

Little Luke Likes Lights

Thought I would post a quick little update about our youngest child who is growing so quickly that I don't know if we can call him our "new addition" any longer! Luke James is almost 2 months old, and among his likes are being held, listening to music, and looking at lights. He's been especially impressed by the colorful lights on the Christmas tree. These things are common favorites among many almost-2-month-olds, but Luke is a very special baby – he has been able to hold his head up for a few weeks and is extremely alert for a baby his age. His VERY FAVORITE thing to do in the whole world is to be held like this while his little hands open and close and his eyes bulge as he takes in the world around him:



Luke

doesn't sleep well at night, but we aren't really surprised because none of our 5 kids were very good sleepers as babies. But Luke doesn't sleep much during the day, either – he takes about one good nap per day about 3-4 days per week. And by "good nap" I mean him sleeping for over an hour without waking up. Actually, I thought of the perfect way to describe Luke the other day: he is an *intense* baby. He wants **what** he wants **when** he wants it, and he's not shy about asking. Don't get me wrong; it's not that he is a disagreeable baby, and he is very smiley. He's just very demanding, and since he is always awake... well, you can understand why my free time is down to almost none and the blog posts from me remain infrequent.

Especially because he demands to have 100% of the available attention, whether it's eye contact while playing with him or using both hands to feed him – he is not a fan of a multi-tasking parent.

He's already able to play – he loves looking into the eyes of people who play with him, and he especially likes to exchange baby talk with “goo” being his favorite word. He loves when his sisters and brother play with him, but it's hard to tell if he has a favorite yet. Christopher is 3 and Luke's only brother, but he doesn't play with him often – it seems like Christopher is afraid of hurting Luke, and he also seems shy about talking to him or playing with him. Disney likes to hold Luke (she's 5), but she loses interest in a matter of minutes. Taylor is almost 12, and she enjoys Luke's cuteness, but she is too busy with a life of her own to spend a lot of time with her baby brother. Sammie stands out as the remarkable sibling. 7-year-old Sammie just adores her baby brother; she's always asking to hold him, and she doesn't soon grow tired of it. She plays with Luke, asks how he's doing, expresses interest in his activities, misses him when she's gone, and loves seeing cute pictures of him. I'm looking forward to watching their special bond strengthen even further as they grow up together. His brother and sisters love their baby brother in their own ways, and any time Luke does something new, he is crowded by an admiring entourage that can rival that of most celebrities.



Luke also really likes baths. He smiles like crazy the whole time he's in the bath; he'll even throw out a couple of "goo"s and "gaa"s and doesn't seem to notice that he sounds different when his ears are under water.

Luke is also the tie-breaker in our family – we have 3 brown-eyed people and 3 blue-eyed people. Two months old is too early to tell what color a baby's eyes will be, so right now we don't know which "side" will win. It's interesting also that our 2 blue-eyed kids are left-handed while our 2 brown-eyed kids are right-handed. Will Luke be a tie-breaker in only the eye color category or will he break the mold and be a blue-eyed righty or a brown-eyed lefty?

Even with his intensity, Luke is a wonderful baby and it's been nothing but a pleasure so far to get to know him as his personality develops – I wouldn't change any part of him or anything about him, no matter how far behind on stay-at-home-mommy-work I am! Here he is wearing the adorable camouflage hoodie someone got him – it's so cute! And here's an interesting bit of culture clash for you – where I grew up in the suburbs of Chicago, Luke would wear this and we'd be trendy. Here in the woods of rural Northwest Ohio, I put the camo hoodie on Luke, and we heard no fewer than FIVE comments about hunting and him being a little woodsman ☐



Pou!ts

I actually ran out of room in my previous post to talk about my little ones, my non-schoolers, so it's time for an update!

The baby, soon to be toddler, Christopher (we call him Beeber since that's what his big sister used to call him) is getting so big and is now probably closer to toddler than baby ☐

He walks while holding onto things, and climbs onto anything within reach! He has recently learned where his tongue is, and if you ask to see it, he will stick it out – awww! He still loves most kinds of fruits; his favorites are strawberries, peaches, pears, and oranges, but he really doesn't like cantaloupe nor tomatoes.

Disney is just about the sweetest thing imaginable. Of course, she is still 2, so occasionally she gets loud, whiny, and insistent. But she is a very thoughtful little girl, and a very unselfish 2-year-old. Case in point: the other day, the girls made macaroni necklaces at our church carnival, and a piece broke off of Sammie's after we got home. Sammie was launching into a tantrum, when all of a sudden, Disney jumps off my lap and starts to take her own necklace off, saying, "Here Sammie, you can have my necklace." I can't imagine any other 2-year-old capable of such sweetness! Add that to her little pageboy Buster Brown – as Carol calls it ☐ – back-to-school haircut, and she is a living doll! Oh, and I forgot to mention, Disney is much admired by her older sisters for her ability to whistle!

Having the two of them together during the day is so fun! A lot of busyness and some mild frustration, but only because of the many messes Beeber makes and the fact that they're both still in diapers. I really need to work on Disney's potty-

training. She has her little potty and likes to go in it, but it's not always a priority for her... One of the secrets to harmony in a family with more than a couple of small children is *divide and conquer*. My children are so much better behaved when they are broken into groups of two or sometimes even three. It's really neat to give each sister the chance to be the BIG sister, and Sammie the Kindergartner gets her chance with Disney in the morning before her afternoon Kindergarten, and Disney gets to be Beeber's big sister while the two older girls at school. Back to school time is so fun, and my oldest daughter is really excited about attending her first football game Friday night! I was a little hesitant to let her go; especially after Wednesday evening when I hung out with a pack of 10 seventh grade girls (a new endeavor of ours – we will be leading youth groups on Wednesday nights! More on that later; I'm still grasping the entirety of the situation). Seeing that my daughter is only 3 years away from the ages of these boy-crazy, cellphone-obsessed, "like"-spewing, makeup-toting 'tweens tempted me to buy the **totally** [awesome house on the way to Fort Wayne](#) and lock my 9-year-old daughter in the top of the turret!

But I love where I live and wouldn't dream of leaving, no matter how cool that house is (or how far it would leave us in debt). The bottom line is, my daughter is a great kid, and I have to learn to trust her to hold her own – she's not going to be *that* type of kid! She acts mature and logical most of the time; helping her little sisters and brother and she deserves to get away from all the little kid stuff in our household to step out with her friends. Perhaps volunteering with this (insanely girly) group of girls (have you ever noticed that if you close your eyes, you can mistake a group of pre-pubescent girls for a gang of wild turkeys??) will prepare me for what's ahead with my 4 home-grown tweens and teens. At least that's what I'm hoping...

(In case you're wondering about the title of this blog post...

Poults = baby turkeys. I have 3 daughters and one son. Within a decade, my house will no doubt sound something like a turkey farm!)

Kid Currency

Sometimes Dr. Phil *does* give good advice. Among my favorite Dr. Phil advice lines is: “every kid has his (or her) currency”. Unfortunately, our second-oldest daughter’s (age 5) currency (referring to something that can “buy” a kid; in other words, cheer up a sour mood) happens to be one of the girly things her parents despise most: makeup. She is starting to encounter the all-too-familiar plight of being a younger sibling: big sister leaves home bound for all kinds of fun adventures that little sister is not old enough to do; swimming at the pool, sleepovers, girl scout outings, the list seems endless when you’re ‘not old enough’... It’s hard to be the little sister and to get left behind – I know because I was there!

So anyway, the other day, our oldest daughter left for the pool, and Sammie was really upset she couldn’t go with – but I knew just the cure: makeup! I had bought a few makeup kits on clearance just after the Christmas season, and since I don’t wear makeup, what better use for it than to cheer up a sad little girl? We don’t want the kids wearing makeup out in public or to school, and we especially don’t want it leading to an “addiction” – a teenage girl who won’t leave the house without her makeup on, yuck! But for a special play-treat once in awhile to cheer up a left-behind little sis or two, makeup is just what the doctor ordered and works like a charm!

Baby Diary

The first year of life for children is full of constant development and changes – babies do new things every single day. Realizing this, I decided to make a diary for each of my kids about their first year. I would write in it from time to time to summarize all of their many changes, hoping some day they'll enjoy reading them. I was writing in my son's Baby Diary the other day when it occurred to me that I should share it on my blog; especially since he's been very crabby lately and it's been really difficult for me to write blog posts with him in my arms. He was born on July 11, 2008.

Christopher's Diary:

7/16/08 – went to dr. checkup for your slight jaundice. dr. said everything looked good and you weigh 7 lbs. 11 oz.

7/17/08 – Actually, since it was the 12:01 showing, it's actually the 18th... but your first movie in the theater was the Dark Knight. You barely stirred and did drink a bottle during the movie. You didn't make a peep.

7/19/08 – You attended your first stage play, the Music Man. You were very good, except you pooped early in the show and were crabby and had to be taken out, but only for a few mins. so you could get your diaper changed

7/20/08 – umbilical cord stump falls off – you are 9 days old.

8/11/08 – You had your one month check-up today! Everything looks good; you weigh 9 lbs. 14 oz. and are 22 in. long. Your head circumference is 38.3 cm. You didn't cry at all while getting weighed and measured.

8/13/08 – You smiled at Mommy!

9/3/08 – In the past week, you've started "talking" back to me! You smile really big when I smile at you and give you a big HI, and you smile at me every time you see me when you

wake up. When you were born, you could hardly see any lashes, but now your eyelashes are getting long and beautiful! Your eyes are still a bright beautiful blue!

9/5/08 – You laughed for the first time – long and loud. And it was during Daddy's funny play, The Nerd. You laughed at the part where they're playing the 'I'm going on a trip' game. I don't know if you heard the other people laughing or it was just a coincidence, but it was SO cute!

9/12/08 – Today you had your 2 month dr appt. You are 12 lbs 9 oz and 23.25 inches long. Your head circumference is 44.5 cm. You fussed a little as they were examining you, but you didn't cry. The dr said you have dry skin and we have to watch your ears to make sure formula isn't going in there.

9/22/08 – For about a week now, you seem to recognize your bottle. You'll get extra excited when you see it and open your mouth. Your big sister Disney calls you "Beeber". Your big sister Sammie loves to hold you and is always asking questions about newborn babies. She calls them "born" babies.

10/16/08 – You are 3 months old, and you are starting to play with toys. The other day I saw you "discovering" your hands, and ever since you've been grabbing things. You know how to put your fist in your mouth. You're still spitting up a lot. Not as much at a time as Disney did when she was a baby, but many times throughout the day.

11/5/08 – You've been playing with toys for awhile now; you can grab things and you try to draw them into your mouth. You love making g sounds – ga, goo, ggg. You are still a very happy little guy and smile at everyone, making their days!

12/4/08 – Time flies and you are almost 5 months old! Disney used to call you Beeber, and the name stuck, so we call you that sometimes. Disney now calls you Kipper. You've had some crabby days, but most of the time, you're still very smiley. You've been experimenting with vocalizations and you LOVE to stand! You do not bend at the waist! We tried the tot wheels (walker) for the first time the other day, and you like it for short periods of time since you just hang in there – your feet don't touch the floor yet. Most of the time, you're pretty

good about sleeping at night, usually waking up only once. But you also have bad nights where you won't let Daddy sleep! You like baths, and you're really starting to like toys. You play with the busybox on your crib, and try to eat EVERYTHING! You might be teething because you try to gnaw on everything. You've been trying cereal and if your gums seem really sore, Mommy and Daddy have been giving you a treat – a dab of peanut butter on your pacifier. You LOVE it! You found your feet a few weeks ago, and you were trying to get your toes in your mouth. We are excited to take you to see Santa pretty soon!

Trouble spelled C-U-T-E

Disney, our youngest-for-now, got into some trouble today. She went “missing” for about 10 minutes while I was making lunch, so I started thinking to myself, hmmm, she must have fallen asleep somewhere. So, I went to search for her and found this:



I went to the store and bought some toilet paper today. I had it on the stairs waiting to go up, and apparently she found it and thought it would be fun to play with. It was no big deal, as far as how much trouble toddlers usually get into. And, when I think about it now, the fact that I thought she was sleeping when she was “missing” really says a lot about what kind of baby, err, toddler she is. When my middle child was that age, if she went “missing” and the house was actually quiet, we knew there was going to be REAL trouble – and there always was. Our middle child went through a – how to put this eloquently – a ‘playing with poop’ phase. She would wake up in her crib, take off her diaper, and paint with the contents of her diaper, all while we thought she was still asleep so there was little we could do to intervene before it happened. We even had to postpone opening Christmas presents one year because we had a huge poopie painted mess to clean up before we could see what Santa brought. Good thing big sis was really patient about that one. Our oldest child,

Taylor, was kind of like Disney as a baby – never any real trouble. In fact, she also had a toilet paper incident – see flashback photo below, note the stream of toilet paper behind her:



So anyway, Disney is a very sweet and mild-mannered child. In fact, she really likes to play with my glasses and my Chicago Cubs hat, but she will only ask (yes, that's right, she asks) to play with them when I'm not wearing them. And unrolling toilet paper is her idea of trouble – for now anyway. She is nearing 2, so I am anticipating more trouble from her, but so far, this is it. I just hope kids don't come in any sort of behavior pattern. Meaning, our first and third have been exceptionally good, our second is a HANDFUL (putting it mildly), so the fourth would be...

I'm not going to jinx us... we're hoping for the best. I don't know if I can handle another poop player!

There's An Awful Lot You Can Tell About a Person By Their Shoes...

Where they're going. Where they've been. I've worn lots of shoes. I bet if I think about it real hard I could remember my first pair of shoes... – FORREST GUMP

The preceding quote comes to mind because Disney, our youngest-for-now, got her first pair of shoes yesterday! She loves them! She always asks to wear them, even if it's just for around the house. But she always ends up just wearing one somehow and losing the other, so I wonder what Forrest Gump would think of that? At first when she got them on, she just stood there, as if locked in cement. Her big sister Taylor helped her learn to walk in them – it was adorable. She was so patient with her without doing too much for her and giving in by picking her up. Finally, Disney learned to walk in her new shoes and loves them. Pretty soon she'll be running around in her new shoes with me waddling behind her trying to keep up!

Seeing her “stuck” there when she thought she couldn't walk reminded me of my other daughter Samantha, who is now almost 4. When Sammie was learning to walk, it was summertime, and she was wearing sandals, so she'd be walking, walking, then as soon as she hit the grass – STOP! And she'd be stuck there too, just like Disney was in her new shoes. It's strange how learning to walk is such a huge new experience, yet I've never met anyone who remembers going through it... I think it's much more fun being on the parent side, this time around, but then again, I can't really name an experience that isn't!