

## What can I do? (Cont'd)

Early diagnosis and intervention are key, and you can get help. Some concerns may not reflect a developmental delay. However, in the case of a real delay, the earlier you get the help needed for your baby and your family, the better it will be for the baby's development. Depending on what the health care provider sees and what you tell them, they will decide if your baby needs to go to another professional for additional evaluations. Different types of therapists may be able to help your baby and teach you how to help your baby at home, such as an early intervention therapist, occupational therapist, speech therapist, and physiotherapist.

## How can I stimulate my baby at home?

Keeping a baby happy and stimulated is a very important part of development for any baby, with or without developmental delays. Even if you are not referred to a therapist, you can do the following simple activities at home:

- Look your baby in the eyes when you are talking to them and smile at them.
- When your baby looks at something, point to it and talk about it.
- Point out new things to your baby and name them.
- Your baby loves to hear your voice. Many times, because a baby does not yet speak, parents forget that it is good to talk to their baby...

Talk to your baby when you are close to them and a little farther away in a room to see if they try to follow you with their eyes or follow the sound of your voice.

- Read books to them with very simple pictures.
- Sing to your baby while using their hands and yours to do actions to songs and nursery rhymes.
- Encourage your baby to move by putting toys or things around them that are safe for them. Hold your baby up while she sits and let her look around and give her toys to look at while she balances.
- Put your baby on his tummy or back and put toys just out of reach. Encourage him to roll over to reach the toys.

**REMEMBER: Helping your baby develop to their capacity is an ongoing partnership between your family and your baby's health care providers. Early stimulation is very important for all babies, whether they are or are not developing typically. For children with developmental delays, the earlier diagnosis and intervention occur, the better the chances of improvement. While some conditions may not be curable, it is still possible and important for your baby to have every opportunity to live a happy, healthy, and comfortable life.**

**WHEN THE BABY IS HAPPY,  
THE FAMILY IS HAPPY.**

**Sources:** North Central Regional Health Authority, American Academy of Pediatrics, US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.



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# What Is Developmental Delay

Let's talk about the first  
6 months...



Photo Credit: Baby Magazine, United Kingdom

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## How do I know if my baby has a developmental delay?

When a baby is born, we expect them to be able to do certain things as they develop over time. At your baby's routine checkups, health care providers will begin to look at what things your baby can do and how well they are doing it. For example, are they trying to hold up their head? Are they rolling over? Are they looking at you and smiling? These are all examples of things that happen during typical development. Health care providers will also use measures such as height, weight, and the size of your baby's head to understand how well your baby is doing. A baby who is not doing some things that other babies do at a certain age may need to have further evaluations to see if they have what is called a developmental delay.

It is not unusual for caregivers, mothers, fathers, or grandparents to begin to notice some things about the development of a new baby. Sometimes, they compare a baby to other children in the family, a neighbor's baby, or a friend's baby. While this sometimes helps families understand if their babies are developing typically, it is always best to ask a Paediatrician or nurse if you have concerns about how your baby is developing. Many times, when parents are worried about their baby, their concerns are valid, but they may be afraid to ask health care providers for help and are sometimes persuaded by other people that they are worrying about nothing.

### By 2 months old, most babies:

- Briefly calm themselves by bringing hands to mouth.
- Look at parent and smile, and pay attention to faces of people.
- Make sounds and turn head toward them.
- Begin to follow objects with eyes.
- May act bored (cries, fussy) if activity does not change.
- Can hold head up and begin to push up when on tummy.

Please let your health care provider know if your baby does not do the following by 2 months old:

- Does not respond to loud sounds.
- Does not watch things as they move.
- Does not bring hands to mouth.

- Cannot hold head up when pushing up when on tummy.
- Appears to not hear when people speak to them.
- Does not smile at people.

### By 6 months old, most babies:

- Know familiar faces and begin to know if someone is a stranger.
- Like to play with others, especially parents and regular caregivers.
- Respond to other people's emotions and often seem happy.
- Like to look at self in a mirror.
- Respond to sounds by making sounds, and make sounds to show joy and displeasure.
- String vowels together when babbling ("ah," "eh," "oh") and like taking turns with parent while making sounds. Begin to say consonant sounds (jabbering with "m," "b").
- Respond to own name.
- Look around at things nearby.
- Bring things to mouth and begin to pass things from one hand to the other.
- Show curiosity about things and try to get things that are out of reach.
- Roll over in both directions (front to back, back to front).
- Begin to sit without support.

- When helped to a standing position, support weight on legs and might bounce.
- Rock back and forth, sometimes crawling backward before moving forward.

Please let your health care provider know if your baby does not do these things by 6 months old:

- Shows no affection for caregivers.
- Does not respond to sounds.
- Does not make vowel sounds ("ah," "eh," "oh").
- Does not try to touch things that are in reach.
- Has difficulty moving hands to mouth.
- Does not roll over in either direction.
- Does not laugh or make squealing sounds.
- Seems very stiff, with tight muscles, or very floppy, like a rag doll.

These are just some signs that you may look out for. Please do not panic, but do ask questions when you go to the clinic for your baby's checkup or vaccines.

## What can I do?

Sometimes, when parents are concerned about their baby, they keep it inside and are afraid to share this information in the hope that things will get better. However, the earlier you tell your pediatric health care provider, the better.