



Dear Parent,

Each day is bringing new excitement and new challenges to your task of being a parent. You now realize that what parents do is important to their babies' development, but you're probably not at all sure what things really make a difference. Researchers have studied children and their parents to find out what parents do that make a difference.

The parents of children who are curious, independent, and self-confident:

- *Baby proof their homes so their children can explore their surroundings and develop their natural curiosity.*
- *Accept their children's feelings and help their children understand and deal with these feelings.*
- *Foster a positive self-concept through appropriate encouragement and give their children a sense of being special and loved.*
- *Set a few firm, reasonable limits and are consistent in their guidance.*



In this issue of Keiki ‘O Hawai‘i and in the future issues, there will be more information about these ideas.

Professionals are not always in agreement on specific child-rearing and feeding recommendations. Consult your doctor if you receive conflicting information.

HOW I GROW	HOW I TALK	HOW I RESPOND	HOW I UNDERSTAND	HOW I FEEL
<p>I creep backward and forward with my stomach on the floor.</p> <p>I hold onto an object with one hand and then move it to the other hand.</p> <p>I turn and twist in all directions.</p> <p>I may be able to sit by myself without any help.</p>	<p>I make sounds like f, v, th, s, sh, sz, m, and n.</p> <p>I still babble a lot, but I have more control of sounds.</p> <p>I'm beginning to understand some words by the tone of voice you use.</p>	<p>I pick up things, shake them, and listen to the sounds they make when I drop them.</p> <p>I get upset when I'm around adult strangers, but I'm friendly to children that I don't know.</p> <p>I may coo, hum, or stop crying when I hear music.</p> <p>I explore my world by touching, tasting, hearing and smelling things.</p> <p>I save my smiles for those I love. Others may feel ignored.</p>	<p>I may look at and study things for a long time.</p> <p>I turn objects upside down just to get another view of them.</p> <p>I learn how objects taste and feel by putting them in my mouth.</p> <p>I turn my head when I hear my name.</p>	<p>I complain when I don't get something I want but it's easy to distract me with something I like.</p> <p>I may have very strong likes and dislikes about food.</p>



HOW YOU HELP ME LEARN

- Give me soft stuffed animals and dolls that I can hold easily. When I can make a toy do something, it holds my interest longer. I like squeaky toys and toys that make lots of noise when I shake or bang them.
- Let me play with plastic lids, measuring spoons, plastic bowls, or pots and pans. I like blocks that I can hold in my hands.
- Put a ball or toy where I can stretch my legs and kick it with my feet.
- If I'm not moving on my stomach yet, encourage me by putting my favorite toy just out of reach. Help me to wiggle to it.
- Spend time playing with me every day. Singing, dancing, talking, hugging, and having fun together helps my brain develop.
- Tell me about a toy and show me how to use it.
Let me: look at it . . . smell it . . . chew it . . . squeeze it . . . pat it . . . bang it.

Drinking from a cup

Drinking from a cup will be successful when your infant is able to coordinate lip, tongue, and mouth movements to get liquids from cup to throat. This takes a lot of practice and there is no need to rush the process.

An ideal time to offer her a small cup of water is during her bath or when she is sitting outside. She'll spill some, of course, but she'll gradually learn to coordinate lifting the cup and tilting her head back at the same time.

Water is the ideal thirst-quencher for babies as well as older children and adults. Give your child at least one cup of water each day. Don't give your baby sodas, sweetened fruit punches, flavored syrup drinks or beer. Herbal or regular teas and coffee, even diluted with milk, are not suitable drinks for your baby.

Pediatricians differ in their opinions as to when, or even if fruit juices should be added to your baby's diet. They generally agree, however, that to prevent tooth decay, only water or formula should be given from a bottle. If you introduce juice, use a cup and limit the total amount to 4 ounces of diluted juice a day.



Spoon feeding

When your baby learns that tasty things come her way on a spoon, she'll begin grabbing it to feed herself. Encourage this attempt at independence and give her a spoon to hold. Even though it is messy, let her practice feeding herself. You can feed her with another spoon. It probably will be more than a year before she is actually feeding herself, but these early attempts are her way of saying "I can do it!"

Finger foods

As your baby begins to sit up and reach for things, it's time to offer finger foods. These "pick-ups" help her develop coordination she will need later to feed herself with a spoon. Offer finger foods that are just as nourishing as foods you choose for spoon feeding. Avoid sweetened or salty food. To help your child develop a taste for healthy foods and to protect her teeth, small pieces of fruit, cooked vegetables, unsalted crackers, or unsweetened cereals are good choices. To prevent choking, offer finger foods in very small pieces.

For breast-feeding mothers

As your baby begins eating solids, keep breast-feeding the same number of times a day. Your baby may still want the same amount of milk or somewhat less. Check with your doctor to see if an iron supplement is needed for your baby. Remember that a healthy diet for breast-feeding mothers includes plenty of water and a well-balanced selection of foods.



We give equal time and space to both sexes in Keiki 'O Hawai'i! That's why we take turns referring to babies as "he" or "she". (In this issue, we use "she.") When we refer to "he" or "she," we are talking about *all* babies.

✦ Toys

During the first few months of life, toys for your baby were primarily things for her to watch. Now she has become aware of her hands and what they can do. She is interested in grasping and exploring toys using both her hands and her eyes.

Most toys will go into her mouth or be hit against something. So make sure the toy is washable, smooth, and doesn't chip or splinter if chewed, dropped, or hit. Check to see that toys are too large to swallow. If a toy can fit through the hole in a bathroom tissue roll, it can be swallowed or become lodged in your baby's throat.

Dolls and stuffed animals should have strong seams, be made of durable fabric and be washable. Embroidered faces are best. Ears, eyes, and noses that can be pulled off can be swallowed. Some eyes are attached with spikes or pins. Check carefully the toys you offer your baby.



✦ Choking

Since everything that baby touches usually goes into her mouth, you need to know what to do if your infant chokes. On your next visit, ask your doctor to show you how to safely and quickly remove an object from your baby's throat.



✦ Baby proofing

There are many reasons to baby proof your home:

- It protects your child from accidents and accidental poisoning.
- It gives your baby a large environment that is free to explore.
- It keeps you from having to say "no" all the time.
- It protects your treasured possessions from harm.

Accidents may happen at any time, even in a baby proofed home. Be especially alert when you or your child are sick, tired, hungry, busy, or when you're in a new place.

Most accidents happen in the kitchen. Keep all poisons, cleaning solutions, and knives well out of your child's reach. Put safety latches on cupboards and drawers. Keep hot foods and drinks out of reach. Research shows that the most dangerous time of the day for your child is while you're fixing dinner.

To baby proof their home, parents find it helpful to get down on the floor, crawl around and remove anything that they don't want their baby to touch, grab, taste, or swallow. You may feel a little silly doing this, but you'll see things you would otherwise miss. Prevention is the key to safety. Think ahead to what your child might do next. Check your baby's room and play area daily. Look for small items that could choke your baby.

Harmful substances

With your baby's increased movement comes a desire not just to see and touch but also to taste objects of every sort. Everything possible goes into her mouth, including dirt, stones, shells, flowers, leaves, and even dead cockroaches. Cockroaches may have eaten poisonous insecticide and snails and plants such as oleander and plumeria can also be very dangerous.

Lead based paint may have been used in your home through the 1980's. Keep your baby from chewing on painted cribs, walls and doorways.



First aid

A good family health book and first-aid kit is a valuable addition to any home. You may not need it often, but when you do it may help you make the right decision quickly.

Keep syrup of Ipecac on hand but locked up. This syrup can be obtained at any pharmacy. It is used to cause vomiting in some cases of accidental poisoning. Syrup of Ipecac should only be used according to directions and after consulting your doctor or the Hawaii Poison Center. In case of accidental poisoning, call the Hawaii Poison Center. See the Parent Resource Directory for the phone number and keep it near your phone.

Baby bottle tooth decay

Toddlers with silver caps on their top front teeth are a common sight in Hawai'i. These decayed front teeth are "baby bottle tooth decay". The problem develops when infants are given fruit juices and flavored drinks from a bottle, fall asleep with milk in their mouths, or carry their bottle around with them, frequently sucking from it during the day.

When you hold your infant either to breast-feed her or feed her from a bottle, her head is elevated and the liquid she is drinking flows down her throat. However, when your baby holds her own bottle, when she drinks from a propped bottle, or when she is allowed to breast-feed lying on the bed beside you, she may fall asleep with unswallowed liquid in her mouth.



This liquid, whether it is your breast milk, infant formula, or fruit juice, collects around the teeth and provides food for the bacteria that live in your infant's mouth. Until the teeth erupt, these bacteria are harmless. However, once the habit of going to bed with a bottle has been established, it is difficult to change.

Until she is weaned, each bedtime bottle creates the stage for an attack on the baby teeth. To prevent decay, wipe her teeth gently with a soft wet cloth after feeding.

If your infant likes to suck on something in order to sleep, let it be a bottle of water (not sweetened), a pacifier, or even her thumb or fist. The time to begin preventing painful, unsightly tooth decay is when your infant begins developing her feeding/sleeping patterns.

Q - *My baby is 6 months old. I thought she would be sleeping through the night by now, but she usually wakes up at least once and sometimes several times during the night. Is this normal?*

A - Yes. Babies wake for different reasons. They may be hungry, thirsty, uncomfortable, frightened, or just light sleepers. At this age, teething may also be the problem.

Some babies, just like some adults, are simply light sleepers or “catnappers.” These babies are not necessarily hungry when they wake and they may be content to amuse themselves with a crib gym, cuddly toy, or even a rattle. They may need a soft light in the room to help them find a way to amuse themselves. Some babies wake, cry briefly, and then go back to sleep. Others, no matter what you do, keep crying. Unless your baby’s cry signals discomfort, you might safely wait to see if she will go back to sleep before attempting to comfort her. Some babies fall back to sleep if they are given a pacifier, patted gently, or soothed by the sound of music.



It is easy to ignore the first signs of stress: tense stomach, headache, muscle ache, fatigue, etc. If you listen to your body and to your feelings, you can learn to read the warning signals and take action to reduce tension.

- When your baby takes a nap, forget what you “should” be doing. Take time out. Do whatever relaxes you.
- Plan ahead! Unplug your phone to assure a quiet time for feeding or bathing the baby or a rest time for you. You might let your friends and family know the best times to reach you. A “Do Not Disturb” sign on your front door can also give you some uninterrupted time.
- Talk about your feelings of anger and worry with people who are really close to you. During times of stress it may be difficult if you must rely on only one person so it is helpful to have more than one person with whom you can really talk. Fathers as well as mothers need to talk out their feelings. For a more objective listener, you can also call The Parent Line.
- Trying to do everything will wear you out. Choose to do the most important things and don’t worry about the rest.



- Parents and babies learn together.
- Parents’ needs are important.
- Your baby relies on you. You can rely on others.
- Guide your baby with love and limits.



For more information about Keiki ‘O Hawai’i and its contents or to receive additional copies call The Parent Line at 526-1222 or 1-800-816-1222 toll free.