



Dear Baby TALK Parents,

Your nine-month-old baby has changed a lot in the last three months! He is more curious, more capable and more interesting by the day. He is now in a stage of very rapid development with changes occurring constantly, so photograph him whenever possible and make frequent notes about the interesting and funny things he does.

By nine months, babies are **desperately in love** with their parents. After accomplishing a new skill, your baby will look at you and break into a smile. Your response to him is treasured at these moments. Unfortunately, this growing **attachment** between the two of you may make separations very difficult. As he becomes mobile and moves around more, he may find himself separated from you. This can be scary, and can lead to him being more "clingy" than usual.

On those occasions when you must be away from your baby, be sure to prepare him. When you return, let him know that you are back. At this time, he is becoming more **independent** and moving away through increased physical skill, and yet is realizing how **dependent** he is on you! This conflict represents an important struggle for every baby.

ON THE MOVE

Your baby has probably discovered a favorite way to move around, whether by **crawling, scooting or creeping.**

At last she can get to those many objects she could only look at before! She is learning to **pull herself up** to the furniture where she will enjoy

standing for increasing periods of time. At first she will cry in frustration when she is ready to get down, and will probably take a few falls. Soon she will learn to **fold** her body in the middle and let herself down with a plop. Next you will find her **"cruising" along the furniture.** She will be driven to these activities until she reaches her ultimate goal of **walking.**

Parents worry about the inevitable bumps a child will take as she learns to move around. But there is so much to be learned in playing freely on the floor! Your baby will benefit greatly from these opportunities for exploration. From rolling, crawling and tumbling around, she is learning about her body and what it can do. She is learning how to get out from under furniture, and how rugs feel different from wood floors. She is learning to climb by leaning up onto tables and stairs. She is learning hard and soft, hot and cold, smooth and rough—many **concepts she will use for her whole life.** To deny her these important experiences may actually decrease her very ability to learn.

When your baby stops moving long enough to explore small objects or toys, she can get herself to a sitting position. She may enjoy playing with containers filled with small objects such as blocks or spools. She will delight in **dumping them out and putting them back again.** She may bang two blocks together in front of her, bringing both hands to the mid-line of her body. Toys with moving parts will begin to fascinate her, and she may push a car on the floor to make the wheels turn. She may spend time "examining" such moving parts. In their endeavor to learn as much as possible, nine-month-olds spend about 20% of their waking time simply **staring** at objects!

GIVING LIMITS, KEEPING HIM SAFE

Your child's increasing curiosity and ability, while exciting for both of you, put him at great peril for his own life. This is the time that you will have to make a first serious effort to set limits for him, and to make his environment safe for his exploration.

Your child is becoming aware that certain actions of his may be forbidden. He may crawl over to the TV, pull up and reach for the knobs. Before he reaches the knob, he may look around to be sure you're watching. **He is asking you to set a limit!** He needs your help to learn what behavior is acceptable and what is not. He is waiting for you to say "*Don't touch!*" and move him gently away. It's a long road. You must be consistent, firm and loving! At this age, it is helpful to create an environment which will be safe for your baby to explore. For the time being, you may want to remove as many temptations as possible. Your baby doesn't understand how much you love your grandmother's crystal vase. Let him learn "Don't touch!" on objects which are less valuable to you.

The baby-proofing of your house that you did a few months ago may need to be extended now that your child will be getting around more. You must continue to **keep small objects** off the floor. **Household cleaners, chemicals and medicines** should be out of reach. **Stairwells** should be closed off by sturdy gates. And remember to watch for **water** hazards: Never leave a baby in a bathtub, and don't leave buckets of water around.



Although playpens are wonderful safety devices for **brief** times when you are unable to play with your baby, **avoid** using them for long periods. Freedom to move is essential for your baby's mental and motor development. Finding the right balance between **nurturing your baby's curiosity** and **protecting his safety** is one of the greatest demands of this time.

GROWING WITH LANGUAGE



Throughout the years of your child's life, you can find great pleasure in sharing **language** together. Jokes, riddles and rhymes will provide opportunities for you to laugh together. Conversations between you will enable you to answer your child's questions about the world, and give you a glimpse of what is going on in her head. Communication between parents and children can be the "glue" that holds them together through difficult periods. Establishing a pattern of communication begins in infancy, through **conversation**, through reading books and through language play.

Although it is often difficult to pinpoint a baby's first word, most babies will speak a word with meaning sometime between nine and fifteen months. The age of a baby's first word is not related to her intelligence or even necessarily her eventual language ability, so don't be concerned if your baby doesn't speak for a while. She will almost certainly be trying out many new sounds ("*ga-ga*," "*ba-ba*," "*bye-bye*"), but they may not yet have meaning. She will practice and explore these sounds when she is alone in her crib and in her "conversations" with you. You may hear her imitate the rise and drop of your voice and even the actions you make with your hands.

It is important to remember that she understands far more than she can say! She is learning a great deal by what you say to her, so keep talking. Research has demonstrated that babies "babble" more often when their parents respond to the noises they make. Your conversations with your baby will encourage her speech and, more importantly, help her to add to her understanding of the world.

FINGERPLAYS



*"Pat-a-cake, Pat-a-cake,
Baker Man!
Bake me a cake
As fast as you can!
Pat it, and prick it,
And mark it with a 'B,'
And put it in the oven
For BABY and me!"*

By now you have probably enjoyed this traditional game with your baby. One of the reasons it is so popular with nine-month-olds is because it gives them a chance to practice a newly-accomplished feat: the bringing of both hands together to the body's midline.

Fingerplays, a combination of bouncy rhymes, body movements and simple hand gestures, will be enjoyed greatly by your child in the months and years to come.

As you introduce fingerplays, choose one at a time to share with your baby. You will begin by chanting or singing the rhyme out loud as you take your baby's hands in yours to do the gestures. After repeating such a rhyme several times over a period of days, you will notice your baby beginning to move his hands or squirm in anticipation of the fingerplay.

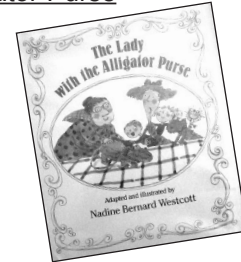
Many published collections of fingerplays are outstanding. Most of them either give written instructions or pictorial illustrations for how to move your hands as you say the rhyme.

Here are some of the best:

- Finger Rhymes
- Marc Brown, Dutton 1980
- Hand Rhymes.
- Marc Brown, Dutton 1984
- Play Rhymes.
- Marc Brown, Dutton 1987

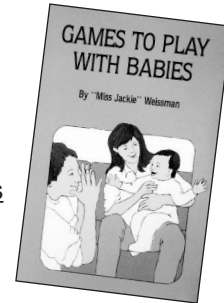


- The Lady with the Alligator Purse
- Hoberman/Westcott,
Megan Tingley 1998



- Read-Aloud Rhymes
for the Very Young
- Jack Prelutsky,
Knopf 1986.

- The Complete Book of
Rhymes, Songs, Poems,
Fingerplays and Chants
- Pamela Schiller,
Gryphon 2002.



- Games to Play with Babies
- Jackie Silberg,
Gryphon 1993

Learning to play with language is fun for your baby and you, too. Vicki Lansky's Games Babies Play 2nd Edition: From Birth to Twelve Months (Book Peddlers, 2001) provides lots of good ideas for interacting with your little one.

BEST WISHES FROM YOUR FRIENDS AT BABY TALK

 **Baby TALK**

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