

Infant Milestones & Care: 8 to 12 Months

“Yeah, you want it?”

Ask twelve-month old Honest Williams’ mom to describe her son and two words come to mind:

“He is very busy. He is cruising. He holds on walking, like on along furniture, the wall, things like that. He’s starting to stand on his own, pulling up.”

“At ages eight to 12 months, hopefully they’re starting to crawl, they should pull to stand; and, of course, the crowning glory at 12 months of age, if the child can take a few steps on their own, that’s wonderful.”

What Doctor Andrew Adesman is referring to, and what one-year old Honest is exhibiting, are “developmental milestones”: skills most children have by a certain age. They fall into specific categories.

“Motor development, which could be gross motor and fine motor; language development, which would be what a child understands and the vocalizations they make; and then personal social skills in terms of how they engage other children or adults in terms of visually and emotionally.”

Among the key milestones for a baby eight to twelve-months.

He or she: Gets to sitting position without help; Gets on hands-and-knees: “all fours”; Finger feeds him- or herself; Imitates people and gestures; Begins to use objects correctly; Finds hidden objects.

“What happens if I take that away?”

Dr. Ruth Milanaik is Honest’s pediatrician.

“Where did it go?”

She’s testing for one of the most fascinating milestones babies reach between eight and twelve months. It’s called “Object Permanence.”

“You were right, I’ve got it.”

“Object permanence is when you actually have the brainpower to remember that there was something there. They will understand that something is missing and that’s a major milestone. When you take a toy away, you’re going to hear some big response going on, “Wait a minute; that’s mine!”

“Nice standing, young man; nice standing!”

But pediatricians say the single milestone many people focus on at this stage is that “crowning glory” Dr. Adesman mentioned: standing, and walking. Fixating on this is natural for parents. But standing and walking, even by the end of the eight-to-twelve-month age range, is not “mandatory.”

“I think a lot of parents will hear, ‘Oh, your baby may stand between 10 and 15 months.’ And they look at their baby on their 10-month birthday, and they go, ‘Go, Go!’ But that’s not realistic for all babies.”

“Two balls you have to get this time. C’mom.”

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Still, you should alert your pediatrician if, during this period, you see any potential signs of developmental delays such as the child: Cannot stand when supported; Does not say any single words, like “mama” or “dada”; Does not start using gestures; Does not look at or point to correct objects when named.

“An isolated milestone delay oftentimes is nothing. Where it’s concerning is if a child has multiple delays, or if a child has several delays with the same type of development, whether it be language or motor.”

“The green ball this time.”

Experts say playing with your baby may help promote normal development, from something as simple as a little bouncing and talking to them in those first few months, to tummy time, to just getting down to their level, literally. It’s all about simple interaction.

“You’re never going to get this day, this time, moment back again. So, just live it, and enjoy every minute of it.”