

HOME — Babies — Baby Development — Social Development

# Baby's First Class

ADVERTISEMENT

Organized mommy-and-me activities can let you bond with your little one, beat boredom, and maybe even make a new BFF.

By **Judy Koutsky**



My son Jack was only 3 weeks old when we took our first mommy-and-me class. Clearly it was more for me than for him. The sessions were basically group therapy for first-time moms, and we discussed everything from breastfeeding challenges to sleep deprivation to surviving the hormonal roller-coaster ride of new motherhood. Despite the fact that Jack slept through most of it, I wouldn't have traded it for the world. And experts agree: "You can feel really isolated when you're a new mom, so finding a class where you can get feedback from other moms -- on colic, diaper rash, going back to work -- is a real gift," says Sally Tannen, director of the 92nd Street Y Parenting Center, in New York City.

But with options ranging from music and art to swimming, finding the right class can seem daunting. At this stage, don't worry about enrichment or creating a learning experience. Your main concern should be about making your first foray into the organized momma/child world a positive one -- for yourself. Use our guide to help you make an educated decision.

## It's All in the Timing

Your baby's sleep schedule may still be a work in progress, but that doesn't mean you can't structure some parts of your day in a way that works for you. If you're a get-up-and-go kind of gal (or at least aspire to be), by all means go for the 9 a.m. Strollercise workout. But be realistic: For some, getting a baby out the door first thing isn't a recipe for fun, fat burning, or bonding.

A rhythm-and-rhyme class was the perfect option for Megan Park, of Potomac Falls, Virginia, and her son Cade. The key was in the logistics. "The class was 45 minutes long, and Cade was fresh from his nap. It was short

enough for him not to get bored or have a breakdown -- but long enough for the kids to do fun, engaging activities," says Park.

## Benefits for Mommy

### Beat the Blues

Isolation and exhaustion can exacerbate or even trigger the feelings of sadness and anxiety that new moms often experience. It may seem counterintuitive to do more if you're already overwhelmed, but a class might give you the shot of normalcy you need. "Meeting up regularly with other moms can help to lessen postpartum depression," explains Laura Jana, M.D., a pediatrician in Omaha, and coauthor of *Heading Home With Your Newborn*. The class itself is less important than developing a network of people with whom you can share the ups and downs of your new life.

### Get in the Loop

You can learn from other moms which playgrounds are the best, which libraries have good storytimes, and which cafés are a magnet for mom gatherings. Ask Rachel Grudberg, from New York City, who took her first class when her son was under a month old. "I got great advice and made some of my closest mom friends while bonding over having a newborn." Indeed, these classes are a great way to establish a social network for making playdates with other moms and kids.

## Things to Consider

## Be Flexible

No matter how much you've thought through the issues, there is still one person who may have an opinion. That's what Amanda Kingloff, a Brooklyn mom (and *Parents* lifestyle director), discovered when she enrolled her then-6-month-old in a local music class. "He was terrified by the tambourines and he let me know it by screaming at the top of his lungs," says Kingloff. Needless to say, she took a time-out from the class. "It didn't seem worth pushing him to do something that was supposed to be relaxed and fun." Kingloff now suggests checking out places that offer drop-in classes, in which you pay as you go.

## Graduate to Baby Focus

As your little one hits the 4-to-6-month mark, you'll want to pick a class that focuses a little more on his development than on your own. Even though the names of the classes will not sound much different from the ones that you may have enrolled in earlier, these movement, music, and yoga activities should involve your baby more -- he may be ready to shake his own instrument, for example. While your baby is still too young to play with other children, he'll now be more aware and interested in being around his fellow babies. This pre-socializing will begin to lay the foundation for kicking off his first friendships.

*Originally published in the October 2011 issue of Parents magazine.*

All content on this Web site, including medical opinion and any other health-related information, is for informational purposes only and should not be considered to be a specific diagnosis or treatment plan for any individual situation. Use of this site and the information contained herein does not

create a doctor-patient relationship. Always seek the direct advice of your own doctor in connection with any questions or issues you may have regarding your own health or the health of others.

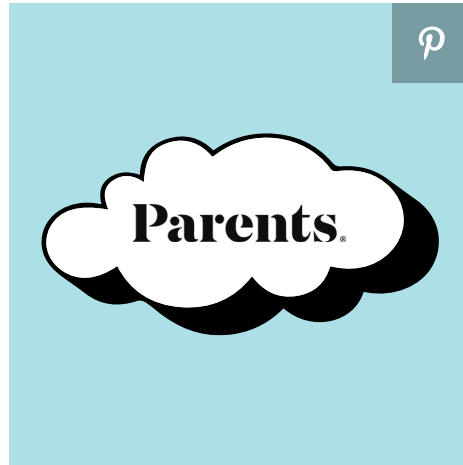
**By Judy Koutsky**

SOURCE: PARENTS MAGAZINE

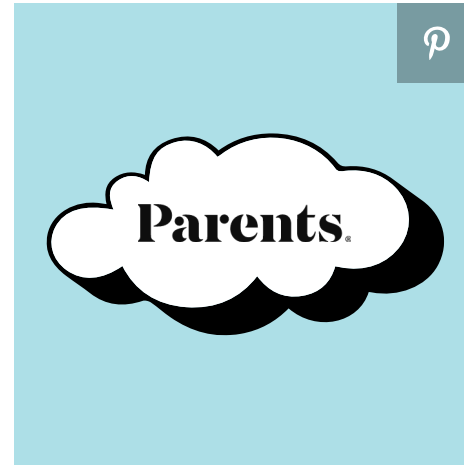
## Popular in Social Development



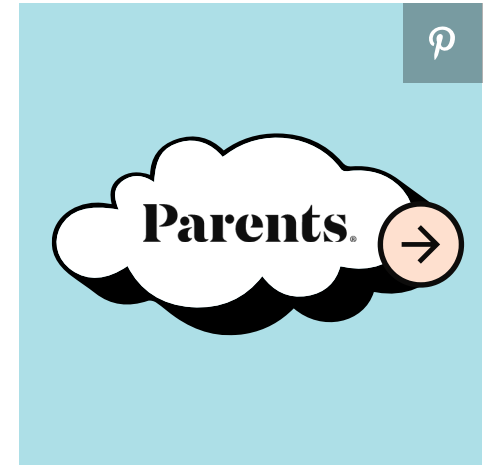
**Signs of a Happy Baby**



**Is Less Attention Hurting My Second Child?**



**Understanding Your Baby's Personality**



**What's Your Baby's Personality?**

All Topics in Social Development

**WHEN DO BABIES WALK?**

**DEVELOPMENT PROBLEMS**

**WHEN DO BABIES TALK?**

**SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT**



ADVERTISEMENT

# Comments

ADD COMMENT

Be the first to comment!

## Shop | Parents®

DIAPER BAGS

CAR SEATS

BABY SHOWER GIFTS

KIDS BACKPACKS

MATERNITY CLOTHING

BREAST PUMPS

BABY GATES

**SHOP MORE →**

PRENATAL VITAMINS

MATERNITY DRESSES

PREGNANCY PILLOWS

Parents may receive compensation when you click through and purchase from links contained on this website.

# Parents®

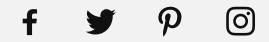
**Magazines & More**

**Learn More**

About Us

**Connect**

Follow Us



[Subscribe](#)

[Customer Service](#)

[Cozi Family Organizer](#)

[Advertise](#)

[Content Licensing](#)

[From Our Sponsors](#)

[Affiliate Program](#)

[Sitemap](#)

[Subscribe to Our Newsletter](#)

**OTHER MEREDITH SITES**



Parents.com is part of the Parents Network. © Copyright 2019 Meredith Corporation. All Rights Reserved. [Privacy Policy](#) | [Data Policy](#) | [Terms of Service](#) | [Ad Choices](#) | [Web Accessibility](#)

