

At What Age Should My Baby Start With the Computer?

You may think that your baby just eats, sleeps and plays all day long. What you probably don't realize is that babies actually learn a lot about their surroundings and environment when you think they are just having fun. They experiment with different objects, try and see what happens when they drop it, put them in their mouth to taste them, and come to terms with the world in their own way.

Almost 70% of the babies brain starts developing during the very early stages i.e. right from when your baby is 6 months. Research has proved that babies as young as 7 months can distinguish between emotional states, and can in fact tell the difference between a happy and a gloomy tone of voice. Babies also have a natural inclination towards numbers, which in most cases, gradually starts diminishing as they grow older.

So, while you've been thinking that babies, including your own, are too young to understand or grasp anything worthwhile, new research on the development of babies and their brains have been finding results to the contrary!

Winds of Change

In today's highly competitive times, there is undeniably a huge difference between how you spent your childhood, and how the children of today spend their childhood. The young ones are getting smarter and smarter, and probably know so much more than you ever did at their age. A lot of it is because of computers and information technology.

Children no longer need to wait to ask their parents or teachers for answers. With computers, the information highway is their calling. Children today are very well acquainted and comfortable with technology. In fact, studies have discovered that toddlers and children of the present generation are much smarter than those of the previous generation.

Before you give credit to the gene pool, don't forget all the studies and research that are conducted today on babies - to study their growth, and to determine how they learn and pick up things. These studies have given invaluable insight into how babies perceive their environment, what effect it has on them, and how to best use it for their growth and development. Toys and playthings for babies, are, therefore, all created keeping these studies in mind. From toys and knick knacks, more and more parents are moving on to computer technology and educational software.

Your Baby and the Formative Years

Research has effectively proven that babies do, in fact, have minds more developed and complex than what we give them credit for. Those formative years, from about 6 months to 18 months, are crucial for your baby's future. Studies have even indicated that babies who are exposed to educational stimulation during this period, retain much of it even at the middle school and high school level, giving them the much desired edge over other students who are not offered any such stimulation. With such evidence, one thing is certain - it is never too early to start, as long as you adopt the right approach.

Babies and Computer Technology

Adopting the right approach, when it comes to babies, translates into mixing play and learning for their holistic development. To ensure that the learning does not overshadow the playing/fun part, books, games and toys are all developed in such a way so as to serve both purposes at the same

time.

However, what has really revolutionized educating children in a fun way is - computers and educational software that make learning an altogether unique and interactive process. With computers, your baby can learn shapes, sizes, colors, alphabets, numbers, fruits, vegetables and much more, without you having to agonize over how to begin these lessons.

Educational softwares like Fingaroo by AGUGU (for kids aged 6 months and up) introduce them to the world of various objects, colors, shapes, sizes and more. The pictures, colors, animation and audio make the learning process come alive on screen.

Fingaroo by AGUGU (for children aged 12 months and up) helps them learn the alphabets, numbers, objects around the house, fruits, vegetables, animals and a lot more. Everything is made fun, so that children don't get bored, nor find it tiresome. Instead, it is a fun activity for them; and you have the satisfaction of knowing that your little one is also learning something while playing.

These softwares come with a keyboard lock feature, so all your data is safe and there is no harm done even inadvertently. Also, with the option of 4 available languages, these two softwares cater to a multi-lingual audience. You don't have to go looking for books in other languages, but just change the settings to your preferred language. Various levels help you monitor your baby's progress, so that you can move on to the next level once you feel your baby is sufficiently familiarized with one. Watching your child learn, remember, and try to repeat things from these lessons, is a great feeling.

Is It Too Early For My Baby?

Such questions are but natural for you (a parent) to ask, since you want nothing but the best for your baby. However, don't let your instinct, to be overly protective of your child, come in the way of his/her mental and intellectual development.

An early introduction to technology is in no way harmful for your child. Software programs like Alfaroo and Fingaroo are especially designed for babies and toddlers, and they are not only tools of education, but also help the child develop healthy imagination, coordination and motor skills.

Moreover, such educational softwares give you the perfect opportunity to spend some quality time with your baby. You may not always find time to read stories, or sing songs, or just watch your baby play with anything that comes their way. However, with such interesting software (and the importance of your child's future), you will certainly find time to watch your baby learn and play on the computer, watch as the screen lights up in animation and colors, and stare in unabashed glee.

At 6 months, your baby's brain is in an important stage of development, and some concept of memory starts evolving. Research indicates that babies as young as 5-6 months start remembering and making sense of things and experiences. In fact, at the age of 12 months, babies are able to remember and copy actions even after a week. Since memory is an important part of your baby's growth at this age, your baby will remember words, actions, pictures and sounds if you have sessions with specially designed educational computer software regularly.

What is The Right Time to Start?

If your baby is 6 months old, then it would be the right time to consider purchasing educational softwares. At this age, you should ensure that you only expose your baby to the computer for as long as he/she is enjoying it. As your baby grows older, 8-12 months, you will automatically notice greater involvement and enthusiasm towards the computer. Now would be the perfect time to increase the duration of these sessions, and experiment with different levels to slowly introduce your baby to newer concepts.

The right time to start also depends on you, as the parents. All your baby's computer lessons will be fully supervised, so begin when you know you have ample time at hand (or 'create' time for this important activity). Also make sure that you understand that your baby will not start memorizing, repeating or understanding these lessons immediately. The idea is just to expose your baby to the idea of technology and learning, at an early age so as to have a positive effect on his/her future growth and development. The introduction of an element of education in your baby's play time has already been tested and tried with toys, and with educational software you just take it one step forward.