

# What's Special About Me at this Age?



## Character Building

Personality shows very early. Parents should pay attention to this so they can support their baby's development. Examples:

- A baby that is scared easily or engages slowly will need encouragement.
- Babies will also show you if they are very determined and persistent about things.
- Some babies require a lot of stimulation. They want to try new things all the time.



## Communication

- Babies copy facial expressions. They are learning to use them to show emotions.
- Babies cry to tell you that they need something.
- When babies make sounds, they are practicing. They are trying to imitate what they hear.



## Skill Building

- Babies explore their environment. Even very young babies can put things into their mouths, so you have to be constantly watchful!
- Babies try to pull themselves up by grabbing onto things.
- Babies are learning to roll over, kick, and push themselves along.

# Applying Inuit Values

## *Inunnguiniq and Miksirkarniq*



*Inunnguiniq* is raising a child to become a capable human being. *Miksirkarniq* is giving proper direction so that the child will develop well and have a strong foundation. This is a key part of *inunnguiniq*.

Some children are made into capable human beings, with proper direction, and others are not. A child who is made into a capable human being will not hurt in their heart when they face life's hardships. A child who is not made into a capable human being will not be able to face hardships well.

*When I learned inunnguiniq from my grandparents, the knowledge could be traced back through many generations. It does not change over time, because the knowledge and directions are foundational. Sound teachings last. They are useful today and will be useful in the future. We need to understand inunnguiniq and consider it a gift from our culture and past. We need to keep this precious gift alive. All of the instructions we give to children become alive in them and continue on through them—good or bad.* ~ Quote from Elders Advisory Committee

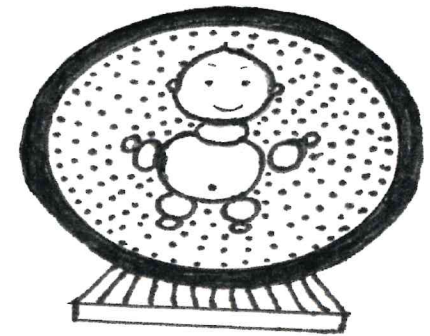
## Reminders for Partners

- ✓ Early visits to the Health Centre are important. Show your child that it is exciting and not scary.
- ✓ Don't miss your child's immunizations. Afterward, watch your child carefully. Provide medication to reduce a fever if needed.

# Inunnguiniq

## Childrearing Advice from Inuit Elders

### 0 to 6 Months



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CENTRES OF EXCELLENCE FOR CHILDREN'S WELL-BEING

Children and Adolescents with Special Needs

## About this Age

From 0 to 6 months old, babies are becoming aware of their bodies, other people, and their environment.

They notice new things and try to touch everything. They suck their fingers as they become more mobile. Sometimes, they scare themselves by their own movements!

They develop food preferences and may gag on unpleasant tastes. They may notice changes in the taste of breastmilk if the mother eats different foods.

Drinking broth made from caribou, seal or other country foods may help contribute to a good supply of breast milk and is very good for the mother and baby.

They teethe. When their gums swell, they may be less interested in eating or tasting new foods. They may want to breastfeed more.

They start to recognize smells, sounds, voices and repetitive chants. They learn words such as hot and cold. They learn about being in an amautiq, such as when to stick their head out.

They begin to copy what others do. They copy siblings' moods, such as laughing or becoming excited.

They recognize people and their touch, especially close people. They may stare at specific people, often related to their namesake.

During this time, they are shy with strangers. They might let a stranger pick them up, but only to be handed over to their mother. Later, they will be more social.

By 3 to 4 months, they know their environment. For example, they will notice if they fall asleep in a strange place. Their sleeping patterns will change. They may panic until they see or hear a familiar person.

## What Parents Can Do

- Make sure the baby is comfortable.
- Do not put on too many clothes or let the baby over heat in the *amautiq*. Use soft, loose clothing (not baby jeans).
- When outside, always have them wear a hat that covers the ears.
- Never face them into the wind. It will take their breath away.
- Hug and caress the baby often. Sing or chant softly whenever you are near them.
- Do not hold the baby all the time. Put them on their tummy for short periods of time. Always watch them.
- Give them things to chew on when teething (long seal flipper bones or dry meat). This soothes their gums. The bones and meat provide calcium for strong teeth.
- Watch out for choking hazards. Don't let them put small things into their mouths.
- *Aqqaq* them. They will respond to *aqqait* and may respond to different *aqqait* in different ways. They will recognize their name and respond.
- Keep them close and in a snug environment. Bundling the baby is good when they are not in their own beds.
- Change diapers often to avoid infections and rashes. Wash the bottom every time.
- Introduce new foods slowly, in small amounts. Start at 6 months.
- Give them things to hold, to improve grip.

## Parenting Skills to Practice for this Age

As a parent, you can do a lot to help your baby develop at this age. You can:

- Speak to them continuously.
- Sing, chant, and play word games.
- Make eye contact, *aqqaq*, and caress the child a lot.
- Respond to their demands so they feel secure.
- Make faces and encourage them to copy.
- Massage the child all over. Gently stretch out their limbs to strengthen them.
- With each diaper change, use the term to signify this (*Haahaapii?*) to teach them instructions.



### Tips for Parents

- ✓ When breastfeeding one child, another child might wake up. Soothe the second child with your voice and by rubbing their back or head.
- ✓ Bathe babies regularly. Clean their heads every day. Clean between folds of skin.
- ✓ Talk to your baby all the time. Encourage the baby to watch what you are doing so they will be entertained, become observant, and learn.