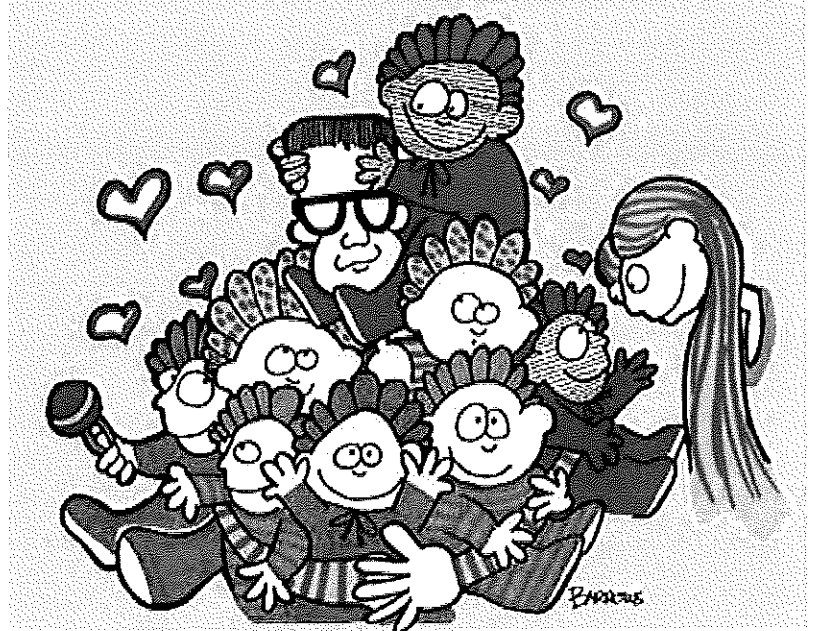


The Observer: Your New Baby, Birth to 6 Months

This is the time in your baby's life when what's important is touching, rubbing, closeness, affection, talking, patting, nuzzling, and looking into your eyes. Your baby is learning even before birth. Your baby knows your voice and other sounds from your house and family. Your baby is listening and watching the world, soaking in new experiences like a sponge, quietly and completely. Even a little baby has a personality. Before words, your baby uses his/her body to talk to you. Keep the conversation going on your baby's level. Try these ideas:



- Imitate your baby's cooing and babbling.
- Talk to your baby in a pleasant voice.
- Be exciting — use your face to show what you are saying.
- Provide sounds for your baby — music, singing, noisy toys.
- Talk about all the house sounds, like water and pet noises.
- Use variety and expression in your voice.
- Hang shiny, colorful, safe things above the crib and out of reach.
- Show the baby objects around the house; remember that what is ordinary to you is fascinating to this tiny new person.
- Look in the mirror with baby and talk about what you see.
- Talk as you are changing diapers, feeding, or bathing your baby. Talk the storyline for your daily activities: "Now it is time to go to bed." Shorten your sentences and repeat a lot; this is great for your little one.
- Sing in the car to your child, who is securely buckled in the car safety seat.
- Peek-a-boo is a great first game.
- Dance with your young partner. Holding your child while dancing to different types of music develops rhythmic responses and can be great exercise for you.
- Read books aloud to your child, even your own book. Your voice is a source of

learning and security to your little one.

- Child proof your house now. Crawling will start sooner than you anticipate. If you have questions about "baby proofing" your house, your local school nurse is a knowledgeable resource.

It's never too early to read with your child...

Recite the stories and rhymes you remember from your childhood — nursery rhymes, lullabies, poems, stories.

- Cloth books —
 - *Baby's First Cloth Book* by George Ford
 - *Hush Little Baby: A Peggy Cloth Book*
- Board books —
 - *The Pudgy Peek-a-Book Book* by Amye Rosenberg
 - *Tickle, Tickle* by Helen Oxenbury

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