

WORKING MOTHERS

Many mothers returning to work sometimes feel guilty because they imagine that they are neglecting their babies. Single parents, in particular, may not have a choice. Feeling guilty won't help you or your baby. Consider the following:

"I want only the best for my baby."

Shop around for a quality day care center or family caregiver for your baby. Studies show that, unfortunately, many parents choose the center closest to their home or work, regardless of quality. Giving a child the best care available is a sign of a loving parent, and it is the best start for later success.

"Quality ... and quantity time!"

The quality of time you spend with your child becomes even more important when the quantity lessens. Make time to spend special time every day with your whole family. This may mean leaving some household chores undone, but your baby's and family's development are much more important. The dirty dishes will still be there after you've spent your special time with the family!

"Be alert!"

Your baby's needs are continually changing. Being aware of these changes will enable you to meet your baby's needs. A child who can depend on her parents to love her, care for her and meet her needs will be happy, healthy and secure. Even if Mom works!

"I have needs, too!"

Some parents know that they could not be happy away from their jobs. They are better parents after working. Be sure to balance the two roles so that all involved have their needs met. If your child's needs are not being met, it may be time to reconsider priorities.

BUY LINES: TOY STORAGE

Your baby is probably accumulating a number of toys now, so you may need to decide where to store all that stuff! Consider the following.

Shelves have an advantage over toy chests because they display toys and offer the child freedom to select and reach for herself. As she grows, you also help her learn to organize by taping pictures of the toys on the shelf where each should be stored. Shelves should be 2 to 3 feet above the floor and attached securely to the wall. Round off sharp edges or cover them with foam rubber.



Toy chests can be anything from a box with a lid to a laundry basket. If you buy a chest, make sure it is easy to open, has a lightweight lid that does not fall easily, is well ventilated, does not lock automatically, and does not have hinges that could pinch little fingers. A pretty painted toy chest may look nice, but a good old laundry basket has a few advantages: it is flexible (if fallen on), well-ventilated, easy to get toys in and out of, and has no lid to trap little ones.

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PUTTING KNOWLEDGE TO WORK

The University of Georgia and Ft. Valley State University, the U.S. Department of Agriculture and counties of the state cooperating. The Cooperative Extension Service, the University of Georgia College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences offers educational programs, assistance and materials to all people without regard to race, color, national origin, age, sex or disability.

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County Extension Agent

Baby Bouncer



FOURTH MONTH Working Mothers



COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE
The University of Georgia
College of Family and Consumer Sciences and
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Baby Bouncer

FOURTH MONTH: Working Mothers

Your baby is so much more aware now — and so responsive! The fourth month is full of joys for the whole family.

BABY'S FOOD

At birth, an infant has a strong natural sucking and tongue thrust reflex. This tongue thrust causes baby to push anything solid (such as food or a small toy) out of her mouth with her tongue. This helps to keep an infant from choking. If solid food is added to her diet earlier than 4 to 6 months of age, it is often rejected. This is because her tongue thrust reflex does not begin to disappear until after the third month.

Your baby should be able to sit up, lean forward and push away before beginning cereals. Then start with an iron-fortified infant cereal. Adding too many different foods too soon may cause allergies and overeating. So, keep it simple.

BABY'S HEALTH

It's time for your baby's second DPT, Hib, and polio immunizations. **Remember:** A DPT vaccine protects your baby against diphtheria, tetanus and whooping cough. There are possible side effects. If you have not talked with your doctor about these, do so. An informed parent makes better choices about the baby's health.

BABY'S DEVELOPMENT

Baby's favorite sounds at this age are usually "h" and "ae." Some babies can even put this together and say "hey" at this age. Babbling is baby's way of learning to talk, so encourage her to practice. When speaking to your baby, speak correctly. At four months, she is already beginning to imitate sounds, so speak to her clearly. Take turns talking with her. Conversation skills begin along with the excitement of attention.

Expect Your Baby to:

- Sit up with support.
- Roll from side to back.
- Splash her hands and feet in the tub.
- Drool. (She hasn't learned to swallow saliva yet.)
- Hold her head up without support.
- Reach for her toes.
- Play with hands and reach for objects.

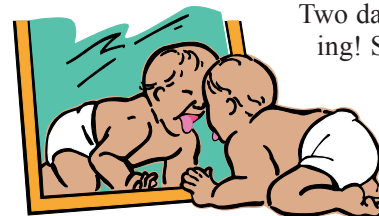
Don't be surprised if your baby tries to grasp an object with her fist closed — she will soon learn to open and close her hands around an object. She may have learned to use her thumb and forefinger together in a pinching manner.

Your baby's eyesight is fully developed now. She can easily follow objects with her eyes.

At four months your baby is becoming a social being. She has a range of emotions such as anger, surprise, sadness and happiness. She enjoys being with the family and is very responsive to attention. She may try to get a reaction from you. Singing, talking and playing with her will bring coos, smiles and squeals of excitement.

PARENT-BABY LEARNING GAMES

Show your baby her image in a mirror. She will smile at her reflection, and when the image smiles back, she may laugh and coo. Does she look at your image in the mirror?



Two daddies are confusing! Say things to your baby such as, "See the baby?" She will soon begin to realize that it is her image

in the mirror and that she is the baby.

It is never too early to introduce a baby to music. In fact, some mothers begin playing music for their baby to hear even before she is born! If you haven't begun already, begin playing music from the radio, classical tapes or nursery rhyme tapes to her occasionally. Watch her reaction to different kinds of music to see if she has favorites!

BABY'S TEMPERAMENT

Every baby will be different from others by nature. If you have more than one child, you probably recognize that even babies in the same family can have very different personalities. Some babies may cry a great deal, resist being bathed and adjust slowly to new situations. Others wake up happy, adapt easily to change and enjoy day-to-day experiences. There is nothing better or worse with these babies or their parents — it is simply the temperament with which the babies were born. You will be able to help your baby learn to use his or her temperament effectively as he or she grows.

Temperament should not be confused with misbehavior. At this stage of development, babies do not behave in ways to intentionally irritate you, so any kind of punishment is out of the question. An infant cannot understand your reprimands and often cannot control her own behavior. Some parents think that infants cry or soil their diapers just to make the parent mad, but this is not true. Patience on your part is a must. Remember: If you reward your baby's laughs and smiles, she will give them more often.

BABY'S CLOTHING

Now that your baby is more active and goes out with you more often, dress her appropriately for the weather. Contrary to what many people believe, babies don't catch a cold from being cold. Most colds are carried by germs; often on people's hands. In spring and early summer (70° to 74°), a diaper, undershirt, sleep/play suit and blanket are usually sufficient. In summer (75° to 85°), remove the blanket and perhaps the undershirt. On those very hot days (above 85°), all your baby needs is her diaper and maybe a T-shirt or lightweight playsuit. Add a sunbonnet to your baby's wardrobe to help keep the sun out of her eyes and to shade her tender skin from the sun.

In the winter, keep the house temperature between 68° and 70°, and add a heavier blanket for baby's warmth. When you take baby out during winter, bundle her in a sweater, cap, mittens, booties and a warm wool blanket. Make sure heavier clothing does not interfere with the straps on her car safety seat.

Baby's clothing is sized according to her body build (height and weight), not by her age. Below are some standard clothing sizes for infants.

SIZE	HEIGHT	WEIGHT
Newborn	Up to 25.5"	Up to 14 lbs.
Small	25.5" to 27.5"	15-19 lbs.
Medium	28" to 32"	20-26 lbs.
Large	32.5" to 36.5"	27-32 lbs.

SAFETY TIPS

Keep any objects that can be dislodged by baby's movements out of her reach. Also, keep tiny objects away from baby. Everything she touches goes into her mouth at this age, and objects smaller than 1" in diameter can become lodged in her throat. Food should be cut into small bits for this same reason.