



Supporting your child's Development

How will my child grow?

- Every child develops at different rates; your Health Visitor will support and empower you to help your child achieve their potential, as well as monitor your child so that early help can be put in place for your child if they need support to meet their expected milestones.
- Your Health Visitor and Midwife will monitor your baby's developmental progress and weight gain in the first few weeks of life. You can ask your Health Visitor for ideas about how to entertain your baby with minimal screen time. Babies learn more from watching real life and it helps their eye muscles develop for reading later. Your baby should be weighed
 - once a month until they are 6 months old
 - once every 2 months from 6 to 12 months
 - once every 3 months when they're over the age of one.
- Your Health Visitor will advise you if there is a need to monitor your child's growth more often.

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The role of your Health Visitor

- Your Health Visitor is a specialist community public health nurse who supports the health and well being of your whole family from ante-natal visits until your child goes to school, to ensure that your child is developmentally, emotionally and socially ready for school entry and has the best start possible in life.
- During your child's development reviews, your Health Visitor will ask you how your child is doing and about any concerns you may have. If your baby was born prematurely, their developmental age will be calculated from your original due date, not from the actual date they were born.
- It is a good idea to think about any concerns or questions you have before you see your Health Visitor and write them down so that you don't forget to ask anything.

For additional fact sheets see www.ihv.org.uk

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The Start4Life Information Service for Parents provides free information and advice. Find out more at: bit.ly/1iC4rrO

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Helping your child to meet their milestones

- Your home provides wonderful opportunities for your child to develop. Spending time with your child playing or involving them in activities in the home helps them to learn and develop.
- Turn everything you do into a game, for example:
 - Learning colours whilst putting clothes into the washing machine.
 - Counting whilst climbing the stairs, doing up buttons or setting the table.
 - Tipping bricks onto the floor, then placing them back into the box one by one, both improves your child's hand-eye co-ordination and teaches them to tidy up.
 - Give your child a plastic bowl with something to stir while you are cooking for example a small amount of flour.
 - Talk to your child all the time, tell them what you are doing and why, for example 'Mummy's going to put your plate in the sink to clean it', 'Daddy's going to boil the carrots so they are soft enough to eat'.
 - Putting dried pasta or rice in empty drinks bottles and empty plastic tubs to make instrument shakers; songs and rhymes are very good for speech development.
 - Give your child a small patch in the garden and plant seeds or encourage them to play with mud and water to see how the textures change.
 - Play musical chairs calling out different objects or colours to sit on. For example "when the music stops sit on the sofa/floor/something blue".
- Full information and an interactive development timeline are available on NHS choices:
bit.ly/1rmHAXA and bit.ly/1o3OZHV

Parenting Support

- All parents struggle at some time with their child's behaviour. There are some basic points to stick to when dealing with challenging behaviour in your child:
 - **Do what feels right** for your child, you and the family.
 - **Don't give up**, once you've decided to do something, continue to do it. Children need practice before a new skill becomes automatic.
 - **Be consistent** to avoid confusing your child. Firm boundaries help your child to feel secure.
 - **Parenting can be stressful**. Try not to over react. Find other ways to cope with your frustration, like talking to other parents about how you feel.
 - **Talk to your child**, children don't have to be able to talk to understand. Talking from birth helps children learn many more words and talk earlier.
 - **Be positive about the good things**, tell your child when you're pleased about something they've done. Praise the behaviour that you want to encourage.
 - **Offer rewards**, for example verbal praise, say something like, "Well done for putting your toys back in the box when I asked you". Don't give your child a reward before they've done what they were asked to do. That's a bribe, not a reward.
 - **Avoid smacking**. Smacking may stop a child doing what they're doing at that moment, but it doesn't have a lasting positive effect.
- Further guidance is available on the NHS choices and The Child Development institute websites:
bit.ly/1BcimO2 and bit.ly/1viDYYI

More information on Page 3

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Family life

- All families face challenges as their children are growing up. Whether you are struggling with money, living in poor housing, coping with bereavement or facing other difficulties, there are services available to help and support you.
- Your Health Visitor can offer home visits until your youngest child goes to school. They will know about all the services available to you locally. For example:
 - Children's Centres offer a variety of group activities and often offer home visits.
 - Many communities now have food and clothing banks.
 - Many children are eligible for 15hrs of nursery placement from the age of 2 years.

Getting help early

- All parents worry about their child and their development at some point in their life. The most important thing you can do for your child is ask for advice or help as soon as you notice a problem. For many children the earlier you get advice the quicker they can catch up with their peers especially if you are worried about their speech or movement.
- If you are worried that something in your family life is delaying your child then accepting help is important. For example attending Children Centre activities when you live in overcrowded accommodation gives your child space to learn to walk or run around as well as allowing you time to relax and socialise with other mothers.