Developmental issues

This is a transcript of the Raising Children Network video available at http://raisingchildren.net.au/articles/development_issues_video.html. It explains some key indicators that a baby might be experiencing a delay in development. If you’re worried about your child's development, you should have your child checked out by a health professional.

**Dr Con James [Consultant paediatrician and father of four]**: There are some things that parents of newborn babies need to think about in the first 12 months where they may need to worry. If a baby is not looking symmetrically. In other words, if both eyes aren’t aligned, especially if they’ve got a squint, we call it a strabismus where the eyes are cross-eyed or the eyes are widened, and often they will get an idea of that, they’ll take a photo and the eyes don’t look equal in most photos. Or if the cornea or the eyes look a bit cloudy or the baby doesn’t seem to be visually alert. Those things, they should be seeing a doctor.

**Dr James**: If a baby is not hearing or responding to sounds, they should see a doctor. Now all babies in New South Wales are having a SWISH test where they have their hearing tested and that will pretty well exclude children with congenital deafness. But, children can develop other complications that mean their hearing isn’t right at six months, or nine months, whether it be glue ear or other things.

**Onscreen tip**: Ask about a hearing test in your state.

So I think the hearing and the eyesight is important. If a baby can’t hold its head up in the sitting position by four months, that’s not quite normal. If a child’s not able to sit on his own, or her own, by about 10 months. If a child is not able to weight bear and stand on their own by around 12 months, that’s not quite normal. Now that doesn’t mean there’s something wrong. Just as I said once before, some children walk at 18 months because they bottom-shuffled instead of crawled because they inherited that from their Dad who was exactly the same. So someone who isn’t weight-bearing at 12 months, it doesn’t automatically mean there is an issue. But someone needs to think about why isn’t my baby doing that, is there something wrong? And, in most cases, there isn’t anything wrong.

**Onscreen tip**: Get baby checked out if:
- cloudy eyes and not focusing on you
- not responding to sounds
- can’t hold head up by 4 months
- can’t sit on his own by 10 months,
- can’t stand up while holding onto to something by 12 months

**Narrator**: If in doubt, see your GP or visit your local community or child health centre.
**Onscreen tip:** State Health Lines:
ACT: (02) 6207 7777 (Health First)
NT: 1800 186 026 (NT Health Direct)
QLD: 1343 2584 (13 Health)
VIC: 1300 606 024 (Nurse on Call)
WA: 1800 022 222 (Health Direct WA)
*Call Directory Assistance for more*