Puppets
Things To Look Forward To

Here are some ideas for children newborn to three.

**Heads Up** (Newborn-1 month) - Babies like to look at complex things. They would rather look at a face than look at a simple object. Make a puppet face from a paper plate. Hang it on the side of the crib 10 inches from the baby's face. A wooden spoon with a simple face drawn with permanent magic markers is another simple puppet that a newborn will look at. Move the puppet slowly from side to side, and see if baby's eyes follow the moving object. Tie a puppet or a marionette over the crib or changing table. Move it to a new location when baby no longer looks at it.

**The Looker** (1-4 months) - Your baby is learning some of the basics of conversation. She is learning that mommy talks, then pauses to give baby a chance to respond, and then mommy talks again. You can introduce a puppet to this scenario. Alternate who talks—baby, mommy, then puppet. Parent and puppet can converse with baby by imitating his cooing and gurgling noises or just babbling totally nonsensical sounds. All three of you will laugh.

**Creeper-Crawler** (4-8 months) - A stuffed animal puppet will be just a stuffed animal to your four month old. She will not know that it can move its mouth or wave its paw. Later on, she will learn that when you put your hand inside the puppet it comes to life. Your creeper-crawler may not know that her hands belong to her. Your four month old may grab on to her stuffed animal, lifting it toward her face and then be surprised to see it there. It may be several months before she makes the connection that she controls her own hands. Your six month old will be entertained with a sock or paper bag puppet show.

**The Cruiser** (8-12 months) - Make a cat puppet using a sock and permanent markers. Sing the song “Where is Kitty” with your doer. Your baby might also like the puppet glove fingerplay “Where is Thumbkin”.

The Walker (12-18 months) - Your walker can be easily entertained. You can do a short puppet show for him. Don't expect, however, that he will sit still very long. His attention span is still very short. Introduce Sammy the Sock. Let your baby turn the pages as you read. Ask questions like “Where is Sammy?” Your baby will enjoy touching and playing with the sock puppet throughout the story.

The Doer (18-24 months) - Have a “puppet” read a book to your baby. There are puppets of book characters that you can buy, but a homemade one works just as well. Consider making a puppet out of a milk carton or an index card. The puppet, whether store-bought or homemade, can follow the storyline, jumping when a character jumps or hiding when a character hides.

The Tester (24-36 months) - The tester can bring life to a small paper bag. With two bags, she can carry on a lively conversation. The three-year old can make the face on the bag and carry on the conversation. “Magazine Family Puppets” can be used to tell a story. Start telling a story using the magazine family characters. Let your preschooler add to it. As time goes on, she will be able to contribute more and more to the story. By using puppets your child might find it easier to say things that are sometimes hard for her to say. It is okay for the tester to show her angry, happy, silly or sad emotions. The back of a sofa or chair makes a wonderful puppet theater for your three-year old.