

PARENTS



COMMUNITIES

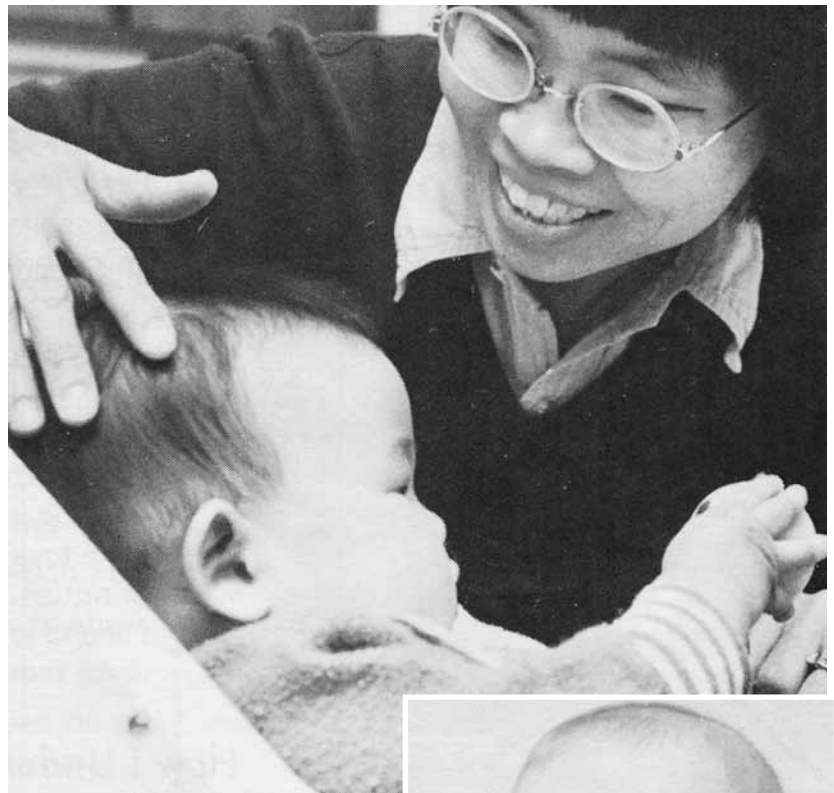
Healthy Children Ready to Learn

7 MONTHS OLD

Dear Parents —
Your baby's world
is growing!

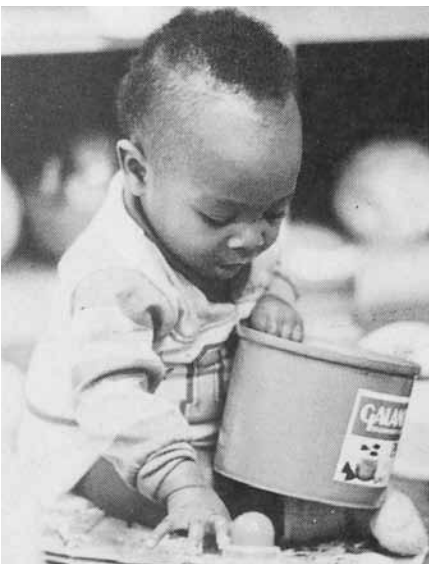
Have you noticed how your baby is fascinated by her hands? How she makes a fist? Claps her hands? How she just loves to poke your face with her fingers? At this age, your baby is interested in everything!

You can encourage her wonderful curiosity by playing simple games with her. Clap hands to music together. Play peek-a-boo or a naming game, where you point to different things and name them.



REMEMBER THAT PLAYING IS A
FORM OF TEACHING. AND, YOU ARE
YOUR BABY'S MOST
IMPORTANT TEACHER.

WHAT'S IT LIKE TO BE 7 MONTHS OLD?



How I Grow

- I creep on my stomach — I may even crawl.
- I also get around on my back by raising my behind and pushing with my feet.
- I balance myself and sit for awhile without any support.
- I keep my legs straight when you pull me up, and I try to stand by myself.
- I explore my body with my mouth and hands.
- I can keep my diaper dry for up to two hours.
- I may have some teeth.
- I feed myself finger foods — I'm pretty messy!
- I play with a spoon and a cup, but I'm not so good at using them yet.

How I Talk

- I imitate the sounds I hear — that's how I learn.
- I say several sounds like ma, mu, da, di and ba, all in one breath.

How I Respond

- I want to be included in all family activities.
- I like to see and touch myself in the mirror.
- I get excited when I see a picture of a baby, thinking it's me.
- I like toys that make noise like bells, music boxes or rattles.
- I like to grab, shake and bang things, and put them in my mouth.

How I Understand

- I concentrate better now and spend lots of time examining things.
- I know the difference in the size of blocks.
- I can tell if something is near or far.
- I can tell when people are angry or happy by the way they look and talk.

How I Feel

- I fear strangers, so stay with me when they are around.
- I feel strongly about what I want and don't want to do.
- I feel playful and like to tease.

T.E.M.P.E.R

and FRUSTRATION

Your baby moves into another room to explore and satisfy his curiosity. He doesn't see you, gets scared and starts to howl. Or, you leave the room. He begins to cry because he is frightened of being separated from you. Or, he drops a toy out of sight. He screams with anger because he can no longer see or get to it, and he wants it back immediately.

Now that your baby is able to get around more on his own, life is more exciting, but scary and frustrating, too. Don't be surprised if he begins to show some signs of temper or frustration — most babies do at this age. Temper and frustration are very normal. They will pass as he gets older, feels more comfortable and is more skillful in moving around.

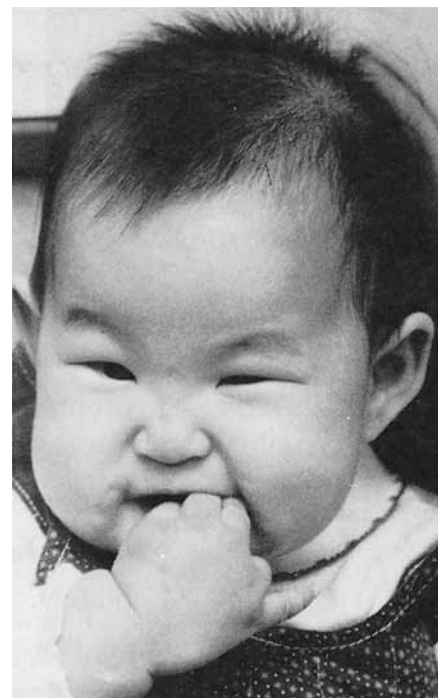
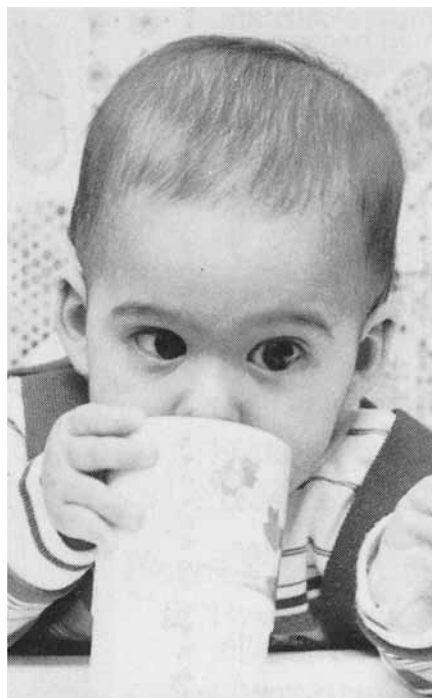
Give him some extra cuddling during these bursts of independence. Remember that he can always use some loving — and so can you!



FEEDING YOUR

You can start feeding your baby strained meats and other protein

After you have tried some cereal, fruit and vegetables, you can start adding meats, or meat alternatives, and whole grain or enriched breads to your baby's daily diet. You can either buy ready-to-eat meat and alternatives such as poultry, fish and egg yolk, or prepare them at home. You should give your baby about one to two tablespoons, twice a day. Prepare or buy only plain, single-ingredient items such as jars of strained chicken,



strained beef, strained liver and strained fish. Remember, there is more protein in one jar of strained chicken than in four jars of strained chicken and noodles.

Here's a single-ingredient recipe that you can prepare at home and freeze:

EGG YOLK PUREE

Cook 1 egg in simmering water 15 to 20 minutes. Remove shell. Remove yolk and puree with 1 tablespoon formula or milk until smooth.

Serve or freeze and keep no longer than one month. Be sure to label and date the item.

Note: Use only the yolk. Egg white is often not given until late in the first year to avoid problems with allergies. Use the egg white in the family's casseroles, salads or sandwiches.

FOODS TO PREPARE

- Fresh and frozen fruit juice without added sugar.
- Fresh and frozen meats, poultry or fish without added salt.

BABY

foods, breads and fruit juices.

BREADS

You can try giving your baby up to 1 serving of whole grain or enriched breads such as toast, crackers or hard biscuits. (If your baby is teething, chewing on hard biscuits will feel good.)

FRUIT JUICES

You can offer your baby three to four ounces of a vitamin-C rich fruit juice, such as orange or grapefruit.

ABOUT WEANING

Some mothers decide to wean their babies from the breast or bottle about now. Others wait until later on. When you decide to wean your baby, try to do it gradually over a period of several weeks. During the weaning period, be sure to give your baby some extra hugs and kisses.

FOODS TO AVOID

- Fruit drinks and imitation flavored fruit-ades.
- Meat products with salt, sugar, seasonings, and other additives (for example, bacon, bologna, hot dogs, frozen meat pies, etc.).



THE MIRROR GAME

Purpose of the game

- Helps your baby be aware of her own appearance.

How to play

- Stand in front of a mirror with your baby and point to her reflection.
- Using her name, say, "I see Tina. Where is Tina? Find Tina. Look at Tina." Encourage her to point to herself in the mirror.
- Still sitting in front of the mirror, do the same thing with objects. Pick them up one at a time and move them behind your baby's head.
- Name the objects, telling your baby something about them, such as "This is a ball, and it's round."
- Then ask your baby, "Where is the ball?" and encourage her to point to it in the mirror.

Other eyes-and-hands games

- Let your baby play with toys in front of a wall mirror or dresser mirror.
- Let other people sit with your baby in front of the mirror and say their names.

GIVE YOURSELF A PAT ON THE BACK!

Remember how you felt just before your baby was born and during those first hectic months afterwards?

Now may be a good time to think about how your feelings as a parent have changed during these past months.

Are you feeling more confident and relaxed now about bringing up your baby? Are there still times when you feel unsure of yourself and guilty that you're not the "perfect" parent? Well, you know that there is no such thing as the "perfect" parent.

Often we expect too much from ourselves. It's impossible to be patient, understanding and loving

all the time. We just try to do the best we can. Yet many parents feel guilty and discouraged if they don't live up to how they think they should be as a parent. They have a whole list of "shoulds":

- I should never get mad at my baby.
- I should always put the baby's needs ahead of mine.
- I should be patient at all times.
- I should always have dinner ready when my partner comes home, no matter how tired I am.

What are some of your "shoulds"? One way to find out is to make a list. Try, for example, to fill in the following sentences. Just write down any thoughts that come to your mind:

- A good parent should _____

- When my baby cries, I should _____

- When I'm tired and my baby is cranky, I should _____

- As a parent, I should never _____

- As a parent, I should always _____

Now make up some of your own "should" sentences. You might want to think about where your "shoulds" are coming from – your own parents or friends?

DON'T BE TOO TOUGH ON YOURSELF. Instead of putting yourself down with your list of "shoulds," try to accept your feelings and realize it's not easy to be all things to all people – even little babies.

Remember, too . . . NOBODY'S PERFECT!

“Ever since we had the baby, there’s been a lot of strain between me and my partner. We never seem to have time just to sit and talk anymore. I can’t seem to tell him how I feel. Things really seem to be piling up between us. Do you have any suggestions?”

Many new parents feel just as you do. Their lives are so busy with all the added demands a new baby brings that it’s hard to find the time to work things out.

As difficult as it may be, it’s important to make the time and openly talk about what’s bothering you. Chances are your partner has been storing up some gripes too.

Here are some ways to make it easier for both of you:

- Set up a “date”— Reserve a special time (or times) each week when you can be together to talk without distractions. Ask a friend or family member to watch the baby for you.

- Use “I” messages — Tell him how you are feeling without blaming him. Make sure you put YOURSELF in your communication. Instead of saying, “You always put me down,” say, “I feel put down when you tell me…” By using “I” messages, your partner will not feel blamed or accused.

- Be direct — Say what you mean, rather than hoping he will guess or know what you mean. Instead of saying “The living room has been looking messy lately,” say, “I get upset when you leave your boots in the living room and expect me to pick them up.”

- Avoid the question trap — Asking questions is often a poor substitute for direct communication. Instead of “Why didn’t you call to tell me you’d be late?” say, “I was worried that something had happened to you when you didn’t come home at the usual time. Next time, call me so I won’t worry.”

Tip: When you feel you are about to ask a question, stop and listen to yourself.

Try to identify your real feelings and then say them in a statement instead of a question.

- Be sure to listen — Give him a chance to air his feelings and gripes. Don’t interrupt, jump to conclusions, preach or quickly offer advice. Check back with him to see if you really understood him; for example, say, “Let me see if I understand. Are you saying that…?”

It’s normal for new parents to have many mixed feelings. If you use these basic communication skills, you may be able to find solutions to problems before they get out of hand.



If you have any questions or comments, please contact your Extension Family and Consumer Sciences agent at your county UT Extension office.

COMING NEXT

In . . . HEALTHY CHILDREN
READY TO LEARN

- Fear of Strangers
- Babyproofing the home



HEALTHY CHILDREN READY TO LEARN

was originally developed as the Parent Express series by the University of California Cooperative Extension Service. The material was adapted for use in Tennessee by Family and Consumer Sciences Professor Janie Burney and others. Contact Family and Consumer Sciences Professor Denise Brandon for information about this publication.

RESOURCES

From a Bookstore or Library:

Touchpoints: Birth to Three by T. Berry Brazelton and Joshua D. Sparrow, Da Capo Press, Cambridge, MA, 2006.

Your Baby's First Year (Second Edition), American Academy of Pediatrics, Bantam, New York, 2005.

Child of Mine: Feeding With Love and Good Sense (3rd Edition) by Elyn Satter, Bull Publishing Co., Palo Alto, CA, 2000.

From the Extension Office:

Preparing Formula for Your Baby, SP445-A, by Janie Burney, University of Tennessee Extension, 2005.

When Is Your Baby Ready for Solid Food?, SP445-B, by Janie Burney, University of Tennessee Extension, 2005.

Tips on Infant Feeding: 6 to 9 Months, SP445E, by Janie Burney, University of Tennessee Extension, 2002.

Childhood Lead Poisoning Series, SP605 and SP605-A - SP605-L, by Martha Keel, University of Tennessee Extension, 2003.

What You Should Know About Lead and Children, SP421, by Janie Burney, University of Tennessee Extension, 2004.

Selecting a Quality Child Care Center, SP455, by Matt Devereaux, University of Tennessee Extension, 2002.

From the Internet:

<http://extension.tennessee.edu>

<http://fcs.tennessee.edu>

www.cyfernet.org

www.zerotothree.org

www.k-12.state.tn.us/smart/index.htm

Visit the UT Extension Web site at <http://www.utextension.utk.edu/> and the Family and Consumer Sciences Web site at <http://www.utextension.utk.edu/fcs/>

SP418-I 11/09(Rev.) 3M E12-5320-00-030-10 10-0080

Programs in agriculture and natural resources, 4-H youth development, family and consumer sciences, and resource development. University of Tennessee Institute of Agriculture, U.S. Department of Agriculture and county governments cooperating. UT Extension provides equal opportunities in programs and employment.