

Dear Mother and Dad:

By this time you've had a chance to get acquainted with your infant. He is a pretty special little thing. And you've probably realized that your baby is different from any other child. He has his own personality and growth pattern. He has changed in his first three months, but there's lots to come.

AT THREE MONTHS HE MOVES

Your baby is beginning to be more active and interested in the world around him. He sleeps less and can perform some new activities. He begins to focus on brightly colored objects and follow their movement from side to side. He can lift his head and rotate it freely while lying on his stomach. He moves all the time. This movement is preparing him to roll completely over. It is fun! *Now it is not safe for you to leave him alone on a table or bed for an instant. You never know when he may just wiggle off.*

Your baby has more control of his body. Hands-eye coordination is developing as he begins to reach for toys. Development is progressing rapidly. Notice his movements. Record what he does. See if you find his new abilities. They are there.

You can help your child grow mentally, socially and emotionally. How? Provide stimulating experiences for him. Play with him. Try some rattle games. Hold a rattle about a foot above his face. Shake it until he looks at it. When he sees it, move it slowly in a circular fashion. His eyes will follow it. If he grabs for it, let him have it. What is he learning? He is coordinating his sense of sound and sight with the ability to move.

Buy or make a cradle gym. This can be a piece of elastic tied or secured to one side of the bed and crossed to the other side. Objects dangle from it, so they move when he jumps or shakes the crib. He can reach for them or just have fun making them move.

Bells, rattles, teething rings, empty spoons, colored yarn, are just a few possible items to use in a cradle gym. Look at some in the store and gather ideas, and then make your own.

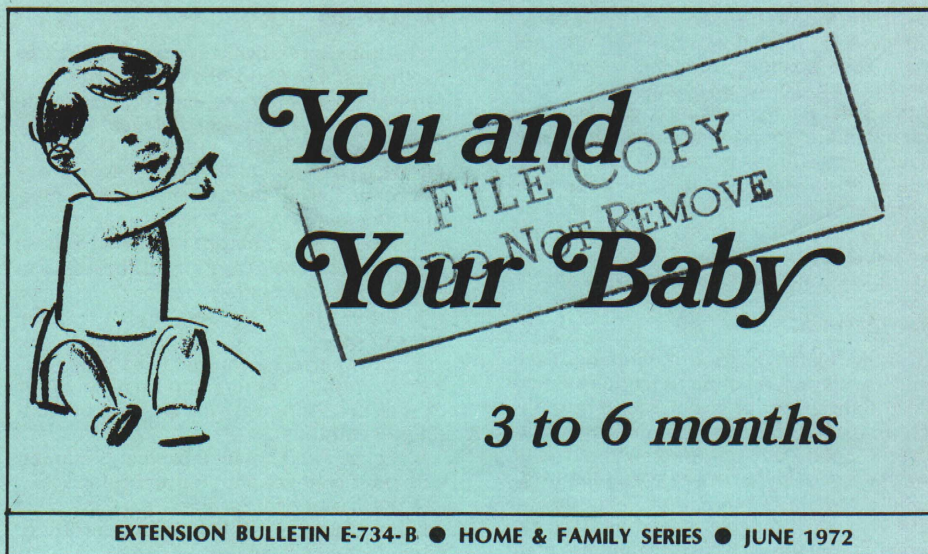
Mobiles are similar to cradle gyms. They are attached to the crib and move when the infant jumps or moves about. They are usually bright colored and so are more interesting to look at than the plain ceiling.

HE SEES

Your baby is learning familiar faces. He loves Mommy and Daddy. He can distinguish between family and strangers. He truly is becoming a social individual. Bring him into the room where you are. Don't leave him alone constantly. Put him in a playpen or maybe an infant seat. Give him objects to play with: a spoon, anything that is safe. He is exploring his environment.

HE "TALKS"

Language begins at birth. The birth cry and subsequent crying helps a baby to develop the fundamental skill of taking in



air quickly and letting it out slowly while making voiced sounds. These early cries usually are cries of discomfort caused by hunger, fatigue or wet diapers. They tend to sound alike. But near the end of 3 months, a baby begins to vary in his crying slightly as his needs differ. Soon you can tell his hunger cry from his wet one.

Talk to your baby. Have your own conversations. He's hearing new sounds. Soon he'll be talking back to you. Yes, his coos, chuckles, and gurgles are his means of communication.

These sounds are the basis for language. These babblings provide lip, tongue and jaw exercise which helps prepare him for speech. When he makes a sound, echo it back. See what fun you and he can have. Don't confuse babbling with the first words baby speaks. When he actually begins to form words, repeat the *correct* pronunciation and not his baby talk. He learns through hearing you and by practicing language. That's why it's important to speak clearly and encourage him to ask for objects rather than pointing or making unintelligible sounds.

HE NEEDS LOVE

Go to your baby frequently for a pat, a chat, a kiss or a laugh. It takes only a minute but keeps him contented. And it reassures you that all is well. A baby left alone for long periods of time gets bored and fretful and learns to whine or cry to get attention. When you give attention, you give your baby an essential. The time you spend with him, playing, laughing, talking, tells him you love him. He can count on you to care for and protect him from the big old world. He is developing a sense of security and trust, which all individuals need for the best physical and mental growth.

HE NEEDS NOURISHMENT

By this time, you will probably introduce solid foods. The timing and selection of food depends on your doctor. As an infant grows,

he needs more vitamins, minerals and iron. Milk provides most of the essential nutrients but lacks the necessary iron and Vitamin C. Your doctor will recommend ways to meet these needs.

When you give a solid food for the first time, expect him to spit it out. It is natural. Babies have to learn the function and control of their tongue as they begin to eat solid foods. Be leisurely and relaxed when you present new foods. This relaxed attitude will be conveyed to the infant. There is no hurry. Let him get to know the food gradually by feeding him small amounts. If he seems to dislike a food, try it again at the next meal or later.

Baby foods are expensive. Try making your own. If you have a blender, it's a snap. If not, it's a little harder but still can be done.

Here are a few basic recipes:

MEAT AND VEGETABLES

½ cup cubed, cooked meat and/or vegetables. (The meat should be free of fat and skin.)

2 Tbsp. milk, formula or other liquid.

Process this at a puree setting until smooth; or put through a food mill; stir until blended. If too thick, add more liquid as necessary. (This makes a rather large portion, and you may wish to cut it down.)

PUREED FRUIT

¾ cup fruit—cooked or canned.

Process at puree setting until smooth, or put through a food mill, or stir until blended.

You may think this food may be bland without seasoning or sugar. Remember an infant is acquiring his taste preferences and doesn't need the salt or sugar added as adult taste might prefer.

To test for smoothness, rub a small amount between your fingers. If any large particles can be felt, process again. You may want to freeze small portions in ice cube containers, then remove cubes from trays and store in plastic bags in the freezing unit. Of course,

defrost the food before serving it to the baby.

Be sure to feed baby from a dish and not a jar. Take portions from the jar and put into the dish. Throw away any unused food in the dish. *Food spoilage is greater when you take the spoon and saliva from the mouth and return it to the jar.*

Be sure to read the labels of baby food containers. The item listed first is in greatest quantity. Buy a jar of meat or a jar of one vegetable. Combinations of foods are a poor buy both economically and nutritionally.

HE'S TEETHING

Closely related to food is teething. Each child has his own reaction to teething. Some chew things, fret or drool 3 or 4 months before each tooth. Or a mother may discover a tooth one morning without ever having suspected that her baby was teething.

Sometimes between 4 and 7 months the baby may act strangely at feeding time. He nurses frantically for a few minutes, then stops and cries as if in pain. A possible explanation may be that sucking causes his gums to swell and make them tingle unbearably. To relieve this pain, alternate between the bottle and solid foods. If it is too disturbing, ask advice from your doctor.

During this time many infants put everything into their mouths. This is a combination of interest in his world and his teething. His mouth is the most sensitive part of his body at this time. Let him chew. Provide the chewable objects. Rubber teething rings of various shapes are good. Avoid thin plastic toys. Small pieces may break off and the baby may swallow them. Baby equipment or toys should:

- be sturdy enough so they will not splinter or break.
- be large enough so he can't swallow them.
- have no sharp points or rough edges.
- have no parts that can come loose to be swallowed, such as buttons or eyes on stuffed animals.
- be painted with safe, lead-free paint. (If painted at home, check the paint can label to be sure.)
- be washable.

HE MAY GET SICK

The baby is relatively immune to diseases for the first 4 to 6 months of life. After that, respiratory (runny nose, cough) and gastrointestinal (upset stomach, diarrhea) illnesses are likely to begin. During the winter months, babies suffer from respiratory troubles; during the summer, gastrointestinal illnesses occur.

Following are common symptoms; if these occur, watch baby carefully. If they persist, check with your doctor.

1. Fever (rectal temperature of 101 degrees or over).
2. Drowsiness or unusual irritability.
3. Vomiting (spitting up small amounts of milk soon after feeding is not to be considered vomiting).
4. Loose, fluid bowel movements marked with odor changes and unusual color.
5. Rash (not heat rash).

Keeping a record of baby's immunization. Your doctor will advise when to begin immunizations. But it is your job to keep track of those he has had and when he is due for another. Use the following handy chart.

Recommended Schedule for Active Immunization and Tuberculin Testing of Normal Infants and Children*

Age	Immunization or Test	Date
2 mo.	DTP= diphtheria, whooping cough, tetanus OPV= trivalent oral polio vaccine	
3 mo.	DTP	
4 mo.	DTP	
6 mo.	OPV	
12 mo.	Tuberculin test-live measles vaccine	
15-18 mo.	DTP OPV Smallpox vaccine	

*Taken from Report of the Committee on Infectious Diseases, 1970, American Academy of Pediatrics.

As He Grows

As you watch your infant grow, remember many factors determine his growth and behavior. Three main factors constantly interact and influence him. They are:

- His state of development.
- The way his environment treats him.
- His own special personality.

He is a unique individual who should not be compared to, or compete with, other infants in developmental behavior.

With these thoughts in mind, enjoy your baby.

Sincerely,

Your Extension Home Economist

The following references contain more helpful information. Check your local library for these books.

How a Baby Grows, Arnold Gesel (story in pictures of first year).

Baby Learning Through Baby Play, Ira J. Gordon. St. Martin's Press, 175 Fifth Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10010 (\$3.95).

Child Development and Personality. Paul H. Mussen, John J. Conger, and Jerome Kagan, 3rd Edition.

Prepared by Mrs. Janice Kukar, home economist in Oakland and Wayne Counties; Mrs. Marilyn Rudzinski, home economist in Macomb and St. Clair Counties; and Irene Ott, program leader in family living education, MSU.

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