



# APL Bright Futures Handout

## 4 Month Visit



Here are some suggestions from your doctors and 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.

### NUTRITIONAL ADEQUACY & GROWTH

#### Feeding Your Baby

##### If Breastfeeding

- If you are still breastfeeding, that's great!
- Continue taking your prenatal vitamins and give your infant 400 international units of vitamin D daily.

##### 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.

##### Solid Food

- Infants may be ready for solid foods at 4 months. However, it is recommended that if your infant is breastmilk fed, you should wait until 6 months to start solid foods.
- Some of the signs your baby is ready for solids:
  - Opens mouth for the spoon.
  - Sits with support.
  - Good head and neck control.
  - Interest in foods you eat.

- Avoid feeding your baby too much by following the baby's signs of fullness:
  - Leaning back
  - Turning away
- Only introduce one new food at a time for 3 consecutive days; on the 4<sup>th</sup> day you may try a different new food.

#### Elimination

- Having 5-8 wet diapers and 3-4 stools each day shows your baby is eating well. Breastfed babies may stool less often as they get older.
- All stool colors are normal except black, red and white. Stool consistency should not be hard, but may be pasty, runny or seedy.

### SAFETY

#### Safety

- Use a rear-facing car safety seat in the back seat in all vehicles.
- Infant swim classes are not recommended due to water intoxication risk.
- 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 hot 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.

### INFANT DEVELOPMENT

#### Your Changing Baby

- At this age your infant can hold his head up high, grab objects and may start to roll. He can follow objects with his eyes through a 180 degree range.
- Keep routines for feeding, nap time, and bedtime.
- Put your baby to sleep awake or drowsy, on

his back, and in a safe crib at the same time each day for naps and nighttime.

#### Crib/Playpen

- Lower your baby's mattress before he can sit upright.
- Make sure the sides are always up on the crib.
- Do not use loose, soft bedding or toys such as quilts, pillows, or pillow-like bumper pads.
- If using a mesh playpen, make sure the weaves are less than ¼ inch apart.

#### 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.

#### Social Life

- Your infant may be aware you are across the room even though he may not see you.
- He may also start to develop separation anxiety, but take this as a positive sign that he is bonding to you.

### ORAL HEALTH

#### 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 cause 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.

**Poison Help: 1-800-222-1222**  
**Child safety seat inspection: 1-866-SEATCHECK; seatcheck.org**

