

Growing Together



Because My First Years Last Forever

Volume 1

Issue 3

Four to Five Months

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Dear Parent,

The world is such an exciting place for babies who are **four** and **five** months of age. Your baby is gaining more body control and is eager to see everything around him. Babies at this age are generally cheerful and energetic, and interested in everything. Sitting up with help, playing, babbling, touching things and moving around help your baby learn about this world. Soon he'll start sharing his discoveries through babbling. He loves the sound of your voice and is having

fun listening to his own. One minute, your baby is calmly watching his hands and the next minute he is actively using them. This is a crucial time for you to check around your home to ensure that all dangerous items are out of your baby's reach. There are more tips on baby proofing your home inside this issue. Make sure you and every other caregiver who helps you is watching your baby at all times.



This newsletter is provided to parents by Help Me Grow of Cuyahoga County

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What It's Like to Be...

FOUR MONTHS OLD

How I Grow

I turn my head when held upright.
I lift my head when I'm on my back and grab my feet with my hands.
I prefer sitting up to lying down - it's more interesting. I still need help sitting up!
I stretch my legs out straight when I'm on my back or stomach.
I can hold small objects in my hands.
I put most everything I can reach in my mouth.
I splash and kick with my hands and feet when I'm in the bathtub. Hold me carefully.
I am hardly ever still when I'm awake.

How I Talk

I babble and imitate sounds like coughing and clicking my tongue for long periods of time.
I coo, grin or squeal with joy when you talk to me.

How I Respond

I love to see myself in the mirror.
I like some people and am shy or scared of others.
I'm still fascinated by my hands.

How I Understand

I can remember things for longer time periods.
I know if something is near or far.

How I Feel

I get excited when I'm having fun - everything is a game to me.
I may cry when you stop paying attention to me or take a toy away.
Kreeger, J., Haverson, V., Maretzki, A. (1996). What it's like to be. Keiki 'O Hawai'i: A Newsletter for New Parents, 3. Cooperative Extension Service College of Tropical Agriculture University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, Hawai'i. Department of Health, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Division.

The information in this newsletter describes an average child at each age. Because your child is unique, he may do things somewhat earlier or later than is indicated.

FIVE MONTHS OLD

How I Grow

I rock, roll and twist my body.
I kick my feet and suck on my toes.
I keep my head and back straight when I sit. I still may need a little help from you.
I stand up (if you hold me under my arms), jump up and down and stamp my feet.
I have fairly good aim when I grab at something. I still have trouble letting go of things I'm holding.

How I Talk

I watch your mouth and try to imitate you when you talk to me.
I like to play with sounds. I make sounds like "ee," "ah" and "ooh."
I babble to myself, to my toys and to people.

How I Respond

I may cry when I see strangers.
I smile at familiar faces and voices.
I look around when I hear sounds.
I make sounds and interrupt your conversations because I love your attention.
I want to touch, hold, turn, shake and taste everything.
I put a lot of energy into everything I do.

How I Understand

I recognize my name
I can tell the difference between myself and others in the mirror.
I look for something if I drop it. I like to drop and throw things.
I remember what I just did.
I explore by touching your face, pulling your hair or beard, and poking at your eyes and mouth.
I look around a lot; it is my way of gathering information.

How I Feel

I cling to you when you hold me.
I stop crying when you talk to me.
I show fear, anger and dislike.

Even professionals are not always in agreement on specific child-rearing and feeding recommendations. Consult your doctor if you receive conflicting information.

If you have concerns about how your child is growing and developing, call Help Me Grow at 216-736-4300 or visit www.helpmegrow.org

How You Help Me Learn...

FOUR MONTHS OLD

- Encourage me in play activities that use both eyes and both sides of my body.
- Play with me in front of a mirror.
- Encourage my babbling. Repeat my sounds but don't try to "correct" the sounds.
- If I have figured out how to click my tongue, click your tongue back; I think that's a great game.
- If I can sit up by myself, I'm too old for mobiles and crib gyms.

FIVE MONTHS OLD

- I enjoy looking at picture books.
- Talk to me in complete sentences about what you are doing.
- Face me so I can watch your lips when you talk. I will try to imitate you.
- Play "peek-a-boo" games with me.
- Let me listen to the radio for short periods of time. Allow me quiet times too.



Activities for Babies

Helping young children develop language skills

Talk, talk, talk!

Young children learn about language by hearing language! Even newborns benefit from hearing you talk to them. So talk to infants when you're changing their diaper or feeding them, talk to toddlers as you're having a snack or buckling them in their car seat, and talk to preschoolers about...well, everything! When they ask you one of their endless questions, instead of giving an answer, ask them what *they* think – that could start a long and very interesting chat!



Have conversations. You might think that children could just as easily learn language by hearing it on TV or from hearing other people talking to each other. But studies have consistently shown that, in order for babies to really learn language well, they need to be *talked to and talked with!* When we spend time using words in conversation with them, babies and young children gain so much more information about language and how to use it. It's also only in conversation that very young children get the feedback about their own attempts to talk that will encourage them to keep trying – and remember, learning requires practice, practice, practice! So don't just talk to them – encourage them to talk to you, too.

Read children's books. Reading to young children, even to babies, has so many benefits - they can't all be listed here! But one of them is that it's a great way to help build a child's vocabulary, no matter what the child's age. For example, babies learn the names of everyday things pictured in board books and preschoolers learn to label their emotions by hearing words like "angry" or "sad" used in a story. Make reading to children a regular habit – not only are there huge benefits for children but it can also become a very enjoyable time for you, too (even if you do have to read *Hop on Pop* for the thousandth time!).

Dr. Kathy L. Reschke, and Kirk Bloir, Ohio State University Extension. For more information <http://ohioline.osu.edu>

Him or her? *This series of newsletters gives equal time to both sexes. That's why we take turns referring to children as "him" or "her." Keep in mind that we are talking about all children when we use "him" or "her."*

Just For Parents

Family Focus

One of the most crucial factors in family life is self-worth. Self-worth is feeling good about yourself and your life. The feeling of worth is learned through relationships. An infant that comes into this world learns about her worth through the family. The family can mean mothers, fathers, aunts, uncles and grandparents. Every word, facial expression, gesture or action on the part of the parent gives a child some messages about her worth. Remember that you are influencing your baby's self-worth just as your self-worth has been influenced by your family. It is possible to raise anyone's self-worth, no matter what age.

Oesterreich, L. (October, 2000). *Family focus*. (adapted). Zero to One: A newsletter for infants during the first year, 6. Iowa State University Extension.

Parents as Readers

All parents want their children to be able to read. Some parents think they do not read well enough to help their children. That's hardly ever the case. There are things every parent can do to help his or her child get ready to read:

- Look at books with your child — the pictures in children's books help tell the story. As you and your child practice reading simple words and phrases, you're building your own reading skills as well as your child's.
- Recite nursery rhymes or make up rhymes — children need to hear the rhyming sounds in words such as "Humpty Dumpty sat on the wall, Humpty Dumpty had a great fall." or "The old fat cat sat on the mat with the rat."
- Sing songs. Most songs are really poems set to music — they have rhythm and rhyme, two important elements that can help build reading skills.
- Tell stories — family stories, neighborhood stories, stories from your childhood.
- Talk about colors and shapes — Have you seen my blue key case? It is not light blue like the sky, but dark blue like a policeman wears. The ball is a big circle. What else is shaped like a circle?

Above all else, have fun!

Reprinted with permission by the National Center for Family Literacy, <http://www.famlit.org/tipsforparents>.

Local Library Information

Cleveland Public Library
216-623-2800
www.cpl.org

Cleveland Heights –
University Heights Library
216-932-3600
www.heightslibrary.org

Cuyahoga County Public Library
216-749-9354
www.cuyahogalibrary.org

East Cleveland Public Library
216-541-4128

Euclid Public Library
216-261-5300

Ways to Use the Library with Your Baby

For Baby

From the beginning your baby is ready to discover the exciting world of the library. Make the library part of your routine. Discover the materials and activities that are there just for children.

Colorful books

Start with simple board or picture books. Choose books yourself or ask the librarian.

Programs

Libraries offer a variety of free programs for all ages. Look for toy lending sections and lap sit story times for infants and parents.

Audio tapes and CD's

Songs and rhymes will delight your baby. Lullabies will soothe and quiet your baby. Stories will be of special interest to your older baby.

For Parents and Caregivers

Find the parenting section, which will have books about raising your baby.

Video tapes and DVD's

Parenting videos/DVD's can usually be found with the parenting books.

Book lists

Libraries usually have prepared lists of books to read to your baby at any age. Ask your librarian.

Computers

Computers and printers are available for web browsing.

Community services

Look for free parenting newsletters and postings about services, entertainment and other related things going on in your area.

Special programs

Look for free special programs offered to library users.

Lakewood Public Library
216-226-8275

Rocky River Public Library
440-333-7610
www.rrpl.org

Shaker Heights Library
216-991-2030

Westlake Porter Public Library
440-871-2600



Feeding Your Baby

Starting Solid Foods

Breast milk or iron fortified formula provides adequate nutrition for most babies for about the first 6 months of life. A 4-6 month old baby breastfeeds 6 or more times in 24 hours or takes 30-40 ounces of iron fortified formula in 24 hours.

Babies vary in their development readiness to eat solid foods. Most are ready to eat solids between 4-6 months of age. Your baby is ready to eat solid foods if he does **all** of the following:

- Sits up with support
- Doubles birth weight **and** weighs 13 pounds or more
- Is hungry after 8-10 breastfeedings, or 32 ounces of formula.

If you are considering starting your infant on solid foods at this time, here are some tips to help you.

- Start with a single grain iron fortified cereal such as rice, barley, or oats.
- Let the baby eat a new food for 2-4 days before trying another food.
- Start with 1 tablespoon of cereal mixed with about 4 tablespoons of breast milk or formula and slowly increase the amount to 1-2 tablespoons twice a day. As the baby gets older, you may want to make the texture thicker by adding less milk.
- Choose a time to feed when the baby is hungry, but not starving.

Don't push your baby to eat food. What your baby eats is your responsibility. How much she eats is something to let her decide. A healthy baby will let you know she wants more. Watch your baby's cues that she is finished eating such as pushing the spoon away or turning her head.

In the next newsletter we will tell you how to start your baby on vegetables and fruits.



- Be patient, repeated exposure to a particular food may be needed before the baby learns to enjoy it.
- Use a small feeding spoon and go as slow or as fast as your baby wants to eat.
- Talk to the baby and provide company as he eats, but do not make the interaction too exciting or distracting.
- Think small. Babies have small stomachs and eat small amounts at a time. Your baby's appetite may change from day to day, so adjust his portion size accordingly.
- Observe baby's cues, he may turn his head away from the spoon, or get more distracted when full.
- **Do not** put cereal in the bottle.
- **Do not** add sugar, salt or syrup to baby food.

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Reference: American Dietetic Association. Starting Solid Foods. Start Healthy – Stay Healthy Feeding Guidelines. (2005). Retrieved December 27, 2006 from http://www.eatright.org/ada/files/infant_book.pdf

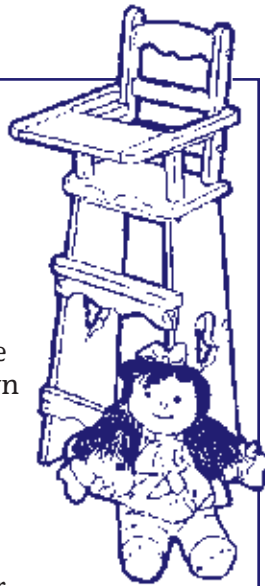
Butte N., et.al. (2004). **The Start Healthy Feeding Guidelines**, *J of Am Diet Assoc.*, 104, No 3, 442-469.

If you have any specific questions on infant feeding and would like to speak to a registered dietitian at the Cuyahoga County Board of Health, Nutrition Program, call 216-201-2000, Ext. 1526.

Safety Tips

Selecting a High Chair

1. Select one that has a wide base for stability.
2. Check the restraining straps to ensure that the waist strap has a buckle that cannot be fastened unless the crotch strap is also used.
3. Restraining straps should be easy to use.
4. Look for a high chair that has a post between the child's leg to prevent the child from slipping down and becoming entrapped under the tray.
5. The tray should lock securely in place.
6. If using a secondhand chair, check the condition of the straps and that they fasten properly. If the straps are not safe to use, contact the manufacturer for replacement straps. If the chair cannot be made safe, do not use it.



Baby Walkers

According to the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), more than 14,000 children are sent to the hospital each year with injuries involving baby walkers. The AAP feels strongly that baby walkers are very dangerous and advises parents and child care providers not to use them. While the new wider-based walker will help prevent falls down stairs, it will not prevent other walker-related injuries such as burns, poisoning, pinched fingers and toes, and drowning. Because walkers have wheels, children can move very fast and can reach higher, putting them at risk for injuries. The AAP recommends using a stationary activity center instead of a wheeled walker. For more detailed information on baby walkers, you can go to the AAP Web Site at www.aap.org/family



Changing Tables

Most injuries involving changing tables occur when children fall from the changing table to the floor. In an instant, an unrestrained active baby can roll over and fall. Remember, to prevent injury always use the safety straps and never leave the child unattended. For more comprehensive safety information on safe nursery equipment, furniture, and toys, request a free copy of The Safe Nursery booklet available from the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, Washington, D.C. 20207. You can also visit their Web Site at www.cpsc.gov.

Source: U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, The Safe Nursery. CPSC Document # 202. Available from <http://www.cpsc.gov/cpscpub/pubs>

Crib Toy Safety

Crib gyms, exercisers, kickers, and similar toys are attractive additions to a child's environment, but they are DANGEROUS as well. The risk of strangulation begins when children are just starting to push up on hands and knees, usually about 5 months old. These children can pull themselves up to a hanging crib toy and become entangled or fall forward over it; but they cannot disentangle themselves, support their own weight, or lift themselves off the toy. The results can be injury or death.

Completely remove such toys from the crib or playpen. Do not merely untie one end and allow the toy to dangle because strangulation is still a possibility.

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Check Ties on Blinds and Curtains.

Window blinds pose a particular hazard because a baby's neck could become trapped in the cords that raise the blinds or run through the slats. A child can become entangled in a looped window cord and strangle in a matter of minutes.

If the crib must be near a window, either cut off the pull cords or use cord shorteners or wind-ups to keep them out of reach. You can also replace a cord loop with a safety tassel. Window blinds sold since November 2000 have attachments on the pull cords to prevent a loop from forming between the slats.

If you bought your blinds before November 2000, visit <http://www.windowcoverings.org> or call (800) 506-4636 to order a free repair kit.

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Keith L. Smith, Ph.D., Associate Vice President for Agricultural Administration and Director, Ohio State University Extension.

TDD No. 800-589-8292 (Ohio only) or 614-292-1868

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Prevent Poisoning

Be prepared. Program emergency numbers into your home phone and cell phone. Keep the number for the National Poison Control Center, 800-222-1222 and your local emergency numbers close to every phone and give the list to all caregivers.

Store poisonous products out of your child's reach. Put safety locks on all cabinets and drawers that hold bug sprays, cleaning products, medications, hair products, makeup, mouthwash, and other potential poisons. Remember that even some houseplants can be harmful if ingested.

Dispose of old or outdated medications.

Watch out for hidden poisons. Not all poisons are easy to spot. Carbon monoxide is an odorless and colorless gas. Install a carbon monoxide detector in every sleeping area in your home, including the nursery. Check the batteries every spring and fall when you change your clocks. If the alarm goes off, leave your home immediately and call 911.

Look out for lead. If you live in a building constructed before 1978, it may contain lead paint. Lead paint is especially dangerous to your child if it's flaking or peeling. Lead can also be found in tap water from older pipes that are lined or soldered with lead. Breathing lead dust or fumes or swallowing anything with lead in it can cause learning disabilities, kidney disease, brain damage, growth delay, and other problems.

Until the lead can be removed, wash your child's hands and face, as well as his toys, often to reduce his exposure to lead-contaminated dust. For information about lead in your environment, contact:

Cleveland Lead Program
216-664-2175

Cuyahoga County Board of Health
216-201-2000

Environmental Health Watch
216-961-4646

National Lead Information Center
800-424-5323

Baby Proofing Checklist

As a parent, it is your job to make sure your baby's world is a safe place to learn and grow. Start by getting down on your hands and knees and looking around your home from your baby's point of view.

- Safety locks and latches** on medicine cabinets, cleaning supply cabinets, drawers with knives and where you store breakable items.
- Safety Gates** on stairways, doorways that lead to balconies and rooms that are not safe for children.
- Anti-Scald Devices** for faucets or showers or set water heater at 120 degrees Fahrenheit to prevent burns.
- Outlet Covers** to cover all electrical outlets.
- Corner and Edge Bumpers** to prevent injuries from falls against anything with sharp edges like furniture and fireplace hearths.
- Anchor** floor lamps and dangling electrical cords.
- Check all window blind cords** (see article this section)
- Baby Crib Toys** (see article this section)
- Fireplace Screen** to completely cover fireplace.
- Smoke Detectors.** Contact your local fire department if you cannot afford one. They will also teach you where to install them.
- Carbon Monoxide Detectors** if your home is heated with natural gas or oil.
- Keep Pot Handles Turned Inward** on stove to prevent burns from spills.
- Watch for items smaller than 1 1/2 inches (can fit through a toilet paper tube)** within baby's reach. For example, bottle caps, used tissues, pins, game pieces and coins.
- Plastic bags** of all types should never be within a baby's reach.
- Balloons** when they break are a choking hazard.
- Do not carry baby and hot items at the same time.**
- Safety Straps on car seats, high chairs, strollers, changing tables, baby carriers and shopping carts should always be used.**



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 Cleveland, OH 44105-6136

Call any one of these Invest in Children partners below for support or information on how to make sure your child is healthy, well cared for and ready for school.

Prenatal Hotline • 216-778-BABY

Prenatal information and support for expectant mothers

MomsFirst • 216-664-4194

Prenatal care and support for expectant mothers in the City of Cleveland

Help Me Grow • 216-736-4300

Services and support for children prenatal to age three

Healthy Start • 216-987-7346

Health Insurance (Medicaid) for children prenatal to age nineteen

Starting Point • 216-575-0061

Child care services and information on care for children with special needs

Family Help Line • 216-229-8800

Free, anonymous support, information, referrals and crisis intervention

Tot-Line • 216-431-8200

Information on child development

First Call For Help • 2-1-1 or 216-436-2000

Free, confidential information and support for referrals to other local health or social services

This newsletter is provided to parents by Help Me Grow of Cuyahoga County.

Help Me Grow is a statewide child development program and a partner of Invest in Children. As Cuyahoga County's early childhood initiative, Invest in Children works to increase the development, funding, visibility and impact of early childhood services in the county, so our children start kindergarten healthy, well cared for and ready for school.



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If you have specific questions about your child's health or development, or concerns about your own health and well-being, please contact your physician.