

Parent Express

A GUIDE FOR YOU AND YOUR BABY



TOPIC

3 months old

Dear parent,

You and your baby talk through body language.

Your baby doesn't use words yet, but he understands a universal language – body language. This is a language that doesn't need words. You can tell your baby you love him by giving him a hug, singing a song, or gently rocking him to music. You will find that he talks back to you in the same way. He will give you a smile, a giggle, a coo, or a hearty chuckle. You don't need words to tell your baby you care.

All babies are different and grow at their own pace. Don't worry if your baby isn't doing exactly the same things as other babies who are the same age.

What it's like to be 3 months old

How I grow

- I hold my head and back fairly straight when you support my body.
- I lift my head, lean on my elbows, arch my back, and rock when I'm on my stomach.
- I move my arms and legs a lot.



- I push my arms and legs when I am held.
- I touch my face with my hands.
- I grab at things, but sometimes I miss.

How I talk

- I coo simple sounds such as ooh, ah, ae.
- I don't cry as much as before. Have you noticed?

How I respond

- I react with my whole body to familiar faces.
- I get excited when I see people I know or when I see my bottle.

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Disabilities
accommodated
with prior notification.

- I stop sucking to hear sounds. Then I look and suck at the same time.
- I follow sounds with my eyes.
- I like listening – talk to me in simple sentences.

How I understand

- I'm beginning to find out that I am a person.
- I'm beginning to show that I have a memory.
- I recognize different family members.

How I feel

- I love being cuddled.
- I don't like being left alone.

Feeding your baby

Your baby spends a lot of time feeding. One of the most important parts of feeding is the warmth and pleasure he feels while being held and fed.

If you are bottle feeding, don't prop the bottle and leave your baby alone or put him to bed with a bottle. There are several reasons why.

There is a small opening or tube between your baby's throat and ear. If your baby is lying down and sucking on his bottle, a small amount of formula might travel from throat to ear and cause infection.

Also, the formula that might remain in his mouth when he falls asleep with a bottle can cause tooth decay.

And leaving your baby to feed himself robs you both of a loving, relaxing time together.

Remember, your baby is not necessarily hungry every time he cries. When a baby is fed too often, he eats less at each meal. His stomach empties more quickly, and an empty stomach soon makes him hungry again.

Also, offering a bottle just to keep baby quiet teaches him to connect feeding with discomfort. This may lead to feeding problems later on.

During the first 6 months, breast milk or iron-fortified formula are enough to satisfy your baby's nutritional needs. After 6 months, your baby will begin eating other foods such as infant cereals,

pureed vegetables, fruit, and meats; but you should continue feeding breast milk or formula until the age of 1.

Games babies play

Getting the feel of things: Using the senses game

Purpose

This game teaches your baby the difference between things through looking, feeling, tasting, smelling, and hearing. It encourages your baby to explore the world by using different body movements such as banging, mouthing, dropping, and rubbing. It also encourages your baby to examine different objects when alone.

How to play

- Choose various harmless objects from around the house with different shapes and textures – square, round, hard, soft, fuzzy, long, short, sticky.
- Show the objects to your baby one at a time and let her examine them. Encourage her to reach out and grasp the items.
- Watch the movements your baby makes – she will treat each object

differently. She is learning to change her body movements to fit the object she is examining.

Baby rattles can be dangerous

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission warns parents to be careful about the types of toy rattles given to babies. Rattles should be at least 2 inches wide. A baby's mouth and throat are flexible and can stretch to hold large shapes, so make sure that no part of the rattle is small enough to fit into your baby's mouth. He could choke on it.

Keep rattles with shapes like a telephone receiver, safety pin, clothespin, or barbell away from your baby. They have been responsible for many home accidents.

Exercises for you

With all the responsibilities in your life, exercise is one of the easiest to leave out, but it's one of



the most important. As a new parent, it is common for your body to hold stress and tension. Some good exercises to rid your body of that stress and tension are walking and swimming, but there also are plenty of good exercises that you can do at home. The following are simple exercises that take just a few minutes and require no special equipment.

For loosening muscles

- Lie on the floor on your back and point your toes.
 - Raise your right leg slightly and stretch your left arm toward your raised leg.
 - Repeat with opposite arm and leg.
 - Repeat six times.
- or
- Lie on the floor on your back with arms stretched out to shoulder level.
 - Bend your knees and lift your feet.
 - Swing bent legs toward the right, making sure your shoulders and arms are flat on the floor.
 - Swing legs to the left.
 - Repeat six times.

For achy muscles

Many things can make your muscles ache – carrying your baby, ironing, writing, washing dishes, or doing any one thing for a long time. Try doing these exercises to relax.

- Lie down on a rug or bed with your legs straight and slightly apart. Stretch your arms high above your head.
- Round your back and stretch your arms out in front of you, touching your chin to your chest.
- Repeat five times.

For tense neck muscles

Shoulder shrug

- Stand or sit in a comfortable position.
- Raise your shoulders to your ears, hold for a count of four, then drop your shoulders back to a normal



position.

- Rotate your right shoulder up, back down, and around – first one way, then the other. Rotate your left shoulder, repeating the same motions. Then rotate both shoulders at the same time.

Head roll

- Stand or sit in a comfortable position.
 - Gently bend your head to the left. While breathing in slowly, gently roll your head back in a circle to the right.
 - Breathe out as you circle forward until you are back where you started.
- Change directions, doing the same movements, bending your head to the right.
 - Repeat two or three times.

Sucking, pacifiers, and learning

Babies suck their own fingers or fists from birth. This is not always a sign of hunger. The need to suck is probably strongest during the first four months.

Sucking quiets your baby. It reduces hunger pangs and tension. Pacifiers can be substituted for fingers, but don't overuse pacifiers as a way of keeping your baby occupied. Fingers are always there, while pacifiers get dropped and have to be picked up – and might get dirty and germ-covered.

Sucking also is a learning experience for your baby. She will suck, then stop and look around. By the end of the third month, she will be able to look and suck at the same time. She is learning about the world around her while looking and studying everything.

Good books for babies

This is a good time to begin reading to your baby, if you haven't already started. Reading helps open wide the brain's window of opportunity for learning language – a lifelong gift for your child.

Reading is also lots of fun for both of you! It makes you warm, loving, and relaxed with each other.



Your 2- to 3-month-old likes making sounds and hearing you imitate her sounds. She might try to imitate sounds you make while reading. She likes you to repeat rhythmic sounds such as nursery rhymes.

Support her on your lap and hold the book in front of both of you.

Select stiff cardboard or vinyl books that can stand alone or fold out on the floor or in the crib. Find books with large, simple, brightly colored pictures or designs. Your baby doesn't need words – you can point to and name the pictures.



A question about getting dressed

When I take my baby out with me, who should I dress first – baby or me?

It's easier if you dress first, then get your baby ready. When dressing your baby before going out, try to make it an enjoyable time. Talk gently and smile at her while changing her clothes.

Decisions you make about what you wear also apply to your baby. If it is chilly outside and you need a sweater, your baby needs something warm, too. If the sun is shining brightly enough for you to need a sunhat or sunglasses, your baby also needs a hat to protect her head from sunburn and to spare her eyes.

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