

PediatricBasics

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Commercial Baby Foods: A Safe, Convenient Option

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Gerber Products Company

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Two, Three, Four, or More... Caring for Multiple-birth Families

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Figure 1 Watch Your Baby for These Signs

NORMAL DEVELOPMENT

BY 3 MONTHS*

DEVELOPMENTAL PROBLEMS



- pushes up on arms
- holds head up



- unable to lift head or push up on arms
- stiff legs



- pushing back with head
- constantly fisted hand and stiff leg on one side
- difficult to move out of this position

NORMAL DEVELOPMENT

BY 6 MONTHS*

DEVELOPMENTAL PROBLEMS



- sits with support
- holds head up
- straight back



- unable to lift head
- rounded back
- stiff arms



- arms held back
- stiff, crossed legs

NORMAL DEVELOPMENT

BY 8 MONTHS*

DEVELOPMENTAL PROBLEMS



- sits without support
- arms free to reach and grasp



- rounded back
- poor use of arms for play
- stiff legs, pointed toes



- poor head control
- difficult to get arms forward
- arches back—stiff legs

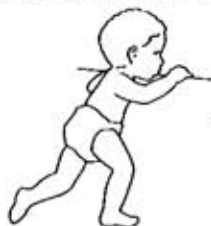


- poor ability to lift head and back
- will not take weight on legs

NORMAL DEVELOPMENT

BY 12 MONTHS*

DEVELOPMENTAL PROBLEMS



- pulls to stand



- difficulty getting to stand
- stiff legs, pointed toes



- cannot crawl on hands and knees
- uses only one side of body to move

NORMAL DEVELOPMENT

BY 15 MONTHS*

DEVELOPMENTAL PROBLEMS



- independent standing or walking



- walks on toes on one side of body
- holds arm stiffly and bent
- excessive tip-toeing when walking



- sits with weight to one side
- uses predominantly one hand for play
- one leg may be stiff

*90% of babies do this before these ages. Remember to correct your child's age for prematurity.

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Part 3: Growth and Development



It would be an understatement to say that a multiple birth creates a unique and challenging parenting experience. While most parents find the birth and subsequent parenting of one child challenging—yet rewarding—the potential challenges and rewards surrounding the simultaneous birth of two, three, or more infants are multiplied exponentially!

The medical, developmental and logistical issues that are part-and-parcel of multiple birth families have a direct impact on parent-infant bonding, everyday parenting, and the importance of optimizing each infant's growth and development. Parents cannot face these issues alone. Therefore, special consideration needs to be given to the support and care of multiple birth families and should be a necessary component of their children's health care. The health care provider who recognizes the parents as partners in family-centered care will establish the mutual trust and knowledge base needed to address the complex needs of multiple birth families.

Strengthening the Ties that Bind

The healthy growth and development of an infant depends heavily on the warm day-to-day physical and emotional relationship between a child and parents and/or caregivers. The dynamics of bonding actually begin in the early months of gestation as each parent comes to accept the pregnancy. When the baby begins to move *in utero*, the mother can differentiate the fetus from herself and the father usually becomes more involved. The parents begin to fantasize about "their baby" and love for "their baby" begins to grow.

There is limited nursing and medical literature regarding the attachment process of multiple birth families. What researchers and clinicians do report, however, is that in order to bond with their infants, parents of multiple births must first work through an "individuation" process during which each baby becomes an individual in the heart and mind of the parents. Identification of the infants by ultrasound during pregnancy allows parents to