

# The length of breastfeeding does not affect age of reaching developmental milestones

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Both literature reviews (e.g. Smith, 2015) and cohort studies (e.g. Dee et al., 2007; Kim & Choi, 2020; Lenehan et al., 2019; Vestegaard et al., 2007) indicate that even short-term breastfeeding (up to 3 months) can have a significant positive impact on cognitive development. Our study analysed data from 1073 healthy Polish monolingual children aged 1 to 40 months, all of whom were born full-term with a birth weight between 2100 and 5050 grams. The data were reported by highly educated mothers (all obtained bachelor degrees). A mobile app called 'StarWords - every word counts' (Mieszkowska et al., 2022) was used to collect longitudinal data on the age at which non-linguistic milestones such as crawling and walking, and linguistic milestones such as babbling, production of first words, and combining words into sentences were reached. We also collected data on breastfeeding practices, including whether the child was still being breastfed at the time of reporting and the length of breastfeeding. Additionally, some mothers completed standardized parental questionnaires on language development (Marchman & Dale, 2023), including CDI-I (n = 56), CDI-II (n = 181), and CDI-III (n = 29). The results showed that 95% of participating mothers initiated breastfeeding and breastfed for a relatively long time (M = 10.5 months, Me = 11 months). We found no correlation between the length of breastfeeding and the age of reaching developmental milestones (all p-values > .09), nor between breastfeeding and the scores of the CDIs (all p-values > .44). Additionally, we found no differences in the age of reaching specific motor and linguistic milestones between infants who were breastfed and those who were not at the ages of 1, 3, 6, 9, 12, 15, 18, 21, and 24 months. We conclude that among a sample of highly educated mothers, breastfeeding may have no additional impact on reaching early language milestones.