

motor development

at 6 months, most children:

- ▶ Hold their head steady when held in a sitting position;
- ▶ Reach for objects with both hands;
- ▶ Lift their feet while lying down;
- ▶ Roll over;
- ▶ Begin to sit when propped or supported;
- ▶ Explore objects with their mouths;
- ▶ Play with their fingers and toes.

to support these developing skills, at Gretchen's House we:

- Provide plenty of floor time for play to strengthen back, neck, and stomach muscles;
- Provide support for sitting, on laps or between adults' legs, or using special prop pillows;
- Provide a variety of noisy and reactive rattles, bells, shaking toys;
- Rotate toys frequently to keep interest high and remove mouthed toys from circulation;
- Let babies play without socks;
- Play clapping games and sing songs with hand and arm movements;
- Provide easy-to-grasp squishy toys.

guidance

at Gretchen's House we:

- ▶ Have consistent routines and caregivers;
- ▶ Distract frustrated babies;
- ▶ Re-direct inappropriate behavior;
- ▶ Allow babies a chance to soothe themselves before intervening;
- ▶ Set routines according to children's physical and emotional needs;
- ▶ Narrate our activities, including transitions, so that children can anticipate what will happen next and know how they are expected to behave;
- ▶ Provide plenty of affectionate contact and one-on-one interaction;
- ▶ Reduce frustrating situations as much as possible: have duplicate toys, reduce waiting time, and anticipate needs.

easy ways to make a 6-month-old feel powerful:

- ▶ Include them in routine activities: let them play with a washcloth as you fold laundry or wipe the table, etc.;
- ▶ Respond to their needs immediately;
- ▶ Don't require them to demonstrate new skills or be affectionate with unfamiliar faces or visitors...let them decide their level of participation;
- ▶ Imitate their behaviors;
- ▶ Let them do the same things over and over again until they tire of them;
- ▶ Encourage them to make big noises with rattles, bells, etc.

To order reprints, contact
Gretchen's House at 734.761.2576

Active Learning at Gretchen's House



your child at 6 months:

**-observer-
-player-
-cuddler-**

cognitive development

at 6 months, most children:

- ▶ Play alone with toys;
- ▶ Enjoy toys that react or make noise;
- ▶ Stay awake for two to three hours at a time;
- ▶ Repeat favorite actions;
- ▶ Enjoy looking at photographs of real people;
- ▶ Respond to music by cooing, moving, or stopping crying.

to support these developing skills, at Gretchen's House we:

- ▶ Play with toys that react: pop up, make noise, or move when acted upon;
- ▶ Position mirrors so children can watch themselves and others at play;
- ▶ Play finger and hand games like pat-a-cake and peek-a-boo;
- ▶ Display photos of familiar faces and children at play at the babies' eye level;
- ▶ Change available toys frequently to continually engage infants' interest;
- ▶ Allow children to initiate play by having choices of toys available;
- ▶ Encourage babies to participate in feedings by holding their bottle or an extra spoon.

language development

at 6 months, most children:

- ▶ Babble, laugh, and squeal;
- ▶ Begin to imitate sounds made by others;
- ▶ Enjoy the sound of their own voice;
- ▶ Make sounds to get attention;
- ▶ Begin to use particular sounds consistently for a period of time, then drop them as they acquire new ones;
- ▶ Babble conversationally;
- ▶ Begin to gesture: may kick feet in greeting, wave, or reach for food.

to support these developing skills, at Gretchen's House we:

- ▶ Narrate our actions with the children to help them understand what's going on;
- ▶ Get down at the children's level to speak and interact with them;
- ▶ Use gestures in conjunction with words;
- ▶ Speak in simple sentences to assist comprehension;
- ▶ Babble conversationally with babies;
- ▶ Sing to children;
- ▶ Read picture books together;
- ▶ Play music to enhance activities;
- ▶ Use appropriate words and proper speech to refer to things rather than baby talk;
- ▶ Play music from a variety of cultures so children hear unique sounds.

social-emotional development

at 6 months, most children:

- ▶ Are aware of strangers but not necessarily alarmed by them;
- ▶ Enjoy playing alone;
- ▶ Enjoy playing in front of a mirror;
- ▶ Show excitement, fear, and frustration;
- ▶ Show affection for caregivers;
- ▶ Show curiosity about new objects;
- ▶ Have developed a regular sleep/wake cycle, at night and during the day;
- ▶ Are easily overwhelmed by too much activity or noise.

to support these developing skills, at Gretchen's House we:

- ▶ Establish drop-off and pick-up routines that are comfortable for each child;
- ▶ Allow babies time to warm up to new faces;
- ▶ Place mirrors strategically so babies can watch themselves at play;
- ▶ Balance quiet and active times;
- ▶ Set up our space and activities so that children play in small groups, with plenty of privacy when needed;
- ▶ Play on the floor with children, acting as secure bases from which babies can venture out and explore;
- ▶ Keep stimulation at individually appropriate levels.