

Parent Express

A GUIDE FOR YOU AND YOUR BABY



TOPIC

5 months old

Dear parent,

Your baby is a bundle of energy. Your baby probably is no longer content to just sit quietly and look around. He wants to move all the time and in all directions.

Babies at this age usually spend a lot of time examining, exploring, tasting, feeling, touching, and learning about everything. As a result, your baby will demand more of your time and attention.

To help you live with this new energy spurt, try to keep your sense of humor and your patience. You will enjoy each other more if you can laugh together.

What it's like to be 5 months old

How I grow

- I rock, roll, and twist my body.
- I kick my feet and suck my toes.
- I keep my head and back straight when I sit if you support my body.
- I stand up (if you hold me under my arms), jump up and down, and stamp my feet.
- I have fairly good aim when I grab at something.



How I talk

- I watch your mouth and try to imitate you when you talk to me.

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Disabilities
accommodated
with prior notification.

- I make sounds such as ee, ah, ooh, da-da, ma-ma.
- I babble to myself, to my toys, and to people – I get attention that way.

How I respond

- I might cry when I see strangers.
- I smile at familiar faces and voices.
- I look around when I hear sounds.
- I make sounds and interrupt your conversations because I want attention.
- I want to touch, hold, turn, shake, and taste everything.
- I put a lot of energy into everything I do.

How I understand

- I recognize my name.
- I can tell the difference between myself and others in the mirror.
- I am beginning to learn about my feelings.
- I look for something if I drop it.
- I remember what I just did.

How I feel

- I cling to you when you hold me.
- I stop crying when you talk to me.
- I show fear, anger, and disgust.

Immunizations

Check with your health-care provider for information about the immunizations (shots) your baby needs. Keep a record of all immunizations. You need to show proof that your child is up-to-date with his immunizations when you register him at school or at a childcare center.

Games babies play

Difficult sounds: A communication game

Purpose

This game encourages your baby to imitate sounds and words.

How to play

- Hold your baby in your arms and let her relax.
- Make sounds like brr-own, grr-ate, bzzz-y, uh-oh, aaa-all gone.
- Face her so she can watch your lips.
- Nuzzle or cuddle her after you make the sounds.
- Laugh or smile or hug her gently when she makes the sounds.

Other communication games

- Any sound or word imitation games you play while facing your baby.

Safety and high chairs

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission will provide information about high chairs, including answers to questions, if you call (800) 638- 2772; or, for the hearing and speech impaired, call (800) 638-8270. You may also write: U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, 4330 East West Highway, Bethesda, MD 20814. Visit the Commission's Web site at <http://www.cpsc.gov>.

To ensure your baby's safety, select a high chair with the following features: It should

- Be well-built and sturdy
- Be wide at the base so it won't tip over easily
 - Have a seat belt that fastens across the waist to hold your baby in the chair
- Have a crotch strap that runs between her legs to keep her from sliding out of the chair
- Have a tray that locks securely on each side
 - Have belt buckles and tray locks that are handy for you to use but that your baby can't work
- Have a non-slippery seat. If the seat seems slippery, attach rough-surface adhesive strips to it.



Dos and don'ts of high-chair safety

- Do always use a seat belt and strap.
- Do be sure the tray is locked securely in place.
- Do be sure your baby's hands are out of the way when you lock the tray.
- Do be sure there are no sharp edges or hardware to cut either her or you.
- Don't let your baby stand in the chair.
- Don't leave the chair too close to a table or counter. Your baby can push against it and overturn the chair.
- Don't leave her alone in the chair.
- Don't let other children climb on the chair.

Toys are for learning

From this age on, your baby will be interested in toys that she can touch, examine, chew, and suck, such as rubber teethers, plastic discs, and rubber beads.

Your baby learns from play and likes to explore each toy to get the feel of it.

She likes to take a toy and twist, shake, suck, move it from hand to hand, and bang it on other objects.

She is learning about nearness and distance, inside and outside, and position and placement of objects.

She is discovering the world of objects and developing a sense of space, form, and texture.

A question about teething

I think my daughter is teething. She wants to chew on everything, is cranky, and drools a lot. What can I do to make her feel more comfortable?

It is quite normal for babies to get some teeth at this age. The first teeth usually appear at 6 months, but some babies get them as early as 3 months. Others don't get any teeth until they are a year old or older.

As teeth push through the gums (usually the first teeth are the lower incisors), your baby might feel some soreness and become cranky and irritable.

Ease the soreness by putting an ice cube in a clean cloth and rubbing it on her gums for a few minutes.



Chilling a plastic or rubber teething ring in the refrigerator and then letting your baby chew on it might also relieve her.

Your baby might drool a lot and have some diarrhea. If she continues to have diarrhea, it might not be teething that is bothering her.

Don't blame fever, vomiting, diarrhea, or other signs of illness on teething. If your baby shows any of these signs, have her checked by your health-care provider.



Discipline begins early

Now that your baby is beginning to explore, make sure his world is safe. Now is the time to begin using some controls, such as babyproofing the house and distracting him from doing something harmful or annoying.

These controls are the beginning of discipline. Discipline also means guiding a child's actions to make his behavior acceptable to others and to himself.

Babies less than 1 year old are too young to understand the reasons for stopping something they are doing.

For example, your baby might love to throw toys on the floor. He likes to hear the noise and watch the toys bounce. He thinks it's a great game.

It doesn't occur to him that the noise is bothering you. You might even think that he is being defiant, but he only thinks that throwing toys is fun.

How can you get your baby to stop? Remove the toys and distract him with something else he can do.

Give him a hug, also. If you can strike a balance between providing necessary controls, a sense of humor, and loving care, your baby will learn to think and act responsibly.

Do not spank or hit your baby.

Sources and recommended readings

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Parent Express guides you through parenting of children through age 36 months. For other publications in the 27-part series, contact your county Cooperative Extension Service office.
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