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Overextended Infants

By Crystal Smith

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Brainy Baby. Bilingual Baby. Baby Babble Speech Development. Baby Bumblebee Smart Baby Series. So Smart. And let's not forget Baby Einstein.

Not familiar with all of these? Neither was I until curiosity drove me to look into the vast array of educational media for infants and toddlers. I was quite astounded by the sheer number of these products. And they are products — please do not overlook that point. They are designed to prey on parents who have, through various crafty marketing campaigns, been made to feel that their infant will fall dangerously behind the rest of the babies in playgroup if he or she is not subjected to a heavy dose of videos, flashcards, CDs, and books.

What can babies learn from these products? Check web sites like www.babyclassroom.com to find out. The Brainy Baby Left Brain VHS series focuses on "such cognitive skills as logic, patterns, letters & numbers, sequencing, analyzing details, and more." The Bee Smart Baby Vocabulary Builder claims that there are (unnamed) studies proving that teaching an infant sign language may raise IQ scores significantly. And if sign language isn't enough, you can use that series to introduce your 4-month old to Spanish, German, French, and Japanese. Many of these products indicate that they are useful for children who are late talkers or have a speech delay, and for those children these media may indeed be very helpful. But the underlying message in the vast majority of these materials is that you should buy them to make your child smarter; to make your child talk and read at the earliest age possible.

We hear a lot in the media about overextended children who are faced with pressures to be involved in sports and other pursuits, and to do homework, and to get good marks. I see from these products that this push to engage children in some sort of activity, to make them excel and stand out, begins at a startlingly young age. It is only natural for parents to want the best for their children. There is nothing wrong with some educational media and toys. And, in my opinion, a child can never have enough books. But I have to wonder if we have lost sight of the simplest method of developing language in children - face to face interaction . Isn't it obvious? The best way to teach your child to communicate is to communicate with your child. You do not need a video, CD, or flashcard as an intermediary. Touch your child, talk to your child, let your child see your face and your mouth moving.

Next time you think about picking up a Baby Shakespeare or Bath Math video, think twice. Why not go home and read some nursery rhymes to your child or play a counting game with his fingers and toes? I guarantee a much more rewarding experience for you both.

©Crystal Smith. Crystal is a technical writer and novice freelance writer. Her new web site is under construction but she can be reached at goatfish1968@hotmail.com.

Diet for Infants

By Bette Daoust

A healthy diet for infants, from birth to 12 months, is what helps them grow fast and healthy. It is very important an infant should get the right kind and amount of nutrients each day.

Here are healthy diet tips that infants should eat:

1. Infants need milk that is rich in iron. So a goat's milk, evaporated milk or a cow's milk is never an alternative option for infants. Besides, these types of milk are harder to digest.
2. If you will not breastfeed and want to result in using formulated infant's milk, it is best to check the nutritional value. Never settle for formulated milks that have low iron content. Iron helps babies to grow healthy.
3. Never give soda, fruit juices, baby fruit juices, tea or coffee. Stick to breast milk or formulated infant milk.
4. Always check the formulated infant's milk if it is pasteurized. This assures you that all kinds of germs are killed.
5. Never give honey, raw eggs, or corn syrup. These contain germs that can harm your infant.
6. Never add anything on your breast milk like cereal or natural juices. These can alter the frequency of your baby's feeding. It can also cause your baby to gain weight very fast, which is not normal.

Remember that breast milk is always best for infants. It can keep your baby from getting sick. It provides more antibodies.

Your baby should be feed when he acts hungry like crying. Infants are usually fed every three hours. Remember that babies need to be fed 8 to 12 times within the 24 hours time.

For formula milk, there are different kinds of formula milk for infants now days. There ready to drink milk that do not require mixing and there are also in powdered form. Be sure to follow the instruction on how to mix the formula. It is also best to boil the water that you will use for mixing if you opt for powdered milk.

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