



Two-Month Handout

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Two months have come and gone with what must seem amazing speed. By now the baby has begun to acknowledge you, so smiling, cooing, and visual tracking are ordinary at two months for babies born at term. For most babies, feedings have settled into a pattern and the only real change is the gradual increase in amount and perhaps a bit more distance between feedings. For those feeding by bottle, whether breast milk or formula, some guidelines can be given. If you know the weight of the baby in pounds, divide this number by two and that would be a reasonable estimate of the maximum ounces to use per feeding with a maximum (regardless of the size of the baby) of 6 to 8 ounces. Another time-honored recommendation would include not using more than 30-32 ounces per feeding per day, again regardless of the size of the baby. More is not always better and obesity knows no starting time. If you are above these guidelines, look at the cues from the baby and try to find other responses to needs that may not be hunger. Slow feedings by stopping to burp, use slowest flow nipples and consider using a cover or opaque sleeve over the bottle so that you're not programmed to "finish" a bottle in a baby who may no longer be all that hungry. Unless directed by a medical professional, altering the calorie density of breast milk or formula is never appropriate and may represent a significant health risk.

Sleeping through the night is often a priority for parents and at two months the optimum time for working on this has begun. Babies are now old enough to begin "patterning" or learning if you prefer. This is the time to begin sleep-learning. This can be done with a minimum of crying on the part of the child. Get feedings done far enough in advance of the upcoming nap or sleep that the baby is no longer falling asleep during a feeding. Preferably, feed outside of the "nursery" so that both, by time and place, there is beginning to be a separation between eating and sleeping. Change and dress the baby for bed and enter the "nursery" only to rock and calm the baby and allow the transition into sleep to begin. As that transition reaches near completion, "ooze" or slide



the baby into the crib/bassinette/pack & play/or similar safety approved device. Transitional aids like pacifiers, white noise from your smart phone, lullabies, classical music, and mobiles can prove helpful. So with these tools in place, if the baby transitions into sleep, your job is over on this occasion. Now let's not kid one another, this isn't going to work every time and when the baby's level of agitation reaches an irrevocable pitch, start over by picking the baby up and restarting the process. This may require more than one effort on many occasions, but as you practice at each sleeping opportunity, success will come more regularly as time goes on. It's essential that all the parents and relatives caring for the baby behave in a quite similar way as this transition is being learned. If not, the "mixed-message" you're sending the baby will be confounding and progress will be slow or non-existent. If you truly believe this cannot happen at this age, go to any day care and watch the sleep transition process they employ. If you have a daycare-participating baby and you're struggling with this, copy their process and success will be yours. I cannot tell you how many families tell me the baby sleeps well at daycare, but will not at home. Well guess what, that baby has already figured out there are two sets of rules or expectations, two sets of care providers, and one set (guess which one) who doesn't have the resolve to be a consistent mentor. Don't kid yourself that at some future time this will be easier. With each passing month, some pattern will be learned and relearning will always be a hardship that careful stewardship on the part of thoughtful parents could have been avoided. Whatever pattern you embrace (this issue or another) the teaching you're doing would be best if it was a pattern you'd embrace for a lifetime. A consistent, repeating process that teaches habits will always be the winning way. Remember, this parental consistency is not for the parents- **it's for the baby!!** The happiest babies and children grow in a home where thoughtful and consistent stewardship gives a message that is unmistakable.