

# Developmental issues: infants

The primary developmental task for infants is to bond with parents and gain a sense of security in the world around them.

This happens, of course, through regular consistent contact (for example, parents meeting their child's needs by engaging in daily activities such as changing, feeding, holding, interacting, etc.)

When parents live apart, meeting these developmental needs clearly becomes more challenging. Taking a more creative approach in how parenting time is shared between households tends to offer more positive outcomes for children. Overall, long periods of time away from either parent is not in the best interest of infants.

**"Keep in mind that young children are also very responsive to and affected by parental stress."**

**"Be aware that even though your little one does not understand what's going on, they will respond to it."**



## Things to look for

- Problems sleeping.
- Not eating well or loss of appetite.
- Digestive problems (i.e. upset stomach, frequent diaper changes, or gas.)
- Excessive crying, crankiness or irritability.



## Needs at This Age

- Regular and consistent contact with both parents.
- Predictable routines and schedules.
- Planned transitions.
- To be protected from parental tension and stress.
- Ability to develop trust in their environment.



# Developmental issues: toddlers

As children move into toddlerhood, they begin to view themselves as separate from their parents. While exploring their newfound independence, these young children will also experience a wide range of emotions but lack the ability to understand or manage their feelings.

Be mindful that your toddler will primarily express their feelings with actions instead of words especially when they're angry, frustrated, or upset.

This is a time when children need lots of love and help learning acceptable ways to express their feelings.

In addition to supporting your child's feelings, it's important for both parents to set appropriate limits and provide consistent consequences for misbehavior when necessary. While the family may have changed, your kids still need both love and limits.

**It can be really hard not to see your children every day. When you do have time with them, it may be tempting to overdo it by filling their days with lots of activities and stimulation. Keep in mind, that young children need their parents to provide a structure that balances play and fun with quiet moments and naps.**



## Things to look for

- May engage in temper tantrums, biting, hitting, or crying when feeling stressed.
- Difficulty leaving one parent or making transitions.
- Can become overly clingy or anxious.
- Nightmares or sleep problems due to anxiety.



## Needs at This Age

- Validation of their feelings. Appropriate limits and consequences when acting out.
- Predictable environment (i.e. regular bedtime and daily routines.)
- Child-safe homes with both parents that allows for exploration and stimulation.
- Regular contact with both parents.
- Reassurance of love through physical affection and direct interaction.

