

Fact Sheet

What is the purpose of the Early Brain Development program?

When young parents leave the hospital with their newborn, there's a lot they may not know. After all, babies don't come with an instruction manual. The first year of life is a crucial time in the child's mental and emotional development too.

The intent of the Early Brain Development program is to make moms and dads aware that simple, natural interactions not only connect them with their infant. They help newborns to grow, learn and understand their world. Chances are, parents are probably already doing many of the important things needed to help their child develop by engaging their sense of sight, sound, touch, taste and smell.

What are some intentional interactions I can have with my child to help them develop?

There are many fun and meaningful ways you can help your baby learn and grow. It's likely you already know many of them. Here are a few suggestions designed to get your newborn off to a great start:

- **Bedtime stories.** Babies love a good book with pictures they can reach out and touch.
- **Tummy time.** Being on their bellies helps infants build brain cells and strengthen muscles.
- **Peek-a-boo.** Playing games is fun and brings newborns and parents closer together.
- **Music.** Soothing melodies help babies sleep and build brain connections.
- **Bundle up.** Infants feel relaxed when they're swaddled. And it helps organize their central nervous system.
- **Hands together.** When newborns are irritated, joining their hands helps calm them and organize their brain.
- **The magic touch.** Babies need their hands free to explore their world and gather information.
- **Sucking is good.** Whether it's a pacifier or their thumb, sucking helps infants calm and focus.
- **Face to face.** Newborns love to look at faces and make eye contact. It's a nice way to communicate.
- **Crying out loud.** When you answer your baby's cry for help, they grow up confident and happy.
- **Daddy time.** Infants need to hold, kiss and touch their fathers too.
- **Give ground.** Letting your child crawl develops muscles and promotes handwriting skills later on.
- **Massage therapy.** Firm touches and fluid movements feel good and help newborns grow.

How do I know if my baby is developing correctly?

While infants may develop at slightly different paces, there are certain milestones you'll probably want to monitor as their knowledge and abilities expand. It's exciting to watch your baby grow. These are a few of the achievements you can expect, grouped by age.

0 to 3 months

- Enjoys being held and spoken to
- Looks at simple pictures or designs
- See 12 inches away
- Perceives human faces including pictures
- Moves arms and legs during playtime
- Makes beautiful smiles

3 to 6 months

- Rolls from stomach to back
- Moves toy from one hand to another
- Sees across the room
- Turns head to follow and watches objects
- Brings hands together
- Reaches for a toy and touches it purposefully

6 to 9 months

- Sits independently and crawls
- Loves to play and repeat simple games
- Babbles consonants and vowel sounds like, "Ba-ba"
- Makes raspberry sounds
- Touches parents' faces to explore them
- Displays pleasure and other emotions

9 to 12 months

- Picks up small objects with thumb and finger
- Rolls ball, picks up crayon, marks paper
- Understands "no-no" and reacts
- Responds to simple requests like "Come here"
- Pulls self up to stand inside the crib
- Steps from couch to chair on their own

Please contact Chris Wilson with any questions about the Growing Little Minds initiative.

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