



## Prenatal Learning

The moment a woman finds out she's expecting, her life is forever changed. Immediately, she begins to consciously plan what she eats to make sure her baby is getting all the necessary nutrients. Mothers know the lifestyle choices they make during pregnancy can impact the physical development of the baby during the crucial prenatal months. But expectant mothers may be surprised to know they can also make choices that effect the baby's cognitive development. It is widely accepted that a child's ability to learn also begins during the prenatal months.

A baby's hearing is fully developed by the 18th week of pregnancy. Independent studies show at this point, a child can actually compare and contrast simple sounds. The research shows encouraging this type of exercise at the earliest stage of learning can result in significant long-term developmental benefits for the child.

"Research suggests that a child's intellectual development is influenced equally by their inherited genetic blueprint and the early immediate environment," according to Dr. Mark Pitzer, Ph.D. This crucial early environment is not just the "0 to 3" years that we hear so much about, but actually the "prenatal to 3" years.

Mothers have long played music, read books and talked to their babies during pregnancy. This activity creates a pleasurable bonding experience between mother and child. However, these sounds are too complex for the baby to understand, and therefore, don't have a significant impact on prenatal learning. Research shows a more effective way to enrich early learning at this stage is to introduce sounds similar to the mother's heartbeat, the most familiar sound to a baby. It was this research that sparked the interest of biologist Lisa Jarrett and ultimately led to the growth of BabyPlus as a stand alone prenatal curriculum.

"BabyPlus is an educational tool that mothers introduce to their babies during the prenatal months," said Jarrett. "When you teach children, you choose materials they can understand. You would not introduce geometry to a 1st grade math class because the material is too complex for the kids. It's the same concept with BabyPlus. It introduces lessons in a language that the prenatal child can understand and will most effectively enrich their learning ability."

BabyPlus is a curriculum made up of 16 lessons patterned after the mother's heartbeat that can be started anytime between 18 and 32 weeks of pregnancy. The prenatal education system is designed for the mother to wear twice a day; an hour in the morning and an hour in the evening, starting with lesson one and progressing through the lessons slowly over the course of the pregnancy. This auditory exercise strengthens the baby's learning ability during the developmental period when the advantages will be most significant for a child.

BabyPlus is based on more than 20 years of scientific research. Since 1989, more than 100,000 parents worldwide have chosen to give their children the BabyPlus advantage. Both parents and experts report a significant difference in babies that enjoyed this prenatal curriculum including - babies are born more relaxed and alert with eyes and hands open at birth; infants are more responsive and interactive and are visibly ready to absorb and appreciate their environment. Parents also report that babies nurse more readily and have a greater ability to self soothe.

Later in life, babies that have benefited from prenatal learning are reported to reach early developmental milestones and improved school readiness.

"Prenatal learning does not create a 'genius baby' anymore than a prenatal vitamin creates a 'bodybuilder.' The prenatal months of early development are simply the right time to strengthen the foundation for later learning. When coupled with the right learning tool, the results for your child can be significant," Jarrett added..