



picture day

Capture your baby's journey—from belly to bassinet. *by* BERIT THORKELSON

The last weeks with your baby bump, and those first moments after your little one is born, are some of the most important in your life—but they fly by in a flash. That reality is undoubtedly driving the recent increase in demand for professional birth photographers who are experts at bringing out the beauty in sometimes strained situations. “You might automatically imagine the ‘crowning’ shot, or Mom in an unflattering, vulnerable state, and think, ‘Why would I ever want a photograph of that?’” says Lyndsay Stradtner, a family photographer at Life in Motion Photography in Austin. “But it’s so much more. The details, who was there to support Mom and Baby, the intense moments—the whole day.” If a professional’s fee isn’t in your budget, ask a shutterbug friend to lend her talents. Just don’t ask Dad—if he’s in the picture, he should literally be *in* the picture!

maternity shots

Snapshots of The Bump can serve as a reminder of how your body changed during pregnancy as well as what your pre-baby family looked like. That freeze-

frame is exactly what first-time mom Amy Palanjian, of Des Moines, sought. She and her husband dressed casually for their backyard shoot. “I wanted the photos to really capture us

and our everyday environment,” she says. “It feels like forever ago. Life’s so different now.”

Follow Palanjian’s lead and wear whatever you’re comfortable in, even if that’s yoga pants and a T-shirt. Ideally, you’ll want to schedule the session for around 34 weeks—late enough that you’ve “popped” yet early enough that you won’t look too huge.

DIY TIP Have a friend shoot the pics from slightly above, which is a universally flattering angle. Try posing with a hand atop your tummy, which will elongate your neck and face while emphasizing your beautiful roundness.

special delivery

Your child’s big debut could take an afternoon or an entire day, but you’ll want those memories to last forever. Katie Alejandrino, of San Diego, hired a photographer who chronicled her from attempting an unmedicated birth at a birth center to being transferred to a hospital and getting an epidural. “The story line of the photos is amazing: the pain, the joy, the times I needed comfort,” she says. “I love the shots of my husband holding me, and the ones of each of us holding Amina for the first time still bring tears to our eyes.”

It’s usually not a problem to have a photographer there, but ask and get the okay from your doctor and hospital or birth center, says Stradtner, founder of the International Association of Professional Birth Photographers. A cesarean section can be just as photographable as a vaginal birth—but definitely discuss this ahead of time. Finally, be sure to clarify your personal boundaries with your photographer. Don’t want any “down there” shots? Your call! Many clients have the photographer capture it all and then curate different versions of the story for different audiences. “It’s about your comfort level,” Stradtner says.

DIY TIP Avoid surprises by telling your friend you want to approve her pics before she shares them online. 😊

baby



teething time

Keep your child happy while he's busy growing his grin. *by* JEANNETTE MONINGER

Got a drooly, cranky little guy? He could be getting ready to pop a tooth. The first signs of teething typically appear around 4 months, when your infant's saliva production kicks into overdrive and he starts to mouth everything within reach. Still, it could be a couple of months—or more—before you see a glimmer of white. The two bottom front teeth usually emerge around 6 months, followed four to eight weeks later by the two top front teeth. After that, your baby should get one or two new teeth each month until he has all 20 primary (or baby) teeth, around age 3. This expert advice will help you handle his sore gums.

mouth watch

Despite what you may have heard, teething doesn't cause high fever or diarrhea. Since your baby is putting everything in her mouth in an effort to massage her gums, it's easy for her to pick up germs, says Steven Chussid, D.D.S., director of pediatric dentistry at Columbia University College of Dental Medicine, in New York City. If

your baby seems sick during this stage, call your pediatrician. While teeth are erupting, her gums may look swollen or, occasionally, she may develop a bluish-red bump called an eruption hematoma. "The area might look bruised, but it's generally not painful," says Joel Berg, D.D.S., president of the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry.

soothing strategies

The last part of a tooth's slow journey upward is typically the toughest. "When it begins to break through, it puts pressure on the gums, which can be uncomfortable," says Dr. Berg. (Fortunately, your baby will probably be less bothered by this as he gets older.) To provide relief, wet a clean washcloth, wring out the excess water, and put it in the refrigerator or freezer to chill. Rubber teethingers also work well, but keep in mind that some liquid-filled teethingers can get too hard in the freezer and bruise a baby's already sensitive mouth (they usually indicate this with "do not freeze" on the package). Your baby may also like for you to massage his gums with your (clean) finger or a moist gauze pad, says Dr. Berg.

You'll probably be able to make your baby feel better without medication, but if he seems particularly fussy, try offering him a dose of acetaminophen, or ibuprofen if he's at least 6 months.

healthy habits

A small number of babies don't get their first teeth until after they turn 1. This usually isn't cause for concern, but still make an appointment with a pediatric dentist to make sure there isn't a problem. In fact, all babies should see a dentist by 12 months. "Dental exams are just as important to your child's health as a well-care visit to the pediatrician," says Dr. Chussid. "You'll discuss teething, and learn what to expect in the coming months." Your dentist should also go over how pacifiers, thumb-sucking, and bottles can affect your baby's teeth, as well as proper cleaning methods and the use of fluoride toothpaste—all important for maintaining a healthy mouth well after the last molar comes in. 😊

get more!

Not sure how to brush those tiny teeth and gums? Go to parents.com/brush-teeth to watch a video with cleaning tips.

toddler

fighting frustration

Avoid tantrums by helping your child explain how she feels. *by* JACQUELINE BURT

One phrase that parents of toddlers repeat a lot is “use your words.” But it’s easier for a child this age to hit, bite, or scream than to express herself by using her limited vocabulary. “Toddlers are just learning that there are words to represent their feelings,” says Rosemarie T. Truglio, Ph.D., senior vice president of education and research at Sesame Workshop. Our plan will help your child use language (instead of her left hook) to express what’s on her mind and provide strategies to help her manage her emotions.

articulate his feelings

To help your toddler cope with frustration, you can put his emotions into words for him. If he throws a fit in the supermarket when you won't buy him cookies, tell him that you understand why he's annoyed: "I know how much you like those cookies, and you're angry because you can't have them." Using a phrase like "you're angry" gives your child the words he needs to label and express his emotions in the future. Don't raise your voice or tell him that he has no reason to be so upset. Children, like adults, are more likely to calm down when someone "gets" how they feel, so a little empathy will go a long way.

You can also show him some cool techniques he can use to calm himself. For example, modeling how to belly breathe—with your hands on your stomach, take a deep breath and slowly exhale—is an effective way to communicate the concept of taking a pause until the anger slowly goes away. Once he simmers down, distract him from the cookies by discussing something else.

Be prepared to repeat these emotional vocabulary words over and over again to make them stick. Jackie Crockett, of Naugatuck, Connecticut, says that for her twin daughters, Sydney and Avery, recognizing each other's mood sets the stage for identifying their own. At 18 months, Avery would point at Sydney when she was crying and say, "Sad." Even if your child doesn't have siblings, you can talk about how other people (such as children at the park or characters in a book) are feeling.

show your child the power of words

The truth is, it can feel good for a toddler to hit or kick when she's mad. Still, you can convince your child that talking things out can help her solve problems, says Rose Kavo, Ph.D., a psychoanalyst in White Plains, New York. Let's say another kid grabs her

bucket in the sandbox. Before a tussle starts, you could say, "Why don't you tell Amy that you're mad. That will make you feel better, and then we can get your bucket back." To help her figure out what she wants to say, you can elaborate: "What did you want to tell Amy? Did you want to say that you're angry because she took your bucket and you'd like her to please give it back?" If it's too hard for her (1- and even 2-year-olds usually don't possess the verbal skills to do this), you can speak to the other child for her. Later, talk about the incident and help her practice what to say the next time something like this happens.

If your child whines when she doesn't get her way, try not to lose your cool (which only shows her that getting angry is acceptable) or give in (which encourages her to act the same way again). Instead, ask her what she wants: "Would you rather have milk instead of water?" Once she's made her choice, praise her: "I can understand you so much better when you use your words instead of crying. Now I can get your milk."

demonstrate a dialogue

Toddlers need practice in learning to handle their frustration. When you're playing together, try using stuffed animals to act out a recent situation when your child should have used his words instead of shouting. You can do the "talking" for both characters at first ("Mommy Elephant, may I wear my blue socks instead of my red ones?") "Sure, Baby Elephant. Thank you for asking so nicely"). Then let your child take over a role.

Continue to give him positive feedback—your child will be more likely to communicate his feelings in the future when you tell him how happy you are to see him trying. "Gossip" to your partner and others about his progress too (make sure your child can hear you!). Soon, your toddler will be using his words more often and his fists a lot less. ☺



preschooler

nude awakening

Some kids want to bare all, and (gulp) compare with their friends. *by* JOANNA NESBIT

When Kate Truman arrived at preschool one afternoon to pick up her 4-year-old daughter, the teacher took Truman aside to tell her that Rachel and her buddy Jasper had gotten sidetracked while playing dress-up. (Names have been changed to protect the innocent.) She'd found them comparing anatomy. "It's not a big deal, but it might be good to talk to her about privacy," the teacher said. "And I'll keep a closer eye on them."

Although the teacher was diplomatic, Truman was embarrassed. Was this behavior normal? Experts offer insights into why kids like to "play doctor" and prescribe the best ways to handle it.

personal details

Developmentally, preschoolers are paying closer attention to hair length, skin color, and other body differences. Not all kids will actually take off their clothes to inspect, but an interest in

peers' anatomy is typical at this age, explains Justin Richardson, M.D., clinical professor of psychiatry at Cornell and Columbia universities. "It's also normal for siblings and same-sex friends to be curious about each

other, which can come up in situations like bathing together or changing into swimsuits.” On the other hand, playmates may strip down over and over to put on costumes and not even notice each other’s body at all.

innocent actions

Three- and 4-year-olds are developing an understanding of gender, and they may have clear-cut ideas about roles, such as boys play with certain kinds of toys and girls wear dresses, but they have no concept of sexuality.

If your child has observed how his friend’s private parts compare with his own, there’s no need to panic—the only thing this interest indicates is a healthy curiosity. It’s possible that a boy might spontaneously get an erection, which is normal. Preschool boys can get erections from anything that arouses the nervous system—something as innocuous as taking off clothes or experiencing a change in temperature. “At this age, they don’t indicate sexual attraction or fantasy,” says Dr. Richardson.

graceful response

Should you come across your preschooler with another child in a state of undress, try to keep calm. Reacting in a way that communicates anxiety or disapproval may inadvertently shame the kids. Simply redirect them by saying something diversionary like “Who wants some grapes or strawberries?” and remind them to get dressed. However, don’t worry if you couldn’t help but seem shocked, says Dr. Richardson. You can always revisit the issue later with your child when you’re feeling more calm and collected.

You can also acknowledge your child’s interest by saying, “I see you are curious about bodies. In our family, we keep our clothes on when we have visitors.” You might want to follow up with a trip together to

your local library to get some age-appropriate books for her about bodies, so she can learn more.

setting boundaries

Now’s the time to establish (or reestablish) playdate rules, such as keeping doors open and clothes on during dress-up, says child-development expert Betsy Brown Braun, author of *Just Tell Me What to Say: Sensible Tips and Scripts for Perplexed Parents*. “These situations are good opportunities to begin teaching respect for others,” says Braun, including the importance of honoring someone’s personal space by not touching her body and by not letting that person touch yours.

Using correct anatomical terms and answering questions matter-of-factly will facilitate open communication with your child and pave the way for frank discussions about bigger topics when she’s older.

Although you can begin talks about privacy, that’s still an abstract concept to preschoolers, adds Deborah Roffman, a sex and family-life educator in Baltimore and author of *Talk to Me First*. “Children don’t adequately understand the concept of privacy until age 5 or 6, but at 3 and 4 they are beginning to understand the concept of rules.” Just as you might teach your preschooler to knock on the bathroom door before entering, you can remind her to keep her clothes on when friends come over to play or when she’s in public, and that some parts of her body are more private than others.

Be prepared for some confusion and questions if your kid and her pal like to get naked together and don’t immediately understand when you explain that they can’t. Having a candid chat with your child about boys’ and girls’ body parts and the differences between them may satisfy some of her natural curiosity—maybe even enough to motivate her to keep her shirt and shorts on. 😊


 school-age

swimming lessons

If your kid is anxious about staying afloat, these tips will ease her into action. *by* KRISTEN KEMP

Before your child can join in the fun with family and friends or at day camp this summer, she may need extra help learning to feel comfortable in the water. Experts recommend that it's important for school-age kids to know how to swim for safety reasons. Plus, the older a kid gets, the harder it can be for her to shake memories of feeling apprehensive at the pool. "Kids this age have the ability to listen and follow directions, so working with a skilled instructor—or a patient parent—can really increase a child's confidence in the water," says Lana Whitehead, founder of SwimKids USA, in Phoenix. Experts weigh in on the best tactics for conquering your child's water worries now.

start slowly

Your child can have real fears about buoyancy and breathing, so it's crucial to take a gradual and loving approach. "He can begin by sitting on the edge of the pool with his feet dangling in," suggests Whitehead. Soon, he'll want to get into the water where he can stand. Next,

gradually trickle some water over him, and encourage him to submerge his face. Then it's on to blowing bubbles. "Get in close with him and do big inhales and exhales at the surface of the water," suggests Whitehead. Practice these skills in the bathtub to reinforce what he learned.

take the plunge

Inevitably, some kids will cry about going in the water even after weeks of sitting poolside. “It’s hard for parents to see their child work through that kind of fear,” explains Emmalee Morse, an aquatics supervisor for Eau Claire, Wisconsin. Go ahead and carry your child into shallow water—even if she’s kicking and screaming. Hold her in front of you with your arms around her. Take a toy with you, sing songs, and do anything you can to distract her and help her feel safe, Morse says.

forget the floaties

You may have bought your child floaties (also called water wings) for his arms to make him feel more comfortable, but experts advise against them. Not only can they give him a false sense of security, but they discourage proper form because they force his body to be vertical instead of horizontal in the water. If your child is used to floaties, taking them away might be tough. “Let him know that he’s only allowed to sit on the pool steps and watch until he learns to swim without them,” Whitehead says. Once he knows how to swim on his own, he can use blow-up rings or pool noodles for fun.

learn the basics

You can either teach your kid yourself or hire a swim instructor. “In lessons, kids focus on proper technique, and then Mom and Dad can focus on play,” Morse says. If you pay for instruction, make sure there is a lifeguard on duty as well as safety equipment like a reaching pole and a ring buoy. Look for a swimming teacher who is certified by the Red Cross or another reputable program and is also trained in CPR. If you decide to teach your child yourself, keep the lesson time short. Matt Giovanisci, creator of Learn2Swim.org, reminds parents to make safety the top priority: If your child can’t swim the length of the pool—called the deep-water test—you should be within arm’s reach of him at all times. 😊

big kid



collector's items

You may want to get rid of all those plastic dinosaurs or dirty rocks, but your child’s treasure trove has real value. *by* JEANNETTE MONINGER

Building a collection starts innocently enough. A pretty seashell plucked from the sand. A plush giraffe to commemorate a trip to the local zoo. Stones gathered on a walk through the woods. Before you know it, your child’s room is overtaken by boxes of pinecones, albums of baseball cards, a herd of plastic animals, or whatever else strikes his fancy. To an adult, all that stuff might look like clutter, but to a child, collecting is an exciting exercise in creating a world all his own—one that he has control over. “Having a collection helps kids this age fit in and bond with their friends,” says Kathleen Camara, Ph.D., associate professor of child development at the Eliot-Pearson Department of Child Development at Tufts University, in Medford, Massachusetts. It gives your child a starting-off point for conversations (“Hey, wanna see my Beanie Boos?”) as well as an easy way to socialize (like trading Squinkies). Still tempted to return that box of rocks to its natural habitat? Then read on to find out more about the important lessons your young collector is gathering.

becoming an expert

Any kid who's tried to explain the significance of a rare trading card can tell you that there are some things grown-ups just don't get. And that's exactly how kids like it. "It's empowering for a child to know more about a subject than his parents or other adults do," says Dr. Camara. Your child's driven to learn more so he can continue to be an authority on the topic.

adding responsibility

The same child who can't recall where she left her jacket and who has to be reminded a billion times to pick up her room will astound you with her devotion to caring for her prized possessions. "Collecting instills a sense of pride and ownership in kids," says Monica Cardoza, author of *Child's Play: Enriching Your Child's Interests, From Rocket Science to Rock Climbing, Stamp Collecting to Sculpture*. You can foster this enthusiasm by helping your child find a good way to display her treasures—i.e., on shelves or in albums,

tins, craft boxes, or small hammocks for cradling stuffed animals.

making social connections

Whether your child is showing off his Justin Bieber cards at a playdate or telling a school friend about an addition to his dragon menagerie, collectibles bring peers with common interests together. Collections that require trading, like baseball cards, also teach the art of friendly negotiation. If the stakes aren't high, let him make his own deals. "What might not seem like a fair trade to you could be acceptable to him," Dr. Camara says. If he later regrets trading, he'll learn to think through decisions more carefully next time.

fostering school skills

If your child collects state quarters or American Girl dolls, it's a pretty good bet that she knows exactly how many are in her collection and which ones she hopes to get next. Don't tell her, but all those hours she puts into counting,

sorting, labeling, categorizing, and organizing are actually exercising her math skills. Reading also gets a boost: Dinosaur fans may invest time learning more about the days when those creatures roamed the earth—and that means trips to the library or museums. Collectors can also go online with your supervision to websites like usmint.gov/kids/campcoin (which has tips on collecting and caring for coins) or stamps.org/young-philatelists (for ways to start a stamp collection).

learning about money

Asking children to pay for collectibles out of their own funds is a smart way to teach them about saving and budgeting, as well as helping them learn delayed gratification, says Dr. Camara. "The point shouldn't be to complete a collection or to accumulate mass quantities. Each addition should have meaning, and having to plan for and earn the funds for that next coveted item makes owning it all the more special." 😊

resources

How-Tos & Recipes

A BERRY GOOD TIME, PAGE 46

Three-Berry Focaccia

ACTIVE TIME 10 MINUTES TOTAL TIME 30 MINUTES

MAKES 9 PIECES



ingredients

- 1 10-oz. portion fresh or frozen (thawed) whole-wheat pizza or bread dough
- 1 Tbs. unsalted butter, melted
- 1 tsp. olive oil
- ¼ cup each fresh blackberries, blueberries, and raspberries
- ¼ cup sugar

make it

- 1** Preheat oven to 375°F and line a large baking sheet with parchment paper. Stretch or roll the dough into a large oval (about 11" x 8") on the baking sheet.
- 2** Combine the butter and olive oil in a small bowl. Brush dough with the butter-oil mixture.
- 3** Sprinkle berries and sugar on top and bake until dough is golden and berries begin to bubble and burst, 20 to 25 minutes. Cut dough into 9 pieces to serve.

Nutrition per piece 124 calories; 4g protein; 3g fat (1g sat. fat); 22g carbs; 6g sugar; 2g fiber; 0 iron; 4mg calcium; 175mg sodium



Berry Pretty Necklace

what you'll need

Shrinky Dinks paper (\$6 for ten sheets; shop.hobbylobby.com), colored pencils, a quarter, scissors, green felt, ⅛" hole punch, pliers, jump rings, green ribbon

make it

- 1 Trace a quarter onto Shrinky Dinks paper to create berries. For blueberries, fill in three circles using a blue pencil. For the raspberries, make about 20 small dots within two quarter-size circles with a red pencil. Cut out. Punch a hole in top edge of each.
- 2 Bake according to Shrinky Dinks instructions.
- 3 Cut small leaves from green felt. Punch hole in one corner of each leaf.
- 4 Use pliers to attach the plastic berries and leaves to jump rings.
- 5 String onto green ribbon.

Sweet Tote

what you'll need

1/2-gal. paper milk carton, adhesive-backed paper (Cross Me Yellow Shelf Paper & Drawer Liner, \$25 for 12"x 10' roll; chicshelfpaper.com), hot-glue gun and glue sticks, 46" piece of 1" jute trim (\$4/yard; mjtrim.com), scissors



make it

- 1 Cut the top off a 1/2-gal. milk carton. Cover in patterned contact paper.
- 2 Hot-glue the ends of a 30" piece of jute trim to two sides of carton to create a handle.

- 3 Finish the top edge by gluing on another piece of trim cut to fit the carton, about 4 inches per side.

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PARENTS BEST OF BLOOPERS CONTEST, PAGE 170

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