WHETHER THIS IS YOUR FIRST BABY OR YOUR THIRD, IT IS EXCITING TO WATCH INFANTS DEVELOP. BUT IF YOUR BABY WAS BORN EARLY, YOU MAY BE CONCERNED ABOUT HOW HIS OR HER OVERALL GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT COMPARES TO OTHER INFANTS WHO WERE BORN FULL-TERM. YOUR CONCERN MAY RANGE FROM WONDERING IF THE OR SHE HAS MASTERED AGE-APPROPRIATE SKILLS TO WONDERING IF HE OR SHE IS GROWING QUICKLY ENOUGH AND GAINING THE RIGHT AMOUNT OF WEIGHT.

HOW OLD IS MY BABY?

WHEN BABIES ARE BORN PREMATURELY, WE CONSIDER THAT THEY HAVE TWO DISTINCT AGES: CHRONOLOGICAL AGE (AGE CALCULATED FROM THE DATE OF BIRTH) AND ADJUSTED AGE (AGE CALCULATED FROM THE ORIGINAL DUE DATE). WHEN MEASURING SKILL DEVELOPMENT, YOU WILL NEED TO “ADJUST” YOUR BABY’S AGE ACCORDING TO HIS OR HER DUE DATE.

HOW CAN I FIGURE OUT IF HIS OR HER DEVELOPMENT IS NORMAL?

WHILE MOST BABIES DEVELOP SKILLS IN A CERTAIN ORDER, THERE IS A WIDE RANGE OF TIMING AMONG THEM. FOR EXAMPLE, MOST BABIES LEARN TO WALK BEFORE THEY WALK. BUT THE AGE WHEN BABIES LEARN TO WALK CAN VARY A LOT — THE RANGE OF NORMAL IS BETWEEN 9 AND 16 MONTHS. ALTHOUGH YOU WILL LIKELY BE FOCUSED ON YOUR BABY’S ACHIEVEMENTS, BE SURE TO REMEMBER THAT DEVELOPMENT IS NOT A RACE. YOUR BABY MAY NOT MASTER EVERY SKILL OR GROW AT THE SAME PACE AS ANOTHER BABY BORN AT THE SAME TIME. THAT IS TO BE EXPECTED — ESPECIALLY IF YOUR BABY WAS BORN EARLY.

ON THE FOLLOWING PAGES, YOU’LL FIND SOME IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENTAL MILESTONES THAT WILL GIVE YOU A SENSE OF WHAT TO LOOK OUT FOR AS YOUR BABY GROWS. DEVELOPMENTAL MILESTONES ARE SKILLS OR AGE-SPECIFIC TASKS THAT MOST CHILDREN CAN DO WITHIN A CERTAIN AGE RANGE. YOUR BABY’S HEALTHCARE PROVIDER WILL USE THESE MILESTONES TO SEE HOW YOUR BABY IS DEVELOPING.

WHEN SHOULD I BE CONCERNED?

WHILE THESE MILESTONES ARE GROUPED BY AGE, KEEP IN MIND THAT YOUR BABY MAY NOT MASTER ALL OF THESE SKILLS AT EACH SPECIFIC AGE. IT IS VERY IMPORTANT, THOUGH, TO WATCH FOR HIS OR HER PROGRESS. YOUR BABY SHOULD BE MOVING FORWARD IN DEVELOPMENT. AS ALWAYS, CONSULT YOUR BABY’S HEALTHCARE PROVIDER IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS. YOU KNOW YOUR BABY BEST. IF YOU DON’T THINK YOUR BABY IS PROGRESSING PROPERLY, DON’T BE AFRAID TO SPEAK UP AND ASK FOR HELP.

This information is for educational purposes only and is not intended to substitute for professional medical advice. Always consult with a healthcare professional if you have any questions about the health of your child.
WHEN SHOULD I BE CONCERNED?

Although you are comparing your baby's growth to other babies of the same age and gender, always remember that children develop at their own pace. Your baby may not grow at a consistent rate, or he or she may have growth spurts that are unpredictable. Look to your baby’s healthcare provider for direction and advice. Ask questions if you are uncomfortable with or worried about your baby’s progress.