

Developing your child's potential Birth to 2 years



Introduction

There are many things you can do to help your child make the most of his abilities. All parents have periods of feeling down or depressed about their child's future, but you can help to make that future better for your child by supporting him to cope with the problems of PWS while he is still young.

Babies with PWS are usually very placid and sleep a lot, and therefore will make few demands on your attention. It can be very

tempting to leave your baby to lie, sit or play on his own, particularly if you have other children demanding your attention. However, it is important that your baby gets a lot of stimulation, both mental and physical, even at a very early age, as this will aid development later on.

Developmental milestones

There is no set age when babies with PWS reach developmental milestones, but, generally speaking, they are as follows:

- Sitting unaided - 12 months or longer
- Walking - 19 months or longer
- Speech - variable, may not start till 3 years or later

It is sometimes hard to visualise development when your new-born baby is so unresponsive and undemanding, and hardly moves or cries but, generally speaking, you can expect your baby to be more alert by the time he reaches six months old.

Potty training

Potty training techniques used with all babies should also work for babies with PWS, although they may take longer. But if you are having particular difficulties, contact the PWSA UK office for further information.



Note:

For ease of reading, the text refers to "he, him, his", but the details are equally relevant to girls, unless otherwise stated.

Child development services and Portage

Most areas of the country have a service whereby a child development specialist will come to your home to help you devise a tailor-made plan for your baby's development and an independent service known as Portage is available in many areas. www.portage.org.uk

The service might include play ideas to stimulate mental action, and simple exercises or physiotherapy to strengthen your baby's muscles and help him to go on to new milestones such as sitting up, crawling and walking.



Photo by Kate Lloyd Photography

How you can help your child's development

Very simple things can help to stimulate your baby, such as putting him in a baby chair in the same room so that he can watch you as you do housework etc., hanging toys from his chair - some within reach and some just out of reach - or purchasing special play mats.

Play music and story tapes to him, or talk and sing to him yourself. Blowing bubbles may also be a source of great fascination and delight to your baby, which will encourage him to reach out to touch them.

Toy libraries, available in most areas, are useful for getting a variety of toys free or very cheaply, and there is always something new for your baby to try.

Young toddlers enjoy clapping and rhyming games, and songs with actions, which help develop speech and communication skills. If possible, involve him in play with other children. Local playgroups or special needs schemes can be extremely helpful for developing social skills. Your local child development centre should be able to tell you more about where you can access these schemes.

Contact with older children who will talk and play with your baby can be very stimulating. Equally, it helps him to learn to interact with other people if you let relatives care for him from time to time. They, in turn, will begin to understand the issues surrounding food, and how to arrange their houses to accommodate his needs.



Netmums:

have details about local support groups for young children with special needs and their families.
www.netmums.com/parenting-support/special-needs



Water play and swimming

Most babies like activities in water, and babies with PWS are no different. They enjoy pouring and squirting water, and will usually happily share a bath with you. Almost all children with PWS love swimming and even very young babies can benefit from sessions in the teaching pool or special hydrotherapy pools.

Child-minders and nurseries

If you wish to place your baby with child-minders or in a nursery, you can search on the internet for suitable special needs placements in your area, or ask your health visitor or child development centre. You should research all the possibilities thoroughly, particularly about how the child-minder or nursery can manage your child's dietary needs within the context of other children - many will already have a "healthy eating" policy in place, or would be willing to adopt one.

Information for Nursery Staff is useful to give to your child's nursery and can be downloaded from our website at <https://www.pwsa.co.uk/assets/files/Nursery-staff.pdf>

PWSA UK Suite 4.4 , Litchurch Plaza, Litchurch Lane, Derby DE24 8AA

T: 01332 365676 E: admin@pwsa.co.uk W: www.pwsa.co.uk

© PWSA UK