

G R E A T B E G I N N I N G S

A Series for Parents of Young Children



2 MONTHS

Dear Parents,

Parents are Baby's first teachers and they are the most influential teachers a child will ever have. Your baby is constantly learning about the world around her through her senses of smell, taste, sight, hearing and touch. You can "activate" those senses by providing playthings that can be seen, heard and touched. These "toys" need not be store-bought and expensive. Homemade toys are often best.

Working Mothers

Many mothers returning to work feel guilty because they imagine that they are neglecting their baby. If you are returning to work and feeling guilty, here are some points that may be helpful to consider:

Most parents don't spend 24 hours a day with their baby. The **quality** of time you spend with your child has been shown repeatedly to be much more important than the **quantity**.

Make time in your life to spend just with baby, and try to have a special time each day for the whole family to be together. This will probably mean leaving some household chores undone, but your baby's development is much more important. You surely have read the popular needlework picture that says... "Cleaning and scrubbing can wait 'til tomorrow; For babies grow up, we've learned to our sorrow. So quiet down, cobwebs; dust, go to sleep. I'm rocking my baby, 'cause babies don't keep."

Shop around for the highest quality care. Giving your baby the best care available is the sign of a

loving parent. You'll also be a much more productive and happy worker if you feel secure with your child care arrangement.

Games Babies Play

Learning-to-Look: An Eyes-and-Ears Game

Playing with your baby gives her a chance to explore the world and satisfy her growing curiosity. She will enjoy your loving attention and benefit from it.

Purpose of the Game: To train your baby's eyes to follow an object and to pay attention.

How to Play: Put your baby on her back. Stand behind her and put your hand gently on her stomach. Try to keep her from seeing your face. You want your baby to watch the object and not you. (Remove your hand from her stomach if it bothers her.)

1. Hold a noise-making object, like a ring of keys, about a foot above her face.

2. Shake the object gently until she looks at it.
3. Watch your baby's eyes to see how she follows the object.
4. Move the object slowly in a circle in the air, around her head.
5. Change the direction of the circle. If your baby can't follow the object in a circle, make only part of a circle.

Other Eyes-and-Ears Games

- Put mobiles over your baby's crib so that she can watch them as they move.
- Move objects back and forth in a straight line in front of your baby.
- When your baby is awake and alert, move her around in her infant seat so she can be near you as you work. Babies like to be with people and see what is going on. Shake a rattle or use a squeaky toy to attract her attention. She may be able to focus on the toy and follow it with her eyes as you move it slowly in an arc.

What's It Like To Be 2 Months Old?

How I Grow

- I still wobble my head a little when I'm propped up.
- I hold my head up for a few minutes when I'm on my back.
- I move my arms and legs and “bicycle” with my feet when I get excited.
- I hold onto things for a little while.
- I may stay awake for as long as 10 hours a day.
- I may even sleep for as long as seven hours a night, but don't count on it.
- Please be patient with me when I wake up during the night.

How I Talk

- I gurgle, laugh and smile when I'm happy.
- I like to try out cooing sounds.
- I cry to let you know when I want something.

How I Respond

- I am fascinated by my own hands.
- I blink at shadows made by my own hands.
- I follow you with my eyes when you move around.
- I can follow objects with my eyes.
- I smile at others besides my mother.
- I quiet down when I suck my fingers, a bottle or a pacifier.
- I perform just to get your attention.

How I Understand

- I recognize some people by their voices.
- I recognize a few objects, such as my bottle or a favorite rattle.
- I like to stare at people and things.

Doesn't it feel great when your baby watches you with those beautiful eyes! Does he watch your lips when you talk and then try to talk back? If you imitate those coos and gurgles, and let your baby know you like those sounds he makes, it will help him later in learning to talk. Research has shown that babies who are talked to **and listened to** are more alert.

How I Feel

- I feel happy, scared or uncomfortable at times.

How You Help Me Learn

- Rub my body gently after my bath. I like your touch. I also like the feel of a soft fabric against my skin.
- Let me stay close to you while you move around the house. Talk to me about what you are doing.
- Put me in my infant seat and change my position frequently to let me get a new view of the world.
- Let me lie on my back under a tree and watch the leaves blow.

- Take me for a walk or to the store. I like to see and hear what's happening.

Children can be very different from each other. Don't worry if your child is "early" or "late" in growth. Look for your child's growth in each area. Encourage each new ability. If you are concerned about your child's development, talk with your doctor.

Feeding Your Baby

Parents used to think that feeding solid foods at bedtime would help their babies sleep through the night. Not true! If your baby is hungry, give her breast milk or formula—it will help her sleep.

No Solids Yet. There are good reasons for waiting to feed solids. Your baby's digestive system is not ready yet to handle foods other than milk. Her tongue and swallowing movements won't develop enough for solid foods until she is about four months old.

Remember that your baby is the best judge of how much she needs at each feeding. Be careful not to force her to feed longer than she wants. She will change her feeding pattern when she is ready.

Baby's Health

Immunizations

Check with your doctor, nurse, or clinic about the immunizations that your baby needs. Immunizations take away a lot of the risk of bringing up Baby. Most babies get their first vaccinations at two months of age.

When to Call the Doctor

There will probably come a time when your baby will have a cold, fever, or just won't act up to par. Don't be afraid to call your baby's doctor and ask for advice. The doctor expects you to call when you have a question or when there is a problem.

In order to be well prepared when you talk with the doctor, have the following information ready:

1. **Baby's temperature:** A baby care book will explain how to do this, or ask a friend or the nurse/doctor.
2. **Baby's symptoms:** A runny nose? a cough? slow, drowsy, listless behavior? diarrhea? constipation? a different kind of cry? a change in the usual eating or sleeping habits?

Listen carefully to the instructions the doctor gives, and be sure to write them down. Don't be embarrassed if you need the doctor to repeat or explain something. His/her instructions are important and need to be followed correctly. If you write them down, you will have less anxiety later about whether or not you have done the right thing.

If you are very concerned about your baby, tell your doctor. Tell her/him that you would feel more reassured if you could bring the baby to the office to be looked at. Your doctor will listen to you. Remember, you know your baby better than anyone else does.

When you go to the doctor on well-baby visits, take along a pad and pencil. Sometimes a lot is discussed at these visits, and it is hard to remember everything when you get back home.

Help! I Want to Relax

Research suggests that steady, monotonous sounds, lights and temperatures soothe an upset baby and calm him down enough to sleep. Try some of these suggestions the next time you can't figure out how to calm Baby.

- He may want to be held close. Talk to him, cuddle him, and rock him for awhile.
- Keep the room an even temperature—neither too cold nor too hot.
- Turn on a soft light in the room where you want your baby to sleep.
- Sing a gentle melody over and over; play soft, soothing music steadily or provide some

monotonous sound like a fan or motor noise.

- Wrap Baby in a soft, light blanket or cloth to reduce random movement and keep him from thrashing about.
- He may be dressed too warmly, or not warmly enough. Adjust his clothing to make him more comfortable.
- He may have an air bubble in his stomach which makes him uncomfortable. Gentle burping may help.
- He may have a diaper rash. Leave his diapers off for awhile. Try powdering his bottom with a little corn starch instead of baby powder. Free circulation of air helps skin to heal, and most babies love the freedom of not wearing a diaper. If the weather is cold, wrap him loosely in a blanket.

Real Tears

Has your baby started crying real tears? Things may look a lot sadder when this happens, but it signals that growth is taking place and that tear ducts are ready to do their work.

Caution: Turns Ahead

Some active babies will move and even turn over at this young age. Be careful where you put the baby. Never leave him where he could accidentally fall. Even quiet babies who “never move” have learned to turn over at the wrong time. Crib sides need to be kept up and firmly secured to prevent falls.

Do not use a crib that was made prior to 1976.

The 1976 federal standard mandating slat interval of not more than 2 inches eliminates the possibility of a baby's head fitting between slats and resulting in strangulation.

Bath Time with Dad

Bath time is a nice time to relax, talk and splash around. Dad can be a great guide in this process. Remember to check the water temperature first with your elbow; have all the supplies ready and **NEVER** leave the baby alone in the bath. If the phone rings, just let it be—they'll call back later

when your precious cargo is safely dried and diapered.

Sleep Time

Sleeping Through the Night. Babies will usually sleep through the middle-of-the-night feeding by the time they weigh about 11 pounds. If your baby sleeps through the 10 p.m. feeding (or the last feeding of the day), you may want to wake her up at 11 p.m. for a feeding. She will then probably sleep until 5 or 6 the next morning. But some 2-month olds will wake up every four hours to be fed, day or night.

Q: “My baby likes to sleep on her back. Is this position bad for her? Should I try to change this habit?”

A: Sometimes parents feel that they have to change a particular sleeping position because they think it is unsafe, or will harm the baby's head or feet. Babies will not choke on their backs, unless they are sick. And they will not smother on their stomachs. Just make sure there are not a lot of bed clothes—never a pillow—in the crib.

It is important for your baby to feel comfortable while sleeping. If you are worried that your baby's head is starting to flatten because she always sleeps on the same side, there are several things you can do. Tie some colorful, safe toys on the other side of the crib so she has to turn her head to look at them. Or turn your baby around in the crib so her head is where her feet were before. The head flattening will disappear when your baby learns to roll over and change her sleeping position.

Take a Parenting Break

Be kind to everyone, and take a “parenting break.” Twenty-four hours a day of parenting does everyone in. Find a friend or relative to watch the baby while you get time away just to do something that will refresh you and make you happy to be back home.

Anything that makes you a happier, more enthusiastic person is bound to make you a better parent. **Plan** and **take** time for yourself.

Allow time each day for relaxation and exercise—you've earned it! These exercises take only a few minutes and will make you feel refreshed again:

- Lie flat on your back. Take a deep breath. Now breathe out slowly. Repeat five times.
- Lie flat with your arms at your sides. Move your arms out to shoulder level, keeping elbows stiff. Then raise your arms over your head and bring your hands together. Repeat five times.
- Lie flat, then raise your head, touching your chin to your chest. Try not to move any other part of your body. Repeat a few times.

Single Parents

More than 6 million adults in the U.S. are single parents. If you are a single parent, your child's needs will be even more demanding on you. It is easy for single parents to become so involved with their children that they stop seeing other people. But you need to spend time with other adults. Share family activities, such as outings, with friends you enjoy being around. Check the following places for news about parent groups and other activities which may interest you:

- Local newspapers
- Religious groups
- Service organizations
- Library bulletin boards

Don't limit yourself to events and groups labeled "for single parents."

Appreciation & Thanks to the Original Authors

This series has been adapted from **Parent Express** by Dr. Dorothea Cudaback, Cooperative Extension, University of California, and her colleagues throughout the national Cooperative Extension System. The safety information was provided by the American Academy of Pediatrics.

Appreciation is expressed to Dr. Patricia Tanner Nelson, Cooperative Extension, University of Delaware for computerizing this series of "age paced newsletters" and for permission to reprint for parents in Utah.

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Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension work, Acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Robert L. Gilliland, Vice President and Director, Cooperative Extension Service, Utah State University. (2-95)