



COMMUNITIES

Healthy Children Ready to Learn

8 MONTHS OLD

Dear Parents —
This is the age of
curiosity!

Imagine that you are 8 months old. You try to talk, but no one seems to understand your language. You try to walk, but you're not quite sure how to do it yet. You reach out to touch things that are shiny, soft, hard, smooth or sticky but everyone tells you "NO-NO — DON'T TOUCH." How would you feel? A little frustrated, you can bet! Well, that's how your baby feels at this age. He is very curious and wants to find out about all the fascinating things that surround him.

OPEN UP THE WORLD TO HIM.
LOVINGLY AND SAFELY GUIDE
HIM WHILE HE EXAMINES,
EXPLORES AND SATISFIES HIS
CURIOSITY.



SETTING FAMILY RULES

Even though your baby is only 8 months old, it's not too early to start setting your family rules. For example, when you say "Don't touch the stove — it's hot," you are teaching a basic rule of safety.

Now is a good time to decide:

- What your family rules will be
- Who will make the rules
- How your baby will learn them

To teach your baby what is allowed in your family, be honest about your feelings and say what you mean. For example, if he does something you don't like,

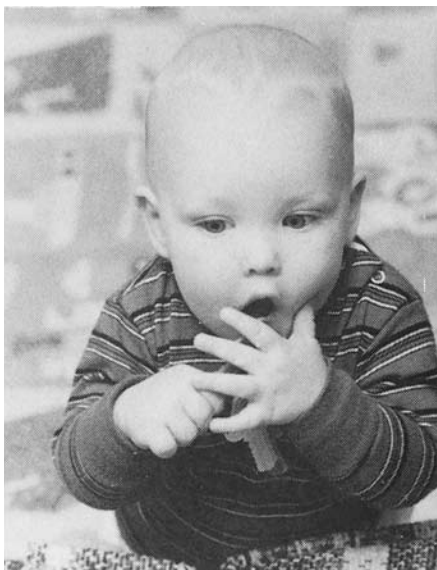
tell him not to do it any more and explain why. You will get your message across by being firm in your voice, in your manner and in your actions. As your baby develops, he will learn what the limits are in your home, and it will be easier on all of you!



WHAT'S IT LIKE TO

How I Grow

- I crawl backwards and forwards on my stomach.
- I pull myself up by holding onto furniture, but I have difficulty getting back down.
- I stand up if I lean against something.
- I sit without any support for several minutes.
- I reach for things and hold them with my thumb and first and second fingers.
- I hold onto a toy, like a rattle, for several minutes.
- I pick up small things like pieces of string.



How I Talk

- I let you know whether I am happy, sad or scared by the sounds that I make.
- I still babble a lot and shout to get attention.
- I say two-syllable sounds like choo-choo, da-da and ma-ma.
- I recognize some words.
- I watch and try to imitate your mouth movements.

How I Respond

- I like to pat and kiss my reflection in the mirror.
- I turn and listen when I hear familiar sounds like the telephone or my name.
- I love to imitate people I know.



How I Understand

- I am very curious and want to explore everything.
- I know how to solve simple problems, such as making a toy bell ring.
- I understand the meaning of "in" and "out."
- I remember events that just happened.

BE 8 MONTHS OLD?

How I Feel

- I am frightened by new experiences and new people.
- I'm upset when you leave me, even if it's for a short time.
- I feel so relieved when you return.
- I'm upset when people make a lot of fuss over me.
- I get frustrated or lose my temper when I can't find something.

A Communications Game

GAMES BABIES PLAY

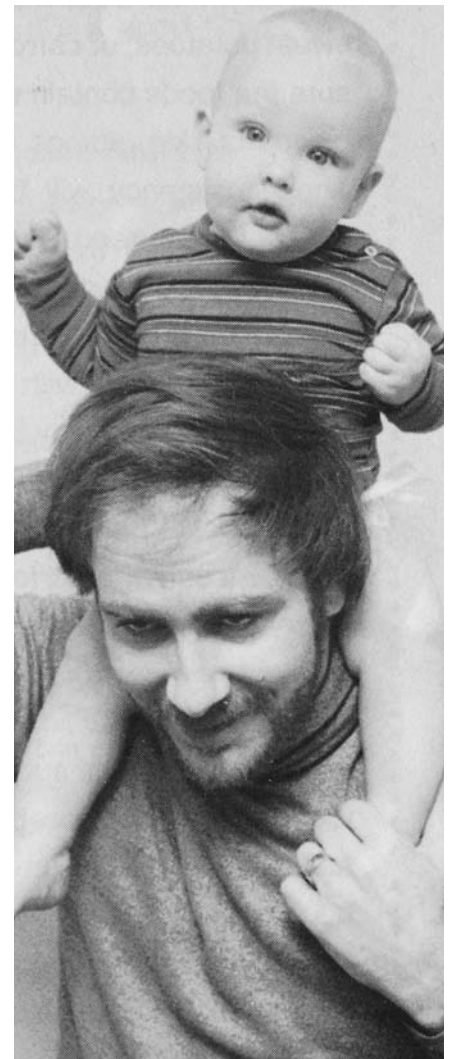
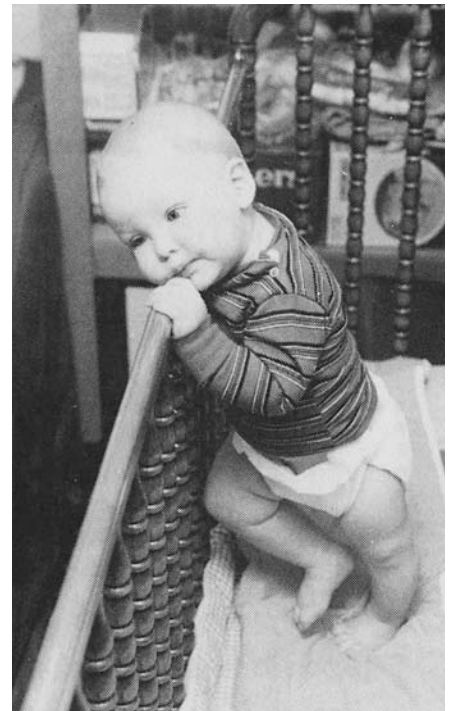
LITTLE PIGGY

PURPOSE OF GAME

- Teaches your baby to learn about his body.
- Helps your baby to become interested in playing games with others.

HOW TO PLAY

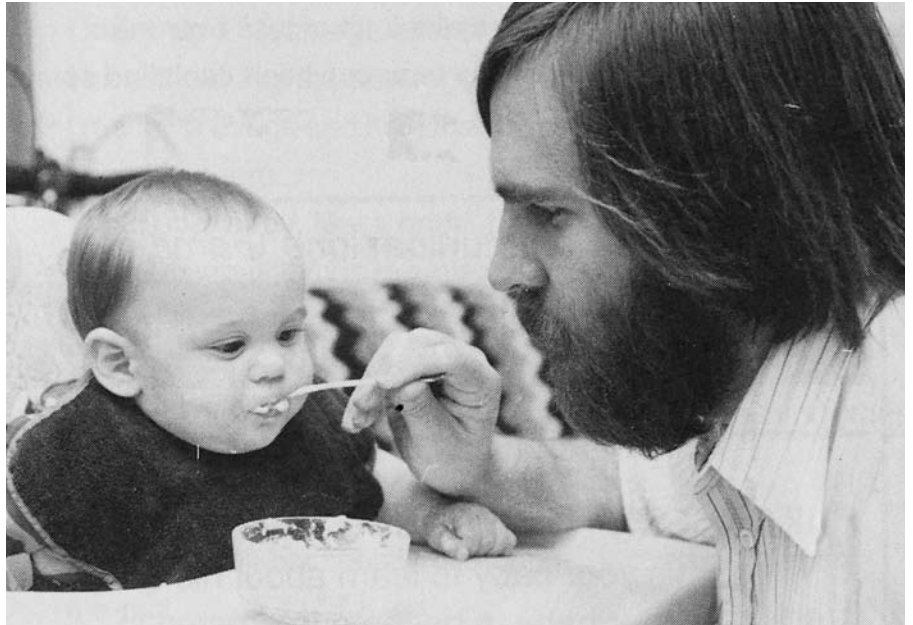
- Your baby can be sitting and facing you, lying on his back or sitting on your lap.
- Hold your baby's big toe between your thumb and index finger and say, "This little piggy went to market."
- Hold the second toe and say, "This little piggy stayed home."
- Hold the next toe and say, "This little piggy had roast beef."
- Hold the next toe and say, "This little piggy had none."
- Hold the little toe and say, "And this little piggy cried wee, wee, all the way home."



FEEDING YOUR

At this age, most babies enjoy fork-mashed foods

Now that your baby is 8 months old and may have some teeth, you can fork-mash vegetables and fruits in addition to straining or pureeing them. Mash a favorite vegetable thoroughly with a fork, or you can use a potato masher for mashing foods like ripe bananas, cooked apples, winter squash, white or sweet potatoes, or carrots. Make sure the foods contain no lumps, pieces of skin, strings or seeds. The consistency will be a little thicker than pureed food.



Meats are good for your baby, too, but do not give her fried meats. Trim all fat from the meat and mash it thoroughly with a fork.

Cooked foods may be strained through a fine mesh sieve or strainer. A sieve is also useful for steam-cooking small amounts of food for your baby. Be sure that all food particles are removed when you wash the strainer.

BE CAREFUL —

Do not add salt, sugar or seasonings to baby foods. Foods that taste bland to an adult are a new taste experience to an infant. Some sodium is necessary for good health, but there is enough natural sodium in foods. Added salt will provide

too much sodium for a small baby, and can even be harmful.

- Do not feed honey to your baby during her first year. Honey may carry botulism spores (bacteria) that can harm her.
- Do not use “leftovers” to make baby foods. Leftover foods are likely to have more bacteria than freshly prepared foods.
- Do not feed your baby raw eggs or raw milk. These raw foods may be sources of bacteria that can be dangerous for her.
- Do not feed your baby chunky foods such as corn, nuts, popcorn, seeds and hot dogs, or coarse-textured foods, such as cookies that crumble easily. Such foods are difficult for your

BABY

baby to eat, and they may make her choke.

- Do not be afraid to serve foods cold. Most babies will accept cold food. If you want to warm your baby's food, do it just before serving.

- Remember, with a little patience, you can help your baby appreciate a wide variety of tastes and textures in new foods.

KEEP YOUR BABY SAFE

To get an idea of what the world looks like to your baby, get down on the floor and look around! Don't things look big and exciting? Wouldn't you be tempted to explore? No wonder your baby tries to satisfy her curiosity and touches everything! Now that she is getting better at moving around, it's a good time to babyproof your home.

- Make sure there are no sharp edges on furniture or loose cords dangling from lamps.
- Keep pot handles turned so they don't hang over the stove front or sides.
- Insert plastic safety caps in all unused electric outlets.
- Keep drawers and cabinet doors shut.
- Unplug appliances when not in use.
- Remove all plastic bags, especially ones from dry cleaning stores. Throw them away or put them out of your baby's reach.
- Keep balloons that are not blown up away from your baby. Your baby might try to swallow them. When balloons pop, remove pieces immediately.
- Check the house for small objects like buttons, coins, needles, rubber bands, bottle tops and razor blades. Put them in a safe place.
- Place safety gates at the top or bottom of stairs.
- Open only those windows that are out of your baby's reach. If you must open low windows, open them only a little to make sure your baby can't fall out.

- Lock all medicines in a medicine cabinet out of reach.
- Remove all cleaning aids (detergents, ammonia, etc.) from under the sink and move to a high shelf or locked cabinet.
- Keep cosmetic and beauty items out of your baby's reach.
- Ensure that drapery or window blind cords are kept out of your baby's reach.

In case of emergency, you and your family should know the phone numbers of the nearest hospital, and the fire and police departments. Make a list of phone numbers and keep it in a handy place.

Safety information on babyproofing your home is available from the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, 4330 East West Highway, Bethesda, MD 20814. You can also call their toll-free Hotline for Consumer Information: 1-800-638-2772, or visit their Web site at: http://cpsc.gov/cpscpub/pubs/pub_idx.html.

..... Q & A

“My baby has suddenly become scared and shy of strangers. She sometimes cries even when my mother comes to visit. Why does she act this way, and what can I do to help her overcome this fear?”

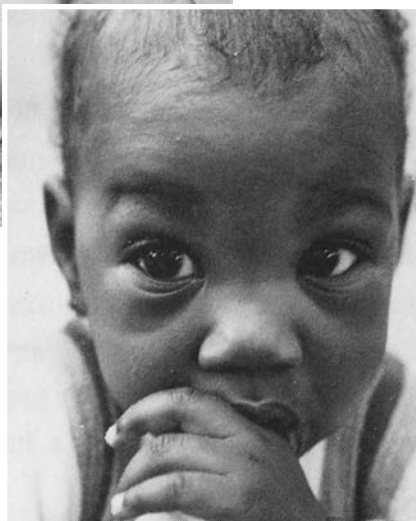
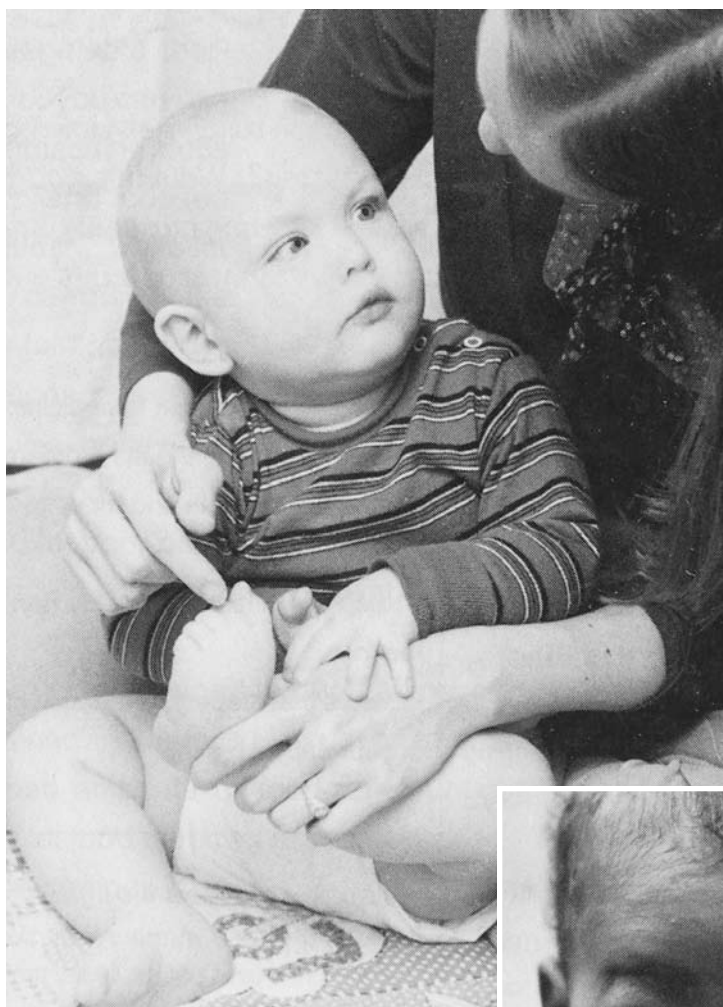
First of all, don't worry. A fear of strangers at this age is normal. Babies are beginning to develop a sense of self and others, an important step in growing up. They are afraid because they know the difference between close family members and strangers. So, they often become upset when someone they don't know hovers around them.

Some babies howl or whimper with genuine fear. Others cling to their mothers and

refuse to let go. Some babies, just like adults, develop an instant dislike for a person.

However she reacts, comfort your baby if she is fearful of strangers. Hold her close to let her know that you love her and she is safe. If you are embarrassed, explain to friends or relatives not to take it personally — that your baby needs time to get used to people. Ask them not to rush up to her or try to pick her up. As your baby gets older, she will feel more

secure and more comfortable with other people.



TIMELY TIPS FOR TEENAGE PARENTS

If you are a teenage parent, chances are you're living at home with your family.

Sometimes problems come up because you're a mother to your child and still a child to your own parents. Being a mother and a daughter — at the same time, in the same household — can be hard for both you and your parents.

Does your mother sometimes act like the baby is hers, not yours? Does she keep telling you she knows what's best?

Do you resent still being treated like a child? And yet do you wish at times that your

mother would take over so you could be like your friends?



And what about dating? Do your parents get all tense at the idea of you going out? Remember that it may be hard for them to tell you their worries. For example, they may be afraid that

you'll get pregnant again.

Here are some ideas that may help you get along better with your parents:

- Try to talk out your feelings calmly and patiently.
- Try to listen to your parents' reasons and fears and understand why they feel the way they do.
- Try to show by the way you act that you are a responsible person.

If you have any questions or comments, please contact your Extension Family and Consumer Sciences agent at your county UT Extension office.

COMING NEXT

In HEALTHY CHILDREN
READY TO LEARN

- Discipline —
What is it?
- A Special
Time for
Baby and
You



Healthy Children Ready to Learn

HEALTHY CHILDREN READY TO LEARN was originally developed as the **Parent Express** series by the University of California Cooperative Extension Service. The material has been adapted for use in Tennessee by Ron Daly, Professor Emeritus, Home Economics-Family Life, and Janie Burney, Associate Professor, Family and Consumer Sciences. Contact Denise Brandon, Associate Professor, Family and Consumer Sciences, for information about this publication.

RESOURCES

From a Bookstore or Library:

Raising a Happy Unspoiled Child by Burton L. White, Simon and Schuster, New York, 1994.

Touchpoints: Your Child's Emotional and Behavioral Development by T. Berry Brazelton, Perseus Publishing, New York, 1992.

What to Expect the First Year, by Arlene Eisenberg, et al., Workman Publishing Co., New York, 1989.

Child of Mine: Feeding With Love and Good Sense (3rd Edition) by Elyn Satter, Bull Publishing Co., Palo Alto, CA, 2000.

From the Extension Office:

Childhood Lead Poisoning Series, SP605 and SP605-A through SP605-L, by Martha Keel and Janice McCoy, University of Tennessee Extension, 2003.

What You Should Know About Lead and Children, SP421, by Janie Burney, University of Tennessee Extension, 2004.

Selecting a Quality Child Care Center, SP455, by Matt Devereaux, University of Tennessee Extension, 2002.

From the Internet:

www.utextension.utk.edu

fcs.tennessee.edu

www.cyfernet.org

www.civitas.org

www.zerotothree.org

www.k-12.state.tn.us/smart/index.htm

Visit the UT Extension Web site at <http://www.utextension.utk.edu/>
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