

Parenting in Focus: A new baby ... how exciting!

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After all the anticipation, your new baby girl has just arrived. But now what?

Should you try to play with her? Should you talk to her? What should you do?

From birth to three months, your baby does not need many toys. She is more involved in exploring her own body and the faces of people around her. The best thing to do during these first months with her is talk with her as if she understands.

Talk about what you are doing, what you are going to do, how pretty she is, how big she is getting and anything else you can think of. The more words she hears the smarter she becomes.

She may really enjoy music. Play soft music with a strong beat. Reggae music has a solid, steady beat of about 60 or 70 beats per minute. That is the same rhythm to imitate the sound in the womb, so she may like this ("The Modern Girl's Guide to Motherhood," J. Buckingham, 2006).

If you buy toys, choose bright colors and high-contrast patterns. Because of how her brain is developing right now, she looks to the right 80 percent of the time at this age. So put a toy or mirror on that side of her body to keep her interested.

Sometimes, no matter what you do she may cry. That is okay too. But whether you are mom or dad, you can't solve all the problems but it is certainly worth trying.

One of the most exciting parts of having a new baby is to see the huge changes that occur in this early time in her life.

- Week 1 — She may be little but she still can make a lot of noise when she cries.
- Week 2 — She may amaze you how much she enjoys eating. Be ready.
- Week 3 — Try to remember that her crying is a way of communicating with you. She wants something.
- Week 4 — By this time, she begins to carry on conversations with you.
- Week 5 — You are likely to see her smile anytime around now.
- Week 6 — This is the age she begins to be aware of her fingers and picking things up.
- Week 7 — Enjoy the smiles and sounds as she communicates more to those around her.
- Week 8 — By this 2-month old milestone, make sure you give yourself a chance to rest.
- Week 12 — Now that she is 3 months old, you are spending extra-long periods of time with her. It is fortunate that babies are so adorable that spending that time is worthwhile. Enjoy her smiles and her attempts at speech.

Raising a child is not easy and it can certainly tire anyone out rather quickly. She needs you (see [www.whattoexpect.com/first-year](http://www.whattoexpect.com/first-year)).

Enjoy these early days with your new child. What you are each teaching the other are very critical lessons. In fact, you will be learning lessons from her for the rest of your life. You are both teaching each other important lessons in life.

Some these lessons will be handed down through multiple generations. Today, however, your time together and what you are each learning is laying the foundation for a lifetime together.

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