

The Right Track Program for Infants & Toddlers

WHAT IS THE RIGHT TRACK PROGRAM?



Children experience the greatest amount of growth and development in their first three years of life.

The goal of the Right Track program is for every child to have the best start in their physical, social, emotional, and intellectual growth. The Right Track Program for Infants and Toddlers provides free developmental screenings for North Dakota children from birth to their third birthday. Screenings are provided in the comfort and privacy of the family's home. Our professional consultants can provide ideas on stimulating your child's development as well as information and referrals to local, state, and national organizations.

This wonderful program is provided through the North Dakota Department of Human Services with funding through the Federal Individuals with Disabilities Act Part C for Infants and Toddlers.

Here is information about your child's first 3 months...

Development At A Glance—*Birth to Three Months*

From his birthday your baby is growing, changing and developing his own personality. It is important for you as the parent or caregiver to realize how crucial you are in enhancing these changes. As a newborn, all areas of development impact each other. In this handout the areas are separated into motor, language, and cognitive development. What you do as a parent or caregiver impacts all areas of your baby's development.

What your baby can do:

Birth—Three Months

- I enjoy being cuddled, wrapped up tightly (or swaddled), and talked to
- I stare at faces when others interact with me
- I smile at familiar people
- I track moving objects approximately 12 inches from my face during play
- I respond or startle to loud noises and they may scare me
- I have discovered my hands and like to stare at them
- I lift my head from the floor during **tummy time**
- I vocalize in response to interactions with others
- I will hold my head steady when held at an adult's shoulder or held in supported sitting.
- I can visually track, or follow with my eyes, an object (such as a rattle) that is moved from side to side and up and down in front of me.

To encourage development, parents and caregivers can:

- Respond to your baby's needs, his cries, vocalizations, and body movements because they are forms of communication.
- Provide your baby with lots of cuddle time and face to face interaction.
- Talk, talk, talk to your baby. The sound of familiar voices is comforting.
- When having a conversation with your baby provide wait time for your baby to respond with gestures, smiles, or vocalizations .
- During play encourage your baby to hold your finger and small toys such as rattles.
- It is important to start **tummy time** at an early age. Tummy time is supervised play on baby's tummy while he is awake to strengthen his neck, back and upper body muscles. The longer a baby waits to start tummy time the harder it becomes. It is best to start with your baby in his first month.

****Never let your baby sleep on his tummy.**



Your Baby's Motor Development

Each day your newborn will be awake more and more. He will start to make eye contact during feedings and face to face interactions. Your baby's head and neck control will develop so that he is able to turn toward the breast or bottle. Head control will also enable your baby to look around the room and recognize his environment and familiar people. Your baby will start to reach out to faces and objects and notice his hands.

As your baby's primary caregiver, there are many things you can do to enhance his motor development. During feeding times be sure to give your baby your full attention. Provide face to face interaction and lots of eye contact.

When your baby is awake, it is important for your baby to have an opportunity to play on his tummy . This is also known as **tummy time**. Tummy time is hard work for your baby because it makes him use his head, neck, and upper body muscles to support himself. Providing several opportunities per day of tummy time and increasing the length of time on the tummy will strengthen his muscles. Your baby will start to find it easier to support his head and body. Tummy time is very important at an early age for improving head control and preparing to roll, sit, crawl, and walk. Be ready for your baby to fuss and become upset at first until his muscles grow stronger. Tummy time is exercise for your baby and he will tire easily at first. Be sure to stay close to your baby, talk in a soothing voice and provide interactions during tummy time to make it a positive experience.



****It is important to never place your baby on his tummy while he is asleep. Tummy time is for waking hours only.**

While playing with your baby in different positions, such as on his back, tummy, in side-lying and supported sitting, provide opportunities for him to reach out to your face or to bright, easy to grasp objects.

This will encourage reaching and grasping skills that develop at this age. Also provide opportunities for your baby to follow your face and objects with his eyes.

Your Baby's Language and Cognitive Development

When your baby first comes home, his main means of communication is crying. As your baby grows he will start to use more sounds to communicate. Different facial expressions and body language are also cues to observe with your baby as early signs of communication. Your baby should also start to seek you out, as the primary caregiver, when communicating. Your baby communicates basic needs such as hunger and being tired but as you get to know each other he will show signs of when he wants to be held, snuggled, talked to, and needs a break from interactions.

As your baby's primary caregiver, he will rely on you to learn the communication signs that he is giving. The more you get to know each other, the faster you will know what these cues indicate when your baby is communicating with you. Establishing routines such as the same activities at bedtime, naptime, and feeding time will help your baby to know what is happening within his day. This will also make him feel more comfortable and will help you to read the cues of what your baby wants or needs. It is important to respond to your baby's communication so that he will continue to communicate with you.

Be sure to talk to your baby from the start. Tell him what is going on and what to expect. Talking with your baby helps him to recognize your voice and encourages your baby to vocalize back to you. Be sure to give your baby time to respond vocally or with facial expressions or body language when talking to him. This is the start of conversations with your baby and an important beginning to language development.

Every parent wants their child to start on the RIGHT TRACK...

**FREE SCREENINGS are available for
all children in North Dakota from birth to age three.**

If you have a concern or just want to be sure your child is developing as he/she should, schedule a developmental specialist to come to your home and provide a screening by calling (701) 252-2131 or mail this form to your regional office address listed on the back page of this brochure.

Name of Child: _____ DOB: _____

Gender: _____ Parent Name: _____

Complete Address: _____

Home Phone: _____ Work: _____