may not be able to crawl back down yet.
- ♥ I may sit by myself and turn my body all the way around — without losing my balance.
- ♥ I stand for a little while if you hold my hand.
- ♥ I poke my fingers into holes and other interesting places.
- ♥ I pick up small things with my finger and thumb, and big things with both hands.
- ♥ I pull myself up by holding on to furniture, but I may have trouble getting back down.

How I talk:

- ♥ I understand some words, my name, and simple sentences.
- ♥ I repeat one or more sounds over and over.
- ♥ I listen to people talking and try to imitate the sounds.
- ♥ I begin to say two-syllable sounds like "choo-choo," "da-da," and "ma-ma."

How I respond:

- ♥ I like to watch people scribbling on paper.
- ♥ I like to perform for people. I love it when they applaud!
- ♥ I sometimes want praise for my accomplishments.

How I understand:

- ♥ I try to figure things out by myself.
- ♥ I know that if I look at things upside down or cover my eyes, they'll look different.
- ♥ I get upset if my toy is taken away from me.
- ♥ I may remember a game, person, or toy from yesterday.
- ♥ I can tell what mood people are in by looking at them.

How I feel:

- ♥ I'm very sensitive. If I see another baby cry, I may cry, too.
- ♥ I may become afraid of a lot of things that didn't bother me before, like taking a bath. I'm afraid of heights.
- ♥ I'm very determined and sometimes stubborn. It's all part of my growing up!

How you can help me learn:

- ♥ Talk to me. Listen to me. Take turns.
- ♥ Praise me when I do something new. I need your encouragement.
- ♥ Give me finger foods so I can practice picking up small things.

Baby-proofing when baby can stand

Once your baby can stand, she can reach farther and higher. She can reach things that were out of reach before. If you can, keep her safe by taking her with you from room to room. Also, look at each room in your home again.

Watch for *new* hazards:

- ♥ When baby uses furniture to pull herself up, she may pull things over. Remove wobbly tables and lamps that could tip over. Fasten bookcases and dressers to the wall if they are not sturdy.
- ♥ Set your crib mattress to the lowest level. Remove bumper pads and large stuffed toys baby could step on to climb out.
- ♥ Be especially alert for dangling electric cords, tablecloths, or curtains that baby could pull down or get tangled in.
- ♥ Keep medicines, cleaners, pesticides, alcohol, and other poisons locked out of baby's reach. This includes vitamins and iron supplements.
- ♥ Turn pot handles toward the back of the stove.
- ♥ Turn your water heater down to 120° F (medium), as baby can be burned by water hotter than this. This saves money, too.
- ♥ Never leave your baby alone in or near water, even for a minute.
- ♥ Don't let baby stand up in the grocery cart at the store. You may be able to find a safety strap to keep her seated.
- ♥ Don't let baby stand up in her high chair or stroller. Use the safety straps to prevent falls.
- ♥ Watch out for things that pinch fingers, such as door hinges or folding chairs.



You are baby's safe base

Your little explorer is on the move. As baby crawls around, have you noticed that he sometimes stops and looks back at you?

Exploring his world is exciting, but it can also be a bit scary when he finds himself separated from you. He glances back at you to reassure himself that his mom or dad is there if he needs them. You are his **safe base!** Baby knows he can crawl back or call to you if necessary.

Babies who feel secure are more comfortable exploring their world. So if baby needs comforting, by all means give him a hug and kiss. Babies who are given lots of opportunities to explore learn more.

Research shows that babies also look at their parents for cues to see if something is safe or not. This is called "social referencing." For example, if baby sees his mom smile he is more likely to keep on exploring than if she frowns.

Fears and insecurities

When baby can stand up alone, he becomes aware of many new things, and some of them can be scary.

Many 9-month-old children become afraid of heights and will no longer climb down from chairs, even though they have before.

Loud noises, such as the vacuum cleaner or the blender, may now frighten him.

Your baby may even refuse to be bathed in the big bathtub. Try bathing with him or giving him sponge baths in the tub.

Don't laugh at your infant's fears. They are just as real to him as your fears are to you. Comfort baby. Try to avoid scary things or encourage him to face the thing he is afraid of. For example, let him touch the turned-off vacuum cleaner.

Baby will grow out of these new fears with your understanding and help.

Helping curiosity grow

Researchers who have studied young children report that curiosity is important for success in school.

Teaching babies formally is probably a bad idea. Avoid "flash cards" and similar lessons. Young children learn best when they direct their own learning, not when you try to force something on them.

Given freedom to explore, a child interested in the world around her will observe and learn.

Your child's first year is very important in laying a foundation for a lifetime of curiosity. You can help by making your baby's world an interesting, stimulating place and by joining in your baby's excitement.

Here are some ideas:

Sight — Surround your 9-month-old with bright, moving colors in clothing, toys, and room décor.

Hearing — Let baby listen to music on the radio, records, CDs, or tapes. Make a chime mobile, or hang wind chimes to catch a breeze. Talk and sing to your baby.

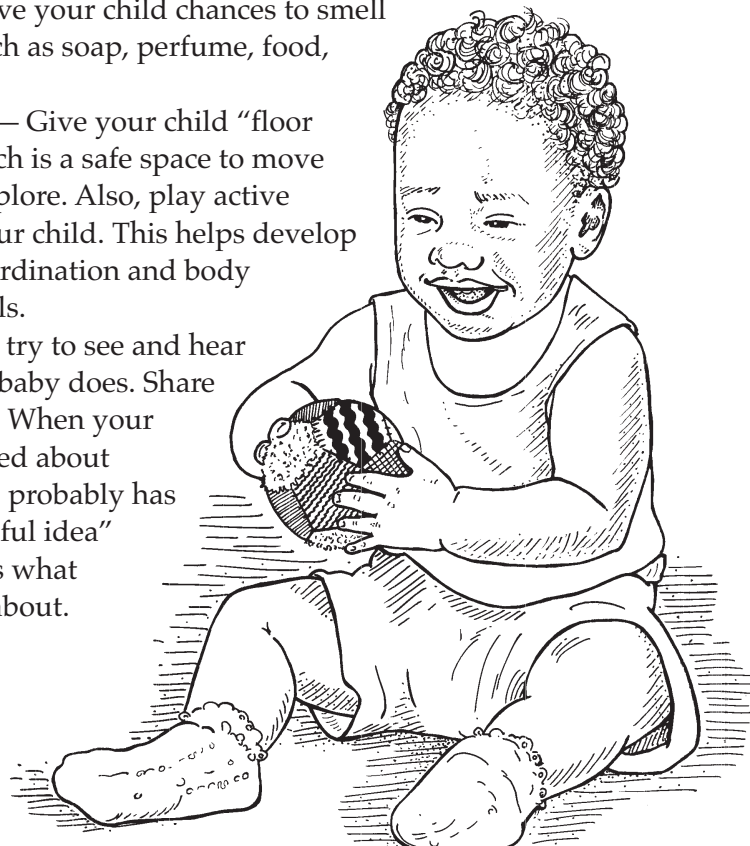
Touch — Give your child textures to feel — soft, hard, smooth, and rough. Make a toy, blanket, or ball from scraps of denim, corduroy, velvet, and satin. Touch your baby, and let her touch your skin, hair, and clothes.

Taste — Let your child try new and different foods, but don't force him to swallow foods he doesn't want to eat.

Smell — Give your child chances to smell safe things, such as soap, perfume, food, and flowers.

Movement — Give your child "floor freedom," which is a safe space to move around and explore. Also, play active games with your child. This helps develop her muscle coordination and body movement skills.

Most of all, try to see and hear things as your baby does. Share the experience. When your baby gets excited about something, she probably has had a "wonderful idea" about it. This is what learning is all about.



Your baby's sisters and brothers

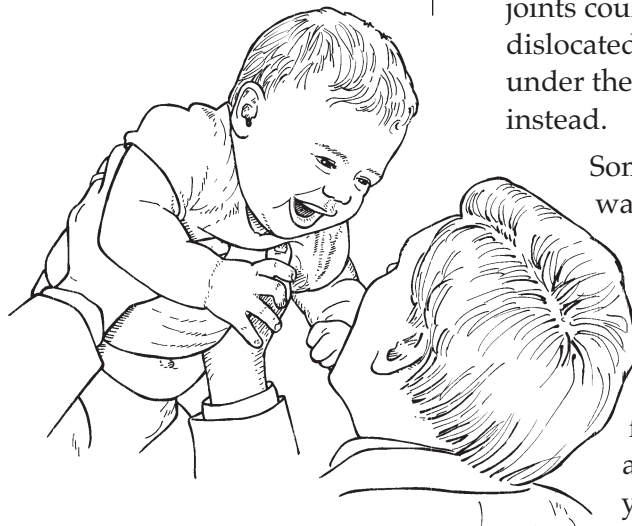
This can be a hard time for some older brothers and sisters. Now that your baby is moving around, he can get into their toys and other favorite things.

Babies need to form good relationships with their older brothers and sisters. You can help this happen.

- ♥ **Prevent problems.** Give older children a place of their own where their things are safe from the baby. If older children can't have their own room, a drawer too high for baby will do. Or let them play on the kitchen table, away from the baby.
- ♥ **Teach children to help.** Show older sister some of the amazing things the baby can do and point out problems he cannot yet solve. Show the older child how to teach baby new things. Suggest she roll a ball to him or read him a book. Be sure to compliment her efforts. Show her when the baby tries to copy her. By treating the older child as a partner in caring for the baby, you will help her gain a sense of cooperation and responsibility.
- ♥ **Make special time.** Give each child some of your full attention each day. Your other children may resent the baby if he always interrupts their time with you.

You can also make special activities "for big children only." This could be something as simple as inviting a friend over or going to a friend's house.

When problems arise, take the time to teach children how to share, take turns, or stay out of each other's way. You don't have to get angry or take sides. It takes a long time for children to learn to see things from someone else's point of view.



Active play with baby

Researchers find that men and women sometimes play differently with babies. Men are more likely to play active games.

Some women would say that men are too wild! Men are more likely than women to swing babies around, lift them high in the air, bounce them high and low, tickle, and chase them.

Babies enjoy this; moms often worry. Mothers might feel better if they knew that most men are like this, and most babies not only survive, but like it!

It can be fun to play active games with baby. And most babies love this. But keep it safe; a few games are too wild to play with babies:

- ♥ **Never shake a baby!** This can lead to blindness, brain damage, or death.
- ♥ **Never jerk a baby's arm.** If you swing her around in a circle, never hold her off the floor by the hands. This is far too much stress for baby's elbows and shoulders. These joints could easily be dislocated. Always hold her under the arms by the chest instead.

Some fun and safe ways to play with baby are chasing her as she crawls, rolling her along the floor, or holding her so she flies like an airplane. Dance with your baby!

About family pets

If a pet is well trained and well cared for, it's seldom a danger to baby. The most common problem is allergies.

If you wash and brush your pet regularly, this may help prevent allergic reactions. Keep your pet free of ticks and fleas; check with your veterinarian for medications to control these insects. Keep the litter box out of baby's reach.

Keep a close eye on both your pet and baby. Never leave baby alone with a pet. A pet that might harm your baby should not be allowed in your home.

Don't let your baby squeeze or hit a pet or pull its fur. Teach baby to be gentle. Show her how to gently stroke kitty's fur. Reward her with a big smile when she pats doggie nicely.

A loving bond between a child and a pet is a joy to see.

Baby learns to feed himself.

Does your baby hold most foods while eating? Drink from a cup with a little help? Hold and lick the spoon after it is dipped into food? These are the first steps in learning how to eat independently.

If your baby always grabs for the spoon, you can make meals easier by using two spoons — one for you and one for him. While he practices, you can feed him a few spoonfuls.

Let your little one try out the new skill of picking things up with his thumb and forefinger.

Finger foods your baby can feed himself:

- ♥ Small pieces of soft, mild cheese. Big chunks — ½-inch or more — can cause choking
- ♥ Small pieces of toast or soft flour tortilla, cooked rice, or bagel halves
- ♥ Graham crackers
- ♥ Unsweetened breakfast cereals like Kix® or Cheerios®*
- ♥ Cooked strips of vegetables, such as potatoes, sweet potatoes, carrots, peas, green or waxed beans, or zucchini
- ♥ Peeled, soft wedges or slices of fruit, such as banana, peach, pear, plum, or melon (no seeds)
- ♥ Small, soft, tender pieces of cooked meat or chicken

Praise your baby for feeding himself, even if he is very messy. If the mess bothers you, spread newspapers under the high chair to catch dripped food.

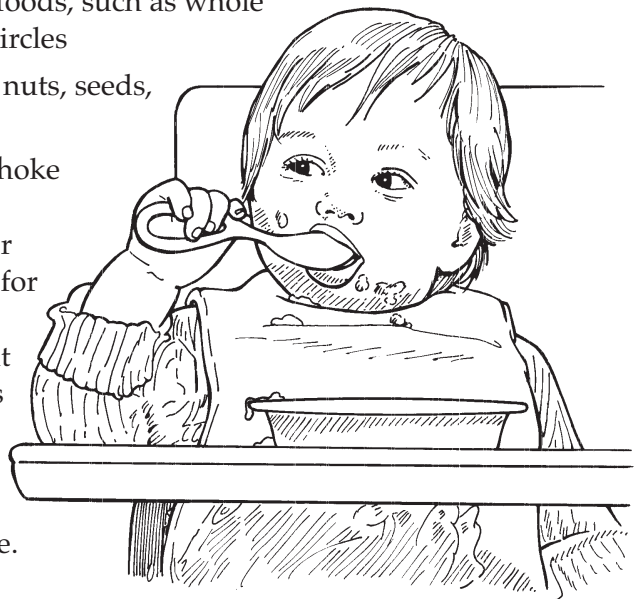
By now, your baby can eat most things the rest of the family eats; just take his portion out before you add salt and other seasonings.

DO NOT give your baby:

- **round** and **slippery** foods, such as whole grapes or hot dog circles
- **hard** foods, such as nuts, seeds, or popcorn.

These foods could choke baby.

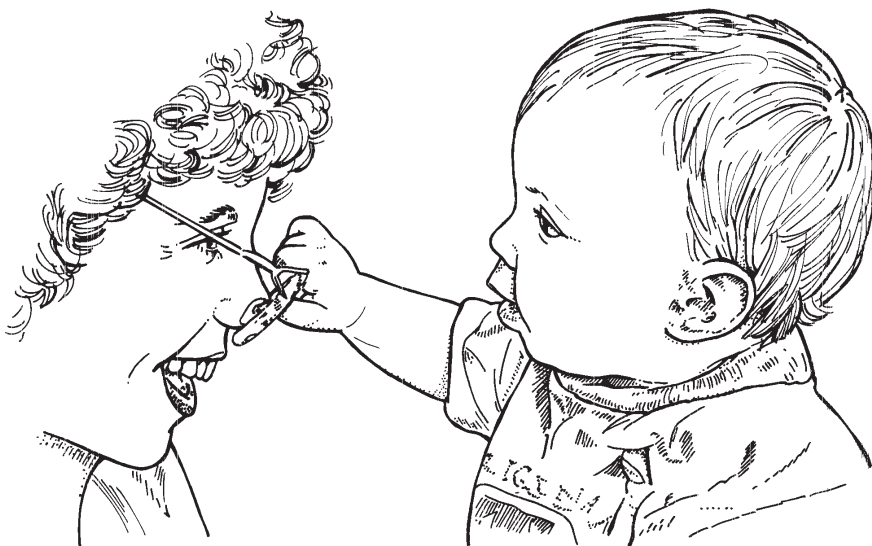
Don't use desserts or sweet treats as rewards for eating more nutritious foods. Studies show that this increases the child's desire for the reward food and reduces their interest in the food you're trying to promote.



* Reference to products is not to endorse them nor to exclude others that may be similar. Examples are a convenience to readers.

Child guidance: Five keys to good discipline

1. **Prevent situations** where your baby might do something you don't like. Move that glass jar to a higher shelf. Put a gate on the stairwell. If baby does something you don't like, think of ways you could keep it from happening again. Create a trouble-free environment!
2. **Ignore behavior** that is annoying, but not harmful. If baby pulls everything out of your sock drawer, just take a deep breath and ignore it. If you pay too much attention, it teaches baby to do things like this to get attention from you.
3. **Distract or redirect** baby from things you don't want her to do or have. If she has your keys and you need them, don't just grab them. Instead, interest her in some other toy or activity. Baby will let go of the keys then. It's easier to get a baby started on something else than to take something away from her.
4. **Reward** baby with your loving attention when she plays nicely. Don't become a parent who only notices your child when she has done something wrong. Notice the good times, and give your baby a smile, a laugh, or a hug. **Your attention is baby's most important reward**; use it to encourage behavior of which you approve.
5. Provide **freedom within limits**. Your baby needs freedom to explore, but she also needs limits. You need good judgment to provide both. Babies kept in playpens or high chairs for much of the day have too little freedom and are too limited.



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