





Time's flying, but you can hold on to the memories with these easy crafts.

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baby keepsakes

One of my first outings after having my son, Max, was to the scrapbooking store. He was only 2 weeks old, but with each passing day, I feared I was missing the chance to capture memories. Soon he would be laughing, and then sitting up, and before I knew it, he'd be driving! I realize now that my panic was strictly postpartum, but the urge to preserve baby mementos grips even the most unsentimental of us. Here's how to turn those fragments of babyhood into lasting artifacts.

Shadow box

"You don't need a crafty bone in your body to do a shadow box," says Abby Pecoriello, author of *Crafty Mama Makes 49 Fast, Fabulous, Foolproof (Baby & Toddler) Projects*. A shadow box is simply a picture frame with depth, so you can frame 3-D objects. Use hot glue or double-stick tape to affix baby items (such as a rattle, a birth announcement, or a hat) against a background made from scrapbook paper or fabric. You'll find inexpensive shadow boxes at places like Michaels and Ikea.

NOT SO CRAFTY?

→Most photo-sharing sites will create an album for you. A basic 20-page book should cost about \$30 plus shipping.



Growth Stick Have a strip of wood cut at the lumberyard, wide enough to accommodate pictures and tall enough to measure growth for as long as you want. Prime and paint your piece of wood, measure out inches, and attach it to a wall or behind a door. Get creative in how you mark the measurements. When your child hits 3 feet, for instance, put a sticker by the 3-foot mark, or paint a meaningful symbol (we chose a heart). And for every recording, affix a picture with the date.



QUICK & EASY

Framed Book Pages

Spent countless bedtimes reading and rereading one particular book? Preserve the memory—and get great art—by framing each page (or selected pages) of your child’s favorite first book.

Buy two new copies of the book (because the pages are two-sided) or use the original to make good-quality color copies on glossy paper, and start framing. You can have the pages professionally matted and framed, but that’s likely to be pricey. Do it yourself by mounting the pages on card stock, and use coordinating mats and matching frames (easy to find at Michaels) to make it look cohesive.

Funny Conversation Journal

Jenna McCarthy, author of *The Parent Trip*, wanted a way to preserve the memories of conversations with her girls, Sophie and Sasha (now 3 and 5). She bought inexpensive journals and titled each one “The Funny Things I Say.” In the books, McCarthy wrote down humorous exchanges with her daughters. “To this day, these are, hands down, their favorite ‘books’ to read—and of course they know and chime in on all the punch lines,” McCarthy says. “You always think you’ll remember all of those precious little musings, but they’re so easy to forget.” So buy a journal (decorate it if you’re feeling inspired) and start writing!

Create a Photo Book

Kimmelin Hull, mother of three and author of *A Dozen Invisible Pieces and Other Confessions of Motherhood*, bought a photo box and 52 note cards. She numbered each card, took a picture of the baby each week, and attached it to the note cards. "By the first birthday, you have a wonderful record of your child's growth," she says.



QUICK & EASY

Sun Collages

Use light-sensitive paper (try Super Sunprint Kit from StarMagic.com) to create collages of baby items. The sun reacts with the paper, turning it a cornflower blue and leaving an imprint of your items. Pick things with a definite shape, like a baby

spoon or a paci, or hold your baby's hand on the paper to create a handprint. Use letter stickers to write your baby's name and birthday. Let your collage sit in the sun for five minutes (a challenge if you're doing a handprint!), remove the item, dunk in a few inches of water, and let it dry.

Clothing Quilt

Okay, this one isn't that quick or easy. It is super cute! Cut up anything from babyhood: a velvet party dress, T-shirts with funny sayings, blankets, or a favorite pair of shorts. Pin the cut pieces to coordinat-

ing fabric to create simple quilt blocks. Use hot glue or a needle and thread to attach 3-D objects, like those colorful plastic keys your baby loved or that first pair of shoes. If you need help with the sewing, shop around before you fork over the big bucks. Try craigslist, or ask at your fabric store.