Charlotte's Story

Charlotte is a 6-month-old baby, born full term at home. Charlotte's parents, Scott and Julie, are both college graduates who live and work in an urban area. Julie was monitored during her pregnancy for high blood pressure. Charlotte is their first baby and the family's first grandchild.

Julie and Charlotte struggled a bit with nursing after birth. Charlotte did not latch well, and Julie was concerned that she was not getting enough milk. The attending midwife noticed a few days after Charlotte was born that her skin and eyes were quite yellow. She referred Charlotte to the local hospital, suspecting hyperbilirubinemia. Charlotte was admitted and received light therapy for moderate infant jaundice. During the course of her admission, she was examined by a neonatologist, who noted some floppiness in her muscles. The doctor recommended that Charlotte follow up with her pediatrician to monitor her development and muscle tone. During the admission, Julie had a hearing screening and passed. Charlotte and Julie made progress in nursing with a lactation consultant to the point where Charlotte was eating well from the breast. The family could not, however, get Charlotte to take a bottle. They tried several kinds of nipples, but Charlotte choked or refused.

Charlotte looks at people when they approach and actively looks for her parents when she hears their voices. She smiles and vocalizes when she sees her parents. She sits in a high chair when propped with pillows. She vocalizes frequently, stringing vowels together but no consonants. Her parents can tell when she is happy by her vocalizations. They babble back to her and can keep this game going for a minute or so. Charlotte responds to her name and enjoys a good game of peek-a-boo. She likes her parents to do pat-a-cake but can't easily bring her hands together. She can pick up toys but drops them before can get them to her mouth. She is not able to move a toy from one hand to the other. She has begun to eat some purees with some choking and gagging. Julie and Scott offer her finger foods that melt, but Charlotte is not able to pick them up and get them to her mouth. Charlotte has begun to roll but with limited success. Her rolling movement is jerky and uncoordinated. She gets frustrated when she tries to roll. Charlotte tends to fall over when her parents place her in a sitting position.

Julie and Scott get together with their Lamaze group once a month. They are noticing that their friends' babies are more proficient in self-feeding and sitting independently. They are babbling, using consonants and vowels with more variety. They feel that Charlotte is very loving and responsive to them like the other babies but are concerned about her lack of motor control and balance in sitting.

WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT
of HEALTH SERVICES

Summary

Charlotte's parents are looking for ways to help her progress. They are generally pleased with her development but are worried about her lack of motor skills. They are worried that their choice of a home birth was a problem for Charlotte and wonder about the impact of infant jaundice and Julie's high blood pressure on her development. Charlotte is exhibiting and has a history of motor control problems that affect her feeding, hand skills, trunk stability, speech development, and achievement of gross motor milestones. Her social-emotional and cognitive development appears to be age appropriate, although she is having motor difficulties that interfere with her participation in social games and in exploratory play.

Follow-Up Questions

1. *Due to some of her feeding difficulties, such as choking and gagging, how long does it typically take to feed her?*

2. *Is her low muscle tone making tasks such as dressing her any more difficult?*

3. *Is she involved with Birth to 3, and if so, what services are they providing? Or is she getting any therapy services elsewhere?*

WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT *of* **HEALTH SERVICES**