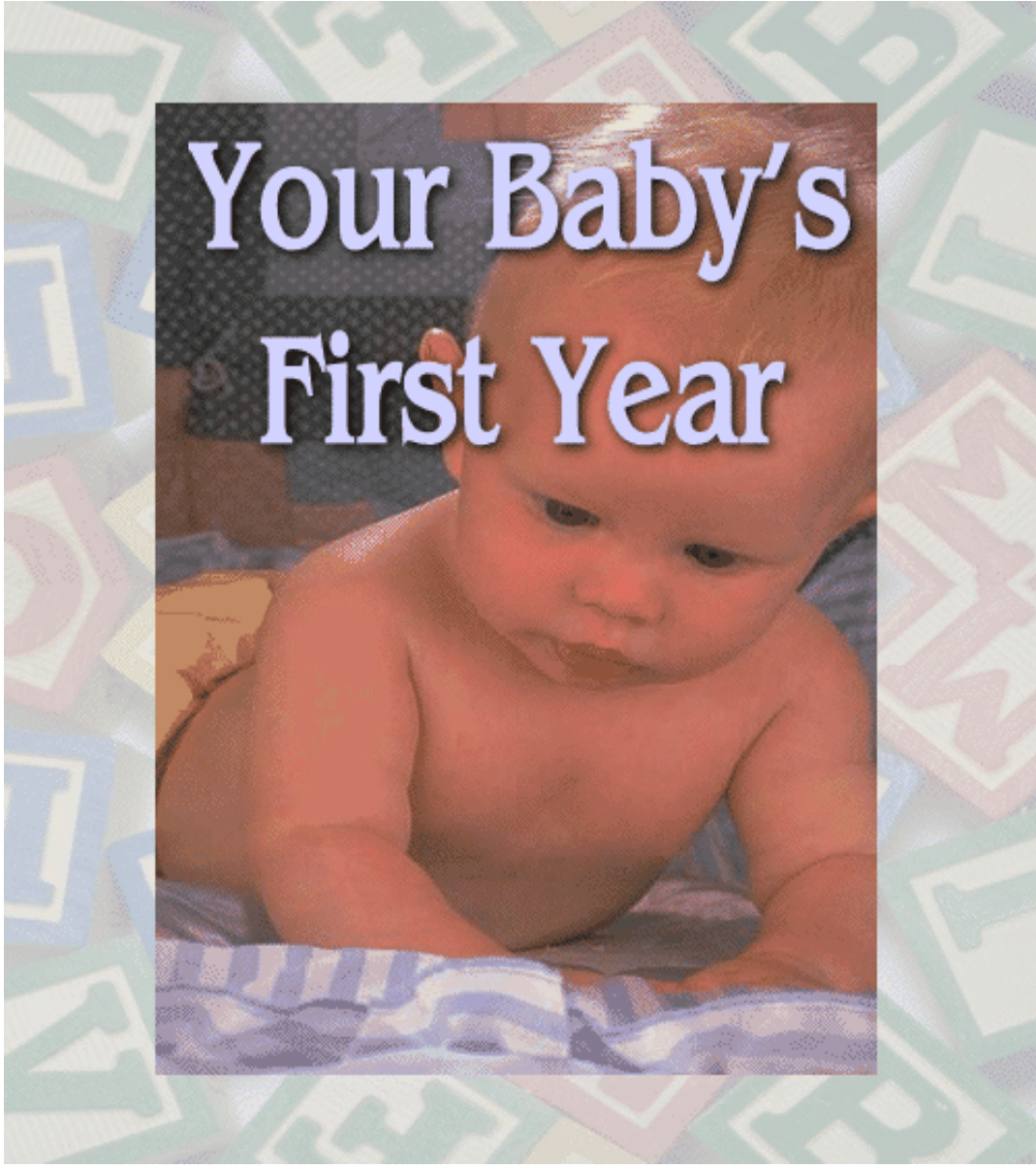
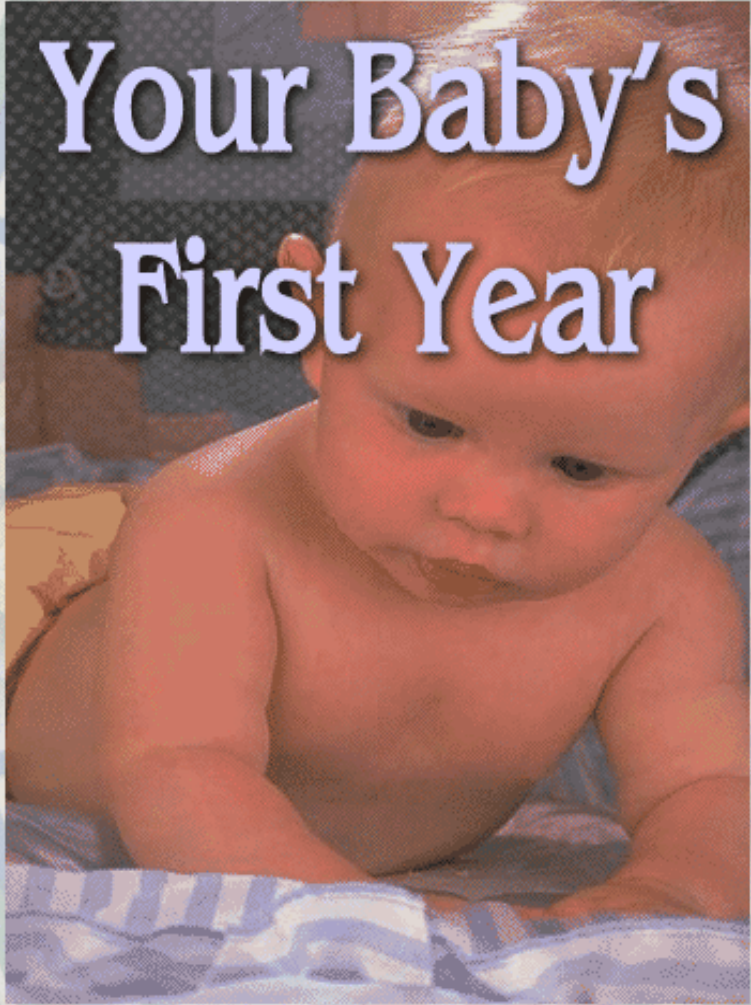


Your Baby's First Year



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Chapter 1-Your Newborn

Congratulations on Your New Baby!

You have a new baby, and you are a proud parent. Do you sometimes feel excited but also a little nervous about taking care of your new baby? Then you are like most parents. Even in the first days of life, your baby is starting to find out who you are.

Research has found that very young babies know the difference between their parents and strangers. There are many changes that take place and new things to learn when you become a parent. It doesn't happen overnight. Be patient with yourself. The love you have for your baby will help you learn to become a good parent. Just as no two babies are exactly alike, no one takes care of a baby in exactly the same way. Be a loving parent. Do your best. Enjoy your baby! Ask questions if you need help.

Newborn Health Screening

Your baby is tested for certain medical conditions when she is born. Many conditions can be treated if they are found early enough. Early treatment means your baby can grow up healthier.

Newborn tests are given in the hospital right after birth. The tests are given again at your baby's first checkup.

The second series of tests is important. It must be done one or two weeks after the first tests. Be sure to take your baby to the doctor or clinic for this second series of tests. At this visit, your doctor will also check other things to make sure your baby is doing fine.

A small amount of your baby's blood will be taken. It will be tested and you will be told if there is any cause for concern.

Your doctor or nurse can answer questions about the tests.

If you don't have health insurance for your baby, you can learn about resources in your state by contacting the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Insure Kids Now Program.

To learn more, call 1-877-KIDSNOW or visit their Web site at www.insurekidsnow.gov/.

What a Healthy Newborn Looks Like

Newborn babies don't usually look like the cute babies in diaper ads. Newborns' heads are often more pointed than round. Their skin may be wrinkly and reddish in color. This is normal.

In the center of your baby's head is a "soft spot" where the skull bones have not yet joined. This allows your baby's head to be flexible during the birthing process. The skull bones will grow together to cover this spot as your baby grows. Meantime, the soft spot allows your baby's brain to grow.

Sometimes there are dark red patches on the baby's eyelids. They can also be on the bridge of the nose or back of the neck. No one knows what causes these. They usually go away during the first year.

Some babies are born bald, some have thin hair, and others are born with thick, dark hair. For many babies, this first hair rubs off. For others, the color may change.

Eye color can also change after birth. Eye color is usually set by the end of the first year.

The umbilical cord that is left on the navel at birth will drop off in five to 10 days. The place where it falls off will become your baby's belly button.

Sometimes baby girls bleed from the vagina. Sometimes boys or girls will have swollen breasts. They may even produce a few drops of milk at birth. Hormones from the mother cause this. The discharge is harmless and will soon disappear.

Newborn Reflexes

Babies have special reflexes that last only a few months. It helps to know what the reflexes are so you are not alarmed when they occur.

The following reflexes are normal for newborns:

- Moro or "startle" reflex: This occurs when your baby's head shifts position quickly. Or when her head falls backward. Or when your baby is startled by something loud. She will react by throwing out her arms and legs and extending her neck. Your baby will then quickly bring her arms together. She may cry when doing this. This reflex should go away after two months.

- Rooting reflex: This is how your baby hunts for her mother's breast. If you gently stroke the side of her cheek with your finger, she will turn her head toward your finger. This lasts for three to four months.
- Grasp reflex: Your baby will clench her fist around anything pressed into the palm of her hand. You can show this to a big brother or sister. Say, "The baby wants to hold on to your finger." This reflex goes away at five to six months.
- Stepping reflex: If you hold a newborn baby upright under her arms with her feet on a hard surface, her feet will make a stepping action. This happens even though it is a long time before she is ready to stand or walk. This usually lasts a couple of months.

Ask your doctor if you have any questions about your baby's reflexes.

Your Baby Depends on You for Checkups

Your baby needs medical checkups during her first days, weeks and months so the doctor can see if she is growing right. The way your baby grows in her first year can affect her health for life.

Checkups are a normal and important thing for babies. Even though your baby seems healthy, she should get checkups at one to two weeks of age, and at two, four, six, nine, and 12 months of age.

Your baby's first visit to the doctor will be a week or two after birth. Ask your doctor for the results of the hearing screening if it was done in the hospital. If a hearing test was not done, ask your doctor for a referral for the test. You need to know as soon as possible if your baby has hearing problems. If she does, she may need special help now so she can communicate with people. This will help her when she learns to talk and read.

At each checkup, the doctor or nurse will:

- Examine your baby's head, eyes, ears, heart, lungs and other body parts
- Measure your baby's length, weight and head size
- Ask about your baby's hearing and vision
- Ask you questions about how she eats, sleeps and acts
- Give you information about how a baby develops and grows

A Special Word to Fathers

As a father, you have an important role to play in taking care of your baby. Your baby needs you. And mom needs you to share many of the responsibilities of taking care of your new baby. When you do things with your baby, you and your baby get closer. You and your baby form a bond that helps her feel safe and happy.

You may feel nervous around a newborn. Or you may be afraid to touch your baby because you have never done it before. The best way for you to get over the uneasiness is to hold your baby.

Here are some things you can do to be a part of your baby's life. You will find that the more you do with her, the more comfortable you will be.

- Hold and cuddle your baby.
- Smile and laugh with your baby.
- Talk to your baby. Your baby will quickly learn your voice and know that you are her daddy.
- Change your baby's diapers.
- Cuddle with mom and your baby during breastfeeding.
- When mom's breast milk or formula has been put in a bottle, you can give your baby the bottle. Cuddle with and talk and sing to your baby during bottle time.
- Take your baby for a walk. Babies love the sights and sounds of the outdoors.
- Play with your baby.

The Baby Blues

(Take Time for Yourself)

Some new mothers go through what is known as the "baby blues," or postpartum blues.

This happens because your body goes through many changes during pregnancy. These "blue" feelings may happen to you before your baby is born or afterward.

You may feel discouraged or tense, or feel like crying over little things that would not usually bother you. Don't worry. These feelings are common. They won't last forever.

You may also have trouble sleeping. If you do, at least take time to rest. You are under a lot of stress. Getting some rest may help you handle your feelings.

It may help to talk about your feelings with others. Talk with family and friends. You can find out if there are any parent groups in your community. Or contact the National Mental Health Association for a list of local affiliates at 1-800-969-NMHA or visit their Web site at www.nmha.org/. Churches and religious organizations in your community may be able to help you find someone to talk to. You may also want to talk to your doctor.

If you have friends or family who will help you with meals, housework or shopping, now is the time to ask them. It is also a good time to let your baby's father help out.

Your Baby Should Sleep on Her Back

You want to keep your baby safe when she sleeps. Most babies are healthy and have no problems when sleeping. But sometimes babies die in their sleep. This is called Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) or crib death. Doctors have not found out what causes SIDS.

Research shows that babies who sleep on their backs are less likely to die from SIDS. If your baby has a health problem, your doctor may tell you to put her in another position. Otherwise, always put your baby to sleep on her back.

Other factors in lowering the danger of SIDS are:

- Breastfeeding—Your breast milk is the perfect food for your baby. Breast milk helps protect your baby from many illnesses, as well as SIDS.
- Smoke-free environment—Don't smoke around your baby. Don't take her around others who smoke. Babies in smoke-free homes have fewer colds and infections.
- Closeness—Keep your sleeping baby nearby. It's good for your baby to learn to sleep in her own crib. Be sure you can hear her if she cries or is in distress.
- Bedding—Be sure your baby is sleeping on a firm mattress. Don't put your baby to sleep on soft or fluffy things, such as a pillow, quilt or waterbed. Keep stuffed animals out of the crib at sleep time.
- Temperature—Make sure your baby is warm but not too hot.

- Doctor visits—Take your baby in for her regular checkups. Any time your baby seems sick or has trouble breathing, take her to the doctor or clinic.

Breast Milk Is Best for Your Baby

Breast milk is the perfect food for your baby. It is the only food your baby needs during her first six months. A baby is not ready for other foods, except formula, during the first few months of life.

A breastfed baby usually doesn't need water. However, you may give her water if the weather is hot and your home is not air-conditioned. Don't add sugar or honey to the water. Don't give flavored drinks or soda pop to your baby. Don't give fruit juice to a newborn baby.

Breast milk is best for your baby's health. Breastfed babies don't get sick as often, and they usually don't have as many allergies. They may even be smarter! Also, breastfeeding seems to protect mothers from certain types of health problems.

Mothers often find that breast milk is the easiest way to feed their babies. Also, there is no cost.

You don't have to wash and sterilize bottles and nipples when you breastfeed. This leaves more time for other things. Breastfeeding your baby can even help you lose some of the weight you gained when you were pregnant. Breastfeeding can be a pleasing experience for baby and mom.

Breastfeeding Is Natural

Babies need to eat often — every 90 minutes to two hours. Feed your baby when she begins to show signs of hunger, such as rooting or sucking on her lips, fingers or fist. Try to feed her before she cries. Feeding your baby often won't spoil her. It will help you learn to become more aware of your baby's needs.

Don't limit feeding times. Babies need different amounts of food at different times of the day, just as grown people do.

Relax! Take your time. The more you nurse your baby, the more milk you will have. Do not give your baby formula or water. If you do, you will make less milk. If you think you do not have enough milk, nurse more often and nurse longer.

To learn more about breastfeeding, you may want to contact your local health department, WIC clinic, hospital, La Leche league or doctor. You can call La Leche league at 1-800-LALECHE, or visit their Web site at www.lalecheleague.org/.

Breastfeeding is natural, but it takes a little time for babies and mothers to learn what works best for them. You may have sore nipples when you first start breastfeeding. The pain can be reduced if your baby is held properly when attached to the breast.

Here are some useful tips:

- Hold your baby's tummy to your tummy, baby's chin to your breast. You can do this sitting or lying down. Hold your breast in a "C-hold," with your thumb on top and fingers underneath. Tickle your baby's lips with your nipple until her mouth opens wide. Quickly bring her onto the breast. Allow the tip of your baby's nose and chin to touch the breast.
- Make sure your baby's mouth covers your entire nipple and much of the darker part around the nipple. Your baby's upper and lower lips should be rolled out. If the lips are not rolled out, break the suction by slipping your finger between the baby's gums and your breast. Then latch the baby on again.
- Offer your baby both breasts at each feeding. Your baby will tell you when she is finished by "falling off" the breast.
- After feeding, rub a few drops of breast milk onto your nipples. Let them air dry. Then cover the nipple with nursing pads, a bra or clothing. This will help keep them from getting too dry.

Your nipples may be tender in the first few days of breastfeeding. This is common. By and large, tenderness goes away once the milk begins to flow. If you have a lot of pain, call a breastfeeding counselor or your doctor. Your doctor or counselor can also help if you have cracked or bleeding nipples. If it doesn't feel right, then it probably isn't right.

If you are out with your baby, you can still breastfeed. You may want to take along a receiving blanket or shawl with which to cover up.

If you have to be away from your baby, you can still give her breast milk. You can withdraw or "express" breast milk by hand or with a breast pump into a sterile container. Then someone else can give it to her in a bottle.

It is important for you to have adequate, high-quality nutrition and drink enough water. You should avoid drugs while breastfeeding unless

the doctor specifically tells you to take a certain medication even though you are breastfeeding.

Tips on Bottle Feeding

If you bottle feed your baby, ask your doctor what kind of formula is best for her. There are three ways formula is sold:

- Powdered formula is the cheapest. You have to mix the powder with sterilized water.
- Concentrated formula is a liquid, but it is thick and must be mixed with sterilized water. It costs more than powdered formula.
- Ready-to-feed formula comes already mixed with water. It costs the most but is the easiest to use.

Follow formula mixing instructions carefully. There is a date on the formula. Don't use the formula after this date. The formula will not be safe to give to your baby after this date.

Wash reusable bottles made of plastic or glass. Also wash all equipment used to prepare formula. Use hot soapy water. Rinse the bottles in clean tap water. Then boil them five minutes in a covered pot or sterilizer.

To prepare formula, boil water for five minutes and cool it before mixing it with powdered or concentrated formula. If you are using bottles with disposable liners, throw away the liner after use. Store prepared formula in the refrigerator and use it within 48 hours.

Heat a bottle of formula by running hot water over it. Never heat formula in the microwave. It can get too hot. Check the temperature by shaking a few drops on your wrist. When it feels warm (not hot) on your wrist, it is cool enough to give to your baby.

When feeding your baby, hold her head a little higher than her tummy. Hold the bottom of the bottle up so that the nipple stays full of formula. This way, your baby doesn't swallow air and spit up. Never prop the bottle, because your baby could choke. Always hold your baby while you feed her. Throw out any formula left in the bottle after a feeding.

Feeding time is more than just satisfying your baby's hunger. It is also a time to bond with and get to know your infant. Dad, grandparents

and other family members can bond too by feeding and cuddling the baby.

Checkups and Shots

At checkups your baby will be given shots (immunizations). Your baby will get her first shot in the hospital at birth. The shots help protect your baby from diseases such as hepatitis, measles, mumps and chicken pox. Your doctor can answer any questions you may have. Without the shots, your baby can get sick and even die.

Some babies can get sick from the shots. Ask your doctor or nurse what signs to look for after your baby gets a shot so you will know if your baby needs medical care.

Keep a record or write down what happens at your baby's checkups. This record will help you and your doctor know about your baby's development and what is best for your baby. Be sure to ask your doctor any questions you have about your baby's health and growth.

What's It Like To Be a Newborn?

- I need others to take care of me.
- I can't decide things for myself.
- I need someone to love, feed, hold and play with me.
- I like to feel warm, and I don't like lots of noise.
- I like to be held very gently and very close.
- My face may be wrinkled, puffy or red, and I may have a large head, but I'm normal.
- I like to sleep a lot.
- I am hungry every few hours.
- I may be fussy and cry a lot.
- I need my diapers changed as soon as they are wet or soiled.

Changing Baby's Diaper

Get everything you need before changing your baby's diaper. Once you start changing, don't take your eyes off your baby even for a second. Babies wiggle and move. They can get hurt or fall in an instant.

To change your baby's diaper:

- It's best to wash your hands before changing your newborn's diaper. Be sure to wash your hands with soap and water after each diaper change, too.

- Lay your baby on a clean surface. Take along a blanket or changing pad when you go out.
- Remove the dirty diaper.
- Use a washcloth dipped in clean, lukewarm water. Wash all the area on your baby that the diaper covers. Wipe from front to back to avoid infection.
- Every time you change a diaper, clean your baby's umbilical cord. Use a cotton swab that you have dipped in rubbing alcohol. Squeeze it so that it is almost dry. Gently clean off the sticky stuff around the cord where it touches your baby's tummy. The cord will fall off by itself in five to 10 days. Your baby may cry when you touch the wet swab to the cord. Be gentle. Check with your doctor if your baby cries at other times when you touch the cord. Check with your doctor if the skin around the cord is red.
- Now put a clean diaper on your baby. If you are using pins, put your hand between the pin and your baby's skin. Do not let the diaper cover up the umbilical cord.

Newborns use about 10 diapers every day. Change them as soon as they are wet. This can prevent rashes. Have a place to put the soiled diapers and washcloths.

Keep a Memory Book

Start a memory book. It will be fun for you and your baby to look at as she is growing up. You can use a scrapbook, a notebook or any book with blank pages.

Save the front page of the newspaper from the day she was born. Your child can look at it when she is older and find out all the things that happened on that important day. Be sure to put in birth announcements, too.

Write down all the great "firsts" for your baby. Things like the first time she smiles, sits up, crawls, walks, talks or does anything else special.

Put in photos of your baby as she grows. When she gets older, you can put in drawings she makes and, later, things she writes. You can write down cute things she does and says, as well as things she learns and what she likes and doesn't like.

Write down dates and symptoms when your baby gets sick. Also write down monthly weights and heights, and when each tooth comes in. Keep track of your baby's shots as well.

The memory book is a good record of your child's early years. You and your child can enjoy it together as she grows up. Later on, the book will help her learn about her past.

Install Car Seats Carefully

Starting the day she is born, any time you take your baby anywhere in a car, put her in a car safety seat. This is best for your baby, and all states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Territories have child passenger safety laws.

Your baby will need different kinds of car safety seats as she grows. Right now, she should be in one that is made for a newborn baby. The safety seat should be placed in the back seat, facing the rear. Infants should never be placed in the front seat.

Make sure the car safety seat fits your car. If it doesn't, exchange it. Make sure it is fastened in the car securely. Make sure the straps that go around your baby fit her snugly.

Avoid used car seats since they may be damaged.

Make sure any safety seat you buy comes with directions on how to install it. Make sure you understand the directions.

If you cannot afford a safety seat, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration can provide information on resources that help low-income families purchase or borrow child car seats. You may call them at 1-800-424-9393 or visit their Web site at www.nhtsa.dot.gov/.

Wonders of the Brain

Your baby's brain started growing before birth. When she was born her brain was about one-fourth its adult size. Your baby's brain will grow at its fastest until she is about three years old.

How a baby's brain grows depends on many things. Some things are inherited from parents. Others depend on your baby's health, nutrition, experiences and relationships. The way your baby's brain develops depends, in part, on what you say and do with her.

Your baby's brain has many, many neurons or brain cells. The types of activities your baby has with objects and people stimulate these

neurons. This allows the neurons to make important connections in the brain. Everyday activities determine how these connections are formed. Activities like holding and playing with toys or listening to people talk are important.

This is why your child needs stimulation and play. She needs to know you love her. She needs to be able to explore and find things out. She needs you to talk to her and interact with her. These things will all help the part of brain development that depends on experience.

How should you provide these experiences for your baby? There isn't any one answer. We do know that babies develop better:

- When they hear language
 - When they have experiences with toys or objects
 - When they know that people love them and pay attention to them
- What's important is to find activities that you and your child enjoy doing together. When you do this, you are not just having fun with your baby. You are helping her brain grow.

Guide Your Baby Every Day

Babies learn by exploring the things around them. Show your baby how to look at, listen to, touch or smell something new or different. Hold your baby so she can see things. Help her hold objects like her socks or a rattle. As she grows, give her safe objects to feel, shake or put into her mouth.

- Be your baby's teacher. She will see how you react to things. When you get excited about a toy or object, she'll get excited too. As she grows, show her how things work—for example, how doors open and close. Talk about what you are doing. For example, "I am putting the food in the pot to cook it."
- When a baby is learning something new, it helps her to try it again and again. With your help and support this can be fun, and your baby will like trying new things.
- Protect your baby from harsh disapproval, teasing or punishment. A baby doesn't understand right from wrong. She doesn't know what things are dangerous for her to do. Watch her to keep her safe. Remove her from situations where she can be hurt or injured.
- Talk and sing to your baby. Even before she is able to speak, this helps her develop language skills. Babies learn best when you talk to them.

- Read to your baby from the earliest months of her life and continue this habit as she grows.

Babies Have People Skills, Too

From the start, your baby is interested in your face. She notices your expressions and tone of voice. She reacts to your emotions. For example, when you say something in a soft and loving way, she will relax and feel more secure.

Scientists have learned that babies show emotions as early as when they are one month old. Something else scientists have learned is that feeling good helps babies learn better.

Why? Happy babies are more alert, attentive and responsive. Babies remember things better when they are happy and at ease. The way you hold and talk to your baby can help her feel happy.

Babies who are alert and feeling good are more likely to look at things, explore and play. They will pay attention more. For example, they will try to make new things happen with toys or make sounds with people. This helps them learn and remember new things.

Brief periods of distress or difficulty will occur. These will not harm a child. Short periods of negative emotions can be helpful for your baby. You should do something quickly to help her feel better. From this she will learn you care about what she tries to tell you. Long periods of negative emotion, like crying, can do harm.

In the first month, the negative emotion that occurs is distress or a response to pain. Later, she will show sadness and anger. Next comes fear. All people have these emotions to protect themselves. Help your baby be at ease with having emotions. Respond to her emotions in a warm and loving way.

You can tell what your baby is feeling by changes in her facial expression. You can also see what she is feeling by her posture, movements and the sounds she makes.

Learning to Communicate

It will be months before your baby says her first word. But babies start learning about language much earlier.

Even in the first few weeks after birth, your baby is learning about language. Very young babies can tell the difference between speech and other sounds. They can tell the difference between the voices of men and the voices of women. They even know the voices of their own mothers. A baby can tell the voice of her mother from the voices of other women. Researchers think babies are able to do this because of the way specific parts of their brains work.

Babies can also communicate long before they speak. They use movements and sounds to let you know what they want or don't want. Some people refer to these as a baby's "signals".

Right now, your baby can tell you if she needs something by fussing or crying. She can also let you know when she likes something or someone by looking intently. Babies learn best how to tell parents what they like or don't like when they begin to see that parents respond to them in positive ways.

Even before she can speak, you need to talk to your baby. Even though there are differences among individuals, babies whose parents talk to them talk sooner. They also have larger vocabularies. Talking to babies gives them language skills that will help them learn more easily when they get to school. Hearing words on the radio or TV is not very helpful to babies learning language. Your baby benefits from having you up close smiling, talking and singing.

Babies Cry for Lots of Reasons

Crying is the way newborns communicate. Your new baby cries to let you know she needs or wants something.

The first thing to try when she cries is to feed her. By noticing when she wants to be fed and when she doesn't, you will learn which cries mean that she is hungry, uncomfortable or wants attention. Sometimes she will want to be held. Sometimes she wants a dry diaper. Sometimes she is tired or bored.

As you and your baby get to know each other, you will sometimes be able to tell the difference between each kind of crying. You can then try to give her what she needs.

Taking care of your baby when she cries will not spoil her. It will help your baby feel loved and secure.

Smile, touch and talk to your baby as often as possible. Do this when you feed her, change her diaper or give her a bath. Your baby will learn that she can rely on you to take care of her.

Ways to Soothe Your Baby

Sometimes babies cry even when they have been fed, have clean diapers and are healthy. If your baby is crying because she needs comfort, there are many things you can do. Every baby is different.

Here are things you can try to find out what calms your baby down.

- Rock your baby in your arms or while sitting in a rocking chair.
- Stroke your baby's head very gently, or lightly pat her back or chest.
- Make soft noises, such as cooing, to let your baby know you are there and you care. Talk to your baby.
- Softly sing to your baby or play soft music.
- Wrap her up in a baby blanket (but not too tightly).

If your baby keeps crying after you have tried everything, stay calm. Babies know when you are upset. No matter how stressed you are, never shake your baby. Shaking your baby can cause blindness, brain damage or even death. If you need a break, call a relative, neighbor or friend to help. All babies cry. You will not be able to comfort your baby every time. That does not mean you are a bad parent. Do the best you can to comfort your baby.

Here's a simple tip to help your baby cry less—carry her. Research shows that babies who are carried more often don't cry as much as other babies.

Preparing Your Baby's Bath

- Plan for your baby's bath. Get everything ready before you start the bath. This makes bathing your baby easier and safer.
- If you can, turn down your water heater to 120 degrees. Babies can get scalded easily. Fill the sink or tub you're going to bathe your baby in with warm water. Always test the water with your wrist or elbow. The water should be comfortably warm, not hot.
- Make sure you have everything you need for the bath. You can keep mild soap, cotton balls and a clean diaper in a shoebox or other container. Then you can bring the box in with the towel and washcloth to the room where you bathe your baby. When everything is ready, get your baby.

- If you forget an item, you will have to carry your baby with you. This is hard to do when the baby is wet and slippery.
- Never leave your baby alone in water. It's best not to answer the phone or the doorbell during your baby's bath. If you do, pick up your baby and carry her with you. If your spouse, relatives or friends call you often, let them know when your baby's bath time is. Tell them you won't take phone calls at that time.

Bathing Your Baby

Your baby needs sponge baths at first. Give your baby a sponge bath until her umbilical cord or his circumcision, if any, is healed. After that, your baby can have a tub bath.

Fill a bowl or basin with warm water: Use your wrist or elbow to check the water to make sure it is just the right temperature. Be sure the water is not too cold or too hot. Very hot water can be dangerous.

Take the bowl of warm water and a soft washcloth to the place where you are going to bathe your baby.

Pick a place for bathing that is warm and not drafty. You don't want your baby to get chilled. You can put your baby on a bath towel in her crib or any other flat surface. If you put your baby on a table, make sure she cannot roll off. Do not leave your baby alone, not even for a few seconds.

Take your baby's clothes off. Put the washcloth in the warm water and squeeze it out until it is just damp. Use the washcloth to gently wipe your baby all over. Wipe her head and neck, behind her ears, and between her fingers and toes.

Your newborn does not need to have a bath every day. Just clean her face, neck and diaper area whenever they are dirty.

Be Gentle When Bathing Your Baby

- You can use your bathtub, kitchen sink or a plastic baby tub. Use something to line the tub to keep your baby from slipping. If you use a foam liner for a tub, it needs to be dried out after each use. This prevents the growth of germs. Or you can line the tub with a bath towel. Be sure to wash and dry it after each use.

- Use a clean, damp washcloth, without soap, to wash her face. Gently wash the outside and back of each ear and wash and dry under her neck.
- Don't use bubble bath or detergents in the bathwater since these may cause rashes.
- Use damp cotton balls or cotton pads to gently wipe your baby's eyes before you put her in the tub. Be sure to support your baby's head when she is in the tub.
- Wash your baby's hair and scalp very gently, using soap or a baby shampoo. Do this only once or twice a week. Rinse with a damp cloth. Make sure that soapsuds don't get into her eyes. Wash her body, starting with the chest. After washing with a soapy washcloth, rinse the washcloth and rinse her off. Pat your baby dry with a bath towel. Always keep her covered and warm when she is wet.

Information Resources for Families

Families who are enrolled in the WIC program (Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children) can get information on breastfeeding and nutrition at the local WIC office. Families eligible for WIC receive nutrition counseling and supplemental foods such as milk and cereal. To find the WIC office nearest you, call your state health department or visit the WIC Web site at www.fns.usda.gov/wic/.

For information about early childhood education initiatives, you may contact the U.S. Department of Education at 1-800-USA-LEARN or visit the Web site at www.ed.gov/offices/OESE/teachingouryoungest/.

To learn about child care options, you may contact the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Child Care Aware by phone at 1-800-424-2246 or visit their Web site at www.childcareaware.org/.

For more information and resources on postpartum depression, breastfeeding, and many other women's health issues call The National Women's Health Information Center (NWHIC) at 1-800-994-9662 (1-800-994-WOMAN).

Chapter 2-Your One Month Old

You and Your Baby

During the first month of your baby's life, you and your baby spend a lot of time getting to know each other. Your baby will spend most of his time sleeping. You will spend most of your time learning the best way to meet your baby's needs. Sometimes, you may feel tired and nervous. These feelings are a signal that you need to take care of yourself. Here are some ways to do it:

- Make sure you get enough sleep. Take a nap when your baby does. If you can't, try to spend some time relaxing.
- Keep your home as quiet and calm as possible. Turn off your radio and TV. This will help calm your baby.
- Simplify housework. Just do the basics. Older children can help dust, pick up toys, sweep the floor and wash dishes. Dad or other family members can help, too.
- Be sure to eat nutritious food. If you are breastfeeding, avoid alcohol and limit caffeine. Avoid drinking more than two to three cups of coffee a day.
- Simplify your meals. Nutritious salads, soups and sandwiches are quick and easy to prepare.
- Make some time for yourself. Take a hot bath to relax or do some reading. You can look forward to taking a break when you are stressed.
- Enjoy spending time with your baby. You can put your baby in a sling, backpack or stroller and take a walk through a mall or a park. Be sure that your baby is safely secured in these devices. Never leave your baby unattended in a stroller.
- Do something you enjoy. If you breastfeed, you can read while nursing your baby.
- Call a relative or friend if you have questions or when you are feeling stressed. Talking to someone who has had similar experiences and feelings can help you.

One-Month Checkup

Soon after you come home from the hospital, you should call to set up a checkup for your baby. This checkup may take place any time from two to four weeks after your baby is born. If your baby doesn't seem to be doing well before your first appointment, don't wait. Call the doctor or the clinic.

The checkup is a good time for you to ask questions. Before the visit, it is a good idea to write down questions and bring them with you.

You can ask the doctor what to have in the house in case of small accidents or mild illness. Ask what to do if something serious happens. Ask your doctor about what to do if your baby chokes or stops breathing. Knowing this can help you save your baby if he gets into difficulty.

Always keep your doctor's phone number where you can find it. This number should be on a list of emergency phone numbers that you can find quickly.

The American Association of Poison Control Centers' (AAPCC) poison control hotline, 1-800-222-1222, should also be on your list. If your baby has eaten a harmful substance, call and get help. Be prepared to tell about your baby's symptoms and what has been eaten. To learn more, you can visit the AAPCC Web site at www.aapcc.org/.

The one-month checkup helps the doctor see changes in your baby. The doctor can find problems your baby is having. Finding problems now can help prevent more serious problems as your baby grows.

In the first year, your baby will have a number of checkups. At most of them, he will receive shots. Be sure to ask the doctor what reaction your baby might have from the shots.

Your baby may need more testing or he may need to be treated if your doctor finds signs of a possible problem. Your doctor may refer you to another doctor. If so, get a copy of your baby's medical records to take with you. Or ask your doctor to make sure the other doctor will get a copy of them. Be sure you understand why your doctor is recommending more tests or sending your child to another doctor. Write down the doctor's description of the possible problem in words you understand and also have him write out the exact words in "doctor's language" so you can communicate with the next doctor you see.

Your doctor will talk to you about what to expect with your child. The doctor will tell you when your baby needs to come in again.

What happens at the checkup?

- Your doctor will ask you questions. The questions will be about how things are with you and the baby.
- The doctor will ask about your baby's eating habits. He will also ask how often your baby has a wet or dirty diaper.
- The doctor will ask about your baby's sleeping habits.
- The doctor will ask about your baby's behavior and development.
- Your doctor will give your baby a physical exam.
- Your baby's clothes will be taken off.
- He will be weighed. Your baby's length and head size will be measured.
- Your baby's vision and hearing will be tested.
- Your baby's blood will also be tested.

One-Month Checkup: Where To Go

Try to find a doctor you like and trust. It helps if your baby sees the same doctor or nurse every time. That makes it easier to keep track of your baby's needs.

If you don't know where to take your baby for care, call your local health department. The phone number is in the "government" listings of the phone book. You can also ask a local hospital.

Ask a close friend or relative who has children whom she takes her children to for health care. Ask if she really likes her children's doctor and if the doctor is good at taking time to explain things and answer questions.

If you are eligible for Medicaid, your baby can get free checkups. You can call your local social welfare, health or family services office to see if you qualify for Medicaid services.

If you don't have health insurance for your baby, you can learn about resources in your state by calling the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Insure Kids Now program at 1-877-KIDSNOW. You can also visit their Web site at www.insurekidsnow.gov for more information about free or low-cost health insurance for children. Many public libraries offer free access to the Internet and provide help for first-time users.

One way to notice changes in your baby's health is to keep a record. You can keep a health notebook. Write down your baby's length and weight as he grows. Write down things like your baby's schedule for shots and checkups. Write down dates of illnesses, and describe the symptoms. Ask for a copy of your child's shot record. You will need to

have this shot record when your child starts day care, Head Start or school.

The Wonders of the Brain

Your baby is flexible in how he grows and learns. His brain is growing and changing, also. The things your baby sees, hears and does help him to learn and to get interested in the people and things around him.

Your baby's brain has come into the world ready to absorb all sorts of good things. Your baby is learning to be a person. You are learning to be his parent. Learning to pay attention and to respond to each other will help you both.

Since birth, your baby has been taking in information. He learns from what he sees, hears, smells and touches. After babies see or hear something many times, they can remember whether they have seen or heard it before. This is the way they learn.

Your baby's brain grows and changes in important ways every day. The experiences your baby has are important for these changes. Some parts of the brain are most important for learning. Some parts are important for remembering new things. These parts will continue to grow and change as your baby learns new things.

We know that responding to your baby in a loving and attentive way helps him learn. Talk to your baby. Provide him with a variety of experiences that help him explore his world safely.

Feeding Your Baby

Your breast milk is the perfect food for your baby. Breastfeeding is natural. It can be easier than formula feeding. Breast milk helps protect your baby from sickness. Breastfeeding helps your body get back to normal after pregnancy. It may help you lose weight.

Your baby will let you know when he is ready to nurse. He will put his hands toward his mouth. He will make sucking sounds, whimper and bend and unbend his arms and hands. He will move his fist to his mouth. He will nuzzle against your breast. If he doesn't start feeding soon after doing these things, he will start crying. Use these signs instead of a clock to set his feeding times. Feed him before he starts crying. Feed him every two to three hours. It's a good idea to switch breasts in the middle of a feeding.

Your baby will let you know when it is time to stop feeding. He will relax. He will stop sucking the breast. He will refuse to take the breast if you offer it again. Your baby should make soft swallowing sounds while feeding.

Your breast should feel softer after the feeding. Milk may leak from the other breast while feeding.

Women who breastfeed should eat nutritious foods. They should drink lots of water. They should relax during breastfeeding.

You will know your baby is getting plenty to eat if he has at least seven to 10 very wet diapers a day (using regular absorbency diapers). You can expect your baby to have two to three bowel movements every day.

You can breastfeed your baby after you return to work or school. You can breastfeed your baby even if he is in a day-care center. You can breastfeed right before leaving your baby at day care. You can breastfeed right after picking up your baby. If your day care is nearby, you can breastfeed your baby during your lunch break.

You can learn how to pump your milk and store it in a bottle. Your milk is good for about 48 hours in the refrigerator. It lasts two to three months in the freezer. You can leave the bottles with the day-care center to feed your baby when you can't be there.

To learn more about breastfeeding, you may want to contact your local health department, WIC clinic, hospital, La Leche League or doctor. You can call La Leche League at 1-800-LALECHE or visit their Web site at www.lalecheleague.org/.

If you use infant formula to feed your baby, be sure to follow directions for mixing. He will take two to three ounces of formula every couple of hours. As he grows, he will take more at each feeding. He will also go longer between feedings.

Spitting Up

For infants, spitting up is a normal part of life. Many babies spit up a lot. Most likely this happens because of the way a baby develops.

The muscle that closes the feeding tube from the baby's mouth to his stomach is still developing in infants. It may be weak. As a result, even

a tiny burp can cause small amounts of stomach contents to come back up.

If your baby is usually happy and gaining weight, you should not be concerned about his spitting up.

You should see your doctor if your baby:

- is vomiting
- has diarrhea
- has trouble breathing
- has lost weight
- has a loss of appetite

Nearly half of all healthy infants under one year of age spit up two or more times a day.

Talking to Your Baby

Talking and cooing with your baby is one of the best parts of being a new parent. Talking and playing are fun for you and your baby. But it is more than fun. It also helps your baby to learn.

In playing with your baby, it is important that you gently interact with him in a back and forth manner. Smile at your baby and wait for him to focus on your face and smile back. When he smiles, you should smile even wider yourself and nod your head. Let him know you are happy that he smiled back at your smile.

Do this with cooing and babbling too. If your child babbles or coos at you, smile and gently coo back. If he answers you with another coo or babble, answer him back. Do this repeatedly. This is how babies learn to get along with other people and how they learn to have confidence that you are interested in them. When you talk and your baby coos back to you, important things happen. Your baby learns how to talk by hearing your words and trying to make the same sounds.

Your baby learns fast. As you talk softly to your baby and he “talks” back, you begin to know his sounds. When you mimic his sounds, you encourage your baby to try to make more sounds.

Talk with your baby as much as you can. He will learn to know his parents’ voices. This makes the bond between you and your baby stronger.

From the day he is born, your baby is learning. When you talk with your baby, you are helping his brain develop.

- Reading to your baby helps him learn. Reading to him starting in infancy will help him do better in school as he grows older.
- Read aloud to your baby for a few minutes at a time. He will be able to pay attention for only a few minutes at first. Babies like to have things repeated over and over.
- Read, say or sing nursery rhymes to your baby. This will help him learn, too.

Finding Child Care for Your Baby

Sometimes you must find child care even for young babies. This happens most often when the parents work outside the home. You may have many choices when it comes to choosing child care for your baby. You may have a neighbor or relative who can take care of him. Or, you may decide to use a day-care center or family home.

It's a good idea to visit several centers or homes before choosing one. Watch how the staff teaches the children. Watch how the children are cared for. If a neighbor or relative cares for your baby, make sure he or she likes your baby. Make sure he or she knows how important it is to keep your baby safe.

Tips on choosing day care

- Always ask to see the center's or home's license. To get a license, a center must follow certain rules. Homes also must follow rules to be licensed. The rules cover cleanliness and safety. The rules tell centers and homes to have enough staff to care for the children.
- The center or home should welcome visits by parents at any time. The center or home should be clean and should look nice. The staff should spend time talking and playing with the children. The staff should be gentle but have control over the children.
- After you choose a center or home, be sure to follow the rules set by the center or home. Make sure you pick up your baby on time. Give the center or home your baby's shot record. Tell the staff about any special needs, such as allergies, that your baby has. If you are breastfeeding, let the staff know that you will come in for feedings or you will provide your breast milk in bottles. The staff should call you right away if your baby seems sick or has a minor accident.

Your baby may be upset at first about staying in a strange place. This is normal. You and the staff can work together to help your baby get used to being in child care. After your baby has settled into a routine, he should become relaxed about going to child care.

Day-care providers to avoid:

- Avoid centers or homes that don't want parents dropping by without notice.
- Avoid centers or homes where you see children left alone.
- Avoid centers or homes where children seem bored or unhappy.
- Avoid centers or homes where staff yell at the children a lot.
- Avoid centers or homes that are dirty or unsafe.

If your friends or relatives care for your baby, go over carefully with them how to make things safe for your baby, especially as he gets older. As a mother, you know to never leave your baby alone, to put him in a safe crib to sleep, to secure him in a stroller and to never shake him. However, sometimes even people who love you and your baby may not know these things. Be sure that they understand how to keep your baby safe and comfortable.

To learn more about child-care options, you can contact the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Child Care Aware by phone at 1-800-424-2246 or visit their Web site at www.childcareaware.org/.

What's It Like To Be One Month Old?

At one month old:

- I like to look at black and white colors and patterns more than at other colors.
- I roll part of the way from my back to my side.
- I keep my hands or fingers slightly open most of the time.
- Sometimes I root around and try to suck, even when I'm not feeding.
- I make some throaty or gurgling sounds.
- I need you to protect the soft spot on the top of my head.
- I cry when I am hungry, wet or tired, or when I want to be held.
- I may smile at you when I see you or hear you.
- I make eye contact with you.
- Loud noises, bright lights or rough handling scare me.
- I'm often fussy in the evenings.
- I turn my head sideways when I'm on my stomach.
- My head wobbles if you don't hold it. I need you to put your hand behind my head and neck.

- I have learned that I will be fed when I am hungry.

Keeping Your Baby's Records

It's important to keep a record of your baby's growth. The record should be written down. It should include medical checkups.

Your baby's length and weight will be measured when he visits the doctor or clinic. The doctor will make notes about your baby's shots. He will also make notes about any illness that your baby has had. You will want to keep records on these things, too. These records help you and your doctor see how your baby is growing.

You can make your own notebook to write down your baby's health record. Some clinics and parenting classes also have booklets you can use. Your local health department may have booklets, too. Write down what happens when your baby goes to the doctor. Also write down what you do for your baby when he is sick at home.

Your doctor keeps good records on your baby's health and shots. You should, too. The records help you and your doctor care for your baby. The doctor needs to know when your baby has been sick. And the doctor needs to know how fast your baby is growing. This information helps the doctor know what kind of medicines (if any) to give your baby. It also helps the doctor know what kind of food your baby needs.

Guidelines To Help Your Baby Every Day

Encourage exploration. Your baby learns about the world by looking at people and objects and touching them. He learns by moving around. Help him learn in familiar places and in new places. Show him how you look at, listen to, touch, smell or handle things.

Be your baby's teacher. In the early years, a lot of important learning happens when you play and talk with your baby. Babies learn from what they see and hear their parents do. They learn by trying to do things with their parents' help.

Communicate. Talk and sing to your baby. He has been learning about language since birth, and this helps him. When he smiles, smile back. A smile is communication, too!

Make sure your baby is safe. Stay in the room with him while he is awake, so you can watch him. It helps to set the room up in a way

that lets your baby be comfortable. You should be able to reach him easily. He should be able to move about without hurting himself.

Do things over and over again with your baby. Babies learn by playing the same games or listening to the same books many times. Your baby learns what it means to reach, make sounds or smile when you give him lots of chances to do these things. Be sure to find times to play and talk to your baby when he is rested and alert.

Protect your baby from disapproval, teasing or punishment. Babies depend on their parents to help them learn how to behave. Never let anyone punish your baby. Never let anyone treat your baby harshly. Never let anyone tease him in a rough or uncaring way.

Celebrate with your child. Get excited about the new things your baby does and the sounds he makes. Get excited about little and big things. Make a big deal about the things your baby does. When you do this, he learns that what he does matters and is noticed. This can be as simple as smiling back at your one-month-old when he smiles, or clapping your hands in praise.

Sleeping Patterns

A one-month-old baby may sleep two to three hours between feedings. Sometimes babies this age will sleep as many as five hours at a time at night.

Some babies begin sleeping through the night at a few months of age. Others don't sleep through the night until they are one or two years old or even older. Sometimes babies will sleep through the night for a while and then start waking up again. You can usually let your baby set his own schedule. If he is waking up too much, ask your doctor for advice.

Some babies want to sleep more in the daytime and as a result they wake more often at night. One thing parents can do to change this is to keep the baby awake during the day. Talk to him. Read to him. Play with him gently. Let him grasp your fingers or a toy. Keeping him awake more during the day may help him sleep longer at night.

As babies get older, they usually sleep longer at night. They stay up more during the day. As he grows, you will see changes in your baby's sleep habits.

You want to keep your baby safe when he sleeps. Research shows that babies who sleep on their backs are less likely to die from Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) or crib death. If your baby has a health problem, your doctor may tell you to put him in another position. Otherwise, always put your baby to sleep on his back.

Bowel Habits

You will see changes in your baby's bowel and bladder habits.

Your baby should have seven to 10 wet diapers a day (regular absorbency). This means that he is getting enough fluids.

Many babies may change their bowel habits. They may change from having several bowel movements a day to having fewer than one a day.

Your baby is not constipated if the stool is soft and passes easily.

Baby Powder

Talk with your doctor or nurse about using baby powder on your baby's skin. Baby powder makes your baby smell nice. But your baby may not need baby powder to stay dry.

If you use baby powder, be sure to check the date on the container to make sure it is fresh. Throw away old containers of baby powder you have around the house. Be sure the powder you are using on your baby does not contain harmful things (zinc stearate or asbestos) that used to be put in baby powder.

Don't shake the powder directly on your baby. Shake the powder into your hand and gently pat your baby's skin. Be sure to shake the powder on your hands away from your baby's face. You don't want the baby powder to fill the air around your baby's head. He could breathe the powder in, and he could choke. Or the powder could get into his eyes.

Keep the powder container away from your baby. Don't let him play with it while you change his diaper. Ask your doctor if you have any questions.

Your Baby Has "People Skills"

Your baby is already beginning to show you how he feels. This means that he has ways to tell you when he's happy, sad, excited or even angry. Babies are tuned in to what people do and say to them. So it is important to pay attention to their feelings.

Your baby has been learning how to show you what he feels since he was born. The way you respond to his feelings helps his emotional growth. It also helps him learn to trust and enjoy you and the other people who care for him.

Your baby has been watching your face closely. He is learning to read the look on your face. And he is learning to respond to the look on your face. He is learning also to notice small changes in your voice. By reading and responding to these cues in others, he is learning to care about other people and their feelings.

Your baby has a personality at birth. Research shows some ways to help him develop his emotional and social skills. You can do this by tuning in to your child's behavior. Take an interest in the things that interest him. Try to figure out what your baby is trying to tell you when he laughs, cries or shakes his arms and legs in excitement. It helps your child when you are happy and interested in life, too.

Your baby's ability to think and learn is closely tied to how he is feeling. When he is alert and feeling good, he is more likely to observe, explore and play. He is more likely to learn and remember new things when people pay attention to what he likes. You can help your baby when you show him your love.

Your Baby "Talks" Without Words

The word "infant" comes from Latin. It means "unable to talk." But as you may have noticed, even though your baby cannot talk, he has begun to communicate with you.

- Perhaps you have noticed that when you smile, your baby smiles back. This shows that he likes to have you pay attention to him in this way. It shows that he can pick up on your happy feelings. He is learning to react to people and to communicate what he likes and doesn't like.
- At the same time, he is learning to take turns. Taking turns is an important part of how people communicate with one another.

- Your baby can also express his feelings of discomfort or distress. Pay attention to him when he is fussy. This will teach him that he can communicate to get his needs met.
- Talk to your baby long before he can talk or know the meanings of words. Babies whose parents talk to them learn to talk at an earlier age. They also learn more words. This is true even though different babies learn to understand and say words in different ways.
- Speak more slowly to your baby than you would to an adult. Say some words more softly and others in an excited way. Use a slightly higher pitch. Babies like it when people talk to them this way. It gets your baby's attention because he knows you are talking just to him.
- When you talk to your baby, use just a few words or short sentences that you say over and over again. Babies like to hear people call their names. Babies like to hear people say things that make them smile and laugh. Your baby will enjoy listening to you. Later on, he will enjoy talking to you.

Low-Cost Ways To Pamper Yourself

You have a baby, and that's a big responsibility. But you need to take time for yourself, too. You need to do some things that make you feel good. In turn, this will let you have more fun with your baby.

Here are a few suggestions:

- Have your baby's dad, a friend or a relative watch the baby while you nap.
- Take time for a warm, relaxing bath when your baby is asleep.
- Ask your husband or a friend to give you a shoulder massage when you feel tense.
- Exercise (with your doctor's OK). Exercise can make you feel less tired and better all over.
- Rent a movie you'll enjoy. You can watch it while you nurse your baby.
- Don't answer the phone if you are too tired to talk. If it is important (or sometimes even if it isn't), the person will call back. Or you can install an answering machine.

Doing a few things you enjoy isn't selfish. It is a good way to take care of yourself and your baby.

Teenage Parents Are Not Alone

If you are a teenager, and you just had a baby, you may feel like you're alone. Does anyone understand or care what you are going

through? Yes! There are many people and places to go to for help. Here are some places to contact:

- Your local health department can tell you if you are eligible for health programs. Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) is one. Families who are enrolled in the WIC program can get information on breastfeeding and nutrition at the local WIC office. Families eligible for WIC receive nutrition counseling and supplemental foods such as baby formula, milk and cereal. If you have access to a computer, you may be able to get on the Internet. Schools and public libraries often have computers that you can use. You can visit the WIC Web site at www.fns.usda.gov/wic/.
- Local churches, synagogues and mosques may be able to help. Sometimes they can help even if you are not a member.
- Parents Anonymous has groups for teen parents who are upset by their babies. You can call 1-909-621-6184 to find out about groups in your area. You can visit the Parents Anonymous Web site at www.parentsanonymous.org/.
- Your school counselor and school nurse can help you in many ways. They can help you find ways to finish school while you take care of your baby. Your school may also have classes on how to be a good parent. Your school counselor can help you find programs for teen parents in your town.

Information Resources for Families

Families who are enrolled in the WIC program (Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children) can get information on breastfeeding, bottle feeding and nutrition at their local WIC office. Families eligible for WIC receive nutrition counseling and supplemental foods such as baby formula, milk and cereal. To find the WIC office nearest you, call your state health department or visit the WIC Web site at www.fns.usda.gov/wic/. Many public libraries offer free access to the Internet and provide help for first-time users.

For information about early childhood education initiatives, you may contact the U.S. Department of Education at 1-800-USA-LEARN or visit the Web site at www.ed.gov/offices/OESE/teachingouryoungest/.

To learn about child-care options, you may contact the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Child Care Aware by phone at 1-800-424-2246 or visit their Web site at www.childcareaware.org/.

For more information and resources on postpartum depression, breastfeeding and many other women's health issues call The National Women's Health Information Center (NWHIC) at 1-800-994-9662 (1-800-994-WOMAN). You can visit their Web site at www.4woman.org/.

To learn more about breastfeeding, you may call La Leche League at 1-800-LALECHE or visit their Web site at www.lalecheleague.org/.

To learn more about free or low-cost health insurance for children, you can call the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Insure Kids Now program at 1-877-KIDSNOW. You can also visit their Web site at www.insurekidsnow.gov/.

The American Association of Poison Control Centers' (AAPCC) poison control hotline, 1-800-222-1222, should be on your list of emergency numbers. To learn more, you can visit the AAPCC Web site at www.aapcc.org/.

Families who cannot afford a car safety seat can contact the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. They can provide information on resources that help low-income families purchase or borrow child car seats. You may call them at 1-800-424-9393 or visit their Web site at www.nhtsa.dot.gov/.

Chapter 3 -Your Two-Month-Old

Watching Your Baby Grow

At two months of age, your baby will begin to notice and reach out to the world around her. She can see better now. She can watch a person or object moving directly in front of her. She is more alert and can respond to you more. The world around her is more interesting to her.

Your baby is gaining more strength in her neck and shoulders. This allows her to hold her head up better and to see more.

Your baby also may begin to make some new sounds. She may start cooing and making sounds like "ah-ah-ah" and "ooh, ooh, ooh." And she may make squeaking and gurgling noises.

Your baby will try to bring her hands to her mouth. She will do this often. When her fingers reach her mouth, she will not be good at keeping them there. She will get better at this as she gets older. She can also tightly hold a toy, such as a rattle, when you put it in her hand. But she will have trouble letting it go.

Her movements are no longer jerky but grow smoother day by day. She may be awake more during the day. If she is an active baby, she may be moving all the time when she is awake.

A Healthy Baby

Your baby needs to see the doctor on a regular basis. These visits are important for her health and development. They are also opportunities to learn more about your baby.

Your doctor can discuss with you whether your baby:

- Is eating well
- Is growing normally
- Is developing social, learning and physical skills properly

While you are at the doctor's office, you can ask questions about taking care of your baby. You can also talk about any problems you may have being a parent.

During the visit, your doctor will:

- Do a physical exam
- Check her growth and development
- Check her ability to move
- Give her shots to help protect her against a number of diseases
- Do a hearing and eye exam
- Check her height, weight and head size
- Check what she is eating
- Treat any medical problems

At your baby's two-month checkup, she will be given shots to protect her against illnesses. Ask the doctor or nurse to tell you what kinds of reactions your baby may have to the shots. Also, find out what to do about those reactions. It is a good idea to keep a record of all your baby's shots.

Find a doctor you like and feel comfortable with. Going to the same doctor each time is a good idea, if you can. Using the same doctor makes it easier to keep track of your baby's health and growth.

If your baby is eligible for Medicaid, she can get free checkups. You can call your local social welfare, health or family services office to see if you qualify for Medicaid services.

If you don't have health insurance for your baby, you can learn about resources in your state by contacting the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Insure Kids Now Program at 1-877-KIDSNOW. You can also visit their Web site at www.insurekidsnow.gov for more information about free or low-cost health insurance for children. Many public libraries offer free access to the Internet and provide help for first-time users.

When To Call the Doctor

At your child's first checkup, ask your doctor what he or she considers a fever in a baby who is your baby's age and at what temperature you should call him or her. Also, go over with your doctor what problems you should call about immediately.

When your baby is sick, use a thermometer to check for fever. Place the thermometer under her armpit for four minutes and gently cuddle her while you hold her arm to her side. Always call the doctor when a baby who is three months old or younger has a fever. Your doctor will tell you what to do to help your baby.

When your baby is sick, be sure to pick her up and comfort her. Call your doctor right away if your baby has any of these symptoms:

- A stiff neck, or if she can't move her head to any position
- A wheezing or crackling noise when she breathes
- Pulling on her ears as if they are painful
- A severe cough or red throat
- A fever of any kind

Sleeping Patterns

Two-month-old babies usually sleep better at night. By now, your baby most likely has a routine for sleeping and eating. Probably she goes at least three hours without a feeding. A baby this age usually sleeps longer than a newborn at night, but each baby is different.

After you feed your baby, hold her and rock her for a while. You can put her to bed at night when she is quiet, even if she is not asleep. You can sit down beside her and pat her gently or sing softly. Doing this will help an active baby learn to calm herself down. She may want to suck a pacifier or her thumb or finger as she gets sleepy.

Every baby will have her own pattern. Every baby will have different things she likes to help her to go to sleep.

Bowel Habits

Baby's bowel habits may change. Many breastfed babies may change their bowel habits. They may go from having several bowel movements per day to having fewer than one a day. This may have happened earlier, or it may start happening now. This is because breast milk is easy to digest. As long as the bowel movement is soft, the baby is not constipated.

The bowel habits of a formula fed baby are similar to the breastfed baby. Like a breastfed baby, a formula fed baby will start out with several bowel movements each day. This number will decline to about

one a day. Your baby may have wet diapers often. This means she is drinking the right amount.

Feeding Your Baby

Breastfeeding is healthy for you and your baby. Here are some reasons why breastfeeding is best:

- Breast milk can help protect your baby against illness. It can protect her from allergies. The American Academy of Pediatrics says it's good for babies to be breastfed for the first year of life.
- It's best for mom. Many breastfeeding mothers lose the weight they gained while pregnant faster than mothers who do not breastfeed.
- It creates a bond between mother and baby. You can learn your baby's signals faster.
- Breast milk is easier to digest than formula and you don't have to prepare bottles or formula. Breast milk is always ready. Babies do not become constipated from breast milk.

Each baby has her own feeding schedule. Some babies need to nurse more often than others do. In general, nursing babies need to be fed at least eight to 12 times in a 24-hour period. That means feedings every two to three hours. If your baby has not fed for several hours and then dozes off after only a few minutes of nursing, gently wake her to encourage her to continue nursing. Try to help your baby feed until your breasts are emptied of milk or at least 15 minutes from each breast.

If you have any questions or problems with breastfeeding, talk to your doctor, nurse or WIC breastfeeding counselor. To learn more about breastfeeding, you may call La Leche League at 1-800-LALECHE or visit their Web site at www.lalecheleague.org/.

Follow your baby's lead. Babies tend to get as much milk as they need when you let them nurse when they want and for as long as they want. The more your baby nurses, the more milk you will produce. Your milk supply will keep up with your baby's demand.

How do you know when your baby is hungry? Here are some hunger signs to be aware of:

Early hunger signs:

- Head moves toward voice, mouth opens
- Lips smack, tongue reaches outward
- Hands move "randomly"
- Fists find mouth
- Infant begins fussing

Late hunger signs:

- Brow furrows
- Mouth widens, head moves quickly from side to side
- Fists clench, seeking the mouth
- Baby cries

Formula Feeding

How you feed your baby is up to you. Breastfeeding is best for you and your baby. But there may be reasons why you will need to feed your baby infant formula.

Remember always to hold your baby while bottle feeding. Never put the bottle in your baby's mouth and leave her.

Here are the three basic types of formula:

- Powdered formulas that are mixed with water
- Liquid concentrates that are mixed with water
- Pre-mixed formulas ready to put in the bottle or already in ready-to-feed bottles

When you mix powdered formulas or liquid concentrate formulas, follow the package directions exactly and add just the right amount of clean water. Be sure not to add too much or too little water. If the formula is premixed and ready-to-feed, do not add any water.

Talk to your doctor about the best formula for your baby.

Protect Your Baby's Future Teeth

Even when your baby is only two months old, you should keep her gums healthy and clean. Gently wipe her gums with a wet, clean, soft

cloth every day. The most important thing to remember is never to put your baby to bed with a bottle. And never prop up the bottle at any time.

Any kind of drink except water can cause a baby's teeth to decay, even breast milk and infant formula. Other liquids that cause tooth decay are powdered fruit drinks, soda and juice. Any drink that contains sugar can cause tooth decay when your baby gets older. A two-month-old baby should drink only breast milk, formula or water.

Here are some tips to follow to protect your baby's teeth:

- Always hold your baby during feedings. Do not prop up the bottle or leave a bottle in your baby's bed.
- If your baby needs a pacifier at bedtime, make sure it is clean and dry. Do not dip the pacifier in honey or sweet liquids. Your baby might like the sweet taste, but these liquids will cause tooth decay when her teeth come in. Germs in honey can also make a baby sick.
- Help prevent the spread of germs to your baby. You and your family should have regular dental checkups to help keep your own teeth and gums healthy. Clean the nipples of your baby's pacifiers and bottles by washing with soap and rinsing carefully and thoroughly with clean water. Do not lick your baby's pacifier or bottle nipples to "clean" them.

What's It Like To Be Two Months Old?

- My head is a little wobbly when I am propped up. Put your hand behind my neck and head for support.
- I can hold my head up for a few seconds when I'm on my stomach.
- I hold onto things for a little while.
- I move my arms and legs. I "bicycle" with my feet when I get excited.
- I gurgle, laugh and smile when I am happy.
- I cry when I am hungry, scared or uncomfortable.
- I am aware of different voices and people.
- I stay awake during the day. But I usually take naps throughout the day.
- I make cooing sounds.
- I begin to stare at my hands.
- I follow you with my eyes to watch you move around.
- I stare at people and at things.

- I smile at other people, not just at my mother.
- I quiet down when I suck my fingers, a bottle or a pacifier.

Baby Movements

At two months of age, your baby has more control of her body. When she was younger, she may have looked uncoordinated when she waved her arms and legs. Now she can move her arms and legs more smoothly.

She can't reach yet, but if you touch her hand with a toy, her hand will move toward the toy.

Her hands are above her head when she plays. She can twist her body and head from side to side. She can put her hand in her mouth for sucking.

Some babies may make crawling movements with their knees when lying on their tummies.

You will see changes in how your baby uses her eyes, ears and hands. Here are things to look for in your two-month-old:

- She watches her hands more.
- She can watch an object several feet away. She especially likes to watch moving objects or people.
- She reacts to sounds by looking toward the sound.
- When she hears a sound, she may stop moving until she decides where it is from.
- Since her hands are open more often, she can touch more objects. She is learning the difference between hard and soft. She likes it when something soft is placed in her fingers.

Baby Games

It is very important to talk to your baby. You may wonder how much of what you say is understood by your baby. But don't worry. When you talk, your baby is listening. When you talk to babies, use simple words and phrases. You should speak clearly. You can get your baby's attention by widening your eyes and mouth. You can also change the

pitch and tone of your voice. These are your baby's first lessons in communication.

Here are some tips for talking to your baby:

- Look at your baby's eyes while you are talking to her.
- Call your baby by her name.
- Keep your talk simple. Say "pretty baby." Use the words "mommy" and "daddy" when you talk to her.
- Watch for your baby's expressions and listen to her sounds. Make these same sounds and facial expressions back to her.
- Add gestures to your talk. Say "wave bye-bye to the dog" as you wave to the dog.
- Ask your baby questions. "Would Maria like to have her milk now?" "Does Maria want to go outside?" Ask the questions even though she can't answer.
- Talk about what you are doing. As you dress, bathe and change your baby, talk about what you're doing.
- Read to your baby. Babies love nursery rhymes and poems. You can even use a lively voice and read your favorite magazine or book to her. If you can, use books with stories that include a baby, a rattle or other common things. (You can find lots of children's books at your public library.)
- Sing to your baby. It is important while she begins to learn language skills.
- Watch for signals from your baby when you are talking to her. If she is smiling and keeping eye contact, she is saying she wants you to keep on talking.

What To Do When Your Baby Cries

Your baby has an important way of telling you she needs something—crying. Crying can mean many things. Here are a few of the things your baby may be trying to tell you with her crying:

- I am hungry.
- I hurt (gas, colic).
- I don't feel well.
- My diaper needs to be changed.
- I'm afraid.
- I want to be held.
- I'm bored.
- I'm tired.
- I'm lonely.

Hearing your baby cry can be hard on you. It is natural for parents to want to soothe their baby. Here are several ways of meeting your baby's needs:

- Hold your baby.
- Rock your baby.
- Walk your baby.
- Feed your baby.
- Burp your baby.
- Check her diaper.
- Pat your baby while she lies on her back.
- Put your baby where she can see activity.
- Talk to your baby.
- Give your baby a pacifier.

Babies should not be left to cry alone. It was once believed that picking up a crying baby would spoil her. We now know that babies cry less if their needs are met. They learn to trust that adults will take care of them. At this early age, one of the best ways to comfort her is to pick her up and hold her.

When an infant's crying increases for unexplained reasons over a long period of time and nothing you do to soothe her seems to help, consider calling your doctor. Call your doctor if you think pain or illness may be causing the crying.

Keeping Your Baby Safe

Here are some ways to keep your baby safe:

- Never shake your baby, either in anger or in play. Shaking a baby can cause brain injury or death.
- If you smoke, quit! If you can't quit, smoke outside, away from the baby. Second-hand smoke can cause a number of childhood illnesses

or make them worse. These include asthma, ear infections and sinus infections.

- Put your baby to sleep on her back. If your baby has a health problem, your doctor may tell you to put her in another position. Otherwise, always put your baby to sleep on her back. Make sure her crib has a firm, flat mattress.
- Make sure your baby's crib is sturdy and safe. There should be no loose or missing hardware. Babies can be hurt in an unsafe crib.
- Always use the safety straps in strollers, infant seats, changing tables and baby swings.
- Use an infant car-safety seat according to the directions.
- Never leave your baby alone in a car. Don't leave her alone for even a few minutes.
- Don't use necklaces to hold a baby's pacifier. A necklace or string could wrap around her neck and choke her.
- Don't leave small children or animals alone in a room with your baby. Even friendly, well-trained children and animals could accidentally hurt a baby.
- Install smoke detectors on each floor of your home. Put them near sleeping areas. Change the batteries as often as the directions say to.

Crib Safety

Your baby's crib needs to be a very safe place. Here are some tips to follow to make sure the crib will not harm your baby:

- If you buy a new mattress, be sure to remove and discard all plastic wrapping.
- The mattress should fit the crib snugly so your baby cannot slip between it and the side of the crib.
- Be sure the crib slats are no more than 2 3/8 inches apart so that your baby's head can't get caught between them.
- If you use a bumper pad, make sure that it goes all the way around the crib. Make sure the bumper pad is tied with at least six straps or

ties. Ties should be no more than six inches long to prevent strangulation. Make sure your baby cannot get caught between the mattress and the bumper pad.

- Mobiles and other hanging toys should be high enough so that your baby cannot reach them.
- Do not put toys, stuffed animals, pillows or extra bedding in your baby's crib. These things can block your baby's breathing.
- Toys should not be tied to the crib because your baby can get caught in the cords.
- Cutouts in the headboard and footboard should be smaller than your baby's head so she doesn't get trapped in them.
- Place the crib away from windows. Cords attached to blinds or curtains can choke your baby if she gets caught in them.

Single Parents

Taking care of children is harder for single parents. Single parents often don't have someone to help take care of the baby. Single parents often don't have someone to help make decisions. Also, it is harder for single parents to see their friends. Caring for the baby takes up so much time.

But it is important to spend some time with other adults, and not just at work. Go out with friends and family. Make sure your baby is well cared for when you are gone. It is not selfish to have some time for yourself. Take a break once a week to avoid stress.

Your baby, whether a boy or girl, needs to spend time with people of both sexes. Children need to know other adults, both men and women, who are calm, friendly, warm and trustworthy. Also, as children grow up, they need to be with other children. Boys need to play with other boys some of the time. Girls need to play with other girls some of the time.

Single Teen Parents

The teen years are a special time in your life. Being a new parent is also special. Both come with their own joys and problems.

Being a single teen parent is not easy. In order to give your baby the best, you need a lot of love and support.

Many school districts have special programs to help teen parents. Some have programs for pregnant teens and teen mothers that include child care for babies while the teen mom goes to school. Some larger school districts have programs with flexible hours. These programs make it easier for teen parents to work and still go to school. Call your school district to find out if there is a program near you.

There are reasons why school is important to teen parents. Here are some of them:

- You can get a better job if you finish high school. A high school diploma is required for most jobs. A high school diploma is needed if you want to go to college.
- You will be a good example for your child. You will be able to help her when she goes to school.
- Ask your school district if it has a special program for teen parents. Ask about how to get your General Equivalency Diploma (GED).

Support for the Single Parent

Where can a single parent turn for help? Start with your family. Your parents, grandparents, brothers and sisters, and aunts and uncles may be able to help you.

Local churches, synagogues and mosques also may be able to help. Ask them about special groups for single parents.

If you attend school, talk to your school counselor. He or she may be able to help you find resources for parents.

Local public schools or community service groups often have free parenting classes.

There are a number of nonprofit groups that help single parents. Some may have chapters in your area. To find them, look in the Yellow Pages of your telephone book. Look under "Support Groups." The groups may also be listed under "Community Services" or a similar title at the front of the telephone book.

Information Resources for Families

Families who are enrolled in the WIC program (Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children) can get information on breastfeeding, formula feeding and nutrition at their local WIC office. Families eligible for WIC receive nutrition counseling and supplemental foods such as baby formula, milk and cereal. To find the WIC office nearest you, call your state health department or visit the WIC Web site at www.fns.usda.gov/wic/.

For information about early childhood education initiatives, you may contact the U.S. Department of Education at 1-800-USA-LEARN or visit their Web site at www.ed.gov/offices/OESE/teachingouryoungest/.

To learn about child care options, you may contact the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Child Care Aware by phone at 1-800-424-2246 or visit their Web site at www.childcareaware.org/.

For more information and resources on postpartum depression, breastfeeding and many other women's health issues call The National Women's Health Information Center (NWHIC) at 1-800-994-9662 (1-800-994-WOMAN). You can visit their Web site at www.4woman.gov/.

To learn more about breastfeeding, you may call La Leche League at 1-800-LALECHE or visit their Web site at www.la lecheleague.org/.

To learn more about free or low-cost health insurance for children, you can call the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Insure Kids Now Program at 1-877-KIDSNOW. You can also visit their Web site at www.insurekidsnow.gov/.

The American Association of Poison Control Centers (AAPCC) poison control hotline, 1-800-222-1222, should be on your list of emergency numbers. To learn more, you can visit the AAPCC Web site at www.aapcc.org/.

Families who cannot afford a car safety seat can contact the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. They can provide information on resources that help low-income families purchase or borrow child car seats. You may call them at 1-800-424-9393 or visit their Web site at www.nhtsa.dot.gov/.

Chapter 4 – Your Three Month Old

Talk to Your Baby with Body Language

You and your baby are “talking” to each other even though he doesn’t say words yet. You are doing what comes naturally. You are using body language as well as words.

Body language includes what you do with your face, the tone of the sounds and words you make, singing, eye contact and body movements. You can show love for your baby by hugging him and rocking him. You can show love by playing with him and smiling at him. He will “talk” back to you with coos, wiggles and smiles.

Even at three months, your baby knows the sound of your voice from other people’s voices. He will make eye contact with you to “say” that he knows you are his mom or dad. He will turn toward you and brighten when he sees and hears you.

You are learning to “speak” your baby’s language, too. You can tell the difference when he is crying because he is hungry or because he needs changing. You can tell when he’s crying because he wants you to hold him.

You have learned when he is tired of playing or has had enough to eat because he turns away or stiffens his body. He will make sounds other than crying to let you know how he feels or what he wants. You can tell when he wants some quiet time to just look around or to take a nap.

Talking with your baby lets him know he is loved and you care about him.

Prepare for Your Baby’s Four-Month Checkup

Call your doctor now to set up your baby’s four-month checkup for next month. This visit is very important for your child’s health.

During the four-month visit, your baby will have another complete checkup. This includes his weight, length and head size. His heart and lungs will also be checked. The doctor will check on how your baby holds his head up and uses his hands. Your baby’s hearing and vision

will also be checked. Make sure your doctor undresses your baby for a complete physical exam.

Your baby will get his second set of shots. These may include three shots: one for diphtheria, tetanus and pertussis; one for polio; and one for hemophilus influenzae B (flu).

You can ask questions about the baby's growth, health and development. Write questions down when you think of them. Then you can bring a list with you to the checkup. The list will help you remember what you want to ask. Your baby needs checkups again at six months, nine months and one year of age.

If your baby is eligible for Medicaid, he can get free checkups. You can call your local social welfare, health or family services office to see if you qualify for Medicaid services.

If you don't have health insurance for your baby, you can learn about resources in your state by contacting the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Insure Kids Now Program at 1-877-KIDSNOW. You can also visit their Web site at www.insurekidsnow.gov for more information about free or low-cost health insurance for children. Many public libraries offer free access to the Internet and provide help for first-time users.

A Book for Memories

You need to keep a record of your baby's shots. This way, if you move or change doctors, you can make sure that the new doctor or clinic has correct information about your baby. You will need proof that your baby has had all his shots when he goes to school or day care.

One way you can keep information about your baby is with a baby book or memory book. You can use any kind of notebook or scrapbook. In the book, you can keep health records and other information about your baby's health, growth and development.

You can write down all his great "firsts" in it: when he first sits up, crawls, walks or talks. You can write dates and symptoms when he gets sick. You can write monthly weights and heights and when he gets each tooth. This health information is important to have.

You can use your book to keep other interesting pieces of information about your child. You can put in fun things you want to remember. Put

in photos of your baby. You can write down cute things he does and says. Later on, you can save drawings by your child.

When he is older, you and your child can have fun looking at the memory book together.

Giving Your Baby Breast Milk, Even If You're Working

Breast milk is still the best food for your three-month-old baby. You don't need to give your baby water, juice, cow's milk or solid food right now. Usually, babies need only breast milk for the first six months.

By now, you and your baby have a schedule for feedings. You may wonder how you can nurse your baby after you return to work.

One way is to pump your breast milk into a bottle. There are special breast pumps that you can buy to help you pump out your breast milk efficiently. Other caregivers can then feed it to your baby while you are away.

Breast milk can be stored in a bottle in a refrigerator for up to 48 hours. It will keep for two to three months in the freezer. Always label and date bottles of breast milk.

Not all moms may be able to provide breast milk for their babies in day care. Some moms may choose not to pump breast milk. In this case, the baby can be given formula at day care. Moms who don't pump can still breastfeed their babies before and after work.

Going back to work takes preparation. Start pumping your breast milk a few weeks before you return to work. Have someone else give your baby your breast milk in a bottle. Do this for one feeding each day. When you return to your job, nurse your baby before going to work. Continue to nurse him when you are at home. Take the bottles of breast milk when you drop off your baby for child care. Carry the bottles in a cooler. Put the date and your baby's name on the bottles. Your baby's caregiver will give these bottles to your baby during the day.

If you have any questions or problems with breastfeeding, talk to your doctor, nurse or WIC breastfeeding counselor. To learn more about breastfeeding, you may call La Leche League at 1-800-LALECHE or visit their Web site at www.lalecheleague.org/.

Feeding Your Baby Formula

Maybe you are not breastfeeding your baby but using formula. When you leave for work, make sure your baby's caregiver knows how to prepare formula. There are three ways to prepare formula for your baby.

The three ways are:

- Powdered: This is the cheapest kind. You need to add water to it. First, boil the water. The water should be sterile. Just do what the label says.
- Concentrated: This is a thick liquid. You must also mix it with sterile (boiled) water.
- Ready-to-feed: This formula is already mixed with water. It's the easiest to use. But it costs the most.

You should ask your doctor about what kind of formula to buy for your baby. Some formulas are sold for babies with special problems. Your doctor can tell you which formula is best for your baby.

There is a date on the formula. Do not use the formula after this date. The formula will not be safe to give to your baby after this date.

Prepare formula by carefully following instructions on the can. Opened cans of formula or prepared bottles can be stored in a refrigerator for up to 48 hours. Any formula left in the bottle after a feeding should be thrown away.

Generally, the baby is fed four to six ounces of warmed formula every three to four hours. To be sure that he gets enough formula, ask your doctor about how much is good for your baby.

Make sure your baby's caregiver has enough formula to give to your baby. And be sure to tell the caregiver how much formula your baby takes.

You and your baby's caregiver should not make up your own infant formula. Do not add honey, corn syrup or anything to the baby's formula. This can make your baby sick.

Do not feed your baby:

- Cow's milk

- Goat's milk
- Evaporated milk
- Condensed milk

Your Baby Is Sleeping Longer at Night

You can start putting your baby to bed while he is still awake. Remember to put him to sleep on his back. Let him go to sleep on his own, alone. When he awakens during the night, he sometimes may go back to sleep on his own. This is much easier on the parents!

Every baby will have a different sleep pattern. By now, most babies are in a routine. At three months, a baby naps about five hours during the day. He sleeps longer at night. He may wake up at night to be fed. You don't have to wake your baby for feedings at night. If your baby sleeps through the night, he will feed more often during the day.

Some babies begin sleeping through the night at a few months of age. Others don't sleep through the night until they are one or two years old or even older. Has your baby been sleeping in the same room with you? This is a good age to move him into another room, if possible.

Wet Diapers

Your baby is getting enough fluids if he has seven to 10 wet diapers a day. The diapers can be cloth or regular disposable diapers. Babies vary in the number of bowel movements they have each day. Sometimes babies may not have a bowel movement for two to three days. The baby is not constipated as long as the bowel movement is soft and passes easily.

Help Your Baby Every Day

Here are things you can do to help your baby every day:

Babies learn by watching and touching things. They are exploring their world. Encourage exploration. Promote your baby's curiosity and exploration by holding things within his reach and helping him touch them.

Exploring on his own is important for your baby. But don't limit it to that. Help him seek new experiences, like reaching for your hand and touching your fingers. Babies also like to feel things that are soft, fuzzy or smooth.

Be your baby's teacher. Your baby learns about life by watching you and what you do.

Babies learn when you do simple, everyday things. This is as simple as looking in your baby's eyes and making funny faces. Or let him touch your face and hair.

Get excited with your baby about all the things he does and the sounds he makes. You and your baby will enjoy this. Make a big deal out of little things, like when your baby makes a little sound while you're talking to him. Let him know he is a great talker. Help him to learn to "talk" back and forth. When he coos at you, gently coo back. Wait and see if he "answers" you with another coo. If he does so, you should answer him. Do this with giggles, coos and other baby sounds.

Do activities over and over again with your baby. Learning goes on each time your baby practices a skill. Let him try new things over and over again. This is as simple as helping him to pat his hands together.

Protect your baby from disapproval. Don't tease or punish him. Never permit others to tease, punish or shake him. Punishment does not work with babies. Punishment can be very harmful to babies. It can cause the wrong lessons to be learned.

Communicate. Use sounds, songs, gestures and words with your baby. When you do this, you help him learn about language and its many uses.

Take good care of your baby. Watch him closely. Make sure your home is a safe place for him to explore. Try to keep an orderly, healthy routine. Your child will begin to know that some behavior is OK at some times but not at other times. He will also begin to know that there are reasons for this.

Safety Tips

Things you should do to keep your baby safe:

- When traveling with your baby, be sure to use an infant car seat that meets the Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards. Look for a tag or label that says the seat meets these standards.
- The middle of the back seat of the car is the safest place for your baby. The infant car seat must be in the back seat. The infant seat

must face the rear of the car. It is not safe to use it in the front seat.

- Check the bath water before bathing your baby. Test it with the inside of your wrist or with a thermometer. If possible, set the water heater in your home to 120 degrees.
- Always check warmed formula to make sure it is not too hot.
- Instruct caregivers carefully. Write things down for them. Make sure that everyone who takes care of your baby understands that you have specific expectations about how to treat and care for your baby.
- Make sure that you and others put your baby to sleep on his back in a safe baby crib.

Numbers to call for information:

To learn more about safety, you can call the Consumer Product Safety Commission at 1-800-638-2772 or you can visit their Web site at www.cpsc.gov/.

Families who cannot afford a car safety seat can contact the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. They can provide information on resources that help low-income families purchase or borrow child car seats. You may call them at 1-800-424-9393 or visit their Web site at www.nhtsa.dot.gov/.

Things you should not do:

- Never leave your baby alone on a bed, couch, table or chair.
- Never leave your baby alone in a car.
- Never put your baby in an infant car seat and then place the seat on a table or chair.
- Never hold your baby while you are smoking, drinking something hot or cooking at a stove.
- Don't allow anyone to smoke around your baby.
- Never leave your baby alone in the bath.
- Never hold your baby in your lap when you are riding in the car or driving.
- Never shake or hit your baby.
- Never leave your baby alone with a pet even if you know the animal well.

Make sure your baby's crib is safe:

- Slats should be spaced no more than 2 3/8 inches apart.
- The mattress should fit snugly in the crib.

- The crib bumpers should fit snugly around the crib. Make sure they are attached so that they stay in place.
- Check crib toys, bumpers, pacifiers, mobiles and clothing to make sure they have no strings longer than six inches.

Give Safe Toys to Your Baby

Do not give your baby toys that he can choke on. Make sure toys do not have small, detachable parts like buttons or loose tufts of cotton or material. These things can become more weakly attached over time and become a choking hazard. Toys or items small enough to place in his mouth are not safe. Toys with strings or ties can cause problems. Babies can get tangled in mobiles that are hung too close to them.

Here are some suggestions for safe toys and play activities:

- The best toy you can give your three-month-old baby is a plastic or rubber ring. Watch as he explores the ring with his hands and mouth.
- Lay your baby on his tummy and roll a brightly colored ball from side to side in front of him.
- Ring a bell or squeeze a squeaky toy while your baby is watching.
- Put some brightly colored toys in your baby's bath.
- Blow liquid bubbles with a wand while holding your baby. He will love to watch the bubbles as they float by.

Tips on Pacifiers

By now you have noticed that your baby sucks his fingers and hands a lot. Sucking brings pleasure to a baby. This is a strong need in babies this age. Being able to suck his own fingers and hands means he can make himself feel good all by himself. Sucking helps him feel happy and calm. Sometimes sucking fingers is a sign of hunger.

A baby often sucks his fingers or pacifier while he watches and learns about his world. As something grabs his attention, he may stop sucking for a moment to watch. He will then start to suck again.

Many parents buy pacifiers for their babies. You may have heard that pacifiers can harm a baby's mouth. You may have heard that pacifiers will keep a baby from developing correctly. A pacifier isn't necessary. But it's OK if your baby uses one.

Never tie or pin a pacifier to your baby's clothes. The ribbon or string could get wrapped around his neck. This could choke him. A pin in your baby's clothes can stick him.

Be sure to buy the kind of pacifier that cannot come apart. Be sure it can be washed in a dishwasher. Clean the pacifier often. You can clean it by boiling it in water or putting it in the dishwasher.

Never dip a pacifier in sweet liquids, honey or syrups to make it tasty. Germs in honey and syrups can make your baby sick. Sweets may cause tooth decay when your baby is older.

Questions Parents Ask

Is it all right to take my baby outdoors?

It is a good idea if your baby spends some time outdoors every day, as long as the weather is not too hot or too cold and as long as he is feeling good. Babies should be dressed for the weather. If he is sweaty or flushed, remove some clothes. If he is shivering or has goose bumps, add some clothes. It is important for your baby to wear a cap to cover his head in cold weather.

Use sunscreen made for babies. Put it on your baby before you take him outside. Even with sunscreen, it's best to keep him shaded when he is outdoors. Keep him out of the sun between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. The sun is hottest during this time. Don't let him get sunburned.

Is it all right to take my baby to crowded places?

The only problem with crowds of people is the germs that your baby might pick up. People want to hold or pick up a small baby. Babies can pick up illnesses very easily. Try to keep strangers from playing with your baby. It can prevent the spread of germs. You should also keep your baby away from people who are sneezing or who have runny noses.

What's It Like To Be Three Months Old?

How I grow

- I don't bob my head as much.
- I keep my hands loosely open most of the time.
- I will hold objects, but I will not reach for them.
- I move my arms and legs a lot.
- When held in a standing position, I can bear some weight on my legs.

- When I'm on my tummy, I can hold my head up for 10 seconds or longer.
- I touch my face with my hands.

How I talk

- I gurgle, whimper and chuckle.
- I don't cry as much as I used to.
- I squeal and make other sounds when you talk to me.

How I eat and sleep

- I may have one feeding at night.
- I may sleep through the night.
- I may need a morning nap and an afternoon nap.

How I respond

- When I see you, I turn my whole body to face you.
- I turn my head toward the sounds of singing or talking.
- I may stop or start crying depending on who is holding me.

How I understand

- I'm beginning to remember things.
- I'm beginning to recognize different people in my family.

Your Baby Has Emotions, Too

Your baby starts to develop socially at an early age. He also has emotions from an early age. Social and emotional growth start long before your baby can talk or move around.

Infants quickly understand and show emotions in their own way. Your baby learns to make himself happy. He watches things that interest him. He finds ways to occupy himself. Little by little, your baby also finds out how to get a response from you.

Your baby can show how happy or how excited he is. You see this when you play and talk with him. Research shows that babies are fussier when parents or other adults argue. It may be best to protect your baby from the ups and downs between the adults in his life.

Help your baby show different emotions. Help him show happiness. Help him show sadness. Talk to him about how he feels about particular things — "That big dog sort of scares you, doesn't it?" Do this when you are with him. This helps him make sense of the world. He will have the skills to join in successfully.

Babies start out with easy-to-read types of emotions. They might smile or laugh to show happiness. They might pout or cry to show they are mad or sad. Over time, they show many different emotions. They will show pride. They will show worry. With your help, your baby will learn more ways to respond to what is happening in his life.

Games To Play with Your Baby

Your baby needs to play to learn about the world. When you play with your baby, remember that your baby needs you to touch and hold him. He needs to look at you and have eye contact.

Your baby also needs to look at, feel, taste, smell and hear different things. He needs to move around. His experiences with toys and objects help him begin to learn how things work and that objects have different shapes, colors and textures.

Give your baby objects of different sizes and textures (square, round, hard, soft, fuzzy, long, short, sticky). Make sure these objects are safe. They need to be too large for your baby to put into his mouth. (Small objects are dangerous. Your baby can choke on them.)

Help your baby play with these objects. Show him how to hold them and make them move.

If you have a crib mobile above where you change the baby's diaper, give it a jiggle to make it move. Your baby enjoys watching things move. He might hold still for a moment so you can put the diaper on more easily. You can play patty cake on his tummy when you change him, too.

When he coos or gurgles, make the sound back. Babies love to make sounds back and forth with you. It is the first step toward talking.

Sing songs to your baby. Sing lively tunes when he is awake. Sing soft lullabies when you are quieting him. You can even make up your own songs.

Things To Do with Your Baby

Your baby stays awake longer now. That means he has more time to explore his world. He is still learning about his body, so he may play with his hands or touch his own eyes, nose, mouth and chin.

He is more involved in his surroundings. He no longer waits for someone to smile or speak to him. He seeks out faces, then smiles and babbles.

Here are some activities that will help your baby learn more about the world around him:

- Take your baby outside and sit under a tree. He will enjoy watching birds and seeing lights and shadows as they move through the trees. He can hear new sounds, too, like rustling leaves, birds calling and the engines of cars and airplanes.
- Cradle your baby in your lap, and support his back and head with your arms. Gently rock him back and forth while you sing.
- Help your baby learn to roll by placing your hands under his shoulders. Gently rock him back and forth. Talk to him while you are doing this.
- Whisper in your baby's ear. Talk to your baby about things and make different sounds – like a moo, a bark, a meow or a peep.

Babies Learn in Many Ways

The early wiring of your baby's brain sets the stage for future development. The kinds of experiences he has in his first three years have a deep and lasting impact. So does the quality of his relationships. What he sees, hears and does helps his brain develop. This helps him learn new skills.

The brain controls how your baby's body works. It also controls thinking and feeling. It controls learning and memory.

What you say and do with your baby helps his brain grow and develop. This happens when you show your baby how to shake a rattle. It happens when you show him how to reach for a stuffed bear and touch it. It happens when you help him make new sounds.

Play with your baby. Talk to him. Doing this many times each day will make a difference in how his brain develops. It helps him to learn how

to talk. Say lots of different words. Point out objects. For example, say to him, "Look, here's a spoon. Can you see the spoon?"

Different babies learn new skills in different ways. Cherish the way your baby learns new things. Doing many things with your baby in different ways can help your baby learn. It helps his brain to develop.

Have fun with your baby. Do things with your baby in your own way. Your baby is special. As a father or mother, you are the most important person in your baby's life.

You Can Help Your Baby Learn

You can do many things to encourage your baby's learning and successful development. These are easy things to do. You can just have fun with your baby, and he will learn. You can just be a parent, and your baby can just be a baby.

Here are things you can do:

- Give your baby things to play with. Babies like to hold things and put them in their mouths. Help your baby play with new toys and objects. Make sure what you give your baby is safe. (Never give your baby a balloon or a plastic bag to play with. He can choke on these things.)
- Give your baby things to look at. Brightly colored mobiles over a crib help his vision develop. Hang the mobiles high enough so that your baby can't pull them down. You can also show pictures of faces to your baby.
- Talk to your baby and read to your baby. Use a kind voice.
- Respond when your baby cries. This helps him learn that he can communicate to make his needs known.
- Take your baby to different places and let him see different things.
- Touch your baby and cuddle him. Make sure he knows you love him. Talk softly and calmly. Be soothing.

Exercise Keeps You Healthy

Six weeks after the baby is born, most moms can go back to normal activities. Doctors often give new mothers exercises to do. Exercise helps you tone your muscles.

If you have not been active before, think about it now. Being active is good for moms and dads. Most of the time, people who exercise often

are less tired. And they deal with stress better. To exercise, you don't have to play a sport.

You can walk for exercise. A brisk walk burns more calories than a slow walk. This is true as long as the length of time you walk is the same. If you have 30 minutes to exercise, you will burn more calories by walking briskly than by walking slowly.

Even slow walking will help a person who starts out in poor shape. A person in better shape will need to walk faster or for a longer time to get new benefits.

Sometimes it helps to have someone to walk with. Try walking every day with your husband or a friend. In good weather, take your baby with you in a stroller. Your baby will enjoy your activity, and he'll benefit from it, too!

Things You Can Do To Relax

With a young baby, you may be feeling extra stress. You can find some ways to relax.

Every day, you should take 15 or 20 minutes to relax. The first thing to do is to put your baby in a safe place.

Notice what part of your body is tense. Perhaps you feel tense in your shoulder muscles or in your arms or legs. Stretch that part of your body out and relax it gently. Keep it relaxed while breathing in and out. Flex and relax each part of your body.

You can do breathing exercises almost anywhere. Slow down your breathing. Count slowly up to four when you breathe in. Then count slowly up to four when you breathe out. Or pause slightly after you breathe in, and pause again after you breathe out.

These breathing exercises help you through periods of waiting. You can do them when stuck in traffic or when you are on hold on the telephone. Take a moment to do them when your baby is crying and won't stop.

Other things you can do to help you relax:

- Schedule time for phone calls to people you enjoy.
- Have lunch once a week with a special friend.

- Plan a special time to be with your child's father.
- Walk or do aerobics.
- Get or give a backrub.
- Listen to calming music.

Teach Your Baby To Trust

Your baby needs you to help him feel secure and safe in the world. Gaining your baby's trust is one of the most important things you can do as a parent.

The way to teach your baby to trust you is to meet his needs. Sometimes parents are afraid they may spoil a baby by paying too much attention to him. Meeting your baby's needs is not spoiling him. In fact, when you feed him, change his diapers and comfort him when he's fussy, you are helping him grow and feel more secure.

You may feel you have the hardest time meeting your baby's need for comfort when he's fussy. These times are hard on you and your baby.

Babies can fuss for all kinds of reasons. They have many things to learn, such as how to talk and how to control their hands and feet. They also need to learn how to get your attention when they need it. Your baby isn't fussing to annoy you or because he is spoiled.

You already have learned some things that help him. You have learned to hold him close, rock him, bathe him and make faces at him. You have learned to sing to him. You have learned to pick him up and walk him around. You have learned to always be gentle and calm with him.

When you take care of your baby's daily needs, he will feel safe and secure. For example, your baby may quit crying when he sees you preparing to feed him or change his diaper. He has learned to trust you. He knows he doesn't have to keep crying.

Your baby will spend time amusing himself by looking around. He will also "talk" to himself. He will play with his hands and feet.

These periods when your baby amuses himself will get longer. This is a sign that he feels safe, secure and trusting.

Ask Others for Help

Having a baby is exciting and joyous. There's so much to do and learn. Your whole family is excited. But having a new baby brings lots of new feelings and changes in your life.

You may be worried about whether you are a good parent. You may wonder whether you can meet your baby's needs. Keeping your baby fed, bathed and diapered is a big job. He also wants to bond with you emotionally.

Your baby likes to be held. He likes to be talked to. He likes to talk back to you and likes to have you answer his smiles, coos, giggles and other baby sounds. He likes to be rocked and comforted.

How do you take care of yourself when your baby needs so much comforting and care? You need to know that it is common to feel run down. If you feel run down, ask others for help.

When you need to rest, let your baby's father take over. Or ask other family members to help. Your baby needs to bond with his father and other members of the family. He needs to be close to his grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins. Be sure your friends and relatives know how to take care of and be with your baby.

Don't be surprised if you feel kind of sad the first few weeks after having your baby. It is common for a new mom to feel this way. It doesn't mean you are a bad parent. You need time to get your body back to normal. And you need to adjust to the changes your baby brings to your life.

Sometimes this feeling of sadness can be strong. If this happens, you may be having postpartum depression. "Postpartum" means "after birth." Some new mothers have this kind of depression. Your doctor will know ways to help you.

Don't try to hide these feelings from your family or your doctor. It is important to talk about what is happening. Get help if you need it.

Information Resources for Families

Families who are enrolled in the WIC program (Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children) can get information on breastfeeding, formula feeding and nutrition at their local WIC office. Families eligible for WIC receive nutrition counseling and supplemental foods such as baby formula, milk and cereal. To find the WIC office nearest you, call your state health department or visit

the WIC Web site at www.fns.usda.gov/wic/. Many public libraries offer free access to the Internet and provide help for first-time users.

For information about early childhood education initiatives, you may contact the U.S. Department of Education at 1-800-USA-LEARN or visit the Web site at www.ed.gov/offices/OESE/teachingouryoungest/.

To learn about child-care options, you may contact the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Child Care Aware by phone at 1-800-424-2246 or visit their Web site at www.childcareaware.org/.

For more information and resources on postpartum depression, breastfeeding and many other women's health issues call The National Women's Health Information Center (NWHIC) at 1-800-994-9662 (1-800-994-WOMAN). You can visit their Web site at www.4woman.org/.

To learn more about breastfeeding, you may call La Leche League at 1-800-LALECHE or visit their Web site at www.lalecheleague.org/.

To learn more about free or low-cost health insurance for children, you can call the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Insure Kids Now program at 1-877-KIDSNOW. You can also visit their Web site at www.insurekidsnow.gov/.

The American Association of Poison Control Centers' (AAPCC) poison control hotline, 1-800-222-1222, should be on your list of emergency numbers. To learn more, you can visit the AAPCC Web site at www.aapcc.org/.

Families who cannot afford a car safety seat can contact the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. They can provide information on resources that help low-income families purchase or borrow child car seats. You may call them at 1-800-424-9393 or visit their Web site at www.nhtsa.dot.gov/.

To learn more about safety, you can call the Consumer Product Safety Commission at 1-800-638-2772 or you can visit their Web site at www.cpsc.gov/.

Chapter 5 - Your Four-Month-Old

Your Baby Is Four Months Old

When your baby reaches the age of four months, things will really start to happen fast. She is growing and learning about her world. She is interested in everything she sees or hears. She is reaching for things and putting them in her mouth. This is how she learns about them.

When she is feeding, she stops and plays with your clothes, or she looks at other people in the room.

She may try to roll over. The more she tries, the better she can do it.

She smiles when she sees her parents and other people who care for her. She may frown when she sees strangers. She babbles. She tries to imitate your words as she makes sounds.

She may start sleeping at night for longer and longer periods of time. She will love it when you sit on the floor and play with her. You can have a lot of fun with your baby at this age.

The more you help her explore, the more she will reward you with smiles, happy sounds and love. You can help her by playing with her, singing to her and talking to her. Enjoy your baby as she grows and develops!

Feeding Your Baby

Make sure your baby is ready for solid food before you give it to her. Don't rush her into eating solid food. Some babies are ready for it at four months. Some babies aren't ready until they are older. Your baby's weight or age alone does not determine her readiness for solid food.

Here are some signs to look for that will tell you if your baby is ready to try solid food:

- She holds her head steady and sits with support.
- She reaches for and shows interest in food.
- She opens her mouth when she sees food.
- She no longer thrusts her tongue out during feeding, so she's able to keep food in her mouth and swallow it.

- She turns her head away when she's full.

Most babies are ready for baby cereal when they're between four and six months of age. Ask your doctor about the best time to start your baby on solid food. Rice, oatmeal or barley cereals are OK if they are finely ground. Use them one at a time.

Mix some infant cereal with breast milk in a bowl. You can also use formula instead of breast milk. Don't use cow's milk or any other kind of milk or other liquid. Hold your baby in a sitting position or put her in a child seat on the floor (Be sure she is strapped in.) so she doesn't choke. Always use a spoon to feed solid foods to your baby.

See if your baby will take half of a very small spoonful. If she turns her head away or cries, she's not ready. Try again in a week or two.

When she is ready, she will take small, messy bites. She may roll the food around in her mouth or feel it repeatedly with her tongue. Making a mess is part of learning, so just have fun with her. At this age, your breast milk or infant formula provides all the nutrition your baby needs.

Give your baby only one new food at a time. You can then see if any one of the foods causes allergic reactions. Right now, only infant cereals are a good choice. If one of these types of cereals is a problem for her, she will vomit or get a rash. She may also have diarrhea. If this happens, call your doctor or go to your clinic.

Taking Care of Your Baby's Gums and Future Teeth

It's never too early to start taking care of your baby's future teeth. Here are some simple things you can do for her:

- Never put your baby to sleep with a bottle.
- Once a day, gently wipe her gums with a wet, clean soft cloth. Start doing this even before her teeth come in.
- Some babies show teeth as early as four or five months. Most babies show teeth between six and eight months.
- When her teeth begin to show, you may use a soft toothbrush for cleaning. Make sure it is baby-sized. Or you can continue to clean her teeth every day with a cloth.
- Gently brush her teeth with water only. Toothpaste is not needed until your baby is around three years old. She should be old enough to spit out the toothpaste after brushing.

Your Baby's Four-Month Checkup

Your baby needs regular health checkups. She needs the checkups even if she's not sick. Checkups can keep her healthy. She will have her vision, hearing, weight and length checked.

Your baby will receive shots. Ask your doctor or nurse what to look for and what you should do if your baby has any reaction to these shots, like fever or fussiness. Shots will keep her from getting sick and keep her healthy.

The doctor will also make sure your baby is developing as she should. The doctor will ask you if your baby is reaching for toys. He will ask if your baby smiles and coos.

Before the checkup, write down questions you have about your baby. Bring the questions with you to the checkup. This is a good time to ask any questions you have about your baby. This is a good time to ask the doctor or nurse questions like, "What are the symptoms a baby has when she has a cold? How should I treat her if she has a cold? What kinds of problems should I call you for? What temperature should I call you for?"

Always ask the nurse or doctor for a copy of your baby's checkup results. It's a good idea to keep the copy in a notebook or safe place. If the doctor tells you to give your baby any medicines, write down the names of the medicines and directions. Using a notebook will help you keep track of your baby's health and development. Make an appointment for your baby's six-month checkup.

Your baby may get her first cold or ear infection. As your baby explores her world and plays with other children and adults, she will have more contact with germs. If you don't know what to do about her symptoms, call your doctor or clinic. They will be able to tell you if she needs to see a doctor.

Dads Are Important

Dad, it's never too early for you to get involved with your baby. You have an important role to play in your baby's life. She wants to play with you and learn from you. Showing your baby that you care about her will help her. It will make taking care of her more fun for you and her mom.

Babies learn from all the adults around them. It's good for your baby to have someone besides her mom to learn from.

Taking care of your baby is important and can be fun. Be very gentle when you play with your baby. Use a calm voice.

If you do these things for your baby, she will reward you with smiles, happy sounds and love. She will smile when she sees you, and she will reach for you when she wants to play. The bond you make now with your child will last a lifetime.

You and your baby's mom can learn more about how to care for your baby. Look in the Yellow Pages of your phone book. There may be a "community service" section near the front of the book. Look under "support groups" for parenting help.

Here are some things you can do with your baby:

- You can hold her.
- You can talk to her.
- You can sing to her.
- You can show her toys.
- You can bathe her and dress her.
- You can comfort her when she's fussy.
- You can help teach her how to talk.
- You can take her to child care.
- You can take her to health checkups.
- You can help feed the baby. If your baby's mom is breastfeeding she can pump some of her milk into bottles, and you can give this breast milk to your baby. As your baby learns to eat solid food, you can feed her with a spoon.

Questions Parents Ask

"Whenever my baby cries, I pick her up. My friend says I'm spoiling her. Is my friend right?"

No, you don't have to worry about spoiling your baby. When you pick your baby up, you are doing the right thing.

By reacting to her needs, you are teaching your baby that she can trust you. Holding her brings her comfort. It shows her that you care when she is hungry, in pain, afraid or unhappy.

Meeting your baby's needs makes her feel safe and loved.

It's good to respond quickly when your baby is crying. Her needs are immediate. When your baby is hungry, she wants to be fed. When your baby is wet, she wants a dry diaper. When she is uncomfortable or scared, it helps her to be held.

It's not good to ignore your baby. She depends on you to respond to her needs. She learns to trust because you respond to her needs. Your baby needs a lot of love from you.

Coping with Stress

Taking care of a baby may cause stress. It's a big job. It's normal to have moments of sadness, fear, frustration or anger.

These feelings can be powerful. When you are angry, you may feel like hitting someone. You may feel like breaking things or saying hurtful things.

But there are other ways to deal with strong feelings. Here are some tips:

- Talk about these feelings with someone you trust. The worst thing you can do is keep these feelings to yourself.
- Talk to your spouse or a family member.
- Talk to a friend, a doctor or a member of the clergy.
- Try to exercise. Put your baby in a stroller or in your arms, and take a walk. Exercise at home while your baby sleeps. Being active can make you feel better. Exercise can give you more energy to take care of yourself and your baby.
- Take time to relax. Take a moment for yourself while your baby naps. Do something that calms you down. Take a break from your chores. Take a moment to talk to a friend, read, listen to music, just be still or enjoy a hobby.
- Don't take your stress out on your baby by yelling at her or avoiding her. Get someone to help you for a while so that you can calm down or get rest.

If you want to know more about how to cope with stress or groups that help parents cope with stress, ask your doctor or clinic.

Helping Your Baby To Fall Asleep

Many four-month-old babies sleep through the night. They go between deep and light sleep several times.

- A baby in light sleep may cry out. She may move around in bed. This may wake her up. As she cries and moves around, she gets upset. She will settle herself if she has a way to comfort herself. She may comfort herself by sucking her thumb or holding a blanket. Or she may get into a comfortable position, which will also settle her down.
- Some babies have more trouble settling down than others do. Going to bed at the same time each night will help her settle down. Keep the house quiet. Loud TV or music may keep your baby awake.
- To help your baby to relax, you can give her a warm bath, massage her or rock her. Reading or singing to her may also help her settle down. Don't rush to her if she starts to cry. She may calm down after a few minutes and fall asleep on her own. If she continues to cry, pick her up.
- Always place the same baby-safe soft doll or stuffed animal in your baby's crib when it is time for sleep. She will learn to connect the stuffed toy with falling asleep.
- You can sing to your baby at bedtime. Put her to bed before she is completely asleep. Then stay beside her and pat her calmly. This can help set a good pattern for going to sleep.
- What your baby does during the day can affect her at night. If she had too much excitement during the day, she may not sleep through the night. It may take several days for her to get back to her usual sleeping pattern.

What's It Like To Be Four Months Old?

How I grow

- When I lie on my tummy, I may roll from side to side. I may even roll over onto my back.
- I may be able to sit with support.
- I can hold my head up on my own. I can turn my head from side to side.
- I use both hands to grab toys and other objects.

- When I'm in the bathtub, I like to splash in the water. I always need to be held firmly so I don't slide into the water.

How I understand

- I may get excited when I see people I know. Sometimes I don't like strangers.
- I like some toys better than others.

How I talk

- When you talk to me, I smile and squeal and coo.
- I like to imitate sounds. I like for you to talk to me and make sounds to me.
- I babble now. I make lots of different sounds.
- When I am happy, I coo, squeal, gurgle, giggle, grin and laugh out loud.

How I respond

- I like to look at myself in the mirror. Sometimes I smile at myself.
- I like to be touched and held.
- I may fuss if I am left alone. I get bored.
- I may cry when you take a toy away from me. I may cry when you stop playing with me.

Games You Can Play with Your Baby

Babies learn by playing. Here are some games you can play with your four-month-old:

- Play peek-a-boo. Place a sheet or baby blanket over your head, lift it up and softly say, "Boo!" Your baby will enjoy many ways of playing this game.
- Sing simple songs to your baby. You can sing nursery rhymes, or you can make up your own songs.
- Lay your baby on her back and sing a song while you gently move her arms in a big circle. You can also gently move her legs and raise her arms.
- Slip a colorful scarf through a plastic bracelet and tie the scarf to the arm of a chair. Lay your baby next to the plastic ring. Your baby will grab the ring and move the scarf around on the chair arm.
- After a bath, sprinkle baby powder into your hands. Do not sprinkle it directly on your baby or near her face. Instead, gently massage your baby's body with the powder. Talk to her or sing a song while you're massaging her.

- Put a brightly colored sock on your baby's foot. Your baby will notice her foot. In time she will be able to grab it with her hands. Make a game out of it by helping her reach for the sock and helping her pull it off.

Toy Safety Is Important

Babies put things into their mouths. So it is important to make sure all toys you give your baby are safe. Here are a few things to look for when choosing toys:

- Make sure toys that you buy for your baby are labeled "non-toxic."
- Toys should have no sharp edges or points.
- Inspect toys often to make sure there are no loose parts. Older toys may break and have sharp edges.
- Make sure small toys, such as squeak toys, rattles and teethingers, are large enough so that your baby can't put the whole toy in her mouth. Smaller toys can get stuck in your baby's throat.
- Don't give your baby toys with strings or ribbons. If you have toys like this, just remove the strings.
- Don't hang toys or a pacifier around your baby's neck.
- Don't give your baby toys that have small parts. The parts can come off and she could choke on them. Check for small parts such as buttons and eyes that are glued on.
- Don't give her toys with beads that can be pulled off. Toys that are stuffed with small pellets can come apart, and your baby could choke on the pellets.
- Don't let your baby play with a plastic bag. It can choke or smother her.
- Don't give your baby balloons to play with. The balloon can break and create a choking hazard. Don't give pieces of popped balloons to children of any age. Babies and children can choke on balloon pieces.
- Don't let your baby play with plastic wrapping from toys or other items.
- Older children should be told not to use loud toys around the baby. Such loud noises can damage her hearing.

Helping Your Baby Explore

By the time your baby is four months old, she is beginning to learn to move around. She may even roll from her stomach to her back.

Your baby can sit up if you prop her up with pillows. She is also able to grab an object with both of her hands.

Since she can now hold toys, your baby spends more time playing.

At this age, babies need time to explore the world around them. It is important to give them time on a flat surface. Place your baby on a blanket on the floor. If you are outdoors, place a blanket on the ground. Make sure the blanket is out of the hot sun. Do not put it near objects or insects that can hurt her. Let her wear clothing that allows her to move easily. Watch her very carefully. Do not walk away leaving her on the blanket, even for moment.

Here are some activities to try:

- Place toys just out of reach so your baby will reach for them. She will learn that she has to wiggle and reach to get the toys. If she can't reach a toy in a few seconds, place it within her reach so she doesn't get frustrated.
- Spread a cloth on the grass and lay your baby on her stomach at one edge of the cloth. Gently raise the edge of the cloth so she will roll onto her back. Reward her with a hug and a kiss.
- Place an unbreakable mirror next to your baby's blanket so she can look at herself. Make sure the mirror cannot fall and break.

Talking with Your Baby

At four months of age, your baby is already putting together ideas about speech and sounds. She does this even though she cannot speak.

Even without speech, your baby already knows how to "talk" with you. She "speaks" by being fussy or with happy giggles. She will learn more ways to let you know her needs, even before she learns to speak. She has learned to coo and laugh.

Not all sounds and gestures are for communication. Learning to make sounds is fun for a baby. Hearing the sounds she makes is also fun for her.

Taking turns is part of language. When your baby coos or gurgles, be sure to listen to her. Then respond. Talk to your baby often. Use both familiar words and sounds and new words and sounds. This will get her attention and hold it.

Babies start to learn to talk at different ages. They also learn in different ways. Talking to your baby a lot helps her learn.

Babies Respond to Angry and Happy Faces

A baby's social skills start to develop long before she can talk. So do her emotions. Babies quickly come to know emotions and to show them.

A four-month-old baby can tell a happy face when she sees it. And she can tell an angry face when she sees it. She is also aware of a face with no expression.

If there is a lot of yelling and screaming in the house, the noise and emotion will affect your baby.

Another step in learning social skills is that your baby will show when she is angry or sad. She'll do this when she doesn't get what she wants. Anger and sadness are normal. Even so, you don't want your baby to have any negative experiences that last a long time. Babies should have far more positive experiences than negative experiences.

Always be sure to comfort your baby quickly. It does more than provide relief. It also builds up the bond between you and your baby.

Babies differ in how social they want to be. Some babies want almost constant time with others. Other babies want more "alone" time. However, it can be very harmful to a baby to leave her alone too much or ignore her.

You should always respond to your baby's needs. This attention will make her happier. Her ability to think and know is tied to her emotions. Babies who feel good are more alert. They are also more attentive and responsive. They learn better. They remember better, too.

Learning about other people starts at an early age. Relating with people also starts early. It is a good start when your baby learns to trust and enjoy her parents and others who take care of her.

Your Baby Learns from Experience

Each brain, like each child, is unique. Here are some things you should know about your baby:

- The brain grows fastest in the first three years of life.
- It's hard to describe how a child's brain develops. It depends on traits that come from the parents. It also depends on the child's experiences. You can influence the part that depends on experience.
- Babies cannot see well when they are born. At four months, your baby's vision has improved. Now she may show interest in objects all the way across the room. Show your baby bright and colorful objects. Move them slowly to help her stay interested in them.
- A baby's hearing develops early. Talk to your baby often. A baby can remember patterns of sounds. She can remember the sounds of a story that you read over and over. She can also remember the sounds of a song. Tell her a rhyme over and over for several days. Read her a story over and over for several days. Or sing the same song for several days with your baby. Watch how she responds.
- Touching your baby gently can help to quiet her or to stimulate her. It depends on how you do it. Massaging your baby gently can help her relax.
- Your baby learns more when you respond to her needs.
- Most infant memories do not last long. Even so, your baby's memory is active.

Guiding Principles To Help Your Baby Every Day

Here are some important things you can do that will help your baby every day:

- Be your baby's teacher. Babies learn when they have many good experiences with someone who loves them. Give your baby a rattle. Say, "Shake, shake," as you move it and make sounds together. Name things for your baby. For example, say, "Look at the tree. Let's sit under the tree." This helps your baby develop language.
- Encourage your baby to explore. Your baby is at an age when she likes to be held up to look at things. Looking at things is important for her. Look at something together, and move it around. Your baby now is holding on to things and putting them into her mouth. This helps her explore. It also helps her develop movement skills. Find things she can play with like unbreakable spoons or plastic cups, and get down on the floor and play with her.
- Get excited about your child. Show your excitement when she does something. Make sure you act immediately. Your baby will connect

your pleasure with what she has just done. For example, when your baby sits up as you hold her, say, "Look at you! You are sitting up!"

- Repeat things with your baby. Babies learn by doing the same thing over and over. Your baby may learn faster when she has lots of time playing and talking with you.
- Communicate. Talk and sing to your baby. She has been learning about language since birth. Talking to her helps her to learn.
- Do not treat your baby harshly.
- Babies do not know right from wrong.
- They should not be punished.
- They should not be teased in a rough manner.
- Never shake or hit your baby. Never allow anyone else to shake or hit your baby. This can cause injuries, brain damage or even death.

Information Resources for Families

Families who are enrolled in the WIC program (Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children) can get information on breastfeeding, formula feeding and nutrition at their local WIC office. Families eligible for WIC receive nutrition counseling and supplemental foods such as baby formula, milk and cereal. To find the WIC office nearest you, call your state health department or visit the WIC Web site at www.fns.usda.gov/wic/. Many public libraries offer free access to the Internet and provide help for first-time users.

For information about early childhood education initiatives, you may contact the U.S. Department of Education at 1-800-USA-LEARN or visit the Web site at www.ed.gov/offices/OESE/teachingouryoungest/.

To learn about child care options, you may contact the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Child Care Aware by phone at 1-800-424-2246 or visit their Web site at www.childcareaware.org/.

For more information and resources on postpartum depression, breastfeeding and many other women's health issues call The National Women's Health Information Center (NWHIC) at 1-800-994-9662 (1-800-994-WOMAN). You can visit their Web site at www.4woman.org/.

To learn more about breastfeeding, you may call La Leche League at 1-800-LALECHE or visit their Web site at www.la lecheleague.org/.

To learn more about free or low-cost health insurance for children, you can call the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Insure Kids Now program at 1-877-KIDSNOW. You can also visit their Web site at www.insurekidsnow.gov/.

The American Association of Poison Control Centers' (AAPCC) poison control hotline, 1-800-222-1222, should be on your list of emergency numbers. To learn more, you can visit the AAPCC Web site at www.aapcc.org/.

Families who cannot afford a car safety seat can contact the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. They can provide information on resources that help low-income families purchase or borrow child car seats. You may call them at 1-800-424-9393 or visit their Web site at www.nhtsa.dot.gov/.

To learn more about safety, you can call the Consumer Product Safety Commission at 1-800-638-2772 or you can visit their Web site at www.cpsc.gov/.

Chapter 6 - Your Five-Month-Old

Your five-month-old is full of energy. He wakes himself up in the morning and is ready to dive into his day.

He doesn't just look at things. He wants to explore everything. He puts things in his mouth. He rocks on his stomach. He kicks his legs. He reaches for toys. He "talks" to you. These are ways he learns and grows.

Your baby is excited because he has more control over his body. He is able to reach for things he wants. He is learning to roll over. He can "read" your feelings by the tone of your voice. He likes it when you repeat his sounds.

You can have a lot of fun with your baby as you help him learn. All this exploring, growing and learning can even wear him out. Don't be surprised if he gets frustrated and fussy sometimes. He learns by trying the same movements and sounds over and over.

Questions from Parents about Medicines

My baby hasn't been feeling well. It doesn't seem to be serious. Can I give him nonprescription medicine or home remedies?

Talk to your doctor before you give your baby any medicine. Some won't help. Others may be harmful.

Some labels are hard to understand. Once the doctor has approved a nonprescription medicine, ask the pharmacist at the grocery store or drug store for help. You can ask questions at any time. You can ask for help even after you buy the medicine.

Here are some tips to follow when you give any medicine to your baby:

- Never give aspirin to a baby or a child with a fever. Giving aspirin can cause a severe problem called Reye's Syndrome.
- Always give medications according to your doctor's directions.
- Read the label completely and carefully.
- Do exactly what the label says to do unless your doctor directs you otherwise.
- Always give your baby the correct dose of medicine.
- Never give medicine for a longer time than the label says.

- Never give medicine more frequently than the label says.
- Always keep medicine out of the reach of children.
- Keep medicine lids closed tightly.
- If you are giving a prescription medicine, always give it as often and for as many days as the doctor says, even after your baby seems well.

Many infant medications come with a measuring device to make sure that you give your child EXACTLY the right dose of medication. You can also buy special measuring devices in the drug store or supermarket to ensure that you know exactly how much medication to give your baby.

When to call the doctor:

- Your baby has a fever.
- Your baby has diarrhea.
- Your baby is vomiting repeatedly. If your baby vomits once and then seems healthy, he should be OK. If he vomits more than once, call your doctor. A lot of babies spit up, especially after feeding or with a burp. Spitting up usually involves bringing up only small amounts of liquid or food.
- Your baby is pulling at his ear and screaming. Maybe he has discolored fluid coming out of his ear.
- Your baby refuses to eat.
- All of a sudden, your baby has trouble sleeping.
- Your baby seems to be drowsy or less active.

It is very important that your baby not become dehydrated. Babies are small and can dehydrate quickly due to a fever, diarrhea, vomiting or refusing to drink liquids. It is especially dangerous if your small baby has two or more of these symptoms at one time.

Safety Corner

As your baby grows older, he will become more active. He will move around more and explore his world. Keep him safe as he grows and learns. Here are some dangers to watch out for:

- Never leave your baby alone in a bath for even a few seconds. Never leave your baby alone near any pool of water or even a bucket of water, no matter how shallow it is.
- Never leave your baby alone on a high place, like a tabletop.

- Never leave your baby alone in a crib with the sides down. If he does ever fall and begins to act strangely in any way, call the doctor right away.
- Never smoke around your baby. Be careful when you eat or drink hot fluids while holding your baby.
- Never give food to your baby that can make him choke. Foods should be soft and runny. They should be ground up or soft, so that your baby can swallow them without chewing. Some babies become constipated when they start to eat different foods at this age. If this happens to your baby, call your doctor.
- Older brothers and sisters may be jealous of the baby. They may try to hit, poke or squeeze him. They may not like it that you spend a lot of time with your baby. Talk to them about it. Let them know that you love them, too.
- Watch your baby when he plays with older children. By mistake, they may give your baby something harmful to play with, or they may be too rough with your baby.
- Make sure that your baby doesn't grab objects that could hurt him.
- Put plugs in all open electrical outlets.
- Never leave your baby alone with a pet, even if the pet appears to be child-friendly.

Avoiding Baby Bottle Tooth Decay

By now, you are enjoying your baby's smile. You can help your baby have a beautiful smile by taking care of his mouth before he gets his baby teeth. Even though his baby teeth will fall out, it is important to keep them healthy. Healthy baby teeth lead to healthy permanent teeth.

Before you can even see your baby's teeth, they need care. Clean your baby's mouth every day. Wipe it out with a soft clean cloth. This will help remove germs and keep his mouth healthy.

Protect your baby from the pain of "baby bottle tooth decay." Always hold your baby when feeding him. Never put your baby to sleep with a bottle. Formula or juice that stays in his mouth while he sleeps can harm his baby teeth. When his baby teeth appear, continue to gently wash them with a soft cloth. Do not use toothpaste until he is about three years old and able to spit it out.

When he is about one year old, you can start to brush gently your baby's teeth with a soft, baby-size toothbrush.

Your baby should get his first dental checkup when he is one year old. You may have questions about how to protect your baby's teeth. If you have questions, ask your doctor or dentist.

Is Your Baby Teething?

When will my baby get his baby teeth? Most babies will start to get their baby teeth between six and 10 months of age.

Watch for your baby's first teeth to show up in the lower front of his mouth. When this starts to happen, your baby may have some discomfort. The discomfort makes him fussy. The gums may be swollen and tender. He may want to chew things.

The two upper front teeth will probably be the next teeth to come in. The rest of his teeth will come in slowly. In time, he will have a total of 20 baby teeth.

Teething sometimes causes a temperature. If your baby has a temperature of 100 degrees or more, call your doctor or clinic. He may be sick and need treatment.

Gently rubbing your baby's gums with a clean finger, cool spoon or wet cloth can be soothing. You can also give your baby a teething ring or pacifier to chew on.

Some teething rings are made to be chilled. This cool object against his gums may feel good and make him less fussy. You don't need to put any kind of pain reliever on his gums. These wash away quickly and don't help much.

Safety and Your Baby's High Chair

You want your baby to be safe. This means looking closely at the things you buy for your baby. One thing your baby will need is a high chair. Your baby can start to use a high chair when he is able to sit up and is ready for solid food. Here are some tips from the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission on choosing a high chair and using it safely.

Choosing a high chair:

- High chairs should have a waist strap and another strap that goes between the legs.

- The straps should not be attached to the tray.
- The tray must lock securely.
- A buckle-on waist strap should be easy to use.
- High chairs should have legs spread far enough apart at the bottom so that they do not tip over easily.
- Look for a locking device on folding high chairs. The lock keeps the chair from collapsing.

Using a high chair:

- Always buckle your baby in. The straps keep your baby from falling or sliding under the tray, where he could be hurt.
- Never leave your baby alone when he is in the high chair.
- Lock the tray securely in place.
- Be sure that your baby's hands are out of the way when you lock the tray.
- Be sure there are no sharp edges that could cut your baby.
- You may give your baby something to play with on the high chair's tray.

Tips about Your Baby's Playpen

A playpen can be a big help. You can have your baby in the same room where you are working so that he will not be alone while you do what you need to do.

You can also take the playpen outdoors with you. Make sure it is in a shady and safe spot. Stay with your baby. Outside he can watch all kinds of things that are going on, safely. You can talk to him about what he is seeing.

Babies should only be in playpens for very short periods of time. They need to spend time on the floor. They need time to explore while a parent watches.

If you leave your baby in the playpen too long, he will let you know. When he first gets tired of it, you can give him something new to play with. He may be content to remain there for a while longer.

Here are some playpen safety tips:

- Make sure the mesh on the sides of the playpen has openings that are smaller than 1/4 inch.
- Make sure there are no tears, holes or loose threads in the mesh.
- Make sure the top rail cover has no tears or holes.

- Playpens made of wood should have slats that are no more than 2 3/8 inches apart, or even closer.
- Make sure screws and staples are firmly installed and that none are missing or loose.
- When you set up your baby's playpen, make sure the sides of the playpen are locked in place. A partially set-up playpen can collapse on and harm your baby.

What's It Like To Be Five Months Old?

How I talk:

- I like to watch other people make sounds. I try to make new sounds on my own.
- I may say sounds like "ah-ah-ah," "ee-ee-ee" and "oo-oo-oo."
- I may babble to get attention.

How I grow:

- I can sit with support.
- I explore my world with my eyes, fingers and mouth.
- I reach for things when I see them and am able to grasp them.
- When I'm lying down on my tummy, I can push myself up with my arms. At the same time, I can turn my head to look around.
- When I'm lying on my back, I may touch my feet and may play with my toes.
- If you hold me under my arms, I like to stand and move my body up and down.

What I understand:

- I know my name when someone says it.
- I can tell the difference between strangers and family.
- I know familiar objects like my toys.
- I am discovering parts of my body.

How I respond:

- I like to watch other people's faces.
- I like to smile and talk to myself when I'm looking in the mirror.
- I smile and make noises when I see a person.
- I may stop crying when someone talks to me calmly and softly.
- I may cry when someone leaves or when someone takes an object away from me.

Your Baby's Sleep

A five-month-old baby may sleep for longer periods of time, like five to eight hours. But babies are individuals. Each baby has his own sleep patterns.

Babies are not always awake when they sound like they are. They can cry out and may make all kinds of noises in their sleep. Even if they wake up at night, babies may be awake for only a few minutes. They may fall asleep again on their own.

Don't get up right away if you hear your baby at night. It's best if your baby learns how to get back to sleep on his own. If your baby cries for several minutes, it's time to respond. He could be hungry, wet, cold or even sick.

When you get up to take care of him, do it as quietly and quickly as you can. Don't give him any extra stimulation. Don't talk or play with him. Don't even turn on the light. He needs to learn that night is for sleeping. Your baby doesn't care what time it is, as long as he gets what he needs.

Brain Development

The brain grows fastest in the first three years of life. That is why you see lots of changes in young children. Each child is unique. Each baby grows differently. There are things you can do for your baby that will help him learn. Here are some tips:

- Talking to your baby helps him to learn how to speak. It's good to start talking to him long before he can speak. Talk to him while you are in the car and at other times, too. Talk to him when you take him for walks. Talk to him when you change his diaper. Talk to him when you feed him.
- Babies learn things at different rates. They learn in different ways. Some babies learn quickly. Others take more time. If you are concerned, talk to your doctor. It's always good to encourage your baby when he tries to learn. Make a big deal of it when he tries to learn. This will help him. It will make him feel good.
- Even at this young age, your baby will notice how you care for him. He will notice how you behave with others.
- Many babies and young children have trouble with sudden change. Try to give your baby time to adjust to new places and new people.

Help Your Baby To Explore

Here are a few things that will help him explore himself and the world around him:

- Hold your baby up in front of a mirror. Point out mommy and baby in the mirror.
- Hand your baby a toy, first to one hand and then to the other. He will soon learn to pass the toy from one hand to the other.
- Bounce a large ball up and down. Soon your baby can follow the ball with his eyes.
- Roll a ball toward a wall so that it hits and comes back. Your baby will learn to watch for the ball to come back.
- Help your baby to stand up by holding him under his armpits. Babies will straighten their knees before they learn to relax them.
- Sing songs when you are dressing or bathing your baby, or make up rhymes about his eyes, nose and mouth.

Here are some things you can do with your baby to help him learn:

- Get down on the floor with him and give him toys to play with. Sometimes, put the toy out of his reach so he will have to stretch for it. Other times, cover part of the toy with a blanket and see if he can find it. Be sure to make it fun so your baby doesn't get frustrated.
- Talk to him and repeat the sounds he makes. When he says "baa," you say "baa." He will smile and laugh and try to make the same sound again.
- Read a book to him every day, even if it is the same book.
- Dance to music with him in your arms.
- Sing children's songs to him.
- Take him for a walk in his stroller or in a cuddly pack when the weather is nice. Talk to him about what you see.
- Sit with him in your lap and show him color pictures in magazines.
- Show him toys of different colors.
- When he gets tired of playing or trying to talk, cuddle him and hug him. Let him know you love him and care about him.
- Babies love doing the same thing over and over and over again. This repetition is an excellent way for your baby to learn.

Stimulating Your Baby with Toys

At five months of age, your baby is likely to enjoy anything that he can push with his feet. He is also getting very good at reaching for objects and grabbing them. He is interested in exploring his body. He likes toys he can touch, suck on, look at and chew.

He likes to explore toys on his own, but he loves to explore them with you.

Your baby learns from playing. He likes to explore each toy just to get the feel of it. He likes to take a toy and twist it, shake it and suck on it. He likes to bang it against other objects.

Here are a few things that will help him explore himself and the world around him:

- Give your baby a roly-poly toy that comes back up when it is knocked over.
- Put pictures in his crib or carriage. Make sure the pictures are out of his reach. Hang something bright on the wall of his bedroom.
- Give him teething rings and plastic toys that are clean. Make sure his toys cannot be broken. Make sure they have no pieces that can come off.
- The toys should all be made of safe materials, because your baby will put them into his mouth. Make sure they are too large for your baby to swallow or choke on them.
- Give him a toy that is brightly colored like red or green.
- Give him toys that make a noise like a squeaky stuffed animal, or give him a ball with bells inside.
- Let him play with toys that make music. Make sure the toys are safe for him to play with or put in his mouth.

Sometimes babies are very happy playing with safe things that are not toys, like pots and pans.

Interacting and Playing

It is important to make time to play with your baby. How he understands the world comes from playing with other people. Two of his best playmates are his parents. Here are some tips for playing with your baby:

- Sing nursery rhymes or songs to your baby.

- Dance to music. Hold your baby firmly in your arms or in a baby carrier and dance to music you both like.
- Hold your face close to your baby's. Copy his looks and his sounds. Laugh with your baby.
- Your baby is interested in his hands and feet. Touch his fingers and toes while you talk to him or sing to him.

Dads and other caregivers should play with the baby, too. This is an exciting time for your five-month-old. He needs to get to know all the people who will take care of him besides his mom and dad.

Babies need to be around different types of people. This helps babies learn about themselves and the world. They need to learn to tell the difference between family members and strangers. There are many things brothers, sisters, grandparents and others can do to help your baby grow and learn.

Take Care of Your Back

With a baby in the house, you are doing a lot more lifting. You are bending and picking things up more often. This can put stress on your back and cause injury.

Think about taking care of your back. Having a strong back will help you take care of your baby and yourself.

Staying physically fit is a great way to take care of your back. Muscles in your stomach, legs, arms and back are used when you lift things. Strong muscles will help you avoid straining your back.

Ask your doctor what exercises are best for you. Even standing up straight and sitting up straight will help your back. With a little planning, you can learn to lift things without strain.

Here are some tips to help you prevent hurting your back:

- When possible, don't bend over from your waist when you pick up your baby. Instead, lower yourself by bending your knees. Then use the muscles in your legs and buttocks to push yourself back up.
- Lift your baby up slowly and smoothly. If you use jerky movements, you can strain your back.
- Never twist your waist and bend at the same time.
- Don't try to lift something heavy any higher than your shoulders. When you need to put something heavy up high, get some help. Use a step stool or a ladder.

- Hold heavy objects close to you. Don't reach out to pick up a heavy object. Carry your baby close to your body.

Information Resources for Families

Families who are enrolled in the WIC program (Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children) can get information on breastfeeding, formula feeding and nutrition at their local WIC office. Families eligible for WIC receive nutrition counseling and supplemental foods such as baby formula, milk and cereal. To find the WIC office nearest you, call your state health department or visit the WIC Web site at www.fns.usda.gov/wic/. Many public libraries offer free access to the Internet and provide help for first-time users.

For information about early childhood education initiatives, you may contact the U.S. Department of Education at 1-800-USA-LEARN or visit the Web site at www.ed.gov/offices/OESE/teachingouryoungest/.

To learn about child care options, you may contact the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Child Care Aware by phone at 1-800-424-2246 or visit their Web site at www.childcareaware.org/.

For more information and resources on postpartum depression, breastfeeding and many other women's health issues call The National Women's Health Information Center (NWHIC) at 1-800-994-9662 (1-800-994-WOMAN). You can visit their Web site at www.4woman.org/.

To learn more about breastfeeding, you may call La Leche League at 1-800-LALECHE or visit their Web site at www.la lecheleague.org/.

To learn more about free or low-cost health insurance for children, you can call the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Insure Kids Now program at 1-877-KIDSNOW. You can also visit their Web site at www.insurekidsnow.gov/.

The American Association of Poison Control Centers' (AAPCC) poison control hotline, 1-800-222-1222, should be on your list of emergency numbers. To learn more, you can visit the AAPCC Web site at www.aapcc.org/.

Families who cannot afford a car safety seat can contact the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. They can provide information on resources that help low-income families purchase or borrow child car seats. You may call them at 1-800-424-9393 or visit their Web site at www.nhtsa.dot.gov/.

To learn more about safety, you can call the Consumer Product Safety Commission at 1-800-638-2772 or you can visit their Web site at www.cpsc.gov/.

Chapter 7 - Your Six-Month-Old

Your baby is halfway through her first year. She is really active now. She may be grabbing at things and shaking her rattle. She may be sitting up with support. She babbles and makes a variety of sounds.

She is interested in everything around her. She wants to touch things. She wants to put things in her mouth. She wants to pull on them. Keeping up with her curiosity can be a challenge. Have fun with her. Be patient.

Your baby has learned a lot in her first six months. So have you! You have learned a lot about being a parent. You have learned how to take care of your baby even though she can't tell you what she needs. You have learned what her crying means. You can tell that she is hungry by the way she cries. You can also tell by her crying if she is tired or needs her diaper changed.

You can help your baby be healthy and safe. You can help her learn many important things like how to talk, how to walk and how to feed herself. You can help her learn how to drink from a cup.

Your Baby's Six-Month Checkup

Your baby needs another checkup at about six months of age. Several things will take place at this visit. The doctor will check to see how your baby is developing.

Here are some of the things the doctor will look at:

- Your baby's ability to control her head
- Her ability to reach and grab objects
- Her ability to roll over
- Her ability to make sounds
- Her ability to stand while she holds on to someone

The doctor will also check your baby's weight, length, and the size of her head. Your baby should have what is called a "hematocrit" blood test to check for anemia. The test is done by pricking her toe.

Your baby will also get the shots she needs to stay healthy. Ask the doctor for a copy of the shot record.

Your doctor or nurse will talk to you about your baby. They may ask about her development and about how well she is eating and growing. You should make a list of questions to ask before you go to the doctor.

They may ask about your baby's sleeping and her behavior and mood. They may talk about how you can keep your baby healthy. Be sure to write down any instructions that the doctor gives you.

Finding a Doctor You Trust

Try to find a doctor you like and trust. It helps if your baby sees the same doctor or nurse every time. That makes it easier to keep track of your baby's needs.

If you don't know where to take your baby for care, call your local health department. The phone number is in the "government" listings of the phone book. You can also try a local hospital.

Ask a close friend or relative who has children whom she takes her children to for health care. Ask if she really likes her children's doctor and if the doctor is good at taking time to explain things and answer questions.

If your baby is eligible for Medicaid, she can get free checkups. You can call your local social welfare, health or family services office to see if you qualify for Medicaid services.

Eating New Foods

The types of foods your baby eats will change over the next few months. Breast milk or infant formula is still the most important food for your growing baby. Sometime between six and eight months of age, your baby will be able to eat strained or mashed fruits and vegetables in addition to infant cereal. Try meats if your doctor says your baby needs more iron. You can tell when she is ready. She will show interest by leaning forward and opening her mouth. Her teeth may begin to appear. She needs to be able to sit up and hold her head steady in order to avoid choking.

Use a fork or potato masher to prepare your baby's foods. The consistency of food you feed your baby should be like mashed potatoes. Foods such as ripe bananas and cooked apples, squash, carrots or potatoes are good to use. Be sure to remove any seeds from

your baby's food. Don't add salt, spices or fats to your baby's food. You can also use baby foods in jars.

Try new foods one at a time. Offer her one to two teaspoons. Wait one week before trying another new food. Watch her for any reactions like diarrhea or rashes. Choose plain foods rather than mixtures. Your baby may not like some foods. Don't force her to eat. Wait for one to two weeks before trying them again.

Baby Bottles Can Cause Tooth Decay

If your baby needs a bottle to help her fall asleep, fill it with water only. Don't put breast milk or infant formula in the bottle at night. Don't put fruit juice or sweetened liquids in the bottle. These liquids pool around your baby's teeth while she is sleeping. They can damage and decay her teeth. Water cannot hurt her teeth in this way. Any drink other than water in the bottle at bedtime can cause "baby bottle tooth decay."

Baby bottle tooth decay can cause your baby a lot of pain. Damage to her teeth may have to be treated in a hospital. Protect your baby's teeth even before you can see them. Gently wipe inside her mouth with a clean, soft cloth each day. Be sure to wipe her gums and teeth.

At six months, show your baby how to use a cup. You can put some breast milk or formula in the cup. By the time your baby is one year old, she will stop needing a bottle and will use a cup instead. Introducing the cup now helps prepare her for this development in her life. It also helps prevent baby bottle tooth decay and give your baby a bright, healthy smile.

Before bedtime, give your baby a hug. Instead of a bottle, give her extra attention for comfort. You can also give her a soft blanket or toy to hold. You are more of a comfort to her than a bottle ever can be.

Let Your Baby Feed Herself

Your baby will be a messy eater as she learns to feed herself. She might put her fingers into her mouth to suck on while she eats. It helps her swallow solid foods. She might also spit out foods. It will take time for her to learn to feed herself.

Put a bib or apron on your baby, or let her eat with just her diaper on. You can put a washable cloth under her high chair to make cleaning

easier. Let her play with her food. Always watch your baby when she is eating.

She may want to grab a spoon while you feed her with another spoon. If she drops her spoon on the floor, she will want you to pick it up for her.

Make sure you know what to do if your baby starts to choke. Call 911 right away if you don't know what to do. To become prepared, you can get instructions from your doctor or from your local American Red Cross. After you learn what to do, you will be able to help your baby. Always keep emergency numbers near your phone.

Try giving your baby a little fruit juice, breast milk or formula from a cup. When you give her a cup to drink from, help her hold it. Use a tippy cup with two handles. It is easier for your baby to hold.

Babies with a disability or medical problem may need special help. They may have physical problems that make it hard to feed themselves or chew. They may not be able to digest food like other children. Ask your doctor how best to help your child with solid foods.

Falling Asleep on Her Own

Question

"My baby wakes up almost every night and cries until I go to her. Then she wants to play instead of sleep. What can I do?"

Answer

If she wakes in the night and cries for you, wait for about five minutes. She may be able to fall back to sleep by herself. If her crying continues, go to her. Speak softly to her to comfort her. You can rub her stomach, but don't pick her up.

If she needs a diaper change or seems sick, take care of that. Avoid feeding her unless you think she is truly hungry. Then tell her it is time to sleep, and leave her alone. Don't play with her, or she will begin to expect you to play every night.

Most babies will learn to fall back to sleep by themselves. Babies who wake up a lot or cry for a long time during the night may be sick. Talk with your doctor or clinic about what to do.

Try this idea as you train your baby to fall asleep on her own:

Your baby needs to learn how to fall asleep by herself. You can help her by doing the same things each night when you put her to bed. Doing the same things before bedtime will help her know that it is time to sleep.

At the same time each night, rock her for a few minutes and sing to her or read her a book. Don't let her fall asleep in your arms. As she gets sleepy, put her down in her bed. Put a favorite toy in bed with her. Stay with her for a moment. Then leave her alone to fall asleep by herself.

Grandparents and Other Adults

Many people play an important role in your baby's life—mothers, fathers, grandparents, friends, other relatives. Your baby needs to spend time with both her mom and her dad. She should also spend time with other loving adults.

Gentle adults can help your baby feel safe and secure. They can feed her or give her a bath. These adults can change her diaper or rock her to sleep. They can do many things with your baby.

Other loving adults are good for your baby. They can take her for a walk or read her a story. They can get down on the floor to play with her. They can help her learn something important. She can learn to trust people and understand them.

Talk to your baby's grandparents. Together, you can find things for grandparents to do with your baby that they all will enjoy. Grandparents may play games with your baby. They may bring safe toys that will help her learn.

Soft toys and balls that make noise are great for a six-month-old. Baby books that have bright colors and different textures for her to feel will help your baby to learn.

Grandparents and other adults can:

- Help teach your baby to talk by imitating the sounds she makes.
- Help feed your baby.
- Read stories to her.
- Tell her nursery rhymes that will help her learn to talk.

What's It Like To Be Six Months Old?

- I turn toward voices.
- I reach for toys and pick them up.
- I can hold an object in one hand and put it into the other hand.
- I briefly look for a dropped toy.
- I pick things up and I shake them.
- I turn objects upside down to get another view of them.
- I may roll over from my stomach to my back and from my back to my stomach.
- I play with my toes.
- I may help hold my bottle.
- I know my name.
- I may play games with people I know.
- I babble, squeal and repeat sounds.
- I sit by leaning forward on my hands. I can sit with support.
- I may be afraid of adults I don't know.
- I know the faces of the people who are around me a lot.
- I may know what the tone of your voice means.

Each month, Healthy Start, Grow Smart will provide information about how babies grow and develop. If you have immediate questions or concerns about how your child is developing, call your baby's doctor.

Guiding Your Active Baby

At the age of six months, your baby is more active than in past months. Because she gets around more, it's a good idea to make your home safe for your baby. Put all cleaning supplies, medicines, poisons and sharp objects where your baby can't get to them. Be sure that everyone who cares for your baby knows how to keep her safe.

Sometimes she will reach for things she shouldn't. She may pull at your jewelry. She may try to eat a piece of paper. A baby this young does not need to be punished. She is exploring her world. You need to gently control what she does so she will be safe. She will also know that you are in charge. Be with your baby as she explores her world.

At this age, your baby is not doing things to upset you on purpose. She learns by trying new things. She doesn't know the limits. She needs you to show her what is okay and what is not okay for her to do. She needs you to show her in a loving way.

Always check on your baby when she cries to be sure that she is okay. Never leave her alone. Always watch your baby's activities. Praise her and hug her when she is doing things you like.

Let her know when she is doing something you don't want her to do. If she starts to yank out an electrical cord, or if she spills out the contents of a purse, speak to her in a warm but firm voice. You don't need to raise your voice. Gently take her hand away and give her a toy. Maybe she'll be too close to the hot stove. Maybe she'll try to grab something that could break. Gently pick her up and move her away from the thing she shouldn't touch.

Your Baby's Developing Brain

Each brain, like each child, is unique. Here are some findings by researchers that may help you with developing your baby's brain:

- Your baby may make sounds such as "ba," "ma" and "ga." Sometimes parents think these sounds mean more than they do. Wait. Soon your baby will attach a meaning to the sounds she makes.
- Talk to your baby often. This will help her learn to use sounds.
- Being in a safe and loving place helps your baby to learn. Toys bought in stores are not needed. Playing with pots and pans can be just as much fun. Playing with simple things is just as good for your baby's development.
- Praising your baby's good behavior is good for both of you. Show her that you like the way she is acting. This will help her do more things you like.
- When you take her to new places, your baby will want to reach for new objects that she sees. She is not trying to misbehave. Plan ahead and bring a favorite toy when you go out with her.

Games To Play with Your Six-Month-Old

A six-month-old is awake for much of the day, and she wants to play. Here are some tips for having fun with your baby:

Play naming games with your baby. Point to her nose and say, "nose." Do the same with her eyes, hands and toys.

Play pat-a-cake with your baby.

Play pop-goes-the-weasel. When you reach the “pop,” raise your baby’s arms in the air. Don’t jerk her arms or swing her by the arms.

Partly hide a toy under a blanket or piece of cloth. Let your baby grab the toy and learn to pull the blanket off.

Put several empty plastic cups into a shoebox. The cups can be different sizes. Reach into the box and take one cup out at a time. Pick out another cup and do it again. After you do this a few times, your baby will imitate you.

Put a large picture of yourself and dad near her crib or high chair. When she says “mama” or “da-da,” point to the pictures. Say, “There’s mommy” (or, “There’s daddy”).

Floor Time Is Playtime

Babies who are six months old need lots of floor time so they can learn to crawl and creep. If your baby doesn’t like being on the floor by herself, join her. Play on the floor with her.

Here are two activities that you can do during floor time:

Put your baby in a sitting position. Support her with pillows. Roll a soft ball to her and clap when she tries to roll it back.

Give your baby two plastic cups. Show her how to bang them together or to bang them on the floor.

Safety Corner

Here are some tips to make sure your baby is safe from harm or injury:

- Never leave your baby alone in a high place, such as a tabletop, a couch or a bed.
- Don’t leave her in a crib with the sides down. She can hurt herself if she falls.
- Never drink, eat, prepare or carry hot things while holding your baby.
- Don’t smoke around your baby. Don’t allow others to do so.
- Never give your baby any food or anything that could make her choke. Only give her foods that have been mashed.

- If you can, set the temperature of your hot water heater to 120 degrees or less. This will protect your baby from burns.
- Never shake or hit your baby.
- Never leave your baby alone with any pet. Even friendly pets can harm a baby.

In the car...

- Buckle your baby in a child seat in the back seat of your vehicle. The child seat should face the back of your car, not the front.
- Babies should never ride in the front seat of a car.
- Never hold your baby in your lap while you are driving.
- Never leave your baby alone in a car. Don't do it even if the windows are partly open.

In the crib...

- Crib mattresses should fit the crib snugly. There should be no gaps between the mattress and the sides of the crib.
- Do not cover the mattress with plastic bags of any kind.
- The slats on the side of the crib should be 2 3/8 inches apart, or even closer. Keeping Your Home Safe

Here are things you can do to make your home safe for your baby:

- Close the bathroom door.
- Put gates across steps and stairs.
- Cover unused electrical outlets. Use products that cover outlet holes.
- Keep cords from drapes and blinds and electrical cords out of your baby's reach.
- Put baby locks on cabinets.
- Protect your baby from furniture with sharp edges. You may be able to move the furniture to another room. Or let her play in another room.
- Keep medicines where your baby can't reach them.
- Move cleaning products from under the sink. Put them where your baby can't reach them.
- Keep small objects and balloons away from your baby.

You can learn more about how to make your home safe for your baby. Call the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission at 1-800-638-2772. The call is free.

Quiet Time Together

Be sure to have a little quiet time with your baby every day. Turn off the TV. Turn off the radio. Have a place and time for you and your baby to be quiet together.

Your baby needs to get to know you. And you need to get to know her. Every baby has a different style. Some are active. Some are quiet. Some do not like changes in their daily routines.

You are your baby's first teacher. She has a lot to learn before she goes to school. She has to learn to talk, to walk and to feed herself. But she has much more to learn so she can do well in school later in life.

During her first three years, your baby learns a lot of important ideas. Right now, she can pick up a toy or make different sounds.

Your baby needs to learn how to get along with other people. She learns this from you and your family. She learns this by playing with other children.

Your baby will learn about the idea of "cause and effect." When your baby shakes a rattle and laughs at the sound, she is learning that she can make things happen.

Hold your baby often. It will help her learn to trust. It will help her learn to love.

You can learn more about how to teach your baby as she grows. Talk to your doctor or clinic. They may have a list of helpful books, videos or classes.

Information Resources for Families

Families who are enrolled in the WIC program (Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children) can get information on breastfeeding, formula feeding and nutrition at their local WIC office. Families eligible for WIC receive nutrition counseling and supplemental foods such as baby formula, milk and cereal. To find the WIC office nearest you, call your state health department or visit the WIC Web site at www.fns.usda.gov/wic/. Many public libraries offer free access to the Internet and provide help for first-time users.

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To learn more about safety, you can call the Consumer Product Safety Commission at 1-800-638-2772 or you can visit their Web site at www.cpsc.gov/.

Chapter 8 - Your Seven-Month-Old

At seven months, your baby is doing all kinds of things he could not do even a few weeks ago. He may sit up straight for a moment without falling over. Usually, he sits leaning forward on both hands. He can support his weight on his feet when standing. If you hold him in a standing position, he may bounce up and down. He may be moving around the floor on his belly. He may try to feed himself. He likes to clap, pull, bang, poke and grab with his hands. He makes sounds on purpose.

Being able to do these things makes him happy. When he can do something he wants to do, he may smile, laugh, clap or look for your smile of praise. Smile at him or give him extra hugs when he tries new things.

Trying things over and over can be fun for him. But it can also upset him when he can't do something. He may cry when things don't work out the way he wants. As he does things, he wants you to be there to help him and hug him.

Your baby needs you to show him how to do things. But he may get upset if you try to do things that he thinks he knows how to do.

He may be afraid of strangers. If you leave the room, he may cry because he is afraid. Be sure to give him lots of hugs and smiles. Clap when he does something he wants to do. Give him extra love and care as he goes through this exciting time. He will love you back!

Your Baby's New Independence

Your baby is now playing more with his toys. At seven months, he may try to move around more by crawling on his belly to get a toy. Be sure to inspect your house for possible dangers. Babies find everything. They can see tiny things on the floor and under furniture that you may not see when you are standing. When checking to make sure the floor is a safe place, be sure to get down on the floor yourself, and search carefully with your eyes and hands for any dangers.

Your baby's memory and attention span are increasing. He may try to imitate noises or simple actions, such as clapping. He likes to play peek-a-boo. He may move his head or body around to look for toys that he suddenly cannot see.

Your baby will begin to drop toys on the floor to see you pick them up. He is learning that his rattle makes noise when he hits it or waves it around. He is learning that he can make a noise by banging a toy on the floor or a table. He can move a toy from one hand to the other. He may hold two toys for a very short time.

Your baby knows you. He knows that you are the same person who greets him every morning. He may be shy around people he has not seen before. He may not like it if someone rushes up to him and picks him up. He may need a little time to get used to someone new before he gets picked up by that person.

Your Family's Future

Are you thinking about having another baby?
Would you like your children to be born close together? Or would you like them to be born further apart?

Everyone has a different answer. Some parents wait. They have a second baby after their first child is five or six.

Some parents have their children closer together. Other parents decide to have only one or two children.

Talk to your spouse. Do you both have time and energy for another baby? How much can you give? How will you feed him? How will you give him clothes and medical care? What kind of house or apartment will you need? What do you want for your children?

It makes sense to plan your family. Planning ahead lets you give the best care to your children. Talk to your doctor, or talk to a nurse at a public health clinic. Ask how you can space your pregnancies.

There are many safe ways to delay getting pregnant until you are ready. Most are simple and cost little. Some work better than others. You can choose the one that is best for you.

Breastfeeding and Pregnancy

Maybe you've heard that you can't get pregnant when you're breastfeeding. That's not always true. It depends on how much you breastfeed. And it depends on when your monthly period returns. Breastfeeding should not be used as the only method of birth control. There are various methods of birth control that work well with

breastfeeding. Your doctor can help you choose the one that would work best for you.

Breastfeeding Advice

At seven months, your baby may begin to eat mashed or pureed vegetables and fruit in addition to infant cereal. These foods are not as important as breast milk. Do not worry if he is more interested in playing with his foods than eating them. Nursing him will meet most of his food needs.

Sometimes, your baby may bite down on your breast with his new teeth while he is breastfeeding. He doesn't know that it hurts you. Usually, this happens late in the feeding. If it does, slip your finger in between his gums and gently say, "No." If he does it again, slip your finger in between his gums and gently say, "No" again.

To learn more about breastfeeding, you may want to contact your local health department, WIC clinic, hospital, La Leche League or doctor. You can call La Leche League at 1-800-LALECHE or visit their Web site at www.lalecheleague.org/.

Feeding Your Baby

At meal times, your baby may show you that he wants to do things himself. He may want to hold his cup by himself.

You can avoid spills by putting just a little liquid into his plastic cup for him. Or you can give him an empty cup to hold while you feed him from another cup.

Your baby may not always be interested in eating at meal times. He may be more interested in playing with his spoon or his food. This means that meals may take longer than when he was younger. Let him explore. Learning new skills is important.

Never add corn syrup or honey to your baby's food or drink. These foods may contain germs that can make your baby sick.

Moving Bath Time to the "Big Tub"

Your baby may be getting too big for his baby bathtub. You can start bathing him in the family bathtub when he is able to sit up by himself.

Get everything ready before you put your baby in the tub. First, get the soap, washcloth, towel, shampoo and toys together. Then run the water. Test it on the inside of your wrist to be sure the water is warm but not hot. If the water feels hot on your wrist, it is too hot for your baby.

When everything is ready, place your baby in the water. Be sure to stay close to your baby while he is in the water. Never leave your baby alone when he is in the tub. Do not turn away from your baby when he is in the tub. A good rule is always to keep one hand on your baby the whole time he is in the tub. He could slip under the water and drown, or he could slip and hit his head.

Baths can be fun and messy, so enjoy this time with your baby. Play games with him. Let him enjoy the water. Because playing in the tub can be messy, put rugs or towels on the floor by the tub so the floor does not get wet. You or your baby could slip on a wet floor.

Let your baby splash all he wants. As you wash him, talk and sing to him. Give him a cup or toy that he can fill up with water and pour out. Put floating toys in the water for him to reach for. Reaching for a toy will help him learn to use his hand to find it.

Give your baby his own washcloth. Encourage him to wash himself as you bathe him. You can make your baby's bath a fun time for both of you.

Take Time for Yourself

It takes a lot of your time to care for a baby. Sometimes you may not have time to do all the things you want to do. You may also forget to take care of yourself. You need to take time for yourself.

Here are some things you can do to take care of yourself:

- Exercise, or take a walk.
- Eat healthy food.
- Spend time resting in a quiet place, reading or listening to music. Do something creative that you enjoy.
- Spend time talking with adults you enjoy. These may be your family, friends or a community group.
- Get enough rest. Check with your doctor if you are always tired.

- Share your thoughts, hopes and beliefs with your spouse, family or friends. Listen to their thoughts, too. Different points of view may help you solve problems.

Your baby will be happier if he has happy parents. Try to do healthy things that make you feel good. This is important. It will help you deal with stress and take better care of your baby.

What's It Like To Be Seven Months Old?

How I grow:

- I creep across the floor, and I may crawl.
- I may help you pull me up to a standing position by keeping my legs straight.
- When you hold me under my arms, I can stand and step in place. I like to look at my feet.
- When I'm lying on my back, I like to bring my feet to my mouth.
- I can hold an object in each hand. I like to bang things together.
- I can sit with a little support.
- I have very good eyesight.
- I am starting to feed myself with my hands.

How I talk:

- I like to imitate the sounds I hear.
- I like to say short sounds, like "ba," "ma," "mu," or "di." I say several sounds in a row.

How I respond:

- I listen to my own voice and the voices of other people.
- I may cry when my mommy or daddy leaves.
- I like to give hugs and kisses to people I know.
- I only want my favorite people to pick me up.

How I understand:

- I explore with my hands and feet.
- I struggle to get objects that are out of my reach.
- I can find objects that are partly hidden.

- When you bounce a ball in front of me more than once, I expect the next bounce.

Talking Together Helps Spouses Handle Stress

Question

Ever since we had the baby, there's been a lot of stress between my spouse and me. We never seem to have time just to sit and talk anymore. I can't seem to say how I feel. Do you have any suggestions?

Answer

With all the extra work a baby brings into your life, it is hard for parents to make time for each other.

You may have all kinds of feelings that you need to talk out. You may feel resentment, or you may feel guilt or anger.

Not talking about your feelings can hurt your relationship. As hard as it may seem, you must make time to be alone together. Your spouse probably has things to talk about, too.

Here are some tips on how to talk to each other about what is troubling you:

- Don't blame each other. This will only make the tension between you worse. Avoid saying "you always" or "you never."
- Take turns listening to each other. Listen, and then use your own words to repeat what your spouse says. "So you are saying that you feel left out when I spend so much time with the baby?" Don't interrupt. You will have your turn next.
- When it is your turn to talk, use "I" messages, such as, "I feel like I have to do all of the work." Avoid using "you." Don't say "You never do anything around here."
- Don't expect your spouse to read your mind or guess what you are feeling. Say how you feel.
- Be specific about what is troubling you. You can say "I get upset when you say you'll clean the bathroom, but then you don't do it."
- Be sure to say what you like about what your spouse does. You can say "I like how you're patient with the baby," or "It's good how you handle the shopping."

Having a new baby can make many things in your life more complicated. It may create more work for you and your spouse. Talking through these matters may help you work things out. Talking together often may keep things from getting out of hand.

Fathers and Babies Need Time Together

Being the father of a seven-month-old baby is great. The fun is just starting. At this age, your baby is much more active. He enjoys playing. He wants to move around on his own. He wants to explore everything.

Make sure your house is "baby-proof." Your baby will put anything into his mouth. He will poke his fingers into everything. Be sure that unused electrical outlets have covers. Put medicines and cleaning products out of your baby's reach.

Crawl around the floor of your house. Look for dangerous things, such as electrical cords and sharp objects. That way, you can see the room and the objects in the room the same way your baby sees them.

After your house is safe, get down on the floor with your baby. Fathers and babies need time together. Put a toy just out of his reach and coax him to push himself toward it. Don't push too hard if he's not ready.

Here are some other games to play with him:

- Roll a soft ball to him and let him pick it up.
- Play peek-a-boo.
- Play clapping games with him.
- Smile and clap when he does what he is trying to do.
- Hug and comfort him when he gets upset because he can't do things.

Plan a time to be with your baby. This can be during a feeding time, when he gets a bath, at bedtime or any time that works for you. He will love it.

You're his daddy. It's okay for you to do things differently from the way your baby's mother does things.

Know your baby's caregiver

Take time to talk with your baby's caregiver. Be clear about the care you want for your baby. Talk about what you want the caregiver to do. Talk about your baby's habits. Talk about his likes and dislikes.

At this age, a baby starts to feel afraid of strangers. Be sure to let your baby get used to his caregiver before you leave them alone together.

Take Time for Your Baby

By now, you may have returned to work or school. When you get home from work or school, you have already put in a long day.

You may feel like getting your baby to bed as soon as possible so you can relax. But quiet time with your baby can be a way to renew your tired body and to have some fun.

Plan to spend time with your baby every night. Your baby is going through a time that is exciting for him. He is learning new things every day. He is learning to talk, creep and feed himself. He needs your praise when he tries to do new things.

Hug him often. Play with him every day. Babies love games like peek-a-boo.

At this age, he loves to imitate the sounds you make. Make a sound and then let him try to make the same sound. He can say things like "ba," "ma," and "da."

He loves to look in the mirror at himself and at you. He will laugh and make happy gurgling sounds when he sees himself. He is learning the difference between your reflection in the mirror and the real you.

Rock him. Read to him. Sing songs with rhyming words. All of these things will make your baby happy. He will reward you with smiles, laughs and hugs.

You can learn more about how to teach your baby as he grows. Talk to your doctor or clinic. They may have a list of helpful books, videos, classes and Internet sites.

Fun on the Floor

As your baby grows, so does his interest in the world. He wants to explore his world. Here are some things he can do while playing on the floor. These are things that will help him learn and grow.

- Sit your baby on the floor and put a large empty plastic container in front of him. Hold a small ball over the container and drop it in. Do it a few times and then give him the ball.
- Encourage him to drop it into the container.
- Put your baby on the floor. Give him several soft balls to play with.
- Put your baby on the floor. Place several toys around him. Pick each one up and name it. Hand it to your baby. You can use a cup, a toy telephone, a doll, a spoon, a ball, a block, a stuffed animal or other toys.
- While playing games and having fun, talk to him about the things you are doing.

Early Intervention and Your Baby's Developing Skills

Children learn skills as they grow. These skills happen by certain ages. A child learns skills at his own pace. You can see how your baby is doing. Watch when he starts to crawl, walk, talk and feed himself.

If you are concerned that your baby is learning skills too slowly, call your doctor. You can also call 1-800-695-0285 to get information. The call is free. When you call, you will be told how to contact the early intervention program in your state. Staff of your state's early intervention program can assist you in finding help in your state.

What is an early intervention program?

An early intervention program helps children from birth to age three. Early intervention staff can help your baby learn to roll over, sit up, crawl and grasp toys.

They also help children who are having problems with seeing, hearing and talking.

How does an early intervention program help? It can help your child with needed services and also help you join a support group.

Your family and early intervention staff can work together to plan services. These services teach basic skills and can be done in your home or during child care.

Baby Games

Your seven-month-old loves to play. Here are some games you can play with him:

- Squeeze one of your baby's toys to make it squeak. Then hide it under a blanket while he is watching you. Let him try to find it.
- Bang two toys or objects together in front of your baby. Then let him try it, too.
- Give your baby one end of a towel or scarf and you take the other. Gently pull on your end.
- Cut out large, colorful pictures of objects from magazines. Paste the pictures on paper to make a book for your baby. Sit your baby on your lap and talk to him about each picture.
- Let your baby play with musical toys, such as bells. Make sure that none of the parts can come loose.

Safety Corner

Here are some tips for keeping your baby safe and healthy:

Basic safety tips

- Check the temperature of your baby's bath water before you put him into the tub.
- If you can, set your hot water heater to 120 degrees or less. Hot water can burn your baby's skin.
- Never leave your baby alone in the bath. Never leave him alone in water, even in a small amount of water. Never leave him alone near any water, not even a mop pail or a basin with water in it.
- Never shake or hit your baby.
- Never smoke around your baby.
- Never sip from a hot drink while holding your baby.
- Never cook at a hot stove while holding your baby.

Crib safety

- Crib mattresses should fit snugly. There should be no gaps between the mattress and the sides of the crib.
- The mattress should not be covered with plastic of any kind.
- The slats on the sides of the crib should be 2 3/8 inches apart, or even closer. Here is a 2 3/8-inch line: _____

It can help you to measure the spaces between the crib slats.

To learn more about safety, you can call the Consumer Product Safety Commission at 1-800-638-2772 or visit their Web site at www.cpsc.gov/.

Car safety

- Make sure the car seat is used properly.
- Buckle your baby in his car seat in the back seat of your car. The child seat should face the rear of the car.
- Babies should never ride in the front seat of a car.
- Never hold your baby in your lap while you are driving.
- Never leave your baby in a car alone.

Families who cannot afford a car safety seat can contact the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. They can provide information on resources that help low-income families purchase or borrow child car seats. You can call them at 1-800-424-9393 or visit their Web site at www.nhtsa.dot.gov/.

Safety with pets

- Never leave your baby alone with a pet, even if the pet is gentle.

Including Your Baby's Brothers and Sisters

Your baby's brothers and sisters can help him grow and learn. Include them in activities with your baby. This can help them get along better together.

You and your older children can sing a song or read a story to your baby. The baby will enjoy this.

Your older children can help you at the baby's bath time. They can help when you are changing his diaper.

A brother or sister needs to be old enough, mature enough and aware of how to take care of your baby before you can even consider leaving him with an older brother or sister, even for a short period of time. Most older brothers and sisters must be at least in their teens and have had a lot of experience handling the baby under your direct supervision before you can consider leaving them alone together.

Playing together

Playing with his brothers and sisters lets your baby learn new things. He may learn how to touch, watch and listen in new ways. He may learn to imitate in new ways.

Playing with his brothers and sisters helps teach your baby how to do things with others.

Plenty of Love for All

Here are some tips to help both your baby and your older children feel secure and loved:

- Set aside a time to be alone with your older children. Let them pick an activity they would like to do.
- Tell them stories about what you did with them when they were babies.
- When you are doing things with your baby, let your older children take part. For example, let them help pick out a book to read to their siblings and sit with you when you read to your baby.
- Teach your older children how to play some of the games described in this magazine with the baby under your supervision.
- After you put your baby to bed one night, have a pizza party or special meal with your older children.

Information Resources for Families

Families who are enrolled in the WIC program (Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children) can get information on breastfeeding, formula feeding and nutrition at their local WIC office. Families eligible for WIC receive nutrition counseling and supplemental foods such as baby formula, milk and cereal. To find the WIC office nearest you, call your state health department or visit the WIC Web site at www.fns.usda.gov/wic/. Many public libraries offer free access to the Internet and provide help for first-time users.

For information about early childhood education initiatives, you may contact the U.S. Department of Education at 1-800-USA-LEARN or visit the Web site at www.ed.gov/offices/OESE/teachingouryoungest/.

To learn about child care options, you may contact the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Child Care Aware by phone at 1-800-424-2246 or visit their Web site at www.childcareaware.org/.

For more information and resources on postpartum depression, breastfeeding and many other women's health issues call The National Women's Health Information Center (NWHIC) at 1-800-994-9662 (1-800-994-WOMAN). You can visit their Web site at www.4woman.org/.

To learn more about breastfeeding, you may call La Leche League at 1-800-LALECHE or visit their Web site at www.lalecheleague.org/.

To learn more about free or low-cost health insurance for children, you can call the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Insure Kids Now program at 1-877-KIDSNOW. You can also visit their Web site at www.insurekidsnow.gov/.

The American Association of Poison Control Centers' (AAPCC) poison control hotline, 1-800-222-1222, should be on your list of emergency numbers. To learn more, you can visit the AAPCC Web site at www.aapcc.org/.

Families who cannot afford a car safety seat can contact the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. They can provide information on resources that help low-income families purchase or borrow child car seats. You may call them at 1-800-424-9393 or visit their Web site at www.nhtsa.dot.gov/.

To learn more about safety, you can call the Consumer Product Safety Commission at 1-800-638-2772 or visit their Web site at www.cpsc.gov/.

For information on disabilities and disability-related issues for families, you can call the National Information Center for Children and Youth with Disabilities (NICHCY) at 1-800-695-0285 or visit their Web site at www.nichcy.org/.

Chapter 9 - Your Eight-Month-Old

At eight months, your baby is curious about everything. This is a fun time for both of you. Your baby may surprise you with how well she can get around the house. Let her explore, but keep her safe.

Now that she can pull herself around on her belly or crawl, she wants to get into everything. When she holds things in her hand, she wants to throw them or put them in her mouth. Or she wants to bang them on the table. These activities are important ways she learns. It seems like the more noise she can make, the more she likes it.

She practices new skills every day. She may try to pull herself up to a standing position. She likes finger foods.

Your baby may try to make new sounds, like "dada." The world is exciting to her, but some things may scare her. When she is around strangers, she may cry and hide her face. She may cling to you. All these things are normal. They are part of learning and growing.

She may try to stand or crawl. She may fall down a lot. It may be hard for you to watch her fall. Try to let her explore and move around on her own unless she is in danger or may hurt herself. Make your home as safe as possible for your baby. Join in the games that help her learn about her world.

Ways To Keep Your Baby Safe

Your baby needs to be safe. But she also needs to explore. You must decide when to tell her "no." And you must decide when to let her discover things on her own. You can keep your eight-month-old baby safe. But you always have to stay one step ahead of her!

Baby-proof your house:

- Lock up all of your medicines, vitamins and pills.
- Be careful when visitors come—people often carry medications in their purses or handbags.
- Remove sharp things from your baby's reach.
- Put covers on all electrical outlets.
- Move all electrical cords and extension cords out of your baby's reach.
- Keep your baby away from fans and space heaters.
- Put away small things that your baby can swallow.

- Keep cleaners and detergents out of your baby's reach.
- Put latches on dresser drawers and cupboards.
- Place tight covers on trash cans and diaper pails.
- Keep your toilet lid down. Your baby can fall into the toilet and drown.
- Be sure to cushion the sharp corners and edges of furniture where your baby plays.
- Avoid using any toy chest or other container with a hinged lid that can fall freely and smash small fingers and heads. To learn more about toy chest safety, call the Consumer Product Safety Commission at 1-800-638-2772, or visit their Web site at www.cpsc.gov/.

Prevent falls:

- Do not leave your baby alone on a bed, changing table or chair.
- Do not put furniture on bare floors. Put it on top of rugs or small rubber squares that you can get from the hardware store to hold it in place so it does not slide away from your baby trying to stand up.
- Install safety gates at the top and bottom of stairs. This includes porch stairs.

Prevent drowning:

- Never leave your baby alone in the bathtub.
- Never leave her alone near a swimming pool or any amount of water including a pail of water. It doesn't take a lot of water to drown a baby.

Closely watching your baby is the best way to keep her safe. Check on her frequently. If you leave the room for a short time, make sure she is in a safe place, such as a crib or a playpen. And be sure to keep a list of emergency phone numbers right next to your telephone.

Early Intervention and Your Baby's Developing Skills

Children learn skills as they grow. These skills happen by certain ages. A child learns skills at her own pace. You can see how your baby is doing. Watch when she starts to crawl, walk, talk and feed herself.

If you are concerned that your baby is learning skills too slowly, talk to your doctor. You can also call 1-800-695-0285 to get information. The call is free. When you call, you will be told how to contact the early

intervention program in your state. Staff of your state's early intervention program can assist you in finding help in your state.

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They also help children who are having problems seeing, hearing and talking.

How does an early intervention program help?

It can help your child with needed services and also help you join a support group.

Your family and early intervention staff can work together to plan services. These services teach basic skills and can be done in your home or during child care.

Your Baby's Next Checkup

Now is the time to make an appointment for your baby's nine-month checkup. At this checkup, the doctor will measure your baby's head. The doctor will weigh your baby and measure her length. The doctor will give your baby a physical exam. You will need to remove your baby's clothes before the doctor can do this. You will need to bring an extra diaper, too.

The doctor will also check to see how your baby is developing. Here are some of the things the doctor will check:

- How well she can sit by herself.
- How well she reaches for objects.
- How well her eyes are able to follow moving objects.
- The sounds she makes.

If she did not have a blood test at her six-month visit, your baby may have a test for anemia. She may also be tested for tuberculosis (TB). If you think of questions you would like to ask the doctor, write them down. You might want to bring your questions with you to the checkup. That way, you won't forget what you wanted to ask. If the

doctor's answers are not clear to you, say so. It is important that you understand what is best for your baby.

Mealtime with Your Eight-Month-Old

Mealtimes are still messy for you and your eight-month-old. She continues to need your special attention at meal times.

Your baby is probably able to pick up food with her fingers. By now, she is learning to drink from a cup. When she chews, she can move the food to the sides of her mouth.

You can now offer her thicker and lumpier foods. Here are some foods that she should be able to eat now:

- Soft, small pieces of meat.
- Mashed beans or peas.
- Bite-size pieces of bread.
- Cooked, mashed fruits and vegetables.
- Noodles.

Your baby is not yet ready for some foods. Here are some foods that you should not give her yet:

- Cow's milk.
- Egg whites.
- More than 4 ounces of juice per day.
- Honey or Karo syrup.
- Wheat cereal.

Instead of drinking cow's milk, your baby should continue to be breastfed or to get formula with iron. Egg whites and milk can make a young baby sick. If your baby drinks too much juice, she may lose her appetite. Then she might not eat the foods she needs. Honey may have bacteria. This can make your baby very sick. Wheat cereal can be hard for your baby to digest.

Remember, your baby knows how much food to eat. Give her a choice of foods that will help her grow. Do not force your baby to eat her food. She knows how much food she needs.

Meals should be offered at regular times each day. Meal times should be pleasant and as quiet as possible. Turn the TV off. Don't have a lot of other activity going on. Enjoy your meals together.

Reading to Your Baby

Reading to your baby is a way to spend special time with her. And it is one of the best ways to help your baby learn. Read to her every day.

When you read to your baby, you are helping her learn new words. Reading to her lets her know that books and reading are important. Reading to her now will help her do well in school later on.

At this age, your baby can pay attention for only a short time. Read only a few pages to her with lots of large, colorful pictures. She loves to have you read the same book over and over. Hearing the words over and over helps her to become familiar with them. She will begin to point to pictures to get you to name them for her.

Your baby likes to touch things. You can make a book for her with different pictures of her favorite things. Cover the book in plastic. She will like to feel it. You can paste pictures onto sheets of paper in the book. Use pictures of toys, family members or friends, foods, flowers or other things she likes. It will make her happy to look at these pictures and to feel the pages. She will like to listen to you as you talk to her about them.

You can even make a book of textures. Paste pieces of fabric onto the pages. You can use fabrics that are rough, bumpy and scratchy. You can add fluffy, stretchy and other kinds of fabrics. You can even paste in a piece of leather or some soft fur. This can be her special book. She will enjoy handling its pages. The important thing is to spend time reading to her every day. Reading to her is good for both of you.

Do you want to learn to read better? A public library might be able to help. You can also call America's Literacy Directory at 1-800-288-8813 to find out about programs in your area that help people learn to read. The call is free.

Teen Parents

If you are a teenage parent, you may need help from your family to care for your baby.

- Communicate with your parents. Let them know how you feel about being a new mother. Try to talk with them about your feelings. Do this in a calm way.

- Listen to your parents. Try to understand their feelings. Show them by your actions that you are a responsible person.
- When your parents help you, show them that you are grateful. Your baby needs the support of her whole family.
- If you need someone else to talk to, you might ask the counselor at your school.

What's It Like To Be Eight Months Old?

How I move:

- I crawl backward and forward on my stomach.
- I may pull myself up. First, I have to hold on to something. Maybe I'll hold on to a piece of furniture. Getting back down is not so easy!
- I can stand up. But I have to lean against something.
- I can reach for objects and pick them up with my fingers. Make sure I don't swallow them! I could choke.
- I can hold on to a toy for several minutes.

How I talk:

- I recognize some words. When I hear them, I turn and listen.
- I may make some double sounds. I may say sounds such as "da-da," "ma-ma" and "bye-bye."

How I think and understand:

- I want to learn. I want to explore.
- I remember some things.
- I have feelings.
- New experiences may scare me. New people may scare me.
- I might get upset if you leave the room, even for a short time.
- When you come back, I feel happy.
- I may get upset sometimes when I cannot reach something.

Playing with Your Eight-Month-Old

Your baby is busy learning new things. She is learning that she can cause things to happen. Every day, she is learning to explore. You can help your baby make things happen.

- Give her a ball. When she drops it, she'll see it bounce or roll across the floor. Pick the ball up and give it back to her. Talk to her about what it is called and how it "rolls" and "bounces."

- Let her play with a toy called a “busy box.” Some people call it an “activity board.” She can push a button to make a bell ring, or pull a cord to make an animal sound.
- Give her pots and pans, measuring cups or spoons. She’ll find out that she can bang them together and make lots of noise. In the kitchen, keep one cupboard near the floor as the baby’s cupboard. Put in old pots and pans and some toys so that she can play in the kitchen safely when you are working there to prepare meals.
- Hold your baby and let her switch the room’s light on and off. She’ll enjoy making the room bright or dark. Say the word “light” when she turns it on and “all gone” when she turns it off.

You can also do things to help your baby explore.

- Give safe toys to your eight-month-old. Safe toys include balls, blocks and nesting toys such as measuring cups, busy boxes, rattles and stuffed animals.
- Let her watch you hide objects under a towel or blanket on the floor. Help her find them. Ask her “where is it?” Praise her when she finds them.
- Give her a box of large items that she can take out and put back in.

Your Baby’s Brain

Helping your baby’s brain develop can be fun for both of you. There are things you can do to help her learn. Here are some ways to have fun and to help your baby’s brain develop:

- Talking to your baby helps her learn to speak. You can tell her the names of her body parts. You should repeat things. She will learn new words even before she can speak. A good time for this is bath time. You can talk about washing her leg, her foot and her toes.
- Point to objects that are near and describe them for her. You can point to her rubber ducky and say, “See the yellow ducky.” You can point to her blanket and say, “Grandma loves you. She made this special blanket just for you.”
- Talk about your activities as you do them. As you prepare to go outside, you can say, “Let’s go get in the car. We’ll go to the store for more diapers.” If you’re wiping her face, you can say, “Let’s wipe your face clean. No more stickiness! Doesn’t that feel better?”
- Play finger games or hand games with her. When your baby does something you like, move your fingers or hands. You can wiggle your fingers whenever she smiles. Or you can rub her tummy

whenever she grabs her feet. Soon she will learn that when she does something it makes you do something too.

- Hide objects under a blanket. Act surprised and delighted when your baby finds them.
- Put pillows or soft blocks down on the floor. Your baby can crawl to them. She can crawl all over them.
- Give her toys and games that help her learn. Give her balls, blocks, nesting toys, busy boxes and rattles. She also likes toys that she can pull apart and put back together. Talk to her about the names of the toy and what the toy is doing.

See how much fun it is to help your baby's brain develop. This is a good time to enjoy each other. And remember, each child develops in her own special way.

Floor Time

Your baby is starting to move around more and explore her world. You can help her practice to crawl and creep and scoot. She's on the move! First, make her floor space safe and fun.

- Find a quilt or blanket with colorful patterns to put under her.
- Place interesting objects on the floor so she can crawl to them. You can use soft pillows, stuffed animals or soft blocks.
- Let her crawl on things with different textures. This can be a big beach towel, a smooth sheet or a fuzzy blanket. You can play all sorts of fun games on the floor with your baby. Here are some ideas:
 26. Your baby will love to roll a ball back and forth with you. Use a soft fabric ball that has a bell inside. When you roll it, it will make a noise.
 27. Take turns playing a crawling game. Say, "I'm going to catch you!" and crawl after her. Then say, "You catch me!" and crawl away slowly enough for her to catch you.
 28. Put a towel on the floor next to your baby. Put a toy on it that's out of her reach. Show her how to drag the towel to her to bring the toy closer. Say to her "get it, get the toy."
 29. Make a stack of soft blocks. See how high you can make it before your baby knocks them all down. She loves to make that happen. Laugh with her when she does it.

Special Time with Your Eight-Month-Old

It is important to spend fun time with your baby every day. Your baby looks forward to having this time with you. She needs to be loved, cuddled, talked to and played with. If she spends the day with a sitter or in day care, this time alone with you is even more important. You can use this time to play games with her. Here are some games to play:

- You can help her crawl by placing pillows around the floor and showing her how to move around them.
- You can sit with her while she takes toys out of a box and then puts them back in. Name each toy as she puts them in and takes them out.
- You can show her pictures of animals and make animal sounds for her.
- Hold your baby in front of a mirror or a window. Let her enjoy what she sees.
- Sit with her in a rocking chair. Tell her you love her. Read her a story.
- Talk or sing to her.

The important thing is to spend time with your baby. Even chores like bathing and feeding your baby can be turned into fun and learning games. She looks forward to being with you each day. She loves your touch and attention.

Take Good Care of Yourself

Being a parent is important. But you are more than a mother or a father. You must take good care of yourself. That way, you'll be able to take good care of your baby. What should you do to take care of yourself? Well, think about how you take care of your baby.

- You want your baby to be healthy. Keep yourself healthy, too. Eat healthy foods. Take walks. Exercise. Get enough rest. Get regular medical and dental checkups.
- You want your baby to learn. Keep your mind active. Read a magazine or a book. Learn new things. Try making a new recipe.
- You want your baby to learn how to talk. You need to talk to others, too. You need to talk to other adults. Take time to talk and listen to your spouse, family and friends.
- You want your baby to be safe. You need to practice safety, too. Always wear your seat belt when driving. Always wear a bicycle helmet when riding. They will protect you. Later, your baby will

learn to wear them, too. You need to practice safety to set an example for your baby.

- You want your baby to enjoy life. You should, too. Listen to music. Do something creative. Do something fun. Stress may be a part of your life. Taking time for yourself will help you handle the stress better.

Questions Parents Ask

Question

My eight-month-old baby has now become scared around people. She sometimes cries even when my mother comes to visit. Why does she act this way? What can I do to help her?

Answer

Your baby will make friends when she is ready. She may just look at the new person. Or she may hand something to them and then take it back. Maybe she will pick up things in the room and put them on the person's lap. Do not make her kiss or hug the new person. This may make her unhappy. Your baby will become more at ease with people as she gets older. Then she will learn to make friends without crying and hiding.

At this age, your baby may be scared of anyone she doesn't see often. This may include her grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, and family friends. This is a normal emotional reaction for your baby. She will react by hiding her face in your neck. She may cry. The best way to help her is to comfort her. Give her time to watch new people and get used to them. Let her decide when she wants to be held or touched by new people in her life.

Information Resources for Families

Families who are enrolled in the WIC program (Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children) can get information on breastfeeding, formula feeding and nutrition at their local WIC office. Families eligible for WIC receive nutrition counseling and supplemental foods such as baby formula, milk and cereal. To find the WIC office nearest you, call your state health department or visit the WIC Web site at www.fns.usda.gov/wic/.

For information about early childhood education initiatives, you may contact the U.S. Department of Education at 1-800-USA-LEARN or visit their Web site at www.ed.gov/offices/OESE/teachingouryoungest/.

To learn about child care options, you may contact the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Child Care Aware by phone at 1-800-424-2246 or visit their Web site at www.childcareaware.org/.

For more information and resources on postpartum depression, breastfeeding, and many other women's health issues call The National Women's Health Information Center (NWHIC) at 1-800-994-9662 (1-800-994-WOMAN). You can visit their Web site at www.4woman.gov/.

To learn more about breastfeeding, you may call La Leche League at 1-800-LALECHE or visit their Web site at www.la lecheleague.org/.

To learn more about free or low-cost health insurance for children, you can call the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Insure Kids Now Program at 1-877-KIDSNOW. You can also visit their Web site at www.insurekidsnow.gov/.

The American Association of Poison Control Centers (AAPCC) poison control hotline, 1-800-222-1222, should be on your list of emergency numbers. To learn more, you can visit the AAPCC Web site at www.aapcc.org/.

Families who cannot afford a car safety seat can contact the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. They can provide information on resources that help low-income families purchase or borrow child car seats. You may call them at 1-800-424-9393 or visit their Web site at www.nhtsa.dot.gov/.

To learn more about safety, you can call the Consumer Product Safety Commission at 1-800-638-2772 or visit their Web site at www.cpsc.gov/.

For information on disabilities and disability-related issues for families, you can call the National Information Center for Children and Youth with Disabilities (NICHCY) at 1-800-695-0285 or visit their Web site at www.nichcy.org/.

For information about programs that teach adults how to read, you can call America's Literacy Directory at 1-800-228-8813 or visit their Web site at: www.literacydirectory.org/.

Chapter 10 - Your Nine-Month-Old

Nine Months—and Growing!

Mickey is nine months old. His parents, Lisa and José, have plans for their family. Lisa has gone back to school and looks forward to graduation. José has found a better job in the neighborhood superstore.

And Mickey! He has two teeth, sits up without wobbling and almost sleeps through the night. He's pulling himself across the rug with his arms—crawling can't be far behind. He babbles and laughs when he sees his grandparents.

Mickey nurses several times a day, but he is always eager for his "big boy" dinner. Tonight he will have mashed sweet potatoes, chopped spinach and cheese. Next week he will go to the clinic for his nine-month checkup.

Now Lisa and José are eager to know what comes next.

- Mickey doesn't drink from a cup—is that OK?
- And what about crawling? Will that make home life different?
- How can Lisa and José help Mickey continue to grow, learn and laugh?

And what about you and your baby? In this issue, you will learn how your nine-month-old baby grows and learns.

Questions Parents Ask

Question

My mother is always telling me how to take care of my baby. I know she means well, but it makes me upset. I don't want to hurt her feelings. What can I do?

Answer

Grandparents naturally want to be involved in your baby's life. Other relatives may also offer advice. They often think they can save you from mistakes they made. They only want the best for your child.

All parents have to find their own way of rearing children. Everyone makes mistakes. No one does it perfectly. Here are some ideas to try:

- Be open-minded. Use the advice that makes sense to you. Forget the rest. For example, your mom may insist that you “dress up” the baby when you take him out. But you may find that your baby is more comfortable without a bonnet and shoes. So you dress him in a play shirt, diapers and socks.
- Explain what you are doing. “We don’t toss him in the air or play ‘horsy.’ That kind of rough play can damage his brain.”
- Point to an expert. “My doctor told me to put him to sleep on his back.”
- Talk it out. Discuss feeding and snacks. “Bananas are more nutritious than doughnuts.” Explain about bedtime and naps. “I sit by his bed and pat him on the back until he stops crying and falls asleep.” Talk about playing and toys. “He loves to play ‘patty-cake’ over and over.”
- Let grandparents know specific ways they can help. “Dad, you could help me most by baby-sitting once a week.” Or, “Mom, I never have enough quarters for the laundromat. Could you save some for me?”

After your explanations, grandparents and others may say, “Well, we did it this way, and all our kids turned out all right.” Avoid arguments. Say, “Thank you for your opinion. I know you are trying to help.” You may also let them know that new information is now available on what helps babies develop and what things to try to avoid.

When grandparents baby-sit, give them food and diapers for your baby. Explain safety issues to them. They may have old-fashioned ideas about safety or they may have forgotten how active a nine-month-old can be. Have on hand anything else your baby may need, such as medicine. Explain about any allergies or problems, like teething.

Remember that no one will care for your baby exactly as you would. Everyone does it differently. Your baby will come to know and love his grandparents in a special way.

Safety First—at Every Age

Always remember

- Buckle your baby into a car safety seat every time he rides in a car. Make sure the safety seat is correctly secured.

- Stay with your baby when he is playing near or in water. Watch him closely.
- Never, ever shake your baby.
- Put your baby to sleep on his back unless your doctor tells you to do otherwise. Insist that others who care for your baby do the same.
- Serve healthy foods. Avoid sweetened, salty or fatty ones.
- Lock up alcohol, drugs and other chemicals. These can kill your baby.
- Put away knives, guns, matches, bug spray, medicine, detergents, disinfectants and other items that can hurt your baby. Put them in a place your exploring baby can't reach or open.

Home hazards

Your baby is moving around a lot more. At this age, babies are naturally curious and get into everything. But they don't know what can hurt them. It's up to parents to keep babies safe. Check your house for safety hazards often:

- Vacuum or sweep the floors. Pick up any small items such as buttons, coins and paper clips.
- Latch window guards or open windows from the top.
- Latch safety gates across stairs.
- Lock the doors to balconies and decks.
- Move electric fans out of baby's reach.
- Place a protective screen around a space heater. Keep the heater away from curtains, paper and other materials that can catch fire.
- If you have a gun, store it under lock and key. Make sure it is not loaded.
- Check toys. If you find any loose or broken parts, repair the toy or remove it right away.

While your baby is awake and moving, stay close. Look for possible dangers. A pencil may seem harmless, but in a baby's hand it could poke an eye. Your careful watching will prevent accidents.

Water safety

Water is great for cleaning and drinking. But it can be a hazard for babies. They can drown in only a few inches of water. Here are some water safety tips:

- Empty your mop bucket right after using it.

- In the house and outside, store buckets, wash tubs and other large containers upside down.
- Always keep one hand on your baby while he's in the bath.
- Use a rubber mat, rubber decals or a bath chair to keep your baby from slipping in the bathtub.
- Keep toilet lids closed. Use safety latches, if possible.
- Save swimming until your baby is out of diapers. Play with a trickling hose or sprinkler instead. Babies are not toilet trained, so they can leave germs in swimming pools. Chlorine kills most swimming pool germs but not all of them. And it takes only a tiny number of germs to cause infections.
- If you live near a swimming pool, make sure it is fenced and has a locked gate. Keep your baby away from any pools, ponds and creeks.

Other Possible Hazards Need Special Attention

Electrical cords: Cords invite pulling and tripping. Secure the cords along the base of the wall with clips or tape.

Electrical outlets: Cover outlets with plastic plug inserts available at the grocery or hardware store.

Blind cords: Mini blinds and drapes often have long cords. Tie these up, out of your baby's reach.

Lead paint: Wooden trim in older buildings is sometimes covered with paint that contains lead. This long-acting poison can hurt your child.

Lightweight furniture: Before long, your baby will be pulling himself up to stand. Almost all children use furniture to hold on to as they stand. Top-heavy furniture, like a TV stand, could topple over onto your baby. Rearrange furniture now, and you won't have to worry later.

When your baby does begin to reach for something he shouldn't, telling him "no" in a warm but firm voice will help him learn what's not okay to touch. It will take many "nos" before your baby will avoid reaching for something he shouldn't. You must say "no" and continue to watch your baby carefully. Babies this age are too young to trust to do the safe thing. Anger isn't helpful and may only scare him.

Games for Learning

Children learn through play, and your nine-month-old is ready to learn. Try some of these activities to help him learn about his world while you both have fun.

Read pictures. Share pictures, magazines and the newspaper with your baby. Point to and name things, actions, colors and people. You might, for example, look at a colorful ad. Point to the girl, boy, stove, radio, lawn mower, blue shirt and gardener.

Feel textures. Cut squares of fabric and glue them to a piece of cardboard. Try to have a variety of textures like corduroy, satin, burlap, vinyl and fake fur. Let your baby sit with you and help him feel each of the different textures with his hands. Describe the textures with words like rough, smooth, soft, bumpy and prickly.

Fill and dump. Gather five or six small, empty food containers like gelatin boxes, an oatmeal box and small cereal boxes. Tape or glue the containers closed. Give your baby a small paper bag. Show him how to fill the bag with groceries and dump them out again.

Love the baby. Give your baby a large baby doll or stuffed animal. Show him how to rock and cuddle with the doll. Point to and say "eyes," "nose," "mouth," "ears," "tummy" and "legs," for example. Show your baby where these features are on his body. Say "Here are the baby's ears. Where are your ears?"

Your Baby's Nine-Month Checkup

Babies need to go to the doctor often, even when they are well. They get shots to keep them from catching diseases. They get a physical exam to see how they are growing. If a problem is found, your doctor will suggest what to do. Taking care of small problems now will often keep them from becoming big problems later.

Doctor visits are also a good time to learn more. Ask the doctor or nurse about such things as:

- taking the baby's temperature,
- giving medicine or home remedies,
- feeding milk and solid foods,
- giving vitamins or other supplements,

- putting the baby to sleep, and
- following advice on baby care that others give you.

Guiding Your Baby

Your baby depends on you to teach him about his world. He needs to learn about things that hurt him and about those that hurt other people. He learns by exploring his world—with all his senses. He touches, tastes, smells, hears and sees. This exploring sometimes leads to trouble.

For example, Jarvis wants to touch and taste the coat button he sees under the chair. He crawls over, picks it up and starts to put it into his mouth. Jarvis' mother catches him as he puts the button on his tongue. She startles him when she says in a loud, angry voice, "No, no, no. Don't put that in your mouth." Next time, rather than using a loud, angry voice to stop Jarvis, his mother can calmly but firmly tell Jarvis to drop the button. She can gently tell him why he should not put the button into his mouth and then give him a safe toy to play with instead.

Parents can teach more and scold less by planning ahead. You have already made your home safe with childproofing, but now you have a crawling, curious nine-month-old. It's time to childproof again—with your baby's skills and interests in mind. You can start by getting down on the floor. Pretend you are your crawling baby. You'll see more things down on that level than you do standing up.

Early Intervention and Your Baby's Developing Skills

Children learn skills as they grow. These skills happen by certain ages. A child learns skills at his own pace. You can see how your baby is doing. Watch when he starts to crawl, walk, talk and feed himself.

If you are concerned that your baby is learning skills too slowly, talk to your doctor. You can also call 1-800-695-0285 to get information. The call is free. When you call, you will be told how to contact the early intervention program in your state. Staff of your state's early intervention program can assist you in finding help in your state.

What is an early intervention program?

An early intervention program helps children from birth to age three. Early intervention staff can help your baby learn to roll over, sit up, crawl and grasp toys.

They also help children who are having problems with seeing, hearing and talking.

How does an early intervention program help?

It can help your child with needed services and also help you join a support group.

Your family and early intervention staff can work together to plan services. These services teach basic skills and can be done in your home or during child care.

Games for Skill Building

Physical skills: Your baby is probably crawling or scooting around the floor. Help him build strong muscles and improve his balance. Build a mountain for him to climb by piling pillows on the floor. Encourage him to crawl over the mountain. Sit on the floor with your baby so you can help steady him as he climbs.

Social skills: Sing songs with your baby. Borrow recordings of children's music from the public library. Dance with the music. Or do finger and arm motions that match the words of the song.

Emotional skills: Your baby can probably recognize himself now. Hang an unbreakable mirror on a wall low to the ground. Encourage your baby to look at himself in the mirror. Talk to him about the image. Say things like "Look at Juan in the mirror. He's smiling now. Juan has curly hair."

Language skills: Your nine-month-old is a babbler. He probably copies sounds and soon will be saying words. Talk to him often. Play a game in which you say sounds—"ma-ma-ma-ma," for example. Give him time to repeat the sound to you. When he makes a sound, say it back to him.

Intellectual skills: Your baby is learning that things exist even if he can't see them. He can follow your voice from another room. He can crawl to get a ball that has rolled under a chair. Play "Hide and Find" with him. Get a small object like a block or a spoon. Cover it with a

small towel or scarf. Ask "Where is the block?" Let your baby uncover the block by moving the scarf. He'll love to play this game over and over.

What's It Like To Be Nine Months Old?

- I can move toys and other small things from one hand to the other.
- I may begin to pull myself up to stand. But I need something sturdy to hold on to.
- I can pick up toys, food and small things using my fingers and thumb.
- I usually put a toy or food down by dropping or throwing it.
- I have good balance and can sit by myself.
- I crawl on my hands and knees. I may try to move up and down stairs.
- I like to watch people, animals, things and activities around me.
- I want to taste everything I touch.
- I practice making noises with my mouth. I try to copy the sounds I hear.
- I recognize my family and like being with them.
- I am sometimes afraid of strangers. I don't like being away from my parents.
- I like to play peek-a-boo and other games that help me find hidden things.
- I like to show that I know how to use everyday items like a cup, a hairbrush and a ball.
- I like songs and rhymes and can bounce-dance to music.
- I know my name and smile when someone says it.

Bathing Your Baby

Your baby will probably enjoy his daily bath. You may struggle to get all of him clean while he splashes, slides and wiggles.

Your baby may have great balance and sit without support. But he still needs the safety of a plastic baby bathtub or bath chair. If you don't have a tub or chair, keep one arm around the baby all the time. Gather all the things you need before he goes into the water.

Encourage water play. It helps build coordination and control. Give your baby bath toys and let him splash, pour and catch water. Use bath time to teach. Talk to your baby about water and his play. Even

though he won't be able to say the words yet, he'll begin to understand "empty," "full," "dry," "wet," "float" and "sink."

Keep your baby safe in the bath. Here are some ways:

- Stay alert. Don't take your hand off the baby for even a second. If you must move away, take the baby with you.
- Give your baby toys for the bath. Store the toys in a mesh bag that hangs from the showerhead. They will drain and be out of the way of other bathers.
- Drain the tub right after the bath.
- Don't let your baby go into the bathroom without you. Keep the bathroom door closed and the toilet lid down.

Bowel Habits

Because your baby is eating more solid foods, his bowel movements may change. Solid food moves more slowly through the intestines. And stools become heavier and less frequent.

Some babies have one or two bowel movements a day. Your baby may have one every other day. For some children that's normal. If the bowel movement is hard and painful, check with your doctor.

It is too early for your baby to start learning to use the toilet. This learning must wait until two things happen. Your child must be able to feel his body's "need to go." He must also be able to get to the toilet. Usually this doesn't happen until a child is two years old or older. Trying to start earlier will be frustrating for you and your baby.

You can start preparing for this learning now. Talk to your baby when you change his diaper. Say, for example, "Wow! Your diaper is so wet this morning. Let's change it and make you clean and dry again." This helps your baby learn the words wet and dry. This helps him connect being dry to being comfortable.

Sleeping Patterns

The ordinary, loving things you do every day with your baby are routines. Putting him to bed, changing diapers, bathing and feeding are the most common ones. Routines help your baby feel loved and safe. Routines can also be times for learning.

At this age, most babies sleep about 13 hours a day. They may have a long night sleep of about 10 hours, a short morning nap and a longer afternoon nap. A nine-month-old may stay awake past regular sleep times. This happens when your baby is excited, involved in activities or just doesn't want to be away from you.

Avoid sleep problems by building routines that help your baby move from active play to restful sleep. You can turn down the lights and background noise like the TV or music. Your baby will be more likely to go to bed if he doesn't think he'll miss something exciting.

Create a routine. This could include a soothing bath, a bedtime story and good-night kisses to family members. Give him a stuffed animal, a special blanket or other "snuggly." Put it and your baby into bed. If you use a crib, keep the sides up and securely fastened.

Don't be surprised if he doesn't go to sleep right away. He may babble to himself and later fall asleep on top of the covers. Let him form his own comfort habits—rocking or sucking a thumb, for example. These habits help him put himself to sleep.

Be consistent with your bedtime routine. Reassure your baby if he cries. But make sure he knows that you mean business—it's time for bed.

Help Your Baby Feed Himself

By nine months of age, your baby can grasp food and get it to his mouth. He will be more successful feeding himself if you serve the right foods in the right sizes.

Serve finger foods as part of the main meal. For example, you may need to spoon feed cereal and peaches, but your baby can manage to feed himself small pieces of cracker.

Let your baby discover the tastes and textures of finger foods. Watch your baby carefully as you give him very small pieces of the following finger foods:

- Toasted bread crusts
- Crackers
- Zwieback toast
- Cheese cubes

- H Cooked pasta
- Slices of ripe peach or pear
- Rice

Cooked vegetables also make great finger foods. Offer small amounts of cooked squash, sweet potato, white potato, beans and carrots. Avoid raw vegetables now. Your baby doesn't have enough teeth to chew hard food.

Equipment for happy meals

- Highchair. If you have one, make sure it's sturdy. It should have a big tray as well as a harness or safety belt. Spread newspaper or towels underneath at mealtime to make cleaning up easier.
- Bibs. Look for rigid plastic bibs with a pocket designed to catch spills.
- Dishes. Use a heavy plastic bowl that won't slide around on the high chair tray table. You can serve most foods at room temperature or a little warmer.
- Cups. Serve liquids in a baby cup with two handles and a lid with a spout. This kind of cup makes learning to drink easier.

Solid Foods

Learning to eat solid foods is a big task for an infant. Your baby has learned hunger can be satisfied with breast milk or infant formula. Now he has to learn that hunger can also be satisfied with solid foods. By nine months, your baby will probably enjoy three main meals a day with morning and afternoon snacks. His nutrition now comes more from solid food and less from breast milk or formula.

Continue to offer new foods. But include a variety of foods at every meal. Most of the foods you prepare for your family are fine for your nine-month-old. Chop food into small pieces. If your baby develops a rash, diarrhea or signs of upset stomach after eating a new food, stop serving it. Avoid cow's milk, honey, salt, hot spices and added sugar.

Don't worry about your baby not getting enough to eat. You don't need to coax and urge, "One more bite for daddy." If you offer a variety of healthful foods, your baby will eat what he needs. Just don't fill him up with cookies, sweet drinks or juices.

If your baby is hungry for a snack, try these foods:

- Pieces of banana
- Thin slices of whole wheat bread and butter
- Plain yogurt mixed with mashed fruit
- Small, dry cereal pieces
- Cubes of soft cheese

Satisfy thirst with water. Save juice for treats.

Breastfeeding Tips

Your baby may be eating many kinds of solid foods. But breast milk is still his main source of nutrition. You need to eat healthy foods to maintain your energy and milk supply. Your body may be making less milk now because your baby is nursing less. But if your baby wants to nurse more, your body will make more milk.

Help your baby learn about drinking from a cup. Many parents like using a cup with a lid and spout. This helps babies move from sucking to sipping. You might want to put breast milk in the cup. Offer it at meals. As your baby learns to drink, put more breast milk in the cup. Or put water in the cup.

Your baby is learning to feed himself. That means mealtimes may be messy and stressful. Avoid quarrels. Give your baby finger foods. Talk with him so he will learn that mealtime is a social time. Finish with a relaxed breastfeeding.

Sometimes your baby may want to play instead of nurse. When that happens, let him sit on your lap. Read a story or sing a song instead. He may not be hungry. Or he may be bored with the feeding. Remember, nursing satisfies both physical and emotional needs. Let your baby nurse whenever he needs a snack. Let him nurse when he needs to feel your loving arms.

To learn more about breastfeeding, you may want to contact your local health department, WIC clinic, hospital, La Leche League or doctor. You can call La Leche League at 1-800-LALECHE or visit their Web site at www.lalecheleague.org/.

Protect Your Baby's Teeth

Your baby probably has several teeth by now. Baby teeth are important. They can affect how the permanent teeth will grow.

Your baby learns by watching you. Set a good example. Brush your teeth after every meal. Avoid eating sugary foods. Go to the dentist for regular checkups.

If you notice any white spots on your baby's teeth, take him to a dentist. White spots may be a sign of decay. Regular dental care starts at age one. Emergency dental care can begin sooner.

Here are some ways to protect your baby's teeth:

- If your baby needs a bottle to fall asleep, give him only water in a bottle or a cup. Liquids other than water contain sugar. Feeding at bedtime may leave sugar on teeth all night. Then sugar has more time to turn into decay
- If you feed your baby formula, always hold him while feeding. Never prop the bottle.
- If you use a pacifier, keep it clean. Don't coat it with anything.
- Wipe your baby's teeth and gums every night. Use a wet, clean, soft washcloth.

Choking Hazards for Young Eaters

Stay close to your baby while he eats. Choking is an emergency that can be prevented. Just make sure all food is carefully prepared. Stay nearby and watch that your baby doesn't put too much food into his mouth.

Some foods are more likely than others to cause choking. Your baby is too young for foods that are hard, chunky or need to be chewed. Save these foods until your baby is three or four years old. Then there will be less danger of choking.

Look for classes on infant cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and basic first aid in your community. Or borrow a free video on first aid from your video store or public library. If your baby does start to choke, call 911 right away. This is an emergency. Do what the operator says. Stay on the line until you are sure your baby is all right.

Never feed your baby the following:

- Hot dogs
- Hard candy
- Peanuts or any nuts

- Grapes
- Cookies
- Meat chunks
- Raw carrot slices
- Peanut butter
- Apple chunks
- Popcorn

Take Time for Yourself

Taking care of a baby often creates stress. You may feel stressed without knowing it. Here are a few common symptoms:

- Anxiety. You may worry about the baby, your marriage, money, work or school. You may feel guilty for not doing better.
- Confusion. You may forget things, like where you put your keys. You may run late. You may feel that you just can't handle anything.
- Anger. You may lose your temper easily. You may snap at people.
- Sleeplessness. You may not be able to sleep well at night. Or you may have nightmares.
- Fatigue. You may feel tired a lot. Or you may not feel like doing things you normally enjoy. You may cry easily.
- Physical problems. You may have neck or back pain, headaches or stomach aches.
- If any of this is happening to you, check with your doctor. Make sure there is no other reason for you to feel as you do.

Find ways to cope with stress. Here are some ideas:

- Talk to friends and other parents. Sharing your feelings may help reduce stress.
- Write down all the things that worry you. Making a list may help you think more clearly. Work on one thing at a time.
- Ask for help. Ask your partner to shop for groceries. Ask a nurse about relaxation exercises. Talk to a school counselor or religious advisor.
- Exercise. Take a walk. Push the baby in a stroller. Dance to music on the radio.
- Nap when your baby does. Darken the room. Turn off the telephone. Play soft music.
- Take a break. Ask someone you trust to keep your baby for an hour or two. Go window-shopping at the mall. Find a book at the public library. Visit a friend

Quick stress busters

- Breathe deeply. Close your eyes.
- Tighten your muscles. Then relax them.
- Stand up and stretch.

When Someone Else Cares for Your Baby

All parents are a little nervous when someone else cares for their baby. You may have asked an aunt to baby-sit for a few hours. Or you may have your baby in a state-licensed program. Anytime someone else cares for your baby, help make it safe. Here are some ways.

Give the caregiver a phone number where you can be reached. Give the name of your baby's doctor. Write permission to get medical help in an emergency.

Tell the caregiver about your baby's likes and dislikes. For example, he doesn't like carrots. And he likes his "blankey" at naptime.

Share your baby's routine. For example, he usually wakes up at 5:30 a.m. That means he takes a nap about 9 a.m. He's slow to wake up and needs a few quiet minutes before wanting to be with people.

Maintain a business approach. If you pay for care—even if it's your sister—be clear about what you expect. For example, you expect the caregiver to change wet diapers right away and then wash her hands. Don't take advantage of the arrangement. The caregiver expects you to pick up your baby at the time you have agreed upon.

How Children Grow

When parents are asked what they want for their children, they usually say they want children who

- feel good about themselves;
- get along with others;
- have healthy, strong bodies;
- are smart and successful; and
- can talk about what they need and want.

These answers match the ways children grow and develop. All children can develop emotional, social, physical, intellectual and communication skills. These skills help babies grow into well-balanced, successful adults.

All children grow and develop. But no two babies do it in the same way at the same time. Each baby is unique. Each has strengths in some areas. Each also has needs. If you have concerns about your baby's development, talk to his doctor.

Information Resources for Families

Families who are enrolled in the WIC program (Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children) can get information on breastfeeding, formula feeding and nutrition at their local WIC office. Families eligible for WIC receive nutrition counseling and supplemental foods such as baby formula, milk and cereal. To find the WIC office nearest you, call your state health department or visit the WIC Web site at www.fns.usda.gov/wic/.

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For more information and resources on postpartum depression, breastfeeding, and many other women's health issues call The National Women's Health Information Center (NWHIC) at 1-800-994-9662 (1-800-994-WOMAN). You can visit their Web site at www.4woman.gov/.

To learn more about breastfeeding, you may call La Leche League at 1-800-LALECHE or visit their Web site at www.lalecheleague.org/.

To learn more about free or low-cost health insurance for children, you can call the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Insure Kids Now 1-877-KIDSNOW. You can also visit their Web site at www.insurekidsnow.gov/.

The American Association of Poison Control Centers (AAPCC) poison control hotline, 1-800-222-1222, should be on your list of emergency numbers. To learn more, you can visit the AAPCC Web site at www.aapcc.org/.

Families who cannot afford a car safety seat can contact the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. They can provide information on resources that help low-income families purchase or borrow child car seats. You may call them at 1-800-424-9393 or visit their Web site at www.nhtsa.dot.gov/.

To learn more about safety, you can call the Consumer Product Safety Commission at 1-800-638-2772 or you can visit their Web site at www.cpsc.gov/.

For information on disabilities and disability-related issues for families, you can call the National Information Center for Children and Youth with Disabilities (NICHCY) at 1-800-695-0285 or visit their Web site at www.nichcy.org/.

For information about programs that teach adults how to read, you can call America's Literacy Directory at 1-800-228-8813 or visit their Web site at: www.literacydirectory.org/.

Chapter 11 - Your 10-Month-Old

10 Months and Terrific

Ruby and Albert are excited by 10-month-old Jessica's new skills. This month there are so many! Jessica calls to her parents saying "Mama" or "Dada." She wants to feed herself at every meal. She sometimes drinks from a cup without spilling. She tries to pull herself up to stand. She likes to practice stepping sideways along the sofa. But she knows that she has to hold on to stay steady. Crawling still helps her get around the house in a hurry.

Jessica explores everything. She pulls pots and lids out of the kitchen cabinet. She drags clothes from the laundry basket. She scatters magazines everywhere. Everything is a toy that she learns from. When she was six months old, Jessica made friends with Rollo, the neighbor's dog. This month Rollo's loud bark scares Jessica. Now she cries and clings whenever Rollo is around.

Ruby and Albert know they have to move fast to stay ahead of Jessica. In this month's issue, you'll learn more about your baby. You'll learn more ways to help your baby grow, learn and stay safe and healthy.

Questions Parents Ask

Question

When I'm watching TV, my baby plays with the controls or bangs the screen. I tell her to stop, but she won't. What can I do?

Answer

At this age, babies are curious and want to try out everything. They also have short attention spans. They quickly lose interest in one thing and move to something else.

A TV is interesting to a baby. The controls are just the right size for tiny fingers. She can push or turn them. The screen is a dancing display of light and color. And the TV makes lots of noise.

A TV can also be a safety hazard. Some knobs can come off. If she puts a small one in her mouth, she might choke. Some TV sets are also top-heavy. If she bangs against the screen, the TV might topple over on her.

Telling her “No, no” again and again doesn’t work. She’s just starting to develop memory. So it’s hard for her to remember that she is not allowed to play with the TV. And it’s too interesting for her to ignore.

For safety, make sure the TV is sturdy and out of reach. You might put it on a high shelf or in a cabinet.

Often you can tell when she is about to play with the TV. She might start crawling toward it. Try to distract her before she gets there. Give her something else to play with. You know she is curious about controls, so give her a safe substitute.

Give her a “busy box.” This is a toy with knobs, dials and other things she can move. Or you can make one from a cardboard box. Cut out large circles, squares and other shapes from cardboard. Attach them to the box with brads that spread out on the inside. Tape the box closed. Show her how to turn the shapes on the outside. Tape a clear plastic folder on one side of the box. Insert colorful pictures. Talk to your baby about the pictures.

Guard Against Poisons

Many home products can be poisonous. Here are a few:

- kitchen cleaners such as oven cleaner and dishwasher detergent
- general cleaners such as ammonia, furniture polish and bleach
- toilet bowl cleaner, drain cleaner and other bathroom products
- laundry products such as bleach, spot remover and fabric softener
- turpentine, kerosene, lighter fluid and charcoal lighter
- paint remover, paint thinner, paint and varnish
- products such as gasoline and antifreeze
- bath and beauty products such as makeup, nail polish remover and perfume
- bug spray, roach trays, rat poison and ant poison
- prescription and over the counter medicines such as aspirin, sleeping pills, laxatives and cough syrup
- vitamins, iron pills and other food supplements

If your child swallows any home product, get help right away. If your child is not breathing, phone 9-1-1. Otherwise, phone the Poison Control Center. The number is 1-800-222-1222.

Safety tips

Babies are curious by nature. At this age, they try to crawl everywhere. They may climb to get things they want. Protect your child against poisons. Here are some safety tips:

- Watch your child at all times. Stay close and keep her out of danger.
- Lock poisons in cabinets.
- Store all home products out of reach.
- Make sure all medicines have safety caps. These make it harder for children to take them off. But don't depend on safety caps alone. Given enough time, children can pry them loose.
- Don't leave medicine on the kitchen table or the bathroom sink. Keep all medicines out of reach.
- Put away your purse and those of people who come to visit. Purses often contain medicines and other harmful products.
- Throw out old medicines. Check "Expiration Date" on the label. Flush old medicine down the toilet. Rinse out the container.
- Keep products in the containers they came in. Don't pour gasoline into a soda pop bottle, for example. You don't want a child to mistake one for the other.
- Store harmful products away from foods.
- Get rid of any harmful products you don't need. It's better to discard a half can of paint thinner than to risk an accident. Call the garbage pickup agency. They have a special place for disposing of these products.

Growing Up with Plants

Plants add beauty to our homes. Plants and flowers are lovely in parks and gardens. But many plants can be dangerous. Poison ivy can cause a rash. Roses and some types of cactus have thorns. Some plants contain poison in the leaves, seeds or flowers. There are too many poisonous plants to name here. A few common ones are chinaberry, English ivy, lantana and oleander. Curious, crawling babies often want to play with plants.

Here are some plant safety tips:

- Know the name of every plant in and around your home. Find out which ones are poisonous.
- If you have houseplants, put them out of reach. Store seeds and bulbs where your child cannot get them.

- Remember that holiday plants can be poisonous. These include mistletoe, holly and poinsettia.
- Encourage your baby to smell flowers and leaves. But don't let her put them in her mouth.
- Don't eat wild plants, especially mushrooms.
- Don't make whistles, toys, garlands or wreaths from unknown plants.
- Learn to identify poison oak and poison ivy. Don't touch the leaves, stems, or roots.

What if your child gets into poison oak or poison ivy?

As soon as possible:

1. Take off all her clothes.
2. Wash her skin well with soap and water.
3. Wash the clothes and shoes with hot water and soap.

If she develops a rash, call your doctor.

Ten safe plants for your home

These 10 plants are not poisonous. But plants may cause different reactions in different people. So make sure your child does not try to eat them. Teach her to pet the leaves instead.

- African violet
- Boston fern
- Corn plant
- Peperomia
- Spider plant
- Begonia
- Coleus
- Jade plant
- Rubber plant
- Swedish ivy

Nursing Breaks

It is unusual for a baby to wean entirely on his own during the first year. But it's not unusual for a baby to take occasional nursing breaks. This is different from weaning. Natural weaning happens over several weeks or months. A nursing break is usually abrupt. Both you and the

baby will be unhappy when such a break happens. Try to discover why your baby is unhappy nursing.

- Are you wearing a new perfume?
- Are you using a new soap?
- Are you stressed about work?
- Have you started menstruating again?
- Are you eating a new, spicy food?
- Have you started to smoke?

Some of these involve odors that can confuse your baby. They may make your milk taste different and unappealing. Sometimes a sick or teething baby refuses to breastfeed. When your baby feels miserable, not even nursing takes the hurt away.

There are things you can do to help your baby get back to breastfeeding. Rule out a medical reason for the nursing break. If you can identify something that your baby dislikes, try to change the product or behavior. If you can't identify the cause, try giving your baby more attention. Change your nursing position. Offer to nurse when your baby is relaxed or drowsy. Take some deep breaths before you nurse. Be patient. Most babies will return to their regular routine within a few days.

While your baby is on a nursing break, express your breast milk according to her old nursing routine. This will help prevent uncomfortably full breasts. It will also help maintain your milk supply. Offer your baby breast milk from a cup until she is ready to return to nursing. Milk from a cup will not satisfy her need to suck. This may encourage your baby to return to nursing more quickly.

You can express milk with a mechanical breast pump or your hands. It is easiest to learn to do this from a lactation specialist. Check with your doctor to get the name of someone who can help. As you learn, be patient with yourself. Remember breast milk is the best food you can give your baby.

To learn more about breastfeeding, you may want to contact your local health department, WIC clinic, hospital, La Leche League or doctor. You can call La Leche League at 1-800-LALECHE or visit their Web site at www.lalecheleague.org/.

Time To Eat

Protein is now an important part of your baby's diet. Foods like poultry, fish, beef, pork and beans are all good sources of the protein and iron your baby needs. Make sure the meat is well cooked. Chop or shred it into small pieces. Meats should be lean. Cut off all visible fat before serving it to your baby.

Food allergies

As you add new foods to your baby's diet, be on the lookout for allergic reactions. Gradually add cottage cheese, hard cheeses and yogurt to your baby's diet. These protein-rich foods are OK to use once in a while but they may cause an allergic reaction. You can also offer strained cooked egg yolk—a good source of iron. Avoid whole eggs and egg whites because they might also cause an allergic reaction. Save whole eggs for sometime after your baby's first birthday.

Introduce one food at a time. Wait a few days before trying another new food. If your baby has a reaction, stop offering the food. If there is no reaction, you can offer the same food again or try another new one.

Honey alert

Don't feed honey to your baby before her first birthday. Honey can contain bacteria that will make your baby sick.

Low appetite

Toward the end of her first year, you may notice that your baby is eating less. Her growth rate may be slowing. She also has lots of new and exciting activities that distract her from meals. Don't worry. Continue to offer healthy foods at set times. Trust your baby to eat as much as she needs. Remember, meal and snack times are best when they are pleasant and regular.

Finger foods can help encourage your baby to eat. They also foster your baby's growing independence. Offer foods like cooked macaroni, soft cooked vegetables, ripe peeled fruit slices, small slices of cheese, small pieces of bread and crackers.

Formula feeding

Continue to hold your baby on your lap when you give her a bottle of formula. Never prop the bottle or allow her to lie down when drinking.

When she wants to get down, take the bottle away. Don't let her get into the habit of carrying the bottle around with her. Offer her water or juice from a cup.

Formula and juice contain sugar. Falling asleep with a bottle containing sugary liquids can cause tooth decay. This is called "baby bottle tooth decay." You can avoid it by not putting her to bed with a bottle. Instead of a bottle, give her a comforting blanket or toy to help her feel secure.

Practice makes perfect

Give your baby a spoon to hold during her meals. Show her how to hold it, dip it into the food, and carry the food to her mouth. She'll probably need lots of practice. Serve foods that stay on the spoon easily such as applesauce, mashed potatoes and cooked cereal like oatmeal or cream of rice. Also give her foods she can pick up with her fingers. She's getting good at doing this, and it helps her develop motor control in her hands.

Family meals

Your baby is getting better at feeding herself. She is also more social and enjoys being with the rest of the family.

Introduce her to family meals. Give her most of her meal before the rest of the family is ready to eat. Then let her feed herself finger foods while the whole family enjoys a meal together. Turn off the TV. Include her in the family's conversation. Tell her about everyone's activities. Talk about the food. Encourage other family members to talk to the baby too.

Of course, a 10-month-old will not understand all the words you say. But she will understand that people enjoy each other's company. She'll learn that conversation is back and forth. Sometimes we listen and sometimes we talk. And she'll connect mealtime with being close to her loving family.

Fears and Tears

Your baby is mobile. She is aware of her surroundings. She has learned what is familiar—her family, her home and her toys. She also knows what is unfamiliar—a stranger, a sudden siren or a loud bark.

Give your baby comfort and reassurance. Say “Mari, what a loud noise. It’s a fire engine. The noise tells people to get out of the way. I’m sorry it scared you. Let’s hug until you feel better.”

Your baby may be afraid of strangers. This is normal. It is called “stranger anxiety.” This fear begins when your baby notices the differences among people. This is a big step in development. It means your baby is learning about her world and the people in it.

Some babies fuss, hide or cry when they are with unfamiliar people. When you visit a new place, give your baby time to adjust. Hold your baby and let her look around. Talk in a calm, soothing voice. Warn relatives and friends to go slowly. Let your baby make the first move. Your baby will relax before long. Sometimes her curiosity will overcome her shyness. She’ll crawl out of your lap to explore something new.

Your fears

Try not to share your own fears with your baby. For example, if lightning and thunder scare you, talk about the storm with your baby. Watch the lightning in the sky. Count the time between the lightning and the thunder. If you know that the thunder is coming, it can seem less scary.

Make Teeth Cleaning Fun

At 10 months of age, babies are too young to clean their own teeth. But you can start now to make teeth cleaning a lifelong daily habit. Your baby learns most from watching you. Set a good example by brushing your own teeth after every meal. Let your baby see you doing it. Then clean your baby’s teeth by using a wet, clean, soft washcloth to remove germs. Do this after every meal. Save toothpaste until your baby is older.

Make teeth cleaning fun. Make a puppet from an old, clean white sock. Draw eyes and mouth on the bottom near the toe. Pull the sock over your hand. Pretend to clean the puppet’s teeth. Let your baby try. Or use a stuffed animal.

Sing a song while cleaning. Make up your own words. Or sing these words to the tune of "Here We Go Round the Mulberry Bush."

This is the way we clean our teeth, clean our teeth, clean our teeth.
This is the way we clean our teeth so early in the morning. (This is the way we clean our teeth before we go to bed.)

Use teeth cleaning for learning. Point to your teeth and say, "Teeth." Ask, "Where are your teeth?" Talk about cleaning. Use words like brush, clean, tongue, top, bottom, back, front. Your baby will need to know these words when she starts cleaning her own teeth.

Make teeth cleaning a pleasant experience. That way your baby will want to try it on her own.

White spots on your baby's teeth could be a sign of decay. If you see white spots, call your dentist.

What's It Like To Be 10 Months Old?

- I don't like being away from you.
- I crawl upstairs and downstairs but always need your help to do it safely.
- I pull myself up to stand if there is sturdy furniture to hold on to.
- I sit down from a standing position with balance and self-control.
- I point to parts of my body when you ask me where they are.
- I say "no" and shake my head from side to side.
- I know when you are happy or unhappy with what I do.
- I like to imitate people, gestures and sounds.
- I practice saying words. Sometimes you can understand what I'm saying.
- I have favorite toys that give me comfort when I'm upset.
- I'm afraid of some loud noises, like thunder and the vacuum cleaner.
- I like to do things by myself but need you to stay close to me in case
- I need help.
- I have some teeth and need help cleaning them.
- I fuss when I'm tired. Sometimes it's hard for me to fall asleep.
- I rely on you to understand what my different cries and sounds mean.
- I like trying new foods that I can feed myself.

Learning Through Play

Your baby is unique. No one else is exactly like her! She learns at her own pace. She has specific likes and dislikes. She has a personality that is hers alone.

Your baby does share some traits with other 10-month-olds. Almost all babies will benefit from the following suggestions:

Talk to your baby. You can tell that she understands many of your words and expressions. Encourage her to imitate you.

Keep your baby interested. Doing the same things over and over is important to building some skills. But don't let it get boring. Sing new songs. Tell new stories. Look at new pictures. Play new games.

Show your baby that you are proud of her. Clap and smile when she does something new. Say, for example, "Nita, you did that all by yourself. What a big girl!"

Read to your baby. Let her sit on your lap while you read a book or look at its pictures. Make reading a part of your bedtime ritual. Soon your daughter will be reading to you!

Keep your baby safe. Make sure she won't hurt herself as she explores the things in her home.

Early Intervention and Your Baby's Developing Skills

Children learn skills as they grow. These skills happen by certain ages. A child learns skills at her own pace. You can see how your baby is doing. Watch when she starts to crawl, walk, talk and feed herself.

If you are concerned that your baby is learning skills too slowly, talk to your doctor. You can also call 1-800-695-0285 to get information. The call is free. When you call, you will be told how to contact the early intervention program in your state. Staff of your state's early intervention program can assist you in finding help in your state.

What is an early intervention program?

An early intervention program helps children from birth to age three. Early intervention staff can help your baby learn to roll over, sit up, crawl and grasp toys.

They also help children who are having problems seeing, hearing and talking.

How does an early intervention program help?

It can help your child with needed services and also help you join a support group.

Your family and early intervention staff can work together to plan services. These services teach basic skills and can be done in your home or during child care.

Games for Skill Building

Have fun helping your baby develop these skills.

Physical skills: Your baby loves to imitate you. Get on the floor and crawl with your baby. Play "Follow the Leader." Sit on the floor with her and let her copy your emotions. For example, bang on an empty box with a wooden spoon. Give the spoon to your baby and help her to bang too.

Emotional skills: Help your baby feel pride in what she does. Talk to her all through the day. Tell her she is growing strong. Tell her she is smart or kind. For example, Alma crawls toward the telephone when she hears it ring. Say, "Wow, you know that the phone is ringing. You go right to it."

Intellectual skills: Help your baby learn about sizes. Give her two or three empty boxes. Talk about the biggest, smallest, tallest, widest, longest and shortest box.

Social skills: Show your baby how to touch gently. When she grabs your hair, for example, say in a calm voice, "That hurts me. Hold your hand like this and pat Mommy's hair gently." While you say the words, hold your baby's hand open. Hold it while you slowly pat and smooth your head.

Language skills: Play lots of echo games. Call out sounds like la, la, la or ba, ba, ba. Encourage your baby to repeat the sounds. If she makes sounds, echo her. This will get her ready for saying real words.

Educational Toys?

Sometimes parents feel that they need to buy expensive educational toys for their babies. Don't be fooled by fancy words and packages. Almost anything your baby can play with safely is something she can learn from.

Your baby learns through her senses—her eyes, nose, mouth, fingers and ears. Try to provide hand-made toys that stimulate all of her senses. The toys below take only a few minutes to make, and they are free! Throw them away when your baby outgrows them or they become ragged. Keep your baby safe.

Noisemakers: Gather a few things that make noise. You might choose a rattle, an unopened box of rice, a large whistle and an alarm clock. As you sit with your baby, shake the rattle. Talk about the sound. Compare it to the sound rice makes when you shake the box. Gently blow the whistle. Then turn the alarm clock on and off. Talk about the different sounds.

Check tiny toys for safe size: Use the cardboard tube from a toilet paper roll to judge the safety of a toy. If the toy passes through the tube, it's too small for your baby to play with safely.

Smelling fragrances: Gather a variety of objects with interesting smells like soap, mint, candles or creams. Put a small amount in your hand or on your finger. Hold it to your baby's nose and talk about the smell. "This is soap. We take a bath with it. Do you like it?"

Feeling the outdoors: Take your baby outdoors. Let her sit on a blanket on the grass. Stay close and keep your arms around her. Let her touch the grass. Talk to her about how it feels—wet, dry, smooth, prickly. Move her to a sand pile, sidewalk or park bench. Again, let her touch the surface. Use words like warm, cold, rough, smooth, bumpy and hard.

Looking at animals: Tear out several large pictures of animals from old magazines. Look at the pictures with your baby. Point to the animal. Tell the baby about the animal. Make a noise that sounds like that animal. For example, show a picture of a sheep. Say, "Here's the sheep's head. It has soft wool all over its body. A sheep says 'Baaah.'"

Security Comfort Objects—Loveys

It can be a blanket, a stuffed toy or a silky rag. In any form, it offers your baby comfort and security. It is a substitute you—faithful, loving and accepting.

Security comfort objects are sometimes called loveys, blankeys or other made-up names. Usually babies between nine and 12 months choose their loveys. Once chosen, the lovey may be a part of the family for years to come.

Loveys are not a sign of weakness. Instead, they help your baby learn about being apart from you. With a lovey, your baby can control her own comfort. It can help her find comfort anywhere, even if you aren't there. It will help her go to sleep when she's tired. It will reassure her when she's away from you. It will comfort her when she's scared or upset. It will help her remember the security of home when she's in a strange place.

Think of a lovey as a symbol for you. It allows your baby to think, "I can't have my mommy or daddy right now. I have this instead. It reminds me of my mommy and daddy. It helps me remember that they love and care for me."

Use these tips

- Encourage your baby to choose a lovey. Offer the same object whenever she is upset or needs comfort.
- Develop a bedtime ritual. Remember to include the lovey. For example, say "Let's get Binkey. It's time for bed now."
- Don't hide or deny the use of a lovey. Never use it as a reward or punishment.
- Show your baby where to keep the lovey when it's not being used.

Safety First—at Every Age

Always remember

- Buckle your baby into a car safety seat before you start the car. Keep the seat facing backward until your baby is one year old and weighs at least 20 pounds. The back seat is the safest place for babies and children.

- Stay with your baby when she is playing near or in water. Never leave your baby alone in a bath or a pool. Babies can drown in just a few inches of water.
- Never, ever shake your baby.
- Keep your baby away from things that could burn her. Don't eat, drink, smoke or carry anything hot while holding her.
- Put your baby to sleep on her back unless your doctor has told you to do otherwise. Insist that others who care for your baby do the same.
- Serve healthy foods. Avoid sweetened, salty or fatty ones.
- Lock up guns, alcohol, drugs and chemicals such as cleaning solutions. These can kill your baby.
- Put away knives, matches and other items that can hurt your baby. Put them in a place your exploring baby can't reach or open.

Never Shake Your Baby

Sometimes when a baby cries, a parent will shake the baby. The parent may think that shaking is not as bad as hitting or spanking. Some parents handle a baby too roughly in play.

Never shake a baby. Babies have large heads and weak neck muscles. Brain tissue is very fragile. Sudden motion can damage brain cells. When an adult shakes a baby in anger, the force may be five to 10 times stronger than if the child had fallen.

The damage can kill or disable a child. Shaken babies can become blind or deaf. They can develop cerebral palsy or seizures. They can be left with severe learning or behavior problems.

Avoid rough play, even though your baby seems to like it. Avoid any kind of rough or sudden movement.

- Don't jog or jump with your baby on your back or shoulders.
- Don't throw your baby into the air.
- Don't spin your baby around.
- Don't swing your baby around by a leg and arm or by the ankles.

Explain this danger to everyone who cares for your baby. Older children, neighbors, grandparents and others need to follow this rule.

If you get angry at your baby, stop what you're doing. Put your baby in a safe place. Take 10 deep breaths. Call a friend. Write down your feelings. When you feel calm again, go back to your baby. Whisper

soothing words. Gently stroke your baby's back. Pick up your baby and walk. Rock in a rocking chair.

Guidance and Discipline

Your baby has a need to explore. It's how she learns about her world and the things in it. Sometimes though, this need can get her into trouble. She wants to touch, taste and hold everything—even dangerous or delicate things. You have to set limits for your baby. You want her to explore. But you can't let her hurt herself or damage things in your home.

For example, your baby has watched you pot a new plant. You've talked with her about the delicate leaves and the dark soil. She watched as you watered the plant and put it on a shelf by the window. But now your baby wants to explore it. She crawls to the shelf and pulls herself up. She is ready to topple the plant. What do you do?

One thing you can do is move the plant. Put it in a place where your baby can see it but not pull it over. This is childproofing. Your baby is more mobile than ever. Move delicate and dangerous things out of the way of your exploring baby.

Another thing to do is distract your baby. She has a short attention span. Her memory is short, too. This lets you distract her from an activity. Pick up your baby and show her a new toy. You don't have to say "No" or fuss about the mess she could have made. Saying "No" too often makes the word less effective.

Pulling on an electrical cord is a real danger. This time, say "No" firmly. Then distract her. Also think of ways to hide the cord so she can't play with it. It's never OK to play with electrical cords.

You can help your baby remember and follow your directions. Always respond quickly. And always respond consistently. Use the same words every time. For example, say "No, that is dangerous. It is not to play with."

Expect your baby to explore. But she has a short memory. And she won't remember your directions easily. Respond quickly to dangerous behavior. However, it's important not to become angry with your baby. She needs your help to learn about what's dangerous. Respond the same way all the time.

When You Feel Bad

All parents have days when they feel bad. Lots of things can go wrong. Your baby may be sick. You may feel tired after school or work. You may wish you weren't tied down to a baby. You may feel scared about paying your bills.

Everybody feels bad sometimes. Learning to cope with these feelings is part of living a healthy life.

If you feel so bad that you might hurt your baby, stop what you're doing. Put your baby in a safe place. Leave the room for a few minutes. Take 10 deep breaths. Then take 10 more.

If you feel like hurting your baby, call Parents Anonymous at 1-800-554-2323. This group is made up of parents just like you. They will listen. They can help you find ways to cope with your feelings. They can help keep you from hurting your baby.

Sometimes moms and dads take out their feelings on each other. It often starts with hurtful words. Over time it may grow into hurtful actions like hitting. Hitting just makes things worse. Yelling and fighting scares your baby.

Learn to talk things out. Say, "Let's change the way we argue. Let's talk instead of hit." Avoid blaming your partner when something goes wrong. If you think you might yell or hit, leave the room for a few minutes. Come back when you have settled down.

Some men take advantage of their bigger size and hit their partners. The man may force the woman to keep it secret. Or he may threaten to take away the baby. The woman may feel that she is to blame. And she may feel too scared to tell anyone. If this is happening to you, call 1-800-799-SAFE (7233). This is the National Domestic Violence Hotline. They will listen. They will help you make a safety plan. They will help you figure out what to do.

If you're afraid your partner will hurt you or the baby, call 9-1-1 right away. No one deserves to be hurt. You need to feel safe in your own home.

Abuse hotlines

If you know about a child who is being abused, call the child abuse hotline. Your name will be kept confidential. The incident will be investigated.

Child abuse hotline 1-800-422-4453

If you know a woman who is being abused by her partner, suggest that she call the domestic violence hotline. She may remain anonymous, if she wishes. She will learn how to get help.

Domestic violence hotline 1-800-799-SAFE

Information Resources for Families

Families who are enrolled in the WIC program (Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children) can get information on breastfeeding, formula feeding and nutrition at their local WIC office. Families eligible for WIC receive nutrition counseling and supplemental foods such as baby formula, milk and cereal. To find the WIC office nearest you, call your state health department or visit the WIC Web site at www.fns.usda.gov/wic/. Many public libraries offer free access to the Internet and provide help for first-time users.

For information about early childhood education initiatives, you may contact the U.S. Department of Education at 1-800-USA-LEARN or visit the Web site at www.ed.gov/offices/OESE/teachingouryoungest/.

To learn about child care options, you may contact the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Child Care Aware by phone at 1-800-424-2246 or visit their Web site at www.childcareaware.org/.

For more information and resources on postpartum depression, breastfeeding and many other women's health issues call The National Women's Health Information Center (NWHIC) at 1-800-994-9662 (1-800-994-WOMAN). You can visit their Web site at www.4woman.org/.

To learn more about breastfeeding, you may call La Leche League at 1-800-LALECHE or visit their Web site at www.la lecheleague.org/.

To learn more about free or low-cost health insurance for children, you can call the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Insure Kids Now program at 1-877-KIDSNOW. You can also visit their Web site at www.insurekidsnow.gov/.

The American Association of Poison Control Centers' (AAPCC) poison control hotline, 1-800-222-1222, should be on your list of emergency numbers. To learn more, you can visit the AAPCC Web site at www.aapcc.org/.

Families who cannot afford a car safety seat can contact the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. They can provide information on resources that help low-income families purchase or borrow child car seats. You may call them at 1-800-424-9393 or visit their Web site at www.nhtsa.dot.gov/.

To learn more about safety, you can call the Consumer Product Safety Commission at 1-800-638-2772 or you can visit their Web site at www.cpsc.gov/.

For information on disabilities and disability-related issues for families, you can call the National Information Center for Children and Youth with Disabilities (NICHCY) at 1-800-695-0285 or visit their Web site at www.nichcy.org/.

For information about programs that teach adults how to read, you can call America's Literacy Directory at 1-800-228-8813 or visit their Web site at: www.literacydirectory.org/.

Chapter 12 - Your 11-Month-Old

Growing Up Big and Strong

Fred and Ramona are getting ready for Jacob's entry into toddlerhood. Their baby seems to be mastering new skills every day. Yesterday he was trying to pull himself up at the kitchen table. Today he's pushing a chair around the living room—and walking! He's not steady on his feet, but Ramona and Fred know that he'll soon be harder to keep up with.

Jacob is 30 inches tall and weighs 25 pounds. His parents are a little sad that their son is growing up so quickly. He doesn't look much like a baby anymore. But they are proud of the many things he can do. Jacob points to his body parts. He takes off his shoes and socks. He waves good-bye. He likes to make his parents laugh. He is also learning to test limits and loves to shake his head "no."

And what about your 11-month-old? Read this issue to learn more about how to help your baby learn, grow and stay healthy.

Questions Parents Ask

My three-year-old son, Josh, sometimes hits the baby. He seems to hate him. What should I do?

It is natural for an older child to feel jealous of a baby brother or baby sister. Josh was once the center of your attention. Now he sees you giving more time to the baby. He may feel pushed aside. He may fear that you no longer love him. These can be strong feelings. And Josh doesn't know how to deal with them.

First stop the hitting. Grasp Josh's hand and say firmly, "No hitting. That hurts." You might add, "I won't let anyone hurt the baby. And I won't let anyone hurt you."

Help Josh express his feelings in words. Help your older child find the right words—even angry ones. Don't let him act on his words by hitting, pinching or teasing the baby.

Find ways to give Josh attention. You might do this when the baby is asleep. Take Josh in your lap and talk to him. Or get down on the floor and play with him. You might get a relative or a friend to care for the baby for an hour. Take Josh for a walk. Go to the park and have a picnic of cheese and crackers.

Think about the routines you have with Josh. Your bedtime routine might go like this: Make sure the TV is off. Have a snack of graham crackers and milk. Brush teeth. Have a playful bath. Read or tell a story. Hug and kiss goodnight.

Look for things throughout the day that make Josh feel special. "You have sharp eyes. You can see the squirrel in the tree." Call attention to things he can do that the baby cannot. "You put your shoes on by yourself. What a big boy you are!" When he says something to you, stop what you are doing and really listen to him.

Show Josh ways to play gently with the baby under your supervision. This will help him feel strong and smart. A three-year-old can share the pictures in a book or stack boxes, for example. Playing together will help each child gain respect for the other.

As your children grow, there will be times when they won't like each other. Make it clear that you don't allow hitting and hurting. Help each child feel special. Show affection and let both children know that you love them.

A brother or sister needs to be old enough, mature enough and aware of how to take care of your baby before you can even consider leaving your baby with them, even for a short period of time. Most older brothers and sisters must be at least in their teens and have had a lot of experience handling the baby under your direct supervision before you can consider leaving them alone together.

Prevent Fires and Burns

A fire can start in many areas of your home. Once started, a fire can rage out of control. Protect your family. Prevent fire before it starts. Guard against these hazards.

Smoking: Most deaths in home fires are caused by careless smoking. Someone falls asleep in bed with a lit cigarette. Or someone leaves a cigarette on the edge of a table. Don't let anyone smoke in your home. If people must smoke, ask them to go outside. Provide an ashtray or tin can for matches and butts. You don't want them to flick butts into dry grass or leaves.

Heaters: Place space heaters away from bedding, clothing, drapes and anything else that can catch fire. Don't warm yourself by standing

close to heaters. If you're cold, put on extra socks or a sweater. Teach children not to run or play around heaters.

Electrical system: Ask your landlord how old the electrical system is. Older houses were not wired to carry today's electrical loads. You may need heavy-duty outlets for the stove, washer and other large appliances. You may need more outlets for things like clocks, the TV and lamps.

Don't plug several appliances into one outlet. Overloading can cause a fire. Use only the correct size fuses. If a fuse blows out again and again, call for repair. If you feel a tingle when touching a toaster or other electrical device, unplug it. Replace it or have it repaired.

Don't run cords under rugs or carpets. The cord can become damaged and set a carpet on fire. When you leave the house, make sure all appliances are turned off. Never leave an electrical appliance running when you're gone.

Kitchen: Most kitchen fires occur as a result of cooking. Keep towels and other flammable things away from burners. Never leave the kitchen when something is cooking. While cooking, watch your child closely. Turn pot handles to the back of the stove. Use the back burners whenever possible.

Keep your child away when you open a hot oven. If a fire starts on the stove, cover it with a large pot lid or baking pan. Don't throw water on burning grease. It can send the hot grease flying and spread the fire. Instead, douse a grease fire with salt or baking soda. Store matches in a glass jar with a tight-fitting lid. Store them out of your child's reach.

Storage areas: Remove piles of trash, old clothes and other things that can burn. Get rid of kerosene, paint thinner and other flammable liquids.

If you must use them for a time, keep these products away from heat. Use them only where the air is moving freely. Let paint and polish rags dry thoroughly. If you stuff them into a garbage can on a hot day, the vapors can ignite. Never store gasoline indoors. Never use it to start a fire.

Clothing: Check the labels of your child's clothing and bedding. Don't use any items that say, "Flammable."

Holiday decorations: Keep lighted candles away from paper, curtains and other things that can burn. If you use a live Christmas tree, keep it in a container of wet soil or water.

What To Do in Case of Fire

Gather your children. Leave your home right away. Forget about what you're wearing. Don't grab valuables. Just get your family out.

Never open a door that feels hot. A hot door may mean a fire is blazing on the other side. If you open the door, you could be killed by the heat and smoke. Try another escape route. Or call for help.

In a smoky area, crawl on the floor. Smoke tends to rise. It will be thinnest near the floor. Never use an elevator. Elevators may fill with hot air and smoke. And the fire may damage the cable or operating machinery.

If your clothing catches fire, "stop, drop and roll." Don't run. Running will make the fire worse. Instead, drop to the ground and cover your face with your hands. Roll to put out the fire. If it's your child's clothing, roll him on the ground. Or wrap him in a coat or blanket to put out the fire.

Plan escape routes

Plan ahead for how your family would escape in case of fire. You need to plan ahead to avoid panic.

Find at least two escape routes from each room, especially the bedrooms. A door will provide one path. A window may provide another. For upstairs windows, you may need to keep a ladder or rope within easy reach.

If you use a dead-bolt lock on doors, keep the key in the lock or hanging nearby. You don't want to spend time looking for it in case of a fire.

Make sure escape windows unlock and open easily. Learn how to remove screens and safety bars.

If you live in an apartment, find the fire exits and the fire escape. Don't plan on using an elevator.

Find a spot to meet outside. This could be a tree or a streetlight. Here is where the family will check in.

Show children pictures of firefighters. Explain that they are helpers. Their masks could frighten children and cause them to panic.

Use a Smoke Alarm

Many fire deaths occur between midnight and 4 a.m., when the family is asleep. Fire produces smoke and gases that can numb your senses. If a fire breaks out, you may not wake up, or you may not be able to think clearly. That's why you need a smoke detector. This will sound an alarm when a fire starts. Then you can get your family to safety.

- Make sure you have a smoke detector. Ask your landlord for one. You can buy a smoke detector for as little as \$10.
- Make sure the smoke detector is installed correctly: on a ceiling, at least six inches from the wall or on a wall 6-12 inches from the ceiling, away from windows, doors and vents.
- Check the battery every six months. Do it when you change the clocks for Daylight Savings Time. That's an easy way to remember. Brush or vacuum dust from the unit. Dust can cause it to malfunction.
- Detectors are sensitive to cooking fumes, fireplace smoke and cigarettes. When the alarm sounds, teach your children to stay calm.
- For more information on fire safety, contact your local fire department or visit the U.S. Fire Administration Web site at www.usfa.fema.gov/.

Early Intervention and Your Baby's Developing Skills

Children learn skills as they grow. These skills happen by certain ages. A child learns skills at his own pace. You can see how your baby is doing. Watch when he starts to crawl, walk, talk and feed himself.

If you are concerned that your baby is learning skills too slowly, talk to your doctor. You can also call 1-800-695-0285 to get information. The call is free. When you call, you will be told how to contact the early intervention program in your state. Staff at your state's early intervention program can assist you in finding help in your state.

What is an early intervention program?

An early intervention program helps children from birth to age three. Early intervention staff can help your baby learn to roll over, sit up, crawl and grasp toys. They also help children who are having problems seeing, hearing and talking.

How does an early intervention program help?

It can help your child with needed services and also help you join a support group.

Your family and early intervention staff can work together to plan services. These services teach basic skills and can be done in your home or during child care.

Avoid Food Battles

Battles over food often occur when parents are too concerned about what, how much and when their children eat. Avoid making mealtime a battleground. Your baby is testing his independence. This means that he'll try to do things his way—not yours. Relax and accept your baby's unusual food choices. As he matures, your baby will follow your lead more easily.

- Don't insist on eating foods in a certain order. Resist saying dessert is a treat for "plate cleaners" only. This power struggle makes dessert more desirable to your 11-month-old.
- Instead, serve a nutritious and balanced meal. Let your baby eat it in whatever order he chooses.
- Don't restrict food combinations. If your baby wants to dip his toast in pudding or mix his spinach with rice, let him. He's trying out new tastes. He's eating nutritious food. Try to respect his harmless investigation.
- Don't force your baby to eat. For example, carrots are an important part of a baby's diet. But even a healthy food like a carrot is not worth a battle. Offer him a choice of healthy foods. Follow his cues about when he has had enough.

Eating too little?

Do you think your baby is not eating enough? Relax. Offer nutritious foods at regular times in a pleasant atmosphere. No baby will starve himself! To reassure yourself, check these points.

- Look at his growth. Check the growth chart at his next visit with the doctor. Is the upward curve on the weight and height chart steady? If so, he's eating enough.
- Look at his energy level. Is he moving around all day? Does he sleep well and wake happy? Is he interested in new things? If he's active, he's eating enough.
- Look at his milk intake. Is he breastfeeding eagerly or drinking 24 to 32 ounces of formula a day? If so, most of his nutritional needs are being met.

Using a cup

Weaning is a gradual process. It moves babies from a bottle or breastfeeding to drinking from a cup. For bottle-fed babies, weaning to a cup usually happens around a baby's first birthday.

Now that your baby is feeding himself, it's a good time to offer a cup with his meals. Using a cup with two handles will improve your baby's coordination skills. Gradually substitute a cup for the bottle at the noon meal. Once your baby adjusts to that, do the same at the morning meal.

The evening bottle will probably be the last to go. Your baby is used to the bedtime bottle as a comfortable, secure ritual. Try substituting water in the bottle for the formula. Then just offer your baby a cup of water before bed. If you continue to hold and cuddle at bedtime, weaning will go more smoothly.

Tips for Working Moms

If you've gone back to work or school full time, you can still breastfeed your baby. You can maintain this special relationship for another year or more. You'll need to express (force out) your breast milk. Then your baby's caregiver can feed your baby breast milk from a bottle or a cup when you are away.

Use a pump or your hands to express breast milk. You can learn how from a public health nurse, a WIC breastfeeding counselor or lactation specialist. Ask your doctor or WIC for the name of someone who can help. As you learn, be patient with yourself. Practice. Before long, you'll be an expert.

Express breast milk into a clean container. Refrigerate or freeze it right away. Breast milk will keep up to 48 hours in the refrigerator. It will

keep longer if it is frozen. You will waste less milk if you store it in small, small, two- to four-ounce containers. Write the date the milk was expressed on the containers. If you are taking the milk to a caregiver, write your baby's name on the container, too.

How long can I freeze breast milk?

You can store breast milk in the freezer that has a separate door from the refrigerator for up to three months.

Make sure your baby's caregiver follows these safety rules:

- Defrost frozen breast milk in the refrigerator for several hours. Or thaw it by running the container under cool water. Don't thaw it by leaving it out at room temperature.
- You can refrigerate thawed breast milk for up to 24 hours. It cannot be refrozen.
- Never use a microwave oven to defrost breast milk.
- Throw away any defrosted and warmed breast milk that the baby doesn't drink. Don't keep it at room temperature. Don't refrigerate it for later use.

To learn more about breastfeeding, you may want to contact your local health department, WIC clinic, hospital, La Leche League or doctor. You can call La Leche League at 1-800-LALECHE or visit their Web site at www.lalecheleague.org/.

Hand Washing after Diaper Changes

Hand washing is the best way to prevent the spread of disease. Build healthy hand-washing habits now. Help wash your baby's hands after every diaper change—when you wash your own. Your baby can go with you into the bathroom. Help him stand at the sink. Keep a stepstool, liquid soap and a drying towel handy.

Talk about what you are doing as you wash. For example, say, "Up on the stool. I'm turning on the water. Let's wet your hands. The water is warm. Now we'll add a little soap and rub, rub, rub. The soap gets your hands nice and clean. Now we'll rinse off all of the soap. We'll dry with this towel. This is where we hang it up. Down from the stool now. I'll close the bathroom door behind us. Let's go and look at a book."

It's fun to sing a song while washing. Try this one. Sing it to the tune of "Row, Row, Row Your Boat." Wash, wash, wash your hands. Wash

them to this rhyme. Rub and rub and rub and rub, Away goes all the grime.

What's It Like To Be 11 Months Old?

- The soft spot on the top of my head is almost closed.
- My legs look bowed when I stand up; my feet look flat.
- My sitting balance is good.
- I like to use my fingers to pick up small things like toys and food.
- I can stack two or three small boxes, and I like to knock them down.
- If you hold my hands, I can walk. I'm almost ready to take my first steps by myself.
- I point to things I want, even if they are far away.
- Tasting and touching are my favorite ways to explore new things.
- I love being the center of attention—and making you smile.
- When you call my name, I look for you.
- I like to imitate sounds like coughing, laughing, lip smacking and tongue clicking.
- I can pull off hats, shoes and socks but need your help getting them back on again.
- I know about getting dressed and usually cooperate when you put on my clothes.

Prepare To Visit the Dentist

Children need to have their first dental visit when they're about one year old. Call your dentist now for an appointment.

The dentist will check many things:

- Are the teeth coming in correctly?
- Is there tooth decay?
- Is there any gum disease?

The dentist may ask you questions like:

- Does your baby eat lots of sugary foods?
- Are you breastfeeding your baby or does your baby use a bottle?
- Do you clean your baby's teeth daily?

If there is a problem, the dentist can treat it. Treatment now can avoid big problems later. The dentist will also show you how to clean your child's teeth.

Ask when to come for another checkup. Every six months is a good idea. Make dental visits pleasant. Don't tell scary stories about what dentists do. You might say, "We're going to the dentist. We want you to have strong teeth." You and the dentist can work together to keep your baby's teeth healthy.

Welcome to "NO!"

Just before their first birthdays, babies learn the meaning of "no." They spend lots of time shaking their heads "no"—even when they mean "yes!" This may be frustrating for you. But it means your baby is growing up. He is becoming independent. He feels secure enough that he's sometimes able to risk your disapproval. He's beginning to learn right from wrong.

To get your attention, your baby might do these kinds of things:

- Turn the knobs of the radio to a blast of noise.
- Throw food on the floor.
- Push the buttons on the telephone.
- Pull the dog's ear.
- Bite while he's nursing.

Your baby will test his limits—and yours. As he moves toward the telephone, for example, he may look back at you. He may have a guilty look on his face. He needs an immediate response from you—a facial expression or a gesture that says, "I'm paying attention to you. It's not OK to play with the telephone."

Don't overreact. Avoid yelling and strong corrections. These give your baby the attention he wants, and he will likely repeat the behavior just to get your attention again.

Instead, try to anticipate your baby's behavior. Have you left him alone for too long? Is he bored with his playthings? Does he need a hug? Give him positive attention—he'll be less likely to do something that you disapprove of.

You can also distract your baby. Offer a different activity. Move the attractive, but forbidden, object out of your baby's reach.

Avoid saying "No!" too often. The word will lose its impact. Save it for important times, like when safety is an issue. In the examples above,

respond firmly—don't smile—and tell your baby the right way to do the activity.

For example, if your baby is banging on the table with a spoon, stop him by gently holding his hand. Say, "This spoon is for eating. Would you like another spoonful of peaches? After dinner let's find a big box for you to bang like a drum."

Give him information he can use in the future. Let him know your limits. Enforce your rules the same way every time.

Spoiling your baby?

Parents often wonder if they can spoil their baby by answering his calls for attention. Babies need contact with you. Contact builds trust and security. Responding to your baby helps him be brave enough to learn independence.

Don't be tempted to let your baby cry without going to him. At this age babies have needs—not wants. They can't figure out problems; they can't use logic. They don't understand that you might be busy with something else. They aren't selfish—they just aren't old enough to understand your point of view. Babies who are left to cry are usually anxious and more demanding.

Parents who respond to their babies are not spoiling them. They are helping their babies develop trust, security and confidence.

Helping Babies Build Brains

Help your baby develop his brain with these activities:

- Support and respect your baby's unique personality.
- Hold, rock and touch your baby. Stroke your baby's skin to increase brain activity.
- Respond to your baby's likes and dislikes. You will be able to understand his body language long before he talks.
- Talk, read and sing to your baby. Language increases brain activity and learning.
- Label objects and actions for your baby (ball, walking, washing, etc.).

- Keep the environment calm. Protect your baby from emotional stress. It's hard for him to concentrate if there's loud music and constant television noise.
- Help your baby safely explore using all five senses. Help him use taste, touch, smell, hearing and seeing. Talk to your baby and name the tastes and textures (sour, sweet, etc.).
- Avoid interrupting when your baby is concentrating. Your baby needs playtime to explore and imitate. This happens through play. Stand back and watch. Try to understand what your baby is working on.

Discovering Your Baby's Temperament

Your baby has a temperament. Temperament can make a person behave in a certain way. For example, one baby may cry and hide at the sight of a large animal. Another baby may be cautious and interested. And a third may be fearless and try to play with the animal right away. The first temperament is sometimes called "slow-to-warm-up." You may hear the second called "adaptable." The third is often called "feisty." Some babies combine these three temperaments—being shy sometimes and adaptable or feisty at other times. Knowing your baby's temperament will help you help your baby.

Some babies are shy. They turn away from new people. They do not adapt to change quickly. Let your baby take the lead in new situations. Encourage strangers not to get right in your baby's face and force eye contact. Avoid loud outbursts. These may be frightening to a shy baby. Introduce new people slowly.

Some babies are relaxed and easygoing. They are eager to explore new places and things. They respond quickly to change. They can often calm themselves in times of stress. These babies are likely to be sound sleepers and eager eaters.

Some babies are strong willed and intense. They find change distressing. They react strongly to new events and situations. They need a regular routine for eating, sleeping and outings. They sometimes need extra physical contact with you. Whatever the temperament, your job is clear. Identify and respect your baby's temperament. Then you can support his growth, confidence and abilities.

Safety First—at Every Age

Always remember

Buckle your baby into a car safety seat before you start the car. Keep the seat facing backward until your baby is one year old and weighs at least 20 pounds. The back seat is the safest place for babies and children.

Stay with your baby when he is playing near or in water. Never leave your baby alone in a bath or a pool. Babies can drown in just a few inches of water.

Never, ever shake your baby.

Keep your baby away from things that could burn him. Don't eat, drink, smoke or carry anything hot while holding him.

Put your baby to sleep on his back unless your doctor has told you to do otherwise. Insist that others who care for your baby do the same.

Serve healthy foods. Avoid sweetened, salty or fatty ones.

Lock up guns, alcohol, drugs and chemicals such as cleaning solutions. These can kill your baby.

Put away knives, matches and other items that can hurt your baby. Put them in a place your exploring baby can't reach or open.

Separation Anxiety

Your baby wants to be with you. You are the person your baby knows and loves best. He knows when you are not with him. This creates a fear that you will not return. This distress is called "separation anxiety." It is an important part of growing up.

Help your baby separate from you. Avoid leaving when he is hungry, tired or sick. Ask the caregiver or baby-sitter to sit nearby and hold an interesting toy. Let the baby warm up to the new person. Offer your baby a security object like a stuffed toy or a soft, familiar blanket. This can help your baby comfort himself while you are away.

Your baby may cry loudly, but don't sneak away. Tell your baby what will happen while you're gone. Say when you will return. Tell him, for

example, "I need to leave now. Auntie Meg will play with you and give you lunch. I'll be back before nap time. I love you." Give your baby a kiss and leave. His cries will end soon. Over time he will learn that you always come back.

Baby Walkers

Some parents are eager for their baby to walk. They think that a baby walker will help the process along. In fact, walkers make learning to walk a slower process. They strengthen muscles in the lower leg. But they don't help develop muscles in the upper leg and hip—the muscles most needed in walking.

Walkers also make getting around too easy. They don't help babies learn balance and coordination.

Even worse, walkers are a safety hazard. They can tip over easily. In a walker, babies are more likely to fall down stairs. They can also roll into dangerous places.

A walker is an example of expensive, unnecessary equipment made for babies. Instead of buying a walker, get a sturdy wagon or push car. Show your baby how to push the car around the room or playground. This will help build the muscles and coordination he needs for walking.

Building Skills Through Play

Help your baby build learning skills. The following activities use materials that you're likely to have around the house.

Physical skills

Over and under: Your baby is discovering that his size is changing. Some spaces are now too small to scoot under. Now he can reach new things. Help him explore his size. Make a tunnel from cardboard boxes taped together. Encourage him to crawl through the tunnel. Place a toy on the sofa just out of his reach. Encourage him to stretch to reach it.

Language skills

Animal sounds: Cut pictures of animals from old magazines. Share the pictures with your baby. Tell him the name of the animal. Point out the animal's features. Say things like, "This is a blue bird. It flies. See its feathers." Make the sound each animal makes. Encourage your baby to repeat the sound.

Emotional skills

Check the hat: Gather several hats, plastic bowls and lightweight pots. Show your baby how to put each on his head. Show him his reflection in a mirror. Laugh and talk with your baby throughout this “fashion show.”

Social skills

Cooking together: Give your baby a pot and a wooden spoon. As you empty a container, give it to your baby. He will imitate you—pouring and stirring. Expect some banging, too!

Intellectual skills

Balls in a muffin tin: Give your baby a muffin tin and several balls the size of a tennis ball. Show your baby how to put the balls in the holes. Encourage him to move the balls from space to space. Do the same activity using a clean egg carton and plastic eggs.

Toys, Toys, Toys

Toys are learning tools for babies. Often, simple household objects like pots and wooden spoons are great toys. If you buy toys, make sure they are safe for your baby. Don't let your baby play with anything that has parts he can choke on. Check for sharp edges and points that can cause injuries.

Offer the following kinds of toys to your 11-month-old. His muscle control and balance will improve. He will begin to use his imagination. These toys also help him understand size—the beginning of math skills.

- Stacking toys in different sizes, colors and shapes
- Unbreakable mirrors
- Wheeled toys like cars and trucks that are made of flexible plastic
- Balls of all sizes
- Cardboard books with realistic pictures
- Toy telephones
- Toys that make noise—music boxes, busy boxes that squeak and squeeze toys, for example

Save the following “beautiful junk” for your baby’s play. When the containers become ragged, toss them away. You’ll almost always have a clean, sturdy replacement.

- Paper tubes
- Empty boxes
- Plastic egg cartons that you have washed with soap and water
- Empty and clean milk or juice jugs (without caps)

Managing Your Time

For young parents, there is often not enough time. How can you manage time to better care for your child and yourself?

Try this. Get a sheet of paper. On the left side, write the hours of your day. Start with when you wake up and end with when you go to bed. Keep track of how you spend each 15-minute period. Here's a sample of how one hour might look:

- 6:00 a.m. Get dressed.
- 6:15 a.m. Feed the baby
- 6:30 a.m. Dress the baby.
- 6:45 a.m. Finish dressing.
- 7:00 a.m. Take the baby to day care.

Do this every day for a week. After a few days, you will notice habits. You will get a clear idea of where your time goes.

At week's end, review what you have done. Circle all the important things—such as baby care, work, meals and sleep.

Maybe you had some surprises. On Wednesday, for example, the sink clogged up. You had to stop what you were doing and clean out the drain. Maybe there were days when you wanted to do something important, like exercise. But you didn't have time.

Looking back at your week, what could you easily have done without? Maybe chatting on the phone? Or watching TV? Everyone needs time to relax and enjoy friends. But you might limit such activities. When a friend calls, say, "Sorry, I can't talk now. Can I call you Sunday?"

You might choose one or two favorite TV programs a week and watch them as a family. Limiting TV time is a good habit to begin now. When your children are in school, they will need time to do homework.

Use existing time better

Maybe you spent 10 minutes one morning looking for your keys. Instead, put your keys in a regular place—such as a hook in a kitchen cabinet.

If you always seem rushed in the morning, get organized the night before. Set out clothes for yourself and the baby. Pack the diaper bag. Make your lunch and put it in the refrigerator.

When standing in line at the store, play a simple game with your baby. You might point to things in your basket and name them.

Plan ahead

Plan menus a week or more in advance. Make a list of needed groceries and shop only once a week. Instead of shopping Saturday afternoon when the store is busy, go on a weekday night.

Combine errands into one trip whenever possible. The day before a doctor's appointment, write down the questions you want to ask.

Simplify when possible

Find a simple hairstyle that needs only washing and brushing. Choose clothes that look fresh without ironing.

When faced with a big job, avoid the temptation to put it off. Instead, break it into small parts. Ask about anything you don't understand. Do one part at a time. Reward yourself when it's done.

Free up time

Maybe you can wake up 15 minutes earlier than your baby. You might use this for exercise or quiet time for yourself.

Divide up chores among family members. When cooking, double the recipe. Freeze half for when you're too busy to cook. When someone asks you to do something, consider saying no.

Now plan your time for the coming week. Be realistic. Remember that unexpected things may happen. Be flexible. Keep refining your schedule in the weeks ahead. You may still feel busy and miss doing some things you want to do. If so, be patient. In a few years, your child will be in school most of the day. Your schedule will change.

For now, give yourself a pat on the back. You are doing important things for yourself and your family. The ways you spend your time now will shape the rest of your child's life.

Working with Child-Care Providers

Some parents enroll their children in child-care centers. Some use family day-care homes. And some rely on relatives to care for their babies. In any case, you and the child-care provider will work together. Your partnership will keep your baby strong and healthy and help him grow.

Use these tips to make your child-care choice work.

- Share information. Explain your baby's schedule, habits and needs. For example, tell the provider that your baby uses a security blanket at nap time. Make sure the provider knows how to reach you in an emergency.
- Pay on time. Being late with payments isn't fair.
- Set up regular conferences. Talk with the provider about your baby's needs. Review what works and what doesn't. Ask the provider about your baby's developing skills.
- Insist on good health practices. Is food prepared and stored properly? Are diaper changing areas clean and germ free? Do adults and children wash their hands before meals and after using the toilet? All of these measures help keep your baby healthy.
- Show that you respect the provider. Pick up your baby on time. Say "thank you" often.

Stay Away from Second-Hand Smoke

Second-hand smoke is what you get when you're around a smoker. It's the smoke the smoker breathes out. It's the smoke that comes from the burning end of a cigarette, cigar or pipe.

This smoke contains many irritants and poisons. It is especially dangerous for babies and young children. Their lungs are delicate.

Children who breathe this smoke are more likely than other children to get sick. They may have more mucus. The fluid in their middle ears may build up and cause ear infections. They may develop pneumonia,

bronchitis and other lung infections. If they have asthma, it may get worse.

Second-hand smoke is harmful for everyone. It contains more than 40 cancer-causing substances.

It can also harm the heart. Anyone who lives with a smoker is at risk of developing lung cancer and having a heart attack.

What can you do?

- Don't allow anyone to smoke in your house. If people must smoke, ask them to do it outside.
- Avoid homes, cafes and other places where people smoke. Go to smoke-free places only.
- If other people care for your baby, make sure they don't smoke.
- If you or your partner smokes, stop. If you have trouble quitting, ask your doctor for help.
- Set a good example. Children learn by watching what you do.
- For your baby's health—and your own—stay away from second-hand smoke.

Information Resources for Families

Families who are enrolled in the WIC program (Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children) can get information on breastfeeding, formula feeding and nutrition at their local WIC office. Families eligible for WIC receive nutrition counseling and supplemental foods such as baby formula, milk and cereal. To find the WIC office nearest you, call your state health department or visit the WIC Web site at www.fns.usda.gov/wic/. Many public libraries offer free access to the Internet and provide help for first-time users.

For information about early childhood education initiatives, you may contact the U.S. Department of Education at 1-800-USA-LEARN or visit their Web site at www.ed.gov/offices/OESE/teachingouryoungest/.

To learn about child care options, you may contact the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Child Care Aware by phone at 1-800-424-2246 or visit their Web site at www.childcareaware.org/.

For more information and resources on postpartum depression, breastfeeding and many other women's health issues call The National Women's Health Information Center (NWHIC) at 1-800-994-9662

(1-800-994-WOMAN). You can visit their Web site at www.4woman.gov/.

To learn more about breastfeeding, you may call La Leche League at 1-800-LALECHE or visit their Web site at www.lalecheleague.org/.

To learn more about free or low-cost health insurance for children, you can call the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Insure Kids Now Program at 1-877-KIDSNOW. You can also visit their Web site at www.insurekidsnow.gov/.

The American Association of Poison Control Centers (AAPCC) poison control hotline, 1-800-222-1222, should be on your list of emergency numbers. To learn more, you can visit the AAPCC Web site at www.aapcc.org/.

Families who cannot afford a car safety seat can contact the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. They can provide information on resources that help low-income families purchase or borrow child car seats. You may call them at 1-800-424-9393 or visit their Web site at www.nhtsa.dot.gov/.

To learn more about safety, you can call the Consumer Product Safety Commission at 1-800-638-2772 or you can visit their Web site at www.cpsc.gov/.

For information on disabilities and disability-related issues for families, you can call the National Information Center for Children and Youth with Disabilities (NICHCY) at 1-800-695-0285 or visit their Web site at www.nichcy.org/.

For information about programs that teach adults how to read, you can call America's Literacy Directory at 1-800-228-8813 or visit their Web site at: www.literacydirectory.org/.

Chapter 13 - Your 12-Month-Old

Let's Celebrate!

Alice has invited a half dozen family members to celebrate Lisette's first birthday. They include Uncle Matt, Aunt Melinda and their 14-month-old son, Jake. Placed together on the floor, Jake and Lisette watch each other at first. Lisette picks up a wooden block and turns it over in her hands. Jake does the same. For the next few minutes, they play with the blocks, watching and copying each other.

"Time to sing," Alice announces. She places Lisette in her high chair, and everyone gathers around. "Happy birthday to you" Lisette looks around. Then, clapping her hands, she begins singing, too. "Ay, ay, ay" When the song ends, Alice places a cupcake on the tray. Instantly Lisette pokes her finger into the icing and scoops it into her mouth. Flash! Grandma catches the action in a photograph.

Your baby is now a year old! Whether or not you have a party, it's time to rejoice. Your baby has grown and learned a lot in the past 12 months. What happens now? Read this issue to learn more.

Breastfeeding

Nursing is good for your toddler. If you are breastfeeding, continue as long as you and your toddler enjoy it. Nursing has many benefits:

- Breast milk provides nutrients your child needs.
- Breast milk helps protect against illness and allergies. If your child does get sick, nursing can be a comfort. In case of an upset stomach, breast milk may be the only thing your child can keep down.
- Nursing is soothing. As toddlers test their independence, they often feel frustrated. Nursing can calm a fussy, tired child. It's also restful for you.
- Nursing saves time and money.

Some tips:

- Give your child plenty of hugs and kisses. You are nursing less often now. Hugs help make up for the loss of closeness.
- Recognize that some people will question nursing after age one. Be ready with answers like: "My doctor endorses it." "Some babies

nurse longer than others.” “It’s a special time we both enjoy.”
“Breast is best.”

- Plan ahead. Nurse your child at home before going out. Bring along crackers or other healthy foods to offer as a snack.

To learn more about breastfeeding, you may want to contact your local health department, WIC clinic, hospital, La Leche League or doctor. You can call La Leche League at 1-800-LALECHE or visit their Web site at www.lalecheleague.org/.

Get some sunshine!

Take your child outdoors a few minutes a day. Sunshine enables the body to make vitamin D. The lack of this vitamin can cause the child’s bones to soften. This condition is known as rickets. It can result in bowed or crooked legs.

Dark-skinned children need more sunshine than light-skinned ones. That’s because dark skin absorbs less sunlight.

Your doctor may advise giving your child vitamins, especially if you are breastfeeding. A supplement can help ensure that your baby gets enough vitamin D. Check with your doctor.

Feeding

Giving up the bottle

Learning to drink from a cup takes time. Start by substituting a cup for the bottle at one meal. Once your child has adjusted to that, do the same at another meal.

Your child probably holds the bottle herself. Don’t let her walk around with it. This can turn into a habit. Sucking from a bottle off and on all day can lead to many problems. It can result in tooth decay. Or the milk might spoil, making your child sick. She might depend too much on milk or juice and not get enough other foods.

Your child may still want to be rocked with a bottle at bedtime. Try substituting water for milk. Then just offer a cup of water before rocking.

Some tips for giving up the baby bottle

- Don't put your baby to bed with a bottle. If your child must suck for comfort, offer her a pacifier. Offer a "lovey," such as a favorite stuffed toy or a blanket.
- Offer only milk, fruit juice or water in a cup to drink. Other drinks like tea, punch and soda contain caffeine and sugar. These are not good for growing children.
- Give your child plenty of hugs and kisses. By giving up the bottle, she is giving up a warm, loving ritual.

Drinking cow's milk

After age one, children no longer need formula. They can drink cow's milk. But make sure it's whole milk, not low-fat or skim milk. Children need milk fat for growth and energy. Serve whole milk until your child is at least two years old.

If you are worried that your child has a milk allergy, talk to your doctor about other options to provide the calcium and other nutrients she needs.

Expect a mess

At this age, children love to experiment. They will dip their fingers into apple juice and smear pudding on their tray. At the same time, they are learning to feed themselves. Milk will get spilled, and food will fall on the floor.

Accept your child's efforts. Gently confine activities to the tray of the high chair. Drape a dishtowel under the child's chin, or use a bib. Put newspaper or an old shower curtain on the floor. This will make cleanup easier.

Other tips for mealtime

- Wash your child's hands before eating. In crawling and moving around, she picks up germs everywhere. Use soap and warm water and rub her hands together briskly.
- Use dishes that will lessen frustration. Plastic dishes won't break. Shallow bowls and cups with broad bases are less likely to spill. Plates with upturned rims will help keep food in place.

- Serve small portions, just a spoonful or two. Your child wants to show her independence. Let her ask for more when she wants more.
- Watch for signs of fullness. If your child is playing with her food and no longer eating it, it's time to take it away.
- Wash your child's hands and face after eating. Change a messy shirt, if needed.

Health and Safety

Visit a dentist

It's time for your baby's first trip to the dentist. Call and make an appointment now. It is important to take care of any dental problems early, before they become serious. The dentist can easily check your baby's teeth while your baby sits on your lap. Your dentist can also give you tips on cleaning your baby's teeth.

Are you up to date on your baby's vaccines?

Is your child up to date on her shots? Vaccines help protect against certain diseases. Your doctor or clinic gives vaccines when you bring your child for regular checkups.

Some vaccines are given in two or three doses. Others are given in one dose. Most are given during the first year of a child's life. Some require boosters later.

The timing is important. Vaccines protect children when they are most at risk. The protection from some vaccines may last for years.

When all children are vaccinated, diseases are less likely to break out in the community. They cannot spread to other people. This makes life safer for everyone. This means children won't miss school, and parents won't miss work.

By law, your child must be up to date on vaccines so she can enroll in child care and public school.

Your baby's shots up to now

During the first year, your child should have had two or three doses of these vaccines:

- DTaP. This protects against three diseases:
- Diphtheria can clog the throat, making it hard to breathe.
- Tetanus starts in a cut or wound. It affects the nerves in a way that stiffens the muscles. Another name for it is "lockjaw."
- Pertussis is whooping cough.
- Polio. This disease can paralyze the whole body for life.
- Hepatitis B. This disease inflames the liver. It can last for months. In some cases, it can result in death.
- PCV. This vaccine protects against infections caused by a specific kind of bacteria. These infections can be in the ears, sinuses, lungs, blood and brain. The infections of the lungs (pneumonia), blood and brain (meningitis) can result in death.
- Hib. This vaccine protects against bacterial infections such as meningitis.

More shots needed now or soon

When your child is 12 to 18 months old, she should get:

- One more dose of all the vaccines above, plus:
 - 15.MMR. This protects against three diseases:
 - 16.Measles appears as a red rash. It can make children more at risk for pneumonia and ear infections.
 - 17.Mumps cause throat glands to swell. It can spread to other organs and make men sterile.
 - 18.Rubella is a type of measles. Its main threat is to pregnant women. It can cause a baby to be born deformed in some way.
- Varicella. This vaccine protects against chickenpox. This disease is known for its itchy sores.

Health and Safety continued...

Need to catch up and get shots for your baby?

Your doctor or clinic keeps records of the shots your baby receives. A child who has missed a dose needs to catch up as soon as possible.

Take your child to your doctor or clinic for a 12-month checkup. A nurse will give your child any vaccines that are due. Vaccines can help your child—and the community—stay healthy.

Vaccines are safe

In the early 1900s, childhood diseases were common. Babies died of pneumonia. Schools closed because of measles epidemics. Children were kept from swimming for fear of catching polio.

But today, thanks to vaccines, few children die of these illnesses. In fact, vaccines have nearly wiped out two diseases—smallpox and polio.

Because many childhood diseases are uncommon, some parents think their children don't need vaccines. But if many children go without vaccines, doctors fear a return of the old diseases.

Parents need to understand that vaccines are safe. Before a new vaccine can be given, it goes through at least 10 years of testing. Testing is done by labs and clinics under rules set by the federal government. Yet a vaccine, like any medicine, may involve a risk of harm. But that risk is very small. Taking that risk is better than having a disease.

Get the facts. Talk to your doctor or clinic. Protect your children from disease.

What's It Like To Be One Year Old?

- I've tripled my birth weight and now weigh around 20 pounds.
- I am 26 to 30 inches tall.
- I'm learning to walk, but I still crawl if I want to get somewhere fast.
- I can climb out of my crib.
- I can understand many words and like you to talk to me.
- I can take lids off containers and open cabinet doors.
- I like to imitate familiar sounds and may say a few words you can understand.
- I can solve simple problems like finding a lost toy.
- I have lots of energy and am always on the go.
- I like to push or pull toys when I practice walking.
- I insist on holding a spoon when I eat, but I'm not too accurate, and I have lots of spills.
- I like to look at pictures in books and magazines.
- I can play by myself for a little while if you are nearby.
- I may fuss if things don't go my way or if I'm tired or frustrated.

Baby Games and Activities

Toys for every child

When you're choosing toys for your baby, consider cost and safety. Toys need to be sturdy. They should have smooth edges and not break, splinter or crack. Make sure the toys can be cleaned easily. Test all toys regularly to make sure there are no loose parts.

All babies explore with their mouths. Make sure toys are safe for mouthing. Avoid play materials that are made of foam. Your baby could bite off a piece and choke.

Use these guidelines when you're choosing toys for your baby.

- The toy is interesting to explore and manipulate.
- The toy is not a choking hazard.
- The toy matches the child's physical abilities.
- The toy challenges but does not frustrate.
- The toy is well-constructed and durable.

Great toys for babies

Great toys can help your baby grow and learn. Most are inexpensive. Many can be hand made. Remember to check the toys often for safety.

- Books—Buy plastic or cardboard picture books. Get books with pictures of common objects.
- Dolls—Offer soft, simple dolls with painted faces.
- Stuffed animals—Provide soft, plush animals with sewn or painted faces.
- Transportation toys—Buy sturdy, one-piece cars and trucks. Buy toys your baby can carry and roll.
- Grasping toys—Offer toys that have interesting textures and parts to explore. Examples include plastic linking chains, stacking rings and shape sorters.
- Sand and water toys—Offer unbreakable household cups, spoons, funnels and strainers.
- Construction toys—Buy sturdy wooden blocks. Offer a few at a time for your baby to stack. She will build with them when she's older.
- Puzzles—Buy simple wooden inset puzzles with two to four pieces.
- Mirrors—Share unbreakable hand mirrors. Hang a mirror low on the wall where your baby crawls.
- Nesting and building toys—Buy or gather cups and boxes of various sizes that "nest" inside each other. Turned upside down, they can be stacked on top of each other.

- Balls—Buy a variety of sizes and textures for rolling and tossing.
- Art and craft materials—Offer a few large, nontoxic crayons. Use tape to hold paper in place.
- Musical instruments—Buy or make shakers, rattles and drums.
- Audio materials—Buy or borrow recordings of simple songs, rhymes and rhythms.

Routines and Rituals

Learning to use the toilet

After 12 months of dealing with diapers, parents may want a change. Parents often say, "I'll be so glad when she can use the toilet!"

The key is not when you are ready, but when your child is ready. Problems with getting children out of diapers almost always come from trying too soon.

Typically, girls are ready before boys. Some children are ready around age 18 months, while others are not ready until age three.

When is a child ready?

Your child is ready to learn to use the toilet when she has:

Physical ability

- is able to walk.
- has a larger bladder, so she urinates fewer times a day.
- wakes up from a nap with a dry diaper.
- can control the muscles that hold and release urine and bowel movements.
- can take underwear off and put it back on.

Mental ability

- understands the body's signals for needing to use the toilet.
- understands words such as "pee-pee," "poo-poo," and "potty."
- understands what is expected: when to go, what to do and where to do it.

Social and emotional ability

- can express her needs, like telling you that her diaper needs to be changed.
- wants to learn to use the toilet.

When all these abilities are in place, your child can move out of diapers easily. A child who is not ready may resist learning, and parents may become frustrated. Don't force it!

Routines and Rituals continued...

Helping your child learn

Later, when your child is ready to use the toilet, you can make learning easier. Some tips:

- Talk with your caregiver. Parents and caregivers should agree on when a child is ready and what she should be able to do.
- Always supervise your child as she learns to use the toilet. Make sure your child can easily get to the toilet. Put a potty chair in the bathroom or place a sturdy step stool by the toilet. Place toilet paper within easy reach.
- Dress the child in clothing that is easy to take off. These might include a dress, a skirt or pants with an elastic waist.
- Use cloth training pants. Your child will think that disposable paper training pants are the same as diapers.
- Help your child overcome any fear of the toilet. The deep hole and loud flushing noise can seem scary.
- Watch for signs that a child may need to go. This might include a frown or action such as holding her crotch.
- When the child urinates or has a bowel movement in the toilet, say, "That's good." Avoid making too much of it. Children need to learn to use the toilet for themselves, not to satisfy you.
- Never scold or shame a child for an accident. These are natural body functions, and children easily forget and get distracted.
- If a child has lots of accidents, go back to diapers for a while. Try again when the child seems ready.
- Go slowly. Learning these skills takes time.

Safety First—at Every Age

Always remember:

- Buckle your baby into a car safety seat before you start the car. Keep the seat facing backward until your baby is one year old and weighs at least 20 pounds. The back seat is the safest place for babies and children.

- Stay with your baby when she is playing near or in water. Never leave your baby alone in a bath or a pool. Babies can drown in just a few inches of water.
- Keep your baby away from things that could burn her. Don't eat, drink, smoke or carry anything hot while holding her.
- Put your baby to sleep on her back unless your doctor has told you to do otherwise. Insist that others who care for your baby do the same.
- Serve healthy foods. Avoid sweetened, salty or fatty ones.
- Lock up guns, alcohol, drugs and chemicals such as cleaning solutions. These can kill your baby.
- Watch for choking hazards like small hard candy, coins, popcorn, grapes and nuts.
- Put away knives, matches and other items that can hurt your baby. Put them in a place your exploring baby can't reach or open.
- Never, ever shake your baby.

Developmental Stages

Cognitive development

The one-year-old problem solver

Your baby's brain is developing. She can now solve simple problems. This is an important new skill. For example, when your baby holds a mechanical toy out to you and says, "Huh," her brain is working hard. She knows that the toy will work if someone turns the key. She knows that she can't turn the key. So she hands the toy to you. You can turn the key and make the toy work. She is solving a problem.

Your baby solves problems when she pulls a string to move a toy closer. She learns by trial and error that hammering on a pot makes more noise than pounding on the floor.

Babies use problem-solving skills to stack boxes, pull off shoes and socks or push chairs to use for climbing. Babies might work for several minutes opening a container that holds cereal for a snack.

Your baby needs your approval when she masters a task. Clap and encourage her. She will be more likely to try to solve new problems and to develop new brain skills.

Which hand?

Your baby probably prefers to use either her left hand or her right hand for most tasks. You might notice, for example, that she prefers to hold a spoon with her right hand. She picks up toys with her right hand. And she usually turns the pages of a book with her right hand.

People used to think that being left-handed was bad. Today we know that it doesn't matter which hand a person uses. Complex brain chemistry determines which hand a person prefers. If your baby prefers using her left hand, let her. With your support, she will be as successful as a right-handed child when she feeds herself, plays with toys and does art projects.

Physical development

Building life skills

Life skills are tasks that children learn. They use life skills to take care of themselves. Examples of life skills are eating, dressing and grooming. These skills let children become more independent and confident.

You can practice life skills throughout the day. At mealtime, encourage your baby to feed herself with a spoon or with her fingers. Let her drink from a cup. Encourage independent tooth brushing. Offer your baby a second brush to hold while you clean her teeth. Put a stool near the sink to make hand washing easier.

Let her help with dressing and undressing. Let your baby pull up her own pants or take off her own socks and shoes. Let her help with clean-up tasks, too. Talk about putting toys back on a storage shelf, and let her help you do it.

Don't expect your baby to master these skills any time soon. She may put her pants on backward. She will probably spill more than she eats. She wants to do things for herself but will get frustrated easily. Learning these skills takes practice. Offer your support and be patient. Your child is learning skills that will last a lifetime.

Developmental Stages continued...

Social and emotional development

Learning through play

Your baby tries to play with everything. And everything she plays with teaches her something new. She learns from toys, books and household items. She also learns from interactions with people.

If your baby has older brothers and sisters, she will watch to see how they play with toys. Your baby will want to play the same way. She imitates and copies what other people do.

If your baby is with another child of the same age, she will watch the other child. Sometimes she will copy that child's play. The children may play side by side. But they probably won't interact except to mimic one another.

Your baby will learn most from her interactions with you. Your patience and support will teach her independence. Your encouragement will help her learn that she is unique and has special skills. Your guidance and consistency will help her feel safe. In return, she will share her learning and success.

Language development

Working on words

Your 12-month-old is probably working hard on her language skills. She shows that she understands many words even though she can't say them. This is called receptive language. For example, when you ask her to hand you a toy or point to a picture in a book, she can do it.

Continue to go slowly with requests. Break activities down into many parts. Your baby will be able to follow simple requests. For example, if you are looking at a picture book, don't say, "Where are the farm animals?" Instead, say things like, "Point to the cow." "Show me the pig." "Do you see a chicken?" Give your baby time to think and respond before you move on to the next animal.

Expressive language—saying words—is developing, too. Your baby makes conversation-like noises, following your speech rhythm. She may say a few words clearly. She will point and gesture to help you understand the words she doesn't pronounce well. Clearly say the word she is trying to use. She will try to imitate you. In time, her speech will become clear and easy to understand.

Remember your baby is working on many skills at the same time. For example, she may be putting a lot of energy into learning to walk. If

so, her language development may slow down for a bit. Or she may be trying to get used to a new child-care center. If so, her physical and social skills may stall. Usually, with your support, all areas of development will level out. Remember, if you become worried that her development is delayed, talk to her doctor.

Questions Parents Ask

Question

What are the best shoes for my baby? She is just beginning to walk.

Answer

Many experts suggest that the best shoe is the bare foot. Unfortunately, that is not practical. Children need shoes for protection and warmth. Use these guidelines when shopping for shoes for your young toddler:

- Make sure the shoe fits. A shoe that is too large will make your child trip and fall. A shoe that is too small will cause sores and be painful to wear.
- Get help checking the fit. Test the length and width of your baby's foot while your baby is standing.
- Buy shoes that protect the feet. The shoes don't need special features like wedges, inserts, high tops or arches unless your baby's doctor recommends them.
- Buy lightweight shoes with flexible, nonslip soles. These features will make it easier for your baby to learn to walk.
- Don't shop when your baby is tired or hungry. Bring along a favorite toy or book and a snack in case you have to wait for sales help.
- Compare prices and look for the best value. Your baby will probably outgrow her shoes several times a year. Check the fit regularly. Don't buy ahead. Avoid hand-me-down shoes.

Early Intervention and Your Baby's Developing Skills

Children learn skills as they grow. These skills happen by certain ages. A child learns skills at her own pace. You can see how your baby is doing. Watch when she starts to crawl, walk, talk and feed herself.

If you are concerned that your baby is learning skills too slowly, talk to your doctor. You can also call 1-800-695-0285 to get information. The call is free. When you call, you will be told how to contact the early

intervention program in your state. Staff at your state's early intervention program can assist you in finding help in your area.

What is an early intervention program?

An early intervention program helps children from birth to age three. Early intervention staff can help your baby learn to roll over, sit up, crawl and grasp toys.

They also help children who are having problems with seeing, hearing and talking.

How does an early intervention program help?

It can help your child with needed services and also help you join a support group.

Your family and early intervention staff can work together to plan services. These services teach basic skills and can be done in your home or during child care.

Guidance

Setting limits

There are two main reasons for parents to make rules for their children. The first is to keep children safe. The second is to help children learn self-control.

Your baby needs to know that she can depend on you to set limits for safety and guidance. Use these guidelines when you set limits for your baby:

- Make rules that develop the self-esteem and dignity of your baby. Don't have rules that make her feel bad about herself. For example, when she's trying to say a new word and mispronounces it, say the word correctly. Don't scold, mock, or repeat the "baby" word.
- Make rules that are clear to your baby. Your baby needs to be told the rule, again and again. For example, you don't want your baby to pull your hair. If she pulls it again after you told her that it hurts, simply put her down. Say, "I can't hold you when you pull my hair. I won't let you hurt me."
- Make rules that you can enforce. Avoid threats like "If you splash, I'll never let you play in water again." Instead, state clearly that you

expect the water to stay in the sink while your baby pours from cup to cup. If she splashes the water, restate the rule and tell her that her water play is over for the day.

- Enforce rules consistently. Your baby needs to learn that rules are important to her safety and that they don't change from day to day. For example, you have a rule that your baby always rides in a car safety seat. This rule should be the same in all cars, no matter who is driving. If you bend the rule once, she will test it again and again.
- Childproof your home so it is a safe place for your baby to play and explore. You'll spend less time making and enforcing rules.

TV time?

Your baby is too active to watch TV now. She is curious about the things in the real world: kitchen spoons, blades of grass and newspapers. Her attention span is too short to sit still and watch TV for even a minute. This means that she won't be interested in videos or movies, either.

When you watch TV, watching it takes time away from your baby. It's hard to enjoy a show and care for your baby at the same time. It's best to save your TV watching until she naps or goes to bed at night. Instead of watching TV, read a book to her.

Sing a song or dance to music. Play a game such as "drop the ball in the oatmeal box." These activities help develop her brain. They strengthen her social skills. They help her feel loved and happy.

If you watch TV while your baby sleeps, turn down the sound and darken her room. You don't want her to think she's missing something fun.

Avoid having the TV on all day as background noise. A silent black box will be less interesting to explore. Limiting TV time is a good habit to start now. Later, when she's in school, your child will need time to read and do her homework.

Parenting Styles

Find your style of parenting

There are many ideas about how to rear children. Some parents adopt the ideas their own parents used. Others get advice from friends. Some read books about parenting. Others take classes offered in the

community. No one has all the answers. However, psychologists and other social scientists now know what parenting practices are most effective and are more likely to lead to positive outcomes for children.

Ideas about child rearing can be grouped into three styles. These are different ways of deciding who is responsible for what in a family.

Authoritarian

Authoritarian parents always try to be in control and exert their control on the children. These parents set strict rules to try to keep order, and they usually do this without much expression of warmth and affection. They attempt to set strict standards of conduct and are usually very critical of children for not meeting those standards. They tell children what to do, they try to make them obey and they usually do not provide children with choices or options.

Authoritarian parents don't explain why they want their children to do things. If a child questions a rule or command, the parent might answer, "Because I said so." Parents tend to focus on bad behavior, rather than positive behavior, and children are scolded or punished, often harshly, for not following the rules.

Children with authoritarian parents usually do not learn to think for themselves and understand why the parent is requiring certain behaviors.

Permissive

Permissive parents give up most control to their children. Parents make few, if any, rules, and the rules that they make are usually not consistently enforced. They don't want to be tied down to routines. They want their children to feel free. They do not set clear boundaries or expectations for their children's behavior and tend to accept in a warm and loving way, however the child behaves.

Permissive parents give children as many choices as possible, even when the child is not capable of making good choices. They tend to accept a child's behavior, good or bad, and make no comment about whether it is beneficial or not. They may feel unable to change misbehavior, or they choose not to get involved.

Democratic or authoritative

Democratic parents help children learn to be responsible for themselves and to think about the consequences of their behavior. Parents do this by providing clear, reasonable expectations for their children and explanations for why they expect their children to behave in a particular manner. They monitor their children's behavior to make sure that they follow through on rules and expectations. They do this in a warm and loving manner. They often, "try to catch their children being good" and reinforcing the good behavior, rather than focusing on the bad.

Parenting Styles continued...

For example, a child who leaves her toys on a staircase may be told not to do this because, "Someone could trip on them and get hurt and the toy might be damaged." As children mature, parents involve children in making rules and doing chores: "Who will mop the kitchen floor, and who will carry out the trash?"

Parents who have a democratic style give choices based on a child's ability. For a toddler, the choice may be "red shirt or striped shirt?" For an older child, the choice might be "apple, orange or banana?" Parents guide children's behavior by teaching, not punishing. "You threw your truck at Mindy. That hurt her. We're putting your truck away until you can play with it safely."

Which is your style?

Maybe you are somewhere in between. Think about what you want your children to learn. Research on children's development shows that the most positive outcomes for children occur when parents use democratic styles. Children with permissive parents tend to be aggressive and act out, while children with authoritarian parents tend to be compliant and submissive and have low self-esteem.

No parenting style will work unless you build a loving bond with your child.

Parenting tips

- Treat your child with respect. Talk to her and ask questions. Be polite. Avoid nagging, yelling and hitting. If your child misbehaves in public, take her home. Avoid humiliating her. Maybe she is tired

or hungry. Next time, plan the outing after she has had a nap and a snack.

- Be consistent. Don't be permissive one moment and strict the next. Make sure rules apply to everyone, even you. Make promises only when you're sure you can keep them.
- As parents, consult with each other and maintain a united front so that your child will not try to "play off" one parent against the other.
- Encourage your child. Help build confidence. Say, "I know you can do it." Tell her, "You worked really hard on that." Avoid criticism. Don't compare one child to another.
- Express love. Say the words: "I love you." Give pats, hugs, and kisses.
- Take time for fun. Do things you both enjoy.

Remember "HALT"

Feeling mad or cranky? Afraid you might hurt your baby or do something rash? Whenever you feel out of sorts, think, "HALT."

- Hungry—Have you missed breakfast? Is it mealtime, but you're running late? Stop what you're doing. Eat something—an apple, a sandwich or the meal you have prepared.
- Angry—Are you angry about something? Stop what you're doing. Think back to what made you angry. Maybe the car broke down. Maybe someone hurt your feelings. Accept your angry feelings, but don't act them out. Count to 10. Take a few deep breaths. Your angry feelings will pass, and things will get better.
- Lonely—Are you lonely? Do you feel you spend all your time with your baby and few grown-ups? Stop what you're doing. Call a friend. Take your baby and visit a neighbor. Be with people who care about you.
- Tired—Are you tired? Maybe you didn't sleep well last night. Maybe you have worked hard all day. Stop what you're doing. Put your baby in the crib or another safe place. Sit with your feet up and relax for a few minutes. Or forget about chores and go to bed early.

Thinking "HALT" can often pinpoint what's wrong. It can prevent you from doing something you will regret later. It reminds you to take care of yourself and do what is best for your baby.

Getting Help

Hiring a baby-sitter

Baby-sitting isn't for everyone. Baby-sitters keep your children safe and happy while you are away for a short time. Use the guidelines below. They will keep your baby safe and help your baby-sitter do a good job.

- Ask for names and phone numbers of people who have hired the baby-sitter before. Call these people and ask what they liked and didn't like about this sitter.
- Interview the baby-sitter. Look for someone who is trustworthy, capable and comfortable with babies.
- Have a trial run. Have the sitter care for your baby while you are at home. You can watch the sitter with your baby.
- Describe your routines. Give the sitter information on your baby's habits and preferences for eating, diapering, playing and sleeping.
- Give clear instructions. Make sure the sitter knows how to deal with emergencies.
- Tell the sitter how you can be reached. Give the sitter the name and phone number of a friend or relative to call if you can't be reached.
- Write down the phone number of the baby's doctor.
- Give a tour of your house. Let the sitter know about anything unusual.
- Let the sitter know when you'll be home. Call if you will be late.
- Make sure the baby-sitter understands all your safety rules for your baby.

Information Resources for Families

Families who are enrolled in the WIC program (Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children) can get information on breastfeeding, formula feeding and nutrition at their local WIC office. Families eligible for WIC receive nutrition counseling and supplemental foods such as baby formula, milk and cereal. To find the WIC office nearest you, call your state health department or visit the WIC Web site at www.fns.usda.gov/wic/. Many public libraries offer free access to the Internet and provide help for first-time users.

For information about early childhood education initiatives, you may contact the U.S. Department of Education at 1-800-USA-LEARN or visit the Web site at www.ed.gov/offices/OESE/teachingouryoungest/.

To learn about child care options, you may contact the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Child Care Aware by phone at 1-800-424-2246 or visit their Web site at www.childcareaware.org/.

For more information and resources on postpartum depression, breastfeeding and many other women's health issues call The National Women's Health Information Center (NWHIC) at 1-800-994-9662 (1-800-994-WOMAN). You can visit their Web site at www.4woman.org/.

To learn more about breastfeeding, you may call La Leche League at 1-800-LALECHE or visit their Web site at www.lalecheleague.org/.

To learn more about free or low-cost health insurance for children, you can call the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Insure Kids Now program at 1-877-KIDSNOW. You can also visit their Web site at www.insurekidsnow.gov/.

The American Association of Poison Control Centers' (AAPCC) poison control hotline, 1-800-222-1222, should be on your list of emergency numbers. To learn more, you can visit the AAPCC Web site at www.aapcc.org/.

Families who cannot afford a car safety seat can contact the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. They can provide information on resources that help low-income families purchase or borrow child car seats. You may call them at 1-800-424-9393 or visit their Web site at www.nhtsa.dot.gov/.

To learn more about safety, you can call the Consumer Product Safety Commission at 1-800-638-2772 or you can visit their Web site at www.cpsc.gov/.

For information on disabilities and disability-related issues for families, you can call the National Information Center for Children and Youth with Disabilities (NICHCY) at 1-800-695-0285 or visit their Web site at www.nichcy.org/.

For information about programs that teach adults how to read, you can call America's Literacy Directory at 1-800-228-8813 or visit their Web site at: www.literacydirectory.org/.