

# The Growing Years

Healthy Start...where good results begin

Months 3 and 4

## Your Baby Wants You to Know

### How I Grow:

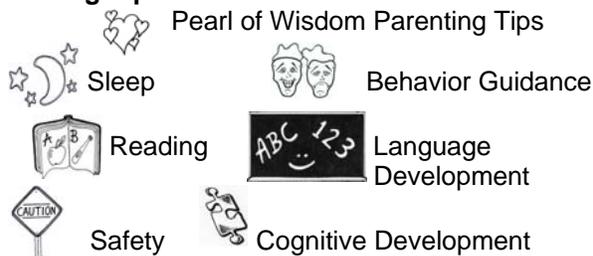
- I hold my head and back pretty straight when you support my body.
- When I'm on my tummy, I can lift my head, lean on my elbows, arch my back and rock.
- I move my arms and legs a lot.
- When you hold me, I push with my arms and legs.
- I touch my face with my hands.
- I grab for things with both hands, but sometimes I miss.
- I turn my head in all directions.
- I lift my head forward when I'm on my back and grab my feet with my hands.
- I can sit up for about 15 minutes with my head and back straight if you support my body.
- I prefer sitting, instead of lying down; it's more interesting!
- I put things in my mouth.
- I splash and kick with my hands and feet in the bathtub.

### How I Talk:

- I coo simple sounds like 'ooh,' 'ah,' 'ae.'
- I don't cry as much as before.
- I coo, grin, or squeal with joy when you talk to me.

Continued on page 3.

Watch for these symbols to find articles on the following topics:



## How Baby Is Changing

Your baby probably spends less time crying and sleeping now, so she has more time to learn about herself and the world. She's just found that she has hands and feet that she can move, and she loves to watch them.

Try putting a toy in her hand. She'll probably hold on and watch it as she moves her arm. She might even reach for things and grab them. She can now get her hand to her mouth and suck on her fingers.

Your baby doesn't have full control over her arms and legs yet, so she may get angry or frustrated when she can't make her body do what she wants it to do.



Your baby likes to watch things. She will even stop eating to follow a toy with her eyes. Hold one near her and then move it away. Bring it close again or move it out of sight. She will go on eating. She does not know yet that things still exist when she can't see them.

Baby also loves to make noises. She can even laugh now! The more you respond to her when she "talks", the more she will answer back and smile at you. This is good practice for real talking later.

Your baby is starting to tell people apart, and she knows her mom and dad! She'll smile more at real people than at pictures of faces. She might have a favorite toy, too.

During her fourth month she will probably begin rolling from side to side and might even be able to roll from her tummy to her back. Watch out,

soon she could roll off a counter or changing table!

Baby is starting to learn that things go together. When she hears you in the kitchen, she expects to have a bottle. She likes to splash in the bathtub, and loves to see herself in the mirror.

## **Not All Babies Like to Cuddle**

Most of us think that all babies love to be held, rocked and cuddled, but some babies don't.

If your baby is a non-cuddler, it doesn't mean that he doesn't like you, or that you're a bad parent. It may just be the way he's made, part of what makes him a unique little person. Some very active babies don't like to slow down long enough to cuddle. Watch this kind of baby closely. Is there a time of day, maybe first thing in the morning or at bedtime, when he's slowed and more ready to be held?

Other babies may be extra-sensitive to the world around them. Bright lights, loud noises, sudden changes, even holding can sometimes be too much. These babies are often very jumpy.

For this baby, try to reduce the stimulation level. Turn down the radio or TV, put a dimmer switch on the nursery light.

Show love to your little non-cuddler in other ways. Smile and make eye contact when you talk to him. Sing to him. And remember, even non-cuddly babies want and need to be held sometimes.

## **Make Baby's Room Interesting**

Baby is more alert and active now, and his vision is more like yours. Here are ideas for fun things to look at in his room.

### **Walls:**

Hang up bright colored wall hangings or pictures out of baby's reach. Pictures can be posters, art prints, family photos or cut outs from magazines.

Change the display often. If you have older children, they can supply lots of original art. An unbreakable mirror in the crib or over the changing table is good, too.

You might also hang a bright-colored toy or stuffed animal from the ceiling.

### **Windows:**

If you put baby's crib so he can look out a window, he'll have lots of new things to look at. Don't put him in reach of the window or in direct sun. Be sure cords for curtains and blinds are out of baby's reach.

A hanging plant or bird feeder outside can make it even more interesting.

A crystal prism in front of the window will throw rainbows into the room. Or how about wind chimes? Baby can look at and listen to them. Be sure to keep these out of the baby's reach.

## **Your Baby Wants You to Know (Continued)**

### **How I Respond:**

- I stare at the place things drop from, but I don't watch where they go when they fall.
- I get excited when I see people I know.
- I can pay attention a little. I stop sucking to listen to sounds or look at things.
- I like to listen. Talk to me in simple sentences.
- I love to see myself in the mirror.
- I'm fascinated by my hands.
- I like some people and am shy or scared of others.

### **How I Understand:**

- I'm starting to have a memory. I like some toys better than others.
- I can remember things for about five seconds.
- I remember important people, like my parents, from night to morning, or even longer.
- I know if something is near or far.

### **How I Feel:**

- I love to be cuddled (usually).
- I don't like to be left alone. Let me sit where I can watch you!
- I get excited when I have fun, and everything is a game to me.



- I cry and get mad when you stop paying attention to me or take a toy away.

### How You Can Help Me Learn:

- Give me safe squeaky toys and rattles to hold or bat at.
- Play pat-a-cake and peek-a-boo with me.
- Look into my eyes when you talk to me.
- Let me see myself in the mirror. Or get me a safe mirror of my own for my crib or changing table.
- Put me on my tummy and hold up a toy for me to follow. This helps me to learn to roll over.
- Blow bubbles for me to follow with my eyes.
- Read nursery rhymes to me. I like to listen to your voice.

Children can be very different from each other. Don't worry if your child is "early" or "late" in growth. This is important: Look for and notice your child's growth in each area. Then you can encourage each new ability.

### Don't Prop the Bottle

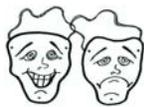
If you are bottle feeding, don't prop the bottle and leave your baby alone. Don't put her to bed with a bottle of formula or juice. A baby left alone with a bottle could spit up and choke.

It is important for your baby to have the closeness of being held in someone's arms at every feeding. If feeding takes a long time because baby gets distracted, sometimes feeding her in a dimly lit, quiet room helps speed things up. Other family members, even older children, may be able to give baby some bottles.

When baby drinks while lying flat on her back formula can back up into the tubes between her throat and ears (Eustachian tubes). This formula can grow bacteria and cause painful ear infections that can harm your baby's hearing.

### Discipline for Baby

Think of discipline as teaching, not punishment. "Discipline" comes from the word "disciple" meaning student.



The most important thing you can teach your baby right now is to trust you. You can do this by meeting her needs, so she learns that you are there when she needs you. Later on, you will need to set some limits to keep her safe. The trust she has in you will help her try to obey so she can please you.

Babies like yours don't do things on purpose to annoy you, even if it seems like it sometimes. Your baby can't help crying, messing her diapers or waking up at night when you want to sleep. A baby should never be spanked for any reason.

**Never hit or shake a baby. Shaking can cause permanent brain damage, blindness or even death.**

Every parent gets upset and frustrated sometimes. But if you ever feel so angry that you're afraid you might hurt your baby, get help.

Call a sitter or friend so you can take a break. Put baby in her crib; shut the door for 15 minutes, and rest. It may help to call Parents' Anonymous or another group to talk to someone about your feelings (1-800-CHILDREN).

### Baby's Sisters and Brothers

How are your other children reacting to the baby now? It's normal for sisters and brothers to be upset at the change in their family, especially if they're under 5.

A toilet-trained child may go back to diapers for a while. Good eaters may lose their appetites. You may notice other things, too.

Don't leave the baby alone with young children even for short periods of time. Young children can't always control their actions.

Watch when your children are together. Praise your older child when he or she is gentle with the baby.

If your baby gets lots of gifts, ask your family and friends to remember older children, too.

Keep a few small gifts on hand for them. Or let them open the baby's presents.

It's important for you and your partner to spend special time alone with each older child, even just 15 minutes or half an hour a day.

Try to find time to take your older child for a walk or play a favorite game. Read to your older child during baby's feeding or after baby's bedtime.

Try to do this often, so your older children feel that they're important too.

## Choosing Safe Baby Toys

Toys don't have to be bought at a store, or even made specially for babies. Here are some tips for choosing toys.



- Babies can put things in their mouths, but they can't always take them out. Never give babies toys smaller than 1-½ inches on all sides. Use a toilet paper tube to test toys and objects that baby may handle. Anything that could fit inside is too small for a child who puts things in his mouth!
- Avoid toys with small parts that could come off, like plastic eyes on stuffed animals, or squeakers in rubber toys. Avoid balloons.
- Toys for babies should not be made from anything that could break or splinter.
- Don't give baby anything with sharp edges, points or corners that could hurt his mouth or eyes.
- Watch out for stuffed or foam toys. Be sure baby can't tear or bit off pieces he could choke on.
- Be sure all strings are less than 12 inches long, so baby can't get his neck or fingers trapped.
- If you have older children or pets, be extra careful to see that small parts of their toys stay out of baby's reach.

## Learning Through Touch

Early on, baby plays with hands and feet and learns about his body. He learns about others this way, too. By now, he may have grabbed

for your hair or patted your face as a way of learning who you are.

Feeling his blanket, a cuddly toy or the bathwater helps baby learn about other things in his world. Give him different textures to feel, like soft fuzzy things, ice cubes, or a sponge. You can think of others.

Your baby also learns by being touched. He senses how you feel about him from your handling. The amount of holding and touching tells baby how important touch is.

If you hold your baby only when you have to bathe or change him, you are both missing out on a lot of times to be close and learn.

Touch and hold your baby often. That's how he learns that you're near and you care. Most of all, baby learns "I'm OK." Give baby lots of hugs and kisses, pats, rocking, stroking, and massages.

## Learning to Talk

Every sound your baby makes is a forerunner of true speech. Learning to talk is a process with many steps. Each child reaches these steps on his own time schedule.



Research shows that when parents talk to their babies, it helps the babies learn language and thinking skills. Parents don't "teach" children to talk, but you can help your baby learn. First, you are a role model for him to copy. And secondly, he needs chances to practice making sounds, and praise from you when he does.

Even when you aren't playing, talk to your baby! Keep sentences short and simple. When you're cooking or cleaning up, put baby in a safe spot in his infant seat so he can watch you.

Talk to him about what you're doing. Show him vegetables, and talk about their colors and sizes, for example.

Bath time is a good time to play "this little piggy." Point out baby's body parts and talk about water. Naming games, like "where are \_\_\_\_\_'s toes?" help him to learn the meaning of



words. Read to baby before bed or while you are feeding him.

Encourage his "talking" by talking to baby and pausing to give him a chance to answer. Even if he smiles or waves his arms instead of making a sound, he's learning that conversation is a two-way street.

At this age, baby makes mostly vowel sounds like "ah," "ay," "oo," and "oh." He probably says them over and over as if he's practicing. Soon he'll make consonant sounds, too.

## What About Baby Talk?

Baby talk such as, "Isn't oo mama's precious uzzums" doesn't help baby learn to talk, because it's hard to understand and some of the words don't mean anything.

Theirs is another kind of baby talk that is useful. Researchers call it "Motherese."

Motherese means repeating words (choo choo), or ending words with an "ee" sound (doggie).

This gives baby extra chances to hear sounds. Try saying "dog" out loud. Now say "doggie". Isn't it much easier to hear the "g"?

Even very young children talk to babies in high-pitched voices and use Motherese. Researchers have found that people all over the world speak to babies this way.

Whatever you say to your baby, speak clearly so he can hear each word. And have fun.

## Starting Solid Foods

Speak to your baby's doctor at her 4-month well child check up about when to begin solid foods. Every baby is different. Some key things you and your doctor will consider are: Does your baby sit well with support? Hold her head without wobbling? Put things in her mouth and chew on them? There are some signs that she is ready to start solid foods.



Many doctors recommend starting with infant rice cereal at 5 months. It is fortified with iron

and not likely to cause food allergies. Mix a tablespoon of cereal with breast milk or formula until it's smooth and about as thick as cream.

Pick a time when baby is hungry, but not starving, it may help to give her some breast milk or formula, then try cereal and finish with more breast milk or formula. Hold her on your lap.

Use a small, narrow spoon and put a little cereal at a time toward the middle of baby's tongue. Her tongue may push the food back out. Be patient. It takes time to learn how to chew and swallow. Using a big bib will cut down on the mess. Start with 1-2 teaspoons per feeding and gradually increase to 2-3 teaspoons per feeding.



Do not use an infant feeder, syringe or bottle to feed solid foods. These can cause choking. They don't help baby learn to eat from a spoon and they can cause over-eating.

Introduction of other foods such as vegetables and fruits usually happens closer to 6 and 7 months. More information on adding new foods will follow in the 5 to 6 month newsletter.

Even with solid foods, baby still needs formula. Baby should drink either breast milk or formula, not cow's milk, until she is a year old. Cow's milk can cause allergies if it is given to children who are too young. Your baby's doctor may have other suggestions, too.

Wait until your baby is one year of age to give her orange juice, egg whites, spinach, tomatoes, beets, honey and chocolate.

Avoid heating food and formula in the microwave as this can cause hot spots.

If you are breast feeding your baby only, talk to your baby's doctor about her need for a multivitamin supplement with vitamin D and fluoride.



## Nurturing Baby's Development

*Tara loves playing peek-a-boo with her parents. When they stop, she squeals and reaches out her arms to let them know she wants more. So they continue. Soon her parents add another twist to the game as they start to hide behind the pillow for a few seconds before they "reappear" to give her time to anticipate what will happen next.*

This simple game is more than just fun. It shows how all areas of Tara's development are linked and how her parents help to encourage her healthy development. Tara's interest in playing with her parents is a sign of her social and emotional development because she has fun with her parents and can see how much they enjoy being with her. This makes her feel loved and secure, and will help her develop other positive relationships as she grows. Her desire to play this game with mom and dad leads to the develop of new intellectual abilities as she learns to anticipate what comes next, an important skill for more in control of her world. Knowing what to expect will also help her to more easily deal with being separated from her parents as she learns that people exist even when she can't see them.

Tara's early language and motor skills emerge as she squeals, makes sounds and moves her arms to let her parents know that she does not want them to stop. When they continue, her parents let her know that she is a good communicator, and each time they reappear, she learns that she can trust them to always come back.

Relationships are the foundation of a child's healthy development.

## Keeping Healthy

Schedule your baby for his 4-month well child check up. He will receive another set of immunizations at this appointment.

Continue to take good care of yourself by eating healthy foods, resting when you can and exercise. Wash your hands often to prevent spreading illness and to promote good hygiene. As your baby grows, he will learn by your example.

Second hand smoke is a health risk you can protect your baby from. Exposure to second hand smoke can increase a baby's risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome, asthma, colds, sinus and ear infections, bronchitis, pneumonia, allergies and croup. If you or a household member smoke and want to quit, seek support. Speak to your health care provider, health insurance plan or contact the Minnesota Quit Line for advice and support (1-888-354-PLAN).



## Pearl of Wisdom

### Homemade Baby Wipes

Making your own baby wipes will not only save money, but you will know for sure that no harsh or drying chemicals are touching your baby's bottom.

#### What you need:

- Round plastic container (Rubbermaid #6 or #9 works well)
- Thick, strong roll of white paper towels
- Sharp knife to cut paper towel roll in half
- 2 Cups of water that has been boiled and cooled to room temperature.
- 2 Tablespoons baby shampoo or baby wash
- 1 Tablespoon baby oil

#### Steps:

1. Cut the roll of paper towels in half with a knife and remove the inner cardboard core.
2. Mix liquid ingredients in container.
3. Place the paper towels in the container with the cut side facing downward (half the roll).
4. Secure lid tightly and allow to sit until all the liquid is absorbed into the paper towels.
5. Turn the container upside-down and allow to sit for 10 minutes.
6. Open container and 'start' the roll by pulling a towel from the inside of the roll.
7. Wipes are now ready to use.

#### Helpful Tips:

- Save the other half of the roll for use next time you make wipes.
- Make sure the container is closed tightly to prevent drying out.
- When your baby is older and his skin is less sensitive, you can add about a teaspoon of rubbing alcohol to the mix.



## Moving Baby to a Big Bathtub

If you've been using the kitchen sink or a special baby tub for baby's baths, he may be starting to outgrow it.

Here are a few things you can try to make the move to a big bathtub easier for you and your baby:



- If you use a baby tub, try putting it in the bathtub for a few days and bathing baby inside it.
- Take a bath with baby. Don't hold him in your arms when you get out; you could slip and fall. Put him on the floor on a towel.
- Always check the water temperature. Bathe baby slowly and gently until he gets used to it.
- Never leave your baby alone in the bathtub even for a minute. If the phone rings, bring the phone with you in the bathroom; wrap him in a towel and take him along; or just let the phone ring.

Having a baby in a big tub can be hard on your back.

1. Bend from your knees, not your hips. Use your stronger leg muscles to help when you lift baby.
2. Hold heavy objects like baby close to your body.
3. Don't lift and twist at the same time. Lift, then turn.
4. When you can, rest lying down with your knees bent and your feet up.

## Crib Toy Safety Alert

Be sure to remove crib toys including mobiles that fit across the crib by the time baby is 5 months old.



When babies can push up on their hands and knees (sometimes at around 5 months), they can fall over a toy and not be able to get free. This could cause strangulation.

Hooded sweatshirts and other loose clothing could also be caught on parts of these toys, causing choking. Babies shouldn't wear these kinds of clothes to bed.

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission has a toll-free number you can call to ask questions or report problems with baby products: 1-800-638-CPSC.

## Games for Growing:

One way to have fun together is a daily exercise time. There may be books on exercises for baby in your public library. Here are a couple for you to try.

**Pulling to Sitting:** Lay baby down on a blanket or rug and hold both his hands. Slowly pull him up until he's sitting. You can say things like, "up we go!" At first, you will probably do all the work, but he'll get the idea soon and may really work hard to help himself up.

**Rolling Over:** Lay baby on a blanket and sit behind his head, holding a toy. Squeaky toys work well for this. Hold the toy where he can see it and slowly move it so he has to turn his head to follow it.

Praise him if he arches his back and starts to turn. If he turns with his shoulders, but his legs aren't following, gently push on his bottom to help him over. Save this game for a later time if he doesn't try at all. Later on, you'll be able to help baby practice crawling and stands.



## MN Parents Know

This is a trusted website with valuable parenting information, resources, and activities to help your children grow, develop and learn from birth through high school. Visit the website at [www.parentsknow.state.mn.us](http://www.parentsknow.state.mn.us)

## Questions and Answers

**Q. I think my baby is teething. She's cranky and drools a lot. What can I do to make her more comfortable?**

**A.** It is quite normal for babies to get some teeth at this age. While first teeth usually come in at 6 months, some babies get them as early as 3 months, while other don't get any teeth until they're a year or older. Once she starts, baby will "teethe" for months. As teeth push through the gums, your baby may feel some soreness and become cranky and irritable.

You can ease the soreness by putting an ice cube in a clean cloth and rubbing it on her gums for a few minutes. Chilling a teething ring

in the refrigerator and letting baby chew on it may also help. Try to avoid using gum-numbing products because it can numb the back a baby's throat and become a choking hazard.

If you baby drools a lot and has diarrhea, it may be caused by something other than teething. Don't blame fever, vomiting, diarrhea, or other signs of illness on teething. If your baby shows any of these signs, have her checked by a medical provider.

Once your baby has her first tooth begin brushing with plain water. It is important to begin good dental care immediately and will help your baby get used to brushing.

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Graphics created and donated by Glen O. Jungmann and [www.designedtoat.com](http://www.designedtoat.com).

Remember, this developmental mailing describes a typical child at each age. Each child is special and each child develops at his or her own pace. Perfectly normal children may do things earlier or later than those described in this mailing. If you are concerned about your child's development, see your medical provider.

This developmental mailing gives equal time and space to both sexes. That's why we take turns referring to children as "he" or "she". When we use he or she, we include all children. Fathers, partners, and other significant adults all play an important role during pregnancy and in child rearing. When we specifically refer to "fathers", the information may also apply to partners and/or other significant adults involved in childrearing.

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