

Learning in Families Together:

Infant Development 1

No two Infants are exactly alike. Parents wonder if their baby is “normal.” Average developmental ages can vary by as much as six months from one child to the next.

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Parenting Secrets

- Infants are not born knowing right from wrong. They must learn by watching others and through trial and error.
- Infant vaccines (shots) help prevent sickness and serious disease. Be sure to get well-child checkups!
- When babies have their needs met — being fed when hungry, comforted when crying, held and touched gently, and kept warm and dry — they begin to trust the adults who care for them.
- Infants younger than a year old should be placed on their backs to sleep — never facedown on their stomachs (see www.sids.org).

Together Time

When you see a baby suddenly jump or twitch for no apparent reason, this is a “startle” response. This means the nervous system is still developing.

- Never shake a child or throw a baby playfully into the air. It could harm the nervous system.

Play Time

Infants cannot support the weight of their head.

- Gently support the neck and head when you pick up or carry the baby.
- Allow some “tummy time” for play. Put a small toy within eyesight so the baby can practice focusing. Tummy time helps to strengthen their arms and legs.
- As they grow, infants will creep or crawl. Be sure the floor is safe and clean or use a clean blanket for floor time.

Learning Time

Trust is the most important milestone in infancy. Infants learn about relationships from how people touch and hold them.

- Comfort babies when they cry. This helps them develop trust. Crying means they need something. They may need to be changed, fed, touched, rocked, or to hear your voice.