



Developing Your Baby's Color Palette



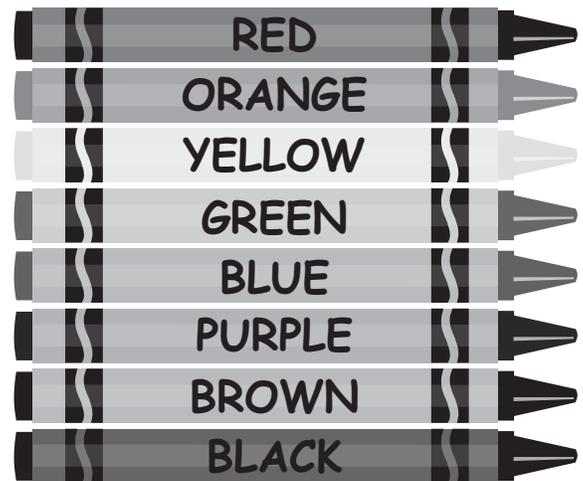
Dear Parents,

Babies are born with a black and white color palette. Colors will wire as a baby experiences them in the outside world. Most babies show that they can distinguish the color red between the second and third month of life. Blue and green will follow within a couple of weeks. Yellow takes a little longer to emerge a month or two later. White becomes a color just after yellow. Black will not become a color, in and of itself, until around a baby's first birthday. From this point through adolescence, fine variations in colors will be distinguished.

Newborn babies will stare at black and white toys and objects because these colors intensify what they are able to see. This does not mean you need to offer only these colors to babies. A baby's brain is wiring for color and interaction with colors is required to do this.

What You Can Do

- Surround your baby with colors, especially primary colors. Group the toys by color when playing with her.
- When you notice your baby staring at a specific color (most likely red first), provide a few objects of this color for her to look at.
- Expose your older infant to fine variations of colors, such as blocks in several shades of blue or stuffed animals in several shades of green. The more often a baby is exposed to variations in hues the more color discriminate she will become.
- Remember a baby is just developing the ability to distinguish colors. She is not learning to name and identify colors. This will come much later, usually at the end of the second year but sometimes even later.
- Point out colors in books as you read to your baby.
- Don't overwhelm your baby with too many objects and too many colors at one time. Offer a couple of items at a time.
- High contrast images are most appealing to your baby but keep it simple. Less is more when it comes to little ones.





Respecting Your Baby's Acute Senses

Dear Parents,

Thanks to new findings from neuroscience research, we have a much greater understanding of the significant role senses play in a baby's early brain development. Babies are born with only a minimal amount of neurological wiring. The higher regions of the brain (those used for language, social interactions, self-control, motor control and critical thinking) are not yet wired. The neurons are there and ready to be connected, but those connections are dependent on the child's senses to bring information from the child's experiences into the brain.

A baby's senses are more acute than those of adults. The amount of time babies spend in a watchful and aware state increases from only a few hours at birth to six or more hours per day by the middle of the first year. Because a baby's senses are at their peak, babies can become easily overstimulated. When overstimulated, little ones may choose to sleep or they may cry for what appears to be no reason.

What You Can Do

- Engage your baby when he is responsive (eyes bright and focused, cooing and babbling, wiggling, smiling) and allow him to rest when he is not.
- Keep lighting natural. Avoid bright lights.
- Protect your baby from bright sun.
- Play music at a moderate volume. Avoid loud music and loud noises.
- Use fragrance-free cleaning supplies and other household products.



SOUND



SMELL



TASTE



TOUCH



SIGHT

- Use fragrance-free toiletries. Eliminate perfumes and colognes. Think about how it feels when you are with someone whose cologne is overpowering. Babies can feel that overpowering sense from household aerosols.
- Offer your baby just one or two items or toys at a time. Too many items at one time may cause your baby to shut down.
- Keep visual stimuli to a minimum. Decorate your baby's room and play space sparingly and thoughtfully.
- Babies prefer warmer temperatures than we do. Turn up the thermostat a couple of degrees or layer your baby's clothing.



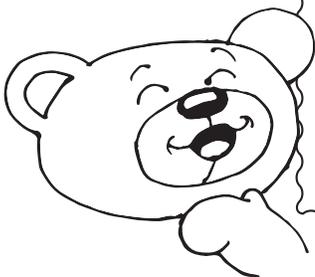
Singing is Joyful and More

Dear Parents,

- Babies love music. They will generally stop what they are doing in order to pay closer attention when they hear a song. If you are singing to them directly, they will make eye contact with you and smile.
- While singing is joyful, it also has many other benefits. Generally singing creates a sense of well-being which in turn causes the brain to release endorphins that help protect the immune system and also act as a memory fixative. Ever wonder why you so easily remember TV ad jingles?
- All early sounds, including music and rhythms, play a profound role in shaping the brain. Linguistics, psychologists, and neuroscientists have recently changed their long-held opinion about the relationship between speaking and singing. The latest data shows that music and language are so intertwined that an awareness of music is critical to a baby's language development. As children grow, music may foster their communication skills. Our sense of song helps us learn to talk, read, and even make friends.

What You Can Do

- Sing to your baby as often as possible.
- Create songs about taking a bath, eating, changing a diaper, or any other routine. Sing about events and things that happen during the day. Your baby doesn't care if you can carry a tune or if your song has rhyme or even makes sense. Just have fun!
- Sing along with songs on the radio.
- Make an effort to learn songs that are sung to your baby at school. Sing these songs at home.
- Play music for your baby when she is awake. Play a variety of music styles, such as country, classical, pop, and jazz. Babies have sensitive hearing so keep the volume low. Music played at a decibel level that is too high can damage a baby's ears.
- Play a musical instrument (xylophone, bells, piano) when you sing. Your baby will enjoy the novelty.
- Smile when you sing. Remember singing is joyful!



Rain, Rain, Go Away

Rain, rain go away.
Come again another day.
Little baby wants to play.
Come again another day.

Rock-a-Bye Baby

Rock-a-bye baby in the tree top.
When the wind blows, the cradle will rock.
When the bough breaks, the cradle will fall,
And down will come baby, cradle and all.