

What Your Baby's Smile Can Tell You About Her Development

November 27, 2015

The Wall Street Journal:

Once upon a time, babies' first smiles would often be dismissed as "probably just gas."

Now, scientists know better.

Starting nearly from birth, infants' ethereal grins provide a window into their social and emotional development, researchers say. And the responses those enchanting and goofy expressions elicit can help program babies' brains for a lifetime of social interactions.

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Developmental psychologists at Johnson State College, in Vermont, observed that 5-month-olds find an unusual sight, such as a book on a person's head, extremely funny and will laugh even if no one else around them does. "We hypothesized that infants would not be able to detect humor unless their parents were laughing," says Gina Mireault, a professor of psychology and the lead researcher. "We were completely wrong."

Read the whole story: [The Wall Street Journal](#)