

7-8 Months

“Put Mariko on the floor and within seconds she has found something to investigate. It may not look graceful, flopping forward on her stomach, but it works to get her where she wants to go. The things she finds—dust in the corner, a newspaper left on the floor, a piece of food that did not quite make it into the garbage, even the speckles in the kitchen tile. I love her determination and persistence, but her safety takes on a whole new perspective now that she can move around. I find I need to get right down there with her— to look with the eyes of a curious eight-month-old and with the eyes of a father who knows what is safe and what is not.”

Separation

It is at this age that your baby begins to discover that Mom and Dad are separate people from himself and that you are his favorite people to have around. At the same time, he does not clearly understand that you still exist even when he cannot see you. Even going into the next room may cause concern for your baby. Your baby’s temperament will be an important factor in how intensely he will react to your leaving. Gradually, through experience, your baby will learn that when you go away, you do come back.

You may also experience feelings of guilt, anxiety, and ambivalence when your child has difficulty with separation. These are signs that you care about your child and it is difficult to see her distressed. It helps to talk with other parents and to feel confident about the individuals caring for your child. Infants pick up parental anxiety around separation that can make separation even more difficult.

In a few more months, your baby will become cautious of people he does not know. Smiling and looking at them from your protective arms is fine. It is when they want to touch or hold him that he objects. Try to let your baby get to know a new person gradually —by playing peek-a-boo from behind your legs or over your shoulder.

To help your baby handle his anxiety about leaving:

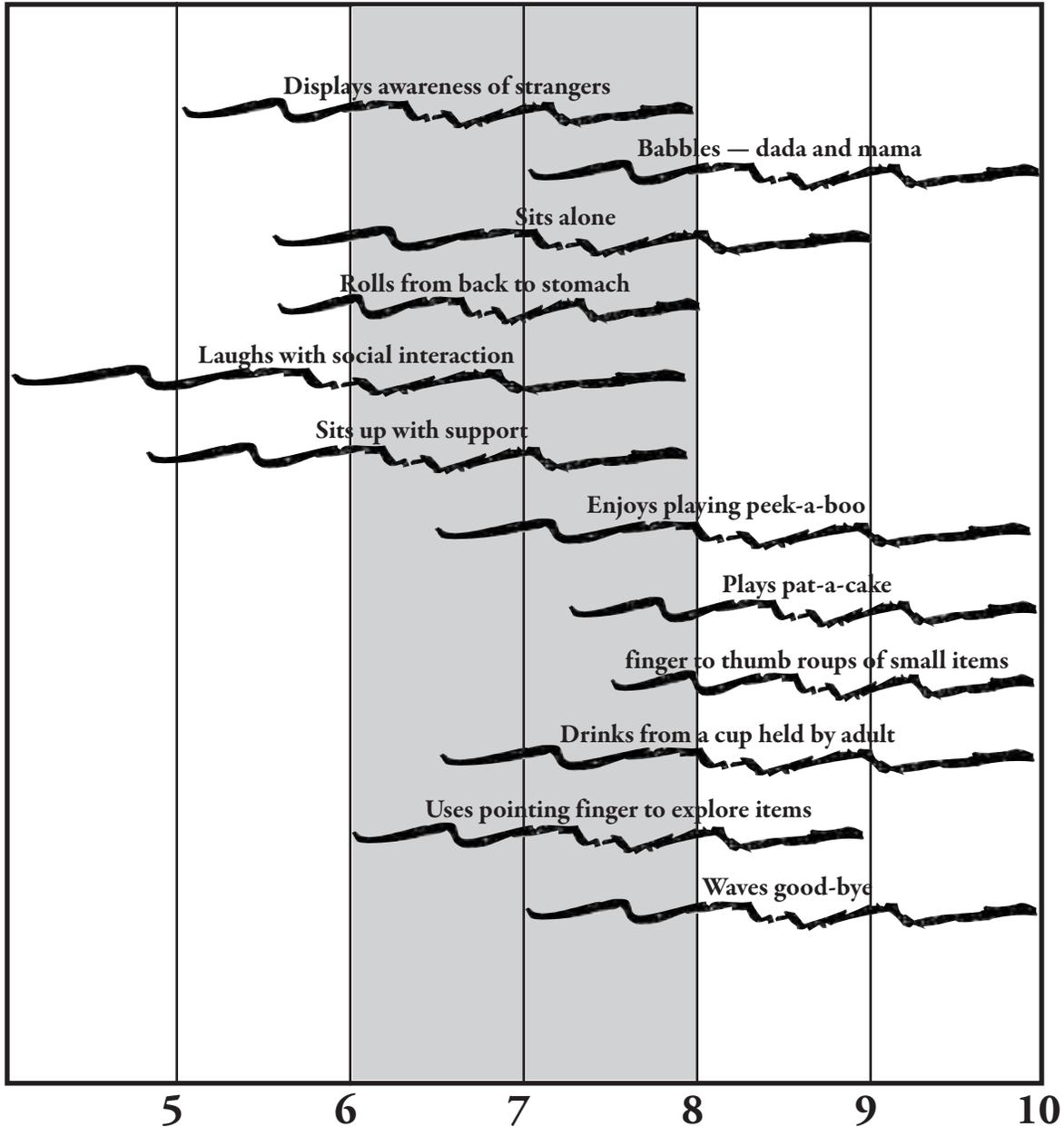
- Develop a predictable routine that you go through whenever you leave. Practice your routine even when you go to another room for a brief time – “Bye, Bye. I’ll be back... Here I am again (accompanied by a hug or touch).”
- Say your goodbyes and then leave. Lingering and waiting for your baby to calm herself can prolong the suffering. After you leave, she can more likely be redirected.
- Always tell your child you are leaving and that you will be back. Sneaking away will make him more watchful and feeling that he needs to keep an eye on you because he cannot trust that you will not leave.
- Accepting that your child’s anxiety is real and normal for her stage or development can make it easier for you to live with her need to be within sight of you. Ignoring her feelings will only make her more anxious.
- Give your baby time to check out new people.

These anxieties are signs of your baby’s social and emotional growth and development. He needs support and encouragement. He needs to feel secure in his relationship with you, and then he will be ready to reach out and enjoy other people.

Developmental Milestones

7-8 Months

The developmental milestones charts introduce the typical range of some common emerging infant capabilities in 6-month age ranges to illustrate the ongoing process of development. Observe and enjoy your baby's unique rate and patterns of interacting and learning during the first year of life.



If you have any concerns about your baby's rate of development in any area, consult your health care provider.

What can baby do?

7 Months

Getting Around

Your six-month-old may be beginning to find ways to get from one place to another. In getting ready to crawl, your child may move by a twisting or rolling method that requires a lot of energy. In her early efforts, she cannot rely on her sense of direction, and she may find herself under furniture, stuck in corners, or going backward more often than forward. If she does get stuck, protect her from getting hurt, but encourage her to find her own way out.

Can your baby move from place to place? How does she do it — rolling, twisting, on her hands and knees and flopping herself forward, or crawling with her tummy on the floor and pushing with her feet? Does she make progress either forward or backward?

What can baby do?

8 Months

Picking Up Small Objects

Young children improve their ability to grasp small objects over several months. At first they try to pick up a small object without much success. They eventually learn to “rake” the object into their palm by pulling their fingers toward the palm without using the thumb. With better coordination, they will next pick up small object using the index finger and thumb with the thumb positioned to the side of the index finger. The final step is for the child to use the index finger and the thumb with the pads of the two finger tips coming together. Perfecting this fine motor skill may not be completed until the child is twelve months old.

While your child is sitting lying on her stomach, place a piece of cereal or cracker or a small toy in front of her. Does she pick it up? What type of grasp does she use?

Provide opportunities for your child to pick up small objects. Be sure that what you give her to pick up is safe for her to put in her mouth.

Object Permanence

A young baby does not fully understand that when an object (or person) is out of sight it still exists. Over time and with many experiences she will learn that hidden objects or a parent who has left the room still exists although she cannot see them — a step toward understanding object permanence and a step toward separating from her parent. As she begins to explore her world, being able to depend on the stability and permanence of people and things are important for her.

As you and your child are playing with one of her favorite toys, let her see you hide it underneath a towel and say, “Where did the bunny go?” Does she look for it? How can you tell?

If she does not, hide it again so that some of it is showing. If she looks towards it say, “Great. You found bunny.” Or, she may crawl to get it herself. Let her play with the toy and perhaps play the game again.

Soon, playing the game of hide and seek is more important to her than having the toy to play with. Eventually she may want to hide the toy. Young children often hide the toy by holding it close to their body and bending over it. They may think that if they cannot see it, no one else can see it either. Hide and seek is a good game you and your child will play for many years to come.

Fatherhood as a time of stability and change.

7-8 Months

CHANGES IN HEALTH AND HABITS

How has fatherhood changed some of your daily routines- sleeping, eating...?

How has fatherhood affected your health habits?

- smoking/drinking
- risk-taking behavior?
- own use of medical care?
- exercise?

SPIRITUAL/VALUE DOMAINS

How has fatherhood influenced your main priorities in life?

How has fatherhood created important shifts in your values or what is important in life?

- What values are now more important?
- How will you pass these values on to your child?

How has fatherhood influenced your commitment to religious beliefs?

- religious practices?

New Game

7-8 Months

Reading Books

Reading books with your child is a good way to have “together time” with her. For very young children choose books that have simple pictures and short text. Your child may want to sit in your lap or be down on the floor. Sometimes your child may just want to look at the pictures at her own speed; other times she may want you to read the words. Often she may choose to flip through the book randomly — front to back has no meaning to her yet. As your child becomes familiar with the names of different things, you might ask, “Where is the train?”

Your child will let you know when she has had enough. When she chooses when to read and when to stop, she is more likely to choose to read books with you.

Pat-a-Cake

Do this rhyme yourself for the first time, then try to guide your baby’s hands to do the actions. Saying the same rhymes day after day helps your child learn to anticipate what comes next. The actions help give meaning to the rhyme.

Pat-a-cake, pat-a-cake, baker’s man	<i>(clap four times)</i>
Bake me a cake as fast as you can	<i>(cup one hand, stir with a finger)</i>
Pat it and prick it	<i>(pretend to knead dough, prick with fork)</i>
And mark it with a “B”	<i>(trace baby’s initial on your palm)</i>
And put it in the oven	<i>(pretend to do so)</i>
For Baby and me!	<i>(point to baby and yourself — give a hug)</i>

Need more rhymes? Go to the public library or make up your own.

Giggle Games

Tickle games are another type of action rhyme. As your child becomes familiar with the actions he will soon squeal with delight as he anticipates the forthcoming tickles.

Slowly, slowly, very slowly creeps the garden snail.
Slowly, slowly, very slowly up the wooden rail.
Quickly, quickly, very quickly runs the little mouse.
Quickly, quickly, very quickly run around the house.
(Let your fingers creep around your child’s body as you say the rhyme.)

Watch to know how your child is accepting this game. Some children do not like to be tickled. Others can take some tickling while others enjoy it very much.

Make a Toy

7-8 Months

Books

You can make homemade books about your child's special interests and about her family. The books you make can be made from pictures you cut from a magazine, your own drawings, or photographs of your family.

Choose materials that can withstand chewing. Keep the books to a size that your child can easily hold and use one large picture per page.

Materials: 6-10 pieces of card stock cut to size
clear contact paper
pictures of people, animals, toys
metal rings

1. Use heavy clear tape or clear contact paper to attach pictures to cardboard.
2. Punch holes along the left side or one hole in the upper left corner. Hold pages together with string or metal rings.

Safety

7-8 Months

As your baby becomes more mobile, it is important to keep one step ahead of his abilities. Look at your home from your child's perspective — what looks interesting, how high can he reach, how well and how far can he travel, and what new skills is he acquiring. Check the following:

HOME FURNISHINGS

- be sure furniture is sturdy enough for child to pull herself up on
- keep electrical wall sockets covered
- put gates at the top and bottom of the stairs
- cover sharp edges and corners of furniture
- secure or put barrier in front of plate glass windows, windows with flimsy screens, patio doors, and balcony windows
- keep things that dangle out of reach or tied up — drapery/blind draw cords, table lamp/ appliance cords, tablecloths

BURNS

- keep radiators, fireplaces, and space heaters out of reach
- set the water heater no higher than 120o
- keep hot foods and drinks on the stove's back burners and away from table edges
- in the bath tub, turn your child away from the faucet

POISONS

- keep cleaning and gardening supplies, medicines, beauty products in locked cabinets
- remove or protect from lead paint
- keep poisonous plants out of reach

SUFFOCATION

- keep plastic bags out of reach
- don't allow your child to play with anything small enough to be swallowed
- keep balloons out of reach
- cut food into small pieces; cut round foods (grapes, hot dogs, bananas) into irregular pieces

OTHER TIPS

- keep plastic bags out of reach
- be wary of places your child can get into but not out of
- watch your child around pets — dogs, cats, hamsters, fish...
- keep guns unloaded and locked up; lock ammunition in a separate cupboard
- install smoke detectors in each bedroom and on every level

**POST EMERGENCY
NUMBERS BY TELEPHONES**

**EMERGENCY
911**

Police - Fire - Ambulance

Issues & New Development

7-8 Months

Language Development

Your child's language development depends on physical growth, cognitive development, and his hearing. An infant whose hearing is developing normally can respond to different tones of voices and distinguish between voices. As he gains control of his lips, jaw, tongue, and vocal cords, he can begin to babble. Gradually his babbling turns into sounds that are more like adult speech patterns, though words do not come until his first birthday or later.

Your Child's Speech and Hearing Development

<i>Age</i>	<i>Hearing & Understanding</i>	<i>Talking</i>
4-6 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does your child respond to "no" or changes in your tone of voice? • Can your child look around for the source of new sounds? • Does your child notice toys that make sounds? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does your child's babbling sound more speech-like with lots of different sounds, including P, B, M? • Does your child tell you (by sound or gestures) when he wants you to do something again? • Does your child make gurgling sounds when left alone? ...when playing with you?
7-12 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does your child enjoy games like peek-a-boo and pat-a-cake? • Does your child turn or look up when you call her name? • Does your child listen when spoken to? • Does your child recognize the names of common items? • Has your child begun to respond to requests such as "Come here"? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does your child's babbling have both long and short groups of sounds, such as ta-ta, up-up, b-b-b-b, d-d-d-d? • Does your child imitate different speech sounds? • Does your child use speech or non-crying sounds to get and keep your attention?

Table from July, 1996 Family Information Services Parenting/Child Development Focus Issue, developed by Linda Schueler, Kandiyohi, MN.

Helping your child to listen and to talk

- Give uninterrupted one-to-one conversation time with your child.
- Use your child's name often as you talk to her.
- Your child will first learn the names of things. Say, "Where did your ball go?" rather than "Where is it?"
- Talk about things that are physically present so your child can make the connection between the word and the object.
- Point to things you are talking about.
- Talk about things that interest your child— things you have done together, his toys, what he eats...
- Be enthusiastic and expressive in your speech.
- To encourage her efforts at speech, do your best to understand her gestures, words, or invented words.
- Talk to your child in a comforting voice. Harsh sounds may make him afraid and limit his interaction.
- Talk about what you are doing. Use routine care times to talk to your child.
- Sing songs and say rhymes to your child.
- Repeat the sounds that your child says to you. Make a game of it.
- Look at books and talk about the pictures. Ask your child to point to pictures in the book, "Where is the truck?"
- Play music — all kinds of music (but not too loud). Make up songs. Dance to the music.