

Incredible INFANTS



SESSION **3**

Encouraging Your Developing Baby

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Parenting Now!
to strengthen families
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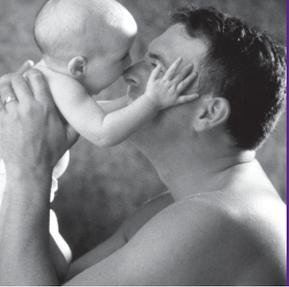
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Encouraging Your Developing Baby

KEY CONCEPTS

- ▶ The growth and development of a baby in the first year is truly incredible.
- ▶ Parents can provide early experiences to promote healthy development.



GOALS FOR SESSION 3

By the end of this session parents will:

1. Learn how babies grow and develop in the first year.
2. Discuss what to do about their worries.
3. Understand that the kinds of experiences babies need for healthy brain development can occur within the context of everyday family life.
4. Learn to follow babies' leads in providing both stimulation and solitude.



AGENDA

1	Gathering Time	15 minutes <i>before session begins</i>
2	Welcome FLIP CHART	1 minute
3	Paired Sharing	5 minutes
4	Group Sharing FLIP CHART	20 minutes
5	Session 2 Review and BabyWatch Reports	5 minutes
6	Developmental Milestones FLIP CHART	15 minutes
7	Parents' Worries ACTIVITIES	20 minutes
8	Break	10 minutes
9	Baby's Cues VIDEO	15 minutes
10	Following Babies' Leads ACTIVITY/FLIP CHART	20 minutes
11	Session Review and BabyWatch HANDOUTS	5 minutes
12	Preview Next Session	1 minute
13	Closing HANDOUT/ACTIVITIES	10 minutes



PREPARE FOR SESSION 3

1. Review Content

- Read the agenda
- Study the session material
- Preview the video: *Your Baby's Cues*

2. **Connect with families.** Phone parents who you feel need individual support or anyone who missed the last class. Call parent(s) who signed up for snacks.

3. Prepare Materials

- Copy handouts as needed

Take Home Ideas

BabyWatch

Developmental Spotlight

- Create flip charts

Blank (Parent Interests and Concerns)

Milestones in the First Year

Everyday Activities

- Gather supplies (needed every session)

Blank name tags and felt tip pens

Flip chart, colored markers, and easel

Pens or pencils and plain paper

Plates, cups, and napkins for snack

- Special supplies for Session 3

Letter to Baby (stationery, markers, and ink pens)

Flip chart

Group Sharing Ideas (from Session 2)



PREPARE ROOM

1. Set up the video equipment and make sure everything works.
2. Arrange the room so that parents can sit in a semicircle and see the flip chart, VCR, and each other.
3. Set up supplies on a table: Name tags, pens and paper, and refreshments.
4. Relax, remember to breathe: Get ready to enjoy yourself and the families!



Before You Begin, Think About This

Babies are approximately three to five months old at this point in the series. This session on development should be very interactive, with lots of parent input. Information about babies' development, including brain development, helps parents think about how to guide their babies in their first year of learning and growing. Babies explore the world through their senses: touching, looking, tasting, listening, feeling, and moving. These are the ways babies provide themselves the experiences necessary to shape the developing brain. Parents also can set up additional experiences to encourage their babies' fullest development. The development topic is placed near the beginning of the series because of its critical importance.

If literacy is an issue for parents in your group, adjust the material accordingly.

Adapt the Parent Educator script to meet your own and your group's style and needs.

SESSION 3



1 Gathering Time

15 minutes *before* session begins

Families know each other a little bit by this time. You may notice more conversation among parents during gathering and break time. If a parent makes a comment to you during this time that might be valuable to the group, ask if you may share the comment. Such sharing helps parents view each other as valuable resources.

2 Welcome

1 minute

Welcome back! Today you will focus on babies' development. You'll share what you have observed about your own baby's development, your delights, and worries. Then, after the break, you will explore how including babies in simple everyday activities, including play, encourages their healthy development.

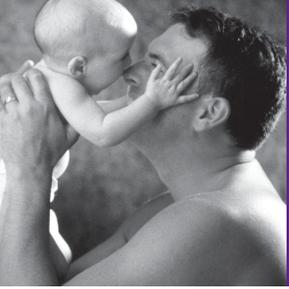
I am interested in what you would like to know about this topic. What interests or concerns do you have that are related to these ideas?



POST A BLANK FLIP CHART

As parents offer their interests and concerns, list them on the flip chart.

During the session, point out how a discussion relates to a specific parent's interest or concern. Check in with the parent at this time and ask, "Is this what you (wanted to know, were concerned about, etc.)?"



3 Paired Sharing

5 minutes



Note to the Parent Educator: Parents frequently comment on how important it is to them to share everyday experiences and get to know other parents. One way to meet these needs is to set aside five minutes at the beginning of each session for some paired sharing. Parents discuss experiences from their everyday lives that may or may not be related to the topic for the day. If couples attend the group, it generally works best if they find a different parent to share with. Occasionally, encourage parents to find new partners so they will get to know a variety of families in the group.

Turn to another parent and take a few minutes to check in with each other about what's been going on with you. Try to find someone you have not yet had a chance to share with. We'll spend about five minutes for this sharing time. When you find another parent to share with, choose who will go first and then take about two minutes each to talk about yourself, your baby, or just what it took to get here!

4 Group Sharing

20 minutes



Note to the Parent Educator: This is a special, open-ended sharing time at the beginning of every session. The activity provides an opportunity for shared support within the group. Post the "Group Sharing Ideas" to stimulate parents' thinking in different areas. During this time, parents can share information, problem-solve, validate each other's comments, and listen to and connect with each other. Your role is to facilitate the process, so your contribution to the discussion will be minimal.

Although there are many opportunities to share ideas and support each other throughout the session, we have set aside time at the beginning of each session to share ideas, experiences, resources, and to problem-solve concerns.

I'll post some ideas for sharing on the flip chart, but you may come up with some of your own. This is your time!



POST FLIP CHART: Group Sharing Ideas

Group Sharing Ideas

- A new game I am playing with my baby is...
- A new discovery I have made about my baby is...
- Someplace interesting I took my baby was...
- One good book or article I have read recently is...
- Something I am wondering about is...
- One exciting new thing my baby has learned is...
- Something I learned about myself since becoming a parent is...

5 Session 2 Review and BabyWatch Reports

5 minutes

Last session we talked about many aspects of taking care of our babies. We discussed several things:

- The idea of being a Learning Family.
- Your babies' natural and positive motivations.
- The importance of learning trust.
- Your responses to babies' patterns.
- Tips for soothing babies.

Who would like to comment on last session, on the ideas you talked about or any suggestions from last session that you tried?

Allow a few minutes for parents to respond and then check in about ***BabyWatch***.

What qualities, experiences, attitudes, or memories did you notice as you and your baby learned together? Who has an observation he or she would like to share?

Encourage parents to respond.



6 Developmental Milestones

15 minutes

Amazing changes happen over the first year in babies' development.

- Some changes are **physical**, like babies' ability to reach toward something they want.
- Some are **social**, like a first smile.
- Some changes are **emotional**, such as a beginning ability to self-soothe when upset.
- Some changes are in babies' **thinking** about the world, such as understanding that when an object is hidden, it is still there.



POST FLIP CHART: Milestones in the First Year

Can you think of any other examples?

Encourage parents to share their ideas and list their examples on the flip chart. These will vary because of the different ages of babies in the group.

After you have made a list, summarize the developments and add the following information, if parents have not offered it.

- During their first months, babies are developing their visual and grasping skills. Sometime around three months, they discover that their hands are part of them and they start reaching toward objects.
- As babies' visual and motor skills develop, they learn to hold objects in front of them, transfer objects from hand to hand, and bring objects to their mouths.
- As babies gain control of their movements, they learn that they can make things happen. For example, when they shake their arms while holding a rattle, the rattle makes noise.
- Early learning about cause and effect is the beginning of a long process of discovery about themselves, "I can make things happen!" and their environment, "What does this do?" Such learning reflects babies' natural and positive motivation for growth and mastery.



What are you seeing of this beginning awareness of cause and effect in your baby?

Allow parents time to respond.

- Between four and six months of age babies gain control of their looking behavior. Babies can be directed by a parent to look at an object and even anticipate the object before it appears.
- This is the first step your baby takes towards paying attention, a skill your baby will use as a building block for learning to read books, play a piano, catch a ball, or enjoy a lively conversation much later in life.

What do you see of your baby learning to pay attention?

Allow parents to respond.

In the second part of their first year, most babies also begin to understand that things are still there even when they don't see them. That's when "Peek-a-boo" and other hiding games are such fun.

Summarize what parents have said. Then, deliver the following message:

If we know about "ages and stages" of development, we can form realistic ideas about what to expect of our babies and, later, our children. We won't expect our babies to think, feel, act, or control themselves as older children or even adults would.

Development means "one thing comes after another." "Unfolding" is a similar idea. We should remember that while all babies' developmental paths are similar, big differences exist in the rates of skill development from one child to another. None of the changes you mentioned—smiling, making sounds, moving around, grasping things—happen according to some exact timetable.

Sometimes parents find that waiting for their baby's next developmental stage is hard because they're so excited by each new skill. Yet, babies have their own timetables and they need that to be okay with us.

What are your feelings about this? Do you see yourself as patient or impatient?

Encourage parents to respond.



Each baby is unique, and so are you. Most parents continue to work on patience. In fact, many parents report that they feel more “patient” with their second child, knowing that the stages don’t last forever.

Your Developmental Spotlight for this week summarizes some of babies’ major developments in the first year. You’ll look at the Developmental Spotlight at the end of the session today.

7 Parents’ Worries

20 minutes

- Introduction
- Visualization
- Letter to My Baby



Note to the Parent Educator: During the following discussion, do not write down parental fears on a flip chart, as they can be discouraging. Some babies within the *Incredible* INFANTs groups may, at some later point in life, be diagnosed with a disability. Some parents already may be aware of a challenge that their baby will face in the future, even though this is not evident to or known by anyone else in the group. Refer to the *Parent Educator Guide* for more information on how to handle this situation.

This discussion should emphasize that all babies need essentially the same thing from their parents—love and acceptance.

Introduction

You have talked about many different feelings and reactions to having a new baby. One common reaction is to worry. Because you care so much, you worry about many things. You don’t all worry about the same things. Sometimes talking about those worries can be helpful. Let’s share what you worry about and why.

What sorts of worries do you have about your baby?

End of Preview Material