

First Smiles...Communicating With Your Baby

What is more special for a new parent than their baby's first smile? A smile is your baby's way of communicating with you. She is telling you, "I want to interact." Take advantage of this by making eye contact, smiling back and making positive comments to her. She will smile at your actions, tone of voice and facial expressions. She will copy the smiles of people around her.

Did you know that talking to your baby is important to your baby's development? Even before babies understand language, they respond to their parent's voice. So vary the tone of your voice to make it more interesting for them. Babies also react to their parent's feelings.

Try to show your baby feelings of happiness and love. It may not always be easy! The way you talk to your baby and the way you respond to her needs will influence how she grows.

Your baby is learning about the world around her. Show her love and security during this new adventure. Let's Grow...Together!

"The most important thing is not to get the child you want, but to care for and love the child you get."

Daniel Beekman



All Together Now

At this age, you can now take your baby just about anywhere you go. You'll still need a diaper bag with a change of clothes and maybe an assortment of little toys, but babies at this age travel well and enjoy many of your activities. Even a walk around the block is an adventure filled with new sights and sounds. Talk about what you see and hear.

Depending on where you live, there are probably baby groups or other activities for parents and children. These get-togethers allow you to share parenting ideas with other parents. Call your local Ontario Early Years Centre or 211 to find out what is available in your neighbourhood. Spending quality time together will take some planning but the rewards will last a lifetime.



Caring For Me

Be Wise – Immunize

You've kept me safe and healthy for nine months before my birth. Now, I need extra protection from childhood diseases. I'm talking about immunization. It's easy and it's free.

- I need my first immunizations when I'm two months old.
- My immunization card will say which vaccines are included in my needle. Keep this record of my immunization in a safe place where it will not get lost.
- I may have mild side effects like fever or a sore leg. These are worth it though, as I would be very sick if I got the diseases.

Ask my healthcare provider or call Public Health for more information on immunization or visit www.caringforkids.cps.ca

For Ontario's Immunization Schedule visit www.health.gov.on.ca/en/public/programs/immunization/

When I'm Not Feeling Well

- If I need medicine, check the label at least twice and measure every time you give it to me
- For health advice or general health information call Telehealth Ontario and get free access to a Registered Nurse 24 Hours a day, 7 days a Week Call 1-866-797-0000 or TTY : 1-866-797-0007
- Call 911 if it is a medical emergency

Super Mom - Who Me?

Motherhood is special and is filled with many thoughts, feelings and expectations.



Sometimes, however, we expect ourselves to be everything to everyone. You may not even realize that you've set this unconscious goal for yourself. If you are striving to be the "perfect" mother - STOP! Perfection is an impossible goal.

Here are some ways that you can help yourself:

- Accept offers of help from family, friends and neighbours.
- Look at the way things are done in your family. What would make your daily routines run more smoothly?
- Remember your own needs. Take time to eat well, sleep, exercise and have fun!
- Enjoy your family and friends. Share your thoughts and feelings. Plan family activities.

Respecting yourself and your family is the most loving behaviour of a real super mom.

Growing Healthy Bodies, Healthy Minds



Feeding & Nutrition

Growth spurts

I will probably have different times in the next several months when I seem to be hungry all the time. These are just growth spurts and do not mean that I need solid food. They commonly happen at around 10 days, 2-3 weeks, 6 weeks and 3 months of age. I will need to be fed more often for a few days. This will increase your milk supply and give my body the nutrients it needs to grow healthy and strong. Hold and cuddle me while you feed me. This is one of my favourite times to look at your face.

Has someone suggested giving me cereal to help me sleep through the night? These ideas are well intended but my body isn't ready yet. My digestive system is immature and I can't digest solid foods very well. Cereal will prevent me from drinking the breastmilk my body needs. Breastmilk is all I need to eat until I am 6 months old.

Healthy Teeth & Gums

- Many babies never use a pacifier. If you choose to give me one and it falls on the floor, the best way to clean it is to rinse it off with water. Do not lick my pacifier because this will transfer bacteria from your mouth to mine. Also, please do not dip my pacifier in anything sweet.
- If you have chosen to give me a breastmilk substitute (formula), I shouldn't fall asleep while drinking it. The sugars can rot my teeth when I sleep because there is less saliva in my mouth to rinse my teeth and gums.
- Even before I have teeth, wipe my gums gently with a clean, wet washcloth two times a day.

Tummy To Play, Every Day

Tummy time is an important part of my daily routine. Tummy time for play helps me develop earlier control of my head and neck and helps me strengthen my arms and shoulders. Place me on my tummy for a few minutes after each diaper change, then add a few more minutes of tummy time every day!



How Stress Affects Your Baby

“Problems at home such as divorce, illness, drugs or violence can create stress for a baby. Stress can make it difficult for a baby to learn. When babies react to stressful situations, they use their brain to deal with problems, rather than to learn. It is best to reduce the baby's contact with stress. Try to get the help you need to reduce the problems at home.” www.healthybabyhealthybrain.ca

Call 211 or your local health unit to learn about community services that are available.



Building My Trust

Understanding My Feelings

I can tell that you now understand some of my cries and behaviours. Certain behaviours such as smiling and looking in your direction with my eyes bright and wide let you know that I am feeling good about our interaction. You're trying to make me happy and that makes me feel good about myself. I may not understand your words like “cute” and “adorable” but I know from your smile, your tone of voice, and the way you hold me, that you think I'm pretty amazing (most of the time).

I also need you to recognize and respect when I need a break or quiet time. It is very obvious to you when I cry or squirm that I need some “me” time, but there are other subtle cues I may use, such as frowning, yawning and looking away. When you notice and respond to my cues, you are helping me develop positive feelings about myself and our relationship.

You can help me by:

- holding me securely, rocking me, cuddling me
- smiling at me
- talking to me while looking in my eyes
- speaking in a gentle tone of voice, singing to me
- responding to my coos, gurgles and babbling

I won't expect perfection of you. Trying is what's important!

Reference: How to Give Your Child a Great Self-Image, by Dr. Debora Phillips with Fred Bernstein.

Look at What I Can Do!

From 1-3 months

1 month

- I can see, taste, smell and hear
- I am still uncoordinated when I move my arms and legs
- I give you signs when I need something
- I often settle when I am held and comforted
- I enjoy being stroked and gently touched
- I enjoy being held and spoken to
- I see things 20 cm to 30 cm (8" to 12") away
- I begin to turn my head to sound
- My hands are usually closed
- I will start to make eye contact with you
- I look at objects
- I lift my head while on my tummy and look from side to side
- I will start to follow an object from side to side
- I turn my head towards sound
- I watch your face while being fed
- As I get stronger, I will hold my head up at your shoulder
- I like to hold your fingers, even while I am being fed or when you talk to me
- I am beginning to recognize my caregivers

3 months

New activities take a lot of energy at first so I might get tired quickly. I will let you know if I need a break by looking away, frowning or becoming fussy. With time you will get to know my "cues" that tell you if I am interested (or not) in what we are doing together.



Ways to Help Me Grow

I need you to talk to me and sing lullabies. Making a connection with you is the most important part of my new life. Sing and play during diaper changes, play time or any time. It's not too early to start reading to me. Even though I don't understand much yet, I love the sound of your voice and the natural highs and lows that come with storytelling.

Pizza, Pickle, Pumpnickel
Pizza, Pickle, Pumpnickel.
My little guy shall have a tickle.
One for his nose
And one for his toes,
And one for his tummy,
Where the good food goes.
By Dennis Lee

We can have fun using some simple toys:

- I like black and white patterns at first.
- The sounds of a musical mobile soothe me and the movement fascinates me.
- Velcro wrist band toys help me to notice my hands.
- I enjoy toys and books with different textures on them.
- A mirror helps me begin to figure out who I am.
- I need rattles to practice my grasp. Use only safety approved ones!
- An activity centre/play gym helps me learn to reach and grasp.

I Need Your Help To Stay Safe



Keeping Me Safe

Using the Microwave

Do not microwave your baby's food:

- Microwaves heat liquid unevenly causing hot spots which can burn your baby.
- Too much heat will also harm the antibodies in breastmilk.
- Always serve breastmilk directly from the breast or warm it up in warm water. Be sure to check the temperature before feeding your baby.

Protect Me from Burns

I have thin, sensitive skin that burns easily:

- Set the temperature of the hot water tank in our home to 49°C (120°F).
- Use lids on hot drinks and keep hot liquids away from me.
- Try to keep me out of the sun between 11 a.m. and 4 p.m. To play it safe, we should play in the shade and I should wear a hat and clothing that protects my skin. I am too young to wear sunscreen.

Keep Me From Falling

I'm not able to do very much by myself yet but I'm learning quickly. I am learning to move, kick, and wiggle and this means I am at risk of falling from high surfaces.

- Keep one hand on me when I am on a high surface like a change table.
- Before you answer the phone or door, put me in a crib or playpen, or take me with you.

Supervise To Keep Me Safe

- Don't leave me alone with family pets or small children.
- Always keep one hand on me while I am in the bath.



Protect My Neck

- Always support my head when you're playing with me. I love songs and rhymes, but don't bounce me hard or toss me in the air. Until I'm 2 years of age my neck isn't strong enough for those rougher games and my brain can still be damaged.

Coping with Crying

All babies cry and I am no different. Crying peaks from 2-4 months.

- It is more important to stay calm than to stop my crying. Plan ahead for how you will cope when my crying gets to be too much.
- It is okay to ask for help. Never shake me for any reason. To learn more, visit www.purplecrying.info



For Parents



Changing Routines

A new baby will change your routine and your life. This is normal. Parents need to remember that any time spent with baby is a good investment. Take time to enjoy your baby.

By now you have noticed that your time is no longer your own. It is still important to try to take time by yourself to relax. Try to take a nap or a long bath when your baby is napping. You deserve it! When you take good care of yourself, you are better able to care for your baby.

The other very important time that often gets lost is the time that you would spend with family and friends. Babies can fit well into most of your regular activities and they would love to be included.

Make sure that you take time to talk and listen to your partner throughout the day. Good communication is important for your relationship and for your baby.

If I'm Supposed To Be Happy, Why Am I So Sad?

Do any of these statements sound familiar?

- "I feel tired all the time..."
- "I find myself crying for no reason..."
- "I'm confused and irritable..."
- "I feel helpless and inadequate..."
- "I find it hard to concentrate and make simple decisions..."
- "I have trouble sleeping..."
- "I have no appetite..."
- "I'm overeating even when I'm not hungry..."
- "I feel anxious and guilty..."
- "I feel scared and panicky..."
- "I don't have feelings for the baby..."
- "I'm afraid I might hurt my baby or myself..."

A baby brings many changes to a family. New parents often feel exhausted, irritable and overwhelmed after the birth or adoption of a baby. These feelings are common. But, it is important to discuss these feelings with someone you trust - your partner, a friend or the Public Health Nurse. If you experience some of these feelings on a regular basis, for longer than 2 weeks, you may have



postpartum depression. Keep talking with someone until you get the help and support you need.

To find out more about Postpartum Depression, visit www.lifewithnewbaby.ca Call your healthcare provider or Public Health for advice. Help is available.



A MESSAGE FOR DADS

Isn't it amazing how one tiny little baby can change your whole life?

Looking back you probably have some great memories of the past couple of months. You've changed diapers - rocked your baby, played with her and had some sleepless nights. Babies will wake during the night to feed for some time yet.

You've learned some things about your partner and yourself too! It's surprising what you can accomplish when you need to! But most importantly, you've started to feel comfortable and confident in your new role as a dad.

Remember that the basis for all healthy development starts with tender love and care. Cuddle your baby skin-to-skin. Rock her gently. Sing softly. Close your eyes and let yourself get caught up in the magic. Feeding and keeping a baby warm and dry is important. But it is the love you share that will ensure your baby grows to be healthy and happy.

Visit Dad Central, a website all about fathering:
www.dadcentral.ca



Love Shouldn't Hurt – Is Your Relationship Healthy?

Family violence is not an easy issue to talk about, but it is important to know that if you are being hurt, your kids will be hurt too.

Children learn from what they see and hear. Their early experiences have a powerful impact on how they see their world, how they grow and who they will become.

Children who are exposed to an abusive relationship between their parents or other care-givers feel scared, helpless and unsafe. As they get older, they may find it harder to control their anger and get along with others. They are at higher risk of having a poor self-esteem, experiencing depression and having trouble learning in school. As adults, they are more likely to be involved in violent relationships themselves.

Protecting your children from violence now, can protect them from lifelong problems. There are people and services to help both women and men who are in an abusive or unhealthy relationship.

Call 211 to learn about the services that are available in your community.

Now that baby is home

Help your older child adjust to the new family member:

- Try to spend 10-15 minutes alone with your older child to help him feel positive and special. First thing every morning is a beautiful way to start the day.
- Put your child's hand in your hand and show him how to be gentle when touching the baby.
- Read to your child while you are feeding your baby.
- Encourage your child to talk about her feelings and tell her it's OK to feel mad or sad. This may be your clue that she needs a few minutes of your attention to read or play with her. Tell your child "I love you". A hug and a kiss along with these words will show her you mean it.



\$ Family Budgeting

By now your household spending has probably changed and you may be collecting maternity benefits. Many parents can find it challenging to balance their new budget.

Here is some information to consider:

- 211 is a three-digit phone number and website that provides information and referral to community and social services in Ontario. Visit www.211Ontario.ca or call 211.
- For some budget and money saving tips, visit the Financial Consumer Agency of Canada at www.fcac-acfc.gc.ca/eng/consumers/index-eng.asp
- Breastfeeding is free! If you have questions or want support, call your local public health nurse or lactation consultant.
- Many communities have nutrition programs to help make fresh produce and other foods more affordable for everyone. Call your local health unit or 211 to find out what is available in your community.
- If you have questions about your how your maternity benefits are taxed, contact Revenue Canada by calling 1-800-206-7218 and press "0" to speak with an agent. You will need your Social Insurance Number and your Employment Insurance access code when you call. For more information, visit www.servicecanada.gc.ca/eng/ei/types/maternity_parental.shtml#much

? For More Information

Caring for Kids: Child health information from the Canadian Paediatric Society www.caringforkids.cps.ca

La Leche League Canada: Breastfeeding support www.lllc.ca

Ontario Early Years Centres: www.oeyc.edu.gov.on.ca

Safe Kids Canada: www.parachutecanada.org/injury-topics

Transport Canada: www.tc.gc.ca/roadsafety/kids

Health Canada Consumer Product Safety - Product Recalls: www.healthycanadians.gc.ca/recall-alert-rappel-avis/index-eng.php?hc_src=rsampromo_btn2_12&medium=button_link&campaign=promobutton

Canadian Partnership for Children's Health & Environment: www.healthyenvironmentforkids.ca



To find your local Public Health Unit:

Visit <http://bit.ly/eMtpaw>

Call the INFOline at 1-866-532-3161

(Toll-free in Ontario only)

or TTY 1-800-387-5559

NEXT ISSUE
4to6months