

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

At birth a baby's brain is not completely developed. When babies experience a variety of sounds, smells, sights, feelings and loving touches, their brains make connections that help them learn language, problem solving and even math in later life. Their relationships with you and other caring adults help them develop their social and emotional responses. When you talk, sing, cuddle and respond to your baby, you are helping him achieve his full potential.

If Babies Could Talk

I am growing fast and I need frequent feedings of milk. Some time between four and six months I will be ready for solid foods. Introduce my foods gradually and one at a time (in case I am allergic). Please don't force me to eat foods I don't want.

If I fuss when you are cuddling me, I am probably overtired or overstimulated. Once I am settled, put me down in a safe, quiet place away from noise and confusion.

Now that I can see farther, I want to look at different things. Please change my position from time to time and take me outside. Interesting mobiles on my crib and playpen get my attention.

You can help me learn language and listening skills. I gurgle, then you talk. I respond. You listen, then say something to me. See, I am only five months old and we are already having a conversation.

HELP YOUR BABY SUCCEED

STEPS FOR HEALTHY CHILD DEVELOPMENT (3 to 6 months)

SAFETY



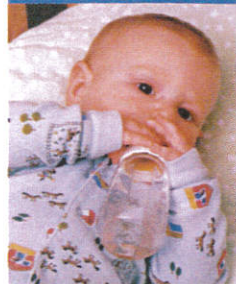
- Never leave your baby alone on a changing table or bed. When changing a diaper, always keep one hand on her to make sure she does not fall off.
- Keep things out of reach that he should not put in his mouth.
- Never leave your baby alone. Not even for a second.

SECURITY



- Smile at your baby a lot. Soon she will smile back.
- Play pat-a-cake, peek-a-boo and other rhyming games with your baby.

HEALTH



- If you need to give your baby a bedtime bottle, use water only. The sugar in juice or milk may hurt the gums or new teeth that are developing.
- Call your doctor or a parent information line at a local hospital if you have concerns about your baby's health. Make sure he gets the immunizations he needs at four and six months.
- Don't put your baby to bed with a bottle. It may ruin her smile.

LEARNING



- Explain things to your baby, for example, "Daddy is going to take you for a walk now."
- Give your baby chances to reach for, grab and hold safe objects. Cheer her on.

ADJUSTING



- Don't use angry or loud voices around your baby.
- Call your baby by name and point him out as you stand with him in front of a mirror.

What to Expect *Remember:* Every baby develops at his or her own pace. These are guidelines only. If you are concerned about your baby's development, talk with your doctor, a public health nurse or another trusted health professional.

- Your baby is getting ready to start talking and she will start to make gurgling and babbling noises.
- She may be able to lift her head when on her tummy and may begin to roll from side to side.
- He is starting to reach for and grasp things. Give him safe, chewable objects because everything he grabs goes into his mouth.
- She may become afraid of loud noises such as angry voices, a barking dog or the vacuum cleaner. Hold her close and reassure her when this happens.
- He looks at you when you call his name.

Take Care of You

The arrival of a new baby is an exciting and happy event, whether it is the first or the fourth. But it is also a time of change. Family members should talk about their expectations, who will handle what chores, and how everyone will cope with the added duties.

Nobody is perfect. You don't have to do everything right, and you don't have to do everything yourself. Accept that you will not be able to go out as often nor keep your home as tidy.

Find time for yourself (at least 30 minutes a day) to read, listen to music, watch television or take a relaxing bath. Ask family members and friends for help so you (and your partner) can take some breaks away from baby.