



How Do Infants Learn?

Infants Are Amazing

In the very beginning, it may seem that your baby does nothing but eat, sleep, cry, and fill her diapers. But your infant is learning too. She can see and hear what is happening around her and can communicate her needs and interests to others. Parents can help their babies learn by playing with them.



Infants have the ability to see faces and objects of different shapes, sizes, and colors. They can tell the difference between the voices of their parents and others. We're surprised when they mold their bodies into our arms or shoulders. We marvel at how they came into the world able to suck (</English/ages-stages/baby/Pages/Newborn-Reflexes.aspx>), communicate certain needs by crying (</English/ages-stages/baby/crying-colic/Pages/Responding-to-Your-Babys-Cries.aspx>), and, at times, calm (</English/ages-stages/baby/crying-colic/pages/Calming-A-Fussy-Baby.aspx>) down on their own. Most infants can do all of these things as soon as they are born.

You Are Your Baby's First Teacher

First experiences have a very important effect on the future. That's why you are so important to your baby's growth and development. The growth of your baby's brain is affected by the care and experiences (</English/ages-stages/baby/Pages/Parenting-Your-Infant.aspx>) you provide. Loving attention helps new brain cells connect in ways that help infants:

- Feel secure and confident.
- Make sense of new ideas and information.
- Grow healthy bodies.

Things To Watch For

Your baby has a different style or personality (</English/ages-stages/baby/pages/Babys-Temperament.aspx>) from all other babies. It's fun to get to know your baby's likes, needs, and abilities. Find out how your baby relates to other people and situations.

- Some infants like more activity, some like less.
- Some infants are louder when they laugh or cry, some are quieter by nature.

All infants let us know when they have had enough. Some ways your baby may tell you that it's time for a nap are:

- Avoids making eye contact
- Becomes sleepy or fussy, may cry a lot
- Coughs or spits
- Rubs eyes

Take Care of Yourself

Children grow faster in their first year than at any other time in their lives. This will take a lot of your time and energy. You need to be healthy and happy to give your child the best start possible. When you feel good about yourself, you will be helping your baby feel happy and secure too. This is why you need to find the time to take care of yourself. Let people know when you need support or help. After you are rested, you will have more energy and you will be able to have more fun with your baby.

Others Who Care For Your Baby

Building a close bond with parents and family members is important. It helps infants form positive relationships with others.

- By letting other people hold and talk with your baby when you are around, your baby learns how to relate to other people. [Back to Top](#)
- When you cannot be with your baby, it is best if the same few trusted people are the caregivers (/English/family-life/work-play/Pages/What-Caregivers-Need-to-Know-About-Feeding-Children.aspx). Your baby will learn to expect and enjoy their company and kindness.
- If you decide to leave your baby with a relative (/English/family-life/work-play/Pages/A-Message-for-Grandparents-Who-Provide-Childcare.aspx), friend, or professional child care provider (/English/family-life/work-play/Pages/Choosing-a-Childcare-Center.aspx), make sure that the caregiver and surroundings adequately provide a healthy, safe and comforting environment. This way, you will feel confident about the safe and loving care being provided.

A Strong Start for Life

Infants spend the first year learning to feel secure about being loved. Love—expressed in the ways mentioned here, and in many other ways by you—will give your child the physical strength to fight illness, the emotional strength to feel confident, and the ability to learn new things.

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The information contained on this Web site should not be used as a substitute for the medical care and advice of your pediatrician. There may be variations in treatment that your pediatrician may recommend based on individual facts and circumstances.