

# Infants



*A child development checklist and tips booklet*

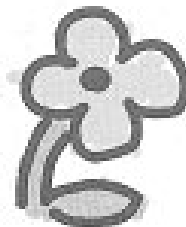
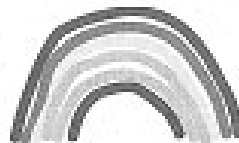
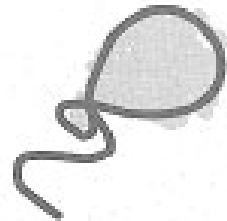


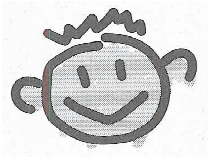
This booklet was a project of the Pinellas Early Childhood Collaborative and was written by early childhood professionals in the community. The project was funded by a grant from the Juvenile Welfare Board.

The booklet is one in a series of resource booklets on child development. The series contains:

- **Infants**
- **Ones**
- **Twos**
- **Threes**
- **Fours**

To obtain booklets in this series please call 727-547-5800.





# Introduction

## Starting Out

You are your infant's first and most important teacher. During your daily routines, your infant is learning as you interact together through holding, talking, and playing.

Child development is a combination of age, individual growth, and experience. Your infant will progress at his/her own rate; however, your involvement will promote optimal development.

Infants are dependent upon adults to meet their needs. The daily interactions you have with your infant while you hold, feed, and diaper are important parts of the learning process. Play is an essential part of learning. Your infant learns best when involved in activities that are age appropriate, interesting, and fun. Your infant will learn by doing activities which include exploring and discovering.

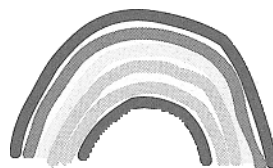
This booklet is designed to help you look at your infant's physical, social, emotional, and cognitive (concept and language) development.

It provides checklists and tips to help guide you as you work and play with your infant.

The checklists contain items that are important to your child's brain growth and learning potential. These checklists are designed for infants from birth through 12 months of age.

This booklet is one in a series of resource booklets on child development. The series also contains a booklet on one year old, two year old, three year old, and four year old development.

To obtain any of the other booklets in this series, please call 727-547-5800.



# Brain Development

“There is a time scale to brain development and the most important year is the first.”  
- Frank Newman, president of the Education Commission of the States

Your infant was born with 100 billion brain cells. These cells need to be stimulated in order for your infant’s brain to properly develop the pathways of learning that will be used throughout his/her life. Activities that are done over and over by repeated early experiences form permanent learning pathways in the brain. Without these activities or experiences the learning pathways do not develop. When a learning pathway is not used, it often tends to disappear.

## **Bonding with parents and other caregivers promotes brain development.**

Infants who receive sensitive, responsive, and consistent care from their parents and other caregivers will feel safe and secure and will develop warm trusting relationships. When you respond to cries and cues, your infant will know you are attuned to his/her needs.

## **Loving interactions promote growth and development.**

Simple activities like cuddling and rocking, talking, and singing stimulate the brain to release hormones necessary for growth.

## **The brain reacts to positive and negative experiences.**

Positive nurturing experiences are crucial to intellectual growth and the ability to regulate and control emotions. Long term exposure to stress will forever change your child’s ability to learn and relate to others in positive ways.

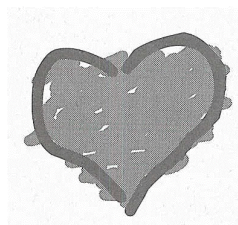


## **Learning pathways are strengthened through repetition.**

Both large and small muscles are developed through the repetition of actions when infants explore their surroundings (e.g., reaching for a mobile and grasping a rattle).

When infants are born their brains are ready to learn but they cannot do it alone. The importance of your role as a parent cannot be underestimated.

***For additional information and ideas you can use for working with your infant, please read on!***



# Social and Emotional Development

<b>DOES YOUR INFANT...</b>	<b>Beginning</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Not Yet</b>
...smile spontaneously?	0-3 months	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
...cry or tense his/her body to express discomfort?	0-3 months	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
...recognize you and enjoy the attention of other people?	3-6 months	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
...smile and laugh responsively and make sounds to get attention?	3-6 months	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
...show preferences for favorite people and things, push away unwanted things?	6-9 months	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
...cry when strangers approach (stranger anxiety)?	6-9 months	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
...display emotions such as happiness, anger, sadness, and stubbornness?	9-12 months	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
...enjoy interactions with others?	9-12 months	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## Social and Emotional Development Tips

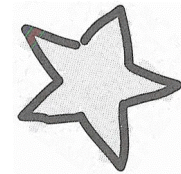
Consistently meeting the emotional and physical needs of infants in a prompt and loving manner will help infants develop a sense of trust in the world.

### **Parents can help this process by:**

- Responding promptly to your infant's crying to create feelings of security and a trusting relationship.
- Respecting your infant's choices, likes, and dislikes.
- Having the same people care for your infant consistently.
- Showing affection through holding, hugging, and attending to your infant with smiles, happy voices, and laughter.
- Massaging your infant's back, arms and legs through gentle touching.
- Playing interactive games with your infant, such as rolling a ball back and forth and "Pat-A-Cake".
- Providing mirrors for your infant to see his/her own reflection.
- Providing opportunities for your infant to socialize with other infants, relatives, and friends.
- Talking to your infant and using his/her name frequently during daily routines and rituals.



# Resources



## Health and Safety

For information on:

- **A medical emergency**.....911
- **Poison control** ..... 1-800-222-1222
- **Car seat education and safety**..... 727-892-KIDS (892-5437)
- **Childproofing my home, water safety, injury prevention ..** 727-898-SAFE (898-7233)
- **Medical services (low cost physicals, immunizations, health insurance)**
  - Pinellas County Health Department..... 727-824-6900
  - Community Health Centers of Pinellas ..... 727-821-6701
  - Florida Kid Care (Health Insurance)..... 1-888-352-5437
- **Infant/child first aid & CPR classes**
  - American Red Cross..... 727-446-2358
  - American Heart Association ..... 727-570-8701
- **Community Resources (Clothing, emergency shelter, stress, family counseling)**  
**(Helpline)** .....211
- **Nutrition (WIC – Women, Infants and Children)** ..... 727-824-6900
- **Reporting suspected child abuse/neglect** ..... 1-800-96A-BUSE  
(Calls remain anonymous)

## Child Care

### For information on:

- **Locating child care centers and homes**  
Child Care Resource and Referral ..... 727-547-5750
- **Assistance in paying child care fees**  
Coordinated Child Care ..... 727-547-5700
- **A provider's licensing history**  
Pinellas County License Board..... 727-547-5800  
(Levels of compliance, complaints)

## Child Development

### For information on:

- **Concerns about my infant's development**  
Early Intervention Program..... 727-767-4403  
Concerns about a preschooler's development..... FDLRS (Child Find) 727-462-1588
- **Parenting and child guidance** ..... (Helpline) 211

# Concept Development

DOES YOUR INFANT...	Beginning	Yes	Not Yet
...appear to recognize faces?	0-3 months	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
...look at patterns, faces, and shapes?	0-3 months	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
...observe movement of objects and people?	3-6 months	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
...recognize a familiar face (parent) and object (bottle)?	3-6 months	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
...appear fascinated with objects that he/she is able to grasp?	6-9 months	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
...drop an item repeatedly and want you to retrieve it?	6-9 months	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
...realize an object exists when it is out of sight?	9-12 months	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
...bang two objects together?	9-12 months	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## Concept Development Tips

Infants construct their own understanding of concepts as they interact with people and things.

### ***Parents can help with the process by:***

- Interacting frequently with your infant through your daily routines and rituals (e.g., diapering, feeding, bathing, dressing).
- Providing age appropriate objects of interest (e.g., rattles, rubber squeeze toys, soft balls, busy box, and activity centers) when playing with your infant.
- Playing simple games (e.g., “Peek-A-Boo”) with your infant.
- Providing safe, brightly colored objects that your infant is able to grasp, throw, bang, pound, shake, and mouth.
- Providing a lightweight container that can be filled and dumped easily.
- Hiding a favorite object under a blanket or pillow and encouraging your infant to look for it.
- Helping your infant explore objects of different textures (e.g., smooth, soft, rough).



# Language, Reading & Writing

## DOES YOUR INFANT...

	Beginning	Yes	Not Yet
...communicate through crying?	0-3 months	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
...make cooing and grunting sounds?	0-3 months	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
...make sounds like “ah-goo” and babble?	3-6 months	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
...whimper, squeal, chuckle, and gurgle?	3-6 months	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
...imitate sounds and inflections of voices?	6-9 months	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
...use beginning sounds like mama, dada, baba?	6-9 months	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
...hold a crayon and attempt to scribble?	9-12 months	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
...turn the pages of a book (often not one by one)?	9-12 months	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



## Language, Reading and Writing Tips

Infants communicate before they are able to speak one word. From the time they enter the world, they are able to express their needs.

### Parents can help this process by:

- Speaking in a calm, soothing voice as you respond to your infant’s cries and cues.
- Engaging in face to face talk with your infant and imitating the cooing, “ah-goo”, and babbling sounds. Eye contact is important.
- Encouraging the use of sounds by repeating those your infant makes.
- Talking to your infant as you are feeding, dressing, and rocking him/her.
- Singing songs and rhymes to your infant.
- Providing opportunities for your infant to hear a variety of music (e.g., musical tapes, musical toys, music boxes).
- Reading cloth, vinyl, and board picture books with familiar pictures to your infant.
- Playing with your infant by using finger plays, puppets, games, and songs.
- Beginning to provide supervised opportunities for your older infant to make marks with a jumbo crayon.
- Phasing out “baby talk” with your older infant.





# Physical Development

Physical development refers to gaining control over large and small muscles. It includes acquiring gross motor skills such as sitting, crawling, and throwing, and fine motor skills such as holding, grasping and pinching.

In between feeding and sleeping, your infant needs daily exercise to strengthen muscles and improve coordination. This interaction between you and your infant should be playful and relaxed, ending when your infant appears tired or loses interest. Learning occurs as an infant moves and explores the environment. Overuse of a playpen or infant seat inhibits your infant's development.

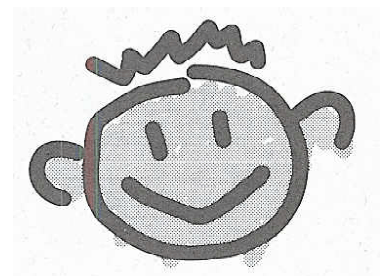
DOES YOUR INFANT...	Beginning	Yes	Not Yet
...follow an object with his/her eyes?	0-3 months	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
...lift head and chest while lying on stomach?	0-3 months	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
...hold hands open/partly open rather than in fists?	0-3 months	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
...roll over to side and from back to stomach?	3-6 months	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
...pull up to a sitting position with your help?	3-6 months	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
...look, reach and grasp at the same time?	3-6 months	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
...transfer an object from one hand to another?	6-9 months	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
...creep forward and backward and begin to crawl?	6-9 months	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
...pull to standing and begin to move around the furniture?	9-12 months	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
...use the pincer grasp (thumb and forefinger together)?	9-12 months	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
...roll or push an object?	9-12 months	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
...walk independently?	9-15 months	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## Physical Development Tips

Infants develop at their own pace, acquiring skills at different times. There is a predictable sequence of development but your infant is an individual and will master skills at his/her own rate.

### Parents can help this process by:

- Holding an object about 12 inches above the infant's face as you move the object slowly from left to right, up and down, or in a circular path.



## Physical Development Tips (cont'd)

- Positioning the infant on his/her stomach on the floor during playtime.
- Allowing your infant to grasp your fingers and gently pulling him/her forward from a lying to a sitting position.
- Placing your infant on his/her back under an activity gym or holding a rattle within reach.
- Providing safe, lightweight objects for your infant to grasp.
- Getting down on the floor and crawling with your infant and setting interesting objects just out of your infant's reach to encourage movement.
- Providing stable furniture and sturdy equipment that your infant can pull up on for support.
- Offering your infant finger foods such as Cheerios™ and bananas.
- Encouraging your infant to walk by providing push toys like an activity walker.
- Encouraging activities such as clapping hands, action songs, and rhymes.



# Safety

## Safety Tips

One of your primary responsibilities as a parent is to create and maintain a safe environment where your infant is protected from danger. Your infant will feel safe and secure when you provide for his/her needs.

Two important safety issues to be aware of are Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) and Shaken Baby Syndrome.

### **Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS)**

To reduce the risk of sudden infant death syndrome place your infant on his/her back (or side) to sleep. Use a firm mattress and be sure that the crib sheets are well-secured. Keep all items out of the crib except when using a lightweight blanket to cover your infant if needed.

### **Shaken Baby Syndrome**

You can prevent shaken baby syndrome by never shaking your infant violently and making sure everyone who cares for your infant knows the dangers of Shaken Baby Syndrome. Shaking an infant can cause permanent brain damage, paralysis, blindness, seizures, developmental delays, broken bones, or death.



#### ***Parents can provide a safe environment by:***

- Supervising your infant at all times including diapering, feeding, and bathing.
- Sitting on the floor at your infant's level to look for safety hazards, such as uncovered/broken outlets, sharp objects, low hanging/dangling cords, and loose/overhanging table covers.
- Using gates to block stairs or other unsafe areas; locking all doors leading to the outdoors or pool areas.
- Padding all sharp corners and edges of equipment and furniture.
- Securing shelves and furniture that could be tipped over or overturned, including furniture on wheels.
- Posting 911, poison control center, and other emergency numbers on or near all your telephones.
- Installing smoke detectors in your home including your infant's bedroom, and keeping a charged fire extinguisher stored in a readily accessible area.
- Dressing your infant in flame retardant sleepwear and comfortable clothing.

## Safety Tips (cont'd)

- Keeping all cleaning supplies, poisons, medicines, toxic plants, adult tools, sharp objects, and hot liquids out of reach of your infant.
- Clearing all areas of chipping paint to eliminate small particles and dust/dirt which may cause lead poisoning.
- Keeping sides of cribs/playpens raised and secured while your infant is inside them. Secure straps on car seats, strollers, swings and highchairs.
- Providing age appropriate toys and equipment that meet the Code of Federal Regulations (e.g., cribs, high chairs, strollers). Use a crib with slats no more than 2 3/8 inches apart.
- Checking for and removing broken toys, plastic bags, balloons, stuffed animals, and other toys with small, loose, movable parts.
- Fencing all pools and using self-closing gates, keeping the gates locked.
- Being aware that your infant could drown in a small amount of water (e.g., buckets, tubs, toilets).
- Emptying inflatable/plastic wading pools after each use.
- Checking the temperature of bath water before placing your infant into the water.
- Holding your infant while feeding him/her instead of propping bottles, which can cause choking.
- Being aware of choking hazards such as grapes, nuts, popcorn, peanut butter, and hotdogs.
- Taking training in pediatric cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and first aid.
- Using new, properly installed car seats placed in the back seat facing backwards. Your local fire department can check for proper installation of car seats.
- Keeping all guns out of your house or storing locked guns, unloaded and uncocked, in a locked container out of reach of your infant. Store ammunition separately.



# Health

## Health Tips

From infancy, children learn about good health and nutrition by watching and imitating their parents' behavior. Healthy habits developed at an early age tend to last a lifetime.

### **Parents can help by:**

- Obtaining immunizations for your infant unless there are medical or religious reasons prohibiting them.
- Taking your infant to a physician for regular healthy baby checkups.
- Seeking medical help for your infant under two months of age if a fever develops. Fevers and other signs of illness in infants should not be ignored.
- Obtaining medical attention if vomiting and diarrhea persists. Infants can dehydrate in less than 12 hours.
- Avoiding administering aspirin to your infant as aspirin has been linked to the development of Reyes Syndrome in children.
- Feeding your infant on his/her own schedule in a pleasant, calm setting.
- Holding your infant during feeding until your infant can support his/her own bottle. Allowing your infant to lie flat to drink could cause the liquid to flow into the ears and cause an ear infection, or could pool in the infant's mouth causing tooth decay or thrush.
- Using bottle warmers for heating formula milk. Using microwave ovens for heating breaks down nutrients in milk/formula. Add cereal to formula only if directed to by your infant's physician.
- Refrigerating formula and other food after opening. Store and handle food in a sanitary manner.
- Introducing solid foods as directed by your infant's physician and using a small spoon that fits your infant's mouth.
- Feeding your infant from a dish/bowl, not from a baby food jar, as the food left in the jar will be contaminated by your infant's saliva.
- Disposing of leftover food or formula after each feeding as the food has been contaminated. Bacteria formed may cause stomach upsets in your infant.



## Health Tips (cont'd)

- Avoiding honey or other sweeteners. Honey can be harmful to infants due to the potential of botulin poisoning (botulism).
- Introducing new foods gradually to determine if your infant has an allergy to the food.
- Serving juice in a sippy cup when introducing juice to your infant.
- Providing small pieces of nutritious food when your infant begins picking up food to eat.
- Washing your hands frequently, and always after diapering your infant, to prevent the spread of germs.
- Being aware that second hand smoke has been proven to increase the frequency of ear and respiratory infections. After smoking, change your clothes before holding your infant.
- Taking your infant outside daily. Limit exposure to the sun as an infant's skin may burn easily.
- Bathing your infant daily, or more often if needed.
- Washing and changing all bedding weekly or more often if needed.
- Giving children lots of floor time for playing and investigating. Infants should not watch television. Limiting young children's exposure to TV may reduce their risk of subsequently developing ADHD (Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder).

