

# Help Your Baby Learn - 0 to 12 Months

## *Birth to One Month*

- Talk, sing, and read to your baby everyday.
- Use "parentese" speech (speak slowly using shorter sentences and a higher pitch.)
- Change baby's scenery. Move baby around the house often.
- Position yourself so your baby can see your face as you feed him and talk to him.

## *Month One*

- Immediately respond to your baby when she cries. As she becomes confident that her needs will be met, she will cry less.
- Imitate the sounds that he makes to reinforce his efforts and to encourage him to continue.
- Hold an object 12-15 inches from your baby's eyes and let her focus on it. Move the object slowly from side to side.
- Put your baby on your chest when you lie down. Talk and sing to her as she looks into your face.

## *Month Two*

- Offer your baby a lot of attention and affection whenever she is awake and alert.
- Respond to your baby when he coos/gurples. This lets him know that crying isn't the only way to get attention.
- Put your baby on her tummy throughout the day for a few minutes each time. Place interesting things to look at in front of her.
- Talk to your baby about what he sees. "There's your bottle!" "Where did your bottle go?"

## *Month Three*

- Eye contact and smiling are extremely important. Look at your baby when you feed and talk to her. Always smile back when she smiles at you.
- Talk to your baby about what is around him, what he is doing, and what you are doing.
- Offer small, safe toys to your baby. Hand them to her toward the middle of her body.
- Lay your baby on a blanket made with many textures and/or a variety of colors.

## *Month Four*

- Continue to rock, cuddle and interact closely with your baby.
- Play frequent "conversation" games. Take turns imitating the sounds your baby makes.
- Allow lots of open space on the floor for your baby to roll, scoot, and move his arms and legs.
- Provide your baby with objects that are easy to grasp. Encourage her to explore safe objects with her mouth.

## *Month Five*

- When playing with your baby demonstrate different ways to use his toys. Be enthusiastic as he grasps and examines them.
- Play face to face with your baby. When you use the same words, songs, and rhymes often, your baby hears and sees the repetition of words necessary to develop language skills.
- Hold your baby in a standing position for 30 to 45 seconds and allow her to support her weight on her legs.
- Take your baby on short shopping trips and other outings so she can be exposed to different environments.

## **Month Six**

- Play lots of games of peek-a-boo, pat-a-cake, and so big. ("How big is baby?" Help him raise his arms and say "So big!")
- Have a routine in which you read or look at books during quiet times, before naps or bedtime.
- Give your baby lots of time to practice sitting up and offer her interesting things to play with while she's sitting.
- Allow your baby to play with a wide variety of objects that he can shake, bang, rattle, and drop.

## **Month Seven**

- Respond when your baby tries to initiate play or wants your attention.
- Tell your baby the names of objects she sees in books or around her so she can begin to associate words with specific items and actions.
- Give your baby small, safe objects and encourage him to pass them from hand to hand, to notice details, and to grasp more than one object at a time.
- Stack blocks or other items and encourage your baby to topple them.

## **Month Eight**

- Reassure your baby that you will come back. Peek around the corner every so often and call out to let her know that you are there.
- Realize that your baby understands language long before he can talk. Watch for him to begin looking at a familiar person or object when you name it.
- Let your baby make noise by either banging pot lids together or using spoons as drumsticks even just splashing in her bath water.
- Hide an interesting object under the edge of a blanket while your baby is watching you. Then encourage him to find it.

## **Month Nine**

- Respect any feelings of anxiety your baby experiences when meeting new people. Hold her close and allow her time to get to know the new person.
- Point and name objects both inside and outside the home. Take the opportunity to label objects when shopping, dressing, or reading.
- Totally safety-proof your house so that your baby can explore completely and safely.
- Allow your baby to explore lower kitchen cabinets and drawers filled with safe kitchen items: unbreakable pots and pans, bowls, dishes, spoons, dishtowels, etc.

## **Month Ten**

- Establish boundaries and limits for your child and always stick to them. Let him know exactly where he can explore safely.
- Talk to your child often. Use simple but descriptive sentences. Bring her attention to interesting sights, sounds, tastes, smells, and textures.
- Place an object beyond your baby's reach and encourage him to cruise (walk while holding on to the furniture), crawl, or walk to retrieve it.
- A box with a hinged lid (school box or band-aid type box) with a safe object(s) hidden inside is an exciting discovery toy at this age.

## **Month Eleven**

- Provide bite-size pieces of food that your baby can easily pick up and eat.
- Tell your child "No!" when he does something dangerous. Immediately find him something else to do.
- Let her practice opening and closing drawers and doors, placing objects in and out of containers, and playing with devices such as light switches.
- Play peek-a-boo and hide-and-seek to show your baby that you still exist even if he cannot see you.

## **Month Twelve**

- Greet your child's hugs and kisses enthusiastically. When she seems annoyed, react with patience and sensitivity.
- When looking at pictures of animals make the appropriate sound. Encourage your baby to imitate you: "The cow says...moo!"
- Show your child how to draw with a jumbo crayon. Tape paper to his high chair so it doesn't slip around. Praise the marks or attempts he makes.
- Hide a small object under a blanket, inside a hinged box, in loosely wrapped paper, or behind your back and encourage your baby to find it.

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