



# WHAT'S IT LIKE TO BE SIX MONTHS OLD?

## How I Grow

- I turn and twist in all directions.
- I roll from my back to my stomach.
- I sometimes sit up for as long as half an hour.
- I creep backwards and forwards with my stomach on the floor.
- I hold onto an object with one hand and then put it in the other hand.
- I hold one building block, reach for a second one and look for a third one right away.
- I grab for an object when it drops.

## How I Talk

- I make sounds like f, v, th, s, sh, sz, m and n.
- I still babble a lot, but I have more control of sounds.
- I'm beginning to understand some words by the tone of voice you use.

## How I Respond

- I pick up things, shake them and then listen to the sound they make when I drop them.
- I play games with people I know.
- I get upset when I'm around grown-up strangers, but I'm friendly to children I don't know.
- I coo, hum or stop crying sometimes when I hear music.
- I keep very busy doing something all the time.

## How I Understand

- I know that I have to use my hands to pick up something.
- I look at and study things for a long time.
- I turn objects upside down just to get another view of them.
- I turn when I hear my name.

## How I Feel

- I haven't learned how to control my feelings yet.
- I complain and howl when I don't get my way.
- I giggle, coo and squeal with joy when I'm happy.
- I have very strong likes and dislikes about food.



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# YOU GOTTA TALK WITH YOUR BABY

*You don't* have to feel funny talking to your baby because she can't talk back yet or because you feel others are watching and judging you. When you answer your baby's babbling with words or noises that imitate her sounds, you are teaching your baby that sounds are one way we communicate with each other. It is a very important part of learning.

Babies who are spoken to often also learn to speak more easily. This is because they imitate the sounds and facial expressions of those who are talking to them. The more they are spoken to, the more practice they get. Notice how your baby watches your face as you talk to her.

So, the next time you find yourself feeling self-conscious, try to remember that your baby is learning from you. Communicating with others is one of the most important things we do. Help your baby with this skill!

# FEEDING YOUR

Your baby is probably eager to learn how to feed herself. She may be messy at first, but she'll improve with practice!

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## *Encourage your baby*

to feed herself. Use “finger foods” such as crackers and small pieces of bread or toast. Let your 6-month-old baby help you handle the spoon. Sit behind her so she can hold the spoon, or your hand, and can learn movements to use later when she feeds herself.

Also let your baby try drinking small amounts of formula or fruit juice from a cup. When she becomes skillful at drinking, increase the amount.

Your baby will be messy when she is first learning how to feed herself. Try not to become overly concerned about neatness at this time. Be prepared with a bib or apron to protect her clothing. A large plastic dropcloth under your baby's chair will make cleanup easier.

## THINGS TO REMEMBER

- Candy, sugar, presweetened cereals, sweet desserts (including baby desserts), fruit-flavored drinks and soda pop all have little food value. These sweet foods should not be fed to your baby; they will spoil her appetite for more nourishing foods. They also will be harmful to your baby's teeth.
- Before buying jars of commercial baby food, check the “circle of safety” on the jar top. If the circle is depressed, then the jar is vacuum sealed. If the circle is pushed up, the vacuum seal has been broken, and the jar should not be bought or used because it may not be safe. Another safety check — listen for a “pop” sound when you open a jar of baby food. It lets you know that you have just broken the vacuum seal.

## BASIC RECIPES FOR PUREED BABY FOODS

These recipes are in one- or two-serving sizes. They may be doubled or tripled if you store food in a freezer that maintains a constant temperature of about 0 degrees Fahrenheit (negative 18 degrees Celsius). Date and label containers; after freezing, keep no longer than one month.

### Fresh Fruit

Do not add sugar.

*3/4 cup ripe fruit (uncooked peaches, nectarines, bananas,\* pears, apricots, apples)*

*1 tsp. unsweetened fruit juice*

*1 tsp. lemon-flavored water (1 tsp. lemon juice to 1 cup water to prevent darkening)*

# BABY



Remove skin and seeds. Puree ingredients in baby food mill or blender until smooth. Serve or freeze.

\*Bananas do not freeze well.

## Cooked or Home-Canned Fruits

Use apples, pears, peaches, nectarines, apricots (not dried) or prunes.

1/2 cup freshly cooked or home-canned fruit, or cooked dried prunes (all without sugar)  
2 to 4 tsp. liquid (unsweetened fruit juice, water or formula)

Remove skin (except apricot and prune skins) and seeds. Press through sieve, or place ingredients in baby food mill or blender and puree until smooth. Serve or freeze. Hint: Apples such as Jonathans and Winesaps are better for cooking than Delicious varieties.

## Vegetables

Do not add salt, sugar or fat.

1/2 cup cooked fresh, frozen or canned vegetables without salt (sweet or white potatoes, green beans, peas, carrots, yellow squash)

2 to 4 Tbsp. cooking liquid, formula or water.

Cook fresh vegetables or use frozen or home-canned vegetables without salt or seasoning. Read ingredients on label to be sure. Press vegetable chunks through sieve or baby food mill. Thin with cooking liquid or formula to eating consistency. Or place cooked vegetable and liquid in blender, and puree until smooth. Serve or freeze.

Note: After the vegetables have been fed individually several times, some good combinations are potatoes and carrots, potatoes and green beans, and carrots and peas.

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# Q&A

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*“My baby wakes up almost every night and cries until I go to him. Then he wants to play instead of sleep! What can I do?”*

Some babies have a hard time sleeping at night. They spend the entire day exploring and playing; and then at night, even though they are exhausted, they have trouble settling down. They wake up during the night and want to play or practice their new skill of standing up in bed.

Parents have to gently but firmly let their babies know that it is bedtime, not playtime. When your baby wakes up in the night, go to him. Pick him up, cuddle him, talk to him, change his diaper and then put him down on his side or back to sleep. Tell him firmly that it is bedtime and that he must try to go to sleep.

You can also try spending some quiet time with him before bedtime. Read from a favorite book, play a quiet game together or hold him closely and sing to him before putting him down for the night.

*Remember —*

*All babies are different and grow at their own pace. So don't worry if your baby isn't doing exactly the same things as other babies at the same age.*

## TAKE CARE OF YOUR BACK

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Protect yourself from future back problems. For in-

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### Protect Yourself!

*Your Baby Needs You*

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stance, when you pick up your baby, DON'T bend over from the waist. Instead, bend your knees and kneel or squat, keeping your back as straight as possible. Hold onto your baby, and straighten up from the kneebend or squat position. **MAKE YOUR KNEES, NOT YOUR BACK, DO YOUR WORK.**

Use the same kind of kneebends or squats, with your

back straight, when you want to pick up something from the floor. This will help prevent back strain.

**REMEMBER TO WATCH YOUR POSTURE.** When standing or sitting, hold your back straight and pull in your stomach. Good posture will help protect your back from future aches and pains.

# GAMES BABIES PLAY

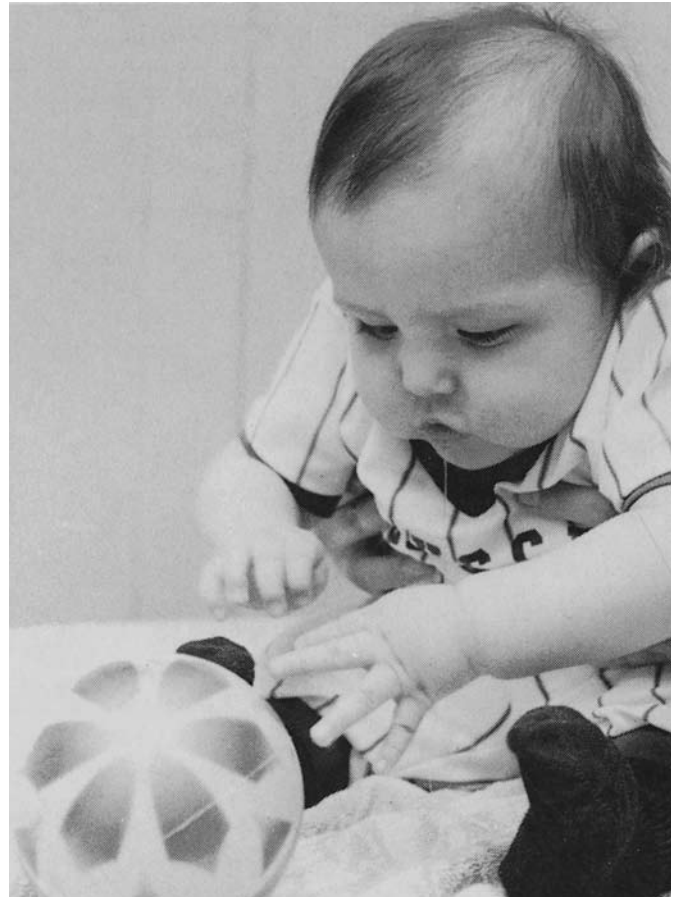
## A using-a-tool game

### PURPOSE OF GAME

- Encourage your baby to use objects as tools for getting what he wants.

### HOW TO PLAY

- Put your baby in a sitting position on the floor. (You can sit beside or in front of him.)
- Place a small blanket within his reach.
- Put a favorite toy on the blanket, but place it out of reach.
- If your baby does not pull the blanket to get the toy, push the blanket towards him until he can reach the toy.
- Use action words to describe what he is doing, like “See, you got the ball by pulling the blanket.”
- You can use towels, potholders or pillow instead of a blanket.



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## CHILDREN LEARN FROM WATCHING PARENTS

*When* raising their children, many parents either do what their own parents did, or just the opposite. What do you copy from your parents? What do you do that is different? Have you thought about why you copy some things and reject others?

Even though your baby is only 6 months old, she is learning from your example. That is why it is so important to think about the examples and patterns you are setting, even at this early age. Once set, patterns of family life are hard to change.

Some patterns that influence your child's life are

- how you talk to each other,
- how you work out problems, and
- how you show your feelings.

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

# COMING NEXT

In — HEALTHY CHILDREN READY TO LEARN

- Be Your Own Best Friend
- Talking Honestly With a Partner



Healthy Children Ready to Learn

## HEALTHY CHILDREN READY TO

## LEARN

was originally developed as the *Parent Express* series by the University of California Cooperative Extension Service. The material has been adapted for use in Tennessee by Janie Burney, Professor, Family and Consumer Sciences. Contact Denise Brandon, Associate Professor, Family and Consumer Sciences, for information about this publication.

## RESOURCES

### From a Bookstore or Library:

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

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

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

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

### From the Extension Office:

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

### From the Internet:

[www.utextension.utk.edu](http://www.utextension.utk.edu)

[fcs.tennessee.edu](http://fcs.tennessee.edu)

[www.cyfernet.org](http://www.cyfernet.org)

[www.civitas.org](http://www.civitas.org)

[www.zerotothree.org](http://www.zerotothree.org)

[www.k-12.state.tn.us/smart/index.htm](http://www.k-12.state.tn.us/smart/index.htm)

Visit the UT Extension Web site at <http://www.utextension.utk.edu/>  
and the Family and Consumer Sciences Web site at  
<http://www.utextension.utk.edu/fcs/>

SP418H 2M 6/09(Rev) E12-5320-00-048-09 09-0243

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