

# motor development

## at 9 months, most children:

- ▶ Roll over with ease;
- ▶ Sit without support;
- ▶ Push up into a sitting position;
- ▶ Creep or begin crawling;
- ▶ Pull things towards themselves;
- ▶ Do two things at one time;
- ▶ Pass toys from one hand to the other;
- ▶ Begin eating table food;
- ▶ Use sweeping arm motions, kick legs.

## to support these developing skills, at Gretchen's House we:

- ▶ Continue lots of floor play with climbing challenges: cushions, ramps, carpeted blocks, and tunnels;
- ▶ "Dance" with props like scarves, bells, and shakers;
- ▶ Encourage children to choose their own toys from bins and shelves;
- ▶ Sing songs and do fingerplays with gestures;
- ▶ Play outside every day: swinging, crawling, or riding in strollers and backpacks;
- ▶ Provide a variety of interesting finger foods and lots of time to explore and eat them.

# guidance

## at Gretchen's House we:

- ▶ Childproof our play spaces so children are not tempted by open drawers, dangling cords, or other dangers;
- ▶ Follow children's own sleeping and eating patterns rather than imposing a rigid schedule on the entire group;
- ▶ Use distraction and gentle redirection with inappropriate behavior;
- ▶ Use "stop" and positive redirection rather than saying "no, no, no" all day;
- ▶ Set up our spaces to reduce "no-no's";
- ▶ Allow children to play and explore at their own initiative and pace;
- ▶ Allow children time alone: in their crib, for a few moments before sleeping or upon waking; in a quiet area of the room when they become overwhelmed.

## easy ways to make a 9-month-old feel powerful:

- ▶ Encourage self-feeding with several food choices and time to relax at meals and snacks;
- ▶ Give children a chance to solve their own problems when frustrated, e.g., let them try to retrieve a toy that's out of reach;
- ▶ Allow them to use comfort objects when they want to;
- ▶ Help children imitate you: e.g., play with a spoon and bowl while you're cooking;
- ▶ Give children toys that do things: balls, noisemakers, pop-up toys.

# Active Learning at Gretchen's House



your child at  
9 months:

-mover-  
-explorer-  
-follower-

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# cognitive development

## at 9 months, most children:

- ▶ Repeat tasks until they master them;
- ▶ Look for toys which they have seen hidden;
- ▶ Shake objects which make noise;
- ▶ Retrieve favorite toys;
- ▶ Imitate adult gestures;
- ▶ Look at books and pictures for longer periods of time;
- ▶ Enjoy gentle surprises.

## to support these developing skills, at Gretchen's House we:

- ▶ Play peek-a-boo games;
- ▶ Leave favorite toys accessible to children so they can use them at will;
- ▶ Provide plenty of sturdy board books and interesting posters at children's level for casual reading;
- ▶ Begin **art exploration**: things like finger painting, tearing paper, and painting with water;
- ▶ Play with toys that can be stacked and knocked over;
- ▶ Play with toys that make different noises, or have different patterns and textures.

# language development

## at 9 months, most children:

- ▶ Say mama or dada (without understanding real meaning yet);
- ▶ Babble to themselves or familiar people;
- ▶ Laugh and coo when alone;
- ▶ Copy mouth and lip movements;
- ▶ Imitate sounds and gestures;
- ▶ Modulate their voices: soft/loud, high/low;
- ▶ Begin to say more sounds that resemble words;
- ▶ Babble conversationally: take turns speaking, respond to voice inflection.

## to support these developing skills, at Gretchen's House we:

- ▶ Narrate our actions with the children to help them understand what's going on and help them acquire new sounds and words;
- ▶ Get down at the children's level to speak and interact with them;
- ▶ Use gestures in conjunction with words;
- ▶ Speak in simple sentences to assist comprehension;
- ▶ Phrase things positively. Say: "Feet stay on the floor," instead of "No climbing!" so that children know exactly what we want them to do;
- ▶ Read favorite books again and again;
- ▶ Modulate our voices to enhance meaning.

# social-emotional development

## at 9 months, most children:

- ▶ Show strong attachment to caregivers;
- ▶ Try to follow you and may cry if you leave;
- ▶ Shout for attention;
- ▶ Show pleasure, excitement, and fear;
- ▶ Begin to develop comfort rituals: cuddling a favorite blanket, or saying goodnight to stuffed animals;
- ▶ Push away unwanted objects or food;
- ▶ Express frustration by frowning, crying, or batting at objects or people.

## to support these developing skills, at Gretchen's House we:

- ▶ Use "kangaroo care:" allow children who are feeling insecure to accompany their caregiver everywhere in a backpack, for example;
- ▶ Keep photos of family members at the center to ease the separation;
- ▶ Label children's feelings for them;
- ▶ Be responsive to their gestures and sounds: don't insist on feeding them when they shake their heads, etc.;
- ▶ Anticipate physical needs to reduce waiting time and frustration; vary routines according to children's best interests.