Being a parent
How can I quiet my crying baby? When will our child finally sleep through the night? When should it start getting baby food, and what is the best approach? Parents often feel uncertain about caring for their baby – especially with the first child. And even though nature has provided that parents can usually sense on their own the right thing to do, questions still arise when caring for an infant or toddler on a daily basis.

Short. Brief.
Materials for parents of babies (age 0–1) and toddlers (age 1–3)
› Information and practical tips on things that often concern families regarding the day-to-day care of their infant or toddler.

› These materials may also be useful to midwives, paediatricians and other professionals, such as counsellors at parenting and family counselling centres, in their work with parents.

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In cooperation with the National Centre on Early Prevention (NZFH)

Further information is available on
www.kindergesundheit-info.de
When your child grabs away the spoon and won’t give it back, just get another spoon to continue feeding!

* Did you know that your baby will show you when it is ready for solid food?
The 5 most important tips

1. Feeding times should be fun, even if it’s a bit of a mess. You should thus dress yourself and your child appropriately. You can use old newspapers for example to cover tabletops and floors.

2. Take your child onto your lap and hold it in your arm in such a way that its head and neck are straight and you can both look at each other. Take your time feeding it with the spoon and talk to your child calmly.

3. Hold the spoon in front of your child’s mouth and wait for it to open its mouth. If it doesn’t open its mouth, put a little bit of food on its lips. In this manner you can get it accustomed to the taste.

4. Always introduce new foods like blended vegetables, potatoes and meat individually, and with intervals of several days. This allows you to observe whether your child is able to properly digest the new food.

5. Breast milk feeds will gradually be replaced by baby food meals. Even after that you can continue breast feeding your child as long as both of you wish.

Did you know...

… that your baby will show you when it is ready for solid food? For example, it will become interested in what other people are eating. It will move its mouth while watching, or open it when you touch its cheek with the spoon.

… that babies usually spit out most of the baby food at first because they are not used to eating with a spoon, and have to learn it first? Your child needs time to get used to this new type of food as well. It needs its time, and likes to thoroughly experiment with it, using its tongue, palate and maybe even fingers.

… that you can continue breast feeding your child even after introducing baby food meals? Breast milk feeds will gradually be replaced by baby food meals. Even after that you can continue breast feeding your child as long as both of you wish.

More information about baby food meals is available on www.kindergesundheit-info.de

Your midwife or paediatrician will be glad to answer your questions.

Ready for solid food

From the fifth month of age to, at the latest, the end of the sixth month, an infant has developed enough for it to learn how to eat from a spoon.

Start out with 1–2 spoons of vegetable baby food and then afterward give your child his or her regular breast feed. Slowly increase the amount of baby food. Then progressively replace breast feeds with baby food feeds.

… that children sometimes need many little tastes to get used to and grow to like a new flavour? When your child rejects a new taste, try again the next day, and the day after that. But you should never force your child.

… that your child knows best when it is full, and will show you? When your child closes its mouth and turns away, that is the most reliable signal for you to conclude the feed. Say “finished”, clean it up, play with it or lay it down.

… that with a bit of patience and calm the two of you can quickly become a well-coordinated team?

Baby food feeds made easier

The 5 most important tips

1. Feeding times should be fun, even if it’s a bit of a mess. You should thus dress yourself and your child appropriately. You can use old newspapers for example to cover tabletops and floors.

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… that with a bit of patience and calm the two of you can quickly become a well-coordinated team?"
Did you know...

* Did you know that curiosity and the urge to explore are the "motors" of child development?

1. Did you know that curiosity and the urge to explore are the "motors" of child development? Children are curious from birth. They want to find out what is happening around them and they try to understand what it has to do with them.

2. Did you know that childish curiosity cannot be aroused at will? What is interesting to a child and what a child is curious about depends on which skills are developing. If for instance the child can walk freely, it will be very interested in knowing how it feels to walk and run on a meadow, on forest soil, on sand, on cobblestones or on paving slabs.

3. Did you know that playing and learning are one and the same for children? Children discover and investigate while playing how something is made, whether things, for instance, are similar or different. They familiarise themselves with daily objects and sometimes find out in a difficult way through trial and error how something is linked or how it functions.

4. Did you know that children don’t constantly need new offers and a lot of variety? If the challenges are age-appropriate and interesting, less is often more. Simple toys made of wood or plastic are mostly better suited than technical or electronic toys which emit sounds or move when buttons are pressed.

5. Did you know that parents are always role models for their child – in good times and in bad times? Children copy a lot from their fathers and mothers. They imitate how they do things as well as how they conduct themselves in certain situations.

6. Did you know that you could facilitate learning by explaining and showing your child some things, but you should not deny the child the chance to try and practise on its own?

The 5 most important tips

1. Give your child enough time and opportunity to play and move around as it pleases.
2. Do not try to teach your child something that it is not ready to learn.
3. Encourage and praise your child if it wants to do something on its own.
4. Give your child the opportunity to apply what it is capable of in day to day life.
5. Let your child be disappointed sometimes. Children have to learn how to handle disappointments and setbacks and they should not let them discourage them.

More information about child development is available on www.kindergesundheit-info.de

Your paediatrician will be glad to answer your questions.

Support development

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Support development

The 5 most important tips

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What your child is probably capable of already

Important phases of development from 0–3 years

In the first year, children develop their mobility, then thinking, they learn to speak and how to interact with others. Each child does this in its own way and at its own pace. The overview in this leaflet can therefore only offer clues for the most important phases of development in the first three years.

6 months

**Mobility (motor skills)**
- The baby rolls on its back or tummy.
- It can walk on tiptoe.
- It can climb stairs.

**Grasping/Manual dexterity**
- The baby can grasp something, holds small toys with one hand and puts them in the other.
- The baby can grasp toys between thumb and index and uses it to play.

**Thinking**
- The baby looks at its fingers when a toy is spoken to it.
- It turns its head to find something.

**Speaking and understanding**
- The child understands at least 20 words and simple prohibitions (“no, not!”) and requests (“Please open your mouth,” “give me the ball”).
- It speaks clearly “ba-ba”, “la-la”, “ga-ga” and initial words such as “mama”, “daddy”, “pop-pop” for dog.

Social conduct
- The child establishes contact with others, smiles at other children for instance.
- It in its contact it differentiates between familiar persons and strangers.

**3 months**

**Mobility (motor skills)**
- The baby can hold its head while lying on the stomach and when held on your lap.
- It can hold a toy for a short time.

**Grasping/Manual dexterity**
- The baby brings both hands to the centre of the body and plays with toys of both hands.
- It can hold a small toy for a short time.

**Thinking**
- If father or mother speaks to the child from the side, the baby turns its head towards the voice.

**Speaking and understanding**
- It “replies” squeaking, humming, screeching, in a whisper, with “a” and “i”, when spoken to.
- The baby turns its head and body towards interesting sounds.

**Social conduct**
- The child establishes eye contact with the father or mother and smiles at them.

**6 months**

**Mobility (motor skills)**
- It can hold a small toy for a short time.
- The baby turns its head and body towards interesting sounds.

**Grasping/Manual dexterity**
- The child grasps and holds small objects between bent thumb and index.
- It can hold a ball with both hands.

**Thinking**
- The baby brings both hands to the centre of the body and plays with toys of both hands.
- It can hold a small toy for a short time.

**Social conduct**
- The baby establishes contact with others, smiles at other children for instance.
- It in its contact it differentiates between familiar persons and strangers.

**Speaking and understanding**
- The child understands at least 20 words and simple prohibitions (“no, not!”) and requests (“Please open your mouth,” “give me the ball”).
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Social conduct
- The child establishes contact with others, smiles at other children for instance.
- It in its contact it differentiates between familiar persons and strangers.

**2 years**

**Mobility (motor skills)**
- It can hold a small toy for a short time.
- The child turns its head and body towards interesting sounds.

**Manual dexterity**
- The child builds blocks.
- It scribbles straight lines, probably even circles. It holds the pen in the fist.

**Thinking**
- The child engages in small role plays with dolls, toy animals and stacks building blocks.
- It can pose questions enthusiastically: “Why has grandma gone?”, “Where is the child?” (Questions – who, how, what, why).

**Speaking and understanding**
- The child can recognize pictures in a picture book and looks at them carefully.
- It queries its eyes, nose, ears, mouth if asked about them.

**Social conduct**
- The child can stay with persons it is familiar with for some hours.

**3 years**

**Mobility (motor function)**
- It can run quickly and confidently. It circumnavigates bendiness skillfully.
- It runs around the small with the tips of the thumb and index and middle fingers.
- It scribbles straight lines, probably even circles. It holds the pen in the fist.

**Manual dexterity**
- It can hold a small toy for a short time.
- The child turns its head and body towards interesting sounds.

**Thinking**
- The child engages in small role plays for itself and with other children (shop, family, experiences).

**Speaking and understanding**
- The child understands at least 100 words and simple prohibitions (“no,” “not!”) and requests (“See a picture book, please!”).

**Social conduct**
- The child wants to help out frequently in housework and gardening.

**Manual dexterity**
- It can hold a small toy for a short time.
- The child turns its head and body towards interesting sounds.

**Thinking**
- The child engages in small role plays for itself and with other children (shop, family, experiences).

**Speaking and understanding**
- The child can recognize pictures in a picture book and looks at them carefully.
- It queries its eyes, nose, ears, mouth if asked about them.

**Social conduct**
- The child can stay with persons it is familiar with for some hours.
Did you know that for your baby there is no other sound that is as interesting as your voice?

The first word*

* Did you know that for your baby there is no other sound that is as interesting as your voice?
Did you know...

... that there is no other sound that is more interesting to your baby than your voice? From the first day, babies like it when one speaks to them. They especially love it when the mother or father talks to them.

... that you have a huge influence on your child’s learning how to speak? Your attention encourages your baby and motivates it to communicate with its environment. By communicating with you and other persons of reference, it hears language and learns that someone also listens to it – long before it can speak.

... that with each “conversation”, your baby gets a better feeling for its mother tongue? Each time when you tell your baby something or you sing something or you soothe or encourage it with words, “its” language becomes more familiar.

... that your baby does not communicate only through crying? Crying during the first months is certainly the baby’s loudest “language”, e.g. if it is hungry or tired. But also through body language, facial expression and eye contact, your baby shows you whether it is feeling comfortable or not, whether it wants to play or rest.

... that learning how to speak begins at birth and even earlier, long before your baby can actually speak?

Awaken and encourage the joy of speaking

The 5 most important tips

1. Talk to your baby from the beginning and give it time to “reply”. Explain in short, simple sentences what you are doing, e.g. when playing, bathing, changing diapers or feeding: “Now I am putting on your diaper”, “Papa is going to carry you”, “Now we are going shopping”.

2. Let your baby see, hear, feel its environment. Show and name what it is seeing, hearing or feeling and what it is interested in: “That’s a ball”, “The teddy bear has very soft fur”.

3. Listen to your baby when it wants to communicate with you using sounds, body language or eye contact. Look at your baby and talk to it for instance when it tries to catch your eye or it is making jolly sounds.

4. Sing simple songs, perform finger plays, repeat short rhymes and terms of endearment. Imitate your baby’s “baby-talk”. That way, your baby knows that it is on the right path in learning how to talk. (During the toddler age however, do not use baby-talk with your child.)

5. Look at simple picture books together. At the age of seven, eight months, your baby enjoys learning from books: “That’s a cow. The cow says “moo”. The cat says “meow”. The sky is blue, the sun is yellow.”

In order for your child to learn how to speak well, it has to hear well. Even if the newborn hearing test was ok, you should pay attention every now and then to how well your child hears and reacts to sounds.

Get in touch with your paediatrician if you get the impression that your child doesn’t hear well or babbles too little for its age after the first half year.

More information on infant language development is available on www.kindergesundheit-info.de

Your paediatrician will be glad to answer your questions.

Finger play

The hand’s fingers are put into play one after the other and moved.

“Finger play”

The hand’s fingers are put into play one after the other and moved.

... that you have a huge influence on your child’s learning how to speak? Your attention encourages your baby and motivates it to communicate with its environment. By communicating with you and other persons of reference, it hears language and learns that someone also listens to it – long before it can speak.

"This little piggy went to market. This little piggy stayed at home. This little piggy had roast beef. This little piggy had none. And this little piggy went “whee whee whee” all the way home."
First of all, when a child learns different languages at the same time, language development can be less “polished” until early school age (e.g. smaller vocabulary or simpler sentence construction). Such “distinctive features” are normal and usually subside on their own after a while.

Get in touch with your paediatrician if you think that your child speaks and understands less than its peers or its pronunciation is hard to understand.

* Did you know that children can learn several languages naturally?
The 5 most important tips

1. Talk to your child in your own mother tongue. As a mother or father, always use the language which best soothes and comforts the child and which shows it your affection. Usually this is your own mother tongue.

2. Create clear “language rules” in case of bilingualism within the family. Do not change and use the language in the family at random: it is important for your child to connect a certain language with a certain situation or with a certain person, e.g. Turkish with the mother, German with the father.

3. Indulge your child from the beginning with your own language. By sparking its interest in talking and offering it a good linguistic role model, you are supporting its linguistic development in its mother tongue. You are hence creating an important basis for successfully learning a second language simultaneously.

4. Give your child early and frequently the opportunity to experience its second language and also apply it. Under “daily conditions” the child learns the second language easily – at the playground, with friends at home, at the day care centre.

5. If your child can not speak German at the time it joins a day care centre, continue communicating in your mother tongue. That way, you are supporting your child to complete acquiring language skills in its first language. At the same time, give your child sufficient opportunity even outside the day care centre to play with German-speaking children so that it can learn German well.

Support multilingual development

… that children can naturally learn several languages? Children can easily learn several languages simultaneously as well as first one language and then another language. According to specialists, this is a natural talent in humans.

… that more and more children are growing up in a multilingual setting? In many countries, children are growing up speaking more than one language. Even in Germany, bilingualism is widespread. In most cases, German is the second language.

… that children learn a language more easily the earlier they begin? In the first years, children can learn a second language as easily as their mother tongue.

… that growing up in a multilingual setting gives a child a big opportunity? A child will never again learn a different language this easily. Later in life, a child’s multilingualism can provide major advantages.

… that attention, joy of speaking and enough encouragement in both languages are the best fundamentals for successful multilingual development?
Precautions against sudden infant death syndrome

Sudden infant death syndrome is the medical term for the phenomenon of when an apparently healthy baby unexpectedly dies without any available explanation.

See inside for recommendations for ensuring your baby sleeps well and safely. They are the best protection for your baby.
Did you know …

… that babies have to learn how to sleep? Sleeping patterns become more regular after roughly 4–6 weeks.

… that some infants simply sleep a lot while others sleep little? Sleeping needs are inherited. In the first three months some infants only require 10–12 hours of sleep per 24 hours, while others need 18–20 hours.

… that for babies up to six months of age it is normal to wake up at least once in the night? During the first six months babies still need one or more feeds at night.

… that for babies “sleeping through” means a maximum of 6–8 hours at one time? Waking up in the night or early in the morning is hard on the parents, but for babies it is normal.

… that you can help your infant learn to sleep?

Supporting the sleep-learning process

The 5 most important tips

1. To the extent possible, maintain regular times in the daily routine for eating, sleeping, playing and going for walks.

2. Babies love routine. Lay your baby down at the same time whenever possible, in the same place and using the same going-to-sleep rituals.

3. Being overtired makes it hard to fall asleep. Lay your baby in its crib when it shows signs of tiredness, such as yawning or turning away its head.

4. Being there is everything. Don’t always pick up your baby when it is lying awake in its crib or is fidgety. Instead, sit down next to it and hold its hand or gently caress its head.

5. Keep things calm ahead of sleeping time. During the day, allow your baby to play in whatever manner it pleases, but do not play with it so as to get it excited just before sleeping time.

More information about healthy sleeping for babies and precautions against sudden infant death syndrome is available on

www.kindergesundheit-info.de

Your paediatrician will be glad to answer your questions.

Recommendations

Tips for your baby to sleep well and safely

– Always on its back, with no pillow, sheepskins, “nest”, cuddly toy or cap – anything that might cover the baby’s face.

– Whenever possible, in its own bed in the parents’ bedroom. Babies should especially not sleep in the parents’ bed if one parent smokes.

– In a smoke-free bedroom – ideally the entire apartment will be kept smoke-free.

– In a sleeping bag, instead of under a blanket.

– In an unheated bedroom – a room temperature of 18 °C is ideal.
Babies cry for many reasons, and often without any identifiable reason.

Seek help promptly …

… if you have the feeling you can't take the crying any more!

… if you are worried your baby has colic.

With professional help and support, together the parent and child can usually get excessive crying quickly under control.

Where to turn for advice and assistance

› Your midwife or paediatrician.

› “Colic squad” and counselling centres for parents with infants and small children. These are available in many locations.

Further information is available on

www.kindergesundheit-info.de

* Babies cry for many reasons, and often without any identifiable reason.
Babies cry because …

... they are hungry or tired, have a full diaper, are overexcited, bored or need attention.

- All babies cry. In the first few months this is completely normal.
- Babies cry in very different ways. How frequently, long and loud babies cry can vary greatly from child to child.
- They tend to cry more in the beginning. Crying usually increases to about 2½ hours per day until six weeks of age. Thereafter crying phases generally decrease.

Babies cry for many reasons, and often without any identifiable reason. But whenever babies cry, this means “I don’t feel good and I need you to be with me”. It never means: “I want to get on your nerves.”

What can you do to help?

5 helpful tips

1. Try to stay calm.
2. Try to discover the cause (hunger, thirst, full diaper, overtired, etc.)
3. Try to calm your child by means of eye contact, talking to it quietly, gently rocking it or singing to it.
4. If your child has already cried itself into a frenzy, carry it into a different room, or carry it and briefly go outside to get fresh air. That helps your baby relax and calm down.
5. Caution: do not make any agitated attempts to calm it down. That makes the baby more agitated in turn.

Constant crying – a nightmare for mothers and fathers

- Parents can feel helpless,
- worrying their child may be in pain,
- thinking they have done something wrong
- and can quickly end up trapped between confusion and despair.

Constant crying – a nightmare for mothers and fathers

- Parents can feel helpless
- worrying their child may be in pain
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- and can quickly end up trapped between confusion and despair.

When you can’t take the crying anymore

- If there are two of you, take turns looking after your crying baby.
- If you are by yourself and realize you can no longer stand the crying, lay your baby somewhere safe, such as in its crib, before you ‘flip out’.
- Try to calm yourself down. Leave the room for a minute and take some deep breaths.
- Call a relative, friend or neighbour who might be able to come over and help.
- Check on your child every few minutes

Never shake your baby! Even briefly shaking a baby can cause grave, lifelong health problems and even cause death.

Never give your child medication to calm it down!
What your child is probably capable of already

At the beginning of the second year, your child probably understands about 50 to 100 words. It understands simple requests (“Give me the ball”), waves “goodbye”, shakes the head when saying “No” and claps its hands when being happy. Your child probably babbles its first words such as “mummy” and “daddy” or probably “nam-nam” for food.

The overview provides a rough guide of further development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Understanding and speaking</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>19–20 months</td>
<td>The child speaks at least 20 words (minus daddy and mummy): “woof-woof”, “ball”, “light”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20–24 months</td>
<td>Commencement of two-word sentences: “Mummy play”, “Jonas tired.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2½ years</td>
<td>Sentences with three or more words: “Mummy has gone”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 years</td>
<td>Vocabulary increases in leaps and bounds.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the coming years up to joining school, your child’s vocabulary will increase considerably; it will tell stories, tell about experiences and always be in a position to express its thoughts much better. At the end of the primary school period talking and understanding will be “fully automatic” and will happen faster.

Further information is available on www.kindergesundheit-info.de

Learning how to speak*

* Did you know that a child can only learn how to speak when in close contact with people?
Your attention encourages your child to communicate with its environment and encourages its linguistic development.

… that a child can only learn a language in close contact with people? In order to learn a language, a child needs parents, siblings or other persons of reference who understand it, answer it and encourage its growing linguistic skills.

… that it varies from child to child when and how fast it learns to speak? Most children speak their first words at the age of 12 months, others take longer. Even among children who are developing normally, vocabulary at the end of the second year can lie in an incredible range. At the age of two, however, a child should be capable of saying at least 20 words correctly, in addition to mummy and daddy.

… that apart from hearing also seeing, feeling, smelling and tasting are important for linguistic development? Children explore their environment with all senses: how does something feel, how does it taste, how does it smell, is it square or round, soft or hard, which form or colour does it have. All these different impressions stay in children’s memories – together with the feelings which they experience and with words they hear.

… that reading to children is enjoyable and it does them good? Stories arouse children’s fantasies and with them the child experiences many interesting things. At the same time, it enjoys being close to the mother or father and it can look how one can “talk” with the hands and face.

… that joy and interest in speaking at each level is more important than “proper” speaking?

Support language development

The 5 most important tips

1. Give your child as much opportunity as possible to get involved in conversations in the family and to talk. Opportunities present themselves when playing, during daily tasks, in the family circle. Talk to your child in simple words and sentences but do not use baby talk any more.

2. Let your child speak or babble in its own manner even if in the beginning it is unclear. Listen attentively to your child and try to understand it, what it is trying to tell you. Let the child speak, do not interrupt and answer it.

3. Do not force your child to talk by not responding, for instance when it doesn’t express itself using words but by using facial expressions or hands. Both are part of language development.

4. Do not make fun of unusual formations of new words and do not constantly correct your child when it makes mistakes. Respond rather to what your child wants to say and repeat what has been said in the correct form in passing.

5. Ask your child what it sees, tastes, feels. Ask encouragingly and help your child to carefully observe and expand its vocabulary. Avoid talking insistently to your child especially when it is tired or is not interested.

Consult your paediatrician if you get the impression that your child clearly speaks and understands less than its peers or its pronunciation is difficult to understand.
**Bab**ies 0–1 year

Mother’s milk is most babies’ only need in the first 4–6 months after birth.

- Breastfeeding. Simple and good.*

Additional liquids: Only necessary in exceptional cases

Until you introduce the third type of solid food, breast or bottled milk generally provides all the liquid intake required.

- Only on very hot days and in the event of diarrhoea or fever should you give your baby additional liquids. In such case give it tap water or thin, unsweetened fruit or herbal tea.

- Allow the water to run from the tap until cold.

- Your baby only needs to regularly have something to drink when it begins to have its third variety of baby food (fruit/vegetable puree with cereal); use a beaker or cup if possible.

Further information is available on

[www.kindergesundheit-info.de](http://www.kindergesundheit-info.de)

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* Mother’s milk is most babies’ only need in the first 4–6 months after birth.
Babies want to be breastfed

- Mother's milk is the natural food for babies.
- Mother's milk strengthens the baby's body and mind.
- Mother's milk is hygienic, always available and free.
- Babies have differing hunger cycles and nursing needs.
- The baby itself determines when, how often, and for how long it wants to nurse. In the first few weeks after birth most babies want to nurse 8–12 times or more within a twenty-four hour period.
- Also in the first weeks after birth, most babies will still need to be breastfed once or several times during the night.

Breastfeeding, too, must be learned

- Patience and trust: You and your baby will become a good "nursing team".
- The right nursing posture: You should be sitting comfortably and your baby should lie cradled in your arms, turned toward you.
- Duration of nursing: It is normal for nursing to last between 10 and 45 minutes.
- Regulating your supply: The more often you nurse your baby, the more milk is produced.

Good for lactation: Milk flows better when you are relaxed. Moreover: eat a balanced diet and drink regularly. It is best to have a glass of water or fruit tea when breast feeding.

Tip Regular daily routines help your baby to find its rhythm.

Nicotine, alcohol and drugs are bad for babies! Anything you ingest will pass to the baby through the breast milk. Therefore: Do not smoke if possible and avoid alcohol. Only take medication in consultation with your physician.

Bottle feeding

Babies can also thrive with powdered milk from the bottle

- Bottle feeding is another option. At first bottle feeds will be needed every two or three hours, as well as once or twice in the night.
- One advantage of bottle feeding: Not just mum but also dad and siblings can administer feeds.
- Important: Be sure to always observe the right proportion of milk powder to water as stated on the package. Otherwise your baby may not receive enough fluids.

Babies want to be held in your arms and looked at when drinking from the bottle.
Right from the beginning a baby wants to decide itself about the amount of care, stimulation and change it needs.

… intimacy and reassurance,
… protection and security,
… care and appreciation,
… communication and inspiration.

Children need a reliable and trusting relationship. It gives them the necessary security to curiously explore their environment.

**Children need …**

... intimacy and reassurance,
... protection and security,
... care and appreciation,
... communication and inspiration.

**Every child is unique.**

A new-born baby is already able to see and hear and to taste and smell; it can feel and sense when it is held or carried. And from its first moments it wants to build a relationship with you, its mother and father, and it is able to communicate with you in many ways:

› Right after its birth it already makes contact with you, maybe by grasping your fingers.
› It relaxes when it hears your voice or shows its discontent, for example by whining or crying.
› Every child has its own rhythm and develops in its very own time.
› Every child has personal likes and dislikes, strengths and weaknesses.
› Every child has a different temperament – some are quiet, some lively, some cry a lot, some not much at all, and some are more easily calmed than others.

**Every child has its own rhythm and develops in its very own time.**

**Every child has personal likes and dislikes, strengths and weaknesses.**

**Every child has a different temperament – some are quiet, some lively, some cry a lot, some not much at all, and some are more easily calmed than others.**
The mother’s and father’s face and voice are particularly stimulating for a baby and encourage it to imitate them – a first clear expression of understanding.

At about 6–8 weeks your baby will smile at you, i.e. more than two weeks.

Some mothers are not able to develop in time the expression of understanding. They might hold out its arms to you.

This can make it difficult to react to them in a positive way. They might be particularly restless and too little rest. If it is not treated, it can permanently complicate the relationship of mother and child, including family midwives who assist parents in taking care of their child and its development.

Some infants may also have a difficult temperament. They might be特别 restless and often cry; they might try to turn away its head or body with all its might, this is a warning signal: The child is overwhelmed from too much stimulation and too little rest.

When there’s no joy

Some mothers are not able to develop imitation feelings for their baby and they don’t enjoy being around it. It is difficult for the baby to get through to the mother and its efforts to get in contact are hardly met with any response. In other cases, mothers are excessively worried and scared that something might happen to their baby. Being sad, doubling oneself and feeling hopeless is often coupled with shame and a feeling of failure and being a bad mother.

Some parents have problems with being responsive to their child. They are happy when it shows interest in you or items in its surroundings. They also find it hard for you to spend time with your baby. Some parents are not able to develop in time the expression of understanding. Some infants may also have a difficult temperament. They might try to turn away its head or body with all its might, this is a warning signal: The child is overwhelmed from too much stimulation and too little rest.

Find help as early as possible ...

... if you feel that your child doesn’t show any signs of approval, encouragement and support.

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... if you often feel down and constantly overtaxed, very insecure and stressed in your new role as a mother.

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