

Baby Bird Rescue TIPS and their development cycles

The first thing you need to know is whether the bird is altricial, precocial or somewhere between.

For full details on these stages, [the Stanford education website is great](#), but the basics are:

Altricial: Naked or sparse feathers, eyes closed, **completely dependent on parental care.**

Precocial: Covered with fluffy down, eyes open, **able to walk almost immediately.**

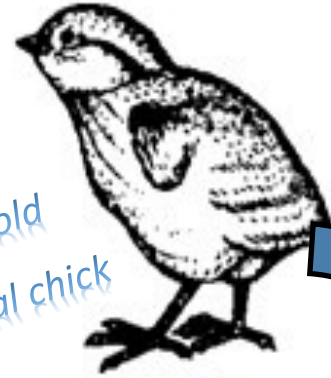
Images: <http://biologyboom.com>

One day old altricial chick



- ⇒ Needs a nest
- ⇒ Food must be soft and moist
- ⇒ Needs to be feed regularly
- ⇒ Needs to be kept warm

One day old precocial chick



- ⇒ Needs to be kept warm
- ⇒ Needs to be shown where to find food

Examples found in Australia

Altricial

Nightjar—Katrina Anderson



Raptor—Katrina Anderson



Striated Pardalote—Katrina Anderson



Galahs—Emerald Aviaries



Rainbow lorikeets—Emerald Aviaries



Laughing Turtle Doves—Matt Swinburne



Precocial

Grebe—Tasha Hennings



Pacific Black duck—Perth Hills Gazette



So, some birds are born helpless & some almost independent....

What next?

Why?

Understanding the altricial bird development stages

This will help you know what is the best help you can give

Terms used to describe baby bird growth stages

HATCHLING

- just out of the egg
- bare naked
- eyes shut



NESTLING

- eyes open
- feathers developing
- begging for food



FLEDGLING

- exercising wings
- 1st flight
- Learning to fly



BRANCHLING

- Sit in branches
- Short flights
- Building flight strength



What help should you give (for each stage of bird) when you find a bird that may be in trouble?

Hatchlings & nestlings

At these stages, the bird needs a nest for warmth, (often with mom in the nest) and frequent feeds. Babies are tucked tightly into nests for warmth.

The best thing for them is to remain with their parents



SO:-

- If the nest has fallen down—consider creating a new artificial nest, suitably sized, and placing it in the same tree or bush the original nest fell from
- Keep quiet and away from the new nest to watch for parent birds returning
- If no parents come after a few hours, keep baby warm & get the baby help a.s.a.p.

Fledglings & branchlings

As they leave the nest, even if they fly from the nest, they need to learn to use their wings properly and build up strength and skill. So, it is **NOT unusual** to see young song or predator birds on the ground, hopping around or flying from branch to branch. **They general DO NOT need rescuing.** The parents may have left them for a while, but will be back to protect and feed them., unless some tragedy has befallen them. **SO:-**

- If you see an apparently abandoned baby bird in low branches or on the ground— move it into a tree or bush - **WAIT & WATCH for parent birds**
- Parents can stay away for hours
- Only if you **ARE SURE** there are no parents are around, should pickup the baby and take it to a care facility