

1974

EC74-547 0-3 The Impressionable Years

Ron T. Daly

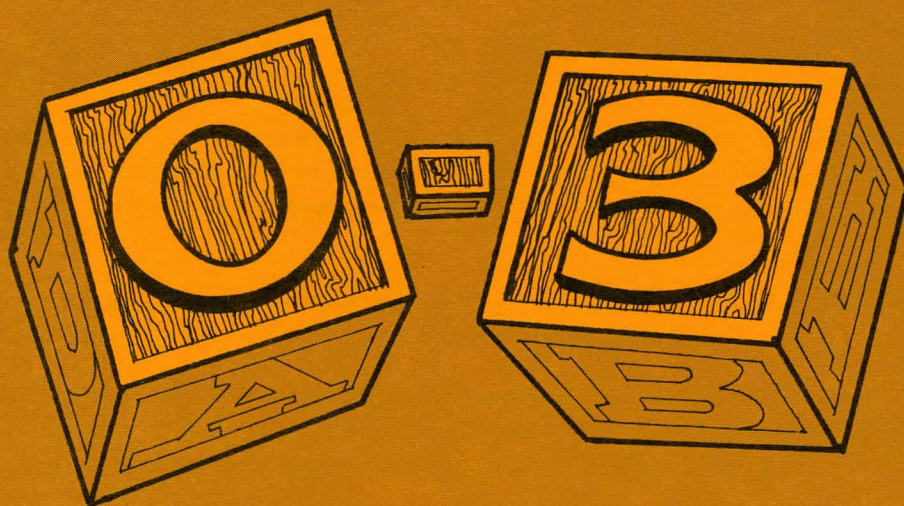
Follow this and additional works at: <http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/extensionhist>

Daly, Ron T., "EC74-547 0-3 The Impressionable Years" (1974). *Historical Materials from University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension*. 4240.

<http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/extensionhist/4240>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Extension at DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln. It has been accepted for inclusion in Historical Materials from University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln.

091
Vert
File
S
85
E7
no 547



The Impressionable Years

Extension work in "Agriculture, Home Economics and Subjects relating thereto,"
The Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Agriculture and Natural
Resources, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Cooperating with the
Counties and the U. S. Department of Agriculture
J. L. Adams, Director

O-3 The Impressionable Years

Ron T. Daly
Extension Specialist (Family Life)

DEAR MOM AND DAD

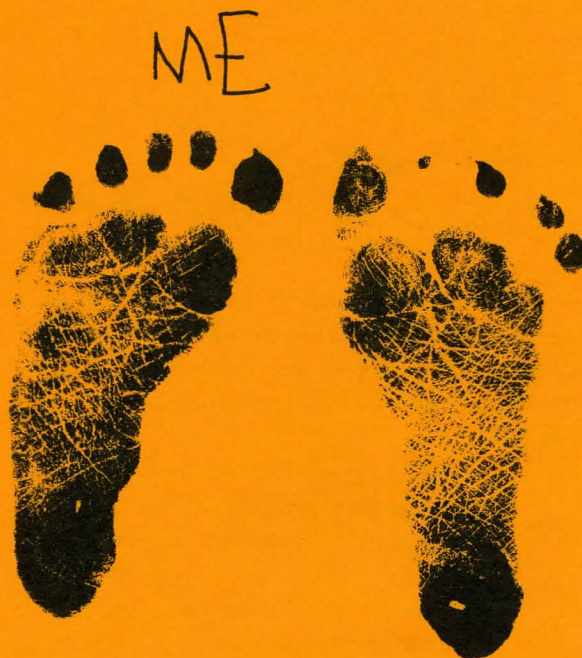
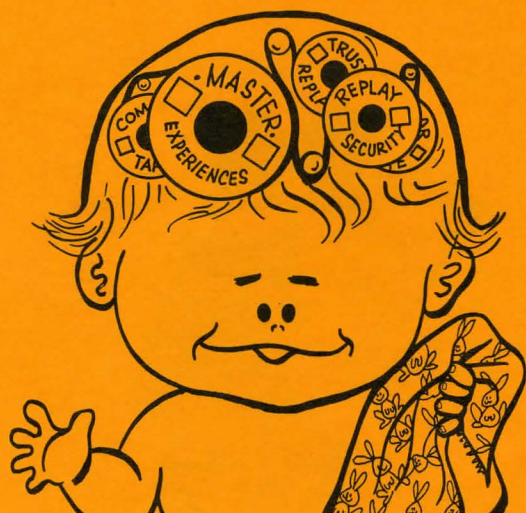
I really appreciate this opportunity to tell you what it's like to be a new-born baby. It was pretty scary to arrive here so suddenly. I'm going to need a lot of help and support. I'll also need a lot of love and encouragement to try new things. If I seem frightened, just pick me up and hold me close. Then I'll know everything's okay.

My language is not the same as yours. I'm going to communicate in a lot of ways. The message may not be too clear, but I'll try my best to let you know what's going on.

I'm different from any other child. I am unique. If you observe me carefully you'll find that I have my own way of doing things. If you're patient with me, and provide the kinds of learning experiences that help me develop my abilities and talents, who knows what I might become.

My brain is like a big tape recorder. It records every experience I have. These tapes are played back to me many times. They tend to color the way I see the world around me. The tapes will influence the decisions I make throughout my life. We children tend to live up to what you expect of us. So be careful and program the kind of tapes that will help me have a feeling of confidence, security, and trust in my world.

Gee, it's exciting to be here and to think of the great adventures we'll share.



The Powerful Potential of Parenthood

Advice giving isn't always too helpful, but, Mom and Dad, there are some things you can do to help me. I have a lot of potential, but I'll need your help, understanding, and encouragement. Please remember the following points.

Recognize MY UNIQUENESS

I'm unique. Don't compare me with my brothers or sisters or some other little person in the neighborhood. There are a lot of books that talk about the average or normal child, but I don't know where you find such a person—we are all different. So remember, help "ME" identify my "UNIQUE" talents and skills and use them to strengthen "MY" character.



OBSERVE LEVELS OF MY DEVELOPMENT

Observe and become aware of the signs and signals that indicate my different levels of development. There are six major areas. If you keep them in mind it will be easier. They are:

1. *My use of mouth and eyes.* My eyes develop quickly. When I'm first born they sometimes won't focus. However, don't worry, by the time I'm about four weeks old I should be able to keep looking at a person as he moves around.

My mouth acts like a suction pump the first few weeks. As time goes on I'll use my mouth for talking and smiling as well as eating.



2. *My use of my hands (small muscle activities).* My grasp reflex comes early, in fact, it was present when I was born. If you place something in my hand I will grasp it but it will take time for me to be able to let go. One day I'll be able to reach, pick up, and even throw. Each stage brings with it new challenges for you and me.

3. *My mastery of language.* At first it's just crying. However, if you listen carefully, my crying varies in tone and intensity. This can be a clue to what I want and how badly I want it. Cooing and babbling comes before too long and that's how I'm practicing my speech sounds. I also learn that smiles and gestures are as important as words.

4. *My social development.* During the first four weeks of my life I will not be very social. It's important to get started right and it will be most helpful to my social development if you will respond more enthusiastically to my smiles than my cries. But do come to see what I need when I cry.
I will respond in different ways to

new people. With some people I will be frightened but with other people I may giggle and smile. This is just part of my getting acquainted with the world.

5. *Skills in use of emotional energy.* Now that I'm born I express a good deal of feelings. I don't have much control at first, but I hope to learn to use my emotional energy wisely (a little emotion for small things and a lot of emotion for large things.) When you, Mom and Dad, model a happy attitude it helps me experience a positive way of using emotional energy.

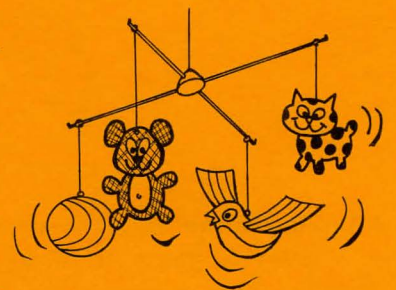
6. *My motor development (large muscle activities).* Motor development does not come quickly. During the first two months I'll kick my legs, push out with my feet, wave my arms, and move my head. I wish I could do much more, but I must remember it takes time. Wanting to roll over, to push, to scoot, to crawl and finally to walk are signals that I'm growing and learning. You can help me with each new accomplishment.

PROVIDE LEARNING EXPERIENCES

Now that you are getting good at observing my levels of development, the next important thing is to provide some opportunities and experiences that challenge me. The following will give you some ideas as to what you might do. Be creative, use your imagination to stimulate me to achieve my maximum potential.

- Give me bright and colorful things to look at, such as mobiles, dangling toys, pictures on the crib or wall. Things that can be set in motion interest me and add to my development. One imaginative dad used some of his colorful ties to make a mobile. Place me where I can see active people.

Development
of my
Eyes



● Give me objects of various sizes and textures to grasp. Help me practice eye-hand coordination by handing me toys that I can reach and put in my mouth. Toys that I can bang together are fun and noisy. Simple clothespins can be used by children in several creative ways. Small plastic bottles with bright objects inside are fun to shake.



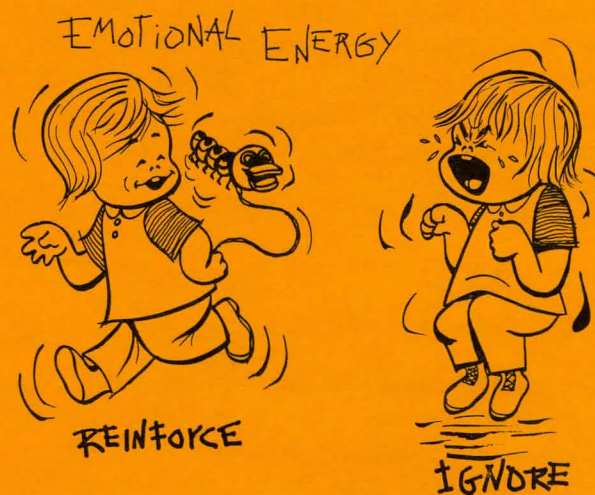
● Soothing, comforting experiences with people I know, help me respond with a smile. Dad, being bounced on your knee and playing peek-a-boo or pat-a-cake is really a delight. The opportunity to meet new people is sometimes scary, but I'm learning to know more about people. I'm learning a lot just watching you and Mom.



● Talking to me helps me recognize sounds. I'm a great imitator so speak clearly and distinctly. Be sure and avoid "baby talk." I don't want to pick up any bad speech habits so early in my life. Use gestures with your words, it's much easier for me to understand. I need lots of practice with people to develop this skill. Talk to me often.



● Each day I have a certain amount of emotional energy to invest. Help me learn by reinforcing my desirable behavior and ignoring my undesirable acts. You can be most helpful by counteracting my fears with happy experiences that give me a feeling of security. Don't over-protect me or close me in. I need space to grow.

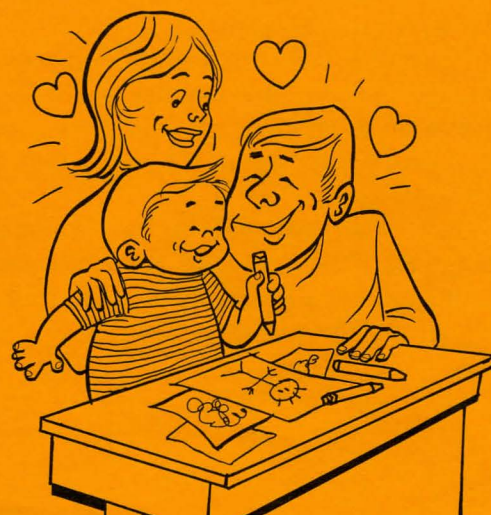


● At first I need your help. Then as I get older, I need my freedom. Place me on my stomach with my feet against the wall and I might be able to move an inch. Encourage my persistence by helping me roll from my back to my side, and see how enthusiastic I can be. Help me pull myself up. Encourage me to stand. Let me practice walking by letting me go places and explore. Climbing stairs and learning to balance are also important.



LOVE AND ENCOURAGE ME

This is really important, Mom and Dad. Please give me positive words of love and encouragement. There will be times when I do wrong and you are right to express disapproval, but always let me know you care. What happens during these formative years will have a great impact on my future life. Try and bring out the best in me. Recognize my small accomplishments and some day I'll be able to stride out with real confidence.



I can't say enough about how important it is for me to know that you love me. The time you spend playing and talking with me tells me in so many ways that you really care. Personally, I don't know of any toy that is as versatile as you. YOU really enrich my learning experiences.

YOU'RE MY MODELS

I'll be watching and learning from you when you're not even aware of it. Look closely and you'll see some of your actions in me. I'll mimic your spoken words and the gestures you use. You can be sure your actions are making an impression. I'm not looking for perfect models, that would be too hard to follow. Just be aware that actions speak louder than words.



RELAX AND ENJOY ME

I've given you quite a load of responsibilities, Mom and Dad. You may think the next step is impossible, but it's very important. "RELAX AND ENJOY ME." A calm and relaxed parent can do wonders. An over-anxious, overprotective parent really impairs a little person's development.

There is a power in parenthood that can help me achieve my unique potential. It requires an investment of your time, energy and commitment tempered with your love and wisdom.

Gosh, It's really great to be a member of this family. I'm so excited about the opportunities and experiences we're going to share. Let's get on with the adventure.



The Cooperative Extension Service provides information and educational programs to all people without regard to race, color or national origin.