



# Bright Futures Parent Handout 4 Month Visit

Here are some suggestions from Bright Futures experts that may be of value to your family.

## How Your Family Is Doing

- Take time for yourself.
- Take time together with your partner.
- Spend time alone with your other children.
- Encourage your partner to help care for your baby.
- Choose a mature, trained, and responsible babysitter or caregiver.
- You can talk with us about your child care choices.
- Hold, cuddle, talk to, and sing to your baby each day.
- Massaging your infant may help your baby go to sleep more easily.
- Get help if you and your partner are in conflict. Let us know. We can help.

FAMILY FUNCTIONING

## Feeding Your Baby

- Feed only breast milk or iron-fortified formula in the first 4–6 months.

### If Breastfeeding

- If you are still breastfeeding, that's great!
- Plan for pumping and storage of breast milk.

### If Formula Feeding

- Make sure to prepare, heat, and store the formula safely.
- Hold your baby so you can look at each other while feeding.
- Do not prop the bottle.
- Do not give your baby a bottle in the crib.

### Solid Food

- You may begin to feed your baby solid food when your baby is ready.
- Some of the signs your baby is ready for solids
  - Opens mouth for the spoon.
  - Sits with support.
  - Good head and neck control.
  - Interest in foods you eat.
- Avoid foods that cause allergy—peanuts, tree nuts, fish, and shellfish.
- Avoid feeding your baby too much by following the baby's signs of fullness

NUTRITIONAL ADEQUACY AND GROWTH

NUTRITION

- Leaning back
- Turning away
- Ask us about programs like WIC that can help get food for you if you are breastfeeding and formula for your baby if you are formula feeding.

## Safety

- Use a rear-facing car safety seat in the back seat in all vehicles.
- Always wear a seat belt and never drive after using alcohol or drugs.
- Keep small objects and plastic bags away from your baby.
- Keep a hand on your baby on any high surface from which she can fall and be hurt.
- Prevent burns by setting your water heater so the temperature at the faucet is 120°F or lower.
- Do not drink hot drinks when holding your baby.
- Never leave your baby alone in bathwater, even in a bath seat or ring.
- The kitchen is the most dangerous room. Don't let your baby crawl around there; use a playpen or high chair instead.
- Do not use a baby walker.

SAFETY

## Your Changing Baby

- Keep routines for feeding, nap time, and bedtime.

### Crib/Playpen

- Put your baby to sleep on her back.
- In a crib that meets current safety standards, with no drop-side rail and slats no more than 2<sup>3</sup>/<sub>8</sub> inches apart. Find more information on the Consumer Product Safety Commission Web site at [www.cpsc.gov](http://www.cpsc.gov).
- If your crib has a drop-side rail, keep it up and locked at all times. Contact the crib company to see if there is a device to keep the drop-side rail from falling down.

INFANT DEVELOPMENT

INFANT DEVELOPMENT

ORAL HEALTH

- Keep soft objects and loose bedding such as comforters, pillows, bumper pads, and toys out of the crib.
- Lower your baby's mattress.
- If using a mesh playpen, make sure the openings are less than ¼ inch apart.

## Playtime

- Learn what things your baby likes and does not like.
- Encourage active play.
  - Offer mirrors, floor gyms, and colorful toys to hold.
  - Tummy time—put your baby on his tummy when awake and you can watch.
- Promote quiet play.
  - Hold and talk with your baby.
  - Read to your baby often.

## Crying

- Give your baby a pacifier or his fingers or thumb to suck when crying.

## Healthy Teeth

- Go to your own dentist twice yearly. It is important to keep your teeth healthy so that you don't pass bacteria that causes tooth decay on to your baby.
- Do not share spoons or cups with your baby or use your mouth to clean the baby's pacifier.
- Use a cold teething ring if your baby has sore gums with teething.

## What to Expect at Your Baby's 6 Month Visit

### We will talk about

- Introducing solid food
- Getting help with your baby
- Home and car safety
- Brushing your baby's teeth
- Reading to and teaching your baby

Poison Help: 1-800-222-1222

Child safety seat inspection:  
1-866-SEATCHECK; [seatcheck.org](http://seatcheck.org)



## American Academy of Pediatrics



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