

# Top Tips: Your Developing Baby 0 – 3 Months

**Newborn babies come into the world ready and eager to learn. They are geared to move, to find out about the strange new world and to communicate with those around them. Amazing! Although not yet able to speak words and having what appears little control over arms and legs, your baby is all the time trying to understand what his or her body can do and making sense of everything that is going on. Development is very rapid in these first few months. This baby is an active explorer.**

The ideas below will help you to support your baby's development.

## **Tip 1. Stimulate your new baby as much as possible**

From the beginning your child's brain is like a sponge, eager to soak up new information and to learn. You provide this by being with baby and talking and listening. Toys can be useful too. Choose ones that are brightly coloured or black and white/red and white and those that make a noise. You can introduce books with pictures at this time too as baby will love to gaze at the pictures and want to touch them. Baby gyms allow visual stimulation and plenty of exercise for legs and arms.

## **Tip 2. Enjoy being physically close to your baby. Try some baby massage**

From as early as several weeks, you can gently soothe baby with gentle massage. It is also a good way to tone those growing muscles. Start at the head and work down, stroking each finger in turn, knees and legs, right down to individual toes. This works best using your thumb and fingertips.

## **Tip 3. Encourage your baby to explore your face**

Babies love to stare at human faces. They find you fascinating and will use all their senses in exploring yours thoroughly. Your baby will look at your face taking in all your features. Let baby touch your face and discover what it feels like and what your skin smells like. Let baby feel and play with your hair too. They are finding out all the time.

## **Tip 4. Allow time for baby to lie on his/her back**

This position is the most comfortable for your baby. It provides lots of opportunities to kick legs and to wave arms about. This helps to build up those important muscles

and help with co-ordination. In a cot, take away the blankets at times to give a sense of freedom. When changing nappies allow extra time to let those legs kick. Choose different positions for your baby to experience. Let your baby lie on his/her back, on the front (but not when sleeping) and sit up in a bouncy chair so to view the world from different positions.

### **Tip 5. Talk to your baby as much as possible**

You can begin talking to your newborn right away. Babies soon tune into the sound of your voice. They find comfort here and will learn quickly that different people's voices are not the same. Make eye contact and hold baby close to you. Nappy changing, feeding and bath times are great opportunities to do this but you can do it anytime and anywhere!

### **Tip 6. Encourage baby to speak to you**

At this stage your baby is not yet using words but is all the time communicating with you. Start to use his or her name. Repeat it often. Try to speak in the same tone each time, clearly and slowly. When you change the tone of voice, notice what reaction this has. Smile and when that first smile appear (around 2-3 months), send a huge beaming smile back! Keep close so that your baby can really look at your mouth as you speak.

### **Tip 7. Help develop early listening skills**

Remember all those nursery rhymes and songs from your own childhood? Be familiar with them because your baby will also love listening to them. Sing to your baby. Avoid too much background noise. Sometimes you might whisper, at other times speak a little louder than normal. Good listening skills are an important part of being a good communicator.

### **Tip 8. Relax around your baby**

A calm environment is what you are aiming for. Be relaxed yourself as babies are sensitive to any anxieties you may have and soon pick up when you are distressed. The time you spend with your baby is precious. Enjoy it. Domestic chores can wait. When you are with your baby enjoy each moment.

## Tip 9. Interpret your baby's cries and other sounds

Babies show what their feelings through their cries. All babies cry when they are either hungry, upset, cold, tired or in pain. They have different sounds and by listening carefully you will very quickly know what it is your baby is telling you. Don't leave babies to cry as they can become distressed and take down a lot of air which can cause more discomfort.

## Tip 10. Set routines that work for you both

Each of us is an individual and what works for one person may not be true for another. Work out the best for you and your baby. After all you are the expert with your own baby. Feeding times, sleeping patterns all need to be worked out. All babies benefit from routines that are consistent.

## Important milestones

Moving	Communicating	Learning	Being with others
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Moves legs and arms in a general way with limited control.</li> <li>▪ Hand control begins at 2 months.</li> <li>▪ Head control is much improved by the third month.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Responds to your voice within days.</li> <li>▪ Communicates through a greater range of cries and cooes. 1 month.</li> <li>▪ Learning about turn-taking as you speak. 8 weeks.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Enjoys looking at anything near to face.</li> <li>▪ Can track an object a short distance away with eyes.</li> <li>▪ Is attracted to contrasting patterns and colours.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Likes to be held and spoken to.</li> <li>▪ Stares at human faces for increasingly longer periods.</li> <li>▪ First smile appears by 3 months.</li> </ul>