

## Cooperative Extension

### Your baby's world is growing!

#### Baby is ready to get moving!

- Baby is sitting up better as his lower back gets stronger.
- If your baby isn't moving on his tummy yet, encourage him. Sit in front of him and put his favorite toy just out of his reach. Praise him when he tries to get the toy.
- When a baby rocks back and forth on hands and knees, crawling isn't too far off.
- Soon, you'll see him pushing up on his hands and knees and crawling or creeping across the floor.



#### Temper and frustrations begin to show.

Your baby moves into another room to explore and satisfy his curiosity. He doesn't see you, he gets scared, and starts to cry. You may leave the room. He begins to scream because he is frightened of being away from you.

He might drop a toy out of sight. He screams with anger because he can't see it or get to it. He wants it back.

#### Temper and frustration are very

#### normal.

- Help Baby learn ways to deal with frustration.
- If Baby drops a toy, help her look for it. If you leave the room, tell Baby you will be back.

**Give her some extra cuddling during these bursts of independence.**

#### Temper and frustrations: normal growing pains

As Baby gets around more on his own, life is more exciting. It is also scary and frustrating.

## MONTH 7

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## Keeping Calm

When your baby is pulling leaves off your favorite plant — one by one — or smearing cereal in his hair, it's hard to stay calm.

If tempting things (like houseplants and wastebaskets) are left in Baby's reach, he will explore them. The easiest way to keep him out of trouble (and you relaxed) is to put "do not touch" things where he can't see or reach them.

Babies do things that are upsetting to parents — but they don't do these

things on purpose to annoy you.

- When Baby bangs toys together, it's because he likes the noise. If it gets on your nerves, give him a quiet toy and take the noisy toys away.
- Feeding babies is messy. They like to help. This is how they learn how to feed themselves.
- Let your Baby help with less-messy foods. Put a shower curtain or old newspaper under the high chair to make clean up easier.
- Feed only as much as you're willing to pick up off the floor. Try feeding

two cubes of soft cheese. When he finishes, give two more.

#### Remember, Baby is not doing anything to try to upset you.

- He's busy learning about his world — and that learning can get messy and noisy!
- When you see things from Baby's point of view, you will feel less stressed.

#### There are people who can help you talk over parenting challenges.

Call the Delaware Helpline at 1-800 464-4357 and ask for parent education and support

# What's It Like To Be 7 Months Old?

## How I Grow

- I creep on my stomach. I may even crawl. Move the crib mattress to the lowest position, so I can't climb up and fall out.
- I also get around on my back by raising my behind and pushing with my feet.
- I balance myself and sit for a while with no support.
- I keep my legs straight when you put your hands under my arms and pull me up, and I try to stand by myself. Don't be surprised if I fuss then— because I don't know how to sit down! Show me how to do it. It's a little tricky to learn how to sit down again!
- Be careful not to lift me by the arms. My bones can still be easily dislocated. Lift me by putting your hands *under* my arms.
- I explore my body with my mouth and hands.
- I might keep my diaper dry for up to two hours.
- I may have some teeth.
- I feed myself finger foods — but I'm pretty messy!
- I play with a spoon and a cup, but I'm not good at using them yet.
- I used to hold things in a clumsy way. Now, I may hold things between my thumb and forefinger, moving things from hand to hand and turning them around. I like to play with nesting cups, plastic bowls and small blocks.
- I turn my eyes and head to see you when you come in the room. If you think I might have a hearing problem, call the doctor.



## How I Respond

- I want to be included in all family activities.
- I like to see and touch myself in the mirror.
- I get excited when I see a picture of a baby.
- I like to make things happen! I like to grab, shake and bang things and put them in my mouth.
- I like toys that make noise — like bells, music boxes or rattles.

## How I Understand

- I can focus better now, and I spend lots of time examining things.
- I can tell if something is near or far.
- I can tell when people are angry or happy by the way they look and talk.
- I can grab things and hold on to them, but letting loose is something I am just learning how to do. I may straighten my whole arm and fling things down — because that is the only way that works for me right now.

**Each child develops at his or her own pace.**

- Look back at last month's list. Am I doing anything now that I wasn't then?
- Look for my growth in each area, and gently help me to learn new things.
- If I was born pre-term, use my due date (rather than my birth date) for keeping track of how I am developing.

## How I Talk

- I imitate the sounds I hear. That's how I learn.
- I say several sounds (like ma, mi, da, di or ba) — all in one breath.
- I watch your face when you talk to me. I may even try to put my hand in your mouth to see where the sound is coming from. I'm a smart kid!

## How I Feel

- I may be starting to be afraid of strangers, so stay with me when they're around. Allow extra time for me to get comfortable with a baby sitter or child care teacher. Gently tell me that you will be back, and then leave. It will take many months for me to learn that you **really will** come back.
- I feel strongly about what I want and don't want to do.
- My sense of humor is starting to show. I feel playful, and I like to tease you. I may laugh if you pretend to eat from my spoon or when you do other silly things.



## Play with me: It helps me learn.

### The Mirror: An eyes —and — hands game



**Purpose:** Helps Baby learn how he looks.

#### How to play

- Stand in front of a mirror with your baby, and point to his reflection.
- Using his name, say, “I see Brandon. Where is Brandon? Find Brandon. Look at Brandon.” Encourage him to point to himself in the mirror.
- Still sitting in front of the mirror, do the same thing with objects. Pick

Playing with Baby is a form of teaching.

them up one at a time and move them behind Baby’s head.

- Name the objects, telling your baby something about them, such as, “This is a ball, and it is round.”
- Then ask Baby, “Where is the ball?” and encourage him to point to the mirror.

Baby may enjoy sitting in front of a wall mirror and playing with his toys.

### Games show Baby he can make things happen.

- He loves to throw things out of the high chair or over the side of the crib. He watches the object fall and listens to the sound it makes when it hits the floor. Your baby is exploring cause and effect relationships. He is trying to learn his effect on his world.
- Help Baby play this game by giving him objects that fall differently. Encourage him to drop such things as a:
  - washcloth
  - wooden spoon
  - plastic key
  - plastic container
  - rattle
  - ball
- As Baby plays, talk about how the object falls and how the object lands. *Oh, look how slowly the washcloth fell and it didn't even make a noise when it landed.*

### Games help Baby learn to crawl.

- Give Baby a reason to want to move. Place a favorite toy just outside Baby's reach. Help him wiggle to it. This is the first step in learning to crawl.
- Whatever your child's timetable, encourage him to move, explore and be active. Moving around helps Baby get exercise AND learn. **Be sure your home is baby-proofed!**

## You are the most important teacher your baby will ever have. Take good care of yourself!

Researchers have found two types of play between parents and their children.

One style is like a professor lecturing to a class. The other style is called “ping pong” — like a ping pong ball going back and forth.

- “Lecturing” doesn’t help babies learn.
- “Ping Pong” is best.

If Baby giggles, Mom giggles. If Baby hands a block to Dad, Dad hands two blocks back. When a parent does something, Baby reacts to what the child did.

The best learners have adults who spend time playing with them.

#### Mom and Dad: Give yourself a pat on the back!

- Remember how you felt just before your baby was born, and during those first hectic months?
- Think about how your feelings about being a parent have changed in the last few months.
- What you are doing is really important. Take good care of you!

## Feeding Baby

Baby will probably be eating:

- Breast milk and/or formula – when Baby is hungry – about 30 ounces a day
- Infant cereal mixed with liquid – several tablespoons twice a day
- Vegetables, pureed – 2-4 tbsp. daily (include green and yellow)
- Fruits, pureed 2-4 tbsp. daily

Give Baby new foods one at a time. Don't force a new food. If your baby doesn't like it, put it away and try again in several days. It may take 7-10 tries before Baby starts to like a food.

- If Baby is interested, let him try to hold



his own bottle or spoon. Also offer finger foods like crackers and dry cereal so he will try to pick them up. It will take time, but that's OK. He's

learning a very important skill.

- Check for the “circle of safety” when buying baby food. Do not buy jars that have the circle pushed up. Listen for a “pop” when you open the baby food jar. That will tell you that you have broken the vacuum seal, and it is safe to feed baby.
- Serve and feed Baby from a dish – not directly from the jar. Don't put leftovers back in the jar. You can refrigerate the unused baby food for 2-3 days. After Baby begins to eat an entire jar in one meal, then you can feed from the jar.

## No sweet foods!

Candy, sugar, pre-sweetened cereal, sweet desserts (including baby desserts), fruit juices, fruit-flavored drinks and soda pop are filled with empty calories.

- These foods should not be fed to your baby because they will spoil her appetite for healthy food.
- These foods also are harmful to Baby's teeth.
- Do not add sugar, sweeteners, salt,

fat or other seasonings to Baby's food.

### Keep Baby's teeth healthy.

- Do not give Baby a bottle to drink in bed as he is going to sleep.
- Do not give Baby sugar-coated foods or put sweets on pacifiers.



Infants are likely to choke if they are given solid foods before they are able to chew and swallow well.

- Stay with Baby while she is eating.
- Teach her to chew food well.
- Cut Baby's food into bite-sized pieces.

## About Weaning

Some babies lose interest in nursing as they become more active. Some mothers decide to wean their babies from the breast about now. We recommend you continue breastfeeding at least until Baby is 12 months, if you can.

Check out these sources for more good reasons to keep up the breastfeeding:

- <http://aap.org/>
- <http://lalecheleague.org/>

When you decide to wean your baby,

try to do it gradually – over several weeks. Replace the feeding in which she is least interested with a bottle or cup feeding. After a week or two, replace another feeding. Do this gradually until Baby is weaned.

During weaning, give your baby extra hugs and kisses.

## Baby's eyes

Babies learn a lot by looking! Here are some facts about eyes.

- It's normal for infants' eyes to look crossed momentarily for their first 18 months.
- It takes time to develop **binocularity** – having both eyes work together. If your baby

doesn't seem to be getting better at having both eyes work together, talk to your doctor.

- Unless there is a problem, most children don't see an eye specialist (ophthalmologist) until about 3 1/2 years old.

### Help Baby use those eyes!

- Play with Baby in ways that use both eyes and both sides of her body.
- Take Baby for walks so she can see different things. Zoos, parks and museums are fun places for you and Baby to see new things. r.

## Baby shots reminder

Baby shots (immunizations) protect your infant against many serious diseases. The shots are so much safer than the diseases.

Vaccines work best when they are given at certain ages. Your child needs a **series** of shots. **If you have missed shots, don't worry. You can start now.** Call your doctor or clinic.

Many communities offer free immunizations. Check with your Public Health office.

Babies are scheduled for a series of shots that can be given anytime between 6 and 9 months. If you aren't sure if your baby needs more shots now, call your doctor or clinic.



A Baby can drown in 2 inches of water. Never leave Baby alone in or near a bathtub, toilet, pail of water, or pool — for even a moment.

## Attachment, stranger shyness & emotions

One of the most important things that babies do is become "attached" to their parents and other important adults in their lives.

- **You'll know that your baby is getting "attached" when he starts to cry when you leave.** This does not mean that Baby is spoiled. It's a sign that Baby is getting attached — which will set the foundation for healthy relationships throughout his life. As Baby grows, he'll be able to branch out and form close ties with other family members and friends.
- **Baby may be upset by strangers. This is part of healthy development.** Babies may talk, coo and laugh with the people he sees every day. But when a stranger (perhaps even Grandmother!) picks up your baby, he may be quiet or even scream. This is normal. It's a sign that Baby is picking up on

the differences in people. He's learning that not everyone is the same. He is likely to accept new people when he has spent some time with them and knows he can trust them.

- Stay close and comfort Baby until he is ready to get to know new people.

### Your baby is learning about good and bad feelings. Help her by talking about emotions.

- Say, "You fell over and are crying. You feel bad. Let me help you up. Now, you're feeling better."
- Learning about our emotions takes a long time. The first steps start right now.
- Your child's tears may be hard to take. It will pull at your heart-strings to see your little one feeling such pain. But,



tears are a sign of healthy emotional growth. Baby is reacting the same way you would when you trip over a bump in the sidewalk, fall down and get drenched in the rain — all on an empty stomach. Tears can be good medicine — they help us relieve tension, reduce stress and get us ready to bounce back to feeling better in a short period of time. Tears help us deal with bumps in the road.

## Language Games

Has Baby learned to blow air or to make a clicking sound with his tongue? These are two skills that are good for language development. These are difficult tasks, and may take a lot of practice.

- Make a game of blowing air and clicking your tongue. Your child will probably try to imitate you.
- Put a small ball on Baby's high-chair tray. Blow on the ball until it rolls toward him. Does Baby try to blow it back to you?
- "Touch and name" games will

help Baby become more aware of himself and his body. Touch different parts of Baby's body and name them. "This is Mike's foot. Here is Mike's nose. Where are Mike's fingers? Here they are!!" Touch your own body parts and do the same thing. "Here's Mommy's nose. Here's Daddy's nose. Here's Mike's nose."

- Playing language games help your child learn more quickly.
- As Baby's language skills grow, so does her brain.



## Storing Baby's Toys

Your baby probably has some books and toys, and you need a good place to put them. Here are some options:

- Shelves or low bookcases make things easy for you and Baby to see and get. Arrange them so Baby can discover different books and toys on different days.
- A large basket (or a plastic laundry basket) will keep everything in one place, and will be easy to move.
- A toy chest may make the room look neat, but it's harder for Baby to

toy explore. If you decide on a chest, look for these safety features:

- A lightweight lid that Baby can lift.
- Air holes, in case your child climbs inside.
- Slow-release hinges, so fingers don't get pinched — and so the lid can't drop suddenly on your child's head.

- Closings that don't lock automatically.
- No splinters or sharp metal edges.



## Sun safety: Baby skin is delicate, and burns easily.

Babies need fresh air and light — but too much sun can be harmful. Researchers have found that severe sunburns in childhood can lead to greater risk of the most deadly form of skin cancer (malignant melanoma) later in life.

Here are some simple steps to help you and Baby enjoy the sun safely:

- Stay out of the sun from 10 a.m.— 3 p.m., when the sun's rays are strongest.
- Keep Baby in the shade. If you use a stroller, keep the sun shade on.
- Put a hat on Baby, and dress him in light-weight clothes that cover the body. Dress like that yourself.
- After 6 months, always put a sunscreen lotion with a 30 or higher SPF (sun protection factor) on Baby and yourself when you'll be in the sun. Test a small area of Baby's skin (to test for a reaction) before applying all over. Re-apply every two hours.
- If you or Baby get sunburned, put cool, wet towels on the burns. If a fever or blisters develop, call the doctor.

## Mom and Dad

Your baby needs lots of love and attention. AND, it's important to find time to nurture you and your relationship.

- You are developing into loving, responsible parents. You're

feeling more confident about parenting.

- Find time for each other and for your hobbies, sports, reading— or whatever it is that gets you revitalized and re-connected.

- Healthy parents — who take time to **keep** themselves healthy — are just what children need.
- Who can watch the baby while you re-charge and relax?

## Family violence hurts everyone.

Women are victims of violence in about one out of six families nationally. Children (including babies) are affected by what they see — whether or not they are the direct targets of the abuse.

Seeing parents hit each other or shout at each other affects girls and boys differently. As teens and adults,

- Boys who see parental hitting are more likely to be violent against women in their lives.
- Girls are more likely to seek out and tolerate abusive partners.

Children in violent homes learn that it is OK to hit the people they love.

They also learn to solve family conflicts with violence.

- Most families solve their disagreements by talking them out, not by hitting. When partners don't agree, they can try to compromise, take turns doing what they want to do, or seek outside help to come up with a solution.

**If you — or someone you know — is living in a violent home, think about the children.**

- It's against the law for people to hit each other, whether they are married or not.

Abuse may be physical, emotional, sexual, or a combination of the three.

**If you feel you can't protect yourself or your children, you need to get help.**

- Get support and information from



a hotline, advocate, counselor or trusted friend. Call the Delaware Helpline at 1-800 464-4357 or call 1-800-799-SAFE (7233) or 1-800-787-3224 (TTY) for help.

These people can help you.

- Find a safer way to stay in the relationship.
- Leave the relationship or your home in a safe way and get to a new, safe place — and stay safe.
- Get help with housing, food, clothes and other needs.

## Another baby?

Raising a baby is hard work. Raising two children can be a lot harder, especially if they are close in age.

- Imagine trying to bathe an active 2 year-old while your newborn is crying.
- Imagine how your 2-year-old will complain when you can't give her the time you do now. You know how Baby can demand your attention whenever you want to talk on the phone. Imagine how the older one will

feel when you have to ignore her to care for the new baby.

- And how will you feel? Happy, we hope — but also worn out!

That is why experts give this advice: If you want to have another baby, don't do it too soon. Wait awhile, at least until your baby is two or older. Research shows that siblings get along better when they are not too close in age.

There are many safe ways to prevent pregnancy. Talk with your doctor, clinic or spiritual advisor before deciding what to use. You can also look under "Family Planning" in the yellow pages of your telephone book.

Planning your family takes effort on your part. But it can make life easier for you, and it can help you be the best parent you can be.

## Are you talking with other parents?

When you're out walking or shopping, you will find other parents and their babies.

- Stop and talk. Ask how old their baby is. It's fun to compare notes.
- Ask how their baby has changed in the last 1-2 weeks. What is the latest new thing she is learning?
- What is their baby's favorite time of day? What does she seem to enjoy the most?
- You will have your own questions, too.
- Other parents will have their own tricks for soothing a crying baby or making feeding easier. Ask them.



- They are like you. They have learned a lot – and they love to talk about their baby!

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*Great Beginnings* \_\_\_\_\_  
A Series for Parents of Infants and Young Children