



# Early Learning Matters

*Because parents are their children's first, best teachers.*

for  
Parents



## Ages and Stages

1-12 Months

### Ideas for Parents



### Overview

Babies learn and grow so quickly. By the end of this year your baby will have almost tripled in size. He or she will be crawling and maybe even taking a timid first step! Try to spend lots of time holding, cuddling, and playing with your little one. You will be richly rewarded with babbles, smiles, and squeals of laughter.

- Baby proof everything! Store toxic substances such as dishwasher detergent, make-up, paint, or medicine up high. Put safety latches on cabinets and covers on electrical outlets. Lower crib mattresses so an older infant can't fall over the rail. Cover sharp corners of tables or shelves that your infant might bump into.
- Provide interesting objects for baby to mouth and explore. Square nylon scarves, plastic measuring cups, large wooden spoons, and colorful washcloths are favorite household toys. Keep easy-to-swallow objects out of infant's reach. Baby should not be allowed to play with anything smaller than a half dollar (about 1 1/4 inch).
- If your baby is bottle fed, be sure to hold him or her while feeding. Even if your baby holds the bottle, being held and cuddled helps develop a strong nurturing parent-child relationship. Do not prop an infant drinking from a bottle as it may cause choking.
- Respect your baby's natural schedule. Most babies will settle into a regular routine for eating, sleeping, and soiling their diapers, but the schedule will vary depending on the baby. Some babies need to eat more frequently than others. Some will sleep through the night early on, others will continue to wake briefly well into their second year.



## Ideas for Parents

(cont.)

### Books for Parents

- *Touchpoints: Your Child's Emotional and Behavioral Development*, T. Berry Brazelton
- *The First Twelve Months of Life: Your Baby's Growth Month by Month*, Frank Caplan
- *What to Expect the First Year*, Arlene Eisenberg, Heidi Murkoff and Sandy Hathaway
- *Your Baby and Child, From Birth to Age Five*, Penelope Leach
- *The Baby Book: Everything You Need to Know About Your Baby from Birth to Age Two*, William Sears and Martha Sears
- *Caring for Your Baby and Child - Birth to Age Five*, American Academy of Pediatrics. Steven P. Shevlov, ed.

- Talk to your baby. Face your infant when talking so he or she can see you and smile with you. Talk about what you are doing, familiar objects, or people. You may even want to babble back or echo sounds your baby makes much as you would in a regular conversation. Even though your infant cannot understand everything you say, he or she will be learning many words that will form the basis for language later on.
- Read to your baby. Babies enjoy cuddling on a parent's lap, looking at colorful picture books, and hearing the rhythm of a parent's voice. With time they begin to understand that words have meaning and can be used to identify objects.
- Encourage older infants to feed themselves by offering pieces of banana and soft bread. Give your baby a spoon with some mashed potatoes or other sticky food and let him or her practice eating with a spoon. Yes, it will be messy! Be patient. Learning this skill takes lots of practice! Play peek-a-boo. Hide your face behind a blanket, then peek out at your baby. Older babies will learn to do this themselves and will enjoy this game for a long time.
- Give your baby the freedom to move around. Young infants enjoy being on their back so they can kick, wiggle, and look around. Older infants need space and time to practice crawling, creeping, pulling up, and walking. Spending too much time in a walker, play pen, or infant swing may inhibit the development of these important skills.
- Help your baby develop a sense of trust and security by responding to baby's cries. Feeling secure encourages your baby to try new things. Be consistent so your baby knows what to expect.
- Stay with your baby when someone new is around. Encourage strangers to approach slowly. Introduce your infant, and let him or her explore someone new in the safety of your presence.



## Books for Children

- *Baby's Faces*, Ben Argueta
- *The Rock-A-Bye Collection* (audio tape and book), J. Aaron Brown & Associates, Inc.
- *Teddy In The House*, Lucy Cousins
- *Touch and Feel: Baby Animals*, DK Publishing
- *Grow! Babies!*, Penny Gentieu
- *Animal Babies*, Harry McNaught
- *Hide and Seek Puppies*, Roy Volkman

# By 4 Months

## Physical Development

- weight: 10-18 pounds, length: 23-27 inches
- sleeps about 6 hours before waking during the night
- sleeps 14-17 hours daily
- lifts head and chest when lying on stomach
- holds both eyes in a fixed position
- follows a moving object or person with eyes
- grasps rattle or finger
- wiggles and kicks with arms and legs
- rolls over (stomach to back)
- sits with support

## Mental Development

- explores objects with mouth
- plays with fingers, hands, toes
- reacts to sound of voice, rattle, bell
- turns head toward bright colors and lights
- recognizes bottle or breast

## Social & Emotional Development

- cries (with tears) to communicate pain, fear, discomfort, or loneliness
- babbles or coos
- loves to be touched and held close
- responds to a shaking rattle or bell
- returns a smile
- responds to peak-a-boo games

# By 8 Months

## Physical Development

- weight: 14-23 pounds, length: 25-30 inches
- first teeth begin to appear
- drools, mouths, and chews on objects
- reaches for cup or spoon when being fed
- drinks from a cup with help & enjoys some finely chopped, solid foods; closes mouth firmly or turns head when no longer hungry
- may sleep 11-13 hours at night although this varies greatly; needs 2-3 naps during the day
- develops a rhythm for feeding, eliminating, sleeping, & being awake
- true eye color is established
- rolls from back to stomach & vice-versa
- sits alone without support & holds head erect
- raises up on arms and knees into crawling position; rocks back & forth, but may not move forward
- uses finger & thumb to pick up an object and transfers objects from one hand to the other



## Mental Development

- cries in different ways to say he or she is hurt, wet, hungry, or lonely
- makes noises to voice displeasure or satisfaction
- recognizes & looks for familiar voices & sounds
- learns by using senses (smell, taste, touch, sight, hearing)
- focuses eyes on small objects and reaches for them
- looks for ball rolled out of sight
- searches for toys hidden under a blanket, basket, or container
- explores objects by touching, shaking, banging, and mouthing
- babbles expressively as if talking
- enjoys dropping objects over edge of chair or crib

# By 12 Months

Physical Development



# TOYS

- weight: 17-27 pounds, length: 27-32 inches
- sleeps 11-13 hours but may still wake up during the night
- takes naps—some babies will stop taking a morning nap, others will continue both morning and afternoon naps
- begins to refuse bottle or wean self from breast during day
- needs at least 3 meals a day with 2 snacks in-between
- enjoys drinking from a cup
- begins to eat finger foods
- continues to explore everything by mouth
- enjoys opening and closing cabinet doors

- pictures on wall
- mobile of bright and contrasting colors
- measuring cups
- crib mirror
- rattles that make a variety of sounds
- musical toys
- xylophone
- bath toys
- spoons
- pounding bench
- balls of different sizes
- stacking rings
- board or cloth books
- large plastic cars, trucks
- soft, washable dolls

## Mental Development

- says first word
- says da-da and ma-ma or equivalent
- “dances” or bounces to music
- interested in picture books
- pays attention to conversations
- claps hands, waves bye, if prompted
- likes to place objects inside one another

## Social & Emotional Development

- copies adult actions, such as drinking from a cup, talking on phone
- responds to name
- likes to watch self in mirror
- expresses fear or anxiety toward strangers
- wants caregiver or parent to be in constant sight
- offers toys or objects to others, but expects them to be returned
- may become attached to a favorite toy or blanket
- pushes away something he or she does not want

# A word on development

Your child is unique. His or her learning and growth rates differ from other children the same age. If, however, your child is unable to do many of the skills listed for this age group, you may wish to talk to an early childhood specialist. You are the best person to notice developmental problems, if any, because of the time you spend with your child. If your child has special needs, early help can make a difference. If you have questions about your child's development or want to have your child assessed, contact:

- Your pediatrician or health care professional
- Area Education Agency—Early Childhood Special Education Department
- Iowa Compass 1-800-779-2001

Contact your county Extension office to obtain other publications about children, parenting, and family life or visit the ISU Extension Web site at <http://www.extension.iastate.edu/> ..



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The developmental information provided in this bulletin has been compiled from a variety of professional resources to help you understand your child's overall growth. It is not a standardized measurement tool.