

Being a parent

How can I quiet my crying baby? When will our child finally sleep through the night? When should it start getting baby food, and what is the best approach? Parents often feel uncertain about caring for their baby – especially with the first child. And even though nature has provided that parents can usually sense on their own the right thing to do, questions still arise when caring for an infant or toddler on a daily basis.

Short. Brief.

Materials for parents of babies (age 0–1) and toddlers (age 1–3)

► **Information and practical tips** on things that often concern families regarding the day-to-day care of their infant or toddler.

► **These materials** may also be useful to midwives, paediatricians and other professionals, such as counsellors at parenting and family counselling centres, in their work with parents.

SHORT. BRIEF.
**INFO FOR
PARENTS**

Further information is available on
► www.kindergesundheit-info.de



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BZgA
Bundeszentrale
für
gesundheitliche
Aufklärung

In cooperation with the National Centre
on Early Prevention (NZFH)

Nationales Zentrum
Frühe Hilfen

Short. Brief.

Materials for parents of babies (age 0–1)
and toddlers (age 1–3)

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SHORT. BRIEF.
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Precautions against sudden infant death syndrome

Sudden infant death syndrome is the medical term for the phenomenon of when an apparently healthy baby unexpectedly dies without any available explanation.

See inside for recommendations for ensuring your baby sleeps well and safely. They are the best protection for your baby.

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Sleeping



In cooperation with the National Centre on Early Prevention (NZFH)





Did you know ...



... that babies have to adjust to the day-night rhythm? Sleeping patterns become more regular after roughly 4–6 weeks.

... that some infants simply sleep a lot while others sleep little? Sleeping needs are inherited. In the first three months some infants only require 10–12 hours of sleep per 24 hours, while others need 18–20 hours.

... that for babies up to six months of age it is normal to wake up at least once in the night? During the first six months babies still need one or more feeds at night.

... that for babies “sleeping through” means a maximum of 6–8 hours at one time? Waking up in the night or early in the morning is hard on the parents, but for babies it is normal.

... that you can help your infant learn to sleep?



More information about healthy sleeping for babies and precautions against sudden infant death syndrome is available on

› www.kindergesundheit-info.de

.....
Your paediatrician will be glad to answer your questions.



› Recommendations

Tips for your baby to sleep well and safely

› Always on its back, with no pillow, sheepskins, “nest”, cuddly toy or cap – anything that might cover the baby’s face.

› Whenever possible, in its own bed in the parents’ bedroom. Babies should especially not sleep in the parents’ bed if one parent smokes.

› In a smoke-free bedroom – ideally the entire apartment will be kept smoke-free.

› In a sleeping bag, instead of under a blanket.

› In an unheated bedroom – a room temperature of 18 °C is ideal.

Supporting the sleep-learning process

The 5 most important tips

1 To the extent possible, maintain regular times in the daily routine for eating, sleeping, playing and going for walks.

2 Babies love routine. Lay your baby down at the same time whenever possible, in the same place and using the same going-to-sleep rituals.

3 Being overtired makes it hard to fall asleep. Lay your baby in its crib when it shows signs of tiredness, such as yawning or turning away its head.

4 Being there is everything. Don’t always pick up your baby when it is lying awake in its crib or is fidgety. Instead, sit down next to it and hold its hand or gently caress its head.

5 Keep things calm ahead of sleeping time. During the day, allow your baby to play in whatever manner it pleases, but do not play with it so as to get it excited just before sleeping time.



- › www.elternsein.info
- › www.trostreich.de
Interactive network for colicky infants
- › www.bke.de
Directory of parenting and family counselling centres

› 0800.111 0 550

At your wits' end? Call the parenting hotline
(toll free nationwide via landline or mobile phone)
Monday through Friday, 9:00–11:00, Tuesday
and Thursday, 17:00–19:00

Seek help promptly ...

... if you have the feeling you can't take the crying any more!

... if you are worried your baby has colic.

With professional help and support, together the parent and child can usually get excessive crying quickly under control.



Where to turn for advice and assistance

- › Your midwife or paediatrician.
- › "Colic squad" and counselling centres for parents with infants and small children. These are available in many locations.

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In cooperation with the National Centre on Early Prevention (NZFH)



Babies 0–1 year



SHORT. BRIEF.
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Crying*

* Babies cry for many reasons, and often without any identifiable reason.

Englisch **Schreien**



More information about crying, advice and assistance is available on

› www.kindergesundheit-info.de

Your paediatrician will be glad to answer your questions.

Short film: "When babies won't stop crying: How to comfort and calm a baby"
› www.kindergesundheit-info.de/kurzfilm-troesten-beruhigen

Short film: "Never shake a baby! When babies won't stop crying"
› www.kindergesundheit-info.de/kurzfilm-niemals-schuetteln



Alarm level red



Babies cry because ...

... they are hungry or tired, have a full diaper, are overexcited, bored or need attention.

› **All babies cry.** In the first few months this is completely normal.

› **Babies cry in very different ways.** How frequently, long and loud babies cry can vary greatly from child to child.

› **They tend to cry more in the beginning.** Crying usually increases to about 2½ hours per day until six weeks of age. Thereafter crying phases generally decrease.

Babies cry for many reasons, and often without any identifiable reason. But whenever babies cry, this means "I don't feel good and I need you to be with me". It never means: "I want to get on your nerves."

What can you do to help?

5 helpful tips

1 Try to stay calm.

2 Try to discover the cause (hunger, thirst, full diaper, overtired, etc.)

3 Try to calm your child by means of eye contact, talking to it quietly, gently rocking it or singing to it.

4 If your child has already cried itself into a frenzy, carry it into a different room, or carry it and briefly go outside to get fresh air. That helps your baby relax and calm down.

5 **Caution:** do not make any agitated attempts to calm it down. That makes the baby more agitated in turn.

Constant crying – a nightmare for mothers and fathers

› Parents can feel helpless,

› worrying their child may be in pain,

› thinking they have done something wrong

› and can quickly end up trapped between confusion and despair.

When you can't take the crying anymore

› If there are two of you, take turns looking after your crying baby.

› If you are by yourself and realize you can no longer stand the crying, lay your baby somewhere safe, such as in its crib, before you 'flip out'.

› Try to calm yourself down. Leave the room for a minute and take some deep breaths.

› Call a relative, friend or neighbour who might be able to come over and help.

› Check on your child every few minutes

Never shake your baby! Even briefly shaking a baby can cause grave, lifelong health problems and even cause death.

Never give your child medication to calm it down!





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Your infant's first baby food*

* Did you know that your baby will show you when it is ready for solid food?

Englisch **Beikost**

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When your child grabs away the spoon and won't give it back, just get another spoon to continue feeding!

Never force your child to eat. You will never win a 'battle of wills' when it comes to food. Instead, it only troubles the relationship between you and your child.



In cooperation with the National Centre on Early Prevention (NZFH)





Did you know...



... that your baby will show you when it is ready for solid food? For example, it will become interested in what other people are eating. It will move its mouth while watching, or open it when you touch its cheek with the spoon.

... that babies usually spit out most of the baby food at first because they are not used to eating with a spoon, and have to learn it first? Your child needs time to get used to this new type of food as well. It needs its time, and likes to thoroughly experiment with it, using its tongue, palate and maybe even fingers.

... that you can continue breast feeding your child even after introducing baby food meals? Breast milk feeds will gradually be replaced by baby food meals. Even after that you can continue breast feeding your child as long as both of you wish.



More information about baby food meals is available on

› www.kindergesundheit-info.de

Your midwife or paediatrician will be glad to answer your questions.

... that children sometimes need many little tastes to get used to and grow to like a new flavour? When your child rejects a new taste, try again the next day, and the day after that. But you should never force your child.

... that your child knows best when it is full, and will show you? When your child closes its mouth and turns away, that is the most reliable signal for you to conclude the feed. Say “finished”, clean it up, play with it or lay it down.

... that with a bit of patience and calm the two of you can quickly become a well-coordinated team?



Ready for solid food

From the fifth month of age to, at the latest, the end of the sixth month, an infant has developed enough for it to learn how to eat from a spoon.

Start out with 1–2 spoons of vegetable baby food and then afterward give your child his or her regular breast feed. Slowly increase the amount of baby food. Then progressively replace breast feeds with baby food feeds.

Baby food feeds made easier

The 5 most important tips

- 1** Feeding times should be fun, even if it's a bit of a mess. You should thus dress yourself and your child appropriately. You can use old newspapers for example to cover tabletops and floors.
- 2** Take your child onto your lap and hold it in your arm in such a way that its head and neck are straight and you can both look at each other.
- 3** Take your time feeding it with the spoon and talk to your child calmly.
- 4** Hold the spoon in front of your child's mouth and wait for it to open its mouth. If it doesn't open its mouth, put a little bit of food on its lips. In this manner you can get it accustomed to the taste.
- 5** Always introduce new foods like blended vegetables, potatoes and meat individually, and with intervals of several days. This allows you to observe whether your child is able to properly digest the new food.

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Babies + Toddlers 0–3 years

SHORT. BRIEF.
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Child development*

* Did you know that curiosity and the urge to explore are the
“motors” of child development?

Englisch **Entwicklung**

Did you know ...

... that curiosity and the urge to explore are the “motors” of child development? Children are curious from birth. They want to find out what is happening around them and they try to understand what it has to do with them.

... that childish curiosity cannot be aroused at will? What is interesting to a child and what a child is curious about depends on which skills are developing. If for instance the child can walk freely, it will be very interested in knowing how it feels to walk and run on a meadow, on forest soil, on sand, on cobblestones or on paving slabs.

... that playing and learning are one and the same for children? Children discover and investigate while playing how something is made, whether things, for instance, are similar or different. They familiarise themselves with daily objects and sometimes find out in a difficult way through trial and error how something is linked or how it functions.

More information about
child development
is available on

➔ www.kindergesundheit-info.de

Your paediatrician will be glad to answer
your questions.

Support development

The 5 most important tips

- 1 Give your child enough time and opportunity to play and move around as it pleases.
- 2 Do not try to teach your child something that it is not ready to learn.
- 3 Encourage and praise your child if it wants to do something on its own.
- 4 Give your child the opportunity to apply what it is capable of in day to day life.
- 5 Let your child be disappointed sometimes. Children have to learn how to handle disappointments and setbacks and they should not let them discourage them.

... that children don't constantly need new offers and a lot of variety? If the challenges are age-appropriate and interesting, less is often more. Simple toys made of wood or plastic are mostly better suited than technical or electronic toys which emit sounds or move when buttons are pressed.

...that parents are always role models for their child – in good times and in bad times? Children copy a lot from their fathers and mothers. They imitate how they do things as well as how they conduct themselves in certain situations.

... that you could facilitate learning by explaining and showing your child some things, but you should not deny the child the chance to try and practise on its own?



What your child is probably capable of already

Important phases of development from 0–3 years

In the first year, children develop their mobility, their thinking, they learn to speak and how to interact with others. Each child does this in its own way and at its own pace. The overview in this leaflet can therefore only offer clues for the most important phases of development in the first three years.

3 months	
Mobility (motor skills)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › The baby can hold its head up while lying on the stomach and when held on your lap.
Grasping/Manual dexterity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › The baby brings both hands to the centre of the body and plays with fingers of both hands. › It can hold a small toy for a short time.
Thinking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › The baby follows a toy moving slowly in front of its eyes.
Speaking and understanding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › If father or mother speaks to the child from the side, the baby turns its head towards the voice. › It “clicks” and coos happily “rrr, grr...”
Social conduct	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › The baby is happy and smiles back when it is spoken to, tickled, stroked or carried.

6 months	
Mobility (motor skills)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › When the baby lies awake on its back, it moves both arms and legs similarly well. › It can turn its body independently – first on the side then from the stomach to the back and finally contrariwise.
Grasping/Manual dexterity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › The baby can grasp something, holds small toys with one hand and puts them in the other.
Thinking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › The baby puts toys and other things which it can hold in the mouth, licks and chews on them. › It observes what is happening in its environment carefully.
Speaking and understanding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › The baby turns its head and body towards interesting sounds. › It “replies” squeaking, humming, screeching, in a whisper, with “a” and “i” when spoken to.
Social conduct	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › The baby establishes eye contact with the father or mother and smiles at them. › The baby smiles, makes different sounds and kicks when someone plays with it.

12 months	
Mobility (motor function)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › The child can sit freely without supporting itself with the hands. › It can crawl, creep or slide forwards and/or backwards or it can already walk while holding itself on furniture or along walls.
Manual dexterity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › The child grasps and holds small objects between bent thumb and straight forefinger. › It can hold a ball with both hands.
Thinking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › The child looks at things which it holds in the hand carefully and attentively. › It searches and finds its toy which was hidden before its eyes.

Speaking and understanding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › The child understands at least 20 words and small prohibitions (“no, no”) and requests (“Please open your mouth”, “give me the ball”). › It speaks clearly “ba-ba”, “la-la”, “ga-ga” and initial words such as “mummy” and “daddy” or “nam-nam” for food, “woof-woof” for dog.
Social conduct	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › The child establishes contact with others; it smiles at other children for instance. › In its conduct it differentiates clearly between familiar persons and strangers.

2 years	
Mobility (motor function)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › The child walks confidently alone.
Manual dexterity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › The child scribbles on paper. It mostly holds the pencil with the fist.
Thinking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › The child engages in small role plays with dolls, toy animals and stacks building blocks. › If it lacks something, it can simply imagine this object or another object takes its place (“make-believe” game: the shoe box becomes a car).
Speaking and understanding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › The child recognises and names pictures in a picture book and looks at them carefully. › It points to its eyes, nose, ears, mouth if asked about them. › It speaks 50–200 words (minus daddy and mummy): “woof woof”, “ball”, “light” and understands simple instructions or orders which it knows (“give me ...”, “go and get ...”). › It starts with two-word sentences: “mummy play”, “Niklas tired”; first questions: “Is that?”

Social conduct	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › The child wants and seeks out contact with other children. › It can occupy itself for around 15–20 minutes even if father and mother are not in the same room but are nearby. › It understands simple requests and prohibitions and observes them more or less.
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3 years	
Mobility (motor function)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › The child can run quickly and confidently. It circumnavigates hindrances skilfully. › The child learns how to ride a tricycle or a run bike.
Manual dexterity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › The child turns the pages of a reading or exercise book carefully, one by one. › It grasps small objects with the tips of the thumb and index and middle fingers. › It scribbles straight lines, probably even circles. It holds the pen in the fist.
Thinking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › The child engages in small “role plays” for itself and with other children (shop, family, experience). › In a picture book, it recognises animals, plants and daily tasks.
Speaking and understanding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › The child listens to rhymes, children’s songs and knows them partially by heart › It speaks short sentences of 3–5 words and can express what it wants, how it feels or what it doesn’t like without problems. › It can pose questions enthusiastically: “Why has grandma gone?”, “Where is the child?” (Questions – who, how, what, why).
Social conduct	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › The child will want to help out frequently in housework and gardening. › The child can stay with persons it is familiar with for some hours.

What your baby is probably capable of already



Age	Understanding and speaking
0–3 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Your baby “understands” the feelings behind the tone of your voice and whether you sound calming or encouraging for instance. › With initial coincidental “voice exercises” (clicking, cooing, “rrrr, grrr...”) the baby is inviting you to engage and entertain it.
3–6 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Your baby smiles at you and answers squeaking, humming, shrieking and in a whisper, with “a” and “i”, when you speak or play with it. › It reacts to noises, moves its eyes or its head towards the direction of the source of sound.
6–9 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Your child babbles its first syllables, strings them together and doubles them a short while later: “da-da-da”, “ba-ba-ba-ba”, “da-da”, “ba-ba”. › During the talk and answer game, the baby “replies” with different tones and sounds. As from about eight months, your child understands first words.
9–13 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Your child understands simple requests (“Give me the ball”). It reacts accordingly to questions such as “Where is daddy?”. › It waves when saying “Good bye”, shakes the head when saying “No” and claps its hands when happy. › Your child is probably babbling its first words such as “mummy” and “daddy” or perhaps “nam-nam” for food.

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The first word*

* Did you know that for your baby there is no other sound that is as interesting as your voice?



Did you know...



... that there is no other sound that is more interesting to your baby than your voice? From the first day, babies like it when one speaks to them. They especially love it when the mother or father talks to them.

... that you have a huge influence on your child's learning how to speak? Your attention encourages your baby and motivates it to communicate with its environment. By communicating with you and other persons of reference, it hears language and learns that someone also listens to it – long before it can speak.

... that with each "conversation", your baby gets a better feeling for its mother tongue? Each time when you tell your baby something or you sing something or you soothe or encourage it with words, "its" language becomes more familiar.



More information on infant language development is available on

› www.kindergesundheit-info.de

Your paediatrician will be glad to answer your questions.

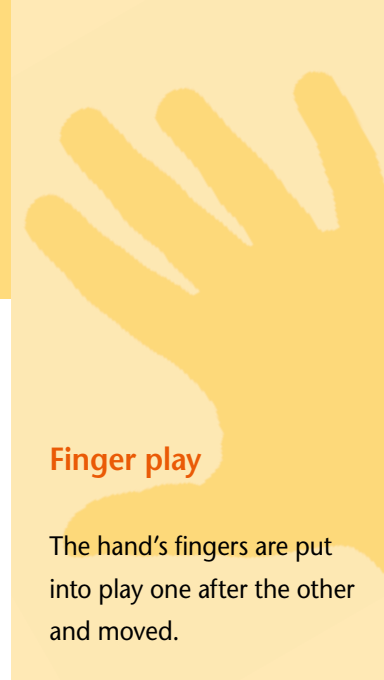
... that your baby does not communicate only through crying? Crying during the first months is certainly the baby's loudest "language", e.g. if it is hungry or tired. But also through body language, facial expression and eye contact, your baby shows you whether it is feeling comfortable or not, whether it wants to play or rest.

... that learning how to speak begins at birth and even earlier, long before your baby can actually speak?

Awaken and encourage the joy of speaking

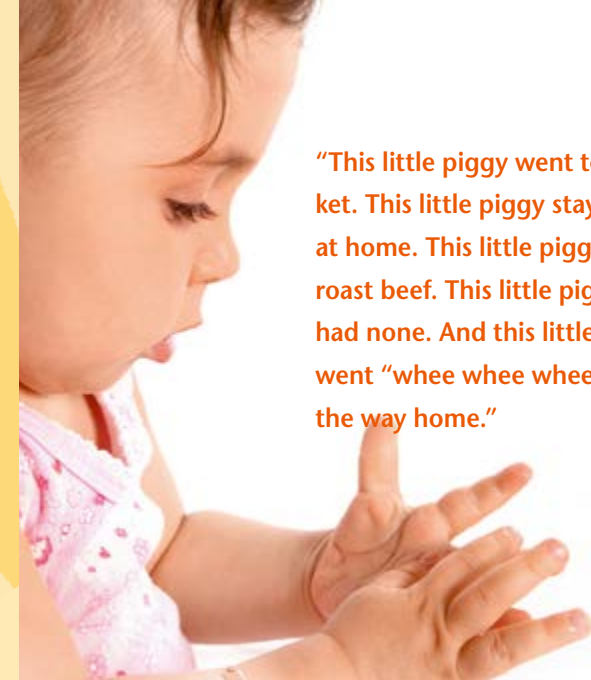
The 5 most important tips

- 1 Talk to your baby from the beginning and give it time to "reply".** Explain in short, simple sentences what you are doing, e.g. when playing, bathing, changing diapers or feeding: "Now I am putting on your diaper", "Papa is going to carry you", "Now we are going shopping".
- 2 Let your baby see, hear, feel its environment.** Show and name what it is seeing, hearing or feeling and what it is interested in: "That's a ball", "The teddy bear has very soft fur".
- 3 Listen to your baby when it wants to communicate with you using sounds, body language or eye contact.** Look at your baby and talk to it for instance when it tries to catch your eye or it is making jolly sounds.



Finger play

The hand's fingers are put into play one after the other and moved.



"This little piggy went to market. This little piggy stayed at home. This little piggy had roast beef. This little piggy had none. And this little piggy went "whee whee whee" all the way home."

- 4 Sing simple songs, perform finger plays, repeat short rhymes and terms of endearment.** Imitate your baby's "baby-talk". That way, your baby knows that it is on the right path in learning how to talk. (During the toddler age however, do not use baby-talk with your child.)
- 5 Look at simple picture books together.** At the age of seven, eight months, your baby enjoys learning from books: That's a cow. The cow says "moo". The cat says "meow". The sky is blue, the sun is yellow.

In order for your child to learn how to speak well, it has to hear well.

Even if the newborn hearing test was ok, you should pay attention every now and then to how well your child hears and reacts to sounds.

Get in touch with your paediatrician if you get the impression that your child doesn't hear well or babbles too little for its age after the first half year.



What your child is probably capable of already

At the beginning of the second year, your child probably understands about 50 to 100 words. It understands simple requests (“Give me the ball”), waves “goodbye”, shakes the head when saying “No” and claps its hands when being happy. Your child probably babbles its first words such as “mummy” and “daddy” or probably “nam-nam” for food.

The overview provides a rough guide of further development

Age	Understanding and speaking
19–20 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › The child speaks at least 20 words (minus daddy and mummy): “woof-woof”, “ball”, “light”.
20–24 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Commencement of two-word sentences: “Mummy play”, “Jonas tired.” › First question: “Is that?”
2½ years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Sentences with three or more words: “Mummy has gone”. › First usage of “I”: “I am tired”.
3 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Vocabulary increases in leaps and bounds. › Second-stage questions (who, where, how, what, why): “Where is the child?” “Why has daddy left?” › The child can follow short stories.

In the coming years up to joining school, your child’s vocabulary will increase considerably; it will tell stories, tell about experiences and always be in a position to express its thoughts much better. At the end of the primary school period talking and understanding will be “fully automatic” and will happen faster.



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Learning how to speak*

* Did you know that a child can only learn how to speak when in close contact with people?



Did you know...



... that a child can only learn a language in close contact with people? In order to learn a language, a child needs parents, siblings or other persons of reference who understand it, answer it and encourage its growing linguistic skills.

... that it varies from child to child when and how fast it learns to speak? Most children speak their first words at the age of 12 months, others take longer. Even among children who are developing normally, vocabulary at the end of the second year can lie in an incredible range. At the age of two, however, a child should be capable of saying at least 20 words correctly, in addition to mummy and daddy.

! Your attention encourages your child to communicate with its environment and encourages its linguistic development.

... that apart from hearing also seeing, feeling, smelling and tasting are important for linguistic development? Children explore their environment with all senses: how does something feel, how does it taste, how does it smell, is it square or round, soft or hard, which form or colour does it have. All these different impressions stay in children's memories – together with the feelings which they experience and with words they hear.

... that reading to children is enjoyable and it does them good? Stories arouse children's fantasies and with them the child experiences many interesting things. At the same time, it enjoys being close to the mother or father and it can look how one can "talk" with the hands and face.

... that joy and interest in speaking at each level is more important than "proper" speaking?

i More information on child language development is available on www.kindergesundheit-info.de

Your paediatrician will be glad to answer your questions.

Support language development

The 5 most important tips

1 Give your child as much opportunity as possible to get involved in conversations in the family and to talk. Opportunities present themselves while playing, during daily tasks, in the family circle. Talk to your child in simple words and sentences but do not use baby talk any more.



2 Let your child speak or babble in its own manner even if in the beginning it is unclear. Listen attentively to your child and try to understand it, what it is trying to tell you. Let the child speak, do not interrupt and answer it.

3 Do not force your child to talk by not responding, for instance when it doesn't express itself using words but by using facial expressions or hands. Both are part of language development.

4 Do not make fun of unusual formations of new words and do not constantly correct your child when it makes mistakes. Respond rather to what your child wants to say and repeat what has been said in the correct form in passing.

5 Ask your child what it sees, tastes, feels. Ask encouragingly and help your child to carefully observe and expand its vocabulary. Avoid talking insistently to your child especially when it is tired or is not interested.

! Consult your paediatrician if you get the impression that your child clearly speaks and understands less than its peers or its pronunciation is difficult to understand.



SHORT. BRIEF.
**INFO FOR
PARENTS**

Further information is available on
 > www.kindergesundheit-info.de



Good to know

First of all, when a child learns different languages at the same time, language development can be less “polished” until early school age (e.g. smaller vocabulary or simpler sentence construction). Such “distinctive features” are normal and usually subside on their own after a while.

Get in touch with your paediatrician if you think that your child speaks and understands less than its peers or its pronunciation is hard to understand.

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In cooperation with the National Centre on Early Prevention (NZFH)



SHORT. BRIEF.
**INFO FOR
PARENTS**

Growing up in a multilingual setting*

* Did you know that children can learn several languages naturally?

Englisch **Mehrsprachigkeit**





Did you know...



... that children can naturally learn several languages? Children can easily learn several languages simultaneously as well as first one language and then another language. According to specialists, this is a natural talent in humans.

... that more and more children are growing up in a multilingual setting? In many countries, children are growing up speaking more than one language. Even in Germany, bilingualism is widespread. In most cases, German is the second language.

... that children learn a language more easily the earlier they begin? In the first years, children can learn a second language as easily as their mother tongue.



More information about language development in children and multilingualism is available on

› www.kindergesundheit-info.de

Your paediatrician will be glad to answer your questions.

You can read about the most important stages in learning how to speak and how you can support your child here: **SHORT. BRIEF. INFO FOR PARENTS** "The first word" and "Learning how to speak".

... that growing up in a multilingual setting gives a child a big opportunity? A child will never again learn a different language this easily. Later in life, a child's multilingualism can provide major advantages.

... that attention, joy of speaking and enough encouragement in both languages are the best fundamentals for successful multilingual development?

Support multilingual development

The 5 most important tips

1 **Talk to your child in your own mother tongue.** As a mother or father, always use the language which best soothes and comforts the child and which shows it your affection. Usually this is your own mother tongue.

2 **Create clear "language rules" in case of bilingualism within the family.** Do not change and use the language in the family at random: it is important for your child to connect a certain language with a certain situation or with a certain person, e.g. Turkish with the mother, German with the father.

3 **Indulge your child from the beginning with your own language.** By sparking its interest in talking and offering it a good linguistic role model, you are supporting its linguistic development in its mother tongue. You are hence creating an important basis for successfully learning a second language simultaneously.



4 **Give your child early and frequently the opportunity to experience its second language and also apply it.** Under "daily conditions" the child learns the second language easily – at the playground, with friends at home, at the day care centre.

5 **If your child can not speak German at the time it joins a day care centre, continue communicating in your mother tongue.** That way, you are supporting your child to complete acquiring language skills in its first language. At the same time, give your child sufficient opportunity even outside the day care centre to play with German-speaking children so that it can learn German well.

SHORT. BRIEF.
INFO FOR
PARENTS

Further information is available on
➔ www.kindergesundheit-info.de



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Babies + Toddlers 0–3 years



SHORT. BRIEF.
INFO FOR
PARENTS

Growing up with love and care*

* Babies and toddlers especially need their parents' care.

Englisch **Zuwendung**



Children need ...

... intimacy and reassurance,

... protection and security,

... care and appreciation,

... communication and inspiration.

Children need a reliable and trusting relationship. It gives them the necessary security to curiously explore their environment.



Right from the beginning a baby wants to decide itself about the amount of care, stimulation and change it needs.

An active part. From the beginning

A new-born baby is already able to see and hear and to taste and smell; it can feel and sense when it is held or carried. And from its first moments it wants to build a relationship with you, its mother and father, and it is able to communicate with you in many ways:

➤ Right after its birth it already makes contact with you, maybe by grasping your fingers.

➤ It relaxes when it hears your voice or shows its discontent, for example by whining or crying.



Every child is unique

➤ Every child has its own rhythm and develops in its very own time.

➤ Every child has personal likes and dislikes, strengths and weaknesses.

➤ Every child has a different temperament – some are quiet, some lively, some cry a lot, some not much at all, and some are more easily calmed than others.



Being together. Parents and child

You and your baby communicate and you are responsive and coordinate with one another. The better attuned you are, the stronger your child's experience of achieving something with its behaviour:

- ▶ As an example, your baby studies your face and makes eye contact. In "reply" you will probably give it an attentive and loving look. You can tell from its content face that it feels comfortable and "understood".
- ▶ Your baby looks at you and smiles, you smile back and talk to it.
- ▶ Your baby is restless and you try to calm it. You might talk to it in a calm voice, stroke its head, cradle it in your arms or place it on your tummy.
- ▶ Your baby regards a toy with interest and you give it the toy.

Your baby sees itself mirrored in your "replies" to its behaviour. In this way it is more and more capable of perceiving itself. At about 2–3 months it starts to see its body "with its own eyes", experiencing it as something independent, separated from you. **It slowly develops an image of itself.**



The mother's and father's face and voice are particularly stimulating for a baby and encourage it to imitate them – a first clear expression of understanding.

At about 6–8 weeks your baby will smile at you for the first time.

Stimulation and rest

The younger a child, the more exhausting and exciting it is to take in and react to everything that is new in its surroundings. Especially in the first weeks after your baby is born, e.g. it may suddenly become tired.

Ready for stimulation:

- ▶ Your baby makes eye contact, it smiles at you, makes happy sounds or moves its mouth as if it was trying to talk.
- ▶ It kicks its legs, and later, when it is a bit older, it might hold out its arms to you.

Time for rest:

- ▶ Your baby looks away or doesn't make eye contact.
- ▶ It has a discontented look on its face, yawns or has red-rimmed eyes.
- ▶ When your baby is a little older, rubbing its eyes and nose is an unmistakable sign that it needs some sleep.

Wordless communication with looks is still very important at toddler age, e.g. when your child, who is becoming more and more independent, searches your expression for signs of approval, encouragement and support.

Important to know



- ▶ If a child tends to avoid eye contact, e.g. by constantly looking down to the ground or by trying to turn away its head or body with all its might, this is a warning signal: The child is overwhelmed from too much stimulation and too little rest.
- ▶ Some parents have problems with being responsive to their child. They have difficulties reading its signals or reacting correctly by intuition. This could be due to stress, depressive moods, but also family problems or negative experiences in their own childhood, to name a few examples.
- ▶ Some infants may also have a difficult temperament. They might be particularly restless and cry a lot, which may unsettle their parents. This can make it difficult to react to them in a sensitive way.

When there's no joy

Some mothers are not able to develop intimate feelings for their baby and they don't enjoy being around it. It is difficult for the baby to get through to the mother and its efforts to get in contact are hardly met with any response. In other cases, mothers are excessively worried and scared that something might happen to their child. Being sad, doubting oneself and feeling hopeless is often coupled with shame and a feeling of failure and being a bad mother.

- ▶ These kinds of feelings could be signs of post-natal depression, the so-called "baby blues".
- ▶ This disorder is highly treatable and should be treated quickly.
- ▶ If it is not treated, it can permanently complicate the relationship of mother and child, having a considerably negative effect on the child's development.

Find help as early as possible ...

... if the depressive mood (the so-called "crying days") lasts unusually long after the birth, i.e. more than two weeks.

... if you often feel down and constantly overwhelmed, very insecure and stressed in your new role as a mother.

... if it is hard for you to spend time with your child.

... if your baby cries a lot and you feel that you can no longer stand the crying.

... if you feel that your child doesn't show any interest in you and its surroundings.

Please consult your midwife or your paediatrician. Ask for advisory services for parents with infants and toddlers close to your home.

You will also find branches of the so-called "Early Help" network in every municipality that support and accompany parents in building a caring relationship with their child. This also includes family midwives who assist parents in taking care of their child and its development and supporting it in the first year in the case of special burdens. You will usually find information on how to contact a family midwife at the local youth welfare or public health office.



Find out more about the early years together at

▶ www.kindergesundheit-info.de

Your paediatrician will be glad to answer your questions.



Being responsive and attentive to your child

The 5 most important tips

- 1 **Pay attention to your child. Observe its behaviour and its needs:** Comply with when and how much contact your child wants.
- 2 **Take good care of your child and give it the reassurance that it can rely on you being there:** React to your child immediately and comfort it if it screams or cries. In the first months a child experiences security and comfort especially by close body contact.

3 **Take enough time for your child, especially when caring for it, when feeding it or for going-to-sleep rituals in the evenings:** Use these opportunities to talk to your child. Listen to it, even if it is not yet able to express itself in words.

4 **Be happy about your child and let it see that you are happy when it shows interest in you or items in its surroundings.**

5 **Create safe surroundings** in which your child can feel free to be curious and go on discovery tours without any danger of injuring itself.