

## Confidence Age 0 Summary

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### Why Confidence?

Confidence simply means a belief in oneself. Confidence comes from a trusting relationship you develop with your infant and responding to their needs. Your bond with your infant forms a solid foundation from which your infant can feel safe to explore the world and grow their confidence.

**STEP 1**  **GET INPUT**

### Getting to Know and Understand Your Infant's Input

- Infants may cry for two to three hours every day. In fact, crying is their primary form of communication with you.
- Paying close attention to your infant's facial expressions, movements, and sounds helps you better understand what they are trying to communicate.
- Check out these common cues and see if they match your infant's feelings and associated needs.
  - If an infant is uncomfortable, they may use a less intense, short, whiny cry like "eh, eh, eh." Respond by loosening or changing clothing or swaddling or changing their position and see if it helps to soothe.
  - If an infant is hungry, they may produce a cry similar to anger or discomfort, depending on the intensity. Cries can be short and low-pitched, and they rise and fall.
- If your response to your infant's cues doesn't help, that's okay. Test another response and see if it helps to soothe. It takes time to learn what your infant is communicating with you.

**Tip:** Decide on a plan for calming down when you are the only one with your infant. Research shows that infants cry less when their caregiver is less stressed. Ensure your infant's safety, then close your eyes and breathe deeply. An infant's crying and frustrations can be challenging, so take breaks when you need them. Be sure you talk about anger at a calm time when you are not stressed or upset!

**STEP  
2**

TEACH

## Teach New Skills

- Ensure daily face-to-face interactions.
  - Talk up close to your infant. Make a point to get down on their level when they are in a high chair, crib, or stroller. Narrate what's happening around you or tell a favorite memory or story.
- Hold your infant close regularly.
  - Rocking in a rocking chair is a soothing way to connect and hold an infant.
  - Baby carriers offer a way to move about with your infant close to your heart.
- Offer sensory exploration.
  - Infants in their first year of life can benefit from regular time on their tummies. Lay your infant down on a blanket. Include items within or just out of reach for infants to explore, including baby-safe mirrors, blocks, and board books if they are attempting to crawl.

**Trap:** Don't expect a long attention span with any one activity. Follow your infant's lead. They likely will signal with a short cry or simply change their attention when they need to shift their focus.

**STEP  
3**

PRACTICE

## Practice to Grow Skills and Develop Habits

- Allow your infant the chance to take steps to meet their big challenges, whether they are working on tasting new foods for the first time, exploring the objects in their environment, crawling, or cruising the furniture.
- Be sure to consider how you can create the conditions to support their success, such as creating a quiet, organized environment with infant-appropriate board books or toys.
- Initially, practice may require more teaching, but avoid taking over and doing it for your infant.

**STEP  
4**

SUPPORT

## Support Your Infant's Development and Success

- Use "Show me..." statements with a positive tone and body language to express excitement and curiosity. Ask them to demonstrate how to work hard toward a goal. When infants learn a new skill, they are eager to show it off! "*Show me you can move toward the mirror.*"
- Recognize effort by using "I notice..." statements like: "*I noticed how you worked extra hard to get to that toy.*"

- On days with extra challenges, when you can see your infant is scared of new people or situations, offer confidence in your infant's ability to face the unfamiliar. Gently, you can say, *"This is my friend Anna. I am excited for you to meet her."*
- Actively reflect on how your infant is feeling when approaching challenges. You could offer comfort items to help your infant face new challenges. *"Would your blanket help you feel better?"* Swaddle your infant, or you may use a pacifier to offer comfort.

**Trap:** Don't move on quickly if your infant shows interest in trying something new. Infants often need more time to stick with a challenge or pursue a goal. Your waiting could make all the difference in whether they can gain skills over time.



## Recognize Efforts

- Smile at your infant.
- Make eye contact.
- Use caring facial expressions.
- Be physically gentle and caring with your infant.
- Use words to celebrate and encourage. Recognize and call out when all is going well. When your infant tries new things, call it out: *"I notice you reached for your toy. I love seeing you try new things."*
- Build celebrations into your everyday routines. Promote joy and happiness by laughing, singing, dancing, hugging, and snuggling to appreciate one another.

**Tip:** The first year is filled with amazing changes—and not just for your child. Remember to recognize and celebrate your own development and milestones as a parent.

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