

The Baby *Adventure*

Parenting Wisdom
for Birth to 12 Months



Dr. Scott Turansky
and Joanne Miller, RN, BSN



The Baby *Adventure*

Parenting Wisdom for Birth to 12 Months

By Dr. Scott Turansky and Joanne Miller, RN, BSN

Published by the National Center for Biblical Parenting

National Center for Biblical Parenting, 76 Hopatcong Drive,
Lawrenceville, NJ 08648-4136

THE BABY ADVENTURE ©2011 by National Center for Biblical
Parenting.

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced without
written permission, except for brief quotations in books and critical
reviews. For information, write National Center for Biblical Parenting,
76 Hopatcong Drive, Lawrenceville, NJ 08648-4136.

First eBook release, 2011
First Printing, 2011

Unless otherwise noted, Scripture is taken from the HOLY BIBLE,
NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION®. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984
International Bible Society. Used by permission of Zondervan. All
rights reserved.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

The Baby Adventure: Parenting Wisdom for Birth to 12 months
Scott Turansky and Joanne Miller

ISBN 978-1-888685-48-0

1. Child rearing--Religious aspects--Christianity.

Turansky, Scott, 1957-
Miller, Joanne, 1960-

Title. BV4529.T88 1996 649.1-dc22

The names of people who have come to the National Center
for Biblical Parenting for counseling have been changed. Some
illustrations combine individual stories in order to protect
confidentiality. Stories of the authors' children have been used by
permission.

The National Center for Biblical Parenting is a nonprofit corporation
committed to the communication of sound, biblical parenting
principles through teaching, counseling, and publishing written,
audio, and video materials.

To obtain a complete resource list or have Dr. Scott Turansky and
Joanne Miller present their material live, you may contact the National
Center for Biblical Parenting, 76 Hopatcong Drive, Lawrenceville, NJ
08648-4136, (800) 771-8334 or visit the website at: biblicalparenting.org

You may also want to take online parenting courses at Biblical Parenting
University. Learn more at www.biblicalparentinguniversity.com

You may email us at parent@biblicalparenting.org

Table of Contents

About the Authors	5
Introduction	7
1 • Setting Up Good Patterns and Routines.	11
2 • Understanding the Importance of Bonding.	15
3 • Calming a Crying Baby	19
4 • Feeding Your Newborn	23
5 • Developmental Milestones	29
6 • Breast or Bottle or Both	33
7 • Dealing with Postpartum Depression	37
8 • Pacifiers, In or Out.	41
9 • Lots of Right Ways and Wrong Ways to Parent	45
10 • The Blessing of Grandparents	49
11 • Getting Off Schedule	53
12 • Keep a Sense of Humor	57
13 • I Feel Overwhelmed	61
14 • Two Primary Character Qualities	65
15 • What You Need to Know About Immunizations	69
16 • When to Call the Doctor	73
17 • And Baby Makes Three	79
18 • Sex After Baby	83
19 • Moms and Dads Do it Differently	87
20 • Adjusting Your Weight after Pregnancy.	91
21 • Be Prepared for Surprises—They Happen.	95
22 • Take Time to Journal.	99
23 • Making Car Rides Easier	103
24 • Sleeping through the Night	107
25 • Talking to Your Baby	113
26 • A Baby's Personality.	117
27 • Your Baby's Emotions	121

28 • Intellectual Development	125
29 • Spiritual Development.	129
30 • Pray for and with Your Baby	133
31 • A Spiritual Milestone—Dedicating Your Baby	137
32 • Read Books to Your Baby	141
33 • Let Your Baby Explore	145
34 • The Use of the Word “No”	151
35 • Going Back to Work	155
36 • Time to Wean.	159
37 • Teething Torture	163
38 • Starting Solid Foods	167
39 • Playing with Your Baby	173
40 • Separation Anxiety.	177
41 • Sleep and Your Older Infant	183
42 • Food and Your Older Infant	187
43 • Crying and Your Older Infant	191
44 • It’s Just the Beginning	195

About the Authors



Dr. Scott Turansky and Joanne Miller, RN, BSN are the co-founders of the National Center for Biblical Parenting. Their heart-based approach to parenting is revolutionizing families. Instead of relying on simple behavior modification, they provide tools that have greater effectiveness for lasting change. They're the authors and editors of numerous books, parent-training curriculum, and children's programs designed to strengthen the family. Turansky and Miller are also the co-founders of Biblical Parenting University, providing parents with easy access to parent training through online courses.

Scott Turansky is a full time pastor of Calvary Chapel, a multi-campus church in New Jersey. He and his wife Carrie have five adult children and three grandchildren.

Joanne Miller is a pediatric nurse, working at the Bristol-Myers Squibb Children's Hospital in New Brunswick, New Jersey. She and her husband, Ed, have two grown sons. She also works full-time leading the National Center for Biblical Parenting.



biblicalparenting.org
biblicalparentinguniversity.com
parent@biblicalparenting.org

A large, light gray decorative swirl graphic that frames the title and extends across the top of the page.

Introduction

Bringing a baby home from the hospital can be one of the sweetest and scariest moments all at the same time. Finally all the waiting is over. Not only that, but you've accomplished more hard work than you ever imagined possible through your pregnancy, labor, and delivery. Or maybe the new baby is a result of years of praying, researching, waiting, home visits, application forms, and more waiting. No matter how this new little life came to you, you now have a little baby as a reward... and life is about to change forever!

You may have thought you had it all figured out. After all, your parents did it, your friends have done it... it's just natural. But now that you're holding this little bundle, the doubts and questions come flooding in. Here's where the adventure begins.

So many ideas are out there about raising children. You can try to absorb the libraries of wisdom, but soon you'll realize that a lot of the ideas disagree with each other. You may try one thing for a while and then switch to something else that you believe might work better. That's one of the signs of a good parent and our first piece of advice for you as you begin your journey. Be flexible and realize that it takes time to get to know your own baby. God made this baby, and you're the caretaker for what may seem at

times like forever. But it's really just a short time, and when you look back someday, like others you'll say, "It was too short." Sometimes parents complain, "But the baby didn't come with an instruction manual!" The reality is that God planned it that way.

Your baby has a unique personality. The biological and emotional makeup of your child is like no other. That's part of the intrigue and adventure. You have to study your child. The job of parenting is one of trial and error, of exploration and discovery. And yes, there are good resources to help you along the way. You and your baby will develop some unique ways of relating and pretty soon you'll be the expert on your baby.

Sure, you'll want to get advice from other parents and teachers, but much of the fun is studying your own child and learning what works for the two of you.

All children are unique and special. We can't give you one approach or technique that will work with all kids. There is no one right way to raise a child. You'll find wisdom in books and the vast number of opinions from moms and dads who have gone before you, but you'll have to evaluate which of those ideas is best for you and your baby.

This isn't a book about feeding, bathing, dressing, and carrying your baby. Although those subjects will be discussed, this book is more about developing a philosophy of parenting early on. Many individual ideas are contained in these pages. You'll find those ideas helpful. But taken as a whole, the ideas represent a way of living with a child that helps them grow and develop physically, mentally, socially, emotionally, and spiritually.

Each chapter contains scripture. Sometimes the Bible passage is included in that chapter just to encourage you in

your spiritual walk with the Lord. One of the things you'll learn somewhere along your parenting journey is that you need God and his grace to be the parent that your child needs. For some it comes early. For others it comes later. But you'll need the Lord to provide the wisdom to raise your child.

So please read this book with more than an eye on techniques for this or that problem. We designed this book to help you develop a biblical worldview regarding parenting. Build that foundation now and the rest of your parenting journey will be much easier. May God richly bless you and your family as you grow together.



Setting Up Good Patterns and Routines

Bringing a new baby home is a relief for many parents. Now you have the freedom to choose your own schedule and make your own decisions—or do you? During the first few days, weeks, and often months with a new baby, it's actually the baby who sets the agenda. Together you and your baby will work out a feeding and sleeping schedule and you'll learn how to best care for your baby's needs.

At first, you might not even call it a schedule. Just when you think you're on a roll with feeding every three hours and sleeping in between, everything changes. Sickness, colic, or just normal growth and development adjusts the schedule and any routine seems elusive.

But there are some things you can do as you settle in. The way you hold your baby, rock her to sleep, and play peek-a-boo starts to form significant patterns. These are called relational routines and they're just as important as any schedule you may try to develop. During these first few weeks, you and your baby are learning to communi-

cate with each other. You're developing an understanding that will be hard to explain to others. Relational routines form the basis of all human interaction. You are in the process now of forming those routines.

You'll learn the way your baby likes to be held. You'll learn his preferences for how he likes to fall asleep and what he thinks is entertaining. You'll develop ways to comfort your baby that will soon become instinctive. There's so much to discover about this new little person, and before long, you'll develop the confidence and skills needed.

Some theories of parenting suggest that you impose a schedule early on in an infant's life. Testimonies of the success of such programs seem to suggest that parents should move faster to get their babies sleeping through the night. And for some families that's helpful. But most babies benefit more from a responsive approach that allows the infant to set the schedule and determine when eating is appropriate. You'll learn more about why we suggest this as you read on in this book. The key, however, is to know your baby and that comes primarily through relationship.

With a newborn, schedule routines are less important than relational routines. In fact, as a baby grows, schedules will take on more importance but relational routines will always be significant. So taking time to evaluate the way you relate is a good investment in your parenting.

Relational routines are interactive. They're defined by the way you respond to your baby's cries, how you smile and talk while you're feeding your baby, and how you put your baby to sleep. Those relational routines are so important because they teach valuable lessons about love, relationship, communication, and closeness.

Relational routines also involve how you listen and

learn. What is she trying to communicate now? Is she hungry? Uncomfortable? Tired? Over-stimulated? Or just plain bored? Your baby has no words yet, but communication is still integral to your relationship. Listening and learning take place by experimenting and being creative. Does this help? Does that help? You liked this last time; will it work again? Over time, your baby will teach you what he wants and likes and you'll teach him what love, and trust, and comfort are all about.

When it comes to a schedule, you'll want to go with the flow for the first few months. If your baby is hungry, feed her. But if she's bored, entertain her. Parent-directed schedules will come in time, but for now, enjoy the communication and learn, learn, learn.

Attitude is part of your relational routine too. Think about your attitude when you go into your baby's room to respond to her cries or her need to be changed. Your baby will know if you're irritated, annoyed, and angry or whether you're peaceful and enjoy the work of parenting. Yes, you're tired. That goes without saying. But it can be a frustrated tired or a peaceful "I'm glad you're here" tired. As you work with your baby look for ways to communicate enjoyment, excitement, and delight.

During those first few weeks you'll likely feel like life will never be yours again. Walking the floors for hours with a fussy baby, or feeding the little guy every two hours, may make you think that this will be your sentence for years to come. But the reality is that life will begin to change all too quickly. Infancy is a stage of rapid change. The funny thing is that you may have heard parents lament "they grow up so fast" but I'm sure you've never heard a mom or dad complain, "he stayed an infant too long." Time will fly by, so

enjoy every minute. Spend time staring. It's okay. Hold her just because she's yours. Be sure to make the most of these early weeks.

As you gaze at the miracle of this new life, be sure to reflect on how God loves to gaze on you. In fact Ephesians 3:17-19 says, "I pray that you...may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ." There's no doubt you've heard before that God loves you, but now as you look at this little baby day in and day out you may get a bigger glimpse of how great God's love actually is.

You may have thought in the past that you knew all about love. Dating, courtship, and marriage provide a certain kind of love that's beautiful and special. But the love that you give and receive from a child is different. There's something about that parent/child bond that releases a new kind of love in your heart. It's interesting that God chose that love to describe his relationship with you. Spend some time just sitting in his presence and thank him for the new life in your heart as well as the new life in your arms.



Understanding the Importance of Bonding

One of the mysteries of childrearing is the importance of the bond between a parent and child. It's this bond that becomes a child's first model of intimacy and closeness. Bonding provides benefits for both the parent and the child that go beyond our understanding. The intense attachment provides the motivation for a parent to get up for a 2:00 am feeding, take on the role of protector and nurturer, and develop the desire to shower love and attention on a child who gives little in return.

Bonding helps provide security and safety for a baby, comfort when distressed, and emotional attachment between parent and child. It contributes to a positive sense of well-being and even aids in the development process. Bonding lays the foundation for self-confidence to develop. Most newborn babies are ready to bond immediately, but parents may require some time and adjustment. If adoption is involved, bonding is usually a bit more complicated. Challenges such as the need for intensive medical attention create obstacles as well. Sickness on the part of the mother

or even other family members can impact the process of bonding. Furthermore, other issues such as an unplanned pregnancy or spousal conflict can hinder the normal love-connection that infancy usually provides.

Bonding doesn't happen instantly; it's a process and takes place during the normal parenting activities. Feeding, changing, carrying, holding, and playing with your baby all contribute to the bonding process. In fact, you may not even know that it's happening until you get that first smile or interested look.

In order to increase the bonding experience, keep in mind the different senses as you connect with your child. A baby bonds in a number of ways. Hearing a parent's voice, for example, is a continual reminder that the parent is nearby and interacting. A gentle voice helps the baby feel safe and secure. Physical touch is important, so spend a lot of time holding, caressing, and cuddling your baby. Eye contact is also important. Babies enjoy looking at the human face and are soothed by the movements a parent makes.

Of course smell is important. Babies quickly learn to recognize the familiar smell of Mom and Dad. Babies can even distinguish the smell of Mom's milk over other smells and quickly learn to prefer it. Smiles and delight further cement the bond between parent and child. Babies even connect through their emotions. They can tell when a parent is upset, angry, or anxious. Your peaceful, relaxed, and calm attitude can provide your baby with a soothing connection with you.

What babies hear, taste, touch, see, and even smell contributes to a feeling of closeness with Mom or Dad. This closeness contributes to the ability to trust and feel secure.

So be sure to spend time just enjoying your baby, holding, playing, talking, and merely having fun. These tasks are important for your child's development. Feeding times become great opportunities to demonstrate care and love and to allow the bonding process to develop.

Premature babies and those with serious medical needs may require even more nurturing. Planned and deliberate times of bonding are often necessary to help the infant develop in an emotionally healthy way. Adopted children may take longer to bond with their new parents and, depending on the age of the child, that bonding may look very different. In the end, though, the child learns about parental love, where to come for nurture and protection, and about the comforts of living in a family.

Bonding isn't just for babies, though. Parents need to bond with the infant as well. When life is overly stressful or parents are very busy and tired, bonding can be difficult. Sometimes parents experience illness, struggle with the gender of the child, feel the added financial burden, or simply have trouble connecting for one reason or another. These issues need to be addressed and worked through if the parent is going to bond successfully.

Babies need to bond with both Mom and Dad. Bonding with Dad may happen differently than with Mom, though, and on a separate timetable. Regular times spent holding and caring for your baby can provide opportunities for the bonding to take place with both parents.

Both Mom and Dad can spend time bathing, feeding, soothing, changing, and carrying the baby. Allow your child to touch your face and feel your skin. Talk and sing to your baby. Take time to enjoy your baby's smell, movements, soft skin, noises, and funny expressions. Study your

baby and enjoy what makes your infant unique. Most importantly, remember that your baby needs your love and care and that you're an essential part of that child's growth and development.

Just as the personalities of parents differ, so do the ways they bond. So be patient with yourself and your spouse. If you don't feel like cuddling, do it anyway. Feelings will come with time. You may feel like you haven't accomplished anything all day, but if you cuddled with your baby, you did a wonderful thing. The house may be dirty, the laundry piling up, and the cupboards nearly bare, but if you spent time enjoying your child, smiling at his silly gestures or caressing her tiny feet, then you accomplished something quite significant. You've done some heart-work called bonding.

Bonding is a function of time and interaction. God wants to bond with you and offers personal interaction as the means for doing that. Take time to think about how God wants to nurture you. Spend time talking to him. Get to know his voice and see his care for you every day. This time of raising a child can do tremendous things for your relationship with your heavenly Father.

To help the Jewish people understand that God was there for them during a very difficult time, he sent the prophet Isaiah to the people with these words, "As a mother comforts her child, so will I comfort you." (Isaiah 66:13) God uses that special relationship between a mother and a child to describe his love and care of his own.



Calming a Crying Baby

Babies cry for a number of reasons and discovering the cause usually involves a lot of trial and error. It's not just finding the problem that requires experimentation, but then you have to find a solution that works for your baby. Babies may cry when they're sick, hungry, or need to be burped or changed. Your baby might be underdressed or overdressed, or in the sun, or a breeze. A baby may cry when bored, lonely, or over-stimulated, or having cold hands or cold feet. And babies sometimes just want company. These are just some of the reasons babies cry. Crying is one of the few ways of getting a parent's attention. The reality is, your baby doesn't have many choices when it comes to communicating, so sometimes crying is just a baby's way of reaching out and saying, "Spend time with me."

Over time parents learn to recognize the difference between a cry to eat, a cry of pain, or a lonely cry. But sometimes it seems like the baby doesn't even know why he's crying. He's just unhappy, and fussing is his way of complaining.

When a baby cries, a parent often feels upset. You want to solve the problem and so you look for ways to do so.

You check the diaper, try to feed, hold and cuddle, or just turn your baby to a new position to see if that works. When your solutions don't work, you may begin to feel irritated, annoyed, and frustrated. Some parents start feeling inadequate because they can't solve the crying problem. Parents may even panic because the crying sounds so pathetic it's like the world is about to end.

Since dads tend to be problem solvers by nature, they're particularly prone to frustration, or even anger, when the baby seems unresponsive to comfort attempts. This can be a real growing edge for dads as they learn to be patient when their babies are upset. If you struggle with this, remember that sometimes a baby will continue to cry and your comfort is helpful, even if doesn't make the crying stop. Your calm and gentle voice is what your baby needs. Don't allow her stress to become yours.

The first rule-of-thumb for calming a crying baby is to stay calm yourself. Part of your task will eventually be to teach your child to soothe himself. Your tender care now often prepares the way for the future. You want to communicate, "It's going to be okay, you're safe, I love you, God loves you, you can handle this..." You may even repeat these words as you're holding and rocking your baby. You want to communicate a sense that you're in control, so don't get sucked into the distress.

Here are some suggestions to try as you work to calm your baby's cries. You might try using touch by cuddling and caressing your baby. Sometimes babies like to be wrapped tightly in a blanket because it makes them feel secure, so learning to swaddle can be helpful. Your baby might like being rocked or being in a wind-up swing. Dimming the lights or turning off the TV can reduce noise and

stimulation. Allowing the child to suck on fingers, a pacifier, a bottle, or breast often consoles a baby.

Sometimes babies cry when they're overtired or overstimulated, so bouncing gently and rhythmically can soothe them off to sleep. Patting them gently on the back can have a settling effect as well. Other times, babies are bored and need some stimulation or new surroundings, so going for a walk outside can be helpful. Singing or gently talking, turning on a fan, or providing some visual stimulation may create a helpful distraction.

You'll find times, though, when nothing seems to work. In those moments it used to be popular to say, "She must just have gas." It's hard to know if that's really the case but it does give parents the realization that sometimes there's nothing more that you can do. If your baby seems unable to receive comfort, you may try allowing him to lie on a blanket or in his crib and cry for fifteen minutes. You may find that comforting your baby is much easier after that time.

If however your baby continues to cry and seems inconsolable, it would be good to get some advice from a more experienced parent or even a physician, especially if this happens frequently. If you find yourself becoming irritated and angry you need to step back and settle yourself down. It can be quite frustrating to try solution after solution with little success.

Your anger, however, won't solve the problem. If you're angry put your baby in a safe place and walk away. The crying won't hurt the baby, so if you need a break take one or get another caregiver involved. Sometime being left alone is just what baby needs to fall asleep.

Taking care of a baby that cries a lot can be emotionally

draining. Be sure to step back at times to gain perspective so that you can help your baby in the most beneficial ways. Talk to other parents and get some advice and support. Caring for a baby all day can make you feel lonely and isolated. You may need to have someone babysit for an hour or so to allow you to take a much needed break. Most infants have parents who are quite tired. Make sure that you do all you can to limit other activities and do your best to get the rest you need.

One of the benefits of spiritual resources is that they fill up depleted emotional tanks. There will be times when you feel discouraged and overwhelmed. Especially in those moments, you want to pray and ask God to give you the strength to do the job of parenting. Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians 12:9, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." It's amazing to see how drawing close to the Lord can get you through a difficult day. Take time to thank him for his grace and look for ways to rely on it every day.



Feeding Your Newborn

During the first days and weeks of your baby's life, feeding will occupy a lot of your time. Sometimes parents feel nervous about the number of feedings especially when a baby seems to want to eat every hour or if the baby is sleeping for several hours at a time. "Should I wake him up? It's been a few hours." "Should I just give her a pacifier if she wants to eat every hour?"

These and other feeding questions can leave parents feeling anxious about caring for their baby. Furthermore, when a baby is colicky or sick, a cry may be hard to translate. Over time you'll get to know your baby and settle into a regular feeding schedule. But in the first few weeks of life, there are several things you'll want to remember.

First of all, your baby is young and immature. She's still trying to figure out this whole feeding thing. Her suck is inefficient and she really doesn't understand "If I suck long and hard enough, then I'll feel satisfied." Furthermore, your baby's stomach is very small, so frequent feedings are necessary. Over time, as your baby grows, your feeding times will be shorter and less often because the process will be more efficient, but in the first few weeks of life

feeding is going to take up most of your time and energy—and that's okay!

Some newborn babies take to sucking and swallowing quite naturally, but many need time to figure it out. You can help your baby by feeding often, relaxing and enjoying the time, and being patient with the learning process. Take advantage of your infant's natural tendency called a "rooting reflex." If you gently stroke your baby's cheek, he'll open his mouth and turn to that side. This natural reflex is to help a baby learn how to suck on the breast. It can be used with bottle-fed babies too. A gentle stroke says, "It's time to eat."

It's natural for breastfeeding moms to wonder, "Is my baby getting enough to eat?" This is a legitimate concern and is a question your pediatrician will want to know the answer to as well. Several indicators can help you discern if your baby is doing okay. First of all, you want to be sure your infant is wetting diapers several times a day. Most will wet with every feeding. That's a good sign.

Another indicator is whether your baby seems satisfied after feeding. This can be a little tricky though, because the sucking process can put an infant to sleep before he's really had enough to eat. Remember too if you're breastfeeding, that the more the baby sucks, the more milk your body is stimulated to produce. So if your baby wants to suck, and you think he's not getting anything, that's okay. The sucking is good for both of you.

As a rule, bottle-fed babies tend to eat less often. Taking two to three ounces every three hours is usually sufficient. Breastfed babies tend to eat more often since the breast milk is digested more quickly and easily. Your baby is unique though, and age and weight also play into the equation.

If your baby likes to “snack,” that is, prefers short feeds with short naps in between, be patient. Remember that the more you feed your baby, the more milk you’ll produce, so allowing her to just suck a bit is fine. Snackers will often consolidate their feedings on their own after the first 2-3 months. If this becomes a pattern and she never really seems satisfied, consider if your baby is actually hungry when you begin to feed. You may try the art of distraction and movement to see if she’s bored rather than hungry. Frequent feedings are fine, but notice if your infant is truly sucking and swallowing - that will indicate an adequate feeding.

You may wonder how to know if your baby is getting milk during a feeding. Watch for a pattern of short, rapid sucks followed by long sucks and swallows. You may even be able to hear your infant swallowing. You’ll know she is finished when she either falls deeply asleep or comes off on her own to coo or smile at you. Sometimes five minutes will do the trick, other times your baby may want a half hour or even more. Sometimes one side is enough, other times your baby will want to switch back and forth a few times. It will vary throughout the day and change over time. It’s often helpful to alternate which breast you begin with to assure frequent and adequate emptying of both breasts throughout the day.

Because your baby needs regular feeding, it may be helpful to keep her close to you at night. Having her bassinet near your bed can make feeding times easier. If, however, the baby’s breathing or normal sounds are keeping you awake, it might be good to put your baby in the next room or further away from your bed. When you hear the cry or sounds indicating the need for feeding then you

can get up and feed your baby. Babies usually make noise in their sleep, so expect some squeaks and sighs. They're just baby noises and don't necessarily mean it's time to eat.

Some parents like to have a special rocking chair or easy chair used for feeding their baby. When breastfeeding, you can feed your baby most any place you'd like. If you're using formula, you'll want to keep the ingredients handy to simplify the process.

Dads sometimes wish they could be more involved in feeding their babies. To help out, a dad might bring the baby to Mom for a feeding time or take the baby afterwards. Newborns usually need to be changed with each feeding, so that's another way Dad can help. Of course, when using formula, Dad can take part in the regular routine of feeding the baby. Giving the baby a bottle of expressed breast milk is a way that Dad can be helpful too. These alternatives can be particularly helpful at night to let Mom get some much-needed sleep.

It's important to allow a newborn to feed when she's hungry. You'll get to know your baby well enough to determine when she's sucking because she's hungry or whether she just wants to be soothed. You'll soon become the expert on your baby, so don't be afraid to try some different things while you're learning. Between the two of you, you'll determine what schedule is best.

When God wanted to describe the process of spiritual growth he used the picture of feeding a baby. In 1 Peter 2:2-3 he says, "Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation, now that you have tasted that the Lord is good." In the same way that you see a hungry baby open his mouth eager to get some food, you want to eagerly get to know God and

grow in your own salvation. What a beautiful picture of the hunger we need to have for God.



Developmental Milestones

Understanding how a baby typically develops can help you anticipate and appreciate the changes that will take place during the first year. Keep in mind that any chart or list of expectations for development gives only general guidelines. It's not necessarily cause for concern if your child isn't tracking the milestones exactly on target. In fact, no child follows the chart exactly. Often the progression from one milestone to the next in a reasonable time frame is more significant than the actual age when each is achieved.

When the Bible comments on Jesus' development it gives words that acknowledge that growth in different areas. Luke 2:52 says, "And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men." Children develop intellectually, physically, spiritually, and socially and it starts from the beginning as babies are just starting out. During the first three months, babies transform from a totally dependent newborn to an active and responsive baby. Vision and hearing develop quickly and your baby becomes obviously more aware and interested in the environment. Fixing on and following moving objects becomes

commonplace and babies turn toward familiar voices and even smile at a familiar face.

By three months a baby's neck is becoming stronger and your daughter can now hold her head more steady and even lift it up when she's placed on her stomach. Babies begin to develop some hand coordination, opening and closing hands, and grabbing for objects. Hands are used to explore, shake a toy, and often make their way into the baby's mouth. By three months a baby may begin to make cooing sounds, the start of language development.

During the next few months, between four and seven months of age, babies learn to coordinate their motor skills. You'll find them rolling over from their backs to their stomachs. Their increased intellectual ability makes them more curious about surrounding sights and sounds, thus motivating them to begin moving. Of course this requires a significant safety reminder. A baby who is motivated to roll can no longer be left in the center of a bed or changing table. Side rails and other boundaries become crucial.

Babies in this stage are also developing the muscle strength and control to begin sitting up; although balance is still an issue, they love to look around and see things from a sitting position. Propping a baby up opens a new world for observation and learning with more opportunity to hold things in the hands. Lying on a blanket on their tummies also creates new opportunities for the beginning movements necessary to crawl. They push up, roll over, and arch their backs, strengthening their muscles to prepare themselves for the next steps.

By seven months babies usually play with anyone they meet. They use more than just a cry to communicate. They can now raise and lower their voices and make babbling

sounds. It's during this time that a baby begins to laugh. As hand coordination continues to develop, a baby can now transfer an object from hand to hand and is delighted to find feet and toes. Vision is continuing to develop so that babies like more complex patterns and shapes and may even find a mirror amusing. At this stage the mouth is also a significant body part as all objects to be explored end up being "tasted." The senses in the mouth are used to learn just as much as exploring with hands and fingers.

Of course this again is a safety issue. If your baby can move independently, and wants to put all found objects in the mouth, it's time to double-check the surroundings and remove anything small enough to fit there.

Between seven and ten months babies start crawling, an important activity for integrating communication between the two sides of the brain. Baby-proofing areas of your home is essential at this stage, blocking access to cabinets, bathrooms, stairs, and other potential dangers. During these months babies begin to pull themselves up to a standing position and explore every chance they can get. Their hands are more coordinated so they can now use their thumb and first or second finger to pick things up and move them around.

During the second half of this first year, babies show obvious interest in almost anything, turning it over, around, opening it up, banging, shaking, and sticking it in their mouths. They like objects that open and shut, feel different, make sounds on cue, or look interesting. Language development is increasing and babies understand a lot more than they can repeat. Open syllables like "ba" or "ma" that they say now will eventually turn into words.

Because babies learn what's called object permanence

sometime between nine and ten months, they hunt for a toy that drops behind a chair or is hidden under a blanket, become anxious when Mom or Dad leaves, and can play games like peek-a-boo. It's usually during this stage that babies begin "cruising" as well. They learn to pull themselves to a standing position and then soon develop the coordination necessary to move their feet to walk along furniture and railings, holding on with their hands for balance.

By twelve months babies can often say one word and usually take their first solo step. This is a significant milestone from infancy to toddlerhood. Although first steps typically take place anytime between nine months and fifteen months, this one-year mark is often when it happens.

At twelve months old, your child will begin to understand the meaning of "no" and learn to follow simple commands. At this age babies point, crawl, gesture to communicate, can shake their heads no, and wave goodbye.

Babies usually double their birth weight by six months and triple it by a year. The once dependent baby who relied on reflexes to act and respond has become more independent and can move at will. One-year-olds have developed a relationship with Mom and Dad and other caregivers, and engage in purposeful two-way interactions. They often demonstrate strong preferences for certain foods, toys, security items, and routines.

Realizing that babies go through developmental stages allows parents to make appropriate parenting shifts along the way. Study your baby and learn what ways you might encourage development. If you're concerned about your baby's progress, talk to your pediatrician or medical care provider.