



Monthly Theme:  
**Infancy**



**Nov. 2014**

A monthly newsletter for families from Catholic Charities

# Caring for Your Infant

**Tips from** Christine Polit, Public Health Community Outreach Program Developer

Congratulations! You're a new parent! Many parents of newborns feel overwhelmed by the responsibility of caring for a tiny infant who cannot communicate their needs. Here are some tips for new parents during your baby's first year:

## Keep Up With Baby's Well Visits

Visit your pediatrician for your baby's well visits. The first visit usually occurs in the hospital before you and your baby are sent home. You will have another in the first week of life, and then again when baby is one, two, four, six, nine, and twelve months old. These visits are a good time to discuss baby's nutrition, safety, sleep habits, development, overall health and vaccines, and to ask any questions you may have. See page two for some general developmental guidelines to keep in mind for these visits.

## Interact With Your Baby

Even though your baby cannot speak or engage in many activities with you, interacting with them regularly and positively will aid in their growth and development. Here are some ways you can interact with your baby:

- ◇ Talk to your baby. Research shows that speaking to infants helps aid in their language development.
- ◇ Read, sing songs, and play music.
- ◇ Praise your baby and give him or her lots of loving attention.
- ◇ Cuddle and hold your baby.
- ◇ Play with your baby when he or she is alert and relaxed.

## Take Care of Yourself

Parenting a newborn is not easy! As a new parent, don't forget to care for yourself physically, mentally, and emotionally. Taking care of yourself benefits you and your baby.

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**#GIVINGTUESDAY™**



[For more information on the Diocese of Camden's participation in #GivingTuesday click here.](#)



Visit our website for more information and to subscribe! [www.CatholicCharitiesCamden.org/YearOfTheFamily](http://www.CatholicCharitiesCamden.org/YearOfTheFamily)

# Developmental Milestones: The First Year

from The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention "Developmental Milestones" at [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)

What to look for in the first 12 months. Check with your doctor for more information about developmental milestones.

	Social/ Emotional	Language/ Communication	Cognitive	Movement/ Physical Development
2 mo.s	Begins to smile at people; Can briefly calm himself (may bring hands to mouth and suck on hand); Tries to look at parent	Coos, makes gurgling sounds; Turns head toward sounds	Pays attention to faces; Begins to follow things with eyes and recognize people at a distance; Begins to act bored (cries, fussy) if activity doesn't change	Can hold head up and begins to push up when lying on tummy; Makes smoother movements with arms and legs
6 mo.s	Knows familiar faces and begins to know if someone is a stranger; Likes to play with others, especially parents; Responds to other people's emotions and often seems happy; Likes to look at self in a mirror	Responds to sounds by making sounds; Strings vowels together when babbling ("ah," "eh," "oh") and likes taking turns with parent while making sounds; Responds to own name; Makes sounds to show joy and displeasure; Begins to say consonant sounds (jabbering with "m," "b")	Looks around at things nearby; Brings things to mouth; Shows curiosity about things and tries to get things that are out of reach; Begins to pass things from one hand to the other	Rolls over in both directions (front to back, back to front); Begins to sit without support; When standing, supports weight on legs and might bounce; Rocks back and forth, sometimes crawling backward before moving forward
9 mo.s	May be afraid of strangers; May be clingy with familiar adults; Has favorite toys	Understands "no"; Makes a lot of different sounds like "mamamama" and "bababababa"; Copies sounds and gestures of others; Uses fingers to point at things	Watches the path of something as it falls; Looks for things he sees you hide; Plays peek-a-boo; Puts things in her mouth; Moves things smoothly from one hand to the other; Picks up things like cereal o's between thumb and index finger	Stands, holding on; Can get into sitting position; Sits without support; Pulls to stand; Crawls
12 mo.s	Is shy or nervous with strangers; Cries when mom or dad leaves; Has favorite things and people; Shows fear in some situations; Hands you a book when he wants to hear a story; Repeats sounds or actions to get attention; Puts out arm or leg to help with dressing; Plays games such as "peek-a-boo" and "pat-a-cake"	Responds to simple spoken requests; Uses simple gestures, like shaking head "no" or waving "bye-bye"; Makes sounds with changes in tone (sounds more like speech); Says "mama" and "dada" and exclamations like "uh-oh!"; Tries to say words you say	Explores things in different ways, like shaking, banging, throwing; Finds hidden things easily; Looks at the right picture or thing when it's named; Copies gestures; Starts to use things correctly; for example, drinks from a cup, brushes hair; Bangs two things together; Puts things in a container, takes things out of a container; Lets things go without help; Pokes with index (pointer) finger; Follows simple directions like "pick up the toy"	Gets to a sitting position without help; Pulls up to stand, walks holding on to furniture ("cruising"); May take a few steps without holding on; May stand alone

# The Complexities of Adoption

by Sylvia Loumeau, M.S.W., L.C.S.W.

There are over five million people who were adopted in the United States today. Each of these adopted people has his or her own unique adoption story.

Some were adopted as infants, going right from the hospital to their adoptive family. Others were separated from their birth families by state agencies, such as the [Division of Child Protection and Permanency](#), because their birth parents could no longer care for them adequately. Some adoptees were born in foreign countries such as China or Russia and know almost nothing about their birth parents, while others may have been placed through an open, identified, or kinship adoption and know a lot about their birth parents.

Regardless of how or when he or she was adopted, it is important to know that an adoptee's story does not end once he or she has been placed with his or her adoptive family. Today, we know so much more about adoption and adoptee's emotional and psychological needs than we used to, and one of the things we now know is that for adoptees, adoption is a life-long process.

Imagine not knowing your nationality when it is time to complete a school project on your family tree or not knowing your family medical history when you develop a health issue the doctors are having a hard time diagnosing. These are things most of us take for granted.

But, adoption can be even more complex than this. Even if they were loved and well cared for by their adoptive parents, adoptees can struggle with feelings that they were rejected by their birth parents. Messages like "your birth mother loved you so much she placed you for adoption" can be extremely confusing, linking love with the potential for abandonment.

Well-prepared adoptive families are what most birth parents hope for when they make an adoption decision, and they are so necessary to help adoptees successfully navigate these complex issues. While it may feel challenging at times, there are many ways that adoptive families can be prepared.

For example, it can be helpful to articulate the questions an adoptee might be thinking, such



as, "I wonder if your birth mother is thinking about you on your birthday," or, "Do you think your eyes are the same color as your birth father's?" It is also important for adoptive families to be an advocate for their adopted children and teach them how to be prepared for those occasions when others might ask them insensitive questions.

Adoption, even with all its complexities, is a loving option and a beautiful way to create or build a family. Catholic Charities has been providing adoption services since 1936, and continues to serve adoptees, birth parents, and adoptive families with needed support throughout the adoption life cycle.

## CATHOLIC CHARITIES' SERVICES

For more information about Catholic Charities' adoption services, call 856-342-4162, or visit the [adoption services homepage](#), [CatholicCharitiesCamden.org/AdoptionServices](http://CatholicCharitiesCamden.org/AdoptionServices).

# Focused Holiday Giving

## Meeting Family's Long-Term Needs

by Joanna Gardner, Catholic Charities staff

Looking for a way to share in the spirit of giving this holiday season? It can sometimes be easier to remember those who go without during the holidays. But here at Catholic Charities, the families we serve face the effects of poverty all year long.

We offer direct assistance to families who come to our Family and Community Services centers with a variety of needs. These centers are located in each of the six Southern New Jersey counties we serve: Atlantic, Cape May, Camden, Cumberland, Gloucester, and Salem Counties.

The families who come to us could be veterans or the recently unemployed at risk of homelessness, refugees or new single mothers. Our mission goes beyond helping these families meet their holiday-specific

needs and aims to help give them the long-term tools they need for stability and eventually self-sustainability.

In order to best serve these families and ensure that your generosity goes where it is needed most, we have developed a holiday donation campaign we call Project Wish List.

Each of our Family and Community Services Centers in each county has written up a wish list of the items they most need in order to best serve these families. Different counties and centers have different needs. Some are in need of diapers, others canned vegetables to round out their food pantry, others blankets, others men's large underwear. The lists are all available online and at the services centers.



# Project Wish List

## Catholic Charities' Holiday Drive 2014



Visit our Project Wish List webpage at [www.catholiccharitiescamden.org/ProjectWishList](http://www.catholiccharitiescamden.org/ProjectWishList).

We invite you to join us this holiday season in making a real impact in the lives of the families we serve. Our wish list initiative will not end with Christmas. You can find our centers' wish lists online all year long. We encourage you and your family to remember those in need not only during the season of giving, but all year long.

We thank you as always for your generosity.

# Childhood Hunger - What it is and how to help

by Christine Polit, Public Health Community Outreach Program Developer

## What is food insecurity?

In the United States there are 15.8 million children who are food insecure. Food insecurity refers to living in a household where individuals are unable to consistently access enough nutritious food necessary for a healthy life. Here in South Jersey there are approximately 200,000 food insecure individuals. Of these, over 63,000 are children.

## What are the effects of childhood hunger?

Food insecurity, while harmful for all who experience it, can have an especially damaging impact on young children. Good nutrition, especially in the first years of life, is vital to proper growth and development, which have long-lasting implications for a child's future physical health and development, mental health, and academic abilities.

Some of the documented effects of living in a food insecure household include:

- ◇ Increased risk of low birth weight infants and complications at birth
- ◇ Increased risk of early developmental delays and learning difficulties
- ◇ Increased risk for chronic health

conditions in childhood, such as anemia and asthma

- ◇ Increased risk of oral health problems
- ◇ Increased risk of behavioral and social challenges, such as school tardiness and anxiety
- ◇ Increased risk of poor academic achievement

## How can I help?

Many of us participate in food drives during the Thanksgiving and Christmas seasons, but there are food insecure families in our communities year-round. Many food pantries experience a sharp increase of (much needed) donations during the holidays, only to face bare shelves come the New Year. Consider making a monthly donation to your parish pantry, local Catholic Charities Family and Community Services Center, or other local food pantry. Visit our holiday donation drive, [Project Wish List, homepage](#) for information on our food pantries' specific needs.

FaithFULL, the Diocesan-wide food drive, is scheduled for Sunday, March 1, 2015. You can find out who leads this effort and how you can help at your parish.

## CATHOLIC CHARITIES' FOOD PANTRIES

Our [Family and Community Services Centers](#) provide many services to families, including food pantry services. Call to schedule a drop-off or arrange a food drive in your parish, school or community.

For a listing of food resources in [Camden County](#), click [here](#).

**Atlantic County**  
9 N. Georgia Ave.  
Atlantic City, NJ 08401  
609-345-3448

**Cape May County**  
1304 Route 47 South  
Rio Grande, NJ 08242  
609-886-2662

**Cumberland County**  
810 Montrose Street  
Vineland, NJ 08360  
856-691-1841

**Gloucester County**  
1200 North Delsea Drive  
Suite 1  
Westville, NJ 08093  
856-845-9200

**Salem County**  
114 State Street  
Penns Grove, NJ 08069  
856-299-1296

**25 Oak Street  
Salem, NJ 08079**

# About Catholic Charities and Year of the Family



As a way of participating in the Diocesan-wide year of the family leading up to the September visit of Pope Francis in Philadelphia for the World Meeting of Families, Catholic Charities has developed a year's worth of themes and resources. The monthly themes follow the human life cycle, beginning in September 2014 with prenatal issues and ending in September 2015 (the month of the Philadelphia gathering) with end of life issues.

Each monthly theme is an opportunity for Catholic Charities to highlight the resources the agency offers to people affected by each of these populations and to provide additional information and links to external help. These resources will be showcased in the form of a monthly newsletter about each theme. Additionally, experts from Catholic Charities in these areas are available to give presentations at parishes within the Diocese of Camden. See our [website](#) for a listing of topics and contact Sylvia Loumeau ([Sylvia.Loumeau@camdendiocese.org](mailto:Sylvia.Loumeau@camdendiocese.org)) to schedule.

The initiative demonstrates Catholic Charities' commitment to provide for the people of the six southern New Jersey counties it serves at every stage of life, regardless of religious affiliation. With a staff of over 90 employees, Catholic Charities serves more than 40,000 individuals and families at 12 sites in Atlantic, Camden, Cape May, Cumberland, Gloucester and Salem counties. We provide high quality services to the poor and needy on a non-discriminatory, non-sectarian basis.



Visit our website for more information and to subscribe! [www.CatholicCharitiesCamden.org/YearOfTheFamily](http://www.CatholicCharitiesCamden.org/YearOfTheFamily)