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Newborn

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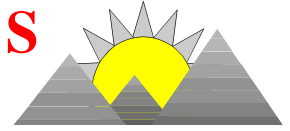
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GREAT BEGINNINGS

A Series for Parents of Young Children



NEWBORN

Dear Parents,

Congratulations! You have just begun one of the most important jobs you will ever have—parenthood! It's natural to be a bit nervous or scared, especially if this is your first child. This newsletter will give you tips each month to help make the important job of parenting easier and more rewarding.

These newsletters describe a typical child, based on the study of many babies. Because your child is unique, he or she will do things somewhat earlier or later than we've described. That will be the glory of your own small wonder.

Your Baby is Special

The thing about babies and sunrises,
is that each one is full of potential to
bring only guessed-at promises.
The thing about babies and sunrises,
is that **each one is unique**,
ever-changing, awe-inspiring,
capable of opening your heart,
of filling your senses,
of making you want to be around
to watch the rest of the story
develop.

--Kay Pearce

Car Seats

Car seats are much safer for babies than their parents' arms. Most state laws require traveling babies to be in approved car seats. Be sure to attach the straps and use the safety bar properly.

Car crashes are the biggest danger to your child's life and health. Most auto injuries and deaths can be prevented by the use of car safety seats. Besides being much safer in a car seat, your child will behave better, so you can pay attention to your driving. Ask your doctor which seats are safe. Make the "First Ride" a safe ride home from the hospital. Seat a child in the center rear seat of the car. This is the safest place in the car.

Infants traveling with only one adult can, however, be placed in the front seat for optimal observation. Infants should ride rear-facing until their legs are

too long to do so comfortably. Then, infants can ride forward-facing in a convertible or toddler seat.

Make certain that your baby's car seat is installed properly. Use it **every** time your child is in the car.

Schedule or Self-Demand Feeding?

Most babies set up their own fairly regular feeding times. Some babies may like to eat every four hours, others are ready to eat every three hours, and some prefer eating more often than that. Newborn babies drink only breast milk and water, or formula and water.

Feeding your baby when he gets fussy or cries will not spoil him. It will help you to be more sensitive to his needs.

Some babies like to sleep for longer periods during the day than at night. If your baby is a lengthy daytime sleeper and stays awake most of the night, you can reverse this pattern. Try to wake him for feeding instead of letting him sleep for long periods during the day.

You can get a pretty good idea of your baby's feeding pattern by keeping track of the times when he seems to be hungry.

Remember, your baby may not be hungry every time he is fussy. He may need burping, a diaper changed, a drink of water, or he may just want to be held.

Breast Feeding

RELAX! Being tense and uptight can affect the natural flow of milk. You can sit in a chair or lie down, whichever is more comfortable for you. Your baby's nursing will help your milk to flow. Don't rush. Take your time. This is a learning time for both of you.

During the first few days, your nipples may be slightly tender from your baby's sucking. But as you learn to relax and your milk flows freely, the soreness will disappear. If your breasts remain sore, it may be that they are extra-full of milk. Nursing your baby long enough and often enough to empty

both breasts will help. Or you may have too much milk and your breasts may leak a little. If this happens, tuck a clean handkerchief, a breast pad or cup in your bra. You can also gently squeeze some milk from your breasts to relieve the pressure.

If you are interested in breastfeeding, you can get more information from *Nursing Mothers* and *LeLeche League*, national groups of mothers who can answer your questions. Look in the white pages of your phone book for a local chapter.

Remind yourself that the time you spend relaxing and enjoying your new baby is very important for both of you.

Bottle Feeding

If you have decided to bottle feed your baby, you will use a formula. Formulas are usually made from cow's milk, or other special products to meet the needs of a growing baby. There are three different forms of formula:

- ✓ Powdered Formula: the cheapest, and fairly easy to prepare.
- ✓ Concentrated Formula: more expensive than powdered formula. You have to add the right amount of water.
- ✓ Ready-to-Feed Formula: the most expensive, but the easiest to use.

Whichever formula you use, follow the instructions carefully. Make sure that bottles and nipples are washed and clean.

When you bottle feed your baby, keep the nipple full of formula so he doesn't swallow air. Hold your baby close with his head up. Don't leave your baby alone with the bottle propped up, and don't put him to bed with a bottle.

Babies Need Water

Whether you breast or bottle feed your baby, offer a bottle of water, especially in hot weather or when he has a fever or diarrhea. Don't add sugar to the water, unless prescribed by your doctor, and don't give flavored drinks, soda pop, or even fruit juice to a newborn.

Talented Babies

Your baby is already very talented and wonderfully unique. These are some things newborns generally can do:

Your baby can see! For the first couple of weeks your baby is near-sighted. This means she can see best when an object is about 8 inches away from her face. If your baby could talk, she would tell you... "I like to look at faces, especially yours," and "I like bright colors and designs. Please find striped ribbons and pictures and fasten them safely in my crib or wherever I spend a lot of time. They will help me strengthen my eyes and learn about my new world."

Your baby can't talk yet, but he can tell you when something is wrong. You're the lucky person who gets to figure out what's wrong. You will soon be able to tell the hungry cry from the "I need attention, please hold me" cry. Be sure you answer these cries for help.

Crying is the way your baby communicates. When you respond to his cries, you not only make the baby happy, but you are teaching your baby to **trust**. This is the first important lesson your baby learns in life. When you answer those cries with your warmth and love, your baby will learn that this world is a pretty great place to be.

There's a nice bonus for you in responding to your child's cries. Babies who have their needs met when they cry, cry **less** than those babies who are allowed to cry without having their needs met.

Hang in There!

Soon there will be more smiles and fewer cries. Be sure to respond to those precious smiles. Your smile will be reinforcing to her smile, and before you know it there will be smiles all around.

On-the-Job-Training

It will take time to feel comfortable in your new role as parent. Parents and babies learn together. Don't expect to know how to handle everything overnight. *Be patient with yourself.*

During the first few weeks after your baby is born, it's not unusual to feel depressed at times or to find yourself on the verge of tears for no apparent reason. This can happen to mothers and fathers, and may be nothing more than the let-down most of us feel after a long-awaited moment has come and gone.

There is also the worn down feeling that follows any sudden change in schedule, like those 2 a.m. feedings. Most parents have these feelings, and you'll recover your energy and good humor in time. In the meantime, keep your days as simple as possible. Ask nothing of yourself but the basic essentials. Plan to nap when your baby does. Try to be flexible.

When you are having a rough time...

- Talk to your partner, a family member, or a good friend about your feelings. It helps to talk with someone close to you.
- Find parent groups in your community where parents get together to talk and work out solutions to common problems.

A Special Word for Fathers...

What's It Like to Be a Newborn Baby?

- I need others to take care of me.
- I can't decide things for myself.
- I need someone to love, feed, hold, and play with me.
- I like to feel warm, and I don't like lots of noise.

- I like to be held gently and very close.
- I like to sleep a lot.
- I am hungry every few hours.
- I may be fussy and cry a lot.
- My face may be wrinkled, puffy, or red, and I may have a large head—I'm normal!

Strong Muscles

Lying on his stomach can help your baby's muscles grow stronger. Soon Baby will be able to lift his chin and then his whole head.

Red and Wrinkly

Does your baby look like what you expected? Babies on TV and in the magazines are beautiful, but red and wrinkly is normal. Soon those looks will change.

As your baby grows older, you may notice times when rashes or redness appears. There are several things you can do to help this. (1) Wash Baby's clothing in a mild detergent separate from the family wash; (2) rinse Baby's clothes twice and consider adding 1/2 cup of vinegar to the second rinse water; (3) wash all clothes before your baby wears them.

Keep a Record

Save the front page of the newspaper on the day your baby is born, and any public notices of Baby's birth. This can be the start of Baby's memory book. So that you can remember the highlights of Baby's growth, try to keep a diary. Write down little notes about the happy, upsetting and funny times. Some parents find it easier to keep notes if they jot down phrases from time to time on a big calendar. If you keep this calendar in your kitchen or near your bed, you may be more likely to find the time to record. Your child will love to read these notes when she grows older. It's important for both parents to help record. **Dad...** keep involved!

Conflicting Information

Professionals are not always in agreement about specific child rearing and feeding recommendations.

Consult your physician or public health nurse if you receive conflicting information.

The Importance of Parents

For babies, the first year of life is crucial. Their future intellectual, social and psychological development largely depends on the care they receive their first year. During this early year, the baby needs to learn about his world, and to begin developing the confidence and competence to relate effectively with others. For this, he needs parents and caregivers who...

- Respond to his needs to be held, loved, comforted, and played with.
- Talk to him.
- Give him opportunities to explore and learn by touch, sight, and smell.
- Let him move around and learn to use his hands, arms and legs.

Parents of infants who later are successful in school tend to treat their babies differently. Parents of achieving babies:

- Understand and respond to their babies' developmental needs.
- Give their babies affectionate attention and respond to their needs.
- Are more likely to talk to their babies and encourage their vocalization.
- Play with their babies more frequently to explore and practice their emerging physical, social and mental skills.
- Respond sensitively to their babies' attempts to communicate and learn.

Appreciation & Thanks to the Original Authors

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