

MONTESSORI FOR REAL LIFE · FREE PRINTABLE

The First *18 Months*

A gentle planner to watch your baby grow, with one observation page for each month, plus trackers, checklists and a note for caregivers.

A companion to **The Everyday Montessori Baby**, 0 to 18 months.
Print what you need. Keep it on the fridge or in a folder.



Five minutes of watching, *one line of writing*

Observation is the heart of Montessori. This planner gives it a place, with a page a month to notice what your baby is working on, and to keep the moments that go by too fast.

INSIDE

- **18 monthly pages** with what you might notice, a simple thing to try, and space for your own observations
- **A toy rotation planner** for what's on the shelf and what your baby does with it
- **First foods and allergen tracker**
- **Checklists** for safe sleep and baby-proofing
- **A note for grandparents and caregivers**, ready to hand over

A GENTLE REMINDER

The "you might notice" lists are not a test. Babies develop at different speeds, and the direction matters more than the date. If something worries you, or your baby loses a skill they had, talk to your pediatrician. The CDC's free "Learn the Signs. Act Early." milestone tracker is a useful companion for checkups.

Landing

From _____ to _____

YOU MIGHT NOTICE

- ☐ Long stretches of sleep, short awake windows
- ☐ Calming to your voice and your smell
- ☐ Studying faces up close, about 8 to 12 inches away

Every baby has their own timing. Tick what you see, when you see it.

FIRST TIME I SAW...

TRY THIS MONTH

Have face-to-face conversations. Talk, pause, and wait for an answer.

WHAT I OBSERVED

What held their attention? What did they come back to? What frustrated them?

A MOMENT I WANT TO REMEMBER

First smiles

From _____ to _____

YOU MIGHT NOTICE

- ☐ A real social smile, often around six to eight weeks
- ☐ Cooing and "answering" when you talk
- ☐ Following a slow-moving object with their eyes

Every baby has their own timing. Tick what you see, when you see it.

FIRST TIME I SAW...

TRY THIS MONTH

Hang the first visual mobile above the mat and watch for the lock-on.

WHAT I OBSERVED

What held their attention? What did they come back to? What frustrated them?

A MOMENT I WANT TO REMEMBER

Discovering hands

From _____ to _____

YOU MIGHT NOTICE

- ☐ Staring at their own hands with total focus
- ☐ Steadier head control during tummy time
- ☐ Longer, happier stretches on the mat

Every baby has their own timing. Tick what you see, when you see it.

FIRST TIME I SAW...

TRY THIS MONTH

Let them discover their hands alone. Hold off on putting a toy in them.

WHAT I OBSERVED

What held their attention? What did they come back to? What frustrated them?

A MOMENT I WANT TO REMEMBER

The first reach

From _____ to _____

YOU MIGHT NOTICE

- ☐ Reaching on purpose for something they want
- ☐ Bringing objects straight to the mouth
- ☐ Rolling from tummy to back for some babies

Every baby has their own timing. Tick what you see, when you see it.

FIRST TIME I SAW...

TRY THIS MONTH

One object just within reach on the mat. Not in their hand. Within reach.

WHAT I OBSERVED

What held their attention? What did they come back to? What frustrated them?

A MOMENT I WANT TO REMEMBER

Rolling and babbling

From _____ to _____

YOU MIGHT NOTICE

- ☐ Babbling with consonants and repeated sounds
- ☐ Rolling from back to tummy for some babies
- ☐ Clear favorites among the people around them

Every baby has their own timing. Tick what you see, when you see it.

FIRST TIME I SAW...

TRY THIS MONTH

Babble back. Repeat their sound, pause, and wait for the reply.

WHAT I OBSERVED

What held their attention? What did they come back to? What frustrated them?

A MOMENT I WANT TO REMEMBER

Sitting begins

From _____ to _____

YOU MIGHT NOTICE

- ☐ A wobbly tripod sit, propped on their hands
- ☐ Passing an object from one hand to the other
- ☐ Signs of readiness for first foods

Every baby has their own timing. Tick what you see, when you see it.

FIRST TIME I SAW...

TRY THIS MONTH

Give them the spoon at the first meals. Mess is part of the work.

WHAT I OBSERVED

What held their attention? What did they come back to? What frustrated them?

A MOMENT I WANT TO REMEMBER

Getting around

From _____ to _____

YOU MIGHT NOTICE

- ☐ Sitting steadily, both hands free
- ☐ Rolling, belly crawling or bottom shuffling toward things
- ☐ Looking for a toy that disappears under a cloth

Every baby has their own timing. Tick what you see, when you see it.

FIRST TIME I SAW...

TRY THIS MONTH

Set up a yes space, one area where everything in reach is safe.

WHAT I OBSERVED

What held their attention? What did they come back to? What frustrated them?

A MOMENT I WANT TO REMEMBER

Crawling and pulling up

From _____ to _____

YOU MIGHT NOTICE

- ☐ Crawling on hands and knees, or their own version of it
- ☐ Pulling up to stand on furniture
- ☐ Separation protests when you leave the room

Every baby has their own timing. Tick what you see, when you see it.

FIRST TIME I SAW...

TRY THIS MONTH

Say goodbye every time you leave, and come back when you said you would.

WHAT I OBSERVED

What held their attention? What did they come back to? What frustrated them?

A MOMENT I WANT TO REMEMBER

Cruising

From _____ to _____

YOU MIGHT NOTICE

- ☐ Moving sideways along the furniture
- ☐ The pincer grasp, with thumb and index finger
- ☐ Understanding far more words than they say

Every baby has their own timing. Tick what you see, when you see it.

FIRST TIME I SAW...

TRY THIS MONTH

Two or three objects on a low shelf, clearly spaced, rotated every few days.

WHAT I OBSERVED

What held their attention? What did they come back to? What frustrated them?

A MOMENT I WANT TO REMEMBER

Pointing and showing

From _____ to _____

YOU MIGHT NOTICE

- ☐ Pointing to ask for things or to show you something
- ☐ Waving and simple gestures
- ☐ Standing alone for a moment

Every baby has their own timing. Tick what you see, when you see it.

FIRST TIME I SAW...

TRY THIS MONTH

Name what they point at, simply and accurately.

WHAT I OBSERVED

What held their attention? What did they come back to? What frustrated them?

A MOMENT I WANT TO REMEMBER

Almost walking

From _____ to _____

YOU MIGHT NOTICE

- ☐ First steps for some children, often toward a person
- ☐ Putting things in and taking them out, over and over
- ☐ First words for some children

Every baby has their own timing. Tick what you see, when you see it.

FIRST TIME I SAW...

TRY THIS MONTH

Crouch a few steps away and let them come to you.

WHAT I OBSERVED

What held their attention? What did they come back to? What frustrated them?

A MOMENT I WANT TO REMEMBER

One year

From _____ to _____

YOU MIGHT NOTICE

- ☐ Walking with help, or alone for some
- ☐ Following simple requests like "come here"
- ☐ Bringing you things with great ceremony

Every baby has their own timing. Tick what you see, when you see it.

FIRST TIME I SAW...

TRY THIS MONTH

Give one small, real job, like "carry this" or "put it there."

WHAT I OBSERVED

What held their attention? What did they come back to? What frustrated them?

A MOMENT I WANT TO REMEMBER

An agenda of their own

From _____ to _____

YOU MIGHT NOTICE

- ☐ Walking with growing confidence
- ☐ Strong preferences, loudly expressed
- ☐ Stacking two or three blocks

Every baby has their own timing. Tick what you see, when you see it.

FIRST TIME I SAW...

TRY THIS MONTH

Offer two real choices, like the red cup or the blue one.

WHAT I OBSERVED

What held their attention? What did they come back to? What frustrated them?

A MOMENT I WANT TO REMEMBER

Helping

From _____ to _____

YOU MIGHT NOTICE

- ☐ Wanting to take part in household tasks
- ☐ Taking off socks and shoes
- ☐ Drinking from an open cup with two hands

Every baby has their own timing. Tick what you see, when you see it.

FIRST TIME I SAW...

TRY THIS MONTH

Let them help in the kitchen by washing a few vegetables in a bowl of water.

WHAT I OBSERVED

What held their attention? What did they come back to? What frustrated them?

A MOMENT I WANT TO REMEMBER

Words and gestures

From _____ to _____

YOU MIGHT NOTICE

- ☐ New words arriving, often between 10 and 15 months for the first ones
- ☐ Climbing anything they can scale
- ☐ Testing limits, methodically

Every baby has their own timing. Tick what you see, when you see it.

FIRST TIME I SAW...

TRY THIS MONTH

Hold one limit calmly, in one short sentence, and follow through.

WHAT I OBSERVED

What held their attention? What did they come back to? What frustrated them?

A MOMENT I WANT TO REMEMBER

Walking with purpose

From _____ to _____

YOU MIGHT NOTICE

- ☐ Carrying, pushing and fetching on purpose
- ☐ Squatting to look at something on the ground
- ☐ Spoon use getting more accurate

Every baby has their own timing. Tick what you see, when you see it.

FIRST TIME I SAW...

TRY THIS MONTH

Plan a slow walk where they set the pace.

WHAT I OBSERVED

What held their attention? What did they come back to? What frustrated them?

A MOMENT I WANT TO REMEMBER

Doing it myself

From _____ to _____

YOU MIGHT NOTICE

- ☐ Trying to put on shoes or a hat alone
- ☐ Playing next to other children
- ☐ Following two-step instructions for some

Every baby has their own timing. Tick what you see, when you see it.

FIRST TIME I SAW...

TRY THIS MONTH

Leave the extra minutes. Let them finish what they started.

WHAT I OBSERVED

What held their attention? What did they come back to? What frustrated them?

A MOMENT I WANT TO REMEMBER

A toddler now

From _____ to _____

YOU MIGHT NOTICE

- ☐ Walking alone with confidence
- ☐ Saying several words and pointing to show you things
- ☐ Big feelings, and big affection too

Every baby has their own timing. Tick what you see, when you see it.

FIRST TIME I SAW...

TRY THIS MONTH

Look back through these pages. Write down three ways they have changed.

WHAT I OBSERVED

What held their attention? What did they come back to? What frustrated them?

A MOMENT I WANT TO REMEMBER

Three or four objects out. *The rest put away.*

When your baby walks past an object without a glance, it's ready to go back into storage. Swap one at a time, and let what you observe decide.

New tastes, *one at a time*

DATE	FOOD	TEXTURE	HOW IT WENT	AGAIN?

COMMON ALLERGENS

Ask your pediatrician how and when to introduce common allergens, especially if your baby has eczema or a known allergy.

Peanut First tried on	Egg First tried on	Cow's milk (in foods) First tried on
Wheat First tried on	Soy First tried on	Tree nuts First tried on
Sesame First tried on	Fish First tried on	Shellfish First tried on

No honey before 12 months. No cow's milk as the main drink before 12 months. Cut round foods like grapes lengthwise.

Safe sleep

- ☐ On their back, every time, naps included
- ☐ Firm, flat surface, fitted sheet only
- ☐ No pillow, loose blanket, bumper or stuffed animal
- ☐ In our room, on a separate surface, for the first six months
- ☐ Never asleep with an adult on a couch or armchair
- ☐ Sleep sack instead of a blanket, room not too warm
- ☐ No sleeping in a swing, car seat or bouncer
- ☐ Smoke-free home

Yes space and baby-proofing

- ☐ Shelves, dressers and TV anchored to the wall
- ☐ Outlets covered, cords out of reach, blind cords tied up high
- ☐ No small objects on the floor (nothing that fits through a toilet-paper tube)
- ☐ Cleaning products and medicines locked away
- ☐ Gates at the top and bottom of the stairs
- ☐ Sharp corners padded, hot drinks out of reach
- ☐ One low shelf with two or three objects only

Recommendations change and situations vary. Talk them through with your pediatrician.

A note for *grandparents and caregivers*

Thank you so much for spending time with our baby. Here are a few things we do at home. You don't have to do all of them, but they help our baby feel at home with you too.

We tell them what we're about to do. "I'm going to pick you up," then we wait a second. It helps them feel safe.

We give them time on the floor. Lying on a blanket, they move, reach and practice. If they look absorbed, it's fine to let them be. They're working.

We let them try first. If they're reaching for something, we wait a moment before handing it over. When they get it themselves, they're very proud.

We keep things simple. One or two objects at a time are plenty. Our baby concentrates better that way.

For sleep, always on their back, in their own bed, with nothing else in it. Never on a couch or armchair.

Most of all, enjoy them. Your love and attention matter more than anything on this list.

With love and thanks,