

Baby's growing brain

Even though the brain keeps growing and changing into adulthood, the first 8 years are an important time of rapid growth that helps build the foundation for all future learning.

The brain is responsible for:

- ✓ Movement
- ✓ Language
- ✓ Emotion
- ✓ Learning and problem solving



The early years set the stage for advanced abilities:

- ✓ **Self-regulation**
- ✓ **Problem solving**
- ✓ **Communication**

The brain doubles in size in the first year!

By age 3, it is about 80% of an adult size brain



Brain & Cognitive Development



Learn more at www.nestlebaby.ca/nutrition-medical-hub

Healthcare professionals visit www.nestlebaby.ca/nutrition-medical-hub

Supporting baby's brain development

Babies are born ready to learn! Parents and caregivers can support healthy brain development by interacting with their baby using language, play, and care.

Breastfeeding
is associated with improved cognitive ability



Sleep
supports healthy development as baby grows from infancy into early childhood



Nurture & Interact

- ✓ Make eye contact often while feeding
- ✓ Spend time cuddling and bathing your child
- ✓ Provide opportunities to play and explore
- ✓ Read, talk, and sing to your child starting at birth



Iron supports learning ability

Starting at about 6 months, introduce dietary sources such as meats and iron-fortified cereals, and continue throughout the first 2 years



Healthy fats are brain building blocks

Omega-3, omega-6 and DHA are found in fatty fish, seafood, vegetable oils and baby safe forms of nuts and seeds



B vitamins support brain function

Found in infant cereals, milk, meat, eggs, fish, and dark green vegetables



Choline, a vitamin, supports memory development

Found in eggs, dairy products, and some fortified foods

Key Milestones*

2 months:

- ✓ Smiles at you
- ✓ Looks at a toy for several seconds



6 months:

- ✓ Puts things in mouth to explore them
- ✓ Reaches to grab a toy
- ✓ Closes lips to show she doesn't want more food
- ✓ Laughs with you



9 months:†

- ✓ Looks for things when dropped out of sight (like a spoon or toy)
- ✓ Bangs objects together



Nutrients for brain development

During infancy and toddlerhood, a baby's brain forms many complex systems they will use throughout their entire life. Getting the right nutrients from infancy to toddlerhood is important to help the brain develop to its fullest.

Baby's key developmental milestones

First smiles, "bye-bye" waves, and wobbly steps are all developmental milestones. While babies develop at their own pace, there are typical ages when these milestones occur.

