

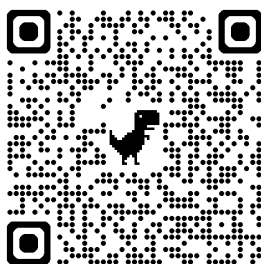
Car Safety

Car safety equipment is required for children under 135 cm and has to be adjusted to the child's height and weight. The car seat should be facing backwards as long as possible, due to the risk of neck injury if an accident occurs.⁸ The time period a child may sit in a car seat varies with the child's age and temper. If in a car seat for an extended period, allow breaks for infants to lie on their tummies or backs. As infants grow, they will begin to signal the need to move and take breaks from sitting.

This brochure is developed and owned by The Pediatric Section of the Norwegian Physical Therapy Association (BUF), translated to English 2022. barneogungdom@fysio.no. Photo: Shutterstock.

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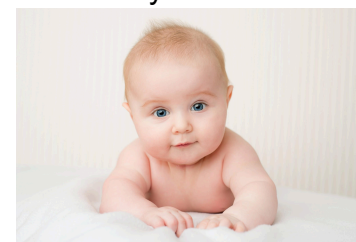


NORSK FYSIOTERAPEUTFORBUND
faggruppe for barne- og ungdomsfysioterapi

Development Through Baby's First Year

Infant Development

Infants develop in close interaction with their caregivers. As the caregiver, your role is critical to the infant's development. Take time to get to know your infant, create eye contact, listen to the infant's sounds and wait for the infant's response to your sounds. Allow time for your baby to get to know you, by talking with your baby and allowing time for your baby to respond. This will stimulate early communication skills, creating a safe and predictable environment, which will help you understand your infant's signs.



The infant's ability to self regulate is not fully developed at birth and the infant needs time and space to adjust to stimuli. Be aware of too many stimuli around the infant the first months, such as sounds and screens, since infants get easily over stimulated.¹ The World Health Organization recommends that babies under two years old have no screen time at all, because it takes time from more beneficial activities for their development.² Also, be aware how much time you as a caregiver spend on screens around your baby. You might be missing valuable opportunities for communication with your baby.

All babies have an internal drive for exploring, which stimulates their development. As a caregiver, your job is two-fold: to create an environment for your baby to explore and to be a safe adult who can comfort and support as needed. ³ Children who experience that their feelings are being met in the early communication with the caregiver, have a good starting point for a safe and healthy development. ³



Movement Development

Babies are unique and develop in their individual timeframe. The development is affected by the nature of the baby itself, the activities the baby does and the baby's surroundings. Babies learn through exploring and movement experience and will achieve movement skills at different ages. As a caregiver, make sure your baby is given time for exploring different positions lying on the floor several times a day. Through movement experience, the infant will develop movement skills. ² The baby will practice getting into an independent sitting position when given the opportunity to practice on the floor. ⁵

The World Health Organization recommends prone position (tummy time) when the infant is **awake** in order to promote movement development. ² **It is highly recommended that infants sleep lying on their backs, to prevent SIDS (Sudden Infant Death Syndrome).** ²

Infants sleep many hours. The baby's skeleton is soft and is easily shaped by the pressure of the head towards the surface. ⁴ If the infant is always sleeping with the head in one position, the infant

may develop an asymmetrical skull and neck. This can be prevented by awareness of positioning of the infant. Please read the brochure "Skull Asymmetry and Side Preference" for further information or contact your health provider for assistance.

There is a wide range for when babies achieve independent walking, usually in the age span between 10 and 18 months. ⁶ Gate patterns change as the child grows, and gate is usually not fully developed until the child is around 7 years old. ⁷ For the early walker, barefoot or no shoes is fine. Eventually the child will need shoes to protect against weather and the surface. Feet have different shapes and forms and shape their shoes accordingly. Over the years, different advice has been given about the ability to inherit shoes. Today, the advice is that shoes that do not appear worn are fine to pass on to other kids.



Baby Equipment

The infant does not need much equipment; however, the caregivers might enjoy some kind of baby carrier, reclining chair for the baby and a stroller. When positioning infants in one position over time, they might miss possibilities for movement development. Variation of position is therefore encouraged. A mat for the baby to be positioned on the floor might be beneficial and toys that are easy to grab and see (contrast in colors, toys with eyes and smiles etc.).