



Confidence Summary

Why Confidence?

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

Step 1. Getting to Know and Understand your Infant's **Input**

- Infants may cry between two and three hours every day. In fact, their primary form of communicating with you is through crying.
- 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 that looks either similar to anger or discomfort depending on the intensity. Cries can be short, low-pitched, and they rise and fall.
- If your response to your infant's cues doesn't seem to 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. A child's crying and frustrations can be challenging, so be sure to take breaks when you need them.

Step 2. **Teach** New Skills by Interactive Modeling

- Ensure daily face-to-face interactions.
 - Talk up close to your infant. Make a point when they are in a high chair, crib, or stroller to get down on their level. Narrate what's going on 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 tummy. Lay your infant down on a blanket. Include items within or, if attempting to crawl, just out of reach for infants to explore including baby-safe mirrors, blocks, and board books.

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** to Grow Skills, Confidence, 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 like 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** Your Infant's Development and Success

- Use "Show me..." statements and ask them to demonstrate how they can work hard toward a goal. When an infant learns 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. In a gentle way, 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 are able to gain skills over time.

Step 5. **Recognize** and Celebrate

- 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 is trying 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. Don't forget to recognize and celebrate your own development and milestones as a parent.

Recommended Citation: Center for Health and Safety Culture. (2020). *Confidence Summary. Age 0*. Retrieved from <https://www.ParentingMontana.org>.