Beyond the 123's of Baby & Me

Developmental Milestones
AGES 0-12 months

Balance
• 0 to 3 months: are working on gaining strength in all areas, but first efforts, focus on lifting the head and holding up their head.
• 3 to 6 months: can hold their head up and are advancing towards sitting.
• 6 to 9 months: are shifting their focus from upper body control to lower body control as they advance into crawling.
• 9 to 12 months: are building both upper and lower body strength as they crawl, pull themselves up on the furniture, and begin to walk.

Body Awareness
• 0 to 3 months: are working on their ability to hold up their head, move their limbs and use their hands – opening & closing, holding objects, swiping at things
• 3 to 6 months: are discovering their hands, ears, feet & other body parts, and using movement to explore their world
• 6 to 9 months: are gaining a sense that they have some control over their actions and are exploring fine motor skills
• 9 to 12 months: are focused on mobility and fine motor skills. This is often the beginning of the “do it myself” phase.

Cause & Effect
• 0 to 3 months: are learning basic control of their movements and body. They also have an inherent instinct to cry when they are uncomfortable.
• 3 to 6 months: will turn their head in the direction of sounds, and are starting to notice that their movements can cause movements in toys and other items.
• 6 to 9 months: are starting to make the cognitive connection between their crying instinct and the help it brings. They also begin dropping items to see what will happen.
• 9 to 12 months: will watch the actions of an adult and try to do it themselves. They will also hand an object that has stopped working to an adult so the adult can make it work again, and will shop frustration when their own efforts don’t work.

Coordination
• 0 to 3 months: are beginning to swipe at objects within their field of vision.
• 3 to 6 months: can reach out, grab and pull in objects and will reach for interesting items. They are also great kickers.
• 6 to 9 months: are beginning to creep, crawl & scoot. They begin to go after items that they want rather than just pointing or reaching.
• 9 to 12 months: are advancing with mobility and may even begin to walk with help. Their fine motor skills are advanced enough to pick up small objects and they can now feed themselves finger foods.

Feelings
• 0 to 3 months: will feel comforted when held, and will respond positively to gentle touch. They will also begin smiling when you interact with them.
• 3 to 6 months: will both smile and laugh. They express discomfort through crying and excitement by waving their arms and legs. They can recognize individuals, and will smile at themselves in the mirror.
• 6 to 9 months: will start to express different emotions through facial expressions and actions. They respond to your voice and movements, and can recognize your mood. They become anxious around strangers, and often begin to seek comfort in an object such as their thumb, a blanket, or a toy.
• 9 to 12 months: are beginning to develop self-esteem. Separation anxiety sets in and temper tantrums make an entrance. They respond to positive affirmation by clapping, develop a sense of humor, choose when to cooperate, and often cling to one or both parents.

Fine Motor
• 0 to 3 months: are beginning to open their hands and will hold an object, such as a rattle, if it is placed in their hand. They are also starting to wave their arms, and may start to sway at objects.
• 3 to 6 months: are now able to reach out and pull objects towards themselves. They can hold, turn, shake, drop, and put objects in their mouth.
• 6 to 9 months: are learning to use their fingers individually. They may put their thumb and forefinger together, pick at strings, or papers, pick up small objects, or grab at your hair.
• 9 to 12 months: are moving on to such activities as turning books pages, stacking blocks, and feeding themselves finger foods. They also begin to imitate signs, fingerplays, and gestures.

Gross Motor
• 0 to 3 months: are at the very beginning of movement. Arm swipes and kicks make up the bulk of their movement.
• 3 to 6 months: are starting to reach for objects, they can now hold their head up, and are working to add sitting to their repertoire.
• 6 to 9 months: are expanding their options for movement - Crawling, rolling, scooting, and even pulling themselves up.
• 9 to 12 months: are working towards walking. Activities such as crawling, jumping, climbing, and walking with assistance are great for development.
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Problem Solving

• 0 to 3 months: depend on their reflexes to solve problems.
• 3 to 6 months: are able to bring object to their mouth. This exploration is the first step towards problem solving.
• 6 to 9 months: enjoy toys that produce responses, such as making noise when shaken. The experimentation with cause & effect is crucial to solving problems.
• 9 to 12 months: begin to solve basic problems such as pushing an item out of the way in order to reach what they want.
• 12 to 18 months: begin to solve problems through observation and imitation.
• Toddlers: start to play with "what would happen if...", for example pushing every part of a new toy until it responds in some way.

Rhythm

• 0 to 3 months: are focused on sensory exploration. Hearing is especially important since they can hear better than they see and have been hearing for several months while in the womb.
• 3 to 6 months: are learning muscular control. They enjoy songs and games with basic gross motor movements and anything they can use to make noise.
• 6 to 9 months: have greater muscular control and are working to refine those movements. They are also starting to explore fine motor skills.
• 9 to 12 months: are into imitative play. They are able to understand the association of words and gestures and are working to refine their own skills based on what they observe from you.

Sensory - Auditory

• 0 to 3 months: are learning to turn towards familiar sounds and will react to disagreeable sounds.
• 3 to 6 months: will smile and eventually babble when they hear a parent’s voice. They are learning to distinguish emotions, and use their own voice to express joy and displeasure.
• 6 to 9 months: are learning their name and the word "no."
• 9 to 12 months: are focused on language development. Their hearing is almost as developed as an adult’s, and they begin to imitate sounds and vocal inflections.

(All babies develop at their own pace. These are just general guidelines.)

Sensory - Tactile

• 0 to 3 months: are just learning about the variety of tactile sensations in the world. They are comforted by gentle touch and pressures, and enjoy the feel of soft, smooth objects, and a variety of movement (ex: rocking, swinging, etc.)
• 3 to 6 months: can now bring things to their mouths and enjoy exploring all the textures they can find with their sensitive oral nerve endings.
• 6 to 9 months: are able to sit up and enjoy a wider variety of movement and physical play. They still put objects in their mouth, but now explore with their hands and eyes just as often.
• 9 to 12 months: are continuing their constant exploration, but now have the added advantage of improved mobility and fine motor skills.

Sensory - Visual

• 0 to 3 months: focusing on objects 8 to 10 in. away. Their eyes are starting to work together and by 3 months they should be able to follow a moving object with their eyes and reach for it.
• 3 to 6 months: improving their eye/body coordination. Depth perception and color come together around month 5.
• 6 to 9 months: working towards crawling which helps improve eye/body coordination. The more crawling the better.
• 9 to 12 months: learning to grasp objects with thumb and finger, and are working towards walking.

Spatial Awareness

• 0 to 3 months: are adjusting to large spaces. Then usually like to be held close and swaddled, and their vision does not yet extend to the edges of a room.
• 3 to 6 months: are beginning to reach out for objects around them, and are starting to explore their space as they learn to roll and sit up.
• 6 to 9 months: are enjoying an expanding world as they gain more mobility. Their movements are becoming more controlled and precise, though they still enjoy flailing their limbs around, especially when laughing.
• 9 to 12 months: are exploring with purpose. They tend to find small spaces interesting and enjoy crawling under the bed or behind the couch.

Strength

• 0 to 3 months: are working on gaining strength in all areas, but first efforts, focus on lifting the head and holding up their head.
• 3 to 6 months: can hold their head up and are advancing towards sitting.
• 6 to 9 months: are shifting their focus from upper body control to lower body control as they advance into crawling.
• 9 to 12 months: are building both upper and lower body strength as they crawl, pull themselves up on the furniture, and begin to walk.