

# ***CHILDREN'S DEVELOPMENT NINE TO TWELVE MONTHS***

*While reading this information, please keep in mind that all children are unique. While the sequence of development is practically the same for all children (for example, most children learn to crawl before they learn to walk), each child's rate of development is different. There is a wide variation in normal development. Some children reach developmental milestones earlier than others. Some reach them later than others. Rarely does a delay in reaching a developmental milestone mean that there is a problem. In most cases, delays turn out to be normal. Remember that premature infants generally reach developmental milestones later than other infants of the same birth age. Parents with any questions or concerns about their children's development should contact their children's health care provider.*

## **Highlights in Physical Development**

**\*Hands/Grasp.** After nine months of age, many children become increasingly better at using the thumb and index finger to grasp objects and transfer them from one hand to another. It is at this time that many children begin to use their index fingers to poke into holes. By this time, many children are also able to manipulate two objects, one with each hand, and they may drop one of two objects to get a third. During the tenth month, many children begin to

prefer one hand and side of the body to the other. During the eleventh month, as children become better and better at grasping and picking up objects, they can pick up very small objects. Also during the eleventh month, many children start to hold and use crayons, place and remove objects into and from a container, lift lids off of boxes, and turn the pages of a book, though probably not one at a time.

**\*Self-feeding.** After nine months of age, many children are able to feed themselves finger foods and many can hold their own bottles. During the tenth month, many babies can drink from a cup when it's held, and by eleven months, many will probably be able to drink from a cup without help. By eleven months, also, many children can carry a spoon to their mouths.

**\*Sitting.** After nine months of age, most children can sit erect with good control and can sit alone steadily for long periods of time.

**\*Crawling/Walking/Standing.** Babies between nine and twelve months of age are getting increasingly better at moving themselves around, and it is very important for parents to make sure their children are monitored constantly. It is unwise to leave them alone for even a short period of time. During the ninth month, most infants make a determined effort to crawl, and by ten month, many will be able to crawl with straight arms and legs. It is also during the period

from nine to ten months that many babies begin to pull themselves into a standing position, either holding on to furniture or someone's hands or legs. Soon afterwards, between ten and eleven months, many children can get down from a standing to a sitting position. Between eleven and twelve months, many children are able to hold on to a piece of furniture, like a couch, and move along side of it. By the end of the tenth month, many children will probably be able to stand alone momentarily, progressing to standing alone quite well by eleven to twelve months of age.

### **Highlights in Cognitive/Language Development**

Between nine and ten months of age, many infants will uncover a toy they have seen someone else hide. Many infants are also able to remember games played the previous day. During the period from eleven to twelve months, most babies begin to explore space by throwing things down. This game may be annoying to some parents, but it is a game thoroughly enjoyed by many infants this age. Many children are also learning to follow simple instructions, and they may anticipate a reward for the successful completion of an act or a command. As children approach eleven months of age, they begin to associate properties with things (for example, they may be able to associate a bark with a dog, a coffee cup with the word hot).

By nine months of age, most babies have begun vocalizing to toys, people, and animals in sentence-like syllables. Many children this age seem to listen carefully to the conversations of other people. They may also imitate sounds they hear in these conversations. The first word-like sounds made by babies are usually of the consonant sounds p, b, m, t, and d.

Most babies say their first words between ten and eleven months of age. Most of what is said is still gibberish, but sounds will be increasingly more intelligible as children approach eleven to twelve months. Most babies are able to say two words besides "mama" and "dada" by the time they reach one year of age.



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