

What is Developmental Delay?

Let's Talk About The First 6 Months...

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.



Photo Credit: Baby Magazine United Kingdom

HOW DO I KNOW IF MY BABY HAS 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.

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").

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.

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 Paediatrics
- US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

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