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6-10 Months**

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Relationships – Building Mutual Trust and Respect

This topic falls under the domain of **Parent-Child Relationship** and the emphasis is **Attachment/Autonomy: Trust**.

Parents support their children's development when they:

- Respond to their babies in sensitive, supportive and caring ways.
- Understand the importance of observing their babies in order to provide a supportive environment.

Relationships – Building Mutual Respect

Now that baby is in his second six months of life, there are many things that you know about each other. For parents, most babies are settled and are more predictable. For baby, he knows that his cries will be answered and he greets his parents with smiles and gurgles. A trusting relationship has been established.

Parents have learned, through experience, how to meet baby's primary needs. Baby's signal for hunger or a diaper change is probably very clear. Baby's signal for, "I want to play," or "I'm frustrated because I can't crawl yet," may not be as clear. As one parent expressed, "Lately, I just don't know what she wants. The old standbys don't work anymore. She seems frustrated and I don't know how to help her."

It may give parents a feeling of helplessness or even incompetence watching their baby's frustration. However, sometimes we need to sit back, observe and let baby work through an issue. Penelope Leach says, "When the baby frustrates himself, it is for you to judge whether he can learn by the situation he has got himself into or whether he can only fight himself into a fury of frustrated crying. If he is struggling to get the lid off the toy box and there is a good chance that he will succeed, leave him to it. The success will be worth the effort. Magda Gerber says, "We need to teach our children to enjoy the struggles of life." Sometimes, it is a fine line between helping and intruding when a baby encounters "a struggle in life." Unless it is a safety issue, try waiting a bit and watch your baby develop her problem-solving skills.

Through observing your baby, you will learn how to respond. Responding to baby does not always mean taking action or solving the problem. Parents can respond respectfully through:

- body language
- eye contact
- facial expressions
- talking
- listening
- assisting when necessary
- a gentle, reassuring touch

Jenny Friedman has these words for parents, “It is important to remember that baby’s skills develop over time, with or without your help, and that the exact time each milestone appears isn’t important. If you encourage your child’s growth by providing a stimulating environment and a warm, enthusiastic response to his accomplishments, you will give an enormous boost to his self-confidence – and to his overall enjoyment of life.”

Relationships – Building Mutual Trust and Respect Discussion Page

During focus play today, sit back, relax and observe your baby. Be prepared to discuss the following:

1. Who chose (you or your baby) what your baby played with? Describe the toy or activity.
2. What skill or behavior was your baby working on?
3. Did you observe a time when your baby was trying to solve a problem? Describe the situation. How did you respond?
4. What can you do to encourage the development of that skill?
5. Complete this sentence, "Lately, my baby gets frustrated when . . ."

Relationships - Building Mutual Trust and Respect At Home Suggestions

Try observing your baby at home. Here are some reasons why it is important from the book “Becoming the Parent You Want To Be” by Laura Davis and Janis Keyser (Broadway Books, 1997)

Why Observe?

- * **You get to enjoy your child.** Moments of fascination, delight, and pride often accompany observation.
- * **You learn about child development.** Jean Piaget formulated his theories about children through the careful observation of his own three kids.
- * **You learn what drives and motivates your children.** When you watch children over time, you begin to get an idea of what interests them, how they explore, and what they’re trying to learn.
- * **Observation enables you to provide children with avenues to further their exploration.** When you know your child is working on pouring, you can supply her with a set of plastic cups in the bathtub.
- * **Observation gives you a chance to see your children as they are.** Most parents have some expectations about who they want their children to be. Yet it’s also important to balance those expectations by asking kids: And who are you? Observation can help you answer that question.
- * **Observation enables you to respond to each child as a unique individual.** Janis notes: “I find I can interact with a child most appropriately once I’ve observed him. Otherwise I’m coming in ready to interact with all the children his age I’ve ever been with before, rather than this particular child.”
- * **When you see what children are working on, you can gain a new perspective on “misbehavior.”** This can help you move beyond your own frustration and respond more empathetically to unsuccessful behavior.
- * **Observation lets your child know she is important to you.** When children see that we are interested in them and in what they are doing, they feel valued.

Parenting - Nurturing Your Non-Parent Self

This topic falls under the domain of **Parent Development** and the emphasis is **Balancing Parent-Child Needs: Care for Self**.

Parents support their children's development when they:

- Maintain their personal overall health and well-being.
- Ask for and accept support from others when needed.
- Construct strategies to keep alive their non-parent selves.

Parenthood is the toughest job you'll ever love. A job with which we do not get professional training, nine-to-five hours or customary wages. Our payment is the joy of watching our children grow and the satisfaction of doing a good job. Before you volunteered for this job, maybe you had another job, hobbies, friends and you were in control of your schedule. How quickly life can change.

To fulfill our role as parents, we define our position as we go along. We remember how we were parented and may adopt some of our parents' practices. We may have friends or other relatives to observe as they raise their children. There are also many great books, magazines, newspaper articles and internet resources from which to gain information. Check out the resource list at the end of this curriculum.

Even armed with models and information, parenting is a rewarding but monumental task. Occasionally, parents need breaks. Now that baby is older and a little more predictable, you might have time to ponder, "What did I do before I became a parent?" You might be ready to enter aspects of that previous world, like meet a friend for lunch or read something other than parenting material. In order to do a good job as a parent, we need to take care of our whole self. We need to nurture our non-parent self.

This nurturing takes on different forms for different people. Some parents are content sneaking moments during baby's nap to read the newspaper or nap themselves. For others, they may need weekly planned excursions to exercise, to meet friends or to have special time with their spouse. Whatever fits for you, make it a priority.

Parenting – Nurturing Your Non-Parent Self Discussion Page

First, reflect on what life was like before you became a parent and then respond to the following questions:

- What do you miss most about your life before you were a parent?

- What has been most rewarding since you became a parent?

- How has parenthood changed you?

Second, as human beings, we need to acknowledge that we have needs that have to do with our personhood not parenthood. Reflect on those needs and complete the following sentences: (Dream if you like)

I have a need to...

I would like (how much time?) to fulfill this need.

In order to make this a reality, I would have to...

If this is not possible now, I can see this happening...

Parenting – Nurturing Your Non-Parent Self At Home Sheet

Why might it be important for our children to see us taking care of ourselves?

“When Parents take time to care for themselves, children get to see that people can take good care of themselves without neglecting the needs of those around them. Specifically, when mothers take care of themselves, children learn that women don’t always have to put the needs of others first. Second, as children begin to see that they are not the only ones with needs, the groundwork is laid for developing empathy.”

(Becoming The Parent You Want To Be”, Laura Davis, Janis Keyser, Broadway Books, 1997)

Maxims for Parents

You need and deserve to:

- enjoy your children.
- have time alone with each child.
- protect your own time.
- take care of yourself.
- have time with other adults.

Pick one of these maxims this week and make it a reality.

Growing - Overall Development

This topic falls under the domain of **Early Childhood Development** and the emphasis is **General Child Development: Process of Development**.

Parents support their children's development when they:

- Understand that child development is a process that:
 - is described and organized by domains that are interrelated,
 - progresses in stages,
 - is universal,
 - is individual,
 - occurs in predictable patterns, and
 - includes a range of skill and competencies within each domain.

- Understand that babies learn, grow and develop by playing.

This is the fun time. The time from six to ten months is one that everyone, including baby, can enjoy. She's not as fragile now, so she and her parents can become partners as she learns about her world. She's awake more. She's good company and loves to play. She also is playing by herself for longer periods.

Physically, socially, mentally there is growth. So much is happening so fast. Bi-weekly pictures are needed to keep far-away grandparents up-to-date.

The baby's control of her body began with her head and moves down the torso. Now she has gained some coordination of the nervous system and muscles of her upper half. The lower half is in process. Little fingers are perfecting complex maneuvers, demonstrating eye/hand control of those small muscles.

Socially, she's blooming on home ground. Depending on her personality, baby is likely to enjoy differing scenery and people. Interest in games such as peek-a-boo and babbling increases daily with baby becoming the instigator of many conversations.

Mentally, she's still a no-common-sense baby, needing an ally to keep her safe during her play and learning. She builds self-esteem by discovering she is likable and lovable and respected. Respecting her ability to do things for and by herself lets her discover she is capable and competent. It is sometimes difficult for parents to accept this role of respectful observer and not step in too soon to disentangle a stuck baby or toy. But it becomes a more and more important parenting role as baby learns and develops self-concept.

Babies work hard at games and mobility and exploration to learn. "I can do things. I can try new things and be successful." Then, they peek up to see the parent's smile before they add, "I am likable, too."

Smiling is easy. She's usually more than likable.

Dr. Burton White, author of ***The First Three Years***, described the central interests of a baby of this age appear to be:

- social interest in primary caregiver.
- exploration interest or curiosity in everything.
- physical interest in practicing new motor skills.

While these are the compelling interests, baby is also working on language development, using all her senses to distinguish the familiar from the unknown and enjoying the effects of her action.

Small wonder that this baby is exciting to be around and a good ally for fun and learning.

Growing - Overall Development Discussion Page

Here is a list of typical developmental behaviors that may occur within the time frame given. Remember, development is predictable but also individual and uneven during the first three years of life. One 8 month old baby may be concentrating on learning to crawl while another is content to sit and is working with her hands as she explores objects.

6-12 months			
Physical	Mental	Language	Social
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • can sit unsupported • rolls over both ways • can stand if leaning on other object • points at objects • picks up small objects with thumb and finger • reaches accurately • can feed herself • can drink from a cup • gets up on all fours and rocks • masters crawling • can stand when supported • climbs on furniture • walks with help 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • studies objects • concentrates on one toy at a time • analyzes what to do with her toy • understands the nesting of objects • understands an object might be behind something • begins to understand phrases (like “come here”) • wants to explore things by touching everything • builds, stacks and disassembles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • longer and more varied sounds • experiments with different volumes and pitches of sounds • makes 2-syllabled sounds • says simple words (“dog”, “hot”) • understands “no” • mimics sounds like tongue-clicking, raspberries, and cough 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • mimics facial expressions • exhibits moods with varied sounds and body movements • may be shy or afraid of strangers • responds to her name • raises arms to signal her wanting to be picked up • likes her reflection • enjoys mimicking • points to things she wants • feels pride (especially when praised) • likes games (peek-a-boo)

Considering these developmental behaviors, answer the following questions.

- How does baby move and what can s/he do with hands, legs, and whole body?
- What causes baby to cry, smile, and laugh? What frustrates him/her?
- How is s/he learning? What does baby know?
- How does s/he communicate (verbally and non-verbally) needs and feelings?

Overall Development At Home Suggestions

Here are some ways to encourage your baby's development.

1. **Unconditional love.** Babies can only develop skills in the context of a loving, supportive relationship. Every time you touch or smile at your baby, you are letting your baby know how important s/he is and that what s/he is doing is important too.
2. **Respond to your baby's requests.** This develops a foundation of trust which allows development to flourish.
3. **Talk to your baby.** Your voice is his/her favorite sound. Talk about what you are doing and talk about what s/he is doing. This is not only soothing to your baby but is also increasing his/her ability to produce sounds and later words.
4. **Touch your baby.** Skin is the biggest sense we have. Studies have shown that touch and massage can bolster neurological development.
5. **Encourage imitation.** Model behaviors like rolling a ball or clapping your hands. Your baby will enjoy mimicking your actions as a way to practice blossoming skills.
6. **Provide a variety of experiences.** Allow baby to feel the warmth of fresh towels from the dryer or watch a bird at the window. Go for walks. Even the grocery store can be a learning adventure of sights, sounds and people.
7. **Allow for safe exploration.** Babies need space and time to develop skills and learn about their world. Make sure there are areas in your home that baby can safely roam without danger of injury. Gate off an area or provide a basket of safe items to explore. However no safety-proofing device will keep your baby as safe as your two eyes watching him/her.
8. **Read books.** Baby may not understand the story or know the pictures yet but s/he loves your voice and the sentence tunes that reading provides. After many times of looking at the same book, they will begin to understand that the cow goes moo.
9. **Play Music.** Listen to music. Dance to music. All music and movement has benefits to baby's development. Pay attention to baby's behavior to make sure that the musical choice isn't over-stimulating. Keep the volume no louder than a typical speaking voice.
10. **Try to gain your baby's perspective.** When your baby keeps dropping things from his/her highchair or attempts to pull the cat's tail, remember s/he is trying to figure out how the world works.

Learning – Separation and Stranger Awareness

This topic falls under the domain of **Early Childhood Development** and the emphasis is **Social & Emotional Development: Self-Concept**.

Parents support their children's development when they:

- Allow their babies to experiment with their growing competence and independence.
- Recognize that separation and stranger awareness are normal developmental tasks at this age.
- Employ strategies to ease their baby's anxiety.

"Separation anxiety" and "stranger anxiety" are terms that make parents cringe. They sound awful.

When baby screams as her parent leaves the room, it can be awful. When baby screams at the sight of strangers or grandparents, that is awful, too.

At six or seven months, most parents are delighted with their babies' devotion. The biggest smiles are for her parents. But as this devotion becomes possessive, the delight often fades.

It helps to know that baby's attachment to her primary caregiver is vital to her learning to love and trust. They were so close, she had thought they were one. Now, she can crawl away. They are not one. She's on her own. But she needs her caregiver. Baby watches, learns, listens and utilizes her caregiver. Little wonder that she becomes frightened at even the thought that her comfort and her connection to the world might leave her. "What will become of me," she asks, "now that we are not one?"

She's growing wiser.

The friendly, outgoing baby becomes less and less comfortable with others between eight and fourteen months. His security lies with the familiar. The baby is now busy learning what he can and cannot do at home and he is learning who he is. It is a big job and one that is best aided by the primary caregiver.

It is exciting to view baby's overt display of his new feelings. Even though he enjoys his new learning and independence, it is difficult for a mother to think of his development when her baby won't let her go into the bathroom alone. It is equally difficult for a father when his baby won't let him talk with a friend without being on dad's lap and wanting to hold his attention. The screaming overcomes parental joy in new learning.

While considering baby's feelings, it is important to think of siblings, babysitters, grandparents and others who also have feelings. Only the primary caregiver can help them and the baby. Some strategies can help.

- Allow the baby to view new people and places from the safety of the primary caregiver's lap until baby is ready to get down. Or let others approach baby while in this safe haven.
- Say, "bye, bye" when leaving baby. When parents sneak away, their baby becomes less trusting and more anxious and watchful.
- Get baby comfortable with at least one other person. The caregiver needs a break.

Some babies have a very difficult time with their anxiety. Some will never meet a stranger – everyone is a friend. Neither reaction indicates a more secure baby. All babies are learning.

Learning – Separation and Stranger Awareness Discussion Page

Separation and stranger awareness is impacted by baby also learning the concepts of object and people permanence. Recent studies suggest that some rudimentary knowledge of object permanence may be present at 3-1/2 months. However, the most likely time for baby to exhibit behaviors is between 8 and 12 months.

During focus play today how did your baby respond to peek-a-boo?

Was s/he able to find the out of sight object?

Each baby's stage of development and personality will determine the degree of separation and stranger anxiety expressed. **If** and **whenever** it hits, here are some situations to ponder and help you consider how you might respond.

What would I do if:

1. at a family birthday party, with everyone there, grandpa picks up the baby and his beautiful grandson shrieks and won't stop?
2. you check in with your babysitter while out to dinner with friends and the sitter says that your baby is crying and won't take his bottle?
3. after the bedtime ritual and baby is in bed, you turn to leave the room and he starts sobbing?
4. when you answer the phone, your happily-playing baby starts to cry for your attention?
5. your friend's baby sat on the floor amusing herself while your baby climbed all over you and cried so hard you couldn't talk?
6. you told your mother about how your friend's baby played contently while yours didn't and she hinted that you might be spoiling her grandson?
7. your baby started screaming when you went into the bathroom and closed the door, even though he was busy playing alone until he saw the door close?
8. lately, every time you leave the room, your baby cries?
9. at 4:00 p.m. with company coming for dinner and the house a mess, your baby continues to want to be held as he has demanded all day?
10. you have dinner plans, theater tickets and your sister to baby sit on your anniversary, but you get second thoughts when your baby's tears start to flow?

Learning - Separation and Stranger Awareness At Home Suggestions

“With every game of peek-a-boo, thousands of connections among brain cells are formed or strengthened adding a bit more development to the complex “wiring” that will remain largely in place for the rest of the child’s life. These connections are more difficult to make later on. ...Peek-a-boo games teach babies that objects that disappear will come back again (object permanence). A strong, secure connection with your child helps him withstand the ordinary stresses of daily life.”

Jackie Silberg, author of
125 Brain Games for Babies

Here are some activities for baby to help him/her learn object permanence and maybe ease separation anxiety.

- Of course play Peek-a-boo!
- Hide a toy under a blanket.
- Roll a ball under a table.
Does baby look for it?
- Play the shell game with Cheerios.

Sleeping

This topic falls under the domain of **Early Childhood Development** and the emphasis is **General Child Development: Developmental Expectations**.

Parents support their children's development when they:

- Set reasonable expectations for baby's abilities and behavior based upon knowledge of early childhood development.
- Explore ways to manage the baby's sleep needs with their own needs for sleep.
- Consider current research and practices regarding sleep and determine which methods will work best for their family.

When a baby comes into your life, you fully expect to have sleepless nights for the first few months. However, by the time your baby is six months old, getting up in the middle of the night is probably wearing thin. Sleep deprived parents wonder, "When will the night waking end?" For other parents, their baby is hardly waking at night and has settled into a predictable napping and night time routine. Many factors play a part in determining when and how much an infant will sleep. One major factor is the individual temperament of each baby which directly impacts sleep habits.

Fortunately, there are some natural maturation processes that occur between 6 and 12 months that help regulate infant sleep patterns. For example, infants at birth sleep an average of 16.5 hours in a 24 hour period. This decreases to 14.25 at 6 months and 13.75 hours at 12 months (Ferber, 1995). Even though, the amount of sleep lessens, infants develop the sleep pattern where more of the time spent sleeping is in the night and the naps are more predictable. Babies generally awaken less at night because their REM sleep phase (characterized by body movements which can easily wake the infant) decreases from 60 percent in a newborn to 30 percent at 12 months. At 6 months, most infants are taking two naps a day with the duration for each nap being 1 to 3 hours. Between 12 and 18 months, children work on changing the nap pattern with a short nap in the morning and a longer nap in the afternoon and slowly phasing out the morning nap. By the age of two, most children take one afternoon nap lasting 1 to 3 hours.

Much is written on the subject of sleep. If you are searching on the internet for information on infant sleep, you will have over 15 million sources from which to choose. The amount of information is overwhelming and varied in the approach in how to solve sleep issues. In order to sift through this weighty material, you might want to ask yourself these questions;

“Are my expectations about sleep realistic given my baby’s age and level of development?”

“What am I trying to teach my baby about sleep?”

“What is my baby learning?”

“What self-soothing behaviors does my baby use for sleep?”

“What is my role in my baby’s sleep process?”

Ultimately, the aspect of infant sleep becomes a learning and negotiation process between parent and child. **Through our discussion on this topic, we will explore some of the current approaches regarding infant sleep.**

Sleeping Discussion Page

Here are some childhood development experts and their general philosophies regarding sleep.

The American Academy of Pediatrics (Guide to Your Child's Sleep: Birth through Adolescence) believes that you should teach your baby to sleep on his own and use self-soothing behaviors when he wakes. Self-soothing behaviors may include sucking on thumb or fist or repositioning the body for more comfortable sleep. When baby does wake up, and cannot settle himself, use your voice to comfort him, but let more and more time pass between intervals to give him time to practice self-soothing behaviors.

Dr. T. Berry Brazelton (Sleep: The Brazelton Way) thinks you should help your baby learn how to settle down and comfort herself. Don't let "her cry it out" but don't jump at the first sound either. Let her go a few minutes and see if she can settle herself back to sleep. If not, go in and comfort by talking and touching her gently but try not to take her out of the crib. At first, go every few minutes, but eventually, call to her from outside the room. Develop a calm, supportive bedtime ritual which can also induce sleep.

Dr. Richard Ferber (Solve Your Child's Sleep Problems) believes that you should help your child form good sleep patterns. Your baby doesn't yet know what's good for him regarding sleep. It is normal for a baby to cry when he doesn't get what he wants. Your job, as a parent, is to help him learn how to sleep and fall asleep alone. You do this by determining what is his sleep agent?

If it is the parent needing to rock baby to sleep every night, eventually, the sleep agent needs to transfer from the parent to the child in the form of self-soothing behaviors. The baby is taught to self-soothe by the parent going in only at specific intervals to allow the baby time to learn how to get to sleep on his own.

Dr. Jodi Mindell (Sleeping Through the Night: How Infants, Toddlers and Their Parent's Can Get a Good Night's Sleep) Believes that your baby can develop good sleep habits as early as 6 weeks. The key is to establish a consistent nap and bedtime routine. It is also important that your baby learn to fall asleep on her own. If your baby is falling asleep on her own, it is alright to respond to her in the middle of the night. Your baby should not need you to put her to sleep. You should replace anything that requires your presence (like rocking) with a soother that does not (like a pacifier).

Elizabeth Pantley (The No-Cry Sleep Solution: Gentle Ways to Help Your Baby Sleep Through the Night) is a well-known parent educator who has a 10 step plan to help baby and parents get a good night sleep. This is accomplished by helping parents set realistic goals, analyzing and assessing baby's current sleep patterns and providing a variety of sleep solutions to fit a variety of parenting styles. Ultimately this helps parents develop a tear-free plan that works for them.

Eating

This topic falls under the domain of **Parent-Child Relationship** and the emphasis is **Nurturing: Physical Care**.

Parents support their children's development when they:

- Provide appropriate nutrition for their baby.
- Explore appropriate feeding methods based on baby's stage of development.
- Identify capabilities in baby that signal readiness for table food.

The new skills of sitting and mastering the pincer grasp are helpful in the process of eating table food. Remember that baby food is a transitional food and baby should be moving towards experiencing more textures and developing self-feeding behaviors. Baby may not always view the substances placed in front of him as nourishment but rather a new sensory experience to explore. Developing self-feeding skills takes time and practice. Fingers work best but let baby attempt a safe baby spoon when you feel he is ready.

Your baby's temperament may impact the feeding process. One baby may enjoy messing with the food and relishes everything placed in front of her. Another may not enjoy having food on her fingers and has difficulty with food textures. A parent needs to have patience as your baby discovers what she likes and dislikes. If your baby refuses a new food, don't give up – it's natural for babies to reject unfamiliar tastes. The good news for frustrated parents, according to a recent study at the University of Illinois, is that when infants are repeatedly given the same food, their reaction may change drastically. Researchers Leann L. Birch, Ph.D., and Susan A. Sullivan, Ph.D., found that when infants were given a pureed vegetable (peas or green beans) for ten consecutive days, they ate about twice as much the tenth time it was offered. Birch and Sullivan also noted the breastfed babies ate more vegetables, and seemed to like them more, than bottle-fed babies. This may be because a breast-fed baby is more accustomed to a variety of flavors since the taste of his mother's milk is affected by what she eats.

A parent is usually concerned about nutrition as their baby transitions from the predictable baby food to the less reliable finger foods. They may be plagued with questions such as, "What does my baby need to eat?", "How much does my baby need to eat?" and "Is my baby getting all the nutrients she needs?" One important aspect to keep in mind, as you attempt to answer these questions, is that breast milk or formula is still the mainstay of the infant's diet until the first birthday. Nutritionally, the breast milk or formula is supplying most of the nutrition your baby needs.

Baby food and finger food provide some additional nutrients and calories but mainly supplies needed practice in getting use to the process of eating solids and self-feeding skills.

As the child turns one, food will provide the balance of nutrients and milk consumption drops to 16-24 ounces per day. Between 6 and 12 months, babies need the additional nutrients of vitamins A, C, B, and protein. A variety of fruits and vegetables and adding a meat or other protein source can fill these needs. Two to five tablespoons is considered a serving size for this age. Expect your baby's appetite to vary from day to day. Foods to avoid before the first birthday are; dairy products, citrus, nuts, peanut butter, strawberries, honey, egg whites, fish and shellfish to decrease the chance of allergic reaction. Be sensitive to specific allergies within your family which might also affect your child. Also avoid giving foods that your baby may choke on such as raw carrots, whole grapes and popcorn.

Eating Discussion Page

1. Please share your baby's current eating pattern.
2. What are your concerns or questions concerning feeding your baby at this age?
3. My baby's current favorite food is...
4. My baby's least favorite food is...
5. How does your baby let you know s/he has had enough to eat?
6. If your baby is eating finger food, please share 2 finger foods that are working well for your baby.
7. Would you describe your baby as a "good" eater or a "fussy" eater? Why?
8. The most frustrating aspect of feeding my baby is...
9. The time of day my baby eats best is...
10. I wish my baby would eat more...

Eating At Home Suggestions

Sample Menus

Feeding	7-9 Months	9-12 Months
Breakfast	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - breastmilk or 6-8 oz. formula* - 4 tbsp infant cereal** - 2-3 tbsp fruit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - breastmilk or 6-8 oz. formula* - 4-6 tbsp infant cereal** - 2-3 tbsp fruit
Lunch	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - breastmilk or 6-8 oz. formula* - 1-3 tbsp meat or meat alternative - 2-3 tbsp vegetables - 2-3 tbsp fruit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - breastmilk or 6-8 oz. formula* - 2-4 tbsp infant cereal** - 1-2 tbsp meat or meat alternative - 3-5 tbsp vegetables - 3-4 tbsp fruit
Late Afternoon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - breastmilk or 6-8 oz. formula* 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - breastmilk or 6-8 oz. formula*
Supper	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - breastmilk or 6-8 oz. formula* - 4 tbsp infant cereal** - 2-3 tbsp vegetables - 2-3 tbsp fruit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - breastmilk or 6-8 oz. formula* - 2-3 tbsp meat or meat alternative - 3-5 tbsp vegetables - 2-3 tbsp fruit
Evening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - breastmilk or 6-8 oz. formula* (optional) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - breastmilk or 6-8 oz. formula* (optional)

* If baby is not breastfed, iron-fortified, commercial infant formula is recommended for the first 12 months.

** Iron-fortified infant cereal is recommended for babies during the first 2 years.

Generally between 8 to 9 months, you can begin to introduce finger foods to your baby to encourage self-feeding. The foods you choose will need to be very soft so your baby can “gum” the food and in small pieces so it can be easily manipulated in the mouth to lessen the chance of choking. Items like small pieces of cereal and crackers that dissolve easily in the mouth can also be given. Make sure feedings are always supervised in case of possible choking. It is a good idea to take an Infant and Child CPR and Emergency Class to be prepared if a choking episode were to occur. Over a few months period, your baby will transition from pureed food to mostly table food. The baby’s meal pattern will begin to resemble that of the rest of the family with three meals and two snacks.

Temperament – The Preferred Way to Respond to the World

This topic falls under the domain of **Parent-Child Relationship** and the emphasis is **Relationship Skills: Temperament**.

Parents support their children's development when they:

- Identify, accept and work with their baby's temperament, whether similar to or different from their own.
- Understand the effect of temperamental characteristics on development.
- Determine the impact of temperamental characteristics on the parent and child relationship.

How can two babies born on the same day and under basically the same circumstances respond to the world so differently? One of the key answers to this question may lie in the area of temperamental differences. Temperament can be defined as individual differences in human motivation and emotion that appear early in life. It is thought to be the biological or physiological component of personality development.

Much of the information on temperament regarding the nature – nurture controversy was addressed by a longitudinal study designed by two child psychiatrists, Dr. Alexander Thomas and Dr. Stella Chess. They collected data on 100 children following them from infancy through early adulthood. They evaluated the children on these nine dimensions:

Activity Level – the general level of energy and movement from quiet to active.

Regularity – biological patterns of appetite and sleep from regular to unpredictable.

Approach or Withdrawal – response to new people and situation from eager to hesitant.

Sensory Threshold – level of reaction to sensory stimuli, such as sounds and texture in food, from little response to highly sensitive.

Adaptability – ability to adjust to changes in schedules or in transitioning from one activity to another from very adaptable to difficulty with change.

Intensity – level of reaction to people or events from strong response to little indication.

Quality of Mood – overall world view from positive to negative

Distractibility – ability to pay attention to a task or instructions from short to long attention span.

Persistence – ability to continue with a task when faced with obstacles from easily discouraged to very persistent.

The overall conclusion of this longitudinal study supported the notion that from infancy to adulthood, a person's response in these nine dimensions remained relatively consistent, reinforcing the role of the biological component in temperamental differences. It is important to note, that when a child is going through a developmental change, response in certain temperamental characteristics may be intensified. For example, while child is learning to crawl, a parent may characterize her child as having a high activity level. The best time to get a glimpse into your child's temperament is when she is not going through a developmental change.

Currently, researchers are making use of new brain imaging technology to better understand temperamental differences in children. Through an MRI (magnetic resonance imaging) they can look at the brain and see how it responds to different stimuli. For example, children who are perceived as having a high activity level, have a lot of activity in the prefrontal cortex of the brain.

Knowledge of your baby's temperamental tendencies can help you better parent your child. You can more effectively anticipate how your child may respond in a given situation. For example, if you know your baby has difficulty with a change in routine, you will probably try to keep a regular schedule of eating and sleeping for your baby. This will make life run a little bit smoother for you and your child.

There are no good or bad temperamental characteristics. Some tendencies may be difficult for parents to deal with in certain situations. Remember, parents have great influence in helping their baby learn to respond in a way that enhances his natural tendencies through the environment and experiences you provide for your child. Your child's personality will develop through the interplay of temperamental characteristics (nature) and environmental influences (nurture).

Here is some useful "food for thought" from Janette Benson, PhD, assistant professor of developmental psychology at the University of Denver.

"There is no set prescription for raising a kid with a great personality. A complex set of factors are at work shaping your baby's personality as she grows. Use your heart, use good common sense and enjoy interacting with your child. Ultimately this will have the most positive effect on the type of person you're raising."

Temperament – The Preferred Way to Respond to the World Discussion Page

1. **Activity Level.** How would you describe your baby's activity level? Active or quiet? Give an example.
2. **Regularity.** How predictable is your baby's eating and sleeping habits. Give an example.
3. **Approach or Withdrawal.** How does your baby respond to a new person? Give an example.
4. **Sensory Threshold.** How does your baby respond to a new food? Give an example.
5. **Adaptability.** How does your baby respond to a change in routine? Give an example.
6. **Intensity.** In a new situation does your baby respond intensely or give very little reaction? Give an example.
7. **Quality of Mood.** Describe your baby's general mood. Serious? Smiley? Give an example.
8. **Distractibility.** How would you describe your baby's attention span? Give an example.
9. **Persistence.** How does your baby respond when a toy is out of reach? Give an example.
10. Using one of the nine temperamental characteristics, describe how your baby brings that aspect to his or her play.

Temperament – The Preferred Way to Respond to the World At Home Suggestions

Some more food for thought, *“The best advice: Don’t try to change your baby (you probably can’t anyway). Instead, work to create an atmosphere (environment) that allows for individual differences and accommodates your child’s personality.”*

Think about the following questions as you interact with your baby.

- How does the knowledge of my baby’s temperamental characteristics help me parent him/her?
- How can I better respond to my baby’s temperament as I feed, change and play with him/her?
- In what ways are my baby and I similar in temperament? In what ways are we different?
- How can I provide an environment that “allows for individual differences and accommodates my child’s personality?”

***Remember** – Temperamental characteristics is just a piece of the puzzle that makes your child who s/he becomes.

The Meaning of Play and Selecting Toys

This topic falls under the domain of **Early Childhood Development** and the emphasis is **Approaches to Learning: Curiosity**.

Parents support their children's development when they:

- Encourage and support baby's interest and excitement in discovery and exploration.
- Determine current developmental and upcoming developmental skills to identify toy selection guidelines and age-appropriate toys.
- Provide a variety of familiar and new materials and activities.

What a baby likes to play with will generally correspond with blossoming developmental skills. These skills are usually sensory such as looking, touching, tasting and hearing; or motor such as rolling, sitting, crawling, standing and walking. Through this sensory - motor exploration, baby learns about his world. The baby's play is not as random as it may appear. If you watch a baby at play, he repeats an action over and over, carefully refining the action each time, working toward mastery. The baby builds a series of skills to complete more complex tasks; rolling to crawling to standing to cruising to walking.

When a baby is working on a new skill, she can become quite focused on a particular activity that encourages that development. For example, the baby who has just learned to crawl will find batting and chasing a ball great fun! The observant parent will watch and determine what currently fascinates her baby and strategically place those activities in her path.

A toy, according to the dictionary is simply stated as "an object for children to play with." This does not necessarily mean a big, expensive "educational" toy purchased at a store. Rather, this encompasses all safe items that your baby may find fascinating, like Tupperware containers. When you do decide to venture into a toy store, the selection can be overwhelming. Before you even get to the store, here are some things to consider:

- Observe your baby. What skill is she currently working on?
- What does she enjoy playing with?
- What is frustrating for her as she works on a skill?

- Look at the toys you currently have. In what areas of development would you like a few additional play things?
- Look at magazines and the internet for ideas and prices.

A little preliminary work before hitting the toy store will make choosing appropriate toys easier.

The Meaning of Play and Selecting Toys Discussion Page

Answer one of the following questions:

- What did your baby enjoy playing with here today?
- Complete this sentence: The latest skill my baby has accomplished is . . .
- What does your baby do that makes you laugh?
- What do you see as your role in your baby's play?
- How long is your baby's attention span when involved in play?
- What is your baby's favorite non-traditional toy play object?
- How do you arrange your baby's playthings?
- What frustrates your baby during play lately?
- Complete this sentence: One thing I wish my baby didn't enjoy doing or playing with is . . .
- What activity do you enjoy playing with your baby?

Optional:

Select a toy your baby played with today and share how your baby interacted with the toy.

The Meaning of Play and Selecting Toys At Home Suggestions

Babies are naturally curious about their world. They want to touch, taste, and climb on everything. Through this curiosity, and exploration of the environment, babies learn about their world.

A parent can help satisfy their baby's curiosity by planning for controlled exploration through the following ways:

First, by child proofing your home. Have areas in your home where baby can explore freely and safely.

Second, by having some toys and activities that promote parent-child interaction where you can guide and enhance the exploration and learning. An example of this is a fuzzy hand puppet or a favorite book.

Third, by providing opportunities for baby to discover objects and properties of the environment on his own. Set up various toys and activities throughout baby's daily crawling path, such as tupperware in the kitchen, a basket of warm towels from the dryer, a bottom bookcase shelf with safe items to explore.

Fourth, by setting limits clearly. Not everything in baby's world can be made safe, or put out of reach. Find a word such as "No" or "Stop" when baby gets into something she shouldn't. Simultaneously with the word physically remove baby or the object. Babies learn through repetition so be prepared to repeat this process many times. As baby matures into toddler-hood, she will just begin to understand and comply, maybe, sometimes. . . . it is a long slow learning process – be patient – be consistent.

Here is a list of possible age-appropriate toys to encourage development:

Manipulative Play - Soft blocks, small hand held toys, busy boxes, small hard blocks, stacking and nesting cups, small study books.

Active Play - An assortment of balls, such as, textured, whiffle and beach balls (balls should be at least 1-1/4 inches in diameter) for baby to practice grasping and chasing. When baby begins to stand and cruise supply a sturdy walking push toy for practice. Trucks to push and toys with strings to pull.

Sensory - Toys with texture, toys that have sound, safe mirrors, CDs and musical toys, and picture books.

Guiding Behavior and Safety Considerations

This topic falls under the domain of **Parent-Child Relationship** and the emphasis is **Guidance: Discipline**.

Parents support their children's development when they:

- Recognize that guiding behavior (discipline) is necessary to keep baby safe during exploration.
- Establish and maintain reasonable limits.
- Determine non-punitive, respectful ways to teach baby while guiding behavior.

A moving baby is bound to attract her first "no." The same movements that were so recently cheered now become a mixed blessing. The baby is capable of independent action. Some of it will be dangerous, some annoying and some will be testing, "Is this still not OK?"

Parents "feel mixed emotions and get mixed advice. They find the word "discipline" is emotionally-packed. Some psychologists say that it is because strong feelings from childhood discipline carry into adult life. Whatever the reason, two people seldom have the same feelings and expectations regarding discipline.

Through good communication, parents can raise questions, find areas of agreement, decide limits and consider their own parents' techniques. This way, their own personal parenting philosophy begins to emerge. They will need to use this communication periodically because, over the years, at each stage of development, discipline remains the foremost parenting issue.

Parents need to consider normal child development and age-appropriate behavior when they think of discipline.

The crawling and toddling baby is propelled by curiosity. She has so much to learn and her world is so attractive. Touching and mouthing give her a better idea of what an object is more than looking at it will.

Understanding baby's need to know and learn is not a good reason for letting her do anything she wants. That does baby no good.

Discipline means teaching or guidance. It implies baby's need to learn and the parents' need to teach – firmly, kindly.

Dr. Burton White has observed many parents and children. He says that where children were developing well, mothers were LOVING but FIRM. There was rarely a question about who was in charge. Where children were not doing well, there was often ambiguity in regards to setting limits.

Babies do not love lenient parents more. Babies do not stop loving the parents who deny them some things. One way that parents can cut down on saying “no” is through safety-proofing. Take a look at your environment. What is baby getting into? How can you change the environment to make it safe for free exploration for baby? The concept of “no” or “stop” is important since there will be times when you can't simply move a tempting object. Think of having zones in your home where baby can explore and other areas that you can gate off or restrict access. However, nothing takes the place of careful watching as your baby learns about his world.

Guiding Behavior and Safety Considerations At Home Suggestions

Remember your baby learns through:

- **Being Curious** – which leads to exploring safe and unsafe aspects of the environment.
- **Cause and Effect** – which leads to testing behavior as your baby looks for your reaction to his/her behavior.
- **Repetition** – teaching baby will also take repetition and consistency on your part.

Guiding Behavior Techniques

Safety Proofing – your baby does not have the life experience or judgment to keep him/her safe. Removing unsafe temptations allows for freer exploration. Take a crawl around your house and look at what might be unsafe for baby at that level. Next, look at your countertops, bookcases, floor lamps and determine what baby can reach or pull over. Create places and habits for keeping choking hazards out of reach such as coins and paperclips.

Physical Removal – there may be some items you cannot remove or you may want to begin to teach the concept of “no” or “stop” with an item that is not a safety issue. As your baby learns, (which will take many repetitions) you will have to physically remove the item or your baby as you use your guidance word.

Redirection – reroute your little investigator by providing a comparable substitute such as a play phone instead of the real one.

Parent and Child Interactions – Selective Interventions

This topic falls under the domain of **Parent-Child Relationship** and the emphasis is **Relationship Skills: Observation Skills**.

Parents support their children's development when they:

- Understand and respond to their baby's interests and signals by observing and listening to their babies.
- Recognize reasons to intervene in a baby's interactions with the environment.
- Respond in ways that support their baby's development during parent and child interaction.

A parent and child relationship has all the elements of a dance. Like dance partners, you have to read each other's signals so you don't step on each other's toes. Sometimes you dance together, sometimes apart. You need to trust and support each other's movements in order for the dance to work.

What are the elements in the parent and child relationship that enhance your interactions with each other? Of course, the most fundamental is **trust**. In the development of that element, a parent must take the lead. By the parent creating a relationship based on trust, a child can eventually dance alone. It is during these times when a child is learning, sometimes on her own, that we are unsure as to what "steps" we should be doing.

Another element that is important is **sensitivity** to our baby's needs during interaction. This requires gaining your baby's perspective. What are your baby's goals during playtime?

Responding to your baby's cues is another important element. **Being responsive** does not necessarily mean taking an action. It means observing and determining what is needed: a smile, a touch or assistance with solving a problem.

Turn-taking is also an important element during interactions with your child. The difficulty lies in figuring out when it's your turn. Sometimes, it's a fine line between interacting and intruding in your baby's learning.

During interaction we can encourage learning by providing the element of **support**. This may entail making appropriate playthings available that are in-step with your baby's current development.

Along with knowing how to interact with your baby, come the questions concerning when to interact. Many parents struggle with these questions:

"Am I spending enough time playing with my baby?" "Am I providing the appropriate playthings and activities to enrich and encourage development?" "When do I intervene when my baby is frustrated?" These are not easy questions to answer. There are moments when we instinctively know because we have learned to read our baby's cues and our response feels right. Other times we feel unsure – Should we respond? Should we wait?

The descriptive words for this interaction time between parent and child where we are reading cues and responding appropriately has been referred to as "quality time." Infant specialist Magda Gerber, in this excerpt from her manual, ***Resources for Infant Educators***, breaks quality time into these two themes:

1. The "Wants Nothing" Quality Time. That's when the parent doesn't want to do anything with the child, has no plans other than wanting to simply be with the child. Just floor-sitting, being available, being there with all the senses awakened to the child; watching, listening, thinking of only that child. It sounds easy, but few can truly do it.

Most of us are used to and conditioned to doing something. This is not "I've-got-to-do-this" kind of time. It's more a time for taking in and waiting. We fully accept the child's beingness just by our own receptive beingness. We are telling the child that we are really there and aware. Not what shall I cook, clean, whom to call, etc. If you really feel that you should do something during this time then it's not the right time. This is a free-flowing space in which the child shouldn't feel he has to perform, because the parent is not sending out the kind of demanding messages that say, "I am here now, what would you like to do?" Most relationships are based on performance. We tend to stimulate our children to produce listening and watching. If the child seems to ignore you and is doing something completely on his own, don't leave. It is very comforting to know that the parent is there, really there without the little person under pressure to have to do something to keep the parent's attention.

For an infant it's a peaceful presence – a quiet assurance in this beingness. This separate play from the parent teaches the child to depend on his own inner security. If you do this with a newborn you learn to see the child fully, you really observe and discover a person unfolding. This separate time doesn't produce immediate results. Please remember this. Everything, especially new things, need time and patience. You must plant and then reap. First put in what you feel is right and slowly it takes. This instant ready-made society expects instant results. Not so with quality time.

It's more like an investment in the future of your child as well as in the present. You are available, waiting; the child is the initiator.

2. Also, there is the "Wants Something" Quality Time. This is when you do have a goal to accomplish something together, such as dressing, bathing, feeding, etc. This too should be regarded as quality time. You can make sure the child knows that this time is different from your "Wants Nothing Time" by actually saying, "Now I want to diaper you." "Now it's time to get dressed, etc."

This is a time when you work for cooperation. If you think in terms of quality, you use the time for learning to do a task together when you expect the child to cooperate. It should become something you both enjoy doing together. Your availability is still there, except that during this time you also have expectations. This is the beginning of introducing and reinforcing discipline.

Parent and Child Interactions – Selective Intervention Discussion Page

Play Observation:

Describe an incident of **“want nothing quality time”** (observing your baby at play without a specific purpose in mind. The parent wants nothing from the baby. Parent is available – watching, listening and thinking only of the baby).

Describe an incident of **“want something quality time”** (while watching your baby at play, you have a specific goal you want to do together like showing him/her how to operate a toy).

Keep in mind “selective intervention” as described by Magda Gerber:

When To Intervene:

- * When there is a safety issue.
- * When you want to teach gentleness.
- * When a child is too frightened or frustrated to solve problems without help.

When Not To Intervene:

- * When your baby is safely exploring the environment.
- * When your baby is engaged in solving his/her own problem.

(Optional: View video “On Their Own with Our Help”, Magda Gerber and/or video Infant contrast set from Reflective Dialogue, University of Minnesota)

**Parent and Child Interactions - Selective Intervention
At Home Suggestions**

Think about the following as you play with your child:

Encourages a Healthy Parent – Child Relationship	Discourages a Healthy Parent – Child Relationship
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observe Child • Set pace suitable to child • Let child find solutions • Let child explore • Give choices • Set expectations based on child’s uniqueness • Follow child’s lead • Develop a mutual relationship • Communicate with respect and support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interpret and judge child • Set pace suitable to adult • Give solutions • Control child • Give orders • Set expectations based on adult’s needs • Interrupt child’s activity • Develop a dependent relationship • Communicate without respect and support

Source:

Strengthening Parent Child Relationships – A Reflective Dialogue Approach to Parent Education, Minnesota Department of Education.

Babies and Books - Language and Literacy

This topic falls under the domain of **Early Childhood Development** and the emphasis is **Language and Literacy Development: Emergent Reading**.

Parents support their children's development when they:

- Make book reading time special and enjoyable with age-appropriate expectations.
- Recognize the importance of how reading to baby impacts language development.
- Understand the progression of language development in infancy.

Early Literacy

From www.zerotothree.org/BrainWonders

What We Know About Early Language and Literacy Development

Early language and literacy (reading and writing) development begins in the first three years of life and is closely linked to a child's earliest experiences with books and stories. The interactions that young children have with such literacy materials, such as, books, paper, and crayons, and with the adults in their lives are the building blocks for language, reading and writing development. This relatively new understanding of early literacy development complements the current research supporting the critical role of early experiences in shaping brain development.

Recent research supports an interactive and experiential process of learning spoken and written language skills that begins in early infancy. We now know that children gain significant knowledge of language, reading, and writing long before they enter school. Children learn to talk, read, and write through such social literacy experiences as adults or older children interacting with them using books and other literacy materials, including magazines, markers, and paper. Simply put, early literacy research states that:

- Language, reading, and writing skills develop at the same time and are intimately linked.
- Early literacy development is a continuous developmental process that begins in the first years of life.

- Early literacy skills develop in real life settings through positive interactions with literacy materials and other people.

Early Literacy Does Not Mean Early Reading

Our current understanding of early language and literacy development has provided new ways of helping children learn to talk, read, and write. But it does not advocate "the teaching of reading" to younger and younger children. Formal instruction which pushes infants and toddlers to achieve adult models of literacy (i.e., the actual reading and writing of words) is not developmentally appropriate. Early literacy theory emphasizes the more natural unfolding of skills through the enjoyment of books, the importance of positive interactions between young children and adults, and the critical role of literacy-rich experiences. Formal instruction to require young children who are not developmentally ready to read is counter productive and potentially damaging to children, who may begin to associate reading and books with failure.

What Infants and Toddlers Can Do – Early Literacy Behaviors

Early literacy recognizes that language, reading, and writing evolve from a number of earlier skills. Judith Shickedanz first described categories of early literacy behaviors in her book, "Much More Than the ABC's". Her categories, listed below, can be used to understand the book behaviors of very young children. They help us to see the meaning of these book behaviors and see the progression children make along the path to literacy.

Early Literacy Behaviors

1. Book Handling Behaviors

- Behaviors related to a child's physical manipulation or handling of books, such as page turning and chewing

2. Looking and Recognizing

- Behaviors related to how children pay attention to and interact with pictures in books, such as gazing at pictures or laughing at a favorite picture
- Behaviors that show recognition of and a beginning understanding of pictures in books, such as pointing to pictures of familiar objects

3. Picture and Story Comprehension

- Behaviors that show a child's understanding of pictures and events in a book, such as imitating an action seen in a picture or talking about the events in a story.

4. Story-Reading Behaviors

- Behaviors that include children's verbal interactions with books and their increasing understanding of print in books, such as babbling in imitation of reading or running fingers along printed words.

Early literacy skills are essential to literacy development and should be the focus of early language and literacy programs. By focusing on the importance of the first years of life, we give new meaning to the interactions young children have with books and stories. Looking at early literacy development as a dynamic developmental process, we can see the connection (and meaning) between an infant mouthing a book, the book handling behavior of a two year old and the page turning of a five year old. We can see that the first three years of exploring and playing with books, singing nursery rhymes, listening to stories, recognizing words, and scribbling are truly the building blocks for language and literacy development.

****A Note to Readers:** In an effort to convey a message of connection and intimacy, we refer to "your baby" in writing about early literacy. This reference is meant for both parents and child care providers - all caregivers who have an emotional connection to the infants in their care. We also use the terms "he" and "she" interchangeably throughout the text to fairly represent both young girls and boys. ******

What Young Children Like in Books

Infants 0-6 months

- Books with simple, large pictures or designs with bright colors.
- Stiff cardboard, "chunky" books, or fold out books that can be propped up in the crib.
- Cloth and soft vinyl books with simple pictures of people or familiar objects that can go in the bath or get washed.

Infants 6-12 months

- Board books with photos of other babies.
- Brightly colored "chunky" board books to touch and taste!
- Books with photos of familiar objects like balls and bottles.
- Books with sturdy pages that can be propped up or spread out in the crib or on a blanket.
- Plastic/vinyl books for bath time.
- Washable cloth books to cuddle and mouth.
- Small plastic photo albums of family and friends.

Young Toddlers 12-24 months

- Sturdy board books that they can carry.
- Books with photos of children doing familiar things like sleeping or playing.
- Goodnight books for bed time.
- Books about saying hello and good-bye.
- Books with only a few words on each page.
- Books with simple rhymes or predictable text.
- Animal books of all sizes and shapes.

Toddlers 2-3 years

- Books that tell simple stories.
- Simple rhyming books that they can memorize.
- Bed time books.
- Books about counting, the alphabet, shapes, or sizes.
- Animal books, vehicle books, books about playtime.
- Books with their favorite TV characters inside.
- Books about saying hello and good-bye.

Ways to Share Books with Babies & Toddlers**Make Sharing Books Part of Every Day**

- Read or share stories at bedtime or on the bus.

Have Fun

- Children can learn from you that books are fun, which is an important ingredient in learning to read.

A Few Minutes is OK—Don't Worry if You Don't Finish the Story

- Young children can only sit for a few minutes for a story, but as they grow, they will be able to sit longer.

Talk or Sing About the Pictures

- You do not have to read the words to tell a story.

Let Children Turn the Pages

- Babies need board books and help turning pages, but a three-year-old can do it alone. Remember, it's OK to skip pages!

Show Children the Cover Page

- Explain what the story is about.

Show Children the Words

- Run your finger along the words as you read them, from left to right.

Make the Story Come Alive

- Create voices for the story characters and use your body to tell the story.

Make It Personal

- Talk about your own family, pets, or community when you are reading about others in a story.

Ask Questions About the Story, and Let Children Ask Questions Too!

- Use the story to engage in conversation and to talk about familiar activities and objects.

Let Children Tell the Story

- Children as young as three years old can memorize a story, and many children love to be creative through storytelling.

Visit www.zerotothree.org/BrainWonders for more information. BrainWonders is a joint project by BOSTON UNIVERSITY MEDICAL CENTER, ERIKSON INSTITUTE, and ZERO TO THREE.

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Source: BrainWonders & Sharing Books with Babies

Babies and Books, Language and Literacy Discussion Page

The Progression of Language Development in Infancy

- Cooing – characterized by vowel sounds like “ooooo”
- Babbling – starts by about 6 months and is characterized by the addition of consonant sounds in repetitive syllables such as “ba-ba”
- Echolalia Babbling –begins around 8 months as the baby echoes speech sounds s/he hears in a conversation style with a parent.
- Gestures – your baby will begin to use gestures such as pointing and body language such as arching the back as a means of communication. Through pointing, your baby is saying “what’s that?” as s/he adds to his/her vocabulary.
- Jargon – characterized by a string of nonsensical sounds that has the tone and cadence of human speech but does not contain any words.
- Words – around the first birthday your child will say his/her first words. Your child may not know the meaning of the words but will soon learn based on the reaction of the adults in his/her life. By 18 months, most children have 8-10 words that have a one-to-one correspondence with a person, place or thing.

Remember – Your baby’s ability to understand words (receptive language) far precedes his/her ability to say words (expressive language). For example, if you say “where is daddy?” your baby can answer the question with a glance before s/he can say “daddy is in the chair”.

1. Describe where your baby is on his/her language development journey.
2. How does your baby respond to books?
3. Do you have a favorite children’s book? Why?
4. What is your favorite book to read to your child?

5. When do you read to your baby?
6. A good way to encourage language development is to talk to your baby about what you are doing. Share an example when you were explaining to your baby about what you were doing.
7. Looking at and recognizing photos and pictures in books are the beginning of literacy skills that will eventually lead to language, writing and reading. Have you noticed your baby getting excited over certain pictures or books? Share an example.
8. Singing can be another way to encourage language development. Do you have a favorite song and/or time you sing to your baby?
9. Gestures and body language is another way your baby can communicate. Share an example.
10. Complete this sentence. My question or concern regarding language development or literacy is...

Babies and Books, Language and Literacy At Home Suggestions

Here is a list of books your baby and you may enjoy.

Classic Board Books

Dr. Seuss Board Books by Dr. Seuss - everyone's favorite titles from Dr. Seuss's ABC to Green Eggs and Ham available as board books with simple, rhyming text. Babies will love to hear the musical rhythm of Dr. Seuss's words.

Goodnight Moon by Margaret Wise Brown - a familiar and beloved bedtime classic.
Wee Pudgy Board Books by Putnam Publishing - a series of small, chunky photo board books for the littlest hands.

Snapshot Series and Touch and Feel Series Board Books by Dorling Kindersley (DK) Publishing - amazingly colorful and inviting board books full of bright photos, soft textures and exciting pictures.

Baby Faces Series by Scholastic - wonderful, ethnically diverse photos of babies engaged in familiar games like peek a boo.

Red Blue Yellow Shoe by Tana Hoban - brightly colored familiar objects on white background, very tempting for little eyes.

Baby Animals and Zoom Zoom by K. Warube - exciting pictures of animals and objects.

Cloth and Soft Vinyl Books

Flower in the Garden and other titles by Lucy Cousins - cloth and soft vinyl books with simple pictures of familiar objects, great for this age because they hold up well to mouthing and can be washed.

Spot Series by Putnum Publishing - Spot the Dog books available in soft to touch vinyl - perfect for the bath or anytime.

General Books

Hippety-Hop Hippety Hey: Growing rhymes from birth to age three by Opal Dunn and Sally Anne Lambert - lovely collection of rhymes with directions for how and/or when to use the rhyme. Rhymes are illustrated and grouped by age level.

BrainWonders: Developed 1998-2001

Source: zerotothree.org

Fun and Safety for all Seasons

This topic falls under the domain of **Parent-Child Relationship** and the emphasis is **Nurturing: Physical Care**.

Parents support their children's development when they:

- Identify seasonal safety concerns.
- Determine prevention and/or treatment strategies
- Provide family fun opportunities

Winter Fun and Safety

The Minnesota baby has a unique issue that a baby from California does not have – being bundled up from December through March. It is the rare baby that adores his snowsuit. However, it is one of the realities of their young lives. Some parents wonder, “How do I dress my baby to insure she stays warm?” Because of your baby's small size, he cannot store as much heat as an adult and can become chilled rapidly. On the other hand, your baby can easily become overheated if overdressed and even develops a heat rash. A baby's most vulnerable areas for heat loss and cold exposure are the head, hands and feet.

Here are some suggestions to help with this dilemma:

- Layers of clothing insure warmth, like insulation keeps a home warm. Two pairs of thin socks are especially helpful since a baby's feet will get colder than the rest of his body.
- A one-piece snowsuit and hat that fits securely over the ears will keep your baby toasty. Look for a snowsuit with attached mittens or ones that fit over the cuffs.
- If you use a scarf to shield baby's face, make sure all ends are tucked into the snowsuit so they cannot get caught.
- To help reduce the chance of overheating, unzip your baby's snowsuit in the warm car and remove hat and mittens if you are indoors (like when shopping). If a baby is overheated, he may get red in the face, feel hot and act fussy.

A properly dressed baby is safe to take outside for brief periods on calm, winter days when the temperature is above freezing. Monitor how long you are out and check baby

often to see if she is warm. A baby sitting passively in a stroller needs extra protection such as a blanket to prevent heat loss and a scarf to protect exposed skin on the face.

If your baby is overexposed to the cold, he could develop frost nip or frostbite.

Frost nip is minor damage to the outer layer of skin which appears white and soft to the touch. If your baby develops frost nip, treat in the following manner:

- Do not rub the skin. This could damage the frozen tissue.
- If you cannot get inside immediately, use the heat of your body to gently warm the skin.
- If inside, use lukewarm water and immerse the affected skin.
- Remember that frost nip can quickly turn into frostbite if not attended to immediately.

Frostbite is the actual freezing of the skin. The most vulnerable areas are the tips of the ear and nose, and hands and feet. The affected skin will appear white and waxy and feel hard to the touch. To treat frostbite, begin warming the skin as stated for frost nip and seek medical attention immediately.

We all need to get out during our long winters to avoid cabin fever. Don't avoid the season – just be prepared.

Winter Fun and Safety Discussion Information

Complete the sentence:

- When I think of winter, I . . .
- I avoid cabin fever by . . .
- My greatest winter safety concern regarding my baby is . . .
- I am looking forward to winter because . . .
- My favorite outdoor winter activity is . . .
- If I could escape winter, I would go to . . .
- An indoor place I like to go in the winter is . . .
- A comfort food for me in the winter is . . .
- My dream winter vacation would be . . .
- My favorite winter memory is . . .

Winter Fun and Safety At Home and Away Suggestions

- Start a New Year's tradition. Write a letter to your baby and reflect on the past year and your hopes for the future.
- Have a "day in the life" photo session with your baby. Take pictures of all your baby's daily activities.
- Make puppet socks. Draw a face on the toe area of the sock with fabric paints. To top them off, loop red yard on the toe seam for hair. When your baby plays with his/her toes, s/he'll get an added surprise.
- Find interesting, safe kitchen items for your baby to grasp and explore: brightly colored dish towels, small Tupperware containers, small pot lids to bang.
- Take a trip to the library. Check out puppets and children's music.
- Get caught up on your baby book.
- When your baby is particularly verbal, record his/her sounds then play it back to him/her. How does baby react?
- Massage baby.
- Mirror play. In front of the mirror, make funny faces (stick out your tongue, blink your eyes, smile, frown, laugh.) How does baby respond?
- Sing "Wheels on the Bus," "Little Bird" and "Little Cuckoo Clock" to baby.
- Pay attention to baby's awareness of sounds around the house: doorbell, phone ringing, T.V., radio, plane flying overhead.
- Need some greenery to combat the winter blues? Go to the Minnesota Zoo and explore the Tropics and the Coral Reef. Call the Zoo-to-Do Hotline at 952-431-9500 for more information.
- On a nice winter day, bundle up baby and go for a walk.

Summer Fun and Safety

Just as taking a baby out in winter poses some safety concerns, summer brings its own safety challenges. Here are some aspects of summer to consider and some possible safety solutions:

Protection from the Sun

Your best defense is to not be out in direct sun during the peak hours of 12:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. A hat with a wide brim helps shield baby's head and eyes. Sunscreen is not generally recommended for children under 1 year of age but, if using a sunscreen, choose one that is PABA-free with a sun protection factor of at least 15. Apply 20 minutes before exposure.

Protection from Insects

Insect repellent is not recommended for babies. Mosquito netting can be helpful over a stroller or a playpen placed outdoors.

Water Safety

A baby should not be in a position with an opportunity to swallow chlorinated water which may cause water intoxication. Always supervise a child around water. A child can drown in any container of water where the water level can cover the child's nose and mouth.

Poisonous Substances

Be aware of poisonous plants around home. Call the Poison Center at 1-800-222-1222 if you have difficulty identifying a plant. Keep poisonous substances such as fertilizer, antifreeze and paint in your garage, out of your child's reach and locked away if possible.

Summer Fun and Safety Discussion Information

Complete the sentence:

- When I think of summer, I look forward to...

- My greatest summer safety concern is...

- My favorite childhood memory from summer is....

- My ideal summer vacation would be...

- My favorite outdoor summer activity is...

- An indoor place I might go on a rainy summer day is....

- The food that reminds me most of summer is. . .

- One thing I hope to do with my child this summer is...

- One thing I hope to do this summer is...

- My favorite season of all is...

Summer Fun At Home Suggestions

Take advantage of our beautiful summer weather. Here are a few possibilities:

- **Como Park Zoo**

Midway Parkway and Kaufman Drive in St. Paul (651-487-8200, 24 hr info line). Grounds open 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. (hours change seasonally) Free. A nice-size zoo for small children.

www.stpaul.gov

- **Minnesota Zoo**

Highway 77 in Apple Valley (952-431-9500). Open 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. (hours change seasonally)

www.mnzoo.org

- **Minnesota Landscape Arboretum**

3675 Arboretum Drive (9 miles west of I-494 on Highway 5) in Chanhassen (952-443-1445). Grounds open 8:00 a.m. to sunset. (building hours vary) Admission: \$5.00 Adults (19+). Kids free. Go and smell the flowers.

www.arboretum.umn

- **Parker's Lake Park**

County Road 6 and Niagara Lane in Plymouth. (763-509-5200) Free. Has a nice beach, playground, snack bar and walking trails.

www.recreation@ciplymouth.mn.us

- **French Regional Park**

County Road 9 in Plymouth (763-694-7750). A nice place for a picnic or walk.

www.threeriversparkdistrict.org

- **Lake Harriet**

In Minneapolis. A great place for a free, outdoor summer concert or to step back in time and ride the Como-Harriet Streetcar. (952-922-1096).

www.trolleyride.org

***Telephone numbers and websites current as of 11/2005**

Resource List

Books

The American Academy of Pediatrics Guide to Your Child's Symptoms: The official, Complete Home Reference, Birth Through Adolescence (Guide to Your Child's Symptoms) by Donald Schiff M.D., F.A.A.P. Steven P. Shelov M.D., F.A.A.P.; Villard Publishing (January, 1997). (Suggested hardcover copy due to formatting)

The Baby Book: Everything You Need to Know About Your Baby from Birth to Age Two (Revised and Updated Edition) by William Sears M.D., Martha Sears, Robert Sears M.D., Little, Brown: (March 2003)

The Breastfeeding Book: Everything You Need to Know About Nursing Your Child from Birth through Weaning, by Martha Sears, William Sears M.D., Little, Brown (March 2000)

Caring for Your Baby and Young Child (Birth to Age Five) by Penelope Leach, PhD.; Bantam Books (1998)

Child of Mine: Feeding with Love and Good Sense, by Ellyn Satter; Bull Publishing Company (2000)

The Happiest Baby on the Block: The New Way to Calm Crying and Help Your Newborn Baby Sleep Longer, by Harvey Karp M.D.; Bantam Books (2003)

The No-Cry Sleep Solution: Gentle Ways to Help Your Baby Sleep through the Night, by Elizabeth Pantley, William Sears M.D.; McGraw Hill (2002)

125 Brain Games for Babies, by Jackie Silberg; Gryphone House (1999)

Touchpoints: The Essential Reference (Your Child's Emotional and Behavioral Development), by T. Berry Brazelton M.D.; Perseus Books (1998)

The Womanly Art of Breastfeeding: Seventh Revised Edition (Le Leche League International Book), by Le Leche League International; Plume (May 2004)

Your Self-Confident Baby: How to Encourage Your Child's Natural Abilities –from the very start, by Magda Gerber, Allison Johnson; John Wiley and Sons Inc. (1998)

Becoming the Parent You Want to Be – A Sourcebook of Strategies for the First Five Years by Laura Davis and Janis Keyser, Broadway Books (1997)

Solve Your Child's Sleep Problems by Richard Ferber M.D., Simon and Schuster (1986)

Sleeping Through The Night – How Infants, Toddlers and Their Parents Can Get a Good Night's Sleep by Jodi Mindell Ph. D., Harper Collins Publisher Inc. (1997)

Websites

www.aap.org – The American Academy of Pediatrics website offers pertinent health information and an array of other topics.

www.askdrsears.com – Leading pediatrician Dr. William Sears provides information concerning a variety of topics and features a “topic” and “question of the week”.

www.babycenter.com – Includes a free developmental newsletter based on the age of your baby.

www.educarer.org – Infant specialist Magda Gerber features information on a variety of topics focusing on her philosophy of caring for infants with respect.

www.fathers.com – A broad resource for topics for fathers.

www.ivillage.com –The internet for women providing information on a range of topics from health to parenting.

www.parentsaction.org – Previously named “I Am Your Child”. Developed by Rob Reiner has a unique format that includes these three areas; **Learn** – provides access to important information on a variety of topics. **Share** – contains personal stories from parents, idea exchanges and book reviews. **Act** – provides information on how parents can get involved in issues affecting families.

www.zerotothree.org – Includes information on parenting topics from A to Z, tip of the week, brain development and articles from the top child development experts.

MOMS Clubs

The MOMS Club (Moms Offering Moms Support) is a non-profit international organization which provides support for mothers who have chosen to stay home to raise their children, full time or part time. Goals include providing moral support to at-home mothers, providing a forum for topics of interest to women, giving mothers more of a voice in the community, and performing service projects, especially those benefiting children.

To find the MOMS Club nearest your, contact:
International MOMS Club web site: www.momsclub.com

Minnesota Dads At Home www.mdah.org

Minnesota Dads At Home is a network of dads who stay home with their children, some part-time, some full-time.