

# Six-Seven Months



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*REACHING...*

*...GRASPING*

*LAUGHING....*

*...ROLLING*

## DEVELOPMENTS:

This month your baby may...

- Show the first sign of locomotion by entering the creeping stage. This usually involves scooting backward on the tummy, then forward.
- Begin to show hand preference and begin discovering his own body.
- Carry a toy around in one of his hands most of the time. If you try to take the toy, baby may protest.
- Develop a sense of humor.
- Show fear of strangers.
- Enjoy making noises by banging of toys.
- Get his first tooth.
- Want to assist in feeding self. He may explore foods with his hands, close lips on a spoon to remove food, and hold and play with a cup and spoon.
- Desire to be included socially and may show increasing dependence and fear of separation.
- Show tension and irritability before a big development step.
- Repeat combination of sounds and show enjoyment of music.

## ENCOURAGING ACTIVITIES

- Instead of playing "peek-a-boo" with your hands, go through a doorway, hide around a corner and call to baby so he has to turn his head to look for you.
- Help your baby to a hands-and-knees position. Rock him slowly back and forth giving support if necessary.
- Place yourself or a favorite toy just out of reach, encouraging him to move toward the object. However, if you do this too often or place the object too far out of reach it will frustrate the baby.
- Bang two blocks on the floor, then give them to your baby to play with. Let him discover different sounds by giving him different items (like spoons or plastic bowls).
- Include baby in as many family activities as possible.
- Show enjoyment of music by humming, bouncing or swaying.
- Repeat combination of sounds, "ma ma ma", watch mouth closely and try to imitate sounds.

## BABY HINTS

- Let your baby begin practicing with a cup.
- Introduce new foods at the beginning of the meal when baby is hungriest.
- If baby is cutting teeth, let the baby suck on frozen yogurt cubes, a frozen bagel, or a cold wet towel.
- On those drooling days, have him wear a bib all day to absorb moisture.

# 9 WAYS TO HELP YOUR BABY'S LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

You play a critical role in your baby's language development. Below are activities you can do to help reinforce the growth of these skills.

1. **Talk.** Tell your baby what he or she is doing throughout their day. For instance, "Now we're going to take a bath. Can you feel the warm water on your belly? When we dry off we'll get dressed and take a walk."
2. **Read.** It's never too early to read to your baby. You can start with simple board books and graduate to picture books as your child gets older.
3. **Play music.** Babies love music and movement. Play nursery rhymes or sing to your baby while you hold them, swaying to the music.
4. **Tell stories.** Make up stories using topics that may be of interest to your baby, whether they be about a family member or a favorite stuffed animal. You can use a visual, by holding and pointing to a picture of that person or the toy.
5. **Follow your child's lead.** Repeat your baby's babbles and sounds back to him or her. You may even be able to tape record your baby's sounds and later play them back as they listen.
6. **Never criticize your child's articulation or speech patterns.** As your baby gets older, use proper pronunciation when repeating words they say instead of the "cute" way they may pronounce them.
7. **Use television and computers sparingly.** The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that children younger than 2 years not watch television at all. While some educational programs can be beneficial to kids, TV shows do not interact with or respond to your baby as you can.
8. **Treat ear infections thoroughly.** Take your baby to the pediatrician promptly. If antibiotics are prescribed, make sure your baby finishes the prescription.
9. **Go on field trips.** These trips don't have to be major. You could take a simple walk around your neighborhood and comment on trees, animals, and buildings.

Information taken from an article by Colleen Davis Gardephe, American Baby. Sources: American Academy of Pediatrics; Kathy Hirsh-Pasek, coauthor of *How Babies Talk*; John Bonvillian, Ph.D.; Karla Stovall, Speech and Language Pathologist.

## Talking Face to Face

Even though babies can't talk now, they are absorbing all the language around them. The more you talk to your baby the more they hear the words, pitch, and inflections of your language. Talking face to face with your child encourages them to talk. They get excited because they have your attention, want to please you and do what you are doing. Soon they will imitate the way your mouth moves. They learn how to form the words and use their tongue from watching you. You are more important than talking toys or TV programs.

# **SUBSTITUTION SUMMARY**

## **WHAT**

Substitution involves replacing an inappropriate activity with an acceptable form of the same activity. It follows the idea that the activity is not bad, but inappropriate. (Substitution differs from distraction in that the activity is encouraged.)

## **WHEN**

Substitution is used when a child's activity is unsafe, annoying, or antisocial, but can be redirected to an acceptable form.

## **PROCEDURE**

1. Decide what is "wrong" with the activity.
2. Choose a substitute "tool" or "location".
3. Calmly and firmly make the substitution (replace the "tool" or move the child to a new "location").
4. Explain briefly why you are making the substitution.
5. Encourage the child to continue the activity.

## **HOW NOT TO DO IT**

- Mother sees Peg in the living room drinking grape juice. She takes the glass away and says, "Shame on you for drinking in here. Here's a book, look at it!"
- Mother sees Tommy making a peanut butter sandwich with a sharp kitchen knife. Mother takes the knife and says, "No, no. Tommy is too little," and then makes the sandwich for him.

## **HOW TO DO IT**

*Daughter Peg is drinking her grape juice standing on the beige living room rug.*

1. Mother is afraid Peg will spill some grape juice on the rug and stain it.
2. Mother moves Peg to the kitchen where spills can be wiped up easier. (Change the location)
3. Mother explains, "We drink juice in the kitchen or at the table so it is easier to clean up."
4. The message Peg gets is, "It is okay to drink grape juice in the kitchen or in chairs."

*Mother sees two year old Tommy trying to make a peanut butter sandwich with a sharp kitchen knife.*

1. The knife is sharp.
2. Mother will substitute a table knife. (Changing the tool)
3. She removes the sharp knife and replaces it with a table knife.
4. Mother explains, "This is a sharp knife for cutting; this is a table knife for making sandwiches."
5. Mother scoops some peanut butter on the table knife and gives it to Tommy so that he can finish his sandwich.

## FOR BABIES, DISCIPLINE CAN WAIT

*I have 9-month-old twins and I'd like to find an alternative to spanking, but at this age, reasoning with them is not effective. What do other parents find effective? -Monica Wolff, Lambertville, Michigan.*

Just the idea of spanking a child of this age is appalling to readers who called Child Life. "Children that age can't relate the punishment to what they are being punished for," says Peter Meyer of Chicago. "It is cruel to inflict pain on a 9-month-old."

Discipline shouldn't begin until the second year, when infants evolve into toddlers as they begin walking and talking. All that's required for crawlers—and even for toddlers most of the time—is simple techniques like clearing the house of breakable objects, giving children a substitute for whatever they shouldn't have or moving them away from the trouble spot.

"In order for a child to be able to reason, they have to be developmentally able to communicate," says Sue Hersurth of San Jose, Calif. "I would divert their attention with toys."

These strategies may sound elementary, but they are important. New research shows that what happens between parents and their children during the first year is crucial for how effective their later efforts at discipline will be.

"The more the mother is responsive to the child's needs and is available to them in the first year, the more responsive and cooperative the child will be to the mother's demands," says Grazyna Kochanska, Ph.D., who is conducting a long-term study on early discipline and the development of conscience funded by the National Science Foundation and the MacArthur Foundation.

"It's like you're collecting interest from the bank on what you've already put in," say Kochanska, a psychology professor at the University of Iowa in Iowa City, Iowa.

Most children want to please their parents, Kochanska says. Her research shows that parents ask toddlers to do something an average of once every two minutes. Children cooperate without any resistance about 60% of the time.

"Remember that not all forms of opposition are bad, and some are very important to the child's developing autonomy," Kochanska says.

One expert in children's behavior, Edward Christophersen, has found through decades of work with troubled families that the more parents focus on prevention, the less they need discipline.

This work led Christophersen, Ph.D., a professor of behavioral pediatrics at Children's Mercy Medical Hospital in Kansas City, Mo., to develop a technique he calls time-in. Rather than paying attention to children mostly for bad behavior, he suggests rewarding them with "love pats" while they are playing quietly or otherwise "being good."

Picking up toddlers and putting them someplace else is not enough," say Christophersen, who describes the technique in his book "Beyond Discipline" (Westport Publishers, \$9.95).

"You also have to touch the children when they're not doing the wrong thing. If the only time children get attention is when they misbehave, there's nothing in it for them to behave."

Here's basically how Christophersen's "love pats" work. As many times a day as you can, without saying anything, give a brief rub on the back or head during good behavior. The advantage of the brief touch is that it reinforces without interrupting the child's activity. Parents should notice better behavior within two weeks.

"Now the child doesn't have to stop what he's doing and come find you to make a connection," Christophersen says.



# LEARNING THE MEANING OF "NO!"

*Although I am learning to understand the meaning of no, if you tell me "no," I may only briefly stop what I'm doing, but then continue. This is because I'm not old enough to have the control or understanding to stop my "no" behavior completely. I need an adult to help me stop and redirect me to something else. At this stage I also think that "No" means "not right now." Since I cannot understand that "No" means never. I will usually try the forbidden behavior again later, several times!*

## HELPFUL SUGGESTIONS:

1. Avoid saying "No" too much or "No" will lose its meaning for me. Excessive use of "No" can also cause me to become more negative and say "No" more often as I get older.
  - a. Save your "No's" for times when my actions can harm me, hurt others, or harm property.
  - b. Child-proofing our home well can help you from needing to say "No" constantly.
  
2. There are four steps to help teach me the meaning of "No":
  - a. Say "No!" immediately after or during my "no" behavior. Use a matching firm facial and vocal expressions.
  - b. Physically help me to stop my "no" behavior, since I cannot be expected to stop by myself. For example, if I start to go near the stove, take my hand or pick me up when you tell me "No."
  - c. Name the "no" behavior and reason I'm not supposed to do it in short concrete terms as you help me stop, e.g., "No, hot!" or, "No...pulling hair hurts!"; avoid yelling or long explanations.
  - d. Redirect me, or show me something that I am allowed to do, e.g., if I pull your hair, show me how to pat your head instead, or, if I start to touch a hot stove, take me to my toy box instead. This is a very important step because "No" only teaches me what I am not supposed to do. I need to also learn what I **am** allowed.
  
3. Remember, I will probably try my "no" behavior several more times to test my limits and to help me learn that "no" means never. It is very important to be consistent with #2 above, so that I can learn my rules, limits, and about dangers.
  
4. Respond to my attempts at telling you "No" to help me understand the meaning. For example, I may turn away or resist you during feeding or dressing as my way of communicating "no." Put what I am trying to communicate into words for me, e.g., you don't want to eat," as you shake your head "no" with extra emphasis.

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## CHILD GUIDANCE: USING WORDS

Baby can't talk yet, but he is starting to learn that words have meanings. You can use this to help baby behave.

If you see baby crawling toward your slippers, and you know they'll go into his mouth, say, "Tastes bad," and move him to a different spot.

If baby tries to touch the oven say, "hot," and move him away.

Don't just say, "No," to things baby does. Give him one or two-word explanations to help him learn why he can't behave in certain ways. Research shows this really helps.

As he gets older you can make explanations a little longer, three or four words instead of one or two.

Baby's memory is not as good as yours. Remember how many tries it took for him to learn Pat-a-Cake or Peek-a-Boo? Don't expect baby to learn to stay away from dirty slippers or hot stoves because you tell him once or 20 times.



## ACT—DON'T JUST REACT

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

If you find yourself saying, "No," all the time, perhaps you should change things in the places where she spends time.

Move that glass vase to a higher shelf. Put safety latches on the kitchen and bathroom cupboards. Move the outdoor barbecue to a spot where she can't go.

This will make life easier for you, and you won't have to discourage baby's curiosity so often.

Sometimes you have to say, "No," to a baby. That's OK. Just don't overdo it. Besides, it's easier to change your living room than to stop your child's curiosity.



# PRAISE YOUR CHILD

Children like to hear words of praise for a job well done. Praise helps create pride, joy, and respect for self. It is important to praise your child when she shows behavior that you want her to repeat. Praise should be given to your child immediately after the action or event takes place.

Praise tips:

- Give positive praise. The value of the praise is lessened if a negative comment is part of the praise statement.
- Praise should be specific to the action or event.

Listed below you will find a praise list to use with your child.



## General

## Specific

Much better.

That's right.

Great.

How about that.

Fine.

You are 100 percent correct.

Beautiful.

Perfect.

You get a star today.

Wonderful.

Marvelous.

That's just so.

That's neat.

Well, I should say so.

Congratulations.

I'm pleased.

You're sharp today.

I am proud of you.

Good thinking.

Outstanding.

Good sharing your tricycle.

You're doing a good job of waiting in line.

Nice waiting.

Good walking.

Good, you did what I asked you to do.

Excellent answer.

You did that just right.

I like that-that's well thought out.

You have been such a helpful worker.

That deserves an A.

You couldn't have said or done it better.

You are a good listener.

It's nice to see you helping each other.

Thank you for listening to my questions.

You remembered all the rules. I'm proud of you.

Thank you for cleaning your room.

Good work.

I like the way you are working.

That is certainly so.

That's good table manners to wipe your mouth with your napkin.

# HOMEMADE TOYS

## Pat Mat (around 5 months of age)

- Materials:** Gallon size zip lock freezer bag, hair gel, sponge shapes, glitter, and poker chips.
- Why important?** At this age, babies learn through their senses and their movements. Connecting words to tactile and motor experiences helps babies learn language.
- How?** Show the baby how to pat the bag to make the floating objects move. Talk to the baby about what he is doing: the motions he's making, the movement of the objects and the feel of the objects.

## Water Bottle activity (around 7 months of age)



- Materials:** Clear water bottle, water, glitter, fun foam.
- Why important?** Develops curiosity and interest in movement. Encourages babies to crawl after the bottle when rolled. Develops language and connection to words.
- How?** Put water, glitter and shapes into bottle and glue cap closed. Show the baby the sparkles and how to roll and shake the bottle. Talk to the baby about colors, animals, letters, shapes, and sinking and floating.

## Bath Fun Foam (around 9 months of age)

- Materials:** Fun foam, scissors, cookie cutters, permanent marker.
- Why important?** Encourages bath time play with fun shapes, textures, and colors. Fosters secure attachment to parent who plays with them. Celebrate holidays together.
- How?** Cut out different shapes like hearts for Valentines Day, four leaf clovers, pumpkins, Christmas trees, or letters of the alphabet. This activity grows with your child. You can even make houses and trees.

# INFLUENZA VACCINE



Influenza vaccine is recommended annually for children age >6 months with certain risk factors (including but not limited to asthma, cardiac disease, sickle cell disease, HIV, diabetes; see MMVR 2001; 50(RR-4), and can be administered to all others wishing to obtain immunity. Children aged 12 years or less should receive vaccine in a dosage appropriate for their age (0.25 mL if age 6-35 months or 0.5 mL if age is 3 years or older). Children aged 8 years or younger who are receiving influenza vaccine for the first time should receive two doses separated by at least 4 weeks.

For additional information about vaccines, vaccine supply, and contraindications for immunization, please visit the National Immunization Program Website at [www.cdc.gov/nip](http://www.cdc.gov/nip) or call the National Immunization Hotline at (800) 232-2522 (English) or (800) 232-0233 (Spanish).

## **Children Learn What They Live**

If children live with criticism,  
They learn to condemn.

If children live with hostility,  
They learn to fight.

If children live with ridicule,  
They learn to be shy.

If children live with shame,  
They learn to feel guilty.

If children live with tolerance,  
They learn to be patient.

If children live with encouragement,  
They learn confidence.

If children live with praise,  
They learn to appreciate.

If children live with fairness,  
They learn justice.

If children live with security,  
They learn to have faith.

If children live with approval,  
They learn to like themselves.

If children live with acceptance and friendship,  
They learn to find love in the world.

*-Dorothy Law Nolte*

## **If I Had To Live My Life All Over Again**

If I had to live my life all over again,  
I'd finger paint more, and point the finger less.  
I'd do less correcting, and more connecting.  
I'd take my eyes off my watch, and watch with my eyes.  
I would care to know less, and know to care more.  
I'd take more hikes and fly more kites.  
I'd stop playing serious, and seriously play.  
I'd run through more fields, and gaze at more stars.  
I'd do more hugging, and less tugging.  
I would be firm less often, and affirm much more.  
I'd build self-esteem first, and the house later.  
I'd teach less about the love of power,  
And much more about the power of love.

# Activities & Games

## Muscle Control & Body Awareness

### **Tunnel travel**

A tunnel made from a large cardboard box provides your little one an incentive to crawl as well as a chance to experience firsthand the difference between inside and outside. Remove the flaps from the box or fold them inside. Then place the baby near one end of the tunnel and seat yourself on the floor at the other end. Encourage the baby to crawl through the tunnel to reach you.

### **Stand-ups**

To show the baby that he can reach things by standing up, place an inviting toy on the seat of a sturdy chair. Try to suggest by words and movements that he get the toy by pulling himself up, holding onto the chair. If he has trouble doing it or does not understand, help him to his feet and lean him against the chair so he can reach the toy.



### **Getting a third toy**

This exercise helps the baby learn to release one toy to get another. While he has a toy in each hand, put another in front of him and call his attention to it. At first he may reach with the toy still in his hand. Later he will discover how to drop one to get another.

### **Pick-up**

To give your child practice in picking up objects of different sizes and shapes, float small toys in his bath, place pieces of food on his high-chair tray and provide him with a variety of objects to play with.

## Hearing and Language

### **Outdoor sounds**

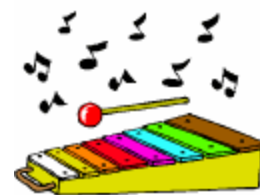
This outdoor activity complements the baby's own interest in tracking sounds. When you hear an airplane, a barking dog, a cawing crow, a roaring truck, turn you child toward the source of the sound and point it out. Then imitate the noise and name the source. As well as learning to locate sounds, the baby will find out what makes them.

### **Hidden sounds**

A squeak toy can help the baby learn to use sound to locate objects that are out of sight. Begin by showing him a toy that squeaks. Squeeze it, then hide it under a soft cloth and squeak it again. Ask the baby where the noise came from and help him find the toy.

### **An ear for music**

Records of all kinds of music—as well as wind-up music boxes and other musical toys—find a willing audience in most children. Put on a lullaby before bedtime, a rousing march before a walk, a polka while dancing your baby around the room.



### **Baby talk**

Continue to talk to your baby often, using short, simple sentences. Speak about the present and be concrete. Use the names of objects and people repeatedly instead of substituting pronouns such as "it" and "them." Babies have short memories and cannot think abstractly. To help the baby understand, use exaggerated gestures when appropriate. Although he cannot respond verbally yet, he is listening and learning to associate words with objects, events and people.

# Activities & Games

## Muscle Control & Body Awareness



### **Pat-a-cake**

This traditional game teaches the baby to imitate gestures. Begin by patting the child's hands together as you sing the rhyme. After a few rounds, start clapping your hands as the baby watches or puts his hands on yours. Then invite him to clap as you sing. It may take the little one a while to learn how to clap on his own, so be patient.

### **In and out**

Your baby probably likes to dump things out of a container, but he may not be able to put them back. Fill a plastic bucket with small toys and let the baby dump them out. Keep refilling the bucket as long as he is interested.

### **Pull the toy**

A six-or-seven-month-old probably can begin to understand how to use one object to get another. Tie a string around one of the baby's favorite toys and place the toy itself beyond the baby's reach, leaving the end of the string in front of him. Then show the baby that he can get the toy by pulling the string. Remember always to remove the string before leaving the toy alone with the baby.



## Hearing and Language

### **Knee-drops**

This teaches your baby to anticipate actions. Place him on your lap. Hold him firmly around his chest and gently bounce him up and down, singing a simple song such as "Row, Row, Row Your Boat." On the last phrase of a verse, lower him between your knees and laugh. After a few days, he may show you he knows what is coming by tensing his muscles or laughing first.

### **Tug-of-war**

An old-fashioned tug-of-war game teaches the baby about taking turns. Give your child one end of a scarf and take the other end yourself. Pull gently on your end, then release it and see if the baby will take a turn tugging at his end. If not, place your other hand over his and show him how to pull.

### **Saying good-bye**

If your child cries when you leave him, help him understand that you always return. Even when you are leaving for a short time, say "bye-bye," and tell him you will be right back. Then return within a few minutes so he will quickly discover you have not disappeared permanently. Gradually increase the period of time when you are gone.

## Where Is The Baby?

Using brightly colored markers, draw a face on a piece of cardboard.  
Attach a piece of cloth or fabric over the picture using duct or cloth tape.  
Show your baby how he or she can lift up the fabric to "find the baby." Ask, "Where is the baby?" and after your baby lifts the flap say, "there's the baby!" or "peek-a-boo!"