

Baby's First Year: What Every New Parent Needs to Know



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Introduction

The moment that you have waited for has finally arrived: the day you bring your newborn baby home from the hospital. Like all other expectant parents you will have spent the last nine months preparing for this day. You will have a baby room full of everything a newborn could possibly want. You will have read book after book on a wide magnitude of baby topics from what to name your baby to when you can expect those first words. You will have walked and paced the length of baby's room, imagining your little bundle sleeping peacefully in his or her crib. Now the moment has arrived. In the crib lies your sleeping baby and the most exciting adventure of life is about to begin.

This e-book will detail what you can expect in the first year of your baby's life. It will offer tips and advice on everything from sleep to baby's first cold. This is by no means a guide that dictates what you should or should not do. It is important to keep in mind that every baby is unique and will react differently from all other babies in all types of situations. Learning what works for you and your baby is what parenting is all about. Throw in love and patience and you have a formula that is sure to work for you.

In this e-book you will learn all about:

- What to do during those first days at home, including the “blues” a new mother might be feeling.

- Getting your baby to sleep and whether or not it's important to insist your baby sleep through the night.
- Using music to soothe your baby.
- What to feed your baby at each stage of development
- How much your baby should weigh.
- What to expect as your baby starts to roll over.
- The types of noises that babies make.
- What to expect as your baby masters those motor skills.
- Having your baby socialize with other babies.
- What to expect when your baby is teething.
- All about vaccinations: the good, the bad, and the ugly.
- What to do when your baby gets that first cold.
- Which toys are best for every stage of your baby's first year.
- What games you can play with your baby to enhance his or her development.

This e-book will help you to make the most out of your baby's first year by giving you some basic guidelines and milestones to measure against. There is so much information out there for new parents that sometimes less information is better. You will have to determine what works best for you and your baby.

For the sake of fairness, I will sometimes refer to a baby as him and sometimes as her but obviously the advice will apply equally to a baby of either sex.

First Days at Home

The first few days home from the hospital are just as important to you as they are to your baby. As new parents you will have gone through an exciting birth that will have left you breathless and exhilarated. As a new mother you will be emotionally and physically exhausted. As a new father you will be overwhelmed by your new responsibilities. The first days at home are a time to take a deep breath, sit back and relax, and take some time just for you.

During your first days at home it may be wise to limit the amount of visitors that you welcome into your home. Other than your immediate family and good friends you might want to ask other friends to wait a week or two before they descend on you with gifts and wanting to hold the new baby. You need time to recuperate and settle into the routine that a sleeping, feeding, and often crying baby brings into your life.

As a new mother you will need to pay particular attention to the way that you are feeling so that those “baby blues” don’t creep up and surprise you unexpectedly. It is normal to feel a bit out of sorts and sad for the first couple of weeks after giving birth. Your body is going through some major physical changes after the birth of your baby. Your hormones will be changing and you likely will be feeling a lack of sleep. All of this can affect the way that you feel. You should be patient with yourself, understand that all these feelings are normal, and that in a couple of weeks things will feel better for you. If you find that you are feeling more and more depressed, and find it difficult to care for yourself and your family, you should consult your doctor so that he/she can

determine if you are suffering from a condition called *postpartum depression*.

Symptoms of postpartum depression include:

- Overwhelming feelings of sadness and depression accompanied by crying.
- Having little or no energy.
- Feelings of guilt and worthlessness.
- Having no interest in your baby or being overly concerned and worried about your baby.
- Weight gain accompanied by overeating.
- Weight loss accompanied by not eating.
- Feeling afraid of hurting yourself or your baby.
- Insomnia.
- Oversleeping.

During the first few days at home your family will be adjusting to the additional member of your family. If you have other children at home you may be dealing with feelings of jealousy as the new baby takes center stage. Make sure that you include your other children in the day-to-day activities that are part of the new baby's routine. Let older children help with diaper changing, feeding, and just sitting and holding the new baby if they are old enough to do so. This is your time to adjust to the changes in your life and settle into a comfortable routine.....at least for the moment!

Sleeping and Lullaby Secrets

When it comes to babies and sleep everyone will have an opinion for you that they are sure will be the answer to your sleepless nights. This is one of those times that you will have to be firm and make your own decisions about what type of sleeping routine and schedule you are going to have. There are baby experts out there who will tell you that you should never let your baby cry as he is trying to fall asleep. The next expert will tell you that you should never give in to your crying baby once you have put him to bed. Which method is right and which is wrong? It all depends on your needs and the needs of your baby. The guidelines in this chapter on sleep are simply that: a variety of tips and ideas that you either can or cannot attempt to incorporate into your bedtime routine.

Before you make the decision about what to do with a baby that won't sleep is where is that baby sleeping? Some parents insist that your baby sleep in his own crib in his own room. Still other parents want their baby in their bedroom. Neither is right or wrong and there are advantages to both. If your baby sleeps in her room you will likely get more rest for yourself since you won't be disturbed by the snufflings and other sleeping noises that newborn babies make. Your baby may wake less often if she is in her own room but this is not always the case. If your baby is sleeping in the same room as you are, you might find it less disturbing and easy to be able to attend to your baby's needs right there. If you not only have your baby in the same room as you but also in the same bed, you should be aware of some of the dangers of sleeping

in the same bed together. Baby experts are completely divided over the issue of sharing the same bed with your baby. You will have to research the safety versus the emotional issues and decide for yourself if you are going to be bringing your baby into bed with you.

You will likely need more sleep than your new baby. New babies most often are not able to sleep through the night until they have at least doubled their weight. This usually happens when your baby is between four and five months old. The following table shows the amount of sleep that babies should be getting. Keep in mind that this is just a guideline and don't be discouraged if your baby doesn't fall within the norm.

| Age | Total Hours of Sleep Needed Per Day (including naps) |
|------------|---|
| 1-15 days | 16-22 |
| 3 weeks | 16-18 |
| 6 weeks | 15-16 |
| 4-6 months | 14-16 |
| 9 months | 13-16 |
| 1 year | 12-15 |

Once you have decided where your baby will sleep and just how much sleep the charts say she should have, you will want to think about getting her into some sort of a sleep routine. A sleep routine can be a soothing and comforting part of your baby's nighttime ritual. It is a way for you and your family to incorporate sleep into the daily routine without it becoming a battle of mind over baby. As your baby grows she will understand that bedtime comes after bath time and may start to settle down if she is comforted by the bedtime routine.

There are many ways that you can establish the bedtime routine. Here are some tips and ideas for bedtime routines that you might want to consider:

1. Start the bedtime routine with a bath, some cuddle time, a song or story, a feeding, more cuddling, and then bed.
2. Sing a soothing lullaby just before you put your baby to bed.
3. Try to do things in the same order, with the same people involved, at the same time each night so that you create a pattern that your baby will recognize as a pre-sleep routine.
4. Make sure the lights are low and dim. You want to make your baby recognize that when it's dark, it's time to sleep.
5. Make sure that whatever routine you set up for you and your baby that there is a finality to it at the end. Your baby should learn that when you put him into bed, no matter how pleasant the bedtime routine has been, that it's time to sleep. Give him some time to fuss.

Number five in the above list is a very important point to remember when it comes to establishing your bedtime routine. If you cuddle your baby, lay down with him, or sing to him one more time after you have put him to bed, he will come to expect that anytime he isn't ready for sleep all he has to do is fuss and the pleasure of being rocked will be his again. You are not trying to play a game of control with him or deny him your affection after he has been put into bed. After all, it's normal for him to want to be with you. What you *are* trying to do is make him understand that after the bedtime routine is complete, it *is* time to sleep.

A quick note on nighttime feedings, which will be further discussed in the chapter entitled *From Milk to Solids*. If you are feeding your baby during the night you won't be able to establish that bedtime routine. If your baby needs to have a feeding at night you may have to delay a good sleeping pattern until he is ready to stop feeding during the night. Most babies stop feeding during the night around five to six months.

Still on the subject of sleep, but on the more entertaining side: Lullabies. Using music to lull and soothe your baby to sleep can be an enjoyable experience for both of you. You'll find out more about music in the next chapter entitled *Using Music to Calm Your Baby*.

The Lullaby, or Cradle Song, has been around for centuries. Whether you are singing Brahms's Lullaby or stumbling through a tune from Sesame Street, what matters is that you are using the power of music and your voice to communicate with your baby. Singing a lullaby at some point during baby's

nighttime routine will settle him down and prepare him of the stillness of sleep.

There is so much more that can be covered under the “sleep” topic when it comes to your baby. You will have to establish your own nighttime rules by trial and error. As your baby grows older you will find that his sleep patterns are constantly changing. What you will have established with the use of baths and lullabies are certain characteristics that can be adapted to whatever nighttime routine you come up with to fit to your baby’s age and needs. With a lot of patience and love you will be able to make it through the ever-changing world of baby’s sleep.

If you find you have any problems with getting your baby to sleep through the night there is a superb free report available that is full of techniques that have helped many many parents to get a full night’s sleep for both their baby and themselves. The report can be found at:

<http://www.parenting-success.com/sleep/free-report.htm>

Using Music to Calm Your Baby

Music is a wonderful way for you to calm and soothe your baby, especially during the first year. How many times have you heard parents say that there was nothing they could do with their crying, fussing baby until they tried music. This is because music does indeed soothe the savage beast, or in this case, the baby.

There are certain distinct sounds that have been proven to calm even fussy babies: the sounds of nature, white noise, and music. Even if your baby isn't fussing or crying you may want to use music as often as you can to encourage that feeling of calm and peacefulness. All it takes is a few minutes every day and before you know it your baby will be looking forward to hearing that certain song emanating from the CD player.

There is nothing complicated or mysterious about introducing your baby to music from day one. You don't need to search for the perfect song or a certain type of music. All you have to do is start by having your baby listen to your favorite songs and music. If jazz is on the top of your list, let your baby listen to the sounds of John Coltrane as he sits in his baby seat watching you in the kitchen. It doesn't matter if you play the schmaltzy songs of the eighties or some wicked African beat, your baby is going to listen and his mood is going to be altered by any musical sound that he hears.

Besides the music that you yourself can introduce your baby to, there are hundreds of CDs on the market today that are filled with baby songs and lullabies. At the end of the day you may want to play a CD of quiet baby songs

that have a slower beat. There are so many CDs for you to choose from that you will have a hard time making up your mind. Choose something that interests you. Many baby CDs will have lullabies and faster beat songs on the same CD.

Playing music has other benefits besides soothing your fussy, crying baby. These benefits include:

- Babies are introduced to musical sounds.
- Music enhances your baby's behavior and cognitive skills.
- Relieves stress for the entire family.
- Will stimulate curiosity and an interest in music.

Take time to find a variety of music CDs for your baby to listen to. You'll soon notice which music your baby is most drawn to and can use that music when he is particularly fussy or is crying.

From Milk to Solids

One of the more complex questions that you will ask yourself during your baby's first year is: What do I feed her? And when do I feed her? Your baby starts out with the simple requirement of either breast milk or formula. But what happens after the milk? This chapter will help you learn what types of foods to introduce into your baby's diet at a certain stage of her development. The information here should only be a guideline. Your doctor may provide you with other advice and your baby may have ideas of her own.

For the first four to six months of your baby's first year, all she will need is breast milk or formula. During this time she should start to be introduced to solids when she is ready. It is important to know that not all babies will be ready for solids at the same time. So how do you know when she's ready? There are a few simple guidelines that you can follow that will give you the information that you need to start your baby on solid food. You should check with your doctor as well for his/her professional advice. Here are the guidelines for clues as to whether your baby is ready for solids or not:

- Your baby has doubled her birth weight.
- Your baby shows an interest in the foods that you are eating and may try to grab the food from you.
- Your baby consumes 32 oz or more each day of breast milk or formula.
- Your baby often puts things into her mouth.

- Your baby can sit up with some support and can turn her head when she is full.

If your baby can do all of the above she is probably ready to be introduced to solid foods. Another indicating factor is that your baby always seems to be hungry. You do not want to introduce solids too early into your baby's diet. If solids are introduced too early there is an increased risk that she will develop a food allergy. Another reason for waiting for four to six months before introducing solids is because your baby needs to be able to properly chew and swallow before she can start eating food safely. Your baby's digestive system has to mature a bit so that she can handle the new foods in her diet.

The first six months. During the first six months of your baby's life breast milk or formula will be all that she needs for nourishment. If you are breastfeeding you will be using cues from your baby as to when she is full or hungry. If you are using formula you will likely have been following the guidelines for how much formula to feed your baby, as well as taking cues from your baby as to when she is full and when she is hungry.

The following chart is a guideline for formula feeding:

GUIDE FOR FORMULA FEEDING (AGE 0 to 5 MONTHS)

| Age | Amount per feeding | Number of feedings per 24 hours |
|---------------|--------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1 month | 2 to 4 ounces | 6 to 8 times |
| 2 months | 5 to 6 ounces | 5 to 6 times |
| 3 to 5 months | 6 to 7 ounces | 5 to 6 times |

A note on giving up night feedings: By the time your baby is six months old you will want to think about giving up those night feedings if you haven't already done so. You should start by offering your baby less and less breast milk or formula during night feedings. Eventually she will stop waking as her body adjusts to not eating during the night. If you are bottle-feeding you can substitute water in your baby's bottle in place of milk or formula. Your baby is almost ready to start eating solids and once she does she shouldn't be as hungry at night.

Four to six months: Introduction to solid food. You should try to wait until your baby is at least four months old before introducing her to anything other than breast milk or formula. You should start by offering your baby tiny amounts of baby cereal thinned with breast milk or formula. You can introduce your baby to fruit juices that are thinned with water. You may want to hold off introducing orange juice for another month or two since orange juice may be too acidic.

Six to seven months: Adding fruits and vegetables. Once your baby has been introduced to cereal you will want to add mashed/strained fruits and vegetables. Start with small amounts (one teaspoonful), increasing gradually as your baby gets used to the new food. You should only introduce one new food at a time and wait 2 to 4 days before introducing something new. This is so that if your baby has an allergic reaction you will be able to pinpoint which food is the culprit.

Make mealtime a happy time with your baby. Make sure that you only put milk or water into baby bottles and juice into a cup or glass. Putting juice into your baby's bottle can lead to dental problems later down the road due to the sugar content of juices.

Seven to eight months: Adding protein. From seven to eight months you will want to think about adding protein foods to your baby's diet. Protein foods include strained meats, cottage cheese, egg yolk, yogurt, and dried beans. As with the fruits and vegetables, you will want to introduce one new food at a time and wait 2 to 4 days before introducing a new food, starting with a small helping (one teaspoonful) and gradually increasing.

Eight to twelve months: Adding other foods. By now your baby will be ready to start eating what the rest of the family is eating. Start by adding soft table foods to your baby's diet such as mashed potatoes, squash, soft meats, and soups. As your baby gets more teeth she will be able to add more foods to her diet.

There are some things that you should keep in mind as your baby tries more and more types of foods.

1. Your baby does not need to have sugar, salt, desserts, pop, or sweets in her food.
2. Talk to your doctor about the right time to add pasteurized cow's milk into your baby's diet.
3. Avoid feeding your baby nuts, seeds, popcorn, raw carrots, and other hard foods.
4. Be sure to feed your baby a variety of good, healthy food so that you are promoting healthy eating habits.
5. It is very important to let your baby feed herself. As messy as this process may get it is a very important step towards your baby's independence and motor skills.

As you gradually introduce your baby to food during the first year you should keep in mind that every baby is different and therefore the process of integrating solid food may or may not follow the "usual" course of action. You will find that your baby soon has her favorite foods that she looks forward to eating as well as food that she will refuse to eat. Try to listen to what your baby is telling you while remaining within the guidelines outlined here.

Weight and Height Expectations

Growth charts are tools your pediatrician can use to keep track of your child's physical growth. During each checkup, the doctor will measure your baby's length, weight, and head circumference. The doctor can then compare the measurements for your baby to a chart of national averages for infants of the same age and sex. The result is that the doctor will be able to tell you what *percentile* your baby is in when compared to averages for babies around the nation. For example, if your doctor tells you your 4-month-old is in the 86th percentile for weight, that means 86 percent of the two-month-olds in your country weigh less, and that 14 percent weigh more. A baby that is at the 50th percentile in either height or weight is right at the national average.

Typically, parents seem to worry quite a bit about these percentages, and that worrying is usually needlessly blown out of proportion. There are many factors that come into play when determining where your baby's statistics will fall in the percentile chart. It is very important to remember that no two babies are the same and that every child, due to body chemistry, heredity, diet, and many other factors will grow at their own pace. Some babies will have growth spurts right from the start and others will take a bit longer to begin major growth periods. These measurements, charts, and percentile points are merely guides for a doctor to help in assessing your baby's growth.

In addition to the measurements that your pediatrician will take during regularly scheduled doctor visits, you may also want to track your baby's

growth at home. Keep in mind that the measurements you take at home may or may not be as accurate as the measurements your doctor takes, but they can provide a certain degree of insight into the growth of your baby and many new parents have found it to be a fascinating way to participate in the parenting process.

Here are some tips that can help you, as inquisitive parents, track your baby's growth at home using commercially available scales and other measuring devices.

If baby is too small to stand upright on the scale, you can try using this procedure:

- With your baby in your arms, step onto a standard bathroom scale.
- Make note of the weight displayed on the scale and write it down on a piece of paper.
- Put your baby down and step onto the scale alone this time.
- Make note of the weight displayed and subtract this number from the combined weight of you and your baby. The resulting number is your baby's weight.

To measure your baby's length all you need to do is lay her down on a flat surface (her changing table is a great place for this task) and stretch a measuring tape from head to toes.

For the measuring of head circumference all you need to do is wrap the measuring tape around your baby's head. You should wrap the measuring tape just above your baby's eyebrows, so the tape falls right at the top of the ears. What you are trying to measure is the point around his head that has the largest circumference.

When taking your baby to the doctor your pediatrician will perform more accurate measurements. Pediatricians do the "baby measuring thing" on a daily basis and will be able to achieve a much more accurate result than you will at home. This is due to the fact that they are accustomed to the things babies do that can result in an inaccurate measurement and they have very accurate measuring tools made specifically for the purpose of measuring the characteristics of babies, such as proper baby scales equipped with cradles. Your doctor will most likely take measurements several times during one visit and average the results together to ensure accuracy and to compensate for any discrepancies that may arise. It is crucial for the doctor's measurements to be as accurate as possible because a discrepancy of as little as a few millimeters in length or a few grams in weight can make a difference where your baby falls on the charts. Since the results of these measurements may determine changes to your baby's diet, and other possible changes to how your baby is fed and treated during her first year, it is important that these results are as accurate as possible.

Your pediatrician will measure the following characteristics of your baby:

Weight: After calibrating the scale the doctor or nurse will place your completely naked baby on a baby scale. There are electronic and traditional beam-type versions of the baby scale, but most will typically have the same type of baby holding stainless steel cradle. After your child is able to stand on her own, your pediatrician will most likely use a standard upright scale.

Length: Like weighing, until your baby is able to stand up on his own, your doctor will perform the height/length measurements with your baby lying down. Your doctor may use a tape measure, much like you use at home, or may utilize a special “baby-measuring device”, which consists of a headboard and movable footboard to obtain the most accurate results possible.

Head circumference: This measurement will be taken in almost the same way you did at home. The doctor will take the measurement at the point where the head is at its largest circumference, right above the ears and around to the back of the head where the neck meets the cranium. Usually the pediatrician will record this measurement to the nearest 0.3 cm (1/8th of an inch).

The head is different from other parts of the body in that the brain is not fully formed at the time of birth and therefore the head will continue to grow during baby’s first year. Baby’s head is a particular point of concern for the doctor because a head that is growing too rapidly can be a sign of hydrocephalus (water on the brain) and a head that is growing too slowly can be indicative of nutritional or developmental problems. Regardless, you shouldn’t be too concerned if your baby’s head appears a bit disproportional

compared to the rest of her body, as this is completely normal for the first year of life.

Baby Noises - Language Development

From birth to one year your baby will go from crying to cooing to talking. Those are amazing milestones for your baby to accomplish in such a short period of time as he develops his speech and language skills. This chapter takes a look at your baby's vocal development for the first year and tells you just what you can expect to see each month. Keep in mind that these stages of your baby's development are broad and that no baby will fall exactly within the timeframe of these expected milestones.

One month. Your baby will understand speech long before he begins to speak. From birth he will look at your face and listen to your voice. He will make a small range of noises that will start to mean something to you, such as his way of exhibiting hunger or pain. These noises will include crying and certain sounds that your baby makes while he is breathing. When your baby is feeding he will make sucking noises and sound of contentment.

Your baby's cry is an important way for him to communicate. Crying lays the foundation for speech as your baby learns to control the air that comes from his lungs and learns how to use his vocal cords. Crying is your baby's way of telling you that he is hungry, upset, or cold. By listening carefully to your baby and responding to his cries you are letting him know that he is important. This is how your baby first learns to communicate with you.

Two months. Your two-month old baby is starting to pay more and more attention to his world. He will be fascinated by the sound of your voice and will follow it around the room with great concentration. The different tones of your voice will keep him interested for short periods of time. Your baby will respond with a variety of cooing sounds, vowel-like sounds, and sometimes some consonant sounds such as a “k”. You will find that your baby has quite a collection of cooing sounds that she uses to communicate with you as well as discover how to use the sound of her own voice.

Talk to your baby as much as possible to encourage her cooing response. Look directly into your baby’s eyes to show that you are listening. This helps to establish signals of communication between the two of you.

Three months. Your baby will recognize your voice and will turn towards you when he hears you talking. He will be starting to laugh out loud and will often startle himself until he learns that he is the one making the sound. Your baby will be making sounds such as “ahhhh goo”. He will squeal when he is happy and content, again often startling himself as he learns his own abilities.

Continue to talk to your baby as much as possible, as well as sing to him and read him stories. The more you communicate with him and let him know that you are listening the more he will attempt to communicate with you.

Four months. Your baby is learning more and more ways to communicate with you. He will be smiling spontaneously at everything around him. His soft babbling will have an almost singsong sound to it, often ranging

into a high pitch that delights him as he learns to like the sound of his own voice. There will be lots of repetition to the sounds that your baby makes.

Make sure that you respond to your baby's "oohs" and "ahhs" with your own voice tones. This is your "chat time" with your baby and you should take advantage of these chatty times as he learns what conversation is all about. Your baby may also be starting to let you know when he's not in the mood for talking with you. He will turn his head in the other direction and may put his arm over his face. He may be showing signs of anger or frustration by crying out, especially if something is taken away from him.

Five months. Your baby is becoming better at communicating. He may start to mimic sounds and gestures which allows him to express his needs. He'll be able to let you know if he's happy or sad. When your baby wants attention he'll start to babble until you respond to him. If you respond to his cooing, laughing sounds he'll repeat his noises often because he knows that he can get your attention this way.

Your baby will now be watching your mouth when you talk. If you talk to him from across the room he'll be able to locate you easily. He is learning to control his vocal sounds as watches your response to his sounds.

Six months. Your baby is now using consonant-vowel combinations. He has discovered his image in the mirror and is probably having conversations with his new "playmate". Your baby's language is becoming much more precise. There are several ways that you can help him to continue to develop his language skills by:

- Speaking clearly, slowly, and accurately.
- Identify objects as you say their names.
- Use short sentences.
- Use repetition when singing songs and nursery rhymes; the repetition will help him to learn.
- Read as often as you can to your baby, asking questions about the pictures in the books so that your baby is interacting with you.
- Never talk “at” your baby, let him respond in his own way.

Seven months. Your baby continues to learn how to use his language skills. He has learned how to wave goodbye and may accompany his wave with babbling sounds. He can say “mama” or “dada”.

Eight months. Your baby is playing games such as pat a cake and peek-a-boo. Even though he can’t speak the words that belong to these games, he can babble and talk to himself. Your baby understands what the word “no” means, even though he doesn’t like hearing it.

Nine months. Continue to play lots of games with your baby, especially those games that involve singing. Your baby is responding to small sentences, such as “Take mommy’s hand.”

Ten months. Your baby’s language skills continue to develop. He is using his own gibberish language to interact with you and have a conversation.

Eleven months. Your baby can now say short, one syllable words such as “bye” and continues to talk in his conversational gibberish language. There are several ways that you can help your baby as he learns and practices his language skills:

- Talk often to your baby using simple words to identify objects in his life. Name trees, numbers, colors, and animals as you take your baby for a walk. Use your baby’s name as often as you can so he starts to recognize it.
- Be patient and listen when your baby talks to you. Respond to his talk in a positive way, often repeating one or two of the words he has used correctly.
- Introduce concepts to your baby, such as the “big” dog or the “little” mouse.
- Give your baby time to get his words out; don’t be tempted to complete sentences for him.
- Continue to read to your baby as much as possible. Reading should be part of your daily routine.

Twelve months. At the one year mark your baby’s language skills are continuing to progress as he discovers more and more about the world around him. Before you know it your baby will be talking non-stop as he masters his language and vocal skills.

Baby's Motor Skills

"The ultimate goal of physical motor development is to make the human organism as independent of gravity as is possible within the limitations of the human body."

When babies begin to participate and engage in the world around them it is indicative of them becoming more and more independent. From the moment a baby is born into this world she will begin the process of developing the motor skills that are necessary for her to take command of that which is around her and for her to relate with her environment. Because of this a baby who has mastered the motor skill of sitting up without help, for example, will have a completely different outlook on the environment that they are a part of than a baby who has not yet mastered this skill and needs assistance from objects or adults to help them up. You will find as your baby begins to stack skill upon skill that her experience of the world, and in turn the complexity of newly learned skills, will grow exponentially. As your baby's motor skills grow and become more complex, so will your baby's overall interaction with her environment.

Physical development can be broken up in to three-month intervals and divided into two categories: gross motor skills and fine motor skills. *Gross motor skills* are the term used to describe your baby's ability to control different parts of her own body. *Fine motor skills* refer to your baby's level of

coordination of different body parts, such as picking up an object with her thumb and forefinger.

Infant muscle development starts at the head and works its way down. Your baby will first develop control over the neck muscles. Soon after that she will learn to control the torso, and finally the leg muscles. Your baby will then start sitting up on her own, crawling a bit, and turning over by herself. She will enjoy being bounced on your knee, which is an excellent way for your baby to begin to develop balance. By the time she is around eight months old she will start learning how to stand up on her own and will try to pull herself upright by holding on to objects with your help.

Typically, a baby will start walking between nine and fifteen months, with the majority of babies walking just after the age of one (around thirteen to fourteen months). If your baby cannot walk but has no problem crawling, standing, or sitting upright, this is completely normal. Some babies skip the crawling phase entirely and can start walking as late as seventeen to nineteen months.

There are things you can do as a parent to stimulate your baby to begin the process of learning to walk. Although many parents believe that they need to get their babies expensive toys and walking aids to facilitate early development, this is completely untrue. What you need to do most is interact with your child as much as possible; this is to facilitate brain development. Babies love to hear stories. This is not just recreational or for entertainment, but very important for helping along your baby's brain development. Instead

of telling your baby a story and making it up as you go along, try reading it aloud to her from a book. This will help her develop her vocabulary. Play with her, talk to her, sing to her. The reason younger children in a family develop at a faster rate than their older siblings is that they have someone to interact with constantly (not just mom and dad, but big brother or big sister as well). As far as toys and walking aids, walkers are definitely NOT recommended, because babies tend to rely on them too much. As a result of using walkers their upper leg muscles will not develop as well as they should and this could lead to a delay in the development of motor skills necessary for walking. Furthermore, each year there are around 200,000 injuries sustained to babies due to walker use. Around 30,000 of these injuries are severe and include fractures, dislocations, and broken bones. Canada has banned the use of walkers and the American Medical Association, as well as various other organizations, has proposed a ban on walkers in the United States. In the interest of your baby's safety it is well worth considering not getting a walker for him or her.

There are some things you can do to help your baby along in the process of developing the motor skills necessary for walking on her own. Here are a few tips:

- Don't let your baby wear shoes indoors. It is much easier for a baby to learn to walk barefoot.

- When you are holding your baby while trying to assist her in walking don't hold her legs or hands. You can hold her by the torso.
- Try to encourage your baby to develop walking motor skills by calling her to come to you or by placing a favorite toy just out of reach so that she crawls towards it. This will help her engage in these actions on her own volition and will expedite the development of several necessary skills for independence.
- Make sure the floor is not too slippery; your baby may not find it easy to balance on a slippery floor and this can be dangerous for a baby just learning to balance.

Motor skills are not exactly the same thing as hand and eye coordination but they are pretty closely related. The development of hand-eye coordination often parallels and/or compliments the development of gross and fine motor skills. There are some activities your baby can do to increase her coordination and develop her motor skills, such as:

- *Puzzles:* Get your baby started on jigsaw puzzles. Let her start off on small puzzles of 4-5 pieces. There are baby-styled puzzles available that have little handles on them for babies to grip. As she gets adjusted to the idea, start her off on puzzles of a higher level. Don't get very complicated puzzles for her as she may get

frustrated if she can't do it and this could make her develop feelings of frustration.

- *Baby-sized Lego Blocks*: These types of blocks are the kind which require construction and which require pegs to be placed and fitted in certain places. These big blocks are excellent for developing motor skills.
- *Plastic building blocks*: These types of blocks allow babies to stack and build things that require balance and use a different set of hand/eye coordination skills and motor skills.
- *Peg and hole toys*: These are toys that are made of plastic and have holes fitted to plastic pegs for the baby to differentiate different shapes and also to develop motor skills and hand/eye coordination.
- *Plastic "Doughnuts"*: Another popular toy for encouraging the development of motor skills is the graduated soft plastic Doughnuts that fit on a plastic center pole. Your baby can stack these and will soon learn more about shapes, sizes and colors, and how they relate to one another.

The chart below illustrates a rough timeline for milestones you can expect your baby to cross in the first year and half:

| | |
|--------------------------|---|
| <p>1-3 months</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baby's hand is curled into a fist that instinctively holds onto objects that are put into her palm. At two months the grasp is less reflexive and more controlled. At three months, the palm is weakly open but with little strength to grip objects. |
| <p>5 months</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baby begins reaching for objects such as toys. • Baby might briefly grasp and hold toys. • Baby will enjoy sucking her own hands. |
| <p>6 months</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baby is beginning to follow objects with her eyes. • Baby is sucking her feet and grasping objects between both hands. |
| <p>7 months</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baby is developing the ability to transfer objects from one hand to the other. • Baby's finger-thumb grip develops and she can simultaneously grip objects in both hands. |
| <p>8 months</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baby keeps hands open and relaxed most of the time. • Baby is starting to have the ability to pick up small foods, like Cheerios. |

10 months

- Baby is able to release an object voluntarily.
- Gives toy to caregiver when asked.
- Baby should be able to hold more than one object in her hand.

Baby's Playmates

Your baby's first year is filled with many challenges and new experiences for everyone in your family. One of the many things that your baby is going to be learning in his first year is the ability to socialize and get along with others. The first place that your baby is going to learn to socialize with others is within your own family. You should also be exposing your baby to playmates and other people outside your immediate family. This is so that he can learn communication and interaction skills at as young an age as possible.

No matter how young your baby is, it is never too soon to let your baby enjoy social activities. The earlier you start to teach social skills to your baby the better his social skills will be when he is older. You should be considering getting out with your baby a couple of times a week so that you are both interacting with other parents and babies.

Your baby won't really "play" with other babies. Babies will, however, be very interested in watching the other babies and at times may interact with them by hitting, touching, or grabbing them. Babies won't participate in a "playing" activity until they are toddlers. What your baby gains by being exposed to other babies is the stimulation of being around other babies.

There are several ways that you can get out of the house and socialize with your baby. One thing you should keep in mind is that you should keep your baby away from other babies if your baby isn't feeling well or if one of the other babies is sick. Babies are very susceptible to colds and you will want to limit your baby's exposure to illness whenever possible.

Here are some things you may want to consider:

- Try to expose your baby to as many social settings as possible. Taking your baby out is a great way for you both to have a change of scenery and vary your daily routine. Your baby will enjoy going out with you, whether you are just going to the store or joining a parent-baby exercise class at your recreation center. He will be excited and stimulated by all the new faces, voices, and settings that he will encounter on his adventure.
- Find a parent/baby playgroup to join. Your baby will enjoy watching other babies and children while you interact with old and new friends. The more social settings that you take your baby to, the broader his world becomes.
- Taking your baby to a playgroup or for a swim at the pool gives your baby the chance to be part of a larger group. Your baby will quickly learn that the smiles and coos he uses on you at home get the same response when you are both out. He will learn that he can have a positive impact on others around him as he gets the response that he is looking for.

There are many things that you can do in your own home so that your baby gets the socialization that he needs. Have your baby sit with you at the dinner table whether he has been introduced to solids or not. This is a great

way for your family to spend quality time and for your baby to watch as others interact around him.

Teething and What to Expect

Baby teeth appear at different ages for different babies and can sometimes take quite some time before they appear. By three years of age most children will have all of their primary teeth. If by the time your baby reaches twelve months of age he does not have his first tooth, you should consult your dentist.

There are 20 *primary* or “baby” teeth that every child has during their lifetime: ten in the upper jaw and ten in the lower. Typically, the appearance of baby teeth is as follows: the upper and lower incisors come first, then the upper lateral incisors come in a few months later, followed shortly thereafter with the bottom lateral incisors. The top and bottom molars are the next set to come through, usually right around 18 months. The cuspids, or eyeteeth, usually follow soon after the molars. At approximately two, to two and a half years, the second set of molars will appear.

The order in which baby teeth appear can vary and no two children will necessarily be alike in their teething schedule. Although occasionally it occurs that a child does not get an entire set of baby teeth, it is still very rare that a child doesn't get all twenty.

Occasionally a baby is born with a front tooth (about 1 in every 2000 babies are born this way). If this happens a pediatric dentist should see your

baby. Until you and your baby adjust this can interfere with breastfeeding so it's best to see a pediatric dentist as soon as possible, especially if you intend to breastfeed.

If you are wondering if your baby is teething here are a few surefire signs that your little one is about to get his first set of choppers:

- Increased fussiness.
- Nighttime crying.
- "Clingy" behavior.
- Excessive dribbling (drooling).
- Chewing on fingers, teething rings, and other objects.
- Swollen, red, inflamed gums.
- Increased demand in breast or bottle-feeding.
- Rejection of breast or bottle because sucking hurts the gums.
- Poor appetite.
- Interrupted sleep.

Although you may have heard otherwise from well meaning friends and relatives, teething does NOT cause significant fever (over 100 degrees rectally), sleep problems, diarrhea, diaper rash, or lowered resistance to any infection.

To help soothe your baby's teething discomfort, follow these guidelines:

- Gently massage the swollen gums with one of your fingers (be sure to wash your hands thoroughly).
- Take a clean, soft washcloth and soak it in apple juice. Wring it out, tie the cloth in a knot, and place it in the freezer for 30 minutes (it will not freeze hard like water does, rather, it will get very cold and nearly frozen). When frozen, give it to your baby, placing it first in his mouth, then his hands. You will see almost immediate results. Your baby will love the apple juice and most doctors approve it for even very young infants. The combination of the cold and the texture of the washcloth will begin to ease your baby's pain right away.
- Give your child something cold to gnaw on like a Popsicle or a chilled teething ring (not a frozen one), or a frozen banana.
- Do not use lotions or ointments that are supposed to reduce teething pain in a baby less than four months. They wash out of the baby's mouth within minutes. They may contain an agent that could numb the throat and cause the baby to choke.
- NEVER, under any circumstances, place alcohol into your baby's mouth. Many well meaning friends and relatives (there sure are a LOT of those "well meaning friends and relatives") may suggest a "dab of whiskey", but this is NEVER ok. Alcohol can act like a poison to a young baby.
- Acetaminophen may be used for a few days if your baby is uncomfortable.

- Baby Advil (ibuprofen) can be used as well and can be more effective than acetaminophen because ibuprofen contains an anti inflammatory component and acetaminophen does not.

Though your baby will eventually replace his primary teeth with permanent teeth they are still important for his development right now and are not just there for appearance. Primary teeth enable children to chew and speak properly, and these "baby" teeth reserve space in the jaw for permanent teeth. The proper care of baby teeth can be very important to the proper development of adult teeth.

Once the new teeth are in place clean them with a soft baby toothbrush or wipe them with gauze.

Be sure to never allow your baby to fall asleep with a bottle. This will lead to tooth decay. Whether a baby is bottle fed or nursed, he will be vulnerable to "baby bottle tooth decay". Such decay occurs when freshly sprouted baby teeth are exposed to liquids containing sugars (basically, anything other than water) for long periods of time. Bacteria in the mouth will grow in the sugar, which attack the tooth enamel and cause cavities. The best treatment for "baby bottle tooth decay" is prevention. Don't let your baby use a bottle as a pacifier or fall asleep with a bottle containing anything but water. Also, be sure to gently clean his teeth and gums after each feeding.

Immunization

Keeping your baby's shots up to date is a very important factor to your baby's health. Immunizations (or "vaccinations") are given from birth and into early childhood. Immunizations are usually given during routine "checkup" visits to your doctor or clinic.

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that babies receive the following vaccinations (health care providers typically use the initials when they talk about these immunizations):

- Haemophilus influenzae Type b (Hib)
- Inactivated polio (IPV)
- Measles, mumps, rubella (MMR)
- Diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis (DTaP)
- Pneumococcal (PCV)
- Hepatitis B (HepB)
- Influenza (flu)
- Varicella (chickenpox)

Immunizations are routine procedural shots that can keep your child healthy for a lifetime. Many of the immunizations are for diseases that frequently are seen in the early years of a child's life and others will prevent your baby from getting particular illnesses over the course of their entire life. Although the experience of getting these vaccinations is not usually pleasant

for a baby (they typically involve getting an injection via hypodermic needle), they're well worth the minor bit of temporary pain for the long-term health of the child.

The diseases these vaccinations protect your baby from are very serious. Babies may become very ill and even die if they are allowed to develop the diseases that are prevented by these shots.

Your doctor or health care clinic will notify you when it is time for your baby's first shot, which generally occurs at three months.

Those First Sniffles

There is no doubt about it. Your baby's first cold is hard to watch as your baby snuffles and tries to breathe through his stuffed nose. You won't be able to give him medication for his first cold since he is too young. There won't be much that you can do while your baby gets over the cold except be there to soothe what will likely be a grumpy, uncomfortable infant.

Your sick baby will more than likely have a fever to accompany that cold, anywhere from 38 degrees C to 101 degrees F. There might be a cough, sore throat, runny nose, and red/watery eyes. Your baby will be irritable and grumpy because of his stuffy nose. If your baby is under six months old he won't be able to breathe through his nose if he is all stuffed up so he will be having some trouble eating and breathing. Your baby won't yet be able to blow his nose so there will be the added misery of the runny nose. You can almost be assured that if your baby was sleeping through the night before the cold hit that he will no longer be that doing that after the cold. He will probably be up several times during the night because of his inability to breathe.

Your baby's cold may last for two to 10 days. If your baby is very young the cold may linger for up to two weeks. Your baby will have from between six to 10 colds by the time he is two years old. And each cold is just as hard on you and your baby as the first one.

If your baby is under three months old when he gets his cold you should contact your doctor. If your baby is over three months old you only need to

contact your doctor if the fever gets too high, the cold lasts too long, or you suspect your baby may have an ear infection, cough, or other secondary problem from his cold.

Until the cold disappears there are several things that you can do to ease your baby's discomfort during his cold:

- Make sure your baby gets lots of rest.
- Give your baby plenty of liquids, especially if the cold is accompanied by a fever.
- Elevate your baby's head if he is stuffed up and congested. You can do this by putting a pillow or two under the crib mattress at one end.
- Since your baby cannot blow his own nose you will have to wipe it gently to help him breathe easier.
- Use a cool mist vaporizer to keep the air moist.
- Give your baby extra cuddles, love and patience.

Eventually your baby's first cold will disappear. Just keep in mind that the next one is right around the corner since colds and babies/children are a part of family life.

Toys

One of the best things about childhood is all the TOYS! Even though the toys only really start to get interesting once your baby reaches one year and begins to have an interest (and the ability) in the widely marketed “toddler” toys, there are still all sorts of toys that your one to 12 month old will enjoy playing with, as well as give them help with their motor skills and hand/eye coordination.

For the one-month to 12-month period there are basically four stages you should be concerned with when it comes to toys that will benefit, as well as capture the interest of, your baby. Here is a brief rundown of some suggestions for these phases:

Toys for newborns: During her first few months, before she learns to grasp objects or sit up on her own, your baby will enjoy things to look at and listen to. Her vision will still be fuzzy at first and she'll focus on objects that are about eight to 14 inches from her eyes. She will be drawn to faces – and can recognize mom and dad's faces at about one month.

She will thoroughly enjoy looking at high-contrast patterns, and bright colors will be particularly easy to see. She will have already learned to appreciate sounds and music. Objects that move around slowly and make quiet music will be much more interesting to your one month old than objects that are stationary and silent.

- *Mobile:* A mobile can be a fascinating source of visual stimulus for a newborn baby. Look for ones with high-contrast colors and patterns as these will be the most visually interesting to your new baby. Many babies are particularly fond of mobiles that play music, so you may want to consider that before picking one out. Perhaps choose one that plays a lullaby. Attach the mobile to the cot rail. Newborns look to the right 80 per cent of the time, so a toy hung overhead or on the left will be of limited value now. For safety reasons, keep the mobile out of your baby's reach.
- *Music box:* Music will likely be something your infant is very interested in. A music box or wind up musical toy will prove to be a fascinating object for a newborn baby.
- *Unbreakable mirror:* Baby will love the look of faces, and although she will not realize it is herself she is seeing in the mirror, it will still be fascinating for her to look at. Look for a mirror you can fasten to the side of the cot or hang near a changing table.
- *Sound-making plush toys:* Plush toys that make noises when squeezed or moved will be very interesting and can occupy the attention of a baby for long periods of time.

Between three months and six months your baby will discover how to use her hands. She will put much attention into her hands, grasping and gripping everything. Keep in mind that at this age she will be putting everything that

she can into her mouth (and even trying to put some things in there that will surely not fit) so make sure anything you buy for her is safe for chewing. Also, never attach a toy to a cot or playpen with elastic or string, which could end up strangling or entrapping your baby.

- *Plush toys:* Soft and cuddly plush toys are a childhood favorite and many children will begin to develop attachments to their little stuffed friends at right about this age. Be very careful when choosing a plush toy for a baby this young. You will want to avoid toys that have parts that can come off (like sewn on button eyes) or wire portions that could poke your baby. As a rule, avoid any toy that has any part that baby could yank off and stuff into her mouth. Read labels that pertain to recommended ages.
- *Rattles:* The baby rattle is the archetypical baby toy for the ages. Every baby at this age will love to make noise. You can try singing songs with your baby and having her accompany you with the rhythm of the rattle.
- *Play gym:* For a baby who is still horizontal, this is a rack that comes with dangling toys or from which you can hang toys of your own. These “activity center” type toys have objects that baby can spin, grasp, push, pull, and otherwise manipulate, yet remain attached to a central console. Consider them “baby dashboards” for fun and games.

- *Colorful teething rings:* These are great for gnawing on when her gums are sore. Some of these contain fluid that cools when you store them in the fridge and can provide cooling relief when your baby really needs it.
- *Squeaky rubber toys:* Anything a baby can grip and squeak is usually very popular. These toys are perfect for the bath.
- *Baby Books:* The puffy plastic air filled books and “board books” are also a popular item. It is never too soon to start reading to baby, as indeed many mothers begin while their baby is still in the womb.

At six to nine months your baby will begin to become much more active and play will become much more intense than in previous stages. She will be picking up things and banging all sorts of objects, making noise and generally causing a ruckus. She will pick up two toys and bang them together just to see the sound that they make. She will be rambunctious, but at the same time will be beginning to develop the fine motor skills necessary for more precise play in addition to ruckus causing roughhousing. The toys your child has should reflect this stage of her development.

She is becoming aware that objects are still there even when she can no longer see or touch them. She will miss a favorite stuffed animal if she can't see it and if you hide it from her while she is looking she will seek it out. It also means you can begin playing hide-and-seek games with objects.

This is the age at which most babies become mobile, and with that in mind, the following toys can help her hone and explore her newly developing senses.

- *Activity board:* These are similar to the “play gyms” listed above. Many babies love the activity boards that can be attached to a cot rail. They come with parts that move and spin and twirl and twist, giving your baby a place to practice her hand-eye coordination. She is also becoming aware that you can make things happen to objects – so poking, twisting, shaking, squeezing, dropping, and opening things will all fascinate her.
- *Plush toys:* Soft and cuddly plush toys are a childhood favorite and many children will continue to develop attachments to their little stuffed friends at right about this age. Stuffed animals are particularly interesting at this point in your baby’s development, as are comforters. You will still want to avoid toys that have parts that can come off (like sewn on button eyes) or wire portions that could poke your baby. As a rule, avoid any toy that has any part that baby could yank off and stuff into his mouth. Read labels that pertain to recommended ages.
- *Balls:* Baby will love to play with balls of all sizes. One fun game is to sit on the floor together and roll the ball back and forth between you.
- *Wood or soft plastic blocks:* Show your baby how to stack a few blocks and then knock them down. The two of you could spend an entire afternoon playing “build it up and knock it down”. Pile blocks into

containers for her – and then dump them out, she'll soon get the idea.

Stacking blocks, and filling and dumping games, are very popular for this age bracket.

- *Books:* This is the age at which reading becomes more interactive and fun for both of you. Cloth or board books work well now. You can read the book to your baby and then she can play with it when you are done. She will mimic your motions and “read” the book to you just like you did for her.

When babies reach nine to 12 months old they are usually able to make their way around the room in some way or another. Some babies will be crawling around the room on all fours, while others will be taking their first steps as they enter the milestone “toddler” phase.

Objects in your baby’s life are no longer simply objects, but baby will be able to distinguish what different objects are and how they can be used for play. She is also more interested in interactive games and problem solving can also be a fun thing for baby to do. Here are some toys for this age bracket:

- *Push toys:* Push toys are toys that your toddler can push around the room. He will most likely be a little too young for “pull” toys, which require the young walker to be able to look behind them and walk backwards. Push toys, on the other hand, will be right up their alley. Try to choose a push toy that has some weight to it, so your child can

get some good exercise while working on the motor skills involved with walking and leaning.

- *Shape sorters:* Any kind of toy that requires your baby to sort through shapes and solve problems will be very well received. These will occupy your baby for hours on end and teach important skills for differentiating shapes and colors and hone problem-solving skills.
- *Balls:* You should have been playing with balls for some months now, and these will still be a staple in your toy box for years to come.
- *Sandbox items:* Sandbox toys like a plastic bucket and shovel, and anything else that involves filling and emptying vessels of various shapes and sizes, will be perfect for your baby at this age.
- *Toy telephone or computer:* Babies are going to learn things from watching you and they will have certainly seen you use a telephone by now. Your baby will love nothing more than having a toy version of grown up items. Try a plastic cell phone that really rings or maybe a toy laptop that makes bleeping computer noises.
- *Books:* Pop-up books and books that foster interactivity will be interesting at this age.
- *Blocks:* Blocks will be a staple toy throughout childhood and at this point in your baby's development you will have many types to choose from. Wooden blocks, Lincoln Logs, Big baby-style Lego's, bristle blocks, and many other types of building blocks will provide hours of creative, motor skill building fun for years to come.

Summary

Your baby's first year will be an adventure that you will never forget. It will be filled with smiles and laughter as well as tears and challenges. Much of what you learn will be by trial and error. No two babies are alike and therefore any advice and tips offered in this e-book are just that: suggestions of things that you can try. Parenting is all about love, patience, and the guessing game. No matter what plans you make, or how you decide your baby's first year should flow, your baby is going to decide many things for you simply because of his likes, dislikes, and personality.

There are many sources available for new parents. These sources include:

- your doctor
- your local health center for families
- books
- the Internet (www.Parenting-Success.com in particular is constantly updated with help, advice and information for all parents. As a community site for parents you can even ask and receive answers to your own specific parenting questions)
- parenting groups
- friends and family

With so many sources available for new parents you will have help close at hand for those times that you need a question answered about what brand of cold medicine to use or what you should do when your baby won't stop crying. Don't be afraid to ask for help if you need it. If you need a break from your baby, don't think that this makes you an inadequate parent. Every parent of a baby under one year of age needs a break once in a while.

If something in this e-book doesn't work for you after you've tried it, don't feel discouraged. Remember that all babies are unique, with their own quirks and things that make them tick. Do what works best for you, sit back and relax, and enjoy your baby's first year.

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