



## Why Black and White for Babies?

In simple terms, because babies love it – and if you have any reason to doubt this, try showing a baby something black and white. Look at their response, they find most things black and white very interesting. Even newborns.

### So why is this?

At birth, babies' vision is limited and not as well developed as ours. There is a debate as to whether or not babies can see in colour, but there is agreement that high contrast images and patterns will be of most interest.



### How to use black and white with babies

**SocialBaby's BabyShapes** is high contrast visual material that has been specially created to be suitable for the visual capabilities of your baby. Your baby's readiness and ability to engage with the *BabyShapes* images, as well as the amount of time spent looking at them will depend on various factors:

**Age and Maturity** Newborn babies can be very alert, but they also tire quickly. Your baby may seem interested at first but then quickly lose interest. This is completely normal. At a few days old, all activities require a great effort by baby. Older babies may look intently for quite long periods. We have reports of babies spending 45 minutes looking at our *BabyShapes* books or mobile, and some continue to look at the books until they are as old as 18 months!

**Alertness** Is your baby fully awake and looking around? If you are changing after a nap, your baby may be in a sleepy state, and prefer to lie quietly, enjoying the sound of your voice. If your baby turns away from the image, he or she is letting you know the image is not of interest at this moment. Don't be concerned, your

baby has just communicated with you! Try again when your baby appears more interested in the surroundings.

**The Environment** What else is going on around you both? If you have lots of activity, noises, visitors, chatting etc, your baby is already having a great deal to cope with and may be distracted. Be aware of the signals your baby can show you

that enough is enough for now: turning away, looking down, closing or covering the eyes.

**Use of BabyShapes** From delivery until the age of around 3 months, your baby will have a visual range of about 23-25 cms (9-10ins), which is about the distance from the breast to eyes – a perfect distance to study mum's face during a breast feed. This is also the best distance to show baby some black and white images.

So make sure you and baby are comfortable and show the images. See which are favourites. All of this plays an important part in helping you to learn about and start to understand your baby. As if you needed telling, your baby is a unique individual! No-one else has a baby like yours, and right from the start your baby is working hard to let you know his or her likes and dislikes.

*BabyShapes* books play an important role in establishing the principles of sharing time together whilst reading books from the earliest age. It is well documented that appropriate stimulation from an early age has a significant impact on a child's ability to socialise, learn,

and process information when they start school and throughout life.



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