

Infant Milestones and Care: By 9 Months

As your baby grows, they will have a lot of “firsts”—their first smile, first laugh, first steps. These are called developmental milestones. And they can help you tell if your baby is healthy and growing up well.

Keep in mind, milestones are not fixed. All babies develop at their own pace. But by knowing the milestones, you can spot a problem early if it arises. Follow this checklist to recognize milestones.

By 9 months of age, most babies will do the following: Express different emotions like happiness, sadness, anger, and surprise. They may be shy or afraid around strangers. React when you leave them, such as looking, crying, or reaching for you, or lifting arms up to be held. Make many different sounds, such as “mamamama.”

DO: Sit up without help.

DO: Bang things together.

DO: Pull food toward them with their fingers.

DO NOT: Wait to talk with your child’s healthcare provider if your baby does not do these things. Also note if your baby: Does not look when you call their name; Does not laugh or smile when you play peek-a-boo; Has trouble moving things from hand to hand; Does not look for things that disappear out of sight, such as you or a dropped toy.

These could be signs of a delay in development. Your child’s healthcare provider can test your baby’s progress.

In most cases, missing a milestone turns out not to be a problem. But being vigilant can help you act on any concerns quickly. Follow this checklist to make sure your baby grows up healthy and happy.