



# Bright Futures Parent Handout

## 4 Month Visit

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

FAMILY FUNCTIONING

### 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.

### Feeding Your Baby

- For babies at 4 months of age, human milk or formula remains the best food. Solid feeding is discouraged until about 6 months of age.
- Avoid feeding your baby too much by following the baby's signs of fullness
  - 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.

### If Breastfeeding

- Exclusive breastfeeding for about the first 6 months of life provides ideal nutrition and supports the best possible growth and development.
- 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.

SAFETY

### 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.

### 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.
- 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 1/4 inch apart.

INFANT DEVELOPMENT

### 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.
- Clean gums and teeth (as soon as you see the first tooth) 2 times per day with a soft cloth or soft toothbrush with a small smear of fluoride toothpaste (the size of a grain of rice).

ORAL HEALTH

## 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)

NUTRITIONAL ADEQUACY AND GROWTH

INFANT DEVELOPMENT



American Academy of Pediatrics



DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN™

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