



## Sleep Diary

Keeping a sleep diary helps you get a clearer picture of your baby’s seemingly unpredictable and disorganized sleep habits. Use this form to record the details of your baby’s sleep habits and compare your notes day to day.

*(Note: An important part of teaching a baby healthy sleep habits is letting him learn how to fall asleep on his own in his crib. Therefore, even though your baby may have fallen asleep during soothing — while feeding, rocking, etc. — you should note the time he went down in his crib as the official start of his sleep period.)*

**Date:**  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Morning wake-up time:**  
\_\_\_\_\_

### morning nap

Time baby went in crib: \_\_\_\_\_

Time baby fell asleep: \_\_\_\_\_

Wake time: \_\_\_\_\_

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### afternoon nap

Time baby went in crib: \_\_\_\_\_

Time baby fell asleep: \_\_\_\_\_

Wake time: \_\_\_\_\_

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### late afternoon nap

Time baby went in crib: \_\_\_\_\_

Time baby fell asleep: \_\_\_\_\_

Wake time: \_\_\_\_\_

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### bedtime

Time bedtime routine began: \_\_\_\_\_

Describe bedtime routine:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Time baby went in crib: \_\_\_\_\_

Time baby fell asleep: \_\_\_\_\_

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### night waking

Time of waking: \_\_\_\_\_

Time in crib awake: \_\_\_\_\_

Length of crying, if any: \_\_\_\_\_

Time fell asleep: \_\_\_\_\_

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### other

Feedings? \_\_\_\_\_

Illness? \_\_\_\_\_

Teething? \_\_\_\_\_

Other relevant events? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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## Fun and Games with Songs

Singing together is learning together. Songs help your child connect words with their meanings. So, fill your house with songs and music. Here are some of the rhymes and songs that children love best. Learn the words, learn the motions, and sing along with your child.

### This Little Piggy

*(can be done on fingers or toes)*

This little piggy went to market.  
This little piggy stayed home.  
This little piggy had roast beef.  
This little piggy had none.  
And this little piggy cried,  
    "Wee, wee, wee!"  
All the way home.

*touch and wiggle thumb*  
*touch and wiggle index finger*  
*touch and wiggle middle finger*  
*touch and wiggle ring finger*  
  
*touch and wiggle pinky*

### The Itsy, Bitsy Spider

The itsy, bitsy spider  
Went up the water spout.  
Down came the rain  
And washed the spider out.

*put finger to opposite thumb and pretend to crawl up*  
*wiggle fingers from top of "spout" down to lap*  
*move hands/arms across lap;*  
*ie, motion of safe in a baseball game*

Out came the sun  
And dried up all the rain.  
And the itsy, bitsy spider  
Went up the spout again.

*show spider again going up*

### If You're Happy and You Know It

If you're happy and you know it,  
Clap your hands.  
If you're happy and you know it,  
Clap your hands.  
If you're happy and you know it,  
Then your face will surely show it,  
If you're happy and you know it,  
Clap your hands.

*Suggestions for other verses:*

***stamp your feet***  
***pat your legs***  
***wiggle your ears***



## Fun and Games with Songs, page 2

### Teapot

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I'm a little teapot, short and stout.  
Here is my handle, here is my spout.

*bend knees*  
*put hand on hip with elbow out;*  
*the other hand should go out to be a spout*

When I get all steamed up,  
Hear me shout,  
“Tip me over and pour me out.”

*pretend to tip over*

### The Wheels on the Bus

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The wheels on the bus go round and round,  
Round and round, round and round.  
The wheels on the bus go round and round,  
All through the town.

*bend your arms and make them go around like wheels*

The people on the bus go up and down,  
Up and down, up and down.  
The people on the bus go up and down,  
All through the town.

*sit up and down*

#### Other verses:

The wipers on the bus go swish, swish, swish.

*use your hands as wipers back and forth*

The horn on the bus goes beep, beep, beep.

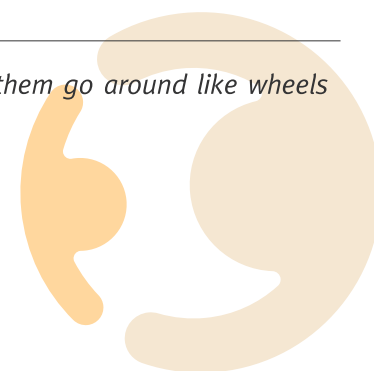
*pretend to beep a horn*

The money on the bus goes clink, clink, clink.

*pretend to put money in*

The driver on the bus says, “Move on back.”

*hand-motion your thumb over your shoulder*  
*to move on back*



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## Everyday Activities for Dad



Dads today are more involved in their children's development than ever before. From the changing table to the side of the bathtub to the grocery store, dads are playing an active role.

### Dads can ...

**Get a child dressed** — Be in charge of helping a child get ready for the day. Create a unique routine, one that's different from mom's routine.

**Read up** — Whether the father of an infant, a toddler, or a preschooler, make an effort to learn about a child's age and stage of development. Read up on how to change a diaper, how to prepare a nursery, how to handle a tantrum, and what toys to use to help a child learn and grow. Read also about the role a dad can play.

**Read to their children** — Carve out a time slot for father time, be it every day or every Saturday, when a child knows he can sit down with his dad and listen to stories. Dads can take special field trips to the library or bookstores to let a child look at book selections to get a good understanding of what the child likes to read.

**Make a weekend morning a dad's morning** — Declare Saturday or Sunday mornings father time. Learn the morning routine well enough to get a child out of bed, dressed, and fed without the help of mom, and go somewhere fun. Or go out for breakfast, just with dad. This is time both a child and mother will look forward to.

**Get comfortable in the grocery store** — Make a concerted effort to learn the foods and supplies that kids need and offer to go to the store to get them. Take a list along and ask the children to help find the things throughout the store.

**Help tackle sleep issues** — Whether dealing with an infant who's yet to sleep through the night or a toddler who's having nightmares, take turns with mom getting out of bed when issues arise in the middle of the night. It's tiring but also a great opportunity to comfort and connect with a child.



## Everyday Activities for Dad, page 2

**Spend time at home especially when caring for a newborn** — The first few weeks and months of a baby's life are the most crucial for family bonding and making connections with caregivers. Accumulate vacation time before the baby is born to use after her birth, investigate the possibility of taking paternity leave and try to arrange to work from home several days a week if possible.

**Get involved with the child's caregivers** — Talk to the babysitter, nanny, or child care teachers. Dads who get to know the people who care for their child learn more about their child — his behavior, moods, activities, etc. — on a daily basis. From simple questions — How much did my baby eat? How long did he nap? What did he play with? — dads can keep connected.

### Additional Tips for Toddlers

#### Dads can ...

**Take a child to school** — Taking a child to school, whether on foot or by car, is a great way to spend high-quality time together on a steady basis. It gives dads a chance to talk to the child and the schoolteacher as well.

**Serve breakfast** — Scrambled eggs, French toast, chocolate-chip pancakes ... come up with a favorite food and make it part of dad's special menu. A child can help dad prepare it.

**Take a toddler to work** — Nothing makes a toddler feel special as much as having his own time with his dad at work. Choose a quiet time to show your child around and make him feel important.

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## Learning on the Go



It's easy and fun to provide early learning opportunities for your young child. You can do it anytime, anywhere – it's learning on the go! On the following pages, we'll explore a few ideas to turn ordinary daily activities into eye-opening experiences for your child.

**At home:** Turn everyday activities at home such as **laundry, meals, and bedtime** into learning experiences for your child.

**Traveling:** Going places is often exciting for children – learn how to make riding **in the car, taking public transit, and walking** educational for them, and fun for you too.

**Public places:** Being out and about exposes children to many learning opportunities. Learn how you can turn excursions to the **market, library, and playground** into learning.



# Learning on the Go at Home

You can turn everyday household chores and activities, like **doing laundry**, into fun learning games for your child, no matter how young she or he is.

Laundry is a frequent activity that young children love to join in – from watching clothes tumble to matching up socks. Find fun ways to help your children take part in these chores.

## Connect

You can make children a part of this everyday task in ways that are fun for you and your child.

## Watch and listen

Look at your child to see what he or she is interested in. Is your baby curious about how the clothes feel? Does your toddler like to take clothes in and out of the laundry basket? Is your preschooler interested in sorting clothes by color?

“Curiosity is an important part of mastery. It’s the desire to know. And the nice thing about it is you never get there. It’s not like you ever get to the point where you know everything or you’ve mastered everything.”

*Jack P. Shonkoff, MD  
Samuel F. and Rose B. Gingold Professor of  
Human Development and Social Policy  
Brandeis University*

## Extend

### For your baby

- › Just because your baby doesn’t talk, doesn’t mean he or she isn’t learning language. Follow your child’s gaze to see what seems to intrigue him or her. Try to see this experience through his or her eyes. Talk to your child about what he or she is watching or what you’re doing: “Now I’m putting the clothes in the washing machine” or “Here goes the soap” or “You’re watching the clothes spinning in the dryer.” Children whose caring adults connect language to their everyday experiences learn to speak, communicate and eventually read better.

### For your toddler

- › If your toddler likes to take clothes in and out of the laundry basket, have him or her help you put the clothes into the washer and dryer. Ask questions like “Can you find the pants and put them in the dryer?” Or, name colors together. These activities can be fun and help build language and thinking skills.

### For your preschooler

- › If your child likes to sort things, have him or her make piles of the light clothes and the dark clothes. Older children can also help by finding matching pairs of socks, or finding all of the shirts to put into a pile for folding. These activities can build math and cooperation skills. Feeling useful also helps children feel good, which encourages them to continue to want to be helpful.

# Learning on the Go at Home

For many, meals are a time when the whole family comes together. Learn how your **mealtime** discussions can help the development of your child, and ways that meals foster learning.

## Connect

Studies show that meals are one of the most important times to be together as a family.

Catherine Snow and her colleagues at Harvard University conducted research on literacy development by taping what happens at family meals. **They found that the families who interacted with each other at meal times were more likely to have children with better literacy skills in the school-age years.** Family mealtime interaction took place when caregivers extended children's interests, which helped children use language to analyze, sequence, and predict while helping children appreciate the joy of language.

## Watch and listen

Do your children listen to what you and others say? Do they have opportunities to talk, listen and take turns? Do they look forward to telling you about their day? What sounds and words do they try to say? What are they trying to communicate?

## Extend

### With your baby

- › Give your baby ordinary kitchen objects, such as plastic cups or wooden spoons, to play with while you are fixing a meal.
- › Name the foods you are eating and talk about foods your baby loves to eat.

### With your toddler

- › Let your young child help make the meal – let him or her tear the lettuce for a salad, stir the spaghetti sauce or put napkins on the table.
- › Ask your toddler to name the foods you are preparing or to fix a pretend meal for his or her toy animal or doll while you fix dinner for your family.

### For your preschooler

- › Ask your child to tell you a story about his or her day or tell him or her a story about yours during mealtime.
- › Create family traditions at meal times, such as a song that you always sing or a game like “I Spy” that you always play.

# Learning on the Go at Home

Help your child wind down at the end of the day, and discover ways to make **bedtime** less stressful and more calming for all involved.

## Connect

Bedtime is time to wind down. Creating a schedule that your child comes to expect makes the transition from an active day to a quiet time easier.

Many parents create “a special time” to be together at bedtime. Sometimes they read or tell stories. Other times, they let the child select what she or he wants to do.

## Watch and listen

What helps your child get ready for bed in the most peaceful way, and what stirs up your child? Emphasize the calming activities and turn them into family traditions.

## Extend

### For your baby

- › Create a consistent bedtime schedule that your child can count on.
- › Think of bedtime as a quiet time to be together rather than a scary time of separation. Your attitude will help build a more positive attitude in your child.

### For your toddler

- › Create traditions: First we take a bath and brush our teeth, then we read a story, put on the nightlight, give a kiss and go to sleep. With practice, a consistent schedule will help children learn to go to sleep by themselves.

### For your preschooler

- › Your preschooler can take a more active role in planning bedtime traditions and use special time for listening to stories, making up stories about his or her stuffed animals, or for talking about the day.

### Anytime

- › Be curious about your own learning and about how your child learns. Parents and caregivers who are truly engaged and excited about learning are more likely to have children who do the same.

**Have fun!** Children and adults learn best when they are connected to others, when they're learning about something they want or need to know, and when they're having fun. So don't make learning in everyday moments a chore, or something to strike off of your to-do list to give your child the best early start. Instead, make it something that *you* enjoy. The gift of joy in lifelong learning is a very important gift you can give your children.

# Learning on the Go Traveling

Are we there yet? Use the time **in the car** to enhance your child's natural curiosity — find ways to interact and connect with your child.

## Connect

Rather than finding toys to amuse and distract your child, use driving time to connect and enjoy being together.

“As a parent (and as a teacher) I would think of yourself as the child's greatest play thing. Your voice, your face, the things you do, and your actions are the things that intrigue them most. They have a natural curiosity for the things humans do. The thing to remember is that you and your time are the most valuable things to a child.”

*Patricia K. Kuhl, PhD  
Professor of Speech and Hearing Sciences,  
Co-Director, Institute for Learning and Brain  
Sciences, University of Washington*

## Watch and listen

What interests your child on car trips? Is it looking for signs that you are almost home or it is talking while you are together? Is it repeating new or silly words or sounds? Is it saying nursery rhymes, singing or watching for when the traffic lights change?

## Extend

### For your baby

- › Use car travel as a time to sing. Play a tape or CD or sing songs you know or love. You can also make up songs about what you are seeing along the road or sing along with the radio. Singing about everyday activities helps children enjoy the sounds of language, and helps babies begin to associate words with good experiences. Singing also creates a sense of togetherness.

### For your toddler

- › If your toddler likes trucks, look for trucks as you drive along and see who can yell out “truck” first. Or listen to what your toddler says and repeat their words, adding new words or rhyming with words he or she says. These games help children learn to watch carefully and to categorize.

### For your preschooler

- › Use car time to talk about your child's day. Ask specific questions (“Did you draw in preschool?” or “Did you eat a cheese sandwich?”) rather than general ones (“How was your day?”) because they are easier for young children to answer. Help your child talk about past experiences to enhance memory.
- › Talk with your child about where you are going in the future (“We are going to the market on the way home”) to help him or her develop thinking and planning skills.

“Memory is at the center of the cognitive universe. Every other kind of cognitive function depends on memory. Memory is bringing an experience that you've had in the world into mind. Memory is extremely important to learning because if you cannot remember, you can't acquire new abilities. Without memory you cannot store the products of learning.”

*Patricia J. Bauer, PhD  
Professor of Child Development, Institute of Child  
Development, University of Minnesota*



# Learning on the Go Traveling

**Riding public transit** exposes your child to different people and new things. Use this time to heighten your child's sense of adventure.

## Connect

Traveling on public transportation, especially if it crowded, can feel overwhelming to a young child, but it can also be an adventure. Encourage your child focus on travel as an adventure.

## Watch and listen

How does your child react to the bus or subway? Help put words to your child's feelings, which will help your child feel known and understood. Notice how your child reacts to other people, sounds, sights, escalators, doors opening and closing or other things you see, feel and hear.

“Stress happens when there is a challenge that matters to you and you don't have the resources to manage it, with a secure relationship you have your resources.”

*Megan R. Gunnar, PhD  
Distinguished McKnight University Professor  
Institute of Child Development  
University of Minnesota*

## Extend

### For your baby

- › Follow your baby's gaze while you travel and say aloud what you think he or she may be focusing on: “See the baby across from us” or “It is very noisy on the bus.”

### For your toddler

- › Imagine what your child is feeling and try to see the experience through his or her eyes. Is she or he feeling overwhelmed or excited? Let your child help you by putting the fare in the fare box, asking the driver for a transfer or signaling the driver to stop. This helps develop a sense of confidence and mastery.

### For your preschooler

- › Talk with your child about the last time you went on the bus or subway or what interests him or her about where you are going and what you will do when you get there. This will give your child a greater sense of control over his or her experiences and will help build memory and planning skills.
- › Make up special games on a bus or subway, such as counting the stops until you arrive. This helps children understand where they are going, and creates special fun routines or traditions that are always remembered, making the world feel predictable and safe.

# Learning on the Go Traveling

Taking your child **on a walk** is not only good exercise, but also allows him or her to experience nature and learn about the outdoors.

## Connect

Taking a walk is a wonderful physical activity for you and your child, plus it can also be a special time together. Focus on the present moment and being with your child, not on all of the things you have to do when you get back.

## Watch and listen

Look at the walk through your child's eyes. How might a bug or a big crack in the sidewalk look to your child? What sounds do cars or birds make? Is the sun shining? Is it cloudy, warm or cold?

“Young children, like little scientists, have a hypothesis to begin with, but then they go out and make predictions and even do mini-experiments... and the experiments cause the children to change their minds – their hypothesis.”

*Andrew N. Meltzoff, PhD  
Job and Gertrud Tamaki Endowed Chair,  
Professor of Psychology  
Co-Director, Institute for Learning and Brain Sciences  
University of Washington*

## Extend

### For your baby

- › Name things that your baby looks at or is interested in – from street and business signs, to animals, flowers, bugs, cars, trucks, people or other sights.
- › Take time to let your baby watch things until his or her interest shifts. Notice how intently your baby studies things.

### For your toddler

- › If your toddler likes to run and jump and practice moving around, make games of doing this.
- › Help your child learn to be safe by stopping at corners and driveways and showing him or her how to look both ways for cars.

### For your preschooler

- › Ask questions about what you see on your walk that seems to interest your child. These questions can include the past, present and future. For example, if you and your preschooler see a dog, ask if he or she remembers seeing that dog before, what the dog is doing, or what they think the dog might do if the dog were bigger or smaller, or faster or slower.
- › Make up rhymes or sing marches as your walk. Try walking and singing or chanting fast, then slow.

# Learning on the Go In Public Places

Errands can equal education. Your everyday outing or errand – even if it’s just **to the market** – can be a chance to connect with your child and to encourage his or her early learning.

## Connect

Going to the market is obviously a chore, especially at the end of a busy day. But markets also offer many opportunities for learning that can make the time there less trying.

## Watch and listen

Make sure that your child is not too hungry when you go to the market. Either take a snack or let your child pick an acceptable snack to eat. Then you and your child can focus on other things. Notice what your child is interested in to help make marketing a fun learning time together.

“There are so many ways that parents and caregivers can encourage language in young children and it’s not through flash cards. It’s through conversation, it’s through questioning. The important thing is to invest words with meaning and once you do... those words live on forever.”

*Kathryn A. Hirsh-Pasek, PhD  
Professor of Psychology  
Director, Infant Language Laboratory  
Temple University*

## Extend

### For your baby

- › The market is like a collage in motion – there is so much going on. Talk about the things you see as you shop.

### For your toddler

- › Talk to your child in advance about a special thing that she or he can buy at the market. Then look for it, like a treasure hunt. This helps your child learn to be a good observer.
- › Ask your toddler about the shapes and colors he or she sees. Or, ask your toddler to name things that are up high or down low.
- › Give your toddler a cracker or piece of apple. Then point out the crackers and/or apples in the store.

### For your preschooler

- › Take the adventure of looking for items you are going to purchase a step further. Cut out a picture of an item you are going to purchase and have your child match the picture with the real item on the store’s shelf.
- › If there is conflict over what you are buying, set rules. For example: we will buy an item, but sugar can’t be one of the first four ingredients. Or it can’t have too many preservatives in the food. Have your child look at labels with you to see if this is something you can buy. All of these games can build pre-reading and thinking skills.

# Learning on the Go In Public Places

Parks and playgrounds are very active places for children. Discover ways to transform activity into learning while you're **at the park**.

## Connect

Being in the park can be a time that is restorative, both for you and for your child. It is also a time for you and your child to play and be physically active.

## Watch and listen

What does your child like about being in the park? Is it nature, looking at flowers, or watching the autumn leaves tumble to the ground? Is it the activities, the swings or jungle gyms? Is it other children? Is it all of the above?

“Stimulation to me means how you can provide rich opportunities that fit with your child – that your child will grab. If the stimulation is making opportunities available and the child takes the initiative, that’s great. But if stimulation is something that you *do* to a child, it generally is, probably at best, not going to be helpful and, at worse, potentially harmful.”

*Jack P. Shonkoff, MD  
Samuel F. and Rose B. Gingold Professor of  
Human Development and Social Policy  
Brandeis University*

## Extend

### For your baby

- › Notice what delights your child at the park and give your child more of those experiences, whether it swinging on a baby swing, tossing piles of leaves or sitting in the sand box. Put words to these experiences or make up a song: “What did you do in the park today, dear little girl of mine? I saw another baby in the park today, mama dear mama of mine...”

### For your toddler

- › Talk about what your child wants to do at the park and then make a point of doing that. Then talk about what you did on the way home. This helps your child begin to make choices and plan ahead.
- › Let your child collect little rocks, leaves or other natural things that fascinate him or her. Sorting helps your child learn to form categories, by seeing the differences and similarities between objects. Bring along containers for scooping and pouring sand.

### For your preschooler

- › Make plans to meet other friends at the park and discuss those plans in advance. Do you want to meet at the swings or at the climber?
- › If your child likes flowers, talk about their colors and sizes, count them, or ask questions about all the things you could make with them. Or stop to watch a bug or a dog and talk about what you saw later.

# Learning on the Go In Public Places

**Libraries** are full of learning, and are wonderful for exploring language and books. Here are some helpful tips for library-going.

## Connect

The library, especially if it has a section set up for young children, can provide a wonderful space to be together and enjoy the world of language and books. Many libraries offer story times for children of different ages, or have play areas with toys, puzzles and soft pillows or couches.

## Watch and listen

What does your child like best when you go to the library? Is it looking at books or story hour? Is it climbing the steps to get into the building? Notice what interests your child and encourage him or her to do more.

## Extend

### For your baby

- › It is never too early to introduce your child to books. Babies like books made from cloth or heavy paper with pictures of other babies, of everyday objects or animals. Hold baby on your lap and let him or her “look at” books. Name things that are in the books and show your baby the real life object, such as the “nose” in a picture and the nose on your face.
- › Borrow books that your child enjoys or seems interested in and read them together at home again and again.

### For your toddler

- › Let your child help choose books that interest him or her, even if your child chooses the same books. Repeating a known story gives your child a sense of mastery.
- › Have your child “read” by telling you a favorite story or repeating words or phrases in the story, such as “Ten Apples on Top” or “Goodnight Moon.”

### For your preschooler

- › Think about what your child loves to watch and do. Then borrow books that you think your child will be interested in. Keep looking for books that extend this interest.
- › Let your preschooler choose books to borrow. Looking forward to reading a story your child chose will increase your child’s love of books and reading.

“Children learn language in a situation where they talk to you about what they are interested in and you respond.”

*Catherine E. Snow, PhD  
Henry Lee Shatluck, Professor of Education  
Graduate School of Education, Harvard University*

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## Understanding Your Child's Feelings



Do you know the first step in helping a child learn? It is for you to understand how a child is feeling or what a child needs. Yes, it can be hard to know what young children are communicating. But when a caregiver understands a child and responds in a supportive way, the child learns to trust the caregiver and feel safe. Then, he can learn and feel good about himself.

*Kids give lots of cues to tell you how they feel. Learn to read them. You will do a better job of taking care of their needs and interests.*

**Common signs and signals that young children use to tell you about their feelings are:**

### Crying and fussing babies.

**What it means:** These signs can mean, “I’m hungry, wet, tired, bored, hurt, need a change of scenery or a hug.”

**Response:** Ask yourself, “Is it time to eat? Sleep? Change activities? Does something hurt? If your child doesn’t seem hungry, tired, feverish or wet, try to calm her with things like singing, walking, rocking or holding her close.

### Crying and turning away head.

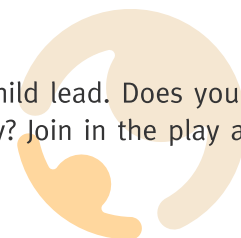
**What it means:** Babies and older children use this to say, “I’m tired of this activity. It’s too much.”

**Response:** Take your child away from the situation or stop what you are doing. Rest or move on to something else.

### Wide eyes, happy sounds, smiles, hand claps, pointing, bouncing or jumping.

**What it means:** Children of all ages do things like this. They mean, “I’m interested. This looks fun. Let’s keep doing it.”

**Response:** Let your child lead. Does your child seem excited by a toy? Join in the play and help her explore.





## Understanding Your Child's Feelings, page 2

### Crying, screaming, or throwing self on ground.

**What it means:** “I’m too upset, tired or wired to keep it together. I can’t handle what’s going on. I don’t have the words to tell you.” The child does not mean to act out on purpose.

**Response:** Stay calm. Make sure your child is safe. Take him away from the situation if you can. Help older children calm down and express their feelings with words. Say things like, “I can see you are angry and upset.”

**Note:**

*These responses are only suggestions. As long as you treat your child with love and attention, you can answer by doing what works best for you and your child.*

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Here are some things to remember when learning to understand your child's feelings:

#### Stop, look, listen and think.

The best way to catch on to what your child is telling you is to pay attention. Use your eyes, ears and instincts. Think about what is happening at a given time. Also think about changes to your routines each day, like missing a nap or taking a trip.

#### Be patient.

Trying to understand why your child is upset can be hard. You may not always get it right. But don't stop trying! You will get better with practice and your child will appreciate your efforts.



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## Meal Ideas for Young Children

Teaching an infant to eat ... helping him get the nutrients he needs to grow and develop ... are basic duties of parenting but ones on which parents often need guidance. To reduce confusion in your kitchen, **hang the following serving suggestions on your refrigerator** and refer to them as often as needed.



### 4 to 6 months

Although breast milk or formula remains the main source of nutrition and calories for the first 4 to 6 months, this is the age to start introducing an infant to solid foods. If you feel your baby is ready to try “real” food — she is interested in watching you eat, she seems unsatisfied by just a bottle — it is time to add smooth single foods to her diet. Although you should consult your child’s pediatrician before starting solids, general first steps include

- 1) **Rice cereal.** Mix plain infant rice cereal with breast milk or formula. A baby won’t digest much until he gets the hang of swallowing from a spoon, so just serve one meal a day until his ability and intake improve.
- 2) **Pureed fruits and vegetables.** As a baby gets better at eating, introduce new single-ingredient foods. Good starters include pureed apples, sweet potatoes, carrots, pears, or bananas. Stay away from foods like nuts, uncooked carrots, popcorn, or grapes that are difficult to chew.
- 3) **One time a day.** Introduce solids once a day and add a second feeding when your baby is eating two to three tablespoons of solids at a sitting.
- 4) **One food at a time.** To make sure a baby is not allergic to a specific food, introduce one new food at a time and wait several days before you try another new food.

### 6 to 8 months

Although breast milk or formula is still the mainstay of your infant’s diet, you can **begin exposing him to a greater variety of flavors and thicker textures:**

- 1) **Combine foods of different flavors.** Good mixes include rice and pureed fruit; pureed fruits and vegetables, like apples and sweet potatoes, with pureed chicken or turkey; mashed avocado and bananas.
- 2) **New food suggestions.** Whole grain — wheat breads and cereals, like Cheerios®. Dairy products — yogurt and mild cheese. New fruits — mangoes and peaches (small enough to ensure no choking). Meats — chicken or lean ground beef (pureed or chopped).
- 3) **Don’t force a baby to eat.** If a baby refuses a new food, continue to offer the food to her at future meals. Give her a chance to get used to the new taste but do not force her to eat it.
- 4) **Multiple meals.** By now, meals should occur at least two if not three times a day.



## Meal Ideas for Young Children, page 2

### 8 to 18 months

As a baby's motor skills develop, he will begin to be able to pick up food from his high-chair tray and by 12 months, he should be weaned from the bottle and drinking from a cup. This opens up a whole new world of foods:

- 1) **Bite-size pieces.** Make sure that foods are big enough to pick up yet small enough to swallow.
- 2) **Soft and gummable.** Although a baby may have some teeth, at this age, she is probably still mashing food with her gums rather than chewing.
- 3) **Hard foods for teething.** Your baby will probably enjoy teething biscuits or a piece of a frozen bagel to soothe swollen gums.
- 4) **Good finger foods include** soft cheeses, soft noodles combined with butter or tomato sauce or cheese, waffles covered with pureed fruit, soft breaded chicken nuggets, and steamed vegetables like carrots and green beans.

### 18 to 24 months

At this age, toddlers should be eating most table foods and sitting down for meals with the rest of the family. Serving suggestions for this age include

- 1) **Manageable pieces.** Serve sandwiches, pizza, and hamburgers in miniature sizes.
- 2) **Quick preparation.** Toddlers are generally short on patience, so try to offer foods that are healthy yet easy to make: peanut butter and jelly, scrambled eggs and cheese, vegetable sticks and dips like cream cheese or avocado and spinach dip; cheese and crackers or homemade Popsicles® made from fruit puree.
- 3) **Creative presentation.** Make eating interesting. Cut sandwiches into fun shapes; decorate patterns and faces on pizza bagels; serve toast and crackers with vegetables and cheese or fresh fruit arranged by color.
- 4) **Multiple small meals a day.**
- 5) **Avoid foods that would cause choking, such as whole grapes, popcorn, or uncooked carrots.**

### 24 months and older

**By now a child should be self-feeding most table foods,** although most of the suggestions for 18 to 24 months still apply:

- 1) **More creative serving.** Use multicolored pasta for pasta dishes. The different colors also tend to offer more nutrients as well as color. Add fresh fruit to Jell-O® cubes molded into different shapes.
- 2) **Introduce a child to cooking.** Have a child help you prepare meals. Put him in charge of mixing ingredients, spreading butter, topping a pizza, etc. This type of involvement may increase his interest in food as well as make him feel good about himself.
- 3) **Offer healthy minimeals to refuel.** Because toddlers are so active, they need quick fixes of nutrition in between the main three meals. Healthy ideas include apple slices with honey, rice cakes with cheese, bananas blended with yogurt and frozen in paper cups; kiwi, strawberries and cream cheese, and a whole-wheat bagel or noodles with cottage cheese.

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## Family History Projects ...



The following projects are perfect starting points for passing on your history and having fun with your grandchildren. In fact, the AARP suggests getting the grandchildren to help “so they can learn and start to connect the past and present.”

### Picture perfect

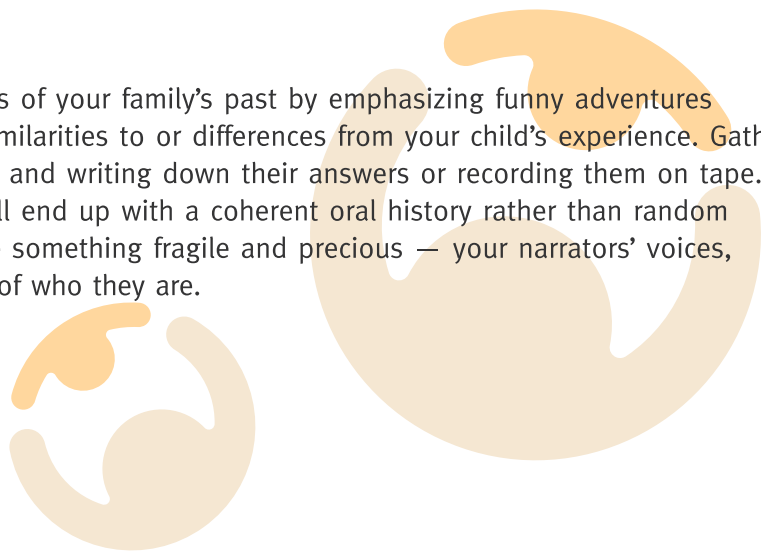
Help grandchildren identify with the family history by gathering and preserving photos and old records. Ask relatives for originals they might have that you can copy. Learn who is in the picture and any interesting stories about them. Arrange all your collected memorabilia in a scrapbook. Write down the details of the picture and how it connects to other information you have about your family such as diaries, letters, and interviews.

### Home truths

Take the children to visit homes and towns where previous generations have lived. A home is evidence of your history, as well as an expression of the people who lived in it. It also reveals trends in architecture and construction. Fixtures and landscaping are tied up with tastes and technologies. Also, a home might offer clues about births, jobs, and the local economy.

### Talk about it

Pass on stories of your family’s past by emphasizing funny adventures highlighting similarities to or differences from your child’s experience. Gather these stories by interviewing your relatives and writing down their answers or recording them on tape. Conduct the interviews with care, and you’ll end up with a coherent oral history rather than random reminiscences. The tapes also will preserve something fragile and precious — your narrators’ voices, how they express themselves, and a sense of who they are.



## Family History Projects ..., page 2

### Road trip

Take your family on a vacation to places that are significant in your family history. This will bring those places to life for the children.

### Hand-me-downs

Keep a journal. Write what you think and feel, see, read, and hear about; weddings, jobs, scandals, news, politics, parades, etc. Relax. Start small. Keep it fun. Years from now, you will have a document that will fascinate your descendants.

### Family video

Use the following interview questions to capture your family story on tape.

1. Describe where your family lived. What did you like best about it? How did it look? What color was your room? With whom did you share it?
2. Discuss ethnic heritage and customs. Talk about religion — discuss what traditions and practices are most important to you.
3. Describe historical events during your lifetime — wars, past presidents, etc.
4. Where did you go to school? Take a trip to the building, if possible. Talk about best friends and teachers, favorite classes, sports played, and other activities and highlights of these years.
5. Did you go to college, serve in the military, or go to technical school? What did you study? What were the highlights of those years?
6. Share pictures from your childhood. Describe or visit old houses and neighborhoods. Talk about neighbors and places you used to visit.
7. What kinds of friends have you had in your life? Discuss what qualities made these people special. Arrange to meet them, if possible.
8. Tell the tale of your relationship with your spouse. Where did you meet? When did you get married? Where? What was the wedding like? Why do you love your partner?
9. Talk about work — the jobs you've had over the years. Talk about the challenges you have faced, the rewards you've received. If possible, visit a place of current or past employment.
10. Pass on life lessons. Share hopes, philosophies, disappointments, and advice.

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## Child Care Checklist



When searching for a compatible caregiver for your child, leave no stone unturned. Refer to this checklist when visiting child care centers and interviewing other child care providers to help you ask all the right questions about all the critical issues.

### Approach

- Treats child with respect
- Gets on the child's level physically when speaking to her
- Speaks and listens with respect
- Accepts child's feelings and differences
- Encourages exploration while setting appropriate limits
- Provides every child with his or her own place for sleeping and storing belongings
- Incorporates families through regular communication and involvement in the program

### Safety

- Keeps all equipment in good condition
- Removes potential hazards from reach: cleaning supplies, sharp objects, medications, etc.
- Provides a clean and comfortable environment
- Encourages and models good hygiene — hand washing, etc.

### Appropriateness

- Provides age-appropriate equipment and activities
- Provides age-appropriate and culturally appropriate toys
- Sets appropriate limits
- Helps children learn how to interact with each other
- Helps children learn how to take care of themselves

### Background

- Has training in child development, first aid and CPR
- Has had criminal background check
- Has valid and current child care license, if applicable
- Has experience caring for young children
- Has supervision as well as education and training
- Understands and respects different parenting styles

### Notes and other observations

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## Are You Baby Smart?



Take this short quiz to test your knowledge about some of the things you can do to enhance your interactions with your infant. Don't worry if you don't get them all right — you can always visit [bornlearning.org](http://bornlearning.org) to learn more.

- 1) **True or False:** You can't spoil an infant.
- 2) **True or False:** You can never overstimulate your baby.
- 3) **Good ways to calm a baby include**
  - A. Singing
  - B. Changing
  - C. Feeding
  - D. Massaging
  - E. Swaddling
  - F. All of the above
- 4) **True or False:** Routines help to lower your baby's stress level.
- 5) **True or False:** Watching TV stimulates your child's development, similar to your own talking.
- 6) **True or False:** You should start talking to your baby as soon as he begins to babble.
- 7) **True or False:** The care you provide your infant shapes the person she will become.
- 8) **True or False:** The care you provide your baby will affect the development of his brain.

**Check your answers on the back.**



## Are You Baby Smart? page 2

### 1) You can't spoil an infant.

**Answer: True.** Responding to your infant's cries is important not only because it makes him more comfortable but also because it teaches him that he can rely on you to take care of him.

### 2) You can never overstimulate your baby.

**Answer: False.** Overstimulation happens when a baby grows bored or unhappy with an activity or toy. Generally, he will tell you that he is overstimulated by turning his head or crying. At this point, you should stop the activity.

### 3) Good ways to calm a baby include

- |             |                     |
|-------------|---------------------|
| A. Singing  | D. Massaging        |
| B. Changing | E. Swaddling        |
| C. Feeding  | F. All of the above |

**Answer: F. All of the above.** Experiment with different activities to determine which are most calming for your baby.

### 4) Routines help to lower your baby's stress level.

**Answer: True.** Routines for everyday activities like bathing and feeding help to lower your baby's stress level by creating a predictable world for her. Routines allow your baby to know that she can expect certain events to happen, give her a sense of control about her world, and help her understand that she can trust you to meet her needs.

### 5) Watching TV stimulates your child's development, similar to your own talking.

**Answer: False.** The "talking" from a television does not offer your baby the same benefits as the sound of your voice. It is the sound of your voice — not just any voice — that will help your baby connect with you and feel the love and affection that she needs to grow and develop.

### 6) You should start talking to your baby as soon as he begins to babble.

**Answer: False.** From the time your baby is born, well before he can make sounds or form words, you should talk, sing, and even read to your baby as much as possible. It does not matter that your baby cannot understand what you say or answer you. Every time you make a sound and he looks at you, you have made an important emotional connection.

### 7) The care you provide your infant shapes the person she will become.

**Answer: True.** The love and attention you share with your baby from her first moments of life will lay the groundwork for the type of adult she will be. Warmth, love, and affection encourage her to trust in her ability to learn about the world around her, to feel good about herself and her world, and to seek to learn more.

### 8) The care you provide your baby will affect the development of his brain.

**Answer: True.** Just as a baby's body depends on parents for food to grow, his brain depends on experiences to develop. Since most of your baby's experiences involve interaction with you, the care you provide plays a critical role in forming his brain's connections.

### If you got ...

- **7–8 right:** Congratulations — you are definitely "baby smart"!
- **4–6 right:** Your "baby smart" level is pretty high. Keep learning to become a real expert.
- **2–3 right:** Your "baby smart" skills could use some improvement; [bornlearning.org](http://bornlearning.org) can help.
- **0–1 right:** Your "baby smart" skills are just beginning. Keep visiting the *Born Learning* website at [bornlearning.org](http://bornlearning.org) to improve your knowledge.

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## Make Reading Fun



Children take their first steps towards language well before they talk. Your talking, singing and story telling and your child's playful experiences with books are the building blocks for communicating, reading and writing. Here are some simple ways you and your child can enjoy books together:

### With Infants:

- **Help them touch books and turn the pages.** Are there things to touch on the pages? Talk about what you see.
- **Bring books everywhere.** Keep small books in your car, purse and stroller and pull them out on the bus, while waiting at a doctor's office or when standing in a line.
- **Read and play with books every day.** Make it a fun and special time. Read the same story before naps or bedtime. You don't have to finish the story. Stop when your baby loses interest.
- **Point to interesting pictures as you read.** Describe them. Explain what you see. Play peek-a-boo with the pictures by covering and uncovering them with your hand.

#### What kinds of books are best?

- **Picture books with simple objects or faces**
- **Board or cloth books with pages that turn easily and won't tear**
- **Books with soft, rough or bumpy textures to touch and feel**

### With Toddlers and Preschoolers:

- **Ask your child to point to pictures or to name things on the pages.** Make it into a game. Describe something in the picture and see if your child can find it.
- **Have him tell the story.** Let him tell his own version or leave out words to well known stories so he can fill them in.
- **Share new words.** Use the pictures in your child's books to help explain a new word. Ask a question to make sure she understands.
- **Talk about the story.** Ask questions about what happened before, what is happening now and what might happen on the next page. "What hat did he choose? What is he doing with the hat? Where will he put it next?" Pause frequently to let your child talk.

#### What kinds of books are best?

- **Books on topics your child is interested in, like animals, dinosaurs or ballerinas**
- **Nursery rhymes or simple stories about everyday activities**
- **Stories with only one or two sentences per page and lots of pictures**

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