By the end of your baby's first year of life, she might already be crawling and trying to take her first steps. Remember that a warm, responsive and dependable adult caregiver is the most essential ingredient to her healthy development.
### 6 to 12 months

#### Your Child's Growth and Development (continued)

**Socially and Emotionally**

*At 6–9 months, your baby will probably:*
- Try to talk to image of self in mirror.
- Become distressed if a toy is taken away.
- Respond to own name and recognize family members’ names.
- Show mild to severe anxiety at separation from parent.

*At 9–12 months, your baby will probably:*
- Offer toys or objects to others but want them to be returned.
- Push away toys or foods when she doesn't want them.
- Become attached to a favorite toy or blanket.

**Attachment**

Over the next months, your child will show her strong attachment to her primary caregiver by acting upset when she leaves and happy when she returns. To ease the anxiety caused by separating:
- Say goodbye, so she learns that you will come back.
- Explain that you are going to leave, but that you'll return.
- Provide a comfort object that will make her feel close to you.

**Play**

At this age, a baby will use play as a chance to develop new cognitive, physical and social skills. Watch your child — you can learn so much about your child’s interests by simply observing. In addition:
- Provide tummy time to help strengthen the neck, torso, and upper body as well as time to practice walking, pushing, pulling, climbing and jumping.
- Play hide-and-seek with different objects. Your child will enjoy seeing the objects appear and disappear.

**Discipline**

At this age, a baby still doesn't understand discipline. Instead, as your child gains mobility, your focus should turn to safety and exploration:
- Distract or redirect your baby from unsafe objects or activities.
- Never use physical punishment.

**Literacy**

Between 6 and 12 months, your baby will begin to communicate with you — first by mimicking your sounds, and then by speaking his first words. To encourage his ability to talk as well as his love of reading:
- Talk and interact face-to-face so he begins to understand the connection between sounds and words.
- Point to familiar objects and people everywhere and ask him to identify them.
- Sing songs with repetitive verses and hand motions that will interest your baby, such as *The Wheels on the Bus.*
- Provide books that are made of cardboard or cloth to withstand a little chewing and make page turning easier.

### Your Child's Safety

As your baby begins to crawl, he will want to touch everything he can — this is how he learns about his world. Therefore, make his environment safe.
- Install safety latches on cabinets, drawers, and toilets.
- Cover unused electrical outlets with outlet covers and use cleats to secure dangling cords on drapes and blinds.
- Gate staircases and steps, cover sharp edges of furniture and ledges on fireplaces.
- Keep older children's toys out of your baby's reach. These may have small parts that can be a choking hazard for your little one.
- Keep all detergents, medicines, sharp objects out of your child's reach.
- Contact Poison Control immediately if you think your child has eaten or drunk something poisonous: 1-800-222-1222.

**Keep in mind...**

Always be aware of your baby's safety. Never leave her unattended near water, open windows, fireplaces or any electrical appliances. Watch her carefully when she is in the kitchen or bathroom where potential dangers are everywhere.

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*Born Learning*® is a public engagement campaign helping parents, caregivers and communities create early learning opportunities for young children. Designed to support you in your critical role as a child's first teacher, *Born Learning* educational materials are made available through the efforts of United Way, United Way Success By 6 and Civitas.

For more information, visit us online at [www.bornlearning.org](http://www.bornlearning.org).

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