



Provided by the WIC Program and First 5 LA

Congratulations On Your New Baby!

Imagine if someone fed you when you were hungry, wrapped you in a blanket when you were cold, held you when you wanted to be cuddled, and let you sleep when you wanted rest!

Trust grows as your baby learns that you will take care of him or her. Look inside this handout for ideas about how to help your baby learn to trust you.

Bonding is the special name for how babies and parents learn to love each other. Bonding continues over time. This handout will give you ideas about how to help your baby bond with you.



**LOVE
ME!**



Your newborn wants to communicate with you. Babies use their bodies and make noises to let their parents know when they need to eat, learn, play or rest. These are called **cues**. Look inside this handout for ideas about how your newborn communicates.

Your newborn is an individual. No two babies are the same. Even twins are different from each other.



QUESTION: What is bonding?

ANSWER: Bonding is the special name for how babies and parents learn to love each other. You may fall in love at first sight, and your first minutes with your baby may be magical. Or, you may be so tired that you want a short break before you hold your baby. You or your baby may need medical care that separates you from each other. Don't worry. You have plenty of time to fall in love with each other.

QUESTION: Will I spoil my newborn baby if I pick up my baby every time he or she cries?

ANSWER: No! You can't spoil your newborn or young baby by cuddling or responding to his or her needs. We used to think so, but doctors now know that **babies this little are too young to spoil.**

Try this!
When your newborn is looking at you, stick out your tongue and hold it out. Sometimes your baby will copy you and stick out his or her tongue. You are communicating!

QUESTION: I'm so tired that I don't even feel like playing with my baby. What can I do?

ANSWER: Many mothers feel tired or sad in the days after their baby's birth. Take a break if you can. Have someone else watch your baby for a few minutes. Sleep when your baby sleeps. Give yourself a chance to relax. If you feel you cannot take care of your baby, ask your doctor for advice.

QUESTION: How does my newborn baby communicate?

ANSWER: Babies are born with the ability to communicate. They use cues to show parents what they need. Newborns are still learning to control their bodies. Sometimes their cues are hard to understand. Watching your baby will help you learn what she needs. With practice, your baby will get better at giving cues and you will get better at responding to them. By responding quickly to your baby's cues, you will learn to communicate with each other. She will develop confidence that her world is safe and secure.

QUESTION: Is there such a thing as playing with my newborn too little?

ANSWER: Yes! You can also play with your baby too much. As your newborn gets older, you will be better able to tell when he is ready to interact, learn or play. He might:

- Have a relaxed face and body
- Stare at your face
- Raise his head
- Follow your voice and face
- Reach toward you

Learning is hard work for babies and they can tire quickly. Your baby will show you signs that he needs something to be different. He might:

- Look away, turn away, or arch his back
- Frown or have a glazed look in his eyes
- Stiffen his hands, arms or legs
- Yawn or fall asleep

Responding to cues quickly before your baby starts to fuss may help your baby cry less. When your baby gives you cues that he is overwhelmed, give him a break from the world around him.

QUESTION: What does my newborn baby SEE?

ANSWER: Your newborn sees most clearly about 8 to 10 inches from his or her face. Guess what? This is about the distance from your face to your newborn’s face when you breastfeed.

At first, babies see black and white best. They also like red. They love checkerboards, stripes and other simple patterns in black, white, and red. That’s why newborn toys are in these colors.



QUESTION: What are newborn babies’ MOVEMENTS like?

ANSWER: Did you know that your newborn needs to learn to move? Newborns’ movements are often not coordinated. Newborns’ hands are clenched, and their bodies are curled. Your newborn will slowly learn new positions.



Try this!

Your newborn also loves to look at faces. When your baby is looking at you, move your face slowly to the right, then to the left. Watch your baby’s eyes follow your face.

QUESTION: What does my newborn baby HEAR?

ANSWER: Your newborn has very sensitive hearing. Loud music can be too much for your baby, and can even damage his or her ears. Babies like quiet music. Talk and sing softly to your baby often.

Your newborn has been listening to you since the sixth month of your pregnancy. At birth, newborns recognize their birth mothers’ voices. If you did not give birth to your baby, do not worry. He or she will learn your voice quickly.

Reflexes: Your baby is born with automatic movements, called reflexes. These early reflexes will disappear when your baby is between 2 and 4 months old.



Try this!

Protect your baby’s neck by holding his or her head. Watch! Your newborn begins to lift his or her head during this first month.



Try this!

Stroke your baby’s cheek gently. Your baby turns toward your finger. This is the rooting reflex and helps your baby turn toward a nipple to feed. Sucking is another reflex.

And this!

Stroke the inside of your baby’s hand. Your baby will grab your finger. This is the palmar reflex.

And this too!

Stroke the bottom of your baby’s foot. Your baby will curl his or her toes in toward your finger.

QUESTION: Is my baby SLEEPING too much or too little?

ANSWER: Newborn babies usually sleep more than they are awake. Most babies do not sleep for more than three or four hours at a time until they are at least two months old. Also, babies have to **learn** that night is for sleeping. Until your baby starts to sleep more of the night, try to rest or sleep when your baby sleeps. Your sleep is important, too. **Your baby should sleep on his or her back.** That is the safest way for babies to sleep.

QUESTION: Why does my baby cry so much?

ANSWER: Babies use crying as a way to communicate many different things. When your baby is crying:

1 Try to figure out the reason. For example, is she:

- In need of a diaper change?
- Hungry?
- Tired?
- Overwhelmed?
- Too hot or too cold?
- Uncomfortable?

2 Hold your baby close to you.

3 Repeat the same action over and over.

You might try one of the following:

- Speaking or singing softly
- Gently rocking, swaying or bouncing your baby
- Gently massaging her back, arms and legs



There may be times when you've checked everything and your baby still cries. Remember to be patient. Sticking with the same action for several minutes before trying something different can be the secret to success.

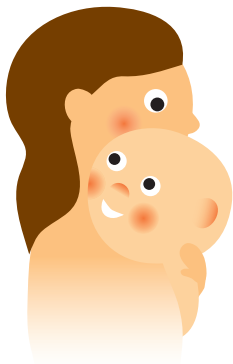
Safety Corner



Bath time for baby.

Water that feels warm to you may be too hot for your baby. Here are a few tips to keep in mind to have a safe bath time:

- Use a bath tub especially made for infants.
- Gather all of the supplies you need and place them close to you. Don't leave your baby even for a second while reaching for an item.
- Adjust the temperature of the room. Your baby is still used to the warm womb and gets cold easily.
- Test the temperature of the water. You can use your elbow, wrist or bath tub thermometer to make sure that the water is not too hot.



QUESTION: What are the best TOYS for newborns?

ANSWER: Your newborn needs **YOU** more than any toys! Cuddle, talk, make faces, sing and watch. These are the best gifts you can give. Remember, this is a great time to read to your baby.



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Your
1-3
Month-Old
Baby



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Watch and Learn! Cuddle and Hold!



Cuddle, cuddle, cuddle! Hold your baby.

Your touch helps your baby's brain grow.

By touching your baby, you are teaching your baby that he or she is safe, can trust you, and will be taken care of.

Smiles, smiles, smiles! Your baby wants to communicate with you.

Your baby learns to trust you when you respond to him or her.

Try this!

Learn what your baby likes. Does your baby like quiet or does your baby also like the excitement of a noisy room? (Babies don't like very loud voices.) Does your baby like to be held looking over your shoulder or cradled in your arms? Of course, babies like different things at different times.

Your baby is a great teacher!

Let your baby teach you what comforts him or her. Look inside this handout for information about what 1-3 month-old babies are like and how they communicate.



Cuddling helps your baby grow!

QUESTION: My baby is not a newborn anymore. Will picking up my baby every time he or she cries spoil my baby?

ANSWER: No! We used to think so, but doctors now know that 1-3 month-old babies are too young to spoil. Hold your baby a lot. You can't spoil your baby by cuddling or responding to his or her needs. Your touch actually helps your baby's brain grow. Your touch teaches your baby that you will take care of him or her. Gentle touch helps babies develop.

Try this!

This is a great age to start playing tickle games. Some babies like being tickled. Others don't like it. See what your baby likes. You can make up your own, or play "This Little Piggy" with your baby's fingers or toes.

Your baby wants to communicate with you.

Babies begin to smile when they are 1-3 months-old. Your baby is beginning to try to get your attention. At first your baby may not look at you when he or she is smiling. Soon, your baby begins to take turns smiling. First, your baby smiles at you. Then your baby waits to see you answer with a smile or loving words.

Here's another fun one. While you say the rhymes, do the actions.

SAY THIS:

Round and round the garden
Goes the teddy bear
One step ... two steps
Tickle under there!

While you DO THIS:

Draw circles on your baby's tummy.
Keep drawing circles.
Walk your fingers slowly up your baby's chest.
Tickle gently under your baby's chin.

QUESTION: How should I talk to my baby?

ANSWER: Parents all around the world use a special way of talking to babies. They use higher tones and speak slowly. Their speech sounds more like music. They use shorter, simpler sentences. Babies learn to talk earlier when talked to this way. Babies also learn more words when talked to this way.

Try this!

When your baby gurgles or coos at you, you can smile, coo, and talk back. He or she loves to hear you talk. The more you talk and sing to your baby, the sooner your baby will begin to talk, and the more words your baby will learn.

QUESTION: I speak more than one language. What language should I use when I talk to my baby?

ANSWER: Use the language or languages that you like to speak. Babies' brains are designed to learn languages. Hearing more than one language will help your baby learn to speak more than one language. Babies that hear more than one language get a wonderful gift!

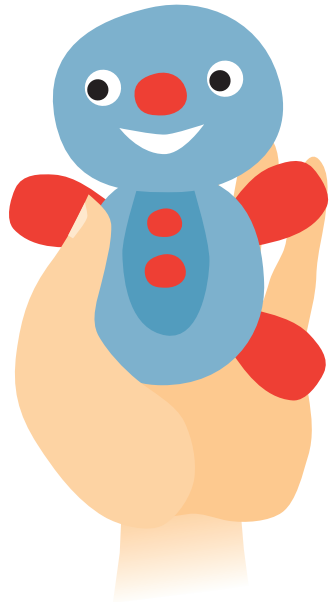
Your baby learns to trust you when you respond to him or her. Your baby is not like any other baby. Some babies only like quiet voices. Other babies like quiet and louder voices. Some babies like to be carried facing forward. Other babies like to look over their parents' shoulders.

Bonding

Bonding starts at birth and continues every day. When you take care of your baby, feed your baby, and hold your baby, you are teaching your baby that you will take good care of him or her. You are the most important person in your baby's world. Your care teaches your baby that the world is safe. **Babies who feel safe explore more and learn more.** When babies explore and learn, they grow new connections in their brains that help them learn even more.

Try this!

Hold a toy and move it slowly in front of your baby. By three months of age, most babies will turn their heads and eyes to watch the toy.



QUESTION: Do some parents not play enough with their 1-3 month-old babies?

ANSWER: Yes! But some parents play with their babies too much. Pick times for playing that your baby will enjoy. Good times to play with your baby are when he or she is awake, but not fussy, crying, or sleepy. Your baby wants to play when his or her eyes are wide open. You will see that your baby seems to be watching or listening.

QUESTION: What does my 1-3 month-old baby SEE?

ANSWER: Soon your baby will smile at you even when you are across the room! By the time they are three months old, babies can see across a room. They recognize familiar people and toys. Babies also love to look at faces, swirls and patterns with circles. An unbreakable mirror is a great toy for babies this age.

QUESTION: What does 1-3 month-old baby HEAR?

ANSWER: Your 1 to 3 month old baby likes to hear your voice more than anything else. Talk and sing to your baby. Your baby will start to turn toward your voice. Doctors know that the more you talk and sing to your baby, the earlier your baby will talk and the more words your baby will learn. Your baby also likes soft music.

Try this!

Hold your baby in front of a mirror and point at yourself in the mirror. Say, "There's Mommy!" (Daddies can say, "There's Daddy!") Point at your baby in the mirror and say, "There's ___!" (Fill in your baby's name.) Move to the side of the mirror and ask, "Where's Mommy?" or "Where's Daddy?" Move back to the mirror and say, "There's Mommy!" or "There's Daddy!"

Try this!

When your baby makes a sound, say the sound back. See if your baby will make the same sound again.

QUESTION: What SOUNDS do 1-3 month-old babies make?

ANSWER: Your 1-3 month-old baby is beginning to make sounds like, "ah-ah-ah," and "oo-oo-oo." This is the first step to talking! When you answer and smile, you are teaching your baby how to have a conversation.

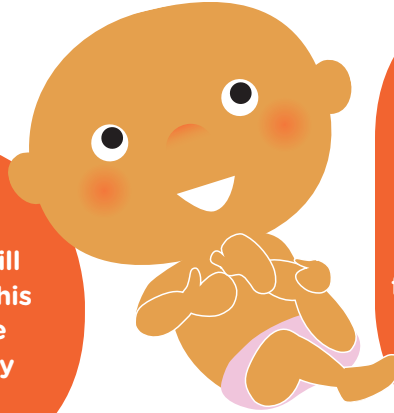
QUESTION: What MOVEMENTS do 1-3 month-old babies make?

ANSWER: You will notice that your baby is getting stronger. His or her movements are getting smoother. By the end of their third month, most babies can:

- raise their head and chest
- stretch their legs out and kick
- hold up their head and chest with their arms for a short time when lying on their tummy
- open and shut their hands
- bring their hands to their mouth
- grab, shake and bat at toys

Try this!

When your baby is lying on his or her back, hold a favorite toy above him or her. Your baby will begin trying to bat at the toy. The more you play this game, the better your baby will get at hitting the toy. Remember, your baby gets tired more quickly than you do. When your baby turns away, it is time to stop playing.



Try this!

Your baby has toys within easy reach: 2 hands and 2 feet! You may laugh at how interested your baby is in his or her own feet. Keep your baby's fingernails and toenails short and clean to prevent scratches.



Back to Sleep!

Your baby is learning the difference between day and night. He or she is probably staying awake longer during the day and sleeping longer at night. Remember to put your baby to sleep on his or her back. Sleeping on his or her back is safest for your baby.

QUESTION: What are the best TOYS for 1-3 month-old babies?

ANSWER: Your baby still needs YOU more than any toys! Cuddling, talking and singing to your baby are the best gifts you can give. Your baby will also like looking into unbreakable mirrors and at bright mobiles. Your baby will also enjoy listening to different kinds of music. Protect your baby's ears; by playing the music softly. Now is a good time to give your baby a soft rattle.

Safety Corner



Keep your baby safe from choking and suffocating.

- Don't let your baby play with small objects that can be placed in the mouth.
- Plastic bags form a tight seal if placed over the nose and mouth. These can stop your baby from breathing.
- Balloons can be inhaled and may cause death from choking.
- Do not put anything around your baby's neck. Necklaces, ribbons, or strings may get caught on parts of furniture or other objects.



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Look at me! I'm so much fun!

Playtime! 3-5 month-olds begin to play more actively. This is when babies are really fun. They will laugh and smile when you read and play with them.

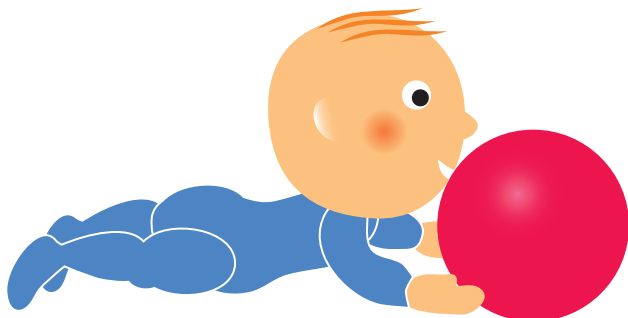
Your 3-5 month-old baby communicates with you. This is the beginning of conversation.

Your baby is exploring the world. Exploring helps your baby's brain grow.



Try this!

Peek-a-boo! Peek-a-boo! Mommy is magic and Daddy is too! Many babies this age love to see Mommy and Daddy disappear and come back. You can hide behind your hands, behind a door, or behind a cloth. Peek-a-boo is fun as long as it is not too scary or too loud. Saying words that rhyme and have a fun rhythm or beat will add to the fun.



You are the expert on your baby.

Look inside this handout for information about how your baby is communicating, growing and changing.

You are the expert! When you take your baby to the doctor for his or her 4-month doctor's appointment, you may notice that you feel more confident. You have learned what your baby likes and does not like. You know how your baby likes to be held and comforted. You can tell the doctor how much your baby sleeps and how often your baby wants to be fed. Breastfeeding mothers and babies both have become expert breastfeeders. You may even breastfeed to comfort your baby after he or she gets shots. These shots help keep your baby healthy.

You may also have questions for your doctor. It is easy to forget to ask questions at the appointment. Write them down at home when you think of them. This will help you remember.

Babies grow in different ways and at different speeds. Your baby will be different from his or her brothers, sisters, cousins and friends. If you are worried about how your baby is growing, **ask your doctor.**

At the 4-month appointment, the doctor will weigh and measure your baby. The doctor will be able to tell you how your baby is growing. The doctor will check your baby's eyes and ears. The doctor will look at how your baby is moving. The doctor will ask you questions about what your baby is doing at home and how he or she is eating. If your baby needs some extra help, the doctor will help you find people who can help.



Try this!

You can make a fun toy for your baby by drawing a face on your baby's sock with non-toxic markers. Put the sock on your baby's foot. Your baby will try to reach for the sock. With practice, your baby will be able to grab the sock. You can play with your baby, helping him or her take off the sock. Babies this age explore everything with their mouths and will work very hard to put their toes in their mouths.

Try this!

Keep reading to your baby every day. Some babies at this age really like to look at books.

QUESTION: I love to hold my baby. Am I spoiling my baby?

ANSWER: No. 3-5 month-old babies are still too young to spoil. Your baby cries because he or she needs something. And guess what? You are getting better at figuring out what your baby needs. You are teaching your baby that you take care of him or her. When you respond, your baby learns to feel safe and loved. Of course, sometimes you cannot pick up your baby right away. You can use words to tell your baby that you will be there soon. Just hearing your voice gives comfort.

QUESTION: How does my 3-5 month-old baby communicate?

ANSWER: Babies use their bodies and make noises to let their parents know when they need to eat, rest, learn or play. These are called **cues**. When your baby has a relaxed face and body, follows your face and voice, reaches toward you, stares at your face and raises her head, she is telling you that she is ready to play and learn. When your baby turns away, arches her back, frowns, has a glazed look in her eyes, stiffens her hands, arms or legs, yawns or falls asleep, she is telling you that she needs something to be different. Responding to these **cues** quickly before your baby starts to fuss may help your baby cry less.



Exploring the world!



QUESTION: What does my 3-5 month-old baby SEE?

ANSWER: Your baby now sees all of the colors. Many 3-5 month-old babies like red or blue best. They like to look at brightly colored pictures and toys. Your baby can see objects and people that are all the way across the room and can follow objects with his or her eyes. If your baby does not seem interested in looking at new things, ask your doctor.

Try this!

Listen to your baby. You can change the sounds that your baby is making into words. For example, if your baby is saying, "Ba, Ba, Ba," you can show your baby that you are listening by repeating the sounds. Then you can introduce your baby to a word by holding up a ball and saying, "Ball." Then you can hold up a book and say, "Book." Your baby will not say the words, but he or she is listening to them.

QUESTION: What does my 3-5 month-old baby HEAR?

ANSWER: Since birth, your baby has noticed the pitch and loudness of your voice. Now your baby is beginning to notice the different sounds you make. 3-5 month-old babies begin to hear and notice vowels and consonants. Your baby notices how you put sounds together to make words and sentences.

Your baby still has very sensitive hearing. Loud music can be too much for your baby, and can even damage his or her ears. Babies like quiet music.

Try this!

When you read, put as much feeling into your voice as you can. You may feel a bit silly saying, "Look! A truck!" with excitement in your voice, but your baby's smiles will show you how much your baby likes the way you read.

QUESTION: What are 3-5 month-old babies' MOVEMENTS like?

ANSWER: Your baby can hold his or her head up. Some babies this age roll over, but don't worry if your baby doesn't. A few babies begin to try to reach for toys and objects. Many will learn to reach in the next month or two. Your baby may begin to sit while leaning forward onto his or her hands. Many babies begin to like to straighten their legs and to try to stand while you hold them. This is good exercise, but your baby will not stand or walk for several months.

Try this!

Listen carefully. Is your baby making some of the sounds of language? Can you hear his or her voice going up at the end of a sentence as if your baby is asking you a question?



4-month-old babies love to put things into their mouths. This is one way they explore. Check your baby's toys often so your baby can explore safely. Babies can choke on small objects. Make sure that none of your baby's toys have small parts (like eyes on stuffed animals) that can come off. If an object fits through a toilet paper roll, it is too small. **Never let babies hold balloons. They can bite them and choke.** More children choke on balloons than on anything else.

QUESTION: Is my baby SLEEPING too much or too little?

ANSWER: At 4 months, most babies still need at least two naps during the day. Some babies this age can sleep 8 to 12 hours at night. **Your baby should still sleep on his or her back.** That is the safest way for babies to sleep. Some 4-month-old babies can roll over. These babies may roll to their stomachs in their sleep. Don't worry if your baby will not stay on his or her back, but make sure they sleep on a safe surface without pillows, heavy blankets or toys.



QUESTION: How can I teach my baby to go to sleep at night?

ANSWER: One way to help your baby learn to sleep at night is to try to make bedtime as similar as possible every night. If you sing lullabies, rock your baby, breastfeed, or cuddle every night before bedtime, your baby will learn that these activities mean it is time to go to sleep. If you help your baby relax and put him or her to bed sleepy, but not quite asleep, you will teach your baby to go to sleep.

QUESTION: My baby cries out in the middle of the night. What should I do?

ANSWER: Like adults, babies have times when they are deeply asleep and times when they are almost awake. During the night, your baby goes through a light sleep every 90 minutes. Sometimes, babies cry out during these lighter sleeps. Wait a couple of minutes. You are teaching your baby to calm down without help. Listen carefully. If your baby begins crying louder and does not seem to be able to calm down, check on him or her. Talk to your baby. Stroke your baby gently. When your baby settles down, leave and let him or her go to sleep.



QUESTION: What are the best TOYS for 3-5 month-old babies?

ANSWER: Board and cloth books are great for babies. Your baby also will like soft toys that make pleasant sounds like a ball that jingles, and toys that have different textures (feel different).

Safety Corner



Smoke alarms can save lives.

- Smoke alarms provide an early warning so that families can escape from fire.
- Most deaths by fire occur at night and are caused by smoke.
- Smoke alarms are recommended in each bedroom and throughout the living areas of a house or apartment.
- Alarms should be checked monthly by pushing the test button.
- Replace batteries in smoke alarms at least once a year. If an alarm "chirps", replace the low battery right away.



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