



*Dear Mom and Dad,*

*I know it isn't easy being a parent and I do demand a lot from you. It isn't easy being a baby either. Most of the time, I'm happy, curious, and content. But sometimes I get upset and scared. You can help me by trying to understand my feelings and how they change as I grow older.*

*At seven months, I may get upset when I have to face new situations, meet new people, see animals, wake up at night, or become separated from you. I may not have been bothered by changes when I was younger. Now I am more aware of the world. I cry because I can't tell you what's frightening me. In this issue of Keiki 'O Hawai'i, there are hints on fears I may have and some ways you can help me live with them.*



*Love,  
Your Keiki*

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 get around by raising my back and pushing with my feet.</p> <p>I sit without any support.</p> <p>I keep my legs straight when you pull me up, and I try to stand by myself.</p> <p>I explore my body with my mouth and hands.</p> <p>I may have some teeth.</p> <p>I feed myself finger foods but I sure am messy.</p> <p>I play with a spoon and a cup but I'm not too good at using them yet.</p> <p>I change objects from one hand to another.</p>	<p>I giggle and squeal to attract your attention.</p> <p>I imitate the sounds I hear.</p> <p>I say several sounds like "ma", "mu", "da", "di" and "ba"—all in one breath.</p>	<p>I want to be included in family activities.</p> <p>I like to touch my reflection in the mirror.</p> <p>I get excited when I see a picture of a baby.</p> <p>I like toys that make noise like bells, music boxes, or rattles.</p> <p>I may put my hand over your mouth if you are talking to someone else and not paying attention to me.</p>	<p>I concentrate better now and spend a lot of time examining things.</p> <p>I can tell when people are angry or happy by the way they look and talk.</p>	<p>I may be afraid of strangers, so stay with me when they are around. I like to "keep my eye" on you.</p> <p>I feel strongly about what I want and don't want to do.</p>



### HOW YOU HELP ME LEARN

- Give me a ball or some small cans of food from the kitchen shelf to roll. I will start trying to stack the cans later.
- Sing to me when I am on your lap. I like the sound of your voice, the rhythm of your body and being close to you.
- Play peek-a-boo with me. You can hide behind a chair or a door and I will giggle while waiting for you to reappear.
- Talk to me about what is around me. Talk to me while you are doing chores.
- Let me practice the skills that I have been developing. Practice is the basis of all my learning.
- Give me plastic or metal cups, bowls, and pans. I will try putting one inside the other.
- Read to me. Cloth, plastic, or hard cardboard books are best. Point to the pictures as you tell me about them.
- During my diaper change, keep me distracted with a toy. I won't squirm as much.
- Hide a toy under a cloth while I'm watching and I will find it.

Between seven and nine months, many doctors recommend the addition of meats and enriched or whole grain breads and cereals to infants' diets. Check with your doctor.

If you are using commercial baby foods, plain meats, vegetables and fruits are more nutritious than the "dinners" that contain added starches. Avoid desserts. Fruit is an excellent way to end your baby's meal.



When your baby is eating a variety of solids and is able to drink from a cup, you can begin to wean him gradually from the breast or bottle. Some parents will choose to breast-feed or bottle-feed their baby for a longer period of time. You will have to decide when your baby is ready to be weaned and what is best for you. Talk with your doctor if the decision seems difficult for you to make alone.

### Watch out!

Now that your baby is beginning to pull himself up by holding onto furniture, you need to be more alert.

- Look for carts with wheels or chairs that roll.
- Move dangling electrical cords that your baby might use to pull down lamps, kitchen appliances, clocks, and computers. In the bathroom, keep razors, curling irons, and hair dryers out of reach.
- Keep windowshade cords out of baby's reach to prevent strangling.
- Move the crib mattress to the lowest position and keep siderails up to prevent your baby from falling or climbing out of the crib.
- Don't fasten toys to a crib or playpen with string.
- Keep mesh playpen sides raised. Never put soft bedding or quilts in the playpen. Infants can suffocate in the unraised mesh "pockets" or in the soft bedding.
- Watch for easily swallowed "button" batteries that are used in cameras, games, calculators, and watches. They could cause internal burns.



### Trips away from home

Always use approved car seats when driving with your child in the car. There is also danger in leaving your child in a parked car. Even with the car windows partially open, the temperature in the car can rise very fast. Also, young children might kick the gearshift resulting in an accident or someone could take your child even from a locked car.

Most infants seem to enjoy the sights and sounds of a supermarket. Encourage your child to sit quietly in the cart while you shop by talking to him about the things you are buying, showing him the colorful cans and boxes, and naming familiar items. Don't leave him unattended in a shopping cart even for a moment.

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 "he.") When we refer to "he" or "she," we are talking about *all* babies.

A word from your baby about fears

### Fear of strange animals

I may cry when a strange dog or cat approaches me. If you cuddle me and hold me close, I'll feel safe when these animals are around. Later, I may want to play with them.

### Fear of separation

I may scream loudly when you leave me. That's because I think that the most important person in my life is leaving me for good. A reassuring word or hug may help.

Plan ahead if you are leaving me with a new caregiver. Arrange several short visits for both of us to become familiar with this new person. Stay with me during these visits. The first time you plan to leave me, make it only a few minutes. Give me a hug or kiss, say goodbye, and tell me when you'll be back. Don't sneak out or stretch out your goodbye.

Return when you promised and comfort me if necessary. Tell me you've returned just as you said you would. You are building trust and confidence and making it easier for me to handle our separations. After a while, I will learn that you always come back.

### Fear of loud noises

Don't be surprised if an appliance such as a vacuum cleaner or blender suddenly makes me cry. I won't feel so afraid if you hold me while you show me how the machine works.

### Fear of the dark

Sometimes I wake up at night. It's dark and no one is around. When I realize I'm all alone, I may get scared. Come in and talk softly to me for a few minutes, or leave on a small light so that I can see that there's nothing to fear.



*P.S. Please don't try to make changes in my life too quickly.  
Give me a lot of time to get used to new things.  
Everything I see, taste, smell, hear or feel is a  
new experience for me, and I need time to understand.*

Babies need fresh air and light. Ultraviolet rays of the sun help the body make Vitamin D, but their ill effects build up. Enjoy sunshine in small amounts. The lighter your baby's skin, the more harmful the sun's rays can be. Protect his skin as well as your own. Ask your doctor which sunscreens are recommended for infants under one year of age; avoid the hottest time of the day (usually mid-morning to mid-afternoon); and protect his head with a hat.

If your baby has a sunburn, stay out of the sun. Offer him more liquid than usual. If his skin blisters, see your doctor.



### Pets

If you are not already a pet owner, consider waiting to get a pet until your child is old enough to understand that animals require gentle handling.

If you have a pet, be aware that illnesses can be transmitted by pets to people through animal droppings.



- 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.

**Q** - *My baby has suddenly become afraid of my friends. He some times cries even when my mother comes to visit. Why does he act this way? What can I do?*

**A** - Respect your baby's very real fear but don't worry. A fear of new people at this age is normal. It's the time when babies begin to develop a separate sense of self, an important step in growing up. They are afraid because they know the difference between people they see all the time and strangers. They become upset when someone they don't know is around them.

Some babies cry or whimper with genuine fear. Others cling to their mothers and refuse to let go. Some babies, just like adults, develop an instant dislike for a person.

Comfort your baby if he is fearful. Hold him close to let him know that he is safe. Explain to friends or relatives not to take the rejection personally—that your baby needs time to get used to them. Ask them to give your baby a chance to get to know them from the safety of your arms. He may be willing to let someone hold him in a little while. As your baby gets older he will feel more secure and more comfortable with other people.



By now you're probably feeling quite confident and relaxed about bringing up your baby. But there may still be times when you feel unsure of yourself and guilty that you're not the "perfect" parent. Remember: there is no such thing as the perfect parent. You may be expecting too much from yourself. It's impossible to be patient and loving all the time. Even if you're doing the best you can, you may feel guilty and discouraged if you're not living up to your image of a "good" parent. You may have a whole list of "shoulds," such as "I should never get mad at my baby"

and "I should be able to get everything done every day".

Don't be too tough on yourself. Instead of putting yourself down with a list of "shoulds," try to accept your feelings and realize it's not easy to be all things to all people—even to little babies. Be reassured that a wide range of feelings is normal. You're not alone. It's how you act or behave because of your feelings that can be inappropriate or hurtful. So, take a break; call a friend or The Parent Line; ask for help or advice; and get some rest.

Be a good friend to yourself.



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.

Keiki 'O Hawai'i describes a typical child at each age. These descriptions are based on the study of many babies.

Because your child is unique, he may do things somewhat earlier or later than is indicated.

If you have any question about your child's development, call your doctor or The Hawai'i Keiki Information Service System (H-KISS).

H-KISS is a statewide information and referral phone line for families with children ages 0-5.

H-KISS helps parents who have concerns about their child's development and/or have children with special needs.