

Your 8 to 20 month old...

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

Making Relationships: Your baby really knows the difference between you and other people, being wary of strangers unless you are there to comfort them. S/he will be interested in fun going on around them. Try copying your baby's movements and sounds to show them you are really listening and enjoy sharing pictures of family members and special friends.

Self-confidence and Self-awareness: When your baby wants something that is out of reach, they will be able to make themselves 'heard' by pointing, making eye contact and making sounds. Enjoy playing action songs and games together. Pointing to the different parts of their body will help them to understand it better. They will enjoy showing you their nose, fingers, mouth etc... when asked.

Managing Feelings and Behaviour: When feeling tired or frustrated, s/he will want to still share it with you but will start to be able to soothe themselves. Your baby will also be able to 'help' with tasks such as dressing and feeding and will be beginning to learn the difference between 'yes' and 'no'. Routines and consistency can help babies learn all about behaviour. In order for baby to understand his/her feelings, it is important to share their emotions; pride, excitement or understanding why they are feeling upset.

Communication and Language

Listening and Attention: You will start to see that your baby can concentrate on something they have chosen to do but will be easily distracted. Allow time to play with your baby to teach them how to concentrate and fully explore a toy. Babies of this age will enjoy dancing to music and sharing stories will support their ability to maintain attention.

Understanding: Everyday objects and words will be understood by your baby. They may point when asked 'where's daddy?' or touch different parts of their body when asked. Involving gestures and saying single words in your routine will help your baby understand and make links between objects and feelings, times of the day and special people.

Speaking: Your baby will be beginning to make recognisable sounds as well as exploring with 'babbling' and relying on gestures such as pointing, to communicate. Use lots of sounds when playing with your baby, such as saying 'weeee' going down a slide or 'brrrmm' as you push a car. Repeat single words such as 'dinner' or 'hello' and say them back to your child clearly if they mispronounce them when they copy.

Physical Development

Moving and Handling: During this time, your baby will learn to sit unaided, crawl, pull themselves up to stand, walk around furniture and take their first steps. They will also be improving smaller movements such as picking things up with a finger and thumb and holding a stick or crayon with their whole hand (palmer grip) to make marks in mud, sand and on paper. Give your baby toys they can hold, squeeze and throw to develop movements and hand-eye coordination. Praise them when achieving big movements but be aware they will have very little sense of danger so will need to be watched!

Health and Self-care: Now that your baby is more aware of him/herself and is more physically able, they will be wanting to be more independent and 'helpful' during the day. You can give your baby a spoon or finger foods at mealtime to feed themselves. Sitting them on a seat with a footrest or a chair on which they can reach the floor will help them to improve their hand-mouth coordination and upper-body control during mealtimes.

Literacy

Reading: Your baby will find it interesting to pick up books and look at them. Read to your baby when they are interested and make it part of your daily routine. Draw attention to pictures as you read. You can also make up stories or make your own books using photographs of special people.

Writing: There are lots of ways to develop your baby's future writing skills! It is important that you give them a rich language experience so talk to them, read to them and listen to all of those spoken words and sounds. Enjoy lots of sensory experiences together; hearing, seeing, smelling, tasting and touching. This is great for brain development and the movement will strengthen their muscles. Now that they can grasp, encourage them to make marks in mud with sticks, paint water with large paintbrushes on the fence or use chalks on the path.

Mathematics

Numbers: Your baby will be beginning to realise that things exist, even when they are hidden and will be becoming aware of numbers. You can play games where you give a baby 3 objects and then, after a while, take 2 away and help them look for them. Sing lots of number songs like '12345 once I caught a fish alive' or 'Peter hammers with one hammer' to reinforce numbers and encourage your baby to link numbers to quantity. Try and make counting part of your routine; counting the stairs in the house up to bed, the plates for the family dinner or steps on the path to your house.

Shape, Space and Measure: Your daily routine will be becoming familiar to your baby and they will recognise something as being big or little. Talk to your baby about what is happening so they learn your routine and, in time, will be aware of what happens at certain times. Try to extend your baby's understanding of size when repeating words and phrases to your child; if they point and say 'bus!', you can say 'Yes, a big bus!'.

Expressive Arts and Design

Exploring and using Media and Materials: Your baby will enjoy copying your actions; dancing, clapping, waving... and they are beginning to understand cause and effect when making marks. Encourage your baby to dance, moving their body, puppets and toys... and show them different ways to move. Giving children materials to sprinkle, throw, spread etc... will strengthen their movements.

Being Imaginative: In the future, your little one will rely on speaking skills to communicate their thinking so providing lots of language and interactions during your day together now will support their ability to share their imagination when they're older.

Understanding the World

People and Communities: Babies can learn about people and their own culture by making attachments with you and other people that are special to them. Allowing time to be affectionate with your baby can help them learn about how people interact with each other. Your baby will notice the way you interact with others and the world and may copy that behaviour in the future so it's important they see positive relationships and interactions.

The World: Your baby will enjoy watching animals, people and vehicles to see what they do. They have an understanding that things exist so will look for a hidden or dropped toy. Give your baby toys to explore- a bucket to put objects in, patterned toys, balls to roll, cars to push...

Technology: The beginning of an understanding of how technology works for babies is to learn about the world around them. Playing with toys and interacting with people can teach babies about making sense of their world and how objects behave.