

## Resources

### Help Me Grow: [HelpMeGrowMN.org](http://HelpMeGrowMN.org)

Provides information on developmental milestones for infants through age 5, videos, and an easy link to refer a child for a comprehensive, confidential, no-cost screening or evaluation.

### March of Dimes:

[www.marchofdimes.org/mission/prematurity-campaign.aspx](http://www.marchofdimes.org/mission/prematurity-campaign.aspx)

Our mission is to improve the health of babies by preventing birth defects, premature birth, and infant mortality. Check out the Share Your Story section at [share.marchofdimes.org](http://share.marchofdimes.org)

### Help Me Connect:

[www.helpmeconnect.web.health.state.mn.us/HelpMeConnect](http://www.helpmeconnect.web.health.state.mn.us/HelpMeConnect)

A navigator to help expecting and parenting families connect to local early childhood and family well-being services.

### Milestone Tracker App:

[www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly/milestones-app.html](http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly/milestones-app.html)

Track your child's milestones from age 2 months to 5 years with CDC's easy to use illustrated checklists.

### Pregnancy & Postpartum Support Minnesota:

[pregnancypostpartumsupportmn.com](http://pregnancypostpartumsupportmn.com)

To engage parents and professionals in promoting optimal emotional well-being during pregnancy and postpartum.

### Prematurity: [www.prematurity.org](http://www.prematurity.org)

Our goal is to support preemie parents by providing information on prematurity and preemie care.

### ZERO TO THREE: [www.zerotothree.org](http://www.zerotothree.org)

A national nonprofit organization that informs, trains and supports professionals, policymakers and parents in their efforts to improve the lives of infants and toddlers.

### Minnesota WIC Program: [health.state.mn.us/wic](http://health.state.mn.us/wic)

Provides nutrition and breastfeeding counseling and support to pregnant women and families with infants and young children.

### Bridge to Benefits: [www.bridgetobenefits.org/Home2](http://www.bridgetobenefits.org/Home2)

Parents often struggle with financial and other issues and don't know where to look.

## Infant and Toddler Intervention

**As you watch your baby grow and develop, you will notice when your baby begins to smile, roll over, sit up and talk.**

While all children grow and change at their own pace, babies born prematurely may experience delays in their development. Infant and Toddler Intervention is a program designed to respond to parents' concerns and support young children with developmental delays.

Eligible children and their families receive services such as speech, language and communication therapy, occupational and/or physical therapy, family support and strategies to help a child's development based on individual needs.

Services are generally provided in the family's home, and parents participate in order to learn ways to help their young children grow and learn. There is no charge to families, regardless of income or immigration status. These intervention services are part of federal legislation through the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

If you have concerns about your baby's development, speak with your child's doctor or refer your child through Help Me Grow to Infant and Toddler Intervention by going to [www.helpmegrowmn.org](http://www.helpmegrowmn.org) or calling **1-866-693-4769**.



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[www.MinnesotaPerinatal.org](http://www.MinnesotaPerinatal.org)

# Premature Babies: An Early Beginning

What do our parents & caregivers need to know to help us grow?



Important information for families with babies born between 23 and 36 weeks gestation.



# What's Different about Parenting Your Premature Baby?

Here are some great tips to help your baby grow and develop in the first months at home.



## Nutrition/Feeding

- Be sure I am fully awake before you feed me, and feed me in a quiet place where I won't be distracted.
- Feed me slowly and let me take my time.
- Be sure to always hold me while feeding, and never prop a bottle.
- After I finish eating, hold me still and upright on your shoulder for a few minutes. This helps me avoid spitting up.

## Keeping Me Healthy

- I have a higher risk of getting infections, so be careful where you take me and who comes to visit us.
- Wash hands before holding me! Put a sign up to remind others. Keep hand sanitizer in the house, the car, and my diaper bag.
- Don't let anyone smoke around me.
- Be sure to bring me to my regularly scheduled doctor visits to monitor all parts of my health, growth and development; and keep me up-to-date on my immunizations.
- If I have any symptoms of illness, call the nurse-line or bring me in to my doctor. Symptoms can be blueness around my lips or nose, vomiting, trouble breathing, a fever higher than 100.4 degrees, or maybe I just don't seem 'right' to you.
- Don't forget to cover coughs and/or sneezes.
- Be sure to keep a list of any questions that you have about me for my doctor, so you are sure to ask them at my appointments.

## Developing Skills

- Like babies born full-term, I will learn many new skills over time and on my own schedule.
- Adjust for my age, taking into account I came early! If I am now 6 months old but born 2 months early, expect me to be more like a 4-month-old.
- Some of these early skills will be smiling and paying attention for longer periods of time. I will begin to swipe at toys, then learn to hold and play with them.
- Keep track of what you see me do and anything you are concerned I can't do.
- Share any concerns with my doctor and also contact **Help Me Grow** for a free evaluation of my development. Please see the back panel for more information on **Help Me Grow**.

## Interactions/Playing

- I love to look at your face and hear your voice.
- Sometimes if you look at me and talk to me at the same time, it might be too much!
- You can tell how I am feeling by reading my facial cues. Watch me closely and try to learn my different stress cues, signs of stability, and coping skills.
- If I am getting stressed I may frown, turn away, or my face will get either red or pale. If I am doing any of those things, I need a break.
- At other times, I will be bright-eyed and looking for someone to talk to me and play with me.

## Sleeping

- Sleep is especially important for me to grow!
- Be sure my sleeping area is quiet and dark even during daytime naps. This helps me get into a deep sleep.
- Be sure my mattress is firm and tight-fitting in my crib or bassinet.
- My crib should not have toys, bumper pads, blankets, quilts, comforters, or pillows.
- Just like every other baby, I need to sleep on my back; but when I am awake let me play on my tummy so I get stronger!
- Put me in a wearable blanket to sleep.

## Caring for Yourself

- In order to be able to take good care of me, you need to take care of yourself, too.
- Raising me is not always an easy task. You might feel sad, overwhelmed, guilty over my early birth, depressed, or even angry. These feelings are normal, but there are people who can help you, too! Let your doctor know if you have these symptoms.
- Did you know post-partum depression is more common when your baby is born early? Both moms and dads can be affected.
- No matter how frustrated you feel, please don't shake me. Call your friend. Get someone to help take care of me. Or put me in my crib and step away for a while.