

*Development: Memory, Separation Anxiety and Stranger Anxiety*

# Memory

As babies grow, the brain is making the appropriate connections and developing memory. As these connections are being made, babies will begin to remember objects and people that they cannot see, an ability known as *object permanence*.

# Separation Anxiety



Up until about six-eight months, for most babies, “out of sight” is “out of mind.” The baby is happy and smiles at most anyone who takes care of her. Suddenly, out of the blue, the baby begins to cry or fuss when the caregiver walks away or leaves the room. The baby does not know that her caregiver will return. This baby is experiencing separation anxiety. This does not mean she is “spoiled!” As frustrating as this may be for parents, it is really a developmental milestone. This anxiety tells us the baby’s brain is developing memory, because she can now form a

mental image of the caregiver when she cannot see the caregiver. She feels a permanent loss when that person is out of sight. She may cry as if her heart is broken, as would we if the most important person in our life disappeared and we thought they were gone forever. Caregivers can help their babies learn that “just because they can’t see their caregiver, it does not mean they are gone forever.”

# Stranger Anxiety

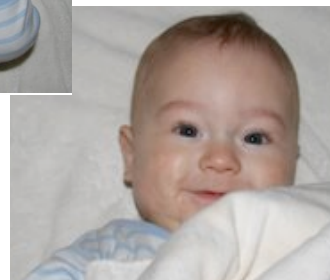
Although it is also related to memory, stranger anxiety is different from separation anxiety. Because the baby now remembers the people who are important to her and those she sees regularly, she may now be fearful of people she does not see on a regular basis. She takes her cue from you.

Caregivers should encourage friends and relatives, even grandparents, to greet and advance slowly, talking, and smiling, but still keeping some distance. Usually when the baby is the one who approaches a new person, she is ready to interact directly.



**Some ways to help your child include:**

- \* Talk or sing to your baby when you leave the room so he can still hear your voice even if he can’t see you.
- \* Play hide and seek games.
- \* Play peek-a-boo.
- \* Help relatives and friends understand that the baby may need warm-up time before being picked up or held.



*Playing Peek-A-Boo will help your baby learn skills that will ease Separation Anxiety as they get older.*