

## More Positive Parenting Techniques

- Check your baby often for signs of discomfort. Go to her when she cries. She may be hungry, wet, too hot, too cold, or scared. She may have a tummy ache.
- Create routines for your baby. Routines make babies feel safe. For example, have a bedtime routine that you do every night. Give him a bath, read him a book, feed him, and sing to him.
- Use a child safety seat to keep your baby safe in a car. Avoid use of the car seat outside of the car. Hold your baby, or use a sling or baby carrier. Babies cannot look around and explore their world when they are strapped in a car seat.
- Take a weekly trip to your library. Check out books to read with your baby.
- Avoid objects that can fit through the opening of a toilet paper roll. They are too small and might cause your baby to choke. Babies love to explore objects with their mouths. It is your job to keep your baby safe.
- Baby-proof your home before baby learns to move by rolling and crawling. Get on the floor to look from your baby's viewpoint. Make sure that your home is safe. Keep plants and cleaning products out of reach. Cover electrical outlets. Move electrical cords, fans, and heaters out of his reach. Use locks on doors and cupboards. Block or gate stairs. Remove tablecloths.

**Keep your NICU Developmental Follow-up Clinic appointment if you have one. The staff will monitor your baby's development.**

### Log on to Learn

The Parent Help Line — [www.parenthelpline.org](http://www.parenthelpline.org)

Zero to Three — [www.zerotothree.org](http://www.zerotothree.org)

PBS Parents - Child Development — [www.pbs.org/parents](http://www.pbs.org/parents)

How Kids Develop — [www.howkidsdevelop.com/developSkills.html](http://www.howkidsdevelop.com/developSkills.html)

Regional Office of Education — <http://roe51.org> Find local school information and phone numbers for schools in Sangamon County.

Springfield School District 186— <http://www.springfield.k12.il.us/schools/> Click Schools. Click *School Locator* to find a school in your area. Call that school for information on pre-school screenings and programs.

The American Academy of Pediatrics — [www.aap.org](http://www.aap.org)



The Live Love Grow Learn series is a Parent Help Line program.



**Help is just a phone call away.**

For support, tips and referrals, call Parent Help Line at 217-544-5808 or 1-888-727-5889 from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m., 7 days a week.

Visit our website at [www.parenthelpline.org](http://www.parenthelpline.org) and our Facebook page: Parent Help Line at St. John's Children's Hospital



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**0-6 Months**



**Live  
Love  
Grow  
Learn**

**Learning begins at birth. Start teaching your baby the minute you get home.**

- Spend lots of face-to-face time with your baby. He can see you best from about 8-12 inches away.
- Make direct eye contact with your baby.
- Kiss, hug, and hold her often.
- Hold your baby skin-to-skin. This helps babies sleep better and gain weight.

**Start to use this list on your baby's 40-week due date. A premature baby or baby with serious health problems may have delays in development.**

**First 6 weeks – your baby:**

- Spends most of her time eating and sleeping.
- Learns to trust that you will respond to his needs.
- Can see bright colors best.
- Can recognize faces, voices and smiles.

**Between 6 weeks – 3 months, your baby:**

- Is awake for longer periods of time.
- Can grip your finger and hold a toy you put in her hand.
- Can follow a moving object with his eyes.
- Turns her head towards a sound.

**Between 3-6 months, your baby can:**

- Control her head.
- Lie on his belly for “tummy time.”
- Roll from front to back.
- Play with rattles and soft toys.
- Sit with your help.
- Enjoy exploring objects and toys with her hands and mouth.
- Make sounds – babbles, coos and gurgles.

**Talk to your doctor if your baby cannot do these skills.**

**Parents help babies develop and reach full potential. Your baby learns from you every day —from what you do and say. Focus your attention *on your baby* during feedings, changings, and playtime.**

## Feeding

### Babies bond with their parents during feeding times.

- Let your baby focus on feeding for the first few minutes. Then, make eye contact with your baby as you softly talk to him. Gently touch him as you talk.
- If you bottle-feed, be sure to feed her by holding her on both sides. Hold her with your right arm. Then, switch her to your left arm.

## Playtime

### Babies learn as they play. You can also play when you bathe, diaper, and dress baby.

- Use rattles and other toys to get your baby's attention. As your baby watches, move the toys slowly. Go from left to right. Your baby can follow the toy with his eyes.
- Provide toys in bright, bold colors. At first, she can best see red, black, yellow, and white. As she grows, add other colors. By 6 months, she can see all colors.
- Put toys and mobiles 10-12 inches from your baby's face. He can see them easily at this distance.
- Starting at 3 months, make sure your baby gets time to play on her back and her **tummy**. Being in different positions helps her muscles develop. Put a baby-safe mirror on the floor so your baby can look at herself. It is a fun tummy game.

- Play peek-a-boo.
- Play with safe household objects - pots and pans, measuring cups and spoons, plastic containers, and boxes. They make great toys for your baby.

## Talking

### Babies learn to talk by hearing and watching you.

- Talk with your baby. Reply when your baby babbles. This helps her learn to talk.
- Use baby talk (parentese) when you talk to your baby. Parentese means talking in a high-pitched tone and drawing out vowel sounds. Say *mommy – m ah ah ah me ee ee*. Talk softly with feeling. Yelling is bad.
- Point to objects and say what they are. If your baby looks at an umbrella say, “That is an *um breell laaa*. It keeps us dry when it rains.”
- Talk, talk, talk. Your baby learns new words by hearing you talk. Use many different words. Describe what you see in the house, at the store, or on a walk. The number of words your baby hears is linked to the number of words she learns and to her IQ. *Yes, just talking to your baby makes him smarter.*
- Read to your baby. Read the words or point out pictures. Say, “Look at that big red dog.”

## Babies need homes that are calm and loving.

- Soft music, like classical music, is soothing for your baby. Play this music before naptime, after lunch and other routine times during the day. Hearing music or the TV all the time over-stimulates your baby.
- Talk-time and play-time with you are best for your baby's brain development. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends **no TV under age 2**. That includes baby videos like Baby Einstein.

## Sleeping

### Babies need a safe place to sleep.

- Always put your baby to sleep on his back. Doctors know it is a safe position.
- Do not co-sleep with your baby in bed, in a chair or on a sofa.



*Tummy-time helps baby develop muscles.*