



## Tips for Growing Your Baby's Brain

### Tip #13: Keep Reading Your Baby

At about six months your baby starts to communicate in many ways. Not with words, but with sounds, facial expressions and gestures. Most of what your baby communicates is about feelings.

How does your baby know how to do this? By listening and watching you! Your baby smiles... you smile. You laugh... your baby laughs. You handle your baby gently and speak softly... your baby makes brain connections. You, your smile, your voice, and your touch become associated with good feelings of happiness.

Your baby will learn to express different feelings with his face and gestures— surprise, disappointment, joy and fear. When baby reaches out with palms up, baby wants something.

By six months babies have different cries— mad, sad, hungry, fake, and the pain cry. The better you become at reading these cries and expressions, the better your baby will get at communicating.

When your baby starts to crawl and explore, things change for everyone.

What is your baby trying to do?

Nothing bad. Exploring is a big need for all babies this age. Your baby is growing and learning.

But this can be difficult. If you get frustrated with you baby, don't yell or spank. This will confuse your baby and cause him to associate you with feeling afraid.

Remember that your baby understands and associates feelings, not ideas or intentions.

A baby reaches for the lamp cord again... the parent yells .. the baby sees the parent's angry face ... hears the angry voice... the baby's brain makes connections... the parent's voice and face may become associated with bad feelings, fear, and perhaps even pain.

What happens to this baby? He may feel insecure, cry more, do less exploring, and learn less.

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Mirror your baby's gestures and expressions. This lets your baby know that you are tuned in to her needs and feelings. Child-proof your home. Distract your baby with something else. Don't yell or spank.