

Baby Operating Manual

Pacifier (AKA 'Pepe,' AKA 'Oh, thank the Lord')

Don't be afraid to use it. It's not your enemy, and frankly, it's better than an addiction to thumb-sucking. When teeth start coming in you can begin (literally) weaning them off the pepe, with the goal of leaving it only for when in the car or going to sleep. Then, leave it only for bedtime. From there on it will be easy to remove it altogether. Or go ahead and let them use it well into their 20s!

Feeding Time

Create a feeding schedule with a goal in mind to end up with three big meals and not too many snacks in between. And for this—like everything else with babies—schedule consistency is everything. Been struggling with “OCD” your whole life? Congratulations!, now you actually need it!

Clip Nails

Babies discover their hands very early on and tend to pick ears or other parts of their bodies. And baby fingernails have a certain “Freddy Krueger” quality such that they can easily scrape or cut themselves. Keep ‘em clipped. It's easiest to cut nails during the day at nap time and, of course, buy a baby nailclipper.

Toys

It's important to find challenging toys. After the rattles, look for toys that you can put on the floor that will be taller than the baby's head. They will challenge the kid to start looking up, lifting their head and using their hands. Try to consult with other parents before buying toys. Don't be fooled by the absurdly expensive toys that don't really hold interest for very long – like that absurd BMW you just bought. Yes, you.

Crying

Unfortunately for our sanity, crying is the basic way for babies to communicate. So they cry when they are uncomfortable, hungry, gassy, tired, or whatever, and your job is to try to figure out the reason. Every time you manage to stop your baby from crying, add it to a list in your head (or on your phone), and go over the list the next time he cries. You will seem like a crazy person saying “Diaper? Burping? Hungry? Depressed about Trump? Tired?” over and over again to remind yourself what might be wrong, but it works!

Ear Cleaning

Some babies resist ear cleaning after a bath. It helps to come up with a move that will be entertaining. I usually say to them: “I-I-I-I-Love-You” and twist the baby-safe Q-tips to the rhythm. I'm the damned Rihanna of ear wax.

Stimulation

We love stimulation! Stimulation makes baby tired and then baby sleeps better, and longer and we are less likely to be sent away to the lunatic asylum. There's a difference between “watching the baby” and “playing with the baby.” At an early age, babies need us to entertain them for stimulation. Try to come up with a puppet-shows with stuffed animals, or even sing and dance to them! This is when the hours I spent as a kid mimicking the dance routines from Kylie Minogue music videos finally paid off! I lost weight AND my babies slept good! Don't be embarrassed. They won't remember!

Diapers

Remember how you were taught that poop and pee were “gross”? NOT anymore! Get used to poop full contact. If you have a boy and you forget the blocking maneuver during diaper change, you may even thrill to the experience of pee in your mouth (ah, the joy of parenting). It's going to happen. Diaper rashes can get really bad and last for days, making babies miserable. It's best not to use wipes with any chemicals or scents. We used “Water Wipes.” For the first year it's recommended to track baby's bladder and bowel functions for health reasons. I recommend doing so through the app BabyConnect. Have fun and track your own too (Don't. That's just weird.)!

Don't Rush With the Standing

A developmental specialist once told me that all the toys that hold babies standing up are actually bad for them, because they end up walking on their tippy toes. If baby wants to stands make sure his feet are flat on the ground (Don't put a book on their head for posture until they're 6 or 7 years old).