



School Begins at Birth Series

Year One, Month Twelve

Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service • Oklahoma State University

Elaine Wilson
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Dear Parents

Congratulations to Mom,
Congratulations to Dad,
Happy Birthday, dear one-year-old,
We've made it, we have!

A year ago *School Begins at Birth* asked, "Are there times when you wonder if you will survive the next few days?" Not only have you survived, you have helped a tiny, fragile newborn become a rollicking, romping child. Congratulations! However, the responsibility for your child's total development doesn't stop at 12 months. You've only just begun.

Do you ever wonder, "What does my child really need to become everything he or she is capable of being?" As described by Abraham Maslow, in his Hierarchy of Needs theory, there are five basic human needs (physiological, safety, affiliation or love and belonging, esteem and self-actualization) that must be satisfied for an individual to be successful in life. The basic foundation is made up of physiological needs. The highest level of achievement is self-actualization. Each need in the hierarchy must be satisfied before a higher level need can be addressed. The needs, in order of importance, are described below.

Physiological – Sleep, hunger, and thirst are physiological needs that have motivated your infant most directly until now. These needs must be met to proceed to a high level. For example, if your child is hungry or tired there won't be an interest in playing learning games.

Safety – Children must feel free from danger and physical harm. They need a secure and stable environment with routine events and familiar faces to develop a sense of trust.

Love and Belonging – Your child will love and want to be loved by others and to feel that he or she is a member of a group (your family). Your child will discover that real love must be given to be received. Love requires honesty, trust, unselfishness and commitment. Love must be unconditional.

Esteem – If your child has been able to love and be loved by another, he or she can proceed to the next level. Esteem needs are equally divided into self respect and respect for others or the feeling that "I'm okay and you're okay."

Self-actualization – Self-actualization is the life-long process of becoming everything your child has the capability to be. This need is difficult to satisfy because even when the lower-level needs are met, this level still requires a strong belief in self. We work toward this goal all of our lives.

This first birthday marks the end of one of the most exciting years you and your child will ever share. Never again will growth be so rapid or new skills appear so fast. You have met some of the greatest challenges of parenting and have begun the important step toward developing a life-long relationship with your child.

You were there at the beginning and you will continue to be a central figure in your child's life. Make the most of this wonderful opportunity. During the past year *School Begins at Birth* has marked the intense growth and changes your little one has made, and has pointed out ways to strengthen that development. In the next year you will also see some rapid changes. The striving for independence will continue to be very strong.

Just as your child moves into a new year, *School Begins at Birth*, goes through some changes too. The second year in this series is offered once every three months instead of every month. This change is not to suggest that your child is slowing down, but it does suggest that the changes are not as distinctive during the next few years. We hope that you will want to keep receiving these letters.

To help you develop your parenting skills even further, the Cooperative Extension Service has many pamphlets and bulletins that present sound information in a usable format. These materials also are available from your local County Extension Office. Also, your local Extension Home Economist may have a special program planned or a special newsletter for families like your own.

Your baby's first year has been an exciting challenge filled with rapid changes. As your child embarks on the toddler and preschool years, and all the years that follow, try to learn as much as possible about each step your child is taking.

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Mental Development

School Begins at Birth reminds you that your child is unique and different from all other babies. Each month has presented developmental steps, but they have been only suggestions of the order in which skills may occur. In other words, children usually learn skills in the same order but at different times.

Have you ever watched participants in an ‘anything goes’ obstacle race? There is a precise order for the event. Most of the athletes proceed in the same order but, for a variety of reasons, some reach the goal first, others lag behind. Sooner or later almost all the participants end up at the same goal line, though. This same idea is true for your child’s development.

For example, if you call ‘Where is kitty?’ or ‘Where is the ball?’ your child may look in the accustomed place. There may even be a tiny finger pointing toward kitty and soft meowing sounds. By the end of their first year some children can perform these tasks, others can only do one thing at a time. Others may not respond at all to these questions. Remember, each child has a special timetable for events. Each child hears a different drumbeat.

Emotional Development

No baby can feel secure in a place where things are always changing. When you carry out tasks much the same way each day and use the same words for familiar objects, it helps your child settle snugly and happily into the environment.

Even though your child needs feelings of safety and routine, things should happen naturally around your house. It’s good for your baby to be with adults who show a natural range of emotions. Obviously, you can’t be entertaining and happy all the time. Try to control your more negative feelings, but don’t try to hide them completely from your child.

Your child is now old enough to sense when people are displeased or upset. This is the way your child begins to understand uncomfortable or unhappy feelings. Learning to control or express these feelings in ways that are acceptable will be a lifelong challenge.

Each family is different. What is a natural atmosphere in one home is chaos in another. Consistency is the key. If your child knows the rhythm and movement of the family emotions, he or she can begin to adjust to them and can feel safe even in the midst of emotional turmoil.

Sometimes during family stress and crises, you may notice your child vigorously sucking a thumb or fingers. Is this harmful? You shouldn’t worry about your baby’s thumbsucking. It gives your baby pleasure and comfort. If your baby spends a lot of time thumb-sucking, you probably should think about whether he or she has enough attention, good feelings of security and things to do. Early

thumbsucking won’t harm teeth and usually stops in a year or two.

There are many adults who revert to thumbsucking or habits in time of crisis. Thumbsucking is a worry at age 12, but not at one.

Social Development

Now that your baby is on the move, you probably will notice that he or she fears strange people and situations. In these instances, your baby will need the loving support of people he or she knows best. Holding your hand and cuddling in your arms are special privileges not given to just anyone.

Your baby may go through a period of clinging. Giving your baby that attention is one of the most important things you can do. When you leave your baby with a sitter, choose someone he or she knows well.

Don’t be uneasy about giving your baby extra attention; his or her need to be dependent on you now is very real. The support that your baby experiences now lays the groundwork for future independence.

Language Development

Your child’s first words may be one-word puzzles for you to figure out. The word may be ‘go’ but the meaning may be ‘Where did Daddy go?’ or ‘I want to go to the car.’ With one word your child is trying to convey a complete thought.

Help your child combine gestures with single words to make them more understandable. Gradually your child will associate words with the correct object, feeling, action or activity they represent.

At 12 months of age some children have many recognizable words but other children do not have any. The average is about three words at this age. Many of the words your baby babbles are words that you have borrowed and use.

For example, if your child looked at the family pet and said ‘puh-puh,’ you might have picked up the word and called the pet puh-puh too. This is usually the way the words mama and dada begin. Your child babbles a near miss, and you quickly fill in the pieces — the missing sounds in this case. Soon your child connects the word with the person, pet or toy.

Take advantage of all your baby’s utterances. If they sound familiar, use them. The more you engage your child in speech, the more that will be understood and the more social your child will become.

Small Muscle Development

If you can stand the noise and the mess, the kitchen can be one of the best places for your baby to play. Set aside a low shelf or drawer with things like spoons or pots that you do mind your baby playing with. You can keep an eye out while getting meals ready and your child can practice using those

small muscles. Your child may want to wave measuring spoons in the air like rattles, bang pots together or bang spoons inside the pots, put smaller pots inside larger pots, dump measuring spoons and cups back and forth between pans, tins and boxes or put measuring cups inside each other.

Remember to join your baby in play every once in a while. Talk, give words for actions. Say for example, ‘Jimmy is banging the pan on the floor,’ ‘Susie is making a very big noise,’ or ‘Jerry is putting one pot inside of another pot.’ Also, constantly show your child new and different things to do with these new toys.

Every parent knows that sinking feeling when things are too quiet. It’s better to have a banging, clanging bundle underfoot than a silent, mischievous bundle out of sight.

Remember, by the end of this first year, there are few containers that your child can’t open given enough time and interest. Check your home again for matches, pill bottles, nail polish remover, detergent, bleach, anything that busy hands can reach. If it is dangerous, your one-year-old will be able to find it and get the top off. Check and double-check.

Large Muscle Development

Some babies scoot along the floor on their bottoms instead of creeping on hands and knees. No one really knows why they prefer this method of getting around. They probably have tried other methods but revert to bottom-scooting because it works so well.

However your child is moving, be sure he or she spends enough time on the floor to do plenty of scooting and crawling. The child who is constantly moved from playpen to high chair, to crib and back to playpen gets little opportunity to crawl and scoot over a distance. Part of the activity at this stage of development is building up muscle strength for the longer periods of stamina needed for walking. This strength is built up by crawling from one room to another. Provide that opportunity.

Sleep

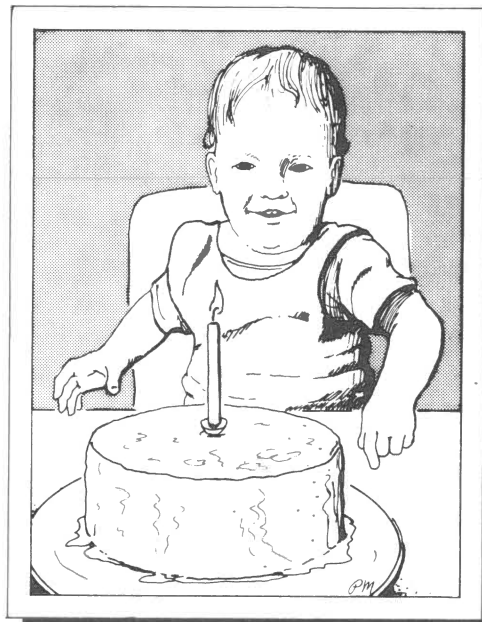
The exercise that your one-year-old receives is also important to maintain sleep patterns. Remember those middle-of-the-night feedings? That’s probably over by now. Most children sleep through the night by their first birthday. They may wake up for a few minutes, but by age one they usually go back to sleep by themselves.

In 24 hours a one-year-old sleeps much less than a newborn, but some children need more sleep than others. Some may need as little as 8 hours, others may need as much as 17 hours.

How can you tell? Set a regular bedtime and watch your child’s reaction. Does your child wake up early in the morning? If so, your short sleeper may need a little later bedtime. Watch how your child acts during the day. Your child may need more sleep if he or she is cross and fussy or if

he or she falls asleep at strange times.

Once a pattern is set, however, have regular times for sleep — not only at night but for naps as well. Young children are happier when important parts of the day, like meals and bedtime, remain the same.



Special Birthday Notes

The most important day in the year for any child is probably his or her birthday. With a little imagination you can turn any birthday into a memorable event. Parties don’t need to be lavish or expensive to be successful. The only ingredients you need are careful planning and lots of enthusiasm.

The first birthday is a big event, especially for the loving grown-ups. Friends and family members will want to join you for a party. Plan to have a camera on hand to take pictures that you will always treasure.

Suggestions for gifts are clothing (jeans, sweaters, pajamas) or toys (rubber baby doll, stacking cups, blocks, balls, baby-proof books, sock dolls). *Caution:* All toys should be at least 2 by 4 inches in size. Toys should not have little pieces that could come loose. Toys should not be breakable or have sharp edges. Babies don’t get good use out of big stuffed animals.

The following is a birthday finger-play to share with your one-year-old.

Today is (child’s name)’s birthday.

Let’s make him (her) a cake. (Form cake with hands.)

Mix and stir, stir and mix. (Action of stirring.)

Then into the oven to bake. (Pretend to place cake in oven.)

Here’s our cake so nice and round. (Make a circle with arms.)

We frost it pink and white. (Action of spreading frosting.)

We put one candle on it, (Hold up one finger. Alter the number of candles to suit age).

To make a birthday light.

Activities for Growth

An interesting, inexpensive birthday gift for your baby is a “nester-rester” made out of empty cans. Use one-pound coffee cans, fruit or soup cans. Remove one end of each can. Hammer down any sharp metal edges. Soak off labels. Cover edges with cloth tape, but be sure the edges are smooth as possible first. With more colored cloth tape, decorate the sides of the cans, or paint them with nontoxic paint.

Your birthday child will spend hours stacking, nesting and pulling apart these cans. Play with your child. Praise good work. Use the number of cans that are appropriate to your child’s ability level.

Special Message to Parents

Your baby’s second year is just beginning, and it will be an active one. Your baby will be growing into an independent toddler. This is a good time to sort through your feelings about the role you are now playing. Many parents are startled to realize that their baby is growing up and might have the urge to add another baby to the family. It seems that a space of two to three years between children provides time for each child to receive the special attention that getting started in life requires.

The decision to have another baby involves your entire family. It is important to understand your own needs as you make that decision. As a couple, think about what is happening in your lives individually and jointly as you try to decide on family size. Most importantly, remember that each child continues to need your special attention throughout life and that each year will bring different and exciting challenges.

Health Suggestions

Roseola, Rubella, Rubeola and Varicella are four of the most common childhood diseases — diseases that you should know about. They are contractable by direct contact with the sick person but cannot be carried by an immune person (one who has already had the disease or who has been vaccinated against it).

Roseola usually occurs during the first two years of a child’s life. It has only two symptoms, fever and rash. The fever is usually high (103 F to 105 F) for three or four days. After the fever is gone a faint rash appears on the child’s trunk. The rash usually disappears in about a day.

Rubella is the technical name for German or three-day measles. Rubella is preventable with a single vaccine that

gives lifetime immunity. When Rubella occurs there may be a low-level fever for three days accompanied by a rash that appears on the face, spreads to the rest of the body and is gone in three days. There also may be painful knots or nodes or back of the neck and skull.

Rubeola is also known as the two-week or hard measles. Rubeola may cause a fever, cough and eye irritation for four or five days. A high fever, increased coughing and a spreading rash will follow. This disease is also preventable by a vaccine that can be given as early as 15 months of age.

Varicella, or chicken pox, is one of the childhood diseases for which there is no vaccine. Varicella may cause small blisters that appear in daily crops starting on the trunk and spreading to the face, scalp and other parts of the body. The only treatment, besides time and patience, is an anti-itch preparation.

Be sure your child has the proper vaccines to prevent these illnesses. Any precaution to make life better for you and your child should be taken. There are some risks in taking these vaccines, but the benefits far outweigh the risks. In most cases the side effects are mild and brief. Usually, only one of a million children has severe reaction to these vaccines. For complete protection, all doses of the vaccine must be taken. Partial immunization does not ensure immunity to the disease.

Special Note from the Editor

By the end of this first year your baby has developed a unique, individual personality. Your child is a full-fledged member of your family. It’s difficult to do much without your child being in on it too. He or she is quite a handful in more ways than size.

School Begins at Birth has given you suggestions and hints on helping your child become everything he or she has the capability to be. Read everything you can to help you understand how your child grows and develops.

Credit is extended to Shirley J. O’Brien, Human Development Specialist at the University of Arizona, for the original development of the “School Begins at Birth” series.

Illustrations for *School Begins at Birth* were done by Paul Mirocha.