

the magic of everyday<sup>TM</sup>  
moments

Brought to  
you by the  
Johnson & Johnson  
Pediatric Institute &  
ZERO TO THREE®

6-9  
months



*The Magic of Everyday Moments™: 6-9 Months*

**Authors: Claire Lerner, L.C.S.W., with Amy Dombro, M.S., and Karen Levine**  
Design: AXIS Communications, Washington, DC ([www.axiscomm.com](http://www.axiscomm.com))  
Photos on cover and page 2: © Ross Whitaker, New York, NY ([www.rosswhitaker.com](http://www.rosswhitaker.com))

**Published by:**

**ZERO TO THREE**

2000 M Street N.W., Suite 200  
Washington, DC 20036-3307  
[www.zerotothree.org](http://www.zerotothree.org)

**To order more copies, contact:**

**Johnson & Johnson Pediatric Institute**

Phone: 1-877-JNJ-LINK (565-5465); Phone outside USA: 314-216-3560  
Fax: 1-877-JNJ-FAXX (565-3299); Fax outside USA: 314-216-3569  
Visit: [www.JJPI.com](http://www.JJPI.com)

Copyright © 2000 ZERO TO THREE  
All rights reserved.  
*Printed in the United States of America.*

# Table of Contents

<i>The Magic of Everyday Moments™</i> .....	1
<i>What It's Like for You</i> .....	3
<i>Bath Time</i> .....	4
<i>Saying Good Night</i> .....	6
<i>Reading Your Baby's Cues</i> .....	9
<i>What to Expect</i> .....	10 & 12
<i>What You Can Do</i> .....	11 & 13
<i>What Your Baby Needs Most</i> .....	15

*The Magic of Everyday Moments™* campaign is an initiative between **ZERO TO THREE** and the **Johnson & Johnson Pediatric Institute**.



**ZERO TO THREE** is a national nonprofit organization of renowned pediatricians, educators, researchers, and other child development experts who specialize in the first years of life.



The **Johnson & Johnson Pediatric Institute** is an organization dedicated to research and development conducted in support of improving pediatric care around the world by partnering with leading healthcare professionals on topics in pediatrics, parenting and infant development.

Endorsed by  
**American Academy  
of Pediatrics**



DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN™

## *Acknowledgments*

**ZERO TO THREE** and the **Johnson & Johnson Pediatric Institute** acknowledge the generous contributions of **ZERO TO THREE's** Parent Education Task Force in helping to shape, write, and edit this series of booklets. We especially appreciate the efforts of the following individuals:

**From our Board of Directors:**

Joy Osofsky, Ph.D.  
Kyle Pruett, M.D.  
Marilyn M. Segal, Ph.D.  
Bernice Weissbourd, M.A.

**Executive Director:**

Matthew E. Melmed, J.D.

**From our staff:**

Lynette Ciervo  
Nancy Guadagno  
Joan Melner, M.S.  
Stefanie Powers, M.S.  
Tom Salyers  
Nancy Seibel, M.S.  
Vicky Youcha, Ed.D.

**ZERO TO THREE** also acknowledges our partner, the **Johnson & Johnson Pediatric Institute**, which, through its educational efforts, is shaping the future of children's health around the world.

# *The Magic of Everyday Moments™*

## *Loving and Learning Through Daily Activities*

If you are like most parents today, your greatest challenge is probably caring for your baby while also taking care of yourself and your responsibilities. The competing demands on your time and energy make finding the time to connect with your baby no small challenge. But daily activities, such as feeding, bathing and grocery shopping, don't need to take time *away* from bonding with and enjoying your baby. In fact, these *everyday moments* are rich opportunities to encourage your child's development by building her:

- *self-confidence* • *curiosity* • *social skills*
- *self-control* • *communication skills*

Most of all you build her desire to learn about her world.

The booklets in this series are not intended to be general guides to *everything* that is happening at each specific age. Instead, they focus on how, through interactions with your baby during *everyday moments*, you can support your baby's social, emotional and intellectual development.

**It's the special interplay between parent and child that makes everyday moments so meaningful.** The potential is limitless. The starting point is you.



# What It's Like for You

Six-month-olds are motivated, energetic, busy, opinionated and, for the most part, fabulous! They are on the verge of huge developmental strides—intellectual, emotional and physical—and they have many, many things they want to do. The challenge—for them and for you—is that they can't yet do everything they have in mind. Their fingers aren't working well enough for them to make objects do what they want. They don't yet have the balance or coordination to stand up and walk, let alone crawl. They've got so much to say, yet they don't have the words. But they experience every imaginable feeling, sometimes all at once.

Although there is great variation in development at this age, during the next 3 months many of the skills babies are eager to master will, in fact, kick in. Until then, they are likely to get frustrated often; and you will most likely bear the brunt of that frustration. Somehow, you need to walk the line between doing things for your 6-month-old that she can't do yet, and finding a way to help her do things for herself. If, for example, she wants to crawl toward a toy but finds herself moving backward instead of forward, you can sit behind her and place your palms against the soles of her feet. Then she might be able to push herself forward and get it for herself. Of course, there's always the possibility that she'll be mad if you do that, because what she really wants is to do it on her own. But hang in there — if you're patient, she'll learn patience and persistence, too.



# bath time

For parents, baby's bath time is usually about cleaning up after a messy day in the trenches. For babies, however, a bathtub is a personal water park; and bath time becomes a special time to connect with and have fun with you.

## If your baby could talk:

*What could be more awesome than a giant puddle in a steamy, warm room, where I'm center stage and no one is allowed to interrupt us? Just you and me and my belly and my nose and my fingers and all the other parts of me that you tell me about. I can fill cups with water and dump them in the tub. And when you soap me up it feels so good. Watch me! I can rub my belly clean just the way you do. Floating boats and ducks and bubbles all make my bath time even more fun. When we're done, I love to be wrapped up in a warm towel and snuggled, and hear you tell me how sweet I smell. Hmmm. I'm something special.*

## What your baby is learning:

Your gentle and respectful touch, during the bath and when you're cuddling afterwards, builds your baby's self-esteem because it makes him feel good about himself. He develops important social skills when he gets you involved in a playful splashing game. He figures out how to engage you, take turns and have fun. This helps prepare him to share good times with other people as he grows.

A few simple water toys can go a long way toward enhancing the learning opportunities of bath time. When he creates a splash by dropping his rubber ducky in the tub, or empties the full container, your baby learns about cause and effect—how things work. He is also discovering basic math and science concepts such as full and empty, floating and sinking, and the difference between liquids and solids. Most important, all of this learning takes place within the context of his loving relationship with you. There's no better way to stimulate his curiosity.

## What you can do:

- Always keep your baby safe in the bath!
- Six-month-olds learn by imitation. Fill up a bucket, or make the rubber ducky squeak and encourage him to do the same.
- You don't have to wait until nighttime to give your baby a bath. Even during the day it can be soothing and help him switch gears.



# saying good night

While some 6-month-olds may snuggle happily into their cribs at bedtime and drift off, many are inclined to put up a good fight...no matter how tired they are. How can we avoid a daily struggle when we, ourselves, are just as tired as our babies?

## If your baby could talk:

*Want to know why I cry and fuss so much when you put me to bed? Well, why in the world would I want to leave your nice warm arms to lie alone in my crib? All I know is that I'm happy when I'm with you, and bed time means an end to all of that. How can you help? Well, if we do lots of nice things that lead up to bed time, it will help me feel relaxed. A bath, a dimly lit room, a book, a gentle song and a rub on the back. I like that. And make sure to give me something to hold on to when I can't hold on to you . . . my teddy or comfy blanket are good. Okay, I still might cry a little, but I think I'm ready. I can't promise anything, though, about tomorrow.*

## What your baby is learning:

Separating from the people they love is one of biggest challenges young children face. When you make this transition easier by snuggling up and devoting uninterrupted time at bed time, your baby learns that she is special and deeply loved. This forms the foundation for healthy social and emotional development and future positive relationships. When you establish regular bed time routines, you offer your baby the predictability she needs to feel in control of her world. When she knows what to expect, she feels secure, and is more willing to believe that while people sometimes disappear, they also can be trusted to return. This helps her adapt to separations.

When you gradually help her unwind, in preparation for bed time, and give her the opportunity to fall asleep on her own (without feeding or rocking), you are helping her learn how to soothe herself to sleep. This is an invaluable skill that will benefit her (and you!) for years to come.

## What you can do:

- Give your baby a chance to get *herself* to sleep. Babies are often much more resourceful than we think. While it can be very distressing to parents to hear their baby struggling, if you always do it for her, she misses opportunities to figure out how to soothe herself to sleep.



# Reading Your Baby's Cues

What follows is a chart that describes what babies are learning at this stage and what you can do to support the development of these new skills. As you go through the chart, it's important to remember **that every baby is an individual person, and grows and develops in her own way, at her own pace.** Building a strong and close relationship with you is the foundation of her learning and her healthy growth and development. Any concern about your baby's behavior or development deserves attention. Always discuss your concerns with your child's pediatrician or other trusted professional.

# what to expect

between 6 and 9 months:

## I've Got Brain Power

Your baby's brain power grows as he experiments with toys in more complex ways.

## I Can Move and Shake

Your baby is increasingly mobile—creeping, crawling and even pulling herself up to stand.

## I'm Good With My Hands

Your baby's ability to use his hands and fingers is increasing every day.

## I See You!

Your baby begins to understand that people and things exist even when she can't see them.

# what you can do:

- Provide a variety of safe toys for the bath—containers, rubber toys, plastic bath books, plastic ladles. Join his exploration and show him different ways to use the objects.
- Show him how to take a cup of water and pour it over the ducky to let him watch what happens. Help him fill up the whale and squirt the water out.
- Create an environment that is safe for exploration. Make sure only safe objects are within her grasp and that anything she might use to pull herself to standing is sturdy and fastened down to support her weight.
- Remind yourself that babies develop their motor skills at very different rates. Sometimes early crawlers are late walkers (why bother walking when she can get to where she needs to go so easily on all fours?). Development is an unfolding process . . . not a race.
- During the next few months he will begin to hold things between his thumb and forefinger. This makes it much easier for him to do things with his hands, like feeding himself.
- Play back-and-forth games. He'll love to hand you things that you hand back to him. This can go on for hours, and it's a great way to learn give-and-take!
- Now that your baby can pick up lots of things, make sure he doesn't get his hands on objects he can choke on – anything that he can fit entirely into his mouth.
- Play peek-a-boo. Even though you're hiding your head for just a moment (and in a very obvious way), this kind of game is practice for saying good-bye in other settings.
- Play disappearing and reappearing games, such as find the missing toy (hidden under cloth, table, etc.) or drop an object and watch her try to locate it.

# what to expect between 6 and 9 months:

## Who, May I Ask, Are You?

Your baby begins to be uncertain or fearful around strangers or even family members he doesn't see very often. Becoming quiet or even distressed when meeting someone new is quite typical of 6- to 9-month-olds.

## Now Hear This!

Your baby begins using sounds and gestures to communicate her wants and needs.

## I'm a Copycat

Your baby becomes a great imitator. Imitating is not only a great learning tool . . . it's lots of fun.

## Inquiring Minds Want to Know

Your baby is intensely curious and wants to spend almost every waking hour exploring.

# what you can do:

- Introduce your baby to new people from the safety of your arms. Ask the new person to approach him slowly.
  - Give the new person one of your baby's favorite toys or books to help engage him.
  - Prepare your extended family and friends for your baby's new wariness and make sure they understand that it isn't anything personal.
- 
- Become your baby's interpreter. If she points to her bottle, ask, "Do you want some juice?"
  - Encourage communication and motor skills by describing what she is doing. When she throws a toy down, you can say, "Okay, you don't want the car. But you're looking at the bear. Do you want to hold him?" Then put the bear within her range and encourage her to get it.
- 
- Play copycat games. Make a sound and give him time to copy you.
  - Push a button on the jack-in-the-box to make the clown appear, then wait for him to do it. This teaches him cause-and-effect and that he can make things happen.
- 
- Follow her lead on what interests her and encourage exploration.
  - Think about the way your baby explores things. Does she explore a book, for example, from beginning to end, page by page? Does she turn it upside down, flip the pages quickly or look at one page again and again. There are no "rights" or "wrongs." Some babies may find books so delicious that they'll want to chew on them for a while. That's okay, too, as long as they're safe.



# What Your Baby Needs Most

We know that you want to do your best to nurture your baby's healthy development. We also know that many parents are overwhelmed by busy days, and the thought of adding extra activities to boost their child's development may simply be too much.

That is the power of the magic of the everyday moment. What your baby needs most to thrive is *you*. Nothing else can replace the power of what your child learns as he explores the world and shares his discoveries during everyday moments with you.

We hope this booklet has shown you that the *magic* of parenting is not in any toy you buy or in the latest product claiming to make your baby smarter. The *magic is* in your everyday interactions that help your child build the crucial capabilities — such as confidence, curiosity, cooperation, and communication — needed for lifelong learning and success.

Remember, everyday moments are rich bonding and learning opportunities. Enjoy the magic of these moments with your child.

*Don't miss the other booklets in  
The Magic of Everyday Moments™ series:*



*For more information on early childhood development, go to:*

Johnson & Johnson  
pediatric  
institute

Division of Johnson & Johnson Consumer Companies, Inc.

[www.JJPI.com](http://www.JJPI.com)



National Center for Infants, Toddlers and Families

[www.zerotothree.org](http://www.zerotothree.org)