

the magic of everydayTM
moments



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Johnson & Johnson
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ZERO TO THREE®

4-6 months

The Magic of Everyday Moments™: 4-6 Months

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The Magic of Everyday Moments™ campaign is an initiative between **ZERO TO THREE** and the **Johnson & Johnson Pediatric Institute**.



ZERO TO THREE is a national nonprofit organization of renowned pediatricians, educators, researchers, and other child development experts who specialize in the first years of life.



The **Johnson & Johnson Pediatric Institute** is an organization dedicated to research and development conducted in support of improving pediatric care around the world by partnering with leading healthcare professionals on topics in pediatrics, parenting and infant development.

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The Magic of Everyday Moments™

Loving and Learning Through Daily Activities

If you are like most parents today, your greatest challenge is probably caring for your baby while also taking care of yourself and your responsibilities. The competing demands on your time and energy make finding the time to connect with your baby no small challenge. But daily activities, such as feeding, bathing and grocery shopping, don't need to take time *away* from bonding with and enjoying your baby. In fact, these *everyday moments* are rich opportunities to encourage your child's development by building her:

- *self-confidence* • *curiosity* • *social skills*
- *self-control* • *communication skills*

Most of all you build her desire to learn about her world.

The booklets in this series are not intended to be general guides to *everything* that is happening at each specific age. Instead, they focus on how, through interactions with your baby during *everyday moments*, you can support your baby's social, emotional and intellectual development.

It's the special interplay between parent and child that makes everyday moments so meaningful. The potential is limitless. The starting point is you.



What It's Like for You

You've survived those first 3 months, giving everything you've got to help your baby adjust to his new world—no small feat. And your hard work has paid off. Now you know his signals. You know the special voice that he finds comforting, how to rub his back when he needs to burp, and how to make him laugh. He's awake much more during the day, and he's more eager than ever to be engaged with you.

For many of you, it is at this time that your parental leave comes to an end and you must return to your paid job—just when the fun is starting. This transition can be very distressing to moms and dads: “Can I find someone who will take care of my baby as well as I do; who'll keep him safe and help him grow? Will I still be the most special person to him?”

Rest assured, your baby will always know you're his mom and dad and you will always be the most special people to him. If you're working, you don't have to quit your job to nurture your child's healthy development. As you read about how feeding and playing with your baby are wonderful opportunities to bond with and teach your baby so many important things, think of all the other moments you share each day that enrich your child's life.



feeding

When you feed your baby you are doing a lot more than providing the nutrition to support her physical growth. You are also nurturing her social, emotional and intellectual growth.

If your baby could talk:

*When I let you know I'm hungry and you come with food, that tells me that you understand my needs and will respond to them. I'm still not too good at waiting so I'll probably fuss. I love being cuddled while I eat. But I also love to explore—find out what's going on around me. So I may pull away to see who else is around, or to find out where all the noise is coming from. I'll also want to grab your fingers and your clothing, or just look up at you with an ear-to-ear smile. When I coo at you, coo back. When it's your turn to eat, it's really interesting to watch. I'll be eating solids soon and will want to feed myself, so let me play with a spoon. Later, when I'm big enough, give me little bits of soft food that I can pick up by myself. For right now, just give me an interesting rattle to chew on. Mealtime is more than just food; it's time to take it **all** in and to explore and feel close to you.*

What your baby is learning:

Responding when your baby “tells” you she’s hungry teaches her that you will always be there for her. She knows she is important and deserves to be well cared for. Her trust in you allows her to focus her energy on exploration. Each time you respond to your baby’s coos and babbles you are telling her that she’s a good communicator, that she’s deserving of your attention, and that she can make things happen by making sounds. While it can be messy, letting your baby explore her food helps her eventually learn to feed herself. This builds her confidence that she can take care of herself and prepares her to take on new challenges.

What you can do:

- Talk with her while you are preparing her food, whether you are getting ready to breastfeed, fixing a bottle or getting her solids ready. This helps her learn words and can also help her wait.
- Make it a point to touch and stroke your baby whenever you can. This kind of physical connection is important for her emotional growth.



playing together

The magical thing about play is that it's not only fun, it's how children learn. Through play they discover how the world works, how to make things happen, and how good it feels to interact with others.

If your baby could talk:

There's no one I'd rather play with than you! I like you better than any of my toys. That's why I beam at you, and squeal with delight when I see you come near! I can already show you when I like something and "tell" you with my expressions and gestures, "Peek-a-boo . . . one more time please!" When I shake a rattle and it makes a noise, I learn that I can make things happen. I love to get my hands on things and use my mouth to explore them. When you hold toys for me and cheer me on as I reach out and grasp something, I'm thrilled, because I'm learning that I can make my body work to get what I want. You're a great partner.

What your baby is learning:

When you play with your baby, you're letting him know that he's fun to be with and that he's important. This builds his self-esteem. And the joy of having fun with you helps him develop positive relationships as he grows.

You are your baby's first and most important teacher. You help him become the master of his world. Offering him objects with different appearances, sounds and textures will help him learn many important skills and concepts. When your baby uses his facial expressions and gestures to entice you to play peek-a-boo, for example, he is learning about cause and effect and boosting his confidence that he can make things happen. The same goes for shaking a rattle: "I move my arm, this toy makes a noise. Mmmm, let's try that again!" As you share the pleasure of play, your baby's curiosity and interest in taking on new challenges will grow.

What you can do:

- Coach your baby as he works to master a skill such as reaching for a toy. Bring an object closer until he can get it on his own. Doing it himself builds his self-confidence.
- Play lots of back-and-forth games. For example, bat the toy he just swung at. These interactions form the foundation of later communication skills and are his first lessons about taking turns.



Reading Your Baby's Cues

What follows is a chart that describes what babies are learning at this stage and what you can do to support the development of these new skills. As you go through the chart, it's important to remember **that every baby is an individual person, and grows and develops in her own way, at her own pace.** And building a strong and close relationship with you is the foundation of her learning and her healthy growth and development. Any concern about your baby's behavior or development deserves attention. Always discuss your concerns with your child's pediatrician or other trusted professional.

what to expect

between 4 and 6 months:

I'm in Control

Your baby has greater control over her body. She may be able to roll both ways, become better at reaching and grasping, and will begin to sit with assistance. She will also be able to use both hands to explore.

I Can Do It!

Your baby learns how things work and that he can make things happen. He uses his new motor skills to pick up and explore objects in new ways. He will watch you to learn what to do.

What's Next?

Your baby loves to anticipate what will happen next. She will look to you with excitement, letting you know she wants to do it again. It gives her a sense of control when she knows what to expect.

All By Myself

Your baby will want to explore his food and help feed himself. Touching and tasting different foods is an important part of his learning. Feeding himself builds his self-confidence.

what you can do:

- Place your baby in different positions—on her back, stomach and sitting with support. Each gives a different perspective on the world and a chance to develop different skills such as rolling, creeping and crawling, and using both hands while sitting.
- Play reaching and grasping games. Hold enticing toys just within her reach and encourage her to grab them.
- Give him a variety of toys with different textures, shapes, weights and functions. Join in his exploration of them.
- Show him different ways to use things: switching objects from one hand to another, shaking, banging, pushing and dropping.
- Speak to her while getting ready to feed her, whether it's by breast or bottle. This lets her know comfort is near and helps her learn to wait.
- Play peek-a-boo; pause briefly after you've "disappeared" to give her time to think about what will happen next.
- Establish routines. As much as possible, keep everyday routines in the same sequence; for example: dinner, bath, stories, lullabies, sleep.
- Let him play with your fingers and explore the bottle or breast during feedings. This may get messy; but it is an essential part of his learning as he discovers what different foods and liquids feel and taste like.
- As he grows, let him handle finger foods and encourage him to feed himself by giving him his own spoon.

what to expect between 4 and 6 months:

I've Got Something to Say

Your baby will make lots of different sounds to you, to other people, to her toys and to whatever else inspires her. All of this vocalizing is the foundation for speech. The more you respond, the more confident and eager she will be to keep "talking."

It's All in the Mouth

At 4 months, your baby is eager to explore every aspect of the world around him. He learns through his senses. Mouthing objects is just another way to "know" an object. It often has less to do with hunger or teething.

Hand it Over

Four-month-olds still aren't using their thumb to grasp things; and, as they shift from two-handed to one-handed play, they will hold things by pressing their fingers against their palms.

I am a Person

By 4 months you have a good idea of how your baby is different or similar to other babies his age. During the next few months he will become very good at letting you know his likes and dislikes, as well as his interests.

what you can do:

- Listen when she talks and look right into her eyes. When she pauses, respond, and then wait. This turn-taking teaches her how to have a conversation.
 - Start lots of conversations and see if she picks up your cues. But don't forget about reading her signals. When she doesn't want to talk, don't push it. She may need a break.
-
- Make certain that any object your baby gets his hands on is clean and safe for mouthing. That means it must be big enough not to fit entirely into his mouth, and smooth enough not to scratch or irritate.
 - Offer toys with lots of variation in shape and texture. Bumpy, smooth, round and square are all distinctions that can be made by mouth.
-
- Offer your baby toys that are easily grasped, with lots of handles. And make sure they're light enough in weight for your baby to hang on to and big enough not to fit into her mouth.
 - Keep in mind that while your baby can hold onto a toy and even reach for it, she can't yet purposefully open up her hand and let it go. When a 4-month-old drops a toy, it isn't because she meant to drop it!
-
- When your baby turns away, arches his back, or starts to cry during play or at other times, don't take it personally; it may be his way of saying that he needs a break from this intense interaction. It might be the perfect time for a refreshing pause, like holding him close and singing a soothing melody.
 - Think about your baby's personality. Does he like noisy environments or prefer quiet? Is he a jump-right-in kid, or a let-me-wait-and-see kid? There is no single right way to be. You just need to understand and respect who he is.



What Your Baby Needs Most

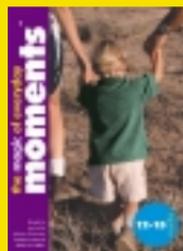
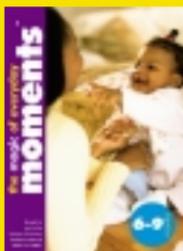
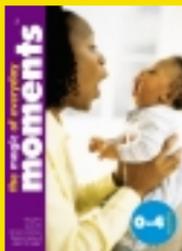
We know that you want to do your best to nurture your baby's healthy development. We also know that many parents are overwhelmed by busy days, and the thought of adding extra activities to boost their child's development may simply be too much.

That is the power of the magic of the everyday moment. What your baby needs most to thrive is *you*. Nothing else can replace the power of what your child learns as he explores the world and shares his discoveries during everyday moments with you.

We hope this booklet has shown you that the *magic* of parenting is not in any toy you buy or in the latest product claiming to make your baby smarter. The *magic is* in your everyday interactions that help your child build the crucial capabilities — such as confidence, curiosity, cooperation, and communication — needed for lifelong learning and success.

Remember, everyday moments are rich bonding and learning opportunities. Enjoy the magic of these moments with your child.

*Don't miss the other booklets in
The Magic of Everyday Moments™ series:*



For more information on early childhood development, go to:

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