

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Parents are their baby's first and most important teachers. But you don't need to put pressure on yourself to "teach" her anything. The magic of babies is that they learn from everything around them. When you sing, talk, and play with your baby, her brain makes the connections that allow her to learn language, math, music and logic. When you comfort your baby, you let her know the world is safe. The more contented she feels, the more able she is to learn how things work. The more secure she feels about your love, the better she will be at getting along with others and coping with stress. So relax and enjoy your everyday moments together.

If Babies Could Talk

I am on my feet and starting to "cruise" along the edge of furniture. I love this new independence but I need you to watch out for me. Now I have lots more chances to explore and get into trouble!

Sometimes I will drive you crazy asking for help and doing things over and over. I love to throw things on the ground and watch you pick them up. Please be patient and have fun with me.

All of the new things I am experiencing can be very stressful. Hold me as often as you can. This does not spoil me. It helps me learn how to deal with stress now and in the future.

HELP YOUR BABY SUCCEED STEPS FOR HEALTHY CHILD DEVELOPMENT (9 to 12 months)

SAFETY



- "Childproof" your house. Cover electrical outlets and make sure there are no cords, unblocked stairs, sharp edges or tippy furniture in the areas where baby will be.
- Put all poisonous and hazardous materials (such as cleaning fluids, lighters and lighter fluid) out of reach. Post the number of your local poison control centre on your fridge.

SECURITY



- Respect your child's feelings, even if they don't seem rational to you at the time.
- Celebrate your baby's first birthday, but keep it simple. A cupcake, a short visit with family members or friends and lots of hugs is all he needs to feel special.

HEALTH



- Exercise with your baby: crawl on the floor, gently stretch her arms and legs, roll a ball to her, play in the bathtub, roll around on a blanket outside, set up and crawl around a simple obstacle course.
- Help baby sleep with a comforting bedtime routine. Pacifiers, cuddle toys and soothing music may also help.

LEARNING



- Give your baby containers to fill up and empty with water, sand or household objects.
- Read out loud to your child every day. Encourage him to turn the pages and point to objects in picture books.

ADJUSTING



- Praise your baby for big and small achievements, such as drinking from a cup, saying "mama", putting an object in a pot or pulling herself to a standing position.
- Distract your baby when you want him to change what he is doing. Hold and soothe him when he is frustrated.

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 may be able to pull herself to a standing position, move around holding on to furniture and eventually take a few steps on her own. However, many babies do not walk until they are 15 months or older.
- He will babble and soon say one or two words such as "mama" and "dada."
- She may cry less and for different reasons. She may feel scared, helpless or frustrated because she does not yet have the skills she needs to do certain things. Or she may be upset with changes in routine.
- He will enjoy finger foods and drinking from a cup. Do not give him foods he can choke on such as nuts, raisins, popcorn, candy or hard pieces of vegetables and fruit.

Take Care of You

If both parents will be working, think about what kind of childcare arrangements are best for you and your baby. Ask for referrals from trusted friends and advice from your nearest Ontario Early Years Centre.

Look for a caregiver you trust who will work with you for the benefit of your child. Visit the caregiver or childcare centre to see how they interact with children in their care. Make sure the setting is safe and clean. Check the caregiver's references.

If possible, go with your child on the first few days. Once he is with a caregiver full time, stay involved. Ask questions about his day-to-day activities and don't be afraid to make suggestions. Keep a strong, positive relationship with your child's caregiver. You are partners in his happiness and successful development.