

Reach Out and Connect: Preparing for a New Baby During COVID-19 Part 2

In this workshop, the ROR GNY team focuses on preparing for a new baby during the pandemic! With the social distancing measures, we realize it is harder to access information and/or attend parenting classes. Though we are not medical experts, we wanted to cover a few basics and give you the tools to get in touch with those who are!

Development Timeline

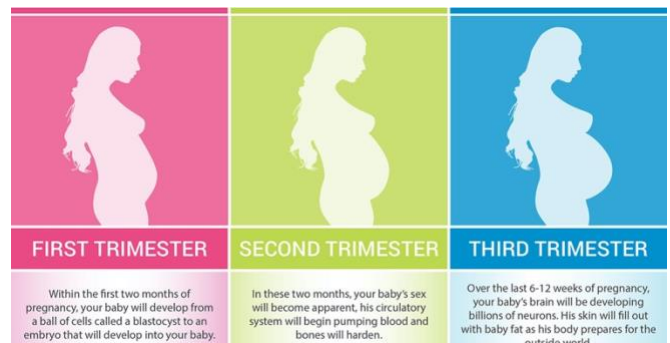
First, we want to stress that when it comes to development, each child develops at different rates!

- For example, brain development generally occurs earlier in girls than boys, but boys catch up!
- With that being said, there are certain developmental milestones that you want to look for
 - E.g. when your baby is able to lift their head and arms when on their tummy
 - You can help develop this skill by setting your baby on their tummy while they are awake and you are actively supervising them, as this will encourage them to try it out!
 - If you are worried about your child not hitting certain milestones, reach out to your doctor and they will connect you with free Early Intervention Programming to help you and your child.
- The [CDC website](#) is a great place to go to see what your baby's development will look like at 1 month, 2 months, 3 months, and so on until they are 5 years old. They also offer [printable checklists](#) in English and Spanish to track development. [Pathways.org](#) also has a feature with all the milestones and some videos to match each milestone.

Trimesters & Brain Development

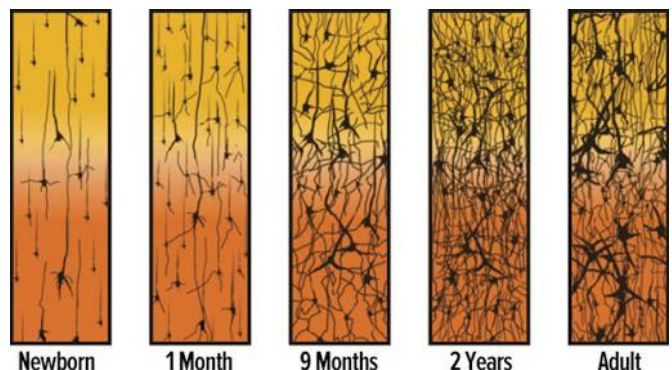
Pregnancy is divided into three trimesters, each of which is about three months.

- Trimester 1 – baby is fully formed (organs and limbs) by the end
- Trimester 2 – hair begins to grow, eyes open, begin responding to sounds
- Trimester 3 – reflexes are coordinated (blinking, head turns, hand grasping)



As noted in the top graphic, in trimester three, your baby's neurons (brain cells) began to grow!

- Then, once your baby is born, these neurons grow rapidly during their first few years (bottom graphic)
- The connections between these neurons, or synapses, also grow very rapidly as they take in new information from your



child's early experiences, what they see, hear, and who they interact with.

- Everything you do with your child at this stage of life affects these connections. The more connections made, the better your child will be able to process information in the future. So as you talk and read to your baby during the first few years of their life, you are setting them up for future success in school and life.

Bonding and Soothing

Establishing a loving bond with your baby will help facilitate healthy brain and body growth!

- One great way to bond is to establish a physical connection, such as through cradling your baby and gently stroking them in different patterns.
- Soothing can begin even before your child is born!



- In the first trimester, your little one hears their very first sound. By talking to them while in utero, they will enter the world already knowing your voice
- If you sing the same song or read the same book to your child everyday while in utero, once your child is born this song or book will serve as a way to calm them down.
- There are various ways to sooth, no matter if before or after birth
 - Singing a soft, calming song
 - Picking a book to read every day
 - Vocal sounds (baby rattles, musical mobiles)
- It is vital to remember that bonding is a process—it does not happen right away!

- If you are having trouble bonding with your child, you are not alone. This happens often, and may be a sign of postpartum depression, which your doctor is more than equipped to help you overcome! Remember, asking for help is a sign of strength.

Additional Resources for New Yorkers

- 1) [Text4baby](#)
 - Parents who text BABY (or BEBE for Spanish) to 511411 receive free text messages three times per week, timed to their due date, through pregnancy and up until the baby's first birthday.
- 2) [Local Family Support Programs](#)
 - These voluntary programs (such as ParentChild+ are provided at no cost to your family and will give you support through home visits by a family support provider.
- 3) New York State [Early Intervention Programming](#) (EIP)
 - This is for infants and toddlers under three years of age who may not be making progress like other children because of a developmental delay or disability.
 - These services come at no cost!



For any questions about the content or our virtual programming, please email Kristen Rocha Aldrich at krochaaldrich@reachoutandreadnyc.org.