



Child Development Resource

0-11 months

Introduction

Small Steps Big Changes (SSBC) in collaboration with colleagues from Health, Early Years Education, and the Local Authority across Nottingham City, have created this resource to provide key child development information to support practitioners working with families. This resource aims to provide a quick reference aide memoire for practitioners who can then use it as a starting point to:

- develop knowledge of the key developmental milestones from birth to five years
- access additional support signposting
- support with making informed judgements on age related progress

This resource will also provide practitioners with an opportunity to reflect on their own practice; this will help them to support parents and carers by sharing ideas on how they can support their child to access learning opportunities to promote development and well-being, and enhance opportunities for improved outcomes during the child's early years and later life.

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Personal, Social and Emotional Development

The main ways that babies start to build relationships and understand themselves are through being held, cuddled and touched, e.g. during feeding or during changing and washing; giving eye contact and modelling 'serve and return' or 'turn-taking' communication, such as making sounds in response to their gurgles.





Personal, Social and Emotional Development

Making Relationships

Key ideas about development

- Infants seek contact with others from birth. They need to feel connected to their parent/caregiver for their overall well-being.
- They gaze at faces intently; making steady eye contact and copying facial movements.
- Babies can tell people apart, recognising the look, sound and smell of their parent/caregiver.
- At approximately 7 months, babies develop object permanence (a key developmental milestone); they begin to understand they are separate from their parents/caregivers and can become upset/reserved when left with someone they don't know.

Diverse paths of development

Babies who have sensory impairment or learning difficulties may need constant reminders to know that you are there for them.

Consider

How to respond and support child and family routines for babies when they are looked after in different childcare settings. For example, keeping a favourite toy close by for nap times.

This will enable parents/caregivers to provide a consistent and positive experience for baby and family.

To support development

- Spend plenty of time playing and talking with baby. Make good eye contact and handle babies gently and sensitively.
- Childcare providers can help offer continuity and consistency by allocating the same key worker to baby at every visit.
- Use changing, feeding, bath and play times to build the relationship between parents/caregivers and baby; this supports strong brain foundations through a responsive relationship which meets baby's needs and forms positive bonds.



Look, listen and note

Watch baby's responses to people they know and people they don't know.

- Watch how they move their hands, feet, body and head, and what they do with their mouth.
- Look out for changes in facial expressions and listen to the sounds they make. These are all signals for how they feel with that person.



Personal, Social and Emotional Development

Being Self-aware

Key ideas about development

- Babies learn about who they are through their physical interactions with their parents/caregivers.
- They find out about themselves through playing with their hands (3 months) and feet (6 months) and through movement.
- Developmental progress is huge. Physical skills develop sequentially from head to toe.
- As babies begin to crawl and walk, their sense of themselves as separate individuals increases and their sense of identity begins to form.

Diverse paths of development

Babies with sensory impairments, physical disability or learning difficulty may rely on adults to use sound, touch and movement in a more deliberate way, such as with tone of voice or gentle stroking, for them to understand themselves and feel valued.

Consider

How to help parents/caregivers make changing or feeding time with baby calm and special rather than hurried and like a 'conveyor belt'.

To support development

- Give babies lots of opportunities to explore how their bodies move by giving them time to play freely on the firm surface of the floor.
- Infants can enjoy tummy time from birth. In the first month aim for 10 minutes a day, building up to 20 minutes in month 2, and 30 minutes in month 3; increasing by 10 minutes per month until baby can roll over both ways.
- Tummy time must only be done when baby is awake (backs to sleep, tummies to play); parents/caregivers should stay and play with them, picking them up if they become distressed.



Look, listen and note

Notice how a baby builds awareness of themselves by playing with their hands and fingers at 3 months and feet at 6 months.



Personal, Social and Emotional Development

Emotional Understanding

Key ideas about development

- Babies communicate with others through their emotions.
- They respond to expressions of emotion in others; smiling when smiled at and becoming upset when there is a blank unresponsive face.
- Babies show a range of emotions such as pleasure, interest, fear, surprise, anger and excitement.
- They express feelings through body movements and crying when hungry, thirsty, tired, sad, uncomfortable or lonely.
- They become distressed, if they are hurt or neglected. If their needs are not responded to, they may become withdrawn and passive.

Diverse paths of development

Babies with sensory impairments, physical disability or learning difficulty may rely on adults to use sound, touch and movement, in a more deliberate way such as with tone of voice or gentle stroking, for them to understand themselves and feel valued.

Consider

The baby who is very still, is not ready to play or who shows no emotion. It could mean they can't see you, hear you or have learned to become invisible. It could mean they are tired. Be curious and always check, never assume you know.

To support development

- Try to 'tune in' to baby's emotions.
- Respond calmly, gently and sensitively in a way that follows baby's needs.
- Create spaces and experiences in which babies feel secure enough to explore and play.
- As their sense of identity grows, they can develop some separation anxiety. Give them reassurance by playing peek-a-boo to show them that you always come back.



Look, listen and note

- Notice how baby reacts to different situations; what do they like? How do they show they're not enjoying something?
- How do you know the baby you are caring for feels secure? How do they move? What do they do with their body, limbs and face?



Communication and Language Development

Infants are able to communicate from birth. They listen, respond and express themselves in a range of ways both with their bodies and their voice to make social contact. They practise taking turns in early 'conversations' this is known as 'serve & return' and helps brain development.





Listening and Understanding

Key ideas about development

- Babies show they like listening to voices by becoming quiet and alert and turning their head towards your voice.
- They respond by smiling, looking and moving, and making happy gurgling noises.
- Infants are tuned in to the sounds of the language they have been hearing while in the womb.
- They enjoy listening to songs and music and are beginning to associate words with objects.



Diverse paths of development

Babies with a hearing impairment need to see your face which will help with communication.



Consider

How forward facing buggies and mobile phones can create barriers for baby which disrupt their ability to understand communications. If they can't see the adult's face and mouth, it interferes with them making important links between what they see and hear. This can impact on them learning how to form and understand sounds and words.

Baby's crying is communication; it is designed to get an adult's attention and make us act so that the baby will survive. Crying may be a baby's last attempt for attention and therefore prior cues they are not happy have been missed.

To support development

- Describe what you and baby are doing, pause and listen for the infant's response.
- Use speech that has different tones, rhythm, and pitch as well as lots of repetition.
- Sing familiar songs often and add variety through speed and tone, rather than singing lots of different songs.



Look, listen and note

- Notice how the baby responds to the way they are spoken to and to the sound of their parent's/caregiver's voice.
- Notice how they smile, kick their legs or become still or if they don't turn their head in the direction of sounds or speech.
- Observe how they respond to different songs; which ones do they like the most? What do they do to show this?
- Make a note of the wide variety of sounds the baby makes.



Communication and Language Development

Responding and Expressing Myself

Key ideas about development

- Babies express themselves with their whole bodies kicking, waving and using gestures such as pointing and lifting arms to be picked up.
- They express their feelings with their facial expressions, smiling, laughing and frowning.
- Babies also use their voices to communicate; crying, calling and babbling.



Diverse paths of development

By the end of the first year, babies learning different languages will make different sounds.



Consider

How forward facing buggies and mobile phones can create barriers for baby which disrupt their ability to understand communications. If they can't see the adult's face and mouth, it interferes with them making important links between what they see and hear. This can impact on them learning how to form and understand sounds and words.

Babies' crying is communication; it is designed to get adults' attention and make us act so that the baby will survive. Crying may be a baby's last attempt for attention and therefore prior cues they are not happy have been missed.

To support development

- Tune in to baby's babble and use of their voice build your understanding of the meaning of their different cries and behaviours.
- Vocalise what you think baby is trying to communicate, e.g. "Oh you are looking at the... would you like it?"



Look, listen and note

- Notice how the baby responds to the way they are spoken to and to the sound of their parents/caregiver's voice.
- Notice how they smile, kick their legs or become still or if they don't turn their head in the direction of sounds or speech.
- Observe how they respond to different songs; which ones do they like the most? What do they do to show this?
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Physical Development

Babies use their brains, bodies and the environment to learn how to move. These connected systems work together to bring both movement and manipulation into a baby's control.

For better health babies under 1 year of age should have:



Physical Activity



Sedentary Screen Time



Good Quality Sleep





Physical Development

Moving My Body

Key ideas about development

- Infants are born with reflexes; arm and leg movements which gradually become more controlled and integrated as they move their bodies.
- Head, arm and leg movements become increasingly purposeful and infants begin to roll over in order to move and explore.
- Infants use all their physical skills to move as much as possible and in whatever way they can.
- They move with energetic movements to gain the experience they need. They also have times of calm when they pause to gather energy for the next movement.

Diverse paths of development

Babies who live in very restricted spaces may have few opportunities to practise their motor skills. Encourage families to spend time outside whenever possible to develop both fine and gross motor skills.

Consider

Think about how 'containing' equipment such as lie-back chairs and bouncers limit baby's movement and physical development. Only use them when necessary.

To support development

- Create a space in the home or setting where the baby is safe to explore and move as they wish.
- Place babies on the floor, on their backs or tummies, for them to roll, creep and crawl.
- Provide interesting and safe objects to explore and move towards.
- Encourage baby-led tummy time.



Please refer to the Useful Resources section at the back of the book (p178) for tummy time information.

Look, listen and note

Notice how babies are becoming more skilful at changing position as well as moving from place to place.



Physical Development

Handling Objects

Key ideas about development

- Reaching, touching, grasping and handling are key ways for babies to find out about the world.
- Babies begin to coordinate their hand movements with their eyes and what they see.
- They follow things with their eyes such as their own hands and then reach out for, touch, feel and push objects.
- As they practise their hand-eye coordination, they begin to purposefully reach for and grasp objects, bringing them to their mouths to find out about them.



Diverse paths of development

Babies with a visual impairment may have difficulty reaching and accessing objects. To help them place high-contrast, textured items and materials close to them.



Consider

How to explain the value of babies exploring everyday objects to other adults, who may be anxious or unsure about this.

To support development

Provide opportunities for babies to explore objects;

- that have a range of textures
- that are made from a range of materials
- that are well-matched to the baby's ability to grasp and manipulate
- that are just outside their reach or grasp so they are stretched and challenged; this helps them gain confidence and master key skills.



Look, listen and note

Notice how a child reaches, grasps and manipulates an object.

- Do they bring their hands together?
- How do they use their palm and fingers?
- Do they hold and examine the object with their mouth, or do they use their hands and eyes?



Physical Development

Being Healthy and Safe

Key ideas about development

- Babies respond to and thrive on warm, sensitive physical contact and care. Their needs for food or comfort should be responded to promptly, they should not be left to cry.
- Through the first years of life, babies' patterns of sleep, feeding and wakeful playtimes change over time, usually becoming more regular. But they also change suddenly according to rates of growth, ill-health or changes in their environment. Each baby's pattern is different.



Diverse paths of development

Physical needs such as tongue tie affects how a baby is able to feed. Babies and parents/caregivers will need support to make feeding times a positive caring experience.



Consider

How you approach other adults whose responses are less sensitive to a baby.

- What might be the reasons for their approach?
- How can you support them to meet baby's needs more sensitively?

To support development

- Always let a baby know when you are about to change their nappy, wash their face or wipe their nose.
- Involve the baby as much as possible in all aspects of their physical care; waiting for the baby to turn their face to the tissue for example.
- Whenever possible change nappies or undertake other caring actions when the baby needs them, rather than when convenient.



Look, listen and note

Keep regular notes about baby's patterns of eating, sleeping, pooing and alert play times so you get to know them better and can notice changes.



Cognitive Development

Perception and attention, memory and learning are the most important cognitive processes and start developing before birth.

Everything baby hears, sees, tastes, touches, feels and smells, along with all of their movements influence the way the brain makes its connections and thereby extends learning in all areas.





Cognitive Development

Thinking and Understanding

Key ideas about development

- Babies are born with reflexes and the ability to see, hear, smell, touch and perceive in general, these skills help them to make sense of the world.
- They gather information through their sense organs - ears, nose, eyes, mouth, and skin- and then process this information in their brains; gradually developing understanding and the ability to think.
- Babies growing cognitive skills show in the way they experiment with toys and other objects. They solve problems and explore cause and effect, through play such as banging a spoon or shaking a rattle.



Diverse paths of development

Babies who are fostered may have heightened sensitivity to their environment, including the people in it.



Consider

Think about how you can extend your knowledge of the abilities of babies. What would you say to someone who thinks that babies don't really do anything?

Think about how you balance playing with baby with allowing them free time to play without interference.

To support development

- Provide an environment that feels safe physically and emotionally, so babies feel safe to explore.
- Provide interesting things that a baby can reach and grasp and explore with their, hands, feet and mouth safely.
- Provide play things that have different properties;
 - texture, shape, smell, weight, length, sound etc.
 - that are both moving and still
 - that have different colour and detail, such as a wooden spoon, a metal bowl or a spotty cloth.



Look, listen and note

- Notice how baby uses the resources available to them. What actions do they do in order to get a desired effect?
- Notice the effect of lots of noise or many different people in the room have on how the baby plays. Do they stop playing or become agitated? What happens when you create quiet?
- Watch how young babies imitate the facial expressions, movements and sounds of their parents/caregivers. Notice how they are interpreting and reconstructing them through their own actions.



Cognitive Development

Exploring, Playing and Imagining

Key ideas about development

- Babies show interest with their gaze, by moving towards things and using their mouths and hands to explore objects.
- They enjoy playing: with familiar adults, with their hands and feet and, with objects they can handle.
- Babies are very curious and as their mobility increases they move to explore.
- They will repeat actions over and over again.
- They use all their senses to explore and experiment with different materials and substances such as water or mud and making marks in food, sand, paste or paint, with hands, feet or tools.

Diverse paths of development

Babies and young children with disabilities may stay longer at this stage of development than other children. It may take some children longer to show interest in exploring toys and other things in the world around them. But it is really important to remember that you are the best toy in the room and play between an adult and child is the first and best playground around!

Consider

Think about how you can extend your knowledge of the abilities of babies. What would you say to someone who thinks that babies don't really do anything? Think about how you balance playing with baby by allowing them free time to play without interference.

To support development

- Be on hand to support babies in their play because you are their most important piece of play equipment.
- Create play opportunities outdoors as well as indoors whatever the weather.
- Allow babies to experience:
 - a wide range of textures with their whole bodies
 - a range of sounds made with voices and instruments
 - a variety of music and singing in familiar languages
 - different tastes and smells

Look, listen and note

- Notice how baby uses the resources available to them. What actions do they do in order to get a desired effect?
- Notice the effect of lots of noise or many different people in the room have on how the baby plays. Do they stop playing or become agitated? What happens when you create quiet?
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