

Understanding and Interacting with Young Infants (3-4 months)

Early Childhood
Education

Information
Brief

UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA-LINCOLN

THREE MONTHS OLD

At three months, infants usually have regular eating and sleeping routines and can recognize their parents. They start to have more control over their body and movement, too. This is a good time for caregivers to set a solid foundation for the infant's early language development by responding to their sounds and talking to them about their surroundings.

Keep in mind that all infants are different and meet the milestones at different times and paces. For example, preterm infants usually take longer to reach developmental milestones. If you have concerns about an infant's development, work with the parents and their healthcare provider.



WHAT 3-MONTH-OLD INFANTS CAN DO

- Communicate with people by using sounds, actions, and facial expressions.
- Reach for and grasp objects and toys.
- Use fingers, mouths, and hands to explore surroundings – it may seem like infants this age want to put *everything* in their mouth.
- Coordinate movement in their arms, legs, and hands.

- Their bodies become more flexible, allowing them to bring their hands together to hold things and clap!
- Start to notice and expect routines, like eating and sleeping at certain times. Routines are good for you and the infant!

WHAT CAREGIVERS CAN DO WITH THREE MONTHS OLD

- Watch and respond to infants' signals by using simple words and sentences. For example, when the infant smiles, say, "You are smiling! I think you are happy."
- Have back-and-forth conversations with the infant.
- Offer infants toys or objects in different shapes, sizes, and textures for them to practice their grasping.
- Make sure the infant has time to play on both his back and tummy while being monitored by a caregiver.
- Help the infant build a regular routine by doing the same things at the same time every day.



FOUR MONTHS OLD

Infants progress very fast in four months. They continue to develop language skills and express self by smiling, laughing, and crying. The infant's motor skills develop fast, too. Rolling over is more likely to appear now, but all infants are different and may reach milestones at different times and paces. If you have concerns about an infant's development, work with the parents and their healthcare provider.

WHAT 4-MONTH-OLD INFANTS CAN DO

- **Vision** - Now infants can see all across the room, but they still prefer to see closer objects. The infant is getting better at seeing different colors, too!
- **Rolling over** - Rolling over is likely to appear around four months, but may take until seven months.
- **Language** - Four-month-olds start to notice the people around them and respond to their actions. They start to know your emotions from your voice and facial expressions. The infant wants to communicate with you and will do it by using sounds, cries, smiles, and laughter.
- **Eating** - Infants now have a larger stomach, so you can feed them more at one time, but not as often. Their eating habits may change, too, as they start to notice their surroundings and get distracted while eating.

WHAT CAREGIVERS CAN DO WITH FOUR MONTH OLDS

- This is a great time to introduce infants to colorful toys, books, and objects to let them explore different colors.
- Do not force the infant to roll over. You may gently encourage the infant by putting a favorite toy by their side and see if the infant rolls over to get it. Stay nearby to make sure the infant is safe while learning to roll.
- Spend some time with the infant every day to read, talk, and sing. At this age, infants enjoy hearing different sounds, like animal noises.
- You may want to find a quiet place to feed the infant to avoid distractions.

RESOURCES

- [Baby Center](#)
- [Bounty](#)
- [Web MD](#)
- [Zero to Three](#)

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For more information:

<https://www.gpidea.org/ecems-information-briefs>

