



# Welcome Words for your Nine Month Old

## Play Time is Learning Time

Your baby is at a wonderful age to enjoy games that combine words with actions. Here are some suggestions for play time, but remember: If your baby looks away, she's probably lost interest. She's giving you a signal that she's had enough of the game and is ready for a break.

**Naming:** You can help your baby begin learning the names for animals and machines. When you see a cat for instance, say, "The cat says 'meow'." Picture books are a good way to extend this naming game to things that you don't often see, such as horse, cow, car, plane, train or fire truck.

You'll also want to be sure you name the items that you give your child so she begins to associate the word with the object, such as "ball" and "block." And don't forget to describe actions as well: "The dog is barking" or "That girl is swinging."

**Making Sounds:** When you hear your baby repeat a sound such as "da" or "la," tell her, "Yes, you're talking," and repeat the sound for her by saying, "la la la." Give her a chance to say it back to you. Encourage one sound at a time. Sounds you're likely to hear are "da," "la," "ma," "bi" and "me." Changing the pitch and tempo of the sounds will keep your baby interested in this game longer.

**Rhythm Games:** Continue all the rhyming games you've played such as "Pat-a-Cake" and "Hickory Dickory Dock." Try adding "One, Two, Buckle My Shoe" as you help get your baby dressed. If you are consistent, your baby will soon begin to associate certain rhymes with routines such as bathing, dressing, eating and naptime/bedtime.

**Action Games:** Your baby is probably ready for activities such as rolling a ball to one another, piling sofa cushions on the floor for her to crawl over, and a simple game of hide-and-seek (hide partially behind a chair or doorway and ask your baby to come find you).

**Problem-Solving:** Hide a small stuffed toy so that it can be partially seen in your pocket. Ask your baby to find it. Hide something in a large paper bag or box with a lid and show her how to make it appear or disappear by closing the lid or bag. Show her how to place one block or small box on top of another for a small tower.

**Cruising:** Move several chairs close together so that your baby can practice cruising by using them for support. Put a small toy on each chair to encourage her to reach for it.

**Which Hand?** Show your baby a small, but safe item (a block or keys on a chain), that will fit in one of your hands. Put your hands together and shake them, saying, "Shake it up, shake it up, shake it up now; shake it up, shake it up, shake it up and how!" Hide the item in one fist and then hold both fists out to baby, asking, "Which hand?"

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## Milestones

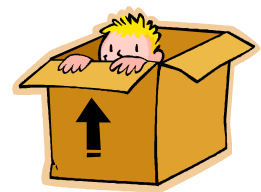
### Between 9-10 months you:

- work to get a toy that's out of reach
- look for a dropped object
- may pull to a standing position from sitting
- may get into a sitting position from your stomach
- may object if I try to take a toy away
- may stand holding onto someone or something
- may be able to pick up a tiny object with any part of your thumb and finger

### Play Time is Learning Time

*continued*

Exclaim "Yes, you found it!" when she discovers the correct hand. Babies (and older children) will play this game endlessly, and it's a quick diversion while waiting in a grocery store checkout line or doctor's office.



## Suggested Reading

Fathers & Babies  
by Jean Marzollo

Parent Power  
by Bud Zukow, M.D.

Your Child at Play: One to Two Years  
by Marilyn Segal and Don Adcock

The Single Mother's Book  
by Joan Anderson

The Daddy Track and The Simple  
Father by Geoffrey L. Greif

## Settling Into Parenting: The Ongoing Adjustment

In his book *Parent Power*, Dr. Bud Zukow writes about the myths that most of us struggle with in our role as parents. What parent hasn't, at least briefly, fallen for:

**The Myth of the Perfect Parent** - The fantasy that we should be able to nurse twins and rock them all night through months of colic while attending school full time . . . or some variation on this theme.

**The Myth of the Experts** - Surely an expert knows just what we should do when our baby hasn't slept more than an hour at a stretch for days, our 3-year-old is feeding the neighbor's dog everything in our fridge, and we're coming down with the flu.

**The Myth of 'It Won't Change Our Relationship'**—Being parents won't change anything between us since it's something that we both want and will share in.

**The Myth That To Know Them Is To Love Them**—Babies that is. In other words, we should instantaneously fall in love with our infant, or, if not immediately, then with the first smile, first laugh, first step or first word. The realities, as parents learn, are very different. As Zukow points out:

**We Are Not Born Parents**—You cannot be perfect at parenting, and neither can any other parent. Parents who want to give their children everything are also trying to give themselves everything, an unrealistic expectation for both of you.

**Parents Need Confidence**—You are the expert for your baby. Trust that gradually you'll learn what works for you and your child. Taking care of your own needs, and your relationship with your partner, is part of good parenting.

**It Does Change Your Relationship**—Maybe for the better, maybe not. The birth of a baby challenges every relationship. If one partner has most of the child care responsibility, it's often helpful if he or she leaves for a few days so the other partner can trade places. Though drastic, this is an effective way to get couples communicating and working together to share parenting. That, in turn, can help every aspect of the relationship, particularly intimacy.

**Ambivalence Is Normal**—"Some days," as Zukow tells parents, "you are not going to like your baby. Some days, you're not going to feel like liking, and it's okay because there are going to be days when the baby doesn't like you either." When parents hear this, Zukow says, they're usually able to tell him about their most recent frustration and laugh about it. They leave his office feeling better about parenting's inevitable pitfalls. Falling in love with our children, he adds, happens over time as we care for them, day in day out.

**"Love for your baby is not a bionic ray that strikes you . . . infusing you with immediate, everlasting rapture. Love is the product of many things that happen in a progression of days and nights with your child. Your love unfolds, just as each day does . . . ."**

## Safety and Your 9 Month Old

Around 9 months, most babies enter a new and challenging stage of motor development. As T. Berry Brazelton puts it in his book, *Touchpoints*, "With a baby so driven to move around, everything—feeding, sleeping and diapering— will be different. New issues of safety, discipline and anxiety pop up daily. . . ."

According to the authors of *What to Expect The First Year* (Workman, 1989), there's no reason to obsess. Although there are germs on the floor, your baby's probably already been exposed to them, and as long as the floor is dry, bacteria won't multiply. Wet floors, however, are another story, so to be on the safe-side:

- Don't let your baby eat food that's been dropped in the bathroom, in puddles, or on other damp surfaces.
- Throw away a cracker or bagel that she's gnawed on, but not finished.
- Outdoors, replace or rinse any food, bottle, pacifier, or toy that's fallen into the street. Keep a water bottle in your diaper bag for these unexpected clean ups, and keep extra pacifiers or bottles just in case you need them.
- Muddy puddles can be a source of harmful bacteria, so keep your baby and her toys away from them.
- While a mouthful of dirt or sand probably won't hurt your baby, even a lick of some cleaning products can. To help you remember how dangerous cleaning products are, put "poison" stickers on all potentially dangerous containers (or mark them with an X of black tape). Keep these items in a locked cabinet, even though your baby is just beginning to move around. Poisons include alcoholic beverages, chlorine bleach, furniture polish, kerosene, weed killers, lye, nail polish and remover, mothballs, over-the-counter medicines and vitamins, all prescription drugs, cosmetics, dishwashing liquids, powders and other detergents, boric acid, and drain cleaners. Never put poisonous substances in an empty food or beverage container.
- **Keep the 24-hour, toll-free number of the statewide Carolina's Poison Center, which is in Charlotte, near your telephone and another copy with you at all times: (800) 848-6946. They will instruct you of what to do in an emergency.**
- Never keep gasoline, even in an approved container, in your house or attached garage or storage room. Toddlers have suffered fatal burns when gas fumes were ignited by the pilot light on a nearby gas dryer, furnace or hot water heater.

