

## Baby steps to healthy development

By MARLA WIGGIN,  
Special to the Register

We have all heard "Babies don't come with a set of instructions." Being a parent is one of the most important and challenging roles you will ever play. Your job is to teach and guide your child so that he will have all the tools and skills he needs to make his way in the world.

There are many facets to the healthy development of a child. Scientific research has shown that in the first three years of life a baby's brain develops most dramatically. It is important for every parent to learn as much as he or she can about raising a child. Knowledge increases competency, confidence and ability to successfully parent children.

Development is a two-sided process in which infant and parents actively contribute. Babies are born primed, ready to learn and develop. While most children will climb through the developmental stages powered by his/her own biological clock, the loving guidance of a parent can greatly enhance their developmental tasks.

Babies and children live minute by minute, hour by hour and day by day, and it is those small units of time which will concern you most in your 24-hour caring. It is though these "baby steps" that strong bonds are formed, contributing to the healthy development of your child.

A new baby is fun and exciting, but anxiety provoking, too. At the outset, the responsibilities of parenthood loom awesomely large. But that natural insecurity and concern are manageable with reassuring advice, down-to-earth information and support. You are not alone!

Cope Family Center can help with Baby Steps an educational support group for parents of infants' ages 0-1 year of age. Topics include: Brain Development, Sleeping Issues, Feeding, Setting Limits and Health & Safety. Bring your baby and make new friends.

Ages 0-6 months Wednesday mornings 10:30-11:30 a.m. Sept. 21 - Nov. 16

Ages 7-12 months Thursday mornings 10:30-11:30 a.m. Sept. 22 - Nov. 17

Cope Family Center also offers Terrific Toddlers, an educational support group for parents of toddlers' ages 12 months - 36 months. Topics include: Child Development, Behavior Issues, Toilet Learning and Health & Safety. Children are welcome.

Ages 12-18 months Thursday mornings 9:30-10:30 a.m. Sept. 22 - Nov. 17.

Ages 19-36 months Wednesday mornings 9:30-10:30 a.m. Sept. 21 - Nov. 16

Classes are free of charge and are held at Cope Family Center, 1340 Fourth St. Napa.

For more information call Marla at 252-1123

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