



## Baby Visuals – Black & White

There are many conflicting theories about how much a baby can see at birth. But, theories aside, scientific evidence indicates that newborns are the most attracted to and interested in black and white.

If you closely observe a newborn, you will notice that their eyes focus on the borders between light and dark areas. They will attend more to the faces of people with fair skin and dark eyes, eyebrows, hair, and they will be enthralled with a dark ceiling fan against a white ceiling.

Black and white contrast is what they are most interested in seeing at birth and for the first three to four months. You need to place black and white designs on a firm card stock approximately 12" x 12" in size. (see samples) In creating your own baby visuals, get creative, but keep it fairly simple. What you want is bold contrast. Show your baby a few of the cards while holding him/her, or you can put your baby on his/her tummy and prop the card against the side of a crib – at a distance of about 9" (12" max.)

Begin with the simplest designs and gradually move to more complex as the baby gets older. You may find that there are certain cards that absolutely fascinate your baby. Let him/her see the favorites as long as desired. At some point, your baby may no longer be interested in a favorite. He/she has probably "outgrown it."

How long should a baby look at black and white visuals? Newborns have very delicate nervous systems that can easily get over stimulated. You must be careful not to overload your baby with too much stimulation. Keep your sessions very short. Gauge the duration by the baby's response. A baby who is over stimulated has only a few ways to let you know so keep alert to the following clues: baby looks away, baby wants to look, but keeps trying to look away in a way that may suggest s/he is fighting the stimulation, baby cries, baby may actually quiver or shake. Do not try to make a baby look. Place the visual in his/her line of vision and allow the baby to look if ready. Do not follow baby's head movement with the card.

There are three reasons a baby may no longer want to look at a visual:

- it is too simple
- it is too complex
- s/he is over stimulated

If your baby used to like a visual and no longer does, it may be too simple. Experiment. Regularly try a more complex visual and read your child's face. A visual that is just right will elicit either a calm, enthralled response or excited response with arms & legs kicking & attentive eyes.