

# Building Blocks for a Bright Baby



## Day One

A Project of the



Healthcare Education  
Foundation Of West Virginia

*A subsidiary of the West Virginia Hospital Association*



## Congratulations!

You have a new baby! Even though he or she may seem delicate and fragile now, your child is a whole, capable human being with abilities, senses that really work, emotions, and a unique personality.

Knowing how to be a good parent doesn't happen like magic when your baby is born. Good parenting is something you learn. The ideas in this booklet are a good way to start learning more about your baby; your parenting skills will grow.

To understand what you see your baby doing, it is important to know about how your baby's brain is growing and developing during this very important first year of life. When your baby is born, his brain is about one fourth the size of an adult brain. He has most of the brain nerve cells that he will ever have. But during the first few years of life, connections between those nerve cells grow faster than they ever will again. These connections are what make it possible for us to think and learn.

Research proves that a loving, nurturing, and stimulating environment helps these connectors grow and lay the building blocks for healthy physical, emotional, and mental development. Babies need three things for this amazing growth and development: love, good nutrition, and stimulation of the senses in a relaxed, playful manner that your baby enjoys.

Your new baby is able to learn from Day One. Babies learn by using all of their senses. The more encouragement and loving attention they get, the more they learn.

## Communicating

By learning the signals that your baby is sending to you, you will soon be able to have a good idea if your baby needs cuddling, food, a clean diaper, sleep or play.

### Alert Times

Alert times are the times when playing and interacting with your baby will be the most fun and have the most affect on your baby's healthy development. Alert times will be very short at first. They may only last for four to 10 seconds, but a lot of learning can happen in that short time period.

Your baby will show signs of alertness by:

- ♥ Turning the head towards you
- ♥ Relaxing or stretching fingers and toes
- ♥ Slowing down body activity
- ♥ Relaxing the tummy
- ♥ Calm breathing and sucking rates
- ♥ Opening eyes wide

Your baby will also tell you when it is time for peace and quiet by:

- ♥ Turning away
- ♥ Closing eyes
- ♥ Becoming quiet or fussing and crying

## The Senses

All of the senses are active at birth. Here is some information about what your new baby can do and things that you can do to help him develop. Don't be tempted to over do it! The key is not how much you do but what you do in a relaxed, fun, loving way.

# Sight

*Your baby:*

- ♥ Is sensitive to bright, harsh light
- ♥ Sees better in dim light for the first few months
- ♥ Can focus on things within 13 inches from her face
- ♥ Can track moving objects
- ♥ Can focus eyes from one object to another
- ♥ Likes, and can see better, highly contrasting colors, especially black and white or red and white
- ♥ Loves to look at human faces

*What You Can Do:*

- ♥ Show your baby interesting patterns, such as a smiling face drawn on a paper plate, pillows with checkerboard or bull's-eye patterns.
- ♥ Take your baby to interesting places where there are colorful things to see.
- ♥ Change pictures or posters in baby's room so she has new things to look at.
- ♥ Look at colorful books together.

# Smell and Taste

*Your baby:*

- ♥ Has a well-developed sense of smell and taste
- ♥ Can tell the difference between sweet, sour and bitter

Because of the possibility of allergic reactions, check with your doctor before letting your baby taste things. Babies under one-year-old should not be given honey or corn syrup.

- ♥ Will begin to suck at the smell of breast milk or formula

*What you can do:*

- ♥ Take baby to the kitchen with you while you cook. Let her smell and taste things you are baking or cooking.  
*Remember to keep her away from hot or sharp objects.*
- ♥ Help baby smell other pleasant things such as flowers, fruits, vanilla or outdoor smells such as rain and woods.

## Hearing

*Your baby:*

- ♥ Can hear before she is born
- ♥ Likes being talked to
- ♥ Knows mom's and dad's voices at birth
- ♥ Likes to be held on your left side to hear your heartbeat
- ♥ Is sensitive to tone, pitch, and emotional quality of voices
- ♥ Can turn toward pleasant sounds
- ♥ May try to tune out loud, disturbing noises by turning away, closing eyes, or fussing.

*What you can do:*

- ♥ Talk to your baby from the very beginning.
- ♥ Name and talk about objects, activities or feelings with baby.
- ♥ Use your baby's name often.
- ♥ Sing to your baby.
- ♥ Play soft, melodic music.

## Touch

*Your baby:*

- ♥ Can feel everything on the skin
- ♥ Can tell difference in textures and temperatures
- ♥ Has certain areas of the body that are very sensitive: face, palms, backbone, genitals and soles of the feet

*What you can do:*

- ♥ Calm your baby by stroking gently from the forehead to

the nape of the neck, from head to toe, from the center of the body outwards.

- ♥ Most babies like gentle massage.



### Never Shake or Throw a Baby!

An injury caused by shaking a baby or young child is called *Shaken Baby Syndrome*. A baby has weak neck muscles and a large, heavy head. Shaking makes the fragile brain bounce back and forth inside the skull and causes bruising, swelling, and bleeding, which can lead to blindness, severe brain damage or death.

Being too rough while playing with baby can also cause damage. Do not toss them on your knee or foot, or spin them around. Anything that causes baby's head to flop back and forth can cause damage.



## What To Expect

All babies eat, sleep, cry, and smile – but each one does it their own way.

**Eating.** Most new babies love to eat. They may eat six to 10 times a day and two times a night. Be sure to hold your baby during feeding. It helps to build a bond between you and the baby and stimulates all of the baby's senses. Babies have the strongest instinct to suck during the first three months, so your baby may suck his finger, thumb or pacifier.

**Sleeping.** Babies have their own sleeping patterns. During the first three weeks of life, some will sleep as little as nine hours a day and others may sleep as much as 18 hours a day. Remember that new babies don't sleep in one long block like we do. They nap about six to eight times a day.

To reduce the risk of Sudden Infant Death (SIDS) or crib death, always put your baby to bed on her back!

**Crying.** All babies cry. Some cry more, some less. Crying is one way they *talk* or communicate with you. The most important thing you can do when your baby cries is to respond in a loving way, building trust and confidence.

**Smiling.** Smiling is another good way for babies to communicate. Smile back at your baby and you will be building bonds of trust and love.

Whether crying or laughing, your baby is communicating. Your repeated, loving responses let your baby know that he can count on you to keep him safe and secure, which is very important for healthy development.

## You, the Teacher

Because you are your baby's first teacher, you are very important! You introduce your baby to the world. You help create attitudes of learning, loving, and trust. Your baby is also a good teacher, who can help you learn to understand his or her needs and how best to respond to them. Learning from each other will create an important bond for life.

The whole world is your baby's classroom. Everything your baby sees, touches, hears, smells, tastes, and does teaches a lesson in living. The lessons are everywhere, and they have the biggest impact during the first years of life. You can help your baby learn by providing many different experiences in warm, gentle and playful ways. They do not need to cost a lot of money or take a lot of time. The ideas offered in this booklet are easy to do and fun to share with your baby. Try them and see! Think up your own ideas too. Remember, every baby is unique and special.

All babies will not always like the same things, so learn what your baby likes. All parents want their child to be bright, happy, healthy, and whole. Your loving actions with your baby lay the foundation for learning that will last a lifetime. This foundation includes trust, self-esteem, intelligence, curiosity, creativity, and love. You are very important to your baby! The activities you do are those that your baby will learn. The traits you model are those that your baby will copy.

As a parent, you are the center of your child's world. If that center is healthy and happy, your child will have a greater opportunity for a healthy and happy life, from *Day One*.

(From *Day One*, New Horizons for Learning, Seattle, Washington, [www.newhorizons.com](http://www.newhorizons.com)).

# Read To Your Baby

## **WHY should I read to my baby?**

Reading to your baby, even 10-20 minutes a day will stimulate brain development. Toddlers soak up new words and increase listening skills. Studies show that children who are read to as infants and toddlers are better students when they get to school.

## **WHEN should I read to my baby?**

Begin reading to your baby as soon as you begin talking to your baby! Babies come into the world ready to learn language. The more they hear words spoken, sung or read to them, the faster they understand them.

## **WHAT should I read to my baby?**

In the beginning, try cloth or board books with large, colorful pictures and a few words on each page. As your baby grows and can listen for longer periods of time, try books that tell a story. You can also ask your local librarian for suggestions and visit *Read Aloud* at [www.educationalliance.org](http://www.educationalliance.org).

## Tips For Reading Aloud To Your Child

**Make time to read to your child every day.** Choose a book with a story and language that you and your young child will find interesting. Hold your child in your lap or sit close together. Enjoy this special time.

**Ham it up!** Kids love it when you read with expression. Try using different voices for different characters. Change your reading pace when you get to the exciting parts. Whisper when the characters whisper, shout when they shout!

**Talk about books with your child.** Ask the child to point out things in the illustrations or describe how the character looks. Talk about your feelings with each other during the sad or exciting parts of a story.

**Visit the library often.** Let your child help select books, and ask the youth librarian for help if you have any questions.

These are some good books to read to your baby:

*Baby Says* — John Steptoe

*Duck in the Truck* — Jez Alborough

*Goodnight Moon* – Margaret Wise Brown

*The Very Hungry Caterpillar* – Eric Carle

*Big Fat Hen* — Keith Baker

*I Love Trains!* — Philemon Sturges

*I See the Moon, and the Moon Sees Me* – Helen Craig, Editor

*You Are My I Love You* – Maryann Cusimano

*The Everything Book* – Denise Fleming

*Freight Train* — Donald Crews

*Where's Spot* — Eric Hill

*Book!* — Kristine O'Connell George

*Play Rhymes* — Marc Brown

*My Car* — Byron Barton

*Mitten* — Jan Brett

*The Three Little Kittens* — Anna Alter

*Ten, Nine, Eight* — Molly Bang

*Time For Bed* – Mem Fox

*When You Were a Baby* – Ann Jonas

*Guess How Much I Love You* – Sam McBratney

*Big and Little* – Margaret Miller

*Green Eggs and Ham* – Dr. Seuss

*Potty Time* — Guido van Genechten

*The Babies Are Coming!* — Amy Hest

*Outside the Window* – Anna Egan Smucker

*Snowy Flowy Blowy: A Twelve Months Rhyme* — Nancy Tafuri

*Read To Your Bunny* – Rosemary Wells

(The Greatest Gifts You Can Give Your Baby, *Education Alliance, Charleston, WV, [www.educationalliance.org](http://www.educationalliance.org)*)

Visit [www.publiclibraries.com/westvirginia.htm](http://www.publiclibraries.com/westvirginia.htm) to find a public library in your area.

## No Smoking, Please!

Just about everyone knows that smoking is very bad for health, but some people think it only hurts the smoker. The truth is, secondhand cigarette smoke (smoke that comes from a burning cigarette and smoke exhaled from a smoker) can cause a lot of health problems for nonsmokers, especially for babies and children. This *secondhand smoke* can cause asthma and other breathing problems, allergies, and even raises the risk of SIDS (sudden infant death or crib death) and cancer. It also greatly increases the risk of ear infections, which if left untreated, can cause hearing loss and affect how a child learns to talk. New research also shows that children who breathe in secondhand cigarette smoke regularly are more likely to have behavior and learning problems.

Secondhand cigarette smoke has about 4,000 chemicals in it. Some of these are poisons such as carbon monoxide and arsenic and about 50 of them are known to cause cancer.

### What Can You Do To Protect Your Child From Secondhand Smoke?

First, and most important, don't smoke around your child and don't allow others to do so either. Make your home and car smoke-free. That means NO smoking inside. Fans, air cleaners, open windows do not get rid of the smoke well enough to protect your child from the dangerous secondhand smoke. If someone must smoke, they should go outside.

### Quitting Smoking

If you smoke, seriously consider quitting. Quitting will help protect your baby from secondhand smoke, protect your own health, and better your chances of being around and healthy to raise your child. You will also save lots of money.

If you smoke a pack a day, you are spending more than \$1,000 a year on cigarettes. Children whose parents smoke are more likely to become smokers, so if you don't smoke, there is less chance that your children will smoke. Quitting smoking may be difficult, and it may take several attempts, but you can do it. And you don't have to do it alone. There is help for smokers trying to quit.

### Tips for quitting smoking:

- ♥ Set a date to quit and get rid of all cigarettes by that date.
- ♥ List your reasons for quitting.
- ♥ Tell others about your plan to quit on that date and ask for their support.
- ♥ Talk to your doctor or other health professional.
- ♥ If you plan on using nicotine gum, patches or other medications to help you quit, get them before the quit date. Practice doing other things when you want a cigarette.
- ♥ Try drinking water, taking some deep breaths, or doing other things with your hands instead of smoking.
- ♥ After meals and other times when you really want a cigarette, go to a different place in the house or outside.
- ♥ Change the patterns that you have developed as a smoker.
- ♥ Quit on your quit date and stick with it.
- ♥ If you slip and have a cigarette, think about what led to the slip, plan what to do if it happens again and keep on your path to becoming tobacco-free.

#### Find Help Quitting Smoking

WV Toll-Free Quit Line: 1-877-966-8784

American Lung Association: 1-800-LUNGUSA

American Cancer Society 1-800-ACS-2345

American Heart Association 1-800-242-8721

[www.cdc.gov/tobacco/how2quit.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/how2quit.htm)

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

# Breastfeeding

There are many benefits to breastfeeding. Even if you are able to do it for only a short time, your baby's immune system can benefit from breastfeeding. Other benefits of breastfeeding for mother and baby include:

## Benefits for Baby:

- ♥ Breast milk is the most complete form of nutrition for infants. A mother's milk has just the right amount of fat, sugar, water, and protein that is needed for a baby's growth and development. Most babies find it easier to digest breast milk than they do formula.
- ♥ As a result, breastfed babies grow exactly the way they should. They tend to gain less unnecessary weight and to be leaner. This may result in being less overweight later in life.
- ♥ Premature babies do better when breastfed compared to premature babies who are fed formula.

## Benefits for Mom:

- ♥ Nursing uses up extra calories, making it easier to lose the pounds of pregnancy. It also helps the uterus to get back to its original size and lessens any bleeding a woman may have after giving birth.
- ♥ Breastfeeding, especially exclusive breastfeeding (no supplementing with formula), delays the return of normal ovulation and menstrual cycles. (However, you should still talk with your doctor or nurse about birth control choices.)
- ♥ Breastfeeding lowers the risk of breast and ovarian cancers, and possibly the risk of hip fractures and osteoporosis after menopause.
- ♥ Breastfeeding makes your life easier. It saves time and money. You do not have to purchase, measure, and mix formula. There are no bottles to warm in the middle of the night!

- ♥ A mother can give her baby immediate satisfaction by providing her breast milk when her baby is hungry.
- ♥ Breastfeeding requires a mother to take some quiet relaxed time for herself and her baby.
- ♥ Breastfeeding can help a mother to bond with her baby. Physical contact is important to newborns and can help them feel more secure, warm and comforted.
- ♥ Breastfeeding mothers may have increased self-confidence and feelings of closeness and bonding with their infants.

*If you choose to bottle feed your baby, your baby should have iron-enriched infant formula for his first year.*

### More Information About Breastfeeding

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
Office of Women's Health

200 Independence Ave., S.W. Room 712 E

1800-994-WOMAN (9662); [www.4woman.gov](http://www.4woman.gov)

Ask for your free copy of *An Easy Guide to Breastfeeding*

La Leche League (Local Chapters in WV)

1-800-LA LECHE; [www.lalecheleague.org](http://www.lalecheleague.org)

WVDHHR WIC (Women, Infants and Children) Program

1-304-558-8830; [www.wvdhhr.org](http://www.wvdhhr.org)

# Keeping Your Baby Safe

## A Safe Ride

Car accidents are a leading cause of injury and death among young children. Proper use of a car seat can greatly reduce the risk of serious injury or death.

**Babies up to one year of age (up to 20 pounds):** Place your baby in the back seat, in a rear-facing car seat. Put the car seat carrying handle down. Keep the harness strap snug. Fasten and place the harness clip at armpit level. Fasten the car seat snugly so that it doesn't move more than one inch from side to side or forward. Route the harness straps in the lower slots at or below shoulder level. Recline the rear-facing seat no more than 45 degrees. A firmly rolled up towel under the car seat may help.

**Babies up to one year of age (greater than 20 pounds):** Babies should be in a convertible seat certified for rear-facing use up to 30-35 pounds.

**Children one year old and older, between 20 pounds and 40 pounds:** Place your child in the backseat. Children can be in a forward-facing car seat. Place the car seat in an upright position. Route the harness straps in the upper slots at or above shoulder level. Fasten the car seat snugly so that it doesn't move more than one inch from side to side or forward. Keep the harness strap snug. Fasten and place the harness clip at armpit level.

### ALWAYS

Always place your baby in the back seat in an approved safety seat, every time the child is in the car. Set a good example, wear your seatbelt, too!

### NEVER

Never leave a child alone in a car, even for a minute!

## Crib Safety

To make sure your baby's crib is safe, always check for the following:

- ♥ Slats should be no more than 2 3/8 inches apart
- ♥ No cutout designs in headboard or footboard
- ♥ No broken or missing crib hardware
- ♥ No corner posts over 1/16 high
- ♥ Must have a firm, tight-fitting mattress
- ♥ Properly mount crib gyms and mobiles
- ♥ Drop side latches work properly and baby cannot release the side.

To reduce the risk of Sudden Infant Death (SIDS) or crib death, always put your baby to bed on her back!

## Poisoning

After your baby begins crawling, he will be curious to learn more by exploring. Be sure to put any poisonous items out of his reach. Cleaning products, medicines, make-up, shampoo and other items, and even some houseplants can be deadly to your baby. Keep your purse out of babies reach, too, if you carry any poisonous items in it.

Some paint, especially in older homes and on older furniture, may contain lead. Babies love to put things into their mouths and chew on them. Lead poisoning can cause brain damage and even death in young children. Make sure you keep children away from flaking or chipped paint.

*Thanks to Jeannie Zinn, ICCE, CD, CLC, Coordinator of the Perinatal Education Program Education Program at Monongalia General Hospital, for her contribution to this book.*

# How To Comfort Your Crying Baby

## Some Reasons Babies Cry   Some Ways to Comfort Baby

Hunger	Feed your baby.
Swallowed Air	Place baby on her stomach and gently pat her back.
Wet or Soiled Diaper or Diaper Rash	Change diapers and keep baby's bottom dry and clean. Expose baby's bottom to air.
Too Cold	Put clothes or covers on baby.
Too Warm	Take off some clothing or covers.
Fear or Abrupt Movement (can cause baby to lose equilibrium)	Speak gently to your baby; hold baby snugly.
Changing From Waking to Sleep (or vice versa)	Talk softly to your baby.
Loneliness	Hold your baby and talk to her; carry her close to you; gently pat or rub her head.
Boredom	Show your baby pictures and objects with bright colors and interesting patterns. Play soft, melodic music.
Tiredness	Change baby's sleep position to the side or back. Rock baby and sing to him. Avoid putting baby on his stomach from birth to six months.
Over Stimulation	Watch baby for cues and stop the stimulation.
Tension in Parents	Try to get some sleep for yourself. Get help and support from family, friends or a community agency.

# West Virginia Toll-Free Resource Numbers and Web Sites

Adult Education Hotline 1-800-642-2670

Child Care Resource and Referral  
[www.childcareaware.org](http://www.childcareaware.org) or [www.wvdhhr.org](http://www.wvdhhr.org)

Children's Health Insurance Program  
(CHIP) [www.wvchip.org](http://www.wvchip.org) 1-877-982-2447

Domestic Violence/Child Abuse 1-800-352-6513  
[www.preventchildabuse.org](http://www.preventchildabuse.org) or [www.cadv.org](http://www.cadv.org)

Drug Abuse Information and Referral 1-800-662-4357

La Leche League 1-800-LA LECHE  
[www.lalecheleague.org](http://www.lalecheleague.org)

March of Dimes 1-800-313-2911  
[www.marchofdimes.com](http://www.marchofdimes.com)

National Health Information  
Clearinghouse ([www.health.gov.nhic](http://www.health.gov.nhic)) 1-800-336-4797

Office of Maternal, Child and Family  
Health, Systems Point of Entry:  
Right From The Start, Family Planning,  
Birth to Three, Newborn Hearing, and  
other Programs (DHHR) 1-800-642-8522  
[www.wvdhhr.org](http://www.wvdhhr.org) 1-304-558-5388

Quit Smoking Information  
WV Tobacco Quitline 1-877-966-8784  
[www.cdc.gov/tobacco/how2quit.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/how2quit.htm)

US DHHS, Office of Women's Health 1-800-994-9662  
[www.4woman.gov](http://www.4woman.gov)

WV Poison Center 1-800-222-1222





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100 Association Drive    Charleston, WV 25311    1-304-344-9744    [www.wvha.org/day\\_one](http://www.wvha.org/day_one)



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