



**Beliefs about babies**

- 1 Young babies can't feel pain.
- 2 Babies can't see or hear much when they're newborn.
- 3 Newborn babies just sleep all day – they don't need much attention.
- 4 All newborns need is to be clean and well fed.
- 5 A newborn baby is like a 'blank slate' – it can't think at all.
- 6 Newborns can express pleasure and displeasure.
- 7 Newborns can't tell what's going on around them.

**Sensory development**

[This involves eyes, ears, smell, taste and touch.]

Babies:

- will turn their head towards the light and will stare at bright, shiny objects
  - are fascinated by human faces and gaze attentively at their carer's face when being fed or cuddled
  - open their eyes when held upright
  - close their eyes tightly if a pencil of light is shone directly into them
  - are known to like looking at high-contrast patterns and shapes
  - blink in response to sound or movement
  - are startled by sudden noises
  - recognize their mother's or main carer's voice, at less than one week old
  - cannot hear very soft sounds
  - if breastfed, can distinguish the smell of their mother's breasts from those of other women who are breastfeeding
  - show a preference for sweet tastes over salty, sour tastes
- (1) • are sensitive to textures and to any change of position
- (1) • have sensitive skin but may not respond to a very light touch.

**Cognitive and language development**

[This is to do with thinking, understanding and talking.]

Babies:

- are beginning to develop concepts – concepts are abstract ideas, based in the senses and combined with growing understanding [for example, babies become aware of physical sensations such as having an empty stomach, and respond by crying; they also become aware of when they feel full and come to associate that concept with whoever and however they are fed]
- explore using their senses and using their own activity and movement
- make eye contact and cry to indicate need
- respond to high-pitched tones by moving their limbs
- often synchronize actions with the sound of an adult voice
- are often able to imitate, for example copying adults who open their mouth wide or stick out their tongue.



### **Emotional and social development**

[This is sometimes referred to as social skills in older children; it refers to the way in which babies behave with other people.]

Babies:

- use total body movements [their whole bodies] to express pleasure at bathtime or when being fed
- enjoy feeding and cuddling
- often imitate facial expressions.

(Meggitt and Sunderland, 2000, pp. 7, 10)