



Specific ways to help your infant's vision develop

Between birth and age 3, many of your baby's vision skills will develop. Here are some ways you can help.

During the first 4 months of life, your baby should begin to follow moving objects with his or her eyes and reach for things. Reaching will become more accurate as hand-eye coordination and depth perception begins to develop. Your baby may even begin to watch his or her own hands at this stage.

To help development:

- Use a nightlight or other dim lamp in your baby's room.
- Change the crib's position frequently and your child's position in it.
- Keep reach-and-touch toys within your baby's view of about eight to 12 inches.
- Talk to your baby as you walk around the room.
- Alternate right and left sides with each feeding.
- Hang a mobile above and outside the crib.

Between 4 and 8 months, your baby should begin to turn from side to side and use his or her arms and legs. While sitting, your baby may look at his or her hands, food and bottle. Eye movement and eye-body coordination skills should develop further, and both eyes should focus equally.

To help development:

- Help your baby explore different shapes and textures with his or her fingers.
- Give your baby the freedom to crawl and explore.
- Hang objects across the crib.
- Play "patty cake" and "peek-a-boo" with your baby.

From 8 to 12 months, your baby should be mobile now, crawling and pulling himself or herself up. He or she will begin to use both eyes together and judge distances and grasp and throw objects with greater precision. It's common for your baby to look for a toy that he or she drops.

To help development:

- Don't encourage early walking; crawling is important in developing eye-hand-foot-body coordination.
- Give your baby stacking and take-apart toys.
- Provide your baby with objects he or she can hold and see at the same time.

From 1 to 2 years, your child's eye-hand coordination and depth perception will continue to develop. He or she will also begin to identify pictures in books and smile when viewing favorite objects and peoples.

To help development:

- Encourage walking.
- Provide building blocks, simple puzzles and balls.
- Provide opportunities to climb and explore indoors and out.

There are many other affectionate and loving ways you can help your baby's vision develop. Use your creativity and imagination and ask your doctor of optometry to suggest other specific activities.

Source: www.aoa.org