

Patience is a virtue for new fathers and Mothers, and learning how to work with a crying baby takes an extra measure of patience. But education and understanding the issues around a crying baby can be a big help in the process as well.

What to Do If You Suspect a Problem

If this is your first baby, you may not wish to seem overanxious about your baby's development. Yet you may have some concerns based on what you've read about normal development or seen other babies accomplishing.

You spend many hours with your child, while your doctor spends only a few minutes at each visit. Doctors tend to look for development milestones and may not focus on deficiencies. If you express your concern as a general worry, your doctor may be apt to reassure you that the range of normal development is quite broad and different babies develop at different rates.

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When parents suspect a problem they should write down what their concerns are. Try to think of as many examples as possible. When you take a list to your doctor, she will recognize your concern and begin thinking about specific causes to the behavior you observe. Your doctor may want to wait and see if there are changes. If she suspects a genetic disease related problem, she may recommend that you see a specialist at the nearest children's hospital.

If your baby's overall development seems delayed, your doctor may recommend that he be examined by developmental pediatrician who specializes in infant development. If your doctor suspects a neurologic disorder, [a problem with the functioning of the nervous system] she may refer you to a pediatric neurologist. In some cases, CT scanning [an X-ray technique that provides a computerized picture of an

BABY GIFTS & GIFT BASKETS

A new baby is a precious gift that should be celebrated. Every new child is unique and a product of the parents. According to the National Center for Health Statistics, there were over 4 million babies born in the US in 2005. The birth rate to teenage moms dropped, while there was a rise in mothers aged 35-44. The birth rate for twins also has risen, with an average of about 31 twin births out of every 1,000 pregnancies.

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area of the body] may be performed. This can reveal if there are tumors or other abnormalities in the brain.

If seizure disorders are suspected, an electroencephalogram [EEG] may be performed to record the brain wave pattern for analysis. If hearing loss is suspected, a brain stem response study may be done by an audiologist.

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An ophthalmologist may examine your child's eyes for visual function and for abnormalities. Your child may also be seen by a physical therapist, who will evaluate such things as muscle strength and control, flexibility, balance, and agility. A psychologist may assess your child's personality and intellectual functioning, while a speech pathologist may look at how your child communicates to identify factors responsible for communication disorders.

It is sometimes difficult to determine the cause of developmental delays so parents may be asked to see a number of specialists and consent to their child's undergoing a number of tests. It may be wise for parents to select a "case manager"-a doctor or other professional who will act as liaison between parents and professionals. Often this is the family pediatrician, but it may also be a hospital social worker or other professional who can explain medical procedures and who also has experience in dealing with parents concerns and feelings. While parents can certainly act as their own case managers, they may find it easier, especially when they are under a lot of stress, to have one person overseeing the tests.

Some procedures are invasive and potentially harmful to the child. Parents should understand why a specific test is being considered and what is involved. Do not be afraid to ask doctors to explain, and never sign consent forms without feeling sure that

you understand what is to be done to your child. If you are unsure about something, wait until you have an opportunity to discuss it with your pediatrician.

