

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 to provide every child with the best opportunities 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 development (6-9 months)...

Development At A Glance—*Six to Nine Months*

At this age you will start to see great changes in your baby. You will notice that he is starting to develop a personality and show definite preferences in people, places, foods, and toys. You will see his ability to problem solve and communicate start to expand. Mobility at this age allows your baby to explore and satisfy his own curiosity.

What your baby can do:

Six—Nine Months

- I can sit on the floor all by myself for several minutes at a time without falling over.
- I can hold a toy or other object in each hand.
- I can move one toy back and forth from hand to hand during play.
- I can stand with my body weight on my legs when someone helps me to balance.
- I like to put syllables together such as “mama” or “dada” although I do not use them specifically to name anyone yet.
- I like to imitate the sounds and actions of other people.
- I may have some stranger anxiety. This means I may cry or get nervous around people I do not know.
- I can crawl on my hands and knees to get to what I want and I love to explore.

To encourage development, parents and caregivers can:

- Encourage your baby to play in sitting with less and less support until he is sitting by himself on the floor.
- As your baby is playing in a variety of positions, place toys at various distances on both sides to encourage reaching at all angles.
- When your baby is playing with a toy or object, offer a second object for him to hold at the same time. This encourages transferring from hand to hand. Encourage him to bang two objects together at the center of his body (midline) to see what noise they make and to encourage activities at midline.
- When your baby starts to make consonant-vowel or vowel-consonant sounds, make the noise back to him and play a turn taking game with the noise. String sounds together and encourage imitation of different sounds.
- Reassure your baby, when in new situations and with new people, so that he is comfortable. Use a calming voice and a comforting object such as a blanket or stuffed animal if it will help him to feel secure.
- Encourage your baby to explore using his own mobility and to start to pull up at stable objects to an upright, supported standing position.
- Safety is very important when your baby starts to move on his own. This means putting up any object your baby should not have. Baby gates and cabinet locks also benefit your baby's safety.

Your Baby's Motor Development

During this stage of your baby's life you will see lots of motor changes. Your baby will change from a stationary baby to a little person that is moving around your home exploring anything he finds. He will go from lying on the floor to being able to sit independently to crawling around the room. You should also see him reach out and grab interesting objects at different heights and distances using either hand. Banging, shaking, tasting and smelling objects are common in exploration.

During play, your baby may drop a toy and will look to see where it goes and then pick it up. During mealtimes your baby will be able to sit in a high chair or booster chair and use his fingers to pick up small pieces of food. Try giving him opportunities to feed himself with foods that are safe for him to eat in small pieces. He may or may not be able to get them in his mouth but will attempt to. This is good practice for self-feeding.

To help your baby become independent with sitting provide lots of opportunities to sit and play on the floor throughout the day. While in sitting, if you need to, place soft objects around him in case he loses his balance. Place toys at various distances and heights around your baby to encourage him to reach and return to upright sitting position. Be sure to offer close supervision during this stage so that your baby is safe as he explores.

It is very important at this stage to "baby-proof" your home. As your baby moves up onto all fours and starts to rock it will only be a matter of time before he is moving on his own. Be sure all outlets are covered, all medications, cleaners, and anything else you do not want your baby to have are placed out of reach or in locked cabinets. Your baby is very curious and will want to explore everything that he possibly can.



Your Baby's Language and Cognitive Development

Your baby will be paying more and more attention to your sounds and actions at this age. He will start trying to imitate the sounds and gestures you make. You will hear your baby string consonant-vowel sounds together such as "mamama" or "bababa" on his own as well as imitating you. He may also imitate banging toys together or waving hi or bye.

Your baby is paying lots of attention to you because he wants to see what you are doing, how you make things work, as well as hear the sounds you make. He will start to interact more with toys and try to figure out how they work. Be sure to give lots of attention to your baby. Tell him what you are doing and describe what he is doing throughout the day as you spend time together. Use short simple phrases so that he can understand and try to imitate you.

Reading books is very important at this stage. Use age appropriate books that have bright, colorful pictures with a few words on each page. Encourage your baby to point or pat the pictures. Naming the objects he points to and encouraging him to help turn the pages is a good way to increase your baby's interactions with books.

Your baby will also be paying attention to new people and situations. He may or may not like these new experiences; however, it is important to make your baby feel as comfortable as possible during these opportunities. Using a favorite blanket, stuffed animal, and a soothing voice may be all your baby needs to feel okay about the situation. Your baby will also show preferences towards either lots of noise and activity or a quiet room for play. Reading your baby's cues and preferences will make him happier.

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: _____

