Your baby is now moving around.

He’s ‘talking’ and making recognisable sounds.
He loves you talking to him and looking at picture books together, pointing to objects he knows.
He’s putting sounds together by babbling, trying to copy or say first words, and saying ‘No’ with a shake of his head.
He may be clingy and wary of strangers, but he is forming special relationships with you and other family members.
His personality is becoming clear to you.

Social and emotional development

It is usually during this time that your baby begins to understand his very special relationship with you and with friends and relatives.
He will smile and babble, try to have conversations with you, and copy simple hand games like ‘clap hands’ or ‘bye bye’.
He’s starting to know that when you go away you’ll come back again, and that you are still there even when he can’t see you.

Unfortunately, this also means that he’s frightened when you leave him and may cling and cry. He will start to be wary of strangers.
Talking to him when you are in another room can help him to understand this.
’Peek-a-boo’ and ‘hiding’ are favourite games because they’re about familiar people coming and going. He’s beginning to understand that when he sees you, you also see him. But he still thinks if he can’t see you, you can’t see him (which is why he puts his hands over his eyes to hide).
He’s starting to understand that he is a person and that the baby in the mirror might be him.
He’s really starting to know what he likes and doesn’t like!
He may kick and resist nappy change time or other limits on his behaviour.
He’s now understanding ‘No’, though he’ll spend the next 18 months checking exactly what it means!

Moving around

Your baby is now moving around all on her own.
She might pull herself along with her arms, roll around, or crawl on all fours.
She’ll start to pull herself to standing while holding on to you, a chair or other furniture, and then begin to walk while still holding on.
She might start to walk by herself, or she might not walk for a few months yet.
It’s a big thing to see your baby ‘standing on her own two feet’, even if she’s holding on to something.

SAFETY

Safety is a big issue when babies start to move around by themselves.

- Baby-proof your house and make sure all dangerous items, including medicines, are locked away up high.
- Put things that she might break well out of reach too – your baby can’t stop herself from touching anything that looks interesting.
- She will still put anything she holds into her mouth. Now that she can pick up small things, there’s a higher risk that she can choke, or swallow dangerous objects.
- Always supervise children around water.
Becoming independent

Your baby’s fine motor skills are improving quickly. She can pick up an object with her thumb and fingers, rather than grabbing with the palm of her hand. She pokes and points with her finger, bangs things together and transfers objects from one hand to another. But she still can’t control putting things down and will often drop an object to release it from her grasp. She’s now able to sit on her own for quite long times, and enjoys exploring objects and the sounds she can make with them, while sitting on the floor. She can feed herself in her high chair, although she’s often more interested in squishing and feeling than eating. She can only learn how to eat properly (such as using a spoon) by practising, so be prepared for some mess. She can drink out of a cup with a spout without help.

Talking and language

Your baby now understands how conversations work (by taking turns).

- Although you might not understand his words, he will ‘chat’ away, imitating what a conversation sounds like.
- He may be saying simple sounds like ‘mummum’ and ‘daddad’.
- He knows several words and may shake his head for ‘no’.
- He is not making the huge variety of sounds that he was earlier because he’s starting to make the sounds of his family’s language.
- He loves music and rhymes, and will bounce and sway to the rhythm. He’ll love repeating songs over and over again.

Babies are usually very interested in picture books by now. Reading with your baby really helps develop his language.

Activities

- Give your baby her own kitchen cupboard – she can open and shut the door, and play with things inside. (Toddler-proof any cupboards that have breakables or dangerous things in them.)
- Give her pots, lids and spoons to bang.
- Sing songs with actions and repeat phrases. Move to the rhythm of music together.
- Look at simple books with clear pictures in them.
- Play ‘hiding’ behind the couch or curtains. Talk with her a lot.
- Sit her on the floor with her toys and play together. Follow her lead if she starts playing a certain way – copy her and take turns. For example, build a tower of blocks so she can have fun knocking them down, over and over.
- Encourage her to push a trolley with bricks in it.
- Cuddle and roll on the floor.
- At this age, your baby will like being with people best of all, but she’s starting to be interested in toys that move or make a noise.
Alert

Talk to your doctor or community health nurse if, by 12 months, your baby is:
- NOT pulling himself up to stand
- NOT moving around
- NOT changing objects from one hand to another
- NOT looking up when you call his name
- NOT copying simple sounds like 'mum mum'
- NOT showing signs of being especially attached to you (the person who looks after her most)
- NOT smiling, laughing, squealing and trying to attract your attention.

Summary

Social and emotional

Your baby:
- is well aware of strangers and familiar people, but withdraws from strangers
- may not even go to familiar people – demanding that you are there
- gives cuddles by 10 months
- enjoys peek-a-boo games.

Talk with your doctor or child health nurse if:
- your baby isn’t sitting by 9 to 10 months
- she’s not starting to move herself around at all.

Understanding

You baby probably:
- is interested in small objects and toys, and reaches out for them
- starts to look at, feel and handle objects before taking them to her mouth
- looks in the correct direction for things that have fallen down.

Talk with your doctor or child health nurse if:
- your baby isn’t interested in toys or objects.

Motor skills

You baby probably can:
- move around by himself on the floor, usually crawling, by 10 months
- reach out without falling over when sitting
- pull himself to standing by 10 to 11 months
- walk if you hold his hand by 10 to 12 months.

Speech and language

You baby probably:
- is putting strings of babble sounds together
- shakes her head for ‘no’ by about 10 months
- recognises several words, such as her own name, or looks for dad when you say ‘daddy’
- imitates simple sounds made by other people.

Talk with your doctor or child health nurse if:
- your baby’s babbling is not becoming more complex and she doesn’t have ‘conversations’ with other people.

Your baby is unique

Every baby is different and may develop at different rates. So, if your baby does not do some of these things, he may be ‘working’ on a different area of learning and development. However, babies usually follow the same pattern of development, and it’s good to feel that your baby is developing normally, in his own unique way. If you are worried about your baby’s development, or if he is very different from other babies, talk with your doctor or child health nurse. If there is a problem, it’s better to get help early.
For more information contact

- HealthyWA
  www.healthywa.wa.gov.au
- Local child health nurse
- Local family doctor
- **Ngala Helpline** (8am–8pm everyday)
  (08) 9368 9368 (Outside metro 1800 111 546)
  www.ngala.com.au
- **Raising Children Network**
  www.raisingchildren.net.au
- **Kidsafe WA** (8.30am–5pm weekdays)
  (08) 6244 4880 (Outside metro 1800 802 244)
  www.kidsafewa.com.au
- **Red Nose (Sids and Kids)**
  rednose.com.au

We’ve used ‘he’ and ‘she’ in turn - please change to suit your child.

This document can be made available in alternative formats on request for a person with a disability.