

Seven-Eight Months

SITTING...
THROWING....



...IMITATING
...CRAWLING

DEVELOPMENTS:

This month your baby may...

- Pull herself up to a standing position by using different pieces of furniture.
- Pull himself up from a sitting position.
- Bounce up and down while sitting, using this action to move across the floor.
- Show increasing memory of objects and people.
- Get herself into a sitting position, using her hands to get herself up.
- Show strong attachment to mother and may fear being separated from him.
- Crawl around everywhere.
- Empty drawers, cabinets and bookshelves.
- Push away unwanted objects.
- Hold a bottle to drink.
- Pick up a small object with thumb and forefinger.
- Respond to signals of upcoming events. Baby may cry when mom puts on a coat before leaving or blink before a cup hits the floor.
- Shout for attention.
- Use two syllable utterances and babble with variety of sounds.
- Touch her genital areas.
- Baby may pick up small objects at this time and can solve simple problems.

ENCOURAGING ACTIVITIES

- Place cheerios on tray, encourage child to reach and pick up.
- As baby's memory increases, try covering one of his toys with a blanket and let him find it.
- Using simple bathtub toys (plastic bottles, measuring cups) can provide baby much enjoyment.
- Allow child indestructible storybooks to encourage page turning and pointing.

BABY HINTS

- Anything smaller than a baby's fist is not a toy. Avoid big toys with small parts that can be broken off.
- Stay away from toys with cords longer than a foot. It is easy to be entangled.
- Keep several teething rings in the refrigerator so replacements are ready when baby needs them.
- Put safety gates at the top and bottom of the stairs.
- Fingernails and toenails are softer and easier to clip after a bath.
- Keep a few disposable diapers in your car's glove compartment.
- To keep a bottle cold when traveling, put it inside a wide-mouthed insulated thermos with a few chunks of ice.
- To keep a bottle warm on short trips, wrap a towel around the heated bottle and put inside an empty potato chip can and tightly seal the can.



CHILDREN'S CLOTHING

Since 1985, the Consumer Product Safety Commission has received reports of 19 deaths and 42 non-fatal incidents involving the entanglement of children's clothing drawstrings. The drawstrings caught on such products as playground slides and platforms, school bus handrails or doors, and crib corner posts. In November 1995, the Consumer Product Safety Commission issued *Guidelines for Drawstrings on Children's Clothing*.

Guidelines for Drawstrings on Children's Clothing include:

- ⇒ Eliminating drawstrings from necks and hoods of children's outerwear, such as jackets and sweatshirts.
- ⇒ Drawstrings around the waist and bottom of outerwear should be limited to 3 inches of exposed drawstring and be sewn at the back center of the garment to prevent the string from being pulled too long on one side.



By 1996, CPSC was aware of almost no children's jackets being manufactured that had neck or hood drawstrings. Instead manufacturers had changed to elastic, velcro, snaps, or buttons.

As children put on their winter outerwear this season, there could be fewer serious or fatal incidents of entanglements with jacket or sweatshirt drawstrings.

- Dress children in layers of clothing.
- Cover children's heads and ears to protect them from the cold.
- During winter and colder months dress children in bright hats, gloves and coats. Make sure they provide adequate warmth but do not compromise mobility.
- Wear mittens rather than gloves.
- Always dress children in winter boots and warm socks.
- Keep children's heads warm with hats at all times.
- During summer months use lightweight, light-colored clothing in the sun.
- Don't forget hats and sunscreen with SPF of at least 15.



To obtain a copy of *Guidelines for Drawstrings* visit the Consumer Product Safety Commission Internet Web site at <http://www.cpsc.gov> (go to "Consumer/CPSC Publications/Children's Safety/Drawstrings").

HOW SHOULD I HANDLE A CHILD WHO'S CHOKING?

Very young children automatically put everything into their mouths. This means that we have to watch what we give them—and what they find themselves. A baby is probably choking on something if he is gasping for breath or is not breathing, is turning blue, or is unable to talk or cry.

If the baby is crying, talking, or coughing, he is not choking. The best thing to do in these situations is nothing. The best way to get an object out is to cough—so if a child is coughing, let him be.

If you think a child is really choking on a piece of food, for example, do not—under any circumstances—stick your finger into the baby's throat without looking closely for the piece of food first. If you don't concentrate, you risk pushing a partially choked-on object farther down and causing it to block the windpipe.

What steps should I take if a baby is choking?

Follow the procedures you have established for handling emergencies: Have someone call your doctor, or emergency hotline, or the emergency room at your local hospital, etc. Follow the steps outlined below until either the baby starts breathing or help arrives—if the baby who is choking is an infant (under one year):

1. Put the baby on his back on a hard surface—across your lap is okay, but a table would be better. Tip back his neck just slightly so the airway is more open. Open his mouth and look in. If you see an object, take your index finger and sweep it across the back of the throat to pull it out.



2. If you don't see anything, but the child has obviously choked on something and is not breathing, immediately take the baby and put him, stomach down, on your forearm with his head down lower than his trunk (you must be seated). With the heel of your hand, strike the child firmly between his shoulder blades four times.



3. If regular breathing has not started, roll the infant over on his back on a firm surface, and

using two fingers, press down on the infant's chest four times rapidly.



4. If breathing has not yet resumed, then with the baby still on his back on a hard surface, open his mouth and look to see if you've brought up the object. If you can see it, sweep it out. If you can't see it, and he's still not breathing, go to step five.

5. Perform mouth-to-mouth resuscitation. Cover the baby's nose and mouth with your mouth, and give four short puffs, looking at his chest to see if it rises. If his chest doesn't come up, then the object that was choking him is still there. In that case, you have to repeat the above procedure, numbers 2-4. Keep repeating this procedure until he starts breathing, or help arrives.



HOW SHOULD I HANDLE A CHILD WHO'S CHOKING?

What do babies choke on most often?

Babies usually choke on foods like nuts and popcorn, or on foods that aren't cut into small pieces, or foods that are too big (such as whole hot dogs). Babies also choke on toys meant for older children, or toys with little pieces that break off. Balloons are very dangerous, as babies choke on both uninflated balloons and tiny pieces from popped balloons.

How do you help an older child who is choking?

The National Academy of Pediatrics has now approved the Heimlich Manuever for children over one year. For a free poster showing you the steps, contact your local American Red Cross chapter, or write to: American Red Cross National Headquarters, 17th and D Streets, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20006.

What precautions should a parent take to prevent choking accidents?

Make sure that all of the baby's food is appropriate: strained for a baby under six months; junior food for the infant six to eight months; and food that is very, very well cut up for a child one to two years old. Don't give finger foods to an infant. Children shouldn't eat peanuts until they are 7 years old! If you give an older baby a hot dog, cut it lengthwise first, and then horizontally into pieces—and always remove the skin.

Make sure toys are age appropriate and pass all safety standards. To check whether a toy is big enough to be safe, make the "okay" sign. The circle that you make is pretty close to the "danger size." A toy smaller than that is small enough to choke a child under three years. Another way you can judge a safe-sized toy is with a No-Choke Testing Tube (see sidebar below).

Is there anything else a parent can do to make sure she is prepared for emergencies?

You should take an approved C.P.R. course with the American Red Cross. Contact your local chapter for more information.

Article by Steven Shelov, M.D.



NO-CHOKE TESTING TUBE

Originally developed by the Consumer Product Safety Commission, the tube simulates a young child's throat. An object which fits entirely into the cylinder fails the test and poses a choking danger to children under three. A toy or toy part passes the test if it protrudes from the cylinder. If teachers and parents would like to order a No-Choke Testing Tube, send \$1.00 for shipping and handling to: Lakeshore Curriculum Materials Co., Dept. PK, 2695 E. Dominguez St., P.O. Box 6261, Carson, CA 90749.

LEARNING PAT-A-CAKE

Preview

With your help, the baby claps her hands together.

Materials

None

Baby is:

Learning to imitate what you do.

Coordinating eye movements and hand movements.

Learning to play with you.



Activity

Introduce your baby to pat-a-cake at this age, so that in a few months she'll be ready to clap by herself. If she likes the game, she'll tell you by smiling, cooing, and laughing.

Put your baby on your lap facing you. Then hold her hands and clap them together as you sing,

*Pat-a-cake, pat-a-cake,
Baker's man;
Bake us a cake
As fast as you can.
Roll it and pat it
And mark it with B.
Then put it in the oven
For Baby and me.*

Play the game at various times during the day. Look for opportunities to include other family members in the game—grandparents and brothers and sisters would enjoy playing pat-a-cake with baby. Vary the game by rolling your baby's hands around and around as you say, **Roll it and pat it and mark it with B.** Give your baby the chance to watch you clap and roll your own hands. She may soon be copying both the clapping and the rolling.

After practicing, your baby will understand that she should clap to the rhyme. She may want to start the game herself!

SURVIVING THE DROPPING AND THROWING STAGE!

As my voluntary release skills improve I'll begin to learn how to throw and drop objects purposefully, and repeatedly. This new way to "play" with toys and objects helps me enjoy watching where the objects go and the interesting movements which occur as the object bounces about. I'll also like the sounds I can make when things hit the floor! Although certainly frustrating for parents, these kinds of observations and experiences are important for learning and is a natural part of play.

The following activities and guidelines are intended to help you support these important learning experiences, and to help prevent throwing from turning into an attention-getting negative behavior.

HELPFUL ACTIVITIES AND GUIDELINES:

1. Provide plenty of opportunities which are appropriate for me to throw and drop objects, e.g., let me throw easy to grasp balls and bean bags of different textures and sizes to you or in a box; crumpled paper in a trash can or box; clothes in the laundry basket; or sponges and bath toys in the tub or kiddy pool.
2. If I throw things that should not be thrown, stop me, show me and tell me what I am allowed to throw, e.g., if I throw blocks at a wall, tell me "No throwing at the wall, drop them in this box." If I continue to throw them inappropriately, matter-of-factly remove the object and give me something else to play with.
3. Avoid laughing or scolding me when I throw "off-limit" things; if I see that my throwing brings me attention, positive or negative, I may be more likely to continue. Instead, show me what I am allowed to throw or take the object away.
4. Prevent inappropriate throwing when possible; e.g., offer only a few pieces of finger foods on my tray at a time; give me a different toy to play with as you see me getting bored and ready to throw my blocks or other toys.





THE USE OF A SIPPY CUP

According to the February 12, 2002 edition of The Wall Street Journal, the sippy cup is keeping many children from learning how to drink out of a regular cup or glass. Speech Therapists and nursery school teachers say that normal muscle development is delayed because the muscles of the cheek and tongue are used differently in each habit. Sucking and swallowing do not use the same muscles as gulping and swallowing, and lazy speech patterns from the delayed development of the tongue and cheeks are appearing in preschool children. Also, children who drink from a sippy cup all day and are put to bed with it at night are at risk of developing the same decay patterns as "baby bottle children". Parents can help prevent these problems from occurring by limiting sippy cup use to snack and meal times. Limit sugary drinks. Consider using a straw to transition children to lidless cups by age two.

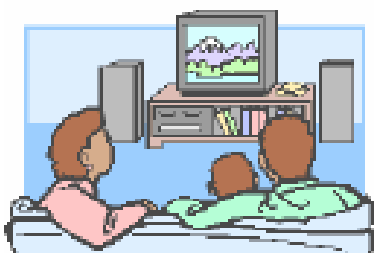
IMPORTANT ROLE OF FATHERS

Because women give birth, sometimes fathers feel less important than mothers. The differences between fathers and mothers are important for a child to see. Fathers have a deeper voice, firmer touch, and a different play style than mothers. These differences help children deal with a variety of people and personalities. Also fathers are a male role model for boys. Boys with nurturing fathers are likely to grow up confident, good at school, generous and compassionate. Girls whose fathers have been respectful and nurturing towards them tend to be confident and relate well to boys and later to men. It is as simple as spending alone time with children. Fathers are different than mothers but both are important in the life of a child.



FAMILY TRADITIONS

In our ever-changing world, children feel secure when they have traditions and regular family time. Self Esteem is enhanced when children know they belong to special group of people that care about them. Think about some of the traditions your family has—things you do together regularly, such as bedtime stories every night. These things help children know what will happen next, help them with transition and make them feel secure. Here are some traditions to think about:



Sunday afternoon walks, weekly visits to the park, making cookies, visits to the library, special meals for birthdays, Friday movie night at home, or a winter campout in the living room.

Keep traditions simple so they are easier to remember and less stressful for your family. Create a new tradition for your family.

Babysitting Tips

Has it been hard trying to find a babysitter? How can we find someone that we trust with our child? There are many good ways to find a good babysitter. There are also some good tips on how to make sure that your child is safe and in loving hands.



Where to find a good sitter...

- Ask family, friends, and close neighbors for references
- Look to see if your local church has a list of babysitters
- Go to local childcare centers or girlscout/boyscout troops

What to do after you have found some sitters...

- Ask for credentials such as a babysitting course and CPR or first aid classes
- Ask for references and be sure to check them (references should include families that they have baby-sat)
- Then narrow them down to the best qualified for your child

Once you have found your sitter...

- Have them come over and meet the children
- Ask the sitter to watch the kids while you do house work so that you can see how they are with the kids

Now it is time to leave your child with the sitter for the first time.

What do you need to tell your sitter...

- Give them your child's schedule (when and what they can eat, when they sleep, when they have television time...etc.)
- Leave all important numbers or show them where to find the numbers that might be needed
- Also be sure to write down your address in case they need to tell an emergency contact
 - ~Number where you can be reached
 - ~Emergency numbers (Doctors, poison control, police department etc.)
 - ~Emergency contacts
 - *family member or friend to contact if you can't be reached
- Give them a tour of the house if you haven't already from the prior visit
- List your child's preferences
- Share any rules that you have
- Tell them what's off limits as far as what activities they can do, what they can play with, which rooms they can go in etc.

What to pay your sitter...

There isn't a set rate what to pay your babysitter. It depends on your area, the amount of children and their ages, the amount of time they are there and how often they come. It is suggested to negotiate a rate with your sitter. Ask what his/her rate is? Ask them if it varies with the amount of children? It is also suggested to ask people around your area what they charge and go from there.

DEVELOPMENTS—SEVEN TO EIGHT MONTHS

Probably the most important development in these two months is your baby's increasing ability to move around. No longer satisfied to investigate only what is brought to him, he will start to creep or crawl purposefully toward whatever attracts his attention. His emerging mobility is both exhilarating and frightening for him. He may assert his independence one day and cling to you the next. Paradoxically, as he develops the physical skill to move away from you, he feels his dependence and the need for love more than ever.

Muscle Control and Body Awareness

As the baby's trunk muscles grow even stronger, he spends less and less time lying on his back and stomach. By the end of this period, he can sit unsupported for as long as he likes. At six months he may need to be placed in the sitting position, but at eight months he will be able to get there himself, either from his side or from all fours. And he will be able to remain sitting up while pivoting to get a toy, bouncing up and down on his bottom, or scooting across a room.

Muscular development reaches the legs and feet during these two months. When the baby is lying on his back, he may kick vigorously, relishing the smack of his feet on the floor. He may use these kicks together with a squirming motion to move a considerable distance. Or, he may propel himself by creeping on his stomach, using his arms to pull the rest of his body forward. Later in this period, he will probably crawl on all fours. But before mastering this motion, he may go through a period of a few days or even weeks during which he gets up on his hands and knees and rocks back and forth. Some babies do very little crawling, but manage to get around during these months by one of the other methods.

Source: Your Baby's First Year



With greater leg strength, the baby does more of the work when you help him to a stand, and he bears his own weight on his feet. Although he can keep his legs straight, he may prefer to bob up and down. By the end of these two months, he may try to pull himself to a stand while holding onto a piece of furniture. It will take him some time and a few backward tumbles before he accomplishes this.

Learning to stand is a major achievement for a baby. Once he is able to do it, he will try pulling himself up on any available piece of furniture. Some very active babies will even try to move along short distances using tentative sideways steps while holding onto furniture. At this stage, however, he may not yet know how to get back down from a standing position and will cry out for help. Release his hands from whatever they are gripping.

As in earlier months, the baby will reach for and examine objects of all kinds and put them into his mouth for further testing. But now he learns to use his thumb separately from his fingers, as an opposable digit, and thus can grasp things between thumb and fingers. Because of this, he can hold onto a toy for a long period, smoothly passing it back and forth between his hands in order to inspect its properties thoroughly. While playing with a toy, the baby may shake it up and down, then bang it on the floor, delighted by the effect of his own actions. Some children may be able to grasp an object in each hand and bang them together. By the end of this period, many will be able to hold their own bottles, and some may even handle and drink from a training cup with a spouted cap.

An easy way to help your child learn to drink from a cup is to give her a fresh cup of clean water while she is sitting in the bathtub. You won't have to worry about a mess and she will get to explore drinking from a cup.

DEVELOPMENTS—SEVEN TO EIGHT MONTHS

Hearing and Language

By the time your baby is in his seventh and eighth months, he is well aware of the differences in the many sounds, familiar and unfamiliar, that attract his attention. The child may interrupt his play and turn his head inquisitively at noises ranging from the ringing of a telephone to the roaring of a truck, and he has an easier time locating the source of the sound than in earlier months.

When you speak to your baby, you may notice him watching you closely: He is studying the movements of your mouth and jaw. If you feed him back one of his strings of syllables—"da-da-da" - he may studiously try to imitate your mouth and jaw movements as he repeats the sounds. He continues to respond mainly to the speaker's tone of voice, rather than to the meanings of the words themselves, but by the end of this period your child will probably understand a few words and can pick out his name when he hears it in a conversation, turning to the person who said it.

Vision and Perception

Children of this age show great interest in small objects, eagerly pursuing bits of dust and crumbs of food even though they have difficulty picking them up. During these months, the baby learns to compare visually large and small objects, gathering information that helps him adjust his grasp according to the size of an item. He sees detail well and is curious about designs and patterns. Don't be surprised if one day you observe your little one trying hard to lift an illustration off a page in a book: While the child sees the object pictured quite clearly, he does not yet understand the differences between two and three dimensions.

In these months, the baby tests the effects of his actions on objects by deliberately dropping his toys—often in rapid succession—and following the motion with his eyes.

He also enjoys having a container full of small toys that he can gleefully dump out; in the process he gains experience that will lead to an understanding of in and out, full and empty. Because the baby now has an accurate mental picture of how a familiar room usually appears, he can be surprised or even uneasy when he notices a change—a table that has been pushed aside for his own safety, for example. And since he is moving about now, your child's perception of the distance between himself and an object is improving.

Emotional and Social

Observing, imitating and patting you and others, the baby continues to show great interest in people. By now, however, he discriminates much more sharply between family and strangers: children of this age show varying degrees of anxiety around unknown people. In the presence of a stranger, your little one may remain calm as long as you are with him, but cry when you leave. He may be clingy and dependent even when you are alone with him, since his increasing mobility often makes his world seem unstable. He is learning that he is separate from you, and this sometimes upsets him.

Your child is developing a stronger sense of himself as an individual with particular likes and dislikes. He will resist your suggestions at times and push away a toy that does not interest him, or shout to get one he does want. He may explore all the parts of his body with great curiosity. And he may test his power over you by crying for you helplessly, then giggling when you appear at his side. In spite of his new anxieties during these two months, the baby enjoys playing by himself as well as interacting with others. A broad smile from you will often elicit a big grin in response, and a favorite game may send the baby into peals of laughter.



Activities & Games

Muscle Control & Body Awareness

Source: *Your Baby's first Year*

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 she get the toy by pulling herself up, holding onto the chair. If she has trouble doing it or does not understand, help her to her feet and lean her against the chair so she 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 her and call her attention to it. At first she may reach with the toy still in her hand. Later she 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 her 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 her 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 her 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, she is listening and learning to associate words with objects, events and people.

Activities & Games



Muscle Control & Body Awareness

Source: *Your Baby's First Year*

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 she 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 she 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 her. Then show the baby that she 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 playful teaches your baby to anticipate actions. Place her on your lap. Hold her firmly around her chest and gently bounce her up and down, singing a simple song such as "Row, Row, Row Your Boat." On the last phrase of a verse, lower her between your knees and laugh. After a few days, she may show you she knows what is coming by tensing her 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 her and show her how to pull.

Saying good-bye

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

Baby Proofing is a never ending job. Please remember that as your child learns and grows different things will interest him. He will go from crawling to cruising and on to walking. As a parent you can prevent some injuries by child proofing. Remember, once baby proofed, not always baby proofed. Refer back to the 2-3 month newParent packet to use the child proofing checklist.