

Baby's First Wish

Cooperative Extension Service
New Mexico State University

A happy & healthy life

Dear Parents:

8 Months Old

This is the age of curiosity!

Imagine that you are 8 months old. You try to talk, but no one seems to understand your language. You try to walk, but you're not quite sure how to do it yet. You reach out to touch things that are shiny, soft, hard, smooth, or sticky but everyone tells you, "NO NO—DON'T TOUCH." How would you feel? A little frustrated, you can bet! Well, that's how your baby feels at this age. He is very curious and wants to find out about all the fascinating things that surround him.

Open up the world to him. Lovingly and safely guide him while he examines, explores, and satisfies his curiosity.



Ways To Make It Easier For Teenage Parents

If you are a teenage parent, chances are you're living at home with your family. Sometimes problems come up, because you're a mother to your child, and still a child to your own parents. Being a

mother and a daughter—at the same time, in the same household—can be hard for both you and your parents.

Does your mother sometimes act like the baby is hers, not yours? Does she keep telling you she knows what's best?

Do you resent still being treated like a child? And, yet, do you wish at times that your mother would take over so you could be like your friends?

And what about dating? Do your parents get all tense at the idea of you going out? Remember that it may be hard for them to tell you their worries. For example, they may be afraid that you'll get pregnant again.

Here are some ideas that may help you get along better with your parents:

- Try to talk out your feelings calmly and patiently.
- Try to listen to your parents' reasons and fears and understand why they feel the way they do.
- Try to show by the way you act that you are a responsible person.

What's It Like To Be 8



How I Grow

- I crawl backwards and forwards on my stomach.
- I pull myself up by holding onto furniture, but I have difficulty getting back down.
- I stand up if I lean against something.
- I sit without any support for several minutes.
- I reach for things and hold them with my thumb and first and second fingers.
- I hold onto a toy, like a rattle, for several minutes.
- I pick up small things like pieces of string.



How I Talk

- I let you know if I am happy, sad, or scared by the sounds that I make.
- I still babble a lot and shout to get attention.
- I say two syllable sounds like choo-choo, da-da, and ma-ma.
- I recognize some words.
- I watch and try to imitate your mouth movements.



Months Old?

How I Respond

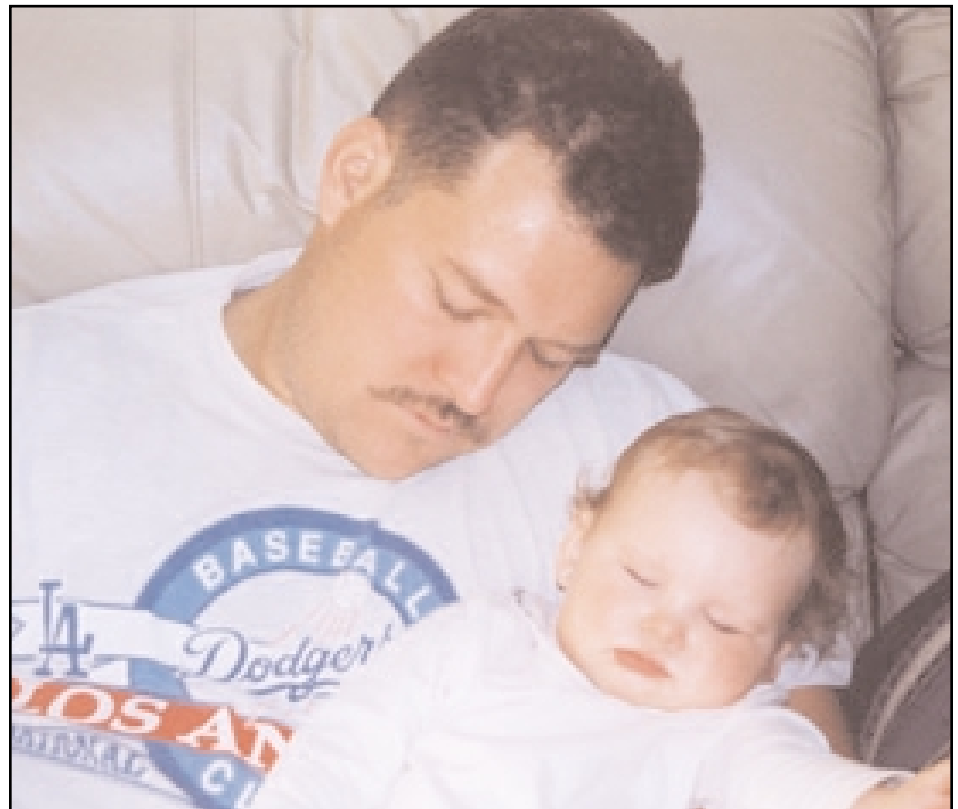
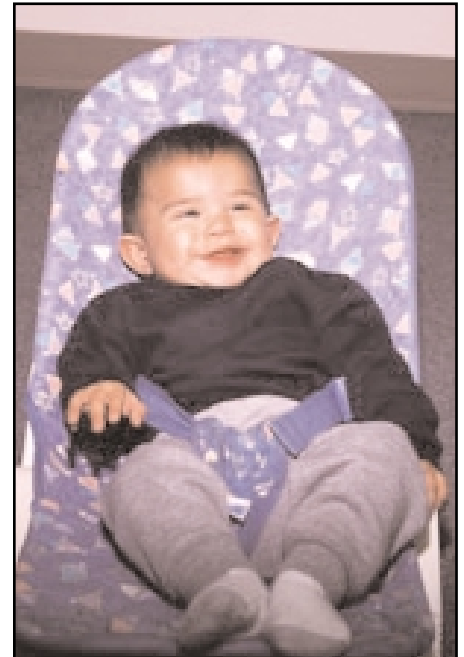
- I like to pat and kiss my reflection in the mirror.
 - I turn and listen when I hear familiar sounds like the telephone or my name.
 - I love to imitate people I know.
-

How I Understand

- I am very curious and want to explore everything.
 - I know how to solve simple problems, such as making a toy bell ring.
 - I understand the meaning of “in” and “out.”
 - I remember events that just happened.
-

How I Feel

- I am frightened by new experiences and new people.
- I’m upset when you leave me, even if it’s for a short time.
- I feel so relieved when you return.
- I’m upset when people make a lot of fuss over me.
- I get frustrated or lose my temper when I can’t find something.



Feeding Your Baby

At this age, most babies enjoy fork-mashed foods in addition to pureed foods.

Now that your baby is 8 months old and may have some teeth, you can fork-mash vegetables and fruits, in addition to straining or pureeing them.

Mash a favorite vegetable thoroughly with a fork or you can use a potato masher for mashing foods like ripe bananas and cooked apples, winter squash, white or sweet potatoes, or carrots. Make sure the food contains no lumps, pieces of skin, strings, or seeds. The consistency will be a little thicker than pureed food.

Meats are good for your baby, too, but do not give her fried meats. Trim all fat from the meat and mash it thoroughly with a fork.

Cooked foods may be strained through a fine mesh sieve or strainer. A sieve is also useful for steam cooking small amounts of food for your baby. Be sure that all food particles are removed when you wash the strainer.



Be Careful...

- Do not add salt, sugar, or seasonings to baby foods. Foods that taste bland to an adult are a new taste experience to an infant. Some sodium is necessary for good health, but there is enough natural sodium in foods. Added salt will provide too much sodium for a small baby and can even be harmful.
- Do not feed honey to your baby during her first year. Honey may carry botulism spores that can harm her.
- Do not use “leftovers” to make baby foods. Leftover foods are likely to have higher levels of bacterial contamination than freshly prepared foods.
- Do not feed your baby raw eggs or raw milk. These raw foods may be sources of infections that can be dangerous for her.
- Do not feed your baby chunky foods, such as corn, nuts, popcorn, and seeds, or coarse textured foods, such as cookies, that crumble easily. Such foods are difficult for your baby to eat, and they may make her choke.
- Do not be afraid to serve foods cold. Most babies will accept cold food. If you want to warm your baby’s food, do it just before serving.
- Remember, with a little patience, you can help your baby appreciate a wide variety of tastes and textures in new foods.

Games Babies Play

Little Piggy: A Communication Game

Purpose Of Game

- Teaches your baby to learn about his body.
- Helps your baby to become interested in playing games with others.

How To Play

- Your baby can be sitting and facing you, lying on his back, or sitting on your lap.
- Hold your baby's big toe between your thumb and index finger and say, "This little piggy went to market."
- Hold the second toe and say, "This little piggy stayed home."
- Hold the next toe and say, "This little piggy had none."
- Hold the little toe and say, "And this little piggy cried wee, wee, wee, all the way home."



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.

Watch Out!

Keep your baby safe. Baby proof your house!



To get an idea of what the world looks like to your baby, get down on the floor and look around! Don't things look big and exciting? Wouldn't you be tempted to explore? No wonder your baby tries to satisfy her curiosity and touches everything! Now that she is getting better at moving around, it's a good time to baby proof your home.

- Make sure there are no sharp edges on furniture or loose cords dangling from lamps.
- Keep pot handles turned so they don't hang over the stove front or sides.
- Insert plastic safety caps in all

unused electric outlets.

- Keep drawers and cabinet doors shut.
- Unplug appliances when not in use.
- Remove all plastic bags, especially ones from dry cleaning stores. Throw them away or put them out of your baby's reach.
- Don't leave uninflated or burst toy balloons around. Your baby will try to swallow them.
- Check the house for small objects like buttons, coins, needles, rubber bands, bottle tops, and razor

blades. Put them in a safe place.

- Place safety gates at the top or bottom of stairs.
- Open only those windows that are out of your baby's reach. If you must open low windows, open them only a little to make sure your baby can't fall out.
- Lock all medicines in a medicine cabinet out of reach.
- Remove all cleaning aids (detergents, ammonia, etc.) from under the sink and move to a high shelf or locked cabinet.
- Keep cosmetic and beauty items out of your baby's reach.
- Ensure that drapery or venetian blind cords are kept out of your baby's reach.

In case of emergency, you and your family should know the phone numbers of the nearest hospital, and the fire and police departments. Make a list of phone numbers and keep it in a handy place.

Safety information on baby proofing your home is available by writing the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, Washington, DC, 20207. You can also call their toll-free hot line for Consumer Product Safety Information: 1-800-638-2772, to get information on baby product recalls.



Setting Family Rules



Parents used to think that the only way children develop into responsible adults was through strict discipline, and the rule “Children should be seen but not heard.” Today, many parents try to set family rules that are not so strict.

Even though your baby is only 8 months old, it’s not too early to start setting your family rules. For example, when you say “Don’t touch the stove—it’s hot,” you are teaching a basic rule of safety.

Now is a good time to decide:

- What your family rules will be.
- Who will make the rules.
- How your baby will learn them.

To teach your baby what is allowed in your family, be honest about your feelings and say what you mean. For example, if he does something you don’t like, tell him not to do it any more and explain why. You will get your message across by being firm in your voice, in your manner, and in your actions.

As your baby develops, he will learn what the limits are in your home, and it will be easier on all of you!

If you have questions, call your county Extension office. Phone numbers are listed on the last page of this newsletter.

A good book to refer to about your child’s development is *The First Three Years* by Burton White and published by Prentice Hall in 1990. You can purchase it from a bookstore or look for it in your public library.

Questions

Q. “My baby has suddenly become scared and shy of strangers. She sometimes cries even when my mother comes to visit. Why does she act this way, and what can I do to help her overcome this fear?”

A. First of all, don’t worry. A fear of strangers at this age is normal. Babies are beginning to develop a sense of self and others, an important step in growing up. They are afraid because they know the difference between close family members and strangers. So they often become upset when someone they don’t know hovers around them.

Some babies howl or whimper with genuine fear. Others cling to their mothers and refuse to let go. Some babies, just like adults, develop an instant dislike for a person.

However she reacts, comfort your baby if she is fearful of strangers. Hold her close to let her know that you love her and she is safe. If you are embarrassed, explain to friends or relatives not to take it personally that your baby needs time to get used to people. Ask them not to rush up to her or try to pick her up. As your baby gets older she will feel more secure and more comfortable with other people.

.....

Coming Next:

- **Discipline—What Is It?**
- **A Special Time for Baby and You**

NMSU COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE OFFICES

Baby's First Wish

Editor: Diana S. DelCampo, Ph.D.
Child Development and Family Life Specialist



Baby's First Wish was adapted from Parent Express, California Cooperative Extension, by Dr. Wendy Hamilton and Dr. Diana DelCampo, New Mexico State University Cooperative Extension Service.



Another 4-H Prevention Program

Order Alert: *Baby's First Wish* is an educational program from NMSU's Cooperative Extension Service. This newsletter series is designed for parents with young children. To order the series, contact your county Extension Office. 2001

Visit our Web site at: www.nmcyfar.org

Alamogordo	401 Fairgrounds Rd.	437-0231
Albuquerque	1510 Menaul NW	243-1386
Aztec	213A S. Oliver	334-9496
Bernalillo	811 Camino del Pueblo	867-2582
Carlsbad	1304 W. Stevens	857-6595
Carrizozo	300 Central	648-2311
Clayton	100 Street	374-9361
Clovis	818 Main	763-6505
Deming	700 S. Silver	546-8806
Dulce	Hawks Drive	759-3530
Española	1122 Industrial Park Rd. #82	753-3405
Estancia	County Courthouse	384-2416
Fort Sumner	514 Avenue C	355-2381
Gallup	5002 W. Historic 66	863-3432
Grants	515 W. High St.	287-9266
Las Cruces	808 N. Alameda	525-6649
Las Vegas	County Courthouse Annex	454-1497
Lordsburg	300 Shakespeare	542-9291
Los Alamos	475 20th St.	662-2656
Los Lunas	319D Hwy. 314	865-9561
Los Ojos	Los Ojos Hwy. House 72	588-7423
Lovington	100 N. Main Ste. 10-C	396-2819
Mora	Hwy. 518	387-2856
Mosquero	3rd & Pine	673-2341
Portales	705 E. Lime St.	356-4417
Raton	3rd & Savage	445-8071
Reserve	County Courthouse	533-6430
Roswell	200 E. Chisum, #4	622-3210
Santa Fe	3229 Rodeo Rd.	471-4711
Santa Rosa	450 Parker Ave.	472-3652
Silver City	2610 N. Silver	388-1559
Socorro	214 Neel Ave., NW	835-0610
Taos	202 Chamisa Road	758-3982
T or C	2101 S. Broadway	894-2375
Tucumcari	301 S. 3rd	461-0562
Zuni	02 Route 301 North	782-4495

New Mexico State University is an equal opportunity, affirmative action employer. NMSU and the U.S. Department of Agriculture cooperating.

8 Months

NEW MEXICO STATE UNIVERSITY
COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE
BOX 30003, MSC 3AE
LAS CRUCES, NM 88003