



Early Learning Digest

Research-based early childhood development information provided by LifeBalance Solutions



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Cuddle with Baby

In baby's first weeks, you're in a haze trying to get the hang of all the feeding, burping, napping, pooping, and general care of your baby. Then, at some point in the day, after all of those things have occurred, you may wonder: Now what do we do?

Instead of setting your baby in a swing to stare at mobiles, research suggests that you cuddle up.

Go skin to skin. Let your newborn, wearing only a diaper, rest on mom's or dad's bare chest. This is sometimes called "kangaroo care." Snuggle with baby in bed the same way. Your skin warms your baby, but you can also put a blanket over the two of you. Being skin to skin, or nursing, when the health care provider gives your baby heel pricks or shots also lowers your baby's stress.

Wrap your baby against your body. Use a soft-structured carrier, sling, or wrap while you run errands, do some chores, or go for a walk. Save the stroller for when the baby gets heavy or you need to haul stuff.



Massage your baby each day.

Researchers found that 4-month-olds who received a daily eight-minute massage were in a better mood, less anxious and stressed, more attentive, and sleeping more regularly. Start with your baby on his back, then his tummy. The pressure needs to be moderate, not too light. Talk to, sing to, or smile at baby while you massage. A silent, distant massage only raises your baby's stress level. If your baby seems agitated, adjust your touch, or try another time.

For an introduction to infant massage, visit <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9FVceLP-bQo>.

Source: "Zero to Five," by Tracy Cutchlow, Pear Press, 2014.

Strategies to Prevent Biting

Biting is a typical behavior often seen in infants, toddlers, and 2-year-olds. As children mature, gain self-control, and develop problem-solving skills, they usually outgrow this behavior. There are a variety of things that families can do to prevent biting.

- Set age-appropriate expectations for your child's behavior based on his current skills and abilities.
- Make sure his schedule, routines, and transitions are predictable and consistent. Your child needs to know what will happen next.
- Provide opportunities for him to relax and release tension. Some examples include deep breathing, yoga, playing with playdough, foam balls, bubbles, and listening to soft music.
- Use positive guidance strategies to help your child develop self-control. Offer gentle reminders that tell him what behaviors are expected.
- Provide objects that are acceptable for him to bite such as teething rings or clean, wet washcloths stored in the refrigerator.

Continued on page 2.



If you have concerns about your child's growth and development, please talk to your child's health care provider or go to www.helpmegrowmn.org





Support Your Child's Learning: Listen, Talk and Answer

Most children like to ask questions and enjoy telling stories about their day. Do you stop what you are doing, listen, and try to answer them? These daily conversations help adults and children keep in touch, interact, and provide daily opportunities to support your child's learning. Here are some communication tips to use daily.

- **Acknowledge emotions.** This helps your child feel safe and secure and willing to share all kinds of feelings. "Are you feeling happy? I see a big smile on your face." "You look a little sad. Is there something you want to talk about?"
- **Use descriptive sentences.** Rather than just saying, "Good job," describe what you see your child doing - "Wow, you've added lots of circles and color to your drawing."
- **Make connections to familiar experiences.** "Today we're having papaya for breakfast, that's similar to pineapple which you like so much. Let's see what you think."



- **Introduce new experiences.** "You ran so fast to the fence! This time, can you skip to the fence?"
- **Ask open ended questions.** As your child looks through a book and says, "I like horses," you might say, "I know you like horses. What do you like about them?"
- **Use new words to build vocabulary.** "I think these strawberries are delicious. I love the texture of the seeds and their juicy, sweet flavor."

Source: retrieved from <http://families.naeyc.org/child-development/listen-talk-answer-support-your-childs-learning#sthash.7TuAk1tt.17vrv511.dpuf>.

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If positive guidance is not effective and biting becomes a habit for your child, it is time to develop a plan to address the causes and help him replace biting with acceptable behaviors.

Source: Retrieved from <http://families.naeyc.org/learning-and-development/child-development/understanding-and-responding-children-who-bite#sthash.ub43rxdD.dpuf>.



for Families at

<http://bit.ly/solutions-for-families>

Test Your Knowledge!

- 1) T F Daily conversations between adults and children help them keep in touch and provide opportunities to support learning.
- 2) T F Biting is a typical behavior often seen in infants, toddlers, and 2-year-olds.
- 3) T F Being skin to skin when the health care provider gives your baby shots lowers your baby's stress level.

Cool Summer Treats



Keep cool this summer with frozen treats kids love to eat and are easy to make!

Just freeze juice in paper cups or ice cube trays with popsicle sticks.