



## Helping Your Baby Make Transitions

Dear Parents,

Everyone needs time to make transitions. Transitions are about change. It takes the brain a few minutes to tune in to new experiences, people, or environments. Adults are used to making transitions. Babies are not. Transitions for infants are also about change (a passage from one experience, caregiver, stage or activity to another) but occur more often and are less expected than those adults make. It is important for adults to recognize that infants react to even the smallest changes in their lives.

For babies, some transitions occur with physical development. They move quickly from being totally helpless to being able to sit, crawl and walk. Some transitions occur because of caregiver changes. Each adult a baby interacts with has a different smell, look, touch, and voice. Some transitions occur because of a change in the environment, such as lighting and temperature. Other transitions are related to routines, such as feeding, diaper changing, and napping.

### What You Can Do

- Transitions are easier for your baby when you plan for them. Sing to announce a change of activity or say your baby's name to announce your presence. Smooth transitions are dependent on making sure your baby knows what is going to happen next.
- Always give a warning when picking up your baby. With a young infant, say her name and leave your hands in place under her for a few seconds before lifting her. With a mobile infant, say her name, make eye contact, and wait a couple of seconds before lifting her.
- Bring a special toy or blanket to school to help your baby connect home and school.
- Don't rush! Move slowly around your baby to avoid startling him and causing him stress.
- Stay a little while when dropping off your baby at school. This allows her time to adjust.
- Maintain routines as much as possible. Your baby depends on routines to know what is coming next.



#### Diaper Changing Time

(Tune: London Bridge is Falling Down)

Now it's time to change your diaper.  
Change your diaper. Change your diaper.  
Now it's time to change your diaper.  
My sweet baby!

#### Good Morning

Good morning to you!  
Good morning to you!  
With eyes open wide  
And me by your side  
Good morning to you.  
Now what shall we do?



Dear Parents,

During the first year of life, babies are learning about their surroundings and their place in these surroundings. They are attempting to figure out how the world works: *Can I make interesting things happen? Are people caring? Do my accomplishments matter? What draws people to me? Is there someone I can trust to help me and teach me?* The answers to these questions come from a baby's experiences and lay the foundation for future learning. Your actions and reactions, your words, your responses, your voice, and your celebrations of a baby's accomplishments will all contribute to his sense of self.

Right from birth, babies need to know that they can cause good things to happen on a predictable basis. They need to know that when they cry you will come to their aid, when they are hungry you will be there with food, and when they are sick you will help them feel better. During the first year of life, you cannot spoil a baby! If there is one significant person there to meet a baby's needs on a predictable basis, the baby will develop trust. Trust is critical. It is the foundation of emotional intelligence and it also fuels curiosity which promotes exploration and learning.

## What You Can Do

- Be present for your baby. Make sure he knows you are there for him. Acknowledge his call for attention. If you are busy, let your baby know you are coming shortly.
- Being available to your baby does not mean that he never experiences the world alone. Babies need to learn to fall asleep on their own. They need to learn to calm themselves. They need to learn to entertain themselves. You can help your child learn these things by letting him know you are close by. For example, when helping your baby learn to fall asleep on his own, make sure he is dry, fed, and ready for sleep and then put him in bed. If he fusses, go to the door every five minutes or so, and let him know you are there and that you have confidence he will succeed in falling asleep. If he fusses longer than 20 minutes, pick your baby up and re-evaluate the situation.
- Celebrate your baby's accomplishments.
- Respond to your baby's curiosity. This is just as important as feeding and diapering. Provide toys with interesting buttons and sounds. Talk about the objects your child points to and allow him to touch those objects when it is safe to do so.
- You cannot spoil a baby but you can spoil a toddler. At 16 months, your child will begin to have an opinion and you will find that many times it is in opposition to yours. Your child needs to know there are limits. Don't give in to fits.



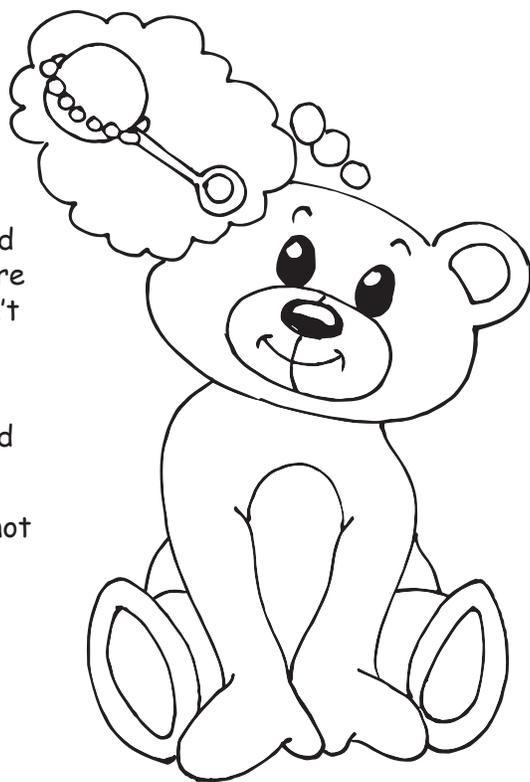


## Understanding Early Memory

Dear Parents,

As adults, our memory is dependent on our knowledge of language, labels, visual organizers, and the context of time and space. Infants do not have any of these tools. Their memory focuses on sensory sensations. A baby's memory is not yet fully understood by science but it appears to be more connected to people, preferences, and feelings especially during the first two years of life. There are three widely accepted theories as to why infants don't appear to retain early experiences as memories as we know them:

- Memories are not accompanied by repetition (recall) and therefore are not strong enough to be retained.
- Memories prior to language are coded differently and not available for later recall.
- Content memories are not significant during the first couple of years. The focus of the brain during these years is on setting up the tools that will be used for organizing information in the future when content will become important.



### What You Can Do

- There is no scientific evidence that anything parents do in the early years in the way of formally "teaching" their child will result in early memory. Instead it is recommended that you offer an environment that is safe and provides plenty of experiences for building an understanding of how the world operates. This environment includes a caring adult to help guide learning.
- Offer your child toys with familiar components. Infants prefer things that are familiar, such as familiar people, toys, and surroundings. They are more likely to approach a toy if there is an element of familiarity to it. For example, they will reach for a new rattle when it is shaken to produce a familiar sound.
- If your child is in childcare, make sure you have selected an environment where children are engaged by caring adults.
- Repeat activities with your baby often. Repetition increases the strength of wiring connections children make when experiencing a new activity or learning a new skill.
- Take photos of your baby and show them to him often over time.
- Enjoy every minute of your child's beginning years. If you store the memories, you can share them with your child later. Little ones often ask us to share our memories:  
*When did I walk? What was my first word? What is something funny I said or did?*