

Developmental Strategies and Activities: Birth - 12 months

Normal, loving, responsive caregiving seems to provide babies with the ideal environment for encouraging their own exploration, which is always the best route to learning (Zero to Three).

This section will review the following:

- ❖ Ideas to support the family to help their child's development
- ❖ Strategies that fit into infant/toddler and family routines
- ❖ Developmentally appropriate activities

Birth – 12 months

Babies and toddlers grow and develop very rapidly in the early years of life. Skills or developmental milestones usually happen by certain ages. Here are some developmental skills and milestones along with possible suggestions for coaching to support the family.

Birth - 2 months

- Call child's name when approaching to encourage head turning from side to side while on back.
- Hold child firmly, talk to the child and rock gently.
- Use bright mobiles, rattles, or squeaky toys within 8-12 inches of child's eyes.
- Encourage head lifting from their belly and back, support at shoulders while handling during daily routines.
- Anticipate child's needs. Keep diapers and bottle ready.
- Move toys across midline, encourage turning, talk and sing to child while looking into eyes.
- Alternate position of toys, light source and mobiles so child will turn to look at different sides.
- Touch child's hand with object then move it away to encourage eye tracking and reaching with hands.

2-6 months

- Repeat and emphasize child's name and names of other family member when you talk to child.
- At bedtime use soothing voice to calm; a music box to lull baby to sleep; sing lullabies.
- Talk with infants about what is happening when bathing, diapering, and dressing. ("Now I am washing your arms.")
- Respond quickly when infants are hungry by feeding, holding and cuddling them.
- Give infants safe toys that produce interesting results or movements in response to their actions (cause and effect toys).
- Place objects with different shapes, sizes, textures, and sounds within infants reach (make sure the objects are safe to mouth).



6-12 months

- Talk about familiar caregivers when they are not present.
- Recognize older infants' favorite books and read with them over and over again.
- Comment when older infants remember something belongs to you or someone else. ("Yes, those are Luna's shoes.")
- Notice and be responsive to older infants' words, gestures, laughs, gazes, and cries.
- Demonstrate action of toys, e.g.: banging blocks, spinning a top and winding a toy. Wait to see if child follows. Give plenty of time for the child to explore own methods.
- Express delight when child can imitate action.
- During playtime, offer second toy. Wait for child to reach with other hand.
- Play lots of social interaction games (peekaboo, pat-a-cake, I'm-going-to-get-you, etc.).
- Stay close by as older infants explore.
- Reassure older infants you will return when you need to leave, explaining where you are going and when you will be back.
- Introduce older infants to new people and allow them time to become comfortable.



- Stand the child between parents' legs while parent is seated on a chair to encourage supported standing. Parent can sing songs, rhymes, and talk with the child.
- Arrange furniture to encourage pull to stand and cruising along furniture.
- Encourage sitting. Seat child between parents' legs with hands bearing weight and engage child with talking, singing, toys. Encourage and support transitions from prone to all fours to sitting.
- Encourage crawling.
- Encourage child to lift hips during diaper change. Facilitate by holding thighs and bounce up and down.



Activity

Many of the enjoyable activities infants and toddlers engage in everyday cross developmental domains. This analysis will allow you to determine which developmental areas are addressed when using a specific activity. Knowing this information is critical when documenting how your SST service helps the child meet his/her developmental outcomes and when explaining to parents and caregivers why you are suggesting certain strategies.

Pick 3-5 activities above from each age group and see what skill they fall into. Review your analysis with your supervisor or another experienced EIS. See the example of how to complete the activity.

Activity/ Age	Gross Motor	Fine Motor	Cognitiv e	Social/ Emotion- al	Self Help	Speech/ Language/ Communication
Encourage crawling	Yes – sitting, transitions, crawling,	Yes -midline orientation, bilateral coordination,	Yes - attention, working memory, problem solving, inhibitory	Yes - meaningful interaction with significant adult	Yes - Balance, bilateral coordination	Yes – verbalizations during interaction, requesting

Activity/ Age	Gross Motor	Fine Motor	Cognitive	Social/Emotio nal	Self Help	Speech/ Language/ Communication

[Family Routine Based Support Guide - Building Relationships with Infants](#)

This guide reflective of the activity above was developed to assist family members and caregivers in supporting infants and building relationships. The guide includes strategies for addressing ages and stages in conjunction with common weekly routines and activities.

Resources

[Zero to Three - Ages and Stages Videos](#)

In the Early Development and Well-Being section you will find “featured resources and videos” that celebrate and support developmental milestones from birth to three years.

[CSEFEL – Helping Children Learn to Manage Their Own Behavior](#)

[CSEFEL – Helping Children Make Transitions between Activities](#)

[CSEFEL – Helping Children Make Transitions between Activities](#) [handout](#)

[CSEFEL – Helping Children Understand Routines and Classroom Schedules](#)

[CSEFEL Children Understand Classroom Routines and Schedules handout](#)