**Intro**
Welcome to Sense by Meg Faure, the podcast that's brought to you by Parent Sense, the app that takes guesswork out of parenting. If you are a new parent, then you are a good company. Your host, Meg Faure is a well-known OT infant specialist and the author of eight parenting books. Each week we are going to spend time with new moms and dads just like you to chat about the week's wins, the challenges, and the questions of the moment. Subscribe to the podcast, download the Parent Sense App and catch Meg here every week to make the most of that first year of your little one's life. And now meet your host.

**Meg:**  Welcome back, mums and dads. It is absolutely fabulous to have you join us. As usual, we're going to be dipping into all sorts of interesting topics around little ones. Some weeks we discuss a theme, things like sleep or sensory personalities. And other weeks we have real mums like Cassidy, who's joining us today again, who join us to talk about their little ones. And we look at an age and stage, and if your babies at the same age and stage, which this week is 22 weeks, you'll find that a lot of what Cass talks about actually really resonates with you. So I'm really, really excited this week to, and welcome back Cassidy, she said to be talking about her life stage before Max.

**Cass:**  Hi, how are you?

**Meg:**  Well, thanks, and you, Cass? Always good to have you back. Is it 20 weeks or 22 weeks?

**Cass:**  22

**Meg:**  Okay. So there we've got it. 22 weeks, I cannot believe it. That's a part of pregnancy, is that really, you know, moving along.

**Cass:**  I know. I think I say this every week in some ways it feels like it is gone really fast. In other ways it feels like we've never been without him. So, yep.

**Meg:**  That's exactly what it's like.

**Cass:**  He is growing really fast and I feel like he's really transitioning from baby, baby now to sort of almost a little boy. He's really start to develop personality and his face is changing so much and just what he's capable of doing is changing all the time.

**Meg:**  Very, very precious stage. Amazing. So tell me what have been the highlights of the week? What have been the good things that have kind come and surprised you wonderfully.

**Cass:**  Well, so actually one of the things we did this week is we took him for his first swing in the playground. So my mom had been chatting to somebody who had a little baby about the same age as Max, and he was showing mom pictures of his baby on the swing. And so, my mother said Max must go on immediately. So we drove one morning, timed obviously very carefully with sleeps and things like that to a playground that had sort of very young swings, you know, for his age groups that he was well supported and that sort of thing, possibly for slightly older. But anyway, he was supported, and his sitting is going quite well; so we went and we put him in the playground, put him in the swing. I have to be honest, I'm not really sure he was phased either way. He just, yeah, sort of sat back and looked at us a bit to say, Okay, well this is obviously more for you guys than it is for me.

But what we both did notice is that he was absolutely focused on the other children in the playground and just couldn't take his eyes off them. And we both commented that really we needed, I needed to be making more of an effort to socialize him. You know he does see, but previously, he's going for walks with other parents that have babies in the pram and things like that. And so we have decided that actually the socialization side and obviously we've discussed, he has a bit of a social bass slide, but I'm guessing is that a sort of, a bit of a stage as well now where he's really wanting to watch and interact with other children?

**Meg:**  Yeah. So it's not so much play with other children. It's very much watching other human beings and of course human beings his size will just be a whole lot more interesting than human beings that he normally sees we're bigger. So it's quite interesting. Social development happens along a trajectory and in terms of play culminating in cooperative play, which only actually emerges at about two and a half years old. So it's like he's got quite a long time to go where he'll actually play with somebody and they'll be cooperating on the same task. So that's kind building the same thing or kind of really just playing with each other, maybe pushing a ball between them, that sort of thing. That takes a long time. That's only going to happen two and a half, even three years old. It's quite a mature play skill.

What happens before then is what we call parallel play, which is where you actually sit alongside somebody. You can both be playing the same game but you're not actually playing with the other person. So if they're there or if they're not, there's pretty irrelevant to the actual game. And that's parallel play. And that's actually the only …That's the start of interactive players. So, in actual fact and that really will only happen kind of closer to a year of age. So he's quite a long way off that still now as a five or nearly six month old or five month old now, plays are way off that. So, it's not so much that he's needing to socialize and play necessarily, but just that he's absolutely fascinated by other little human lives. And that doesn't mean to say that you shouldn't be doing it an actual fat. It is important.

And you know, we saw that in lockdown. It was just, you know, he's not a lockdown baby, but the baby who are born in lockdown could have gone for six or seven months without really interacting with another human baby at all and without even seeing people without masks on. So that was a whole another story, but they really didn't interact with other babies. And so when they emerged, they also, unfortunately it was a time of very high anxiety for many mums and dads because there was job losses, there was being isolated, there was just so many confounding factors that parents actually were not in their A game at the time. It was really hard to parent. You were tired, you exhausted, you'd be doing it on your own, there was no respite. You know, there were a million reasons why parents were stressed.

So, little ones had experienced tiny levels of stress, maybe a little bit of anxiety. And then you come out for the first time and mom and dad are actually anxious about who they're interacting with as well. I mean, I was thinking back to the early days of getting on an airplane or sitting next to somebody standing in a queue in a bank and you wanted to say to the person behind or in front of you, like move away, like keep your distance. Don't, you know, it's supposed to be 1.2 meters, you know? Do you remember that when you look back to it. And so they had…Babies have been referencing this kind of minor anxiety in their parents plus no interaction. And so they became a little bit more socially reticent, shall we say, they just didn't, weren't as gregarious. They didn't just jump out there for many babies. Some babies did. And actually I spoke to moms who said, gosh, my baby, the minute they were kind led out of jail, they really kind of embrace the freedom, but for many babies they actually didn't and that's because they just didn't have the exposure.

So, in a roundabout way, having told you all of that, the name of the game right now is exposure. And that's why socializing with other people with little children is a good thing because there's just that a little bit of exposure to other human beings. He's not going to be playing with them. He might be fascinated by them, but it's not actually play, but it is paving the way for what will come and what will become parallel playing, and eventually cooperative player.

**Cass:**  Yeah, it's actually really, it's funny you mentioned about the anxiety going out after sort of lockdown as well. I was going to say after Covid, that's after lockdown. ,

**Meg:**  Yeah.

**Cass:**  And because when we were on the swing, as I go to picks Max up out of the swing, my mom said, okay now, you got something to wipe down his hands with? And then she sort of stopped herself and she says, Oh no. Well, I don’t know because of course when I was young and generally how I've always…My approach has always been is actually, I don't want to be constantly wiping hands down and keeping him very sterile because there's the building immunity and that exposing him and I don't want him to not ever play with dirt or things like that. But it's also…You don't know, now we're so used to wiping down after you've touched a surface that somebody else has touched and things like that. We went with we weren't going to completely sterilize him after he'd been on the swing, but was that immediate reaction of, “oh my God he's touched something, should we?” And you know, as I said, we went with no, but it's getting that balance right.

**Meg:**  It is. And it's such an interesting balance.

Interlude
This episode is brought to us by Parents Sense, the all-in-one baby and parenting app that helped you make the most of your baby’s first year. Don't you wish someone would just tell you everything you need to know about caring for your baby, when to feed them, how to wean them and why they won't sleep. Parent Sense App is like having a baby expert on your phone guiding you to parent with confidence, get a flexible routine, daily tips and advice personalized for you and your little one download Parent Sense app now from your app store and take the guesswork out of parenting.

**Meg:**  So, I'll tell you something that prior to Covid, I was quite a staunch anti-sterilizer and I believe quite strongly that little ones needed exposure to fairly harmless kind of bugs and germs. And there was a good reason for that. The reason was that your immune system in your body has a job to do and that job is to fight something, and our immune system is really good at doing that. And so off goes these little warriors and they go off to go and find the war. And so when something comes into the system that looks like it could be dangerous, they go in and they launch an attack and they create immunity for us, and that's how immunity develops. And it's really, really important.

Now, with life has very sterile, those little soldiers and armies are still there, it's just that they don't really have a job. And there is a theory that says that part of the reason why we've seen this dramatic increase in allergies is because immune systems haven't had enough to work on. And so because the immune systems didn't have germs to target, they started to target things that were not dangerous. Like for instance, colon, or for instance, white blood cells for instance. So there is a theory that says over sterilizing actually isn't great, and I was a very strong proponent of that. And in fact, my husband and I, he always has sterilized his hands when walking through airports he doesn't like, you know if he touches the railings, he's not wild on it. You know he sounds obsessive, he's actually not. But he does actually sterilize his hands and always carried a sterilizer in his travel bag long before Covid.

Then Covid comes along and in actual fact we all use a hand sterilizer. I mean, in South Africa, which is where I happen to be at the moment, you know, you walk into the shop and they've got a spray of bottle, you have to take a spray of sterilizer every time you enter a shop, and so the world has changed. So how do we find a comfortable middle ground between Covid hysteria and maybe the pre-Covid advice on don't sterilize and don't over sterilize. And I think the reality is that when you are in public places and a swing set would be one of those. I actually probably would actually sterilize, I would probably wipe his hands down with a sterile wipe afterwards. And the reason for that is that play parks are notorious for little ones to be sharing germs. And some of the germs are things that he'll get.

So one of, and a good example of that is the Coxsackie virus, which is the hand, foot and mouth disease, which like when I say it to new parents, they're like, my child's never going to get that. But in actual fact, they absolutely will. It creates little pox and sores under the souls of your feet and the souls of your hands and in your mouth and they lose their appetites. And almost every two year old I ever have known has gone through it. But that's the sort of thing that they'll pick up. It's not the risk of Covid or measles, you know, obviously in a clear path because you know these vaccines that have taken care of that but, Coxsackie virus? Yep, that's going to be there. And so I would actually sterilize coming out of that environment, but talking about your home environment where he might picking up straight off that the dogs have just left, that wouldn't be sterilizing. I would be letting his own immunity just deal with that itself. So it's middle ground.

**Cass:**  I was very much the same and I used to work with a girl who was always sterilizing and she had loads of allergies. So, you know, and also was always sick and you know, I know I was very much left to, when I was little, to sort of, well I was not sterilized and I very, very rarely get sick now, you know. And so I…

**Meg:**  You had already got that immune system.

**Cass:**  Yeah, yeah, exactly. And I do, even when we were in the UK and somebody actually that we had come in contact with the next day tested positive for Covid and she'd been holding Max, Max had actually put her fingers in his mouth and things like that and you sort of thought, “oh gosh, you know, this is…” But then I thought it is going to be tricky for us if he gets covid, but I actually, with all of the knowledge, it might not be the worst thing in the world for him to get. Hopefully he would get it relatively mild and then again he would start to build up a bit of immunity. The same with colds, you know, all this, I want him to get colds and things like I know you'll have a few sleepless nights but…

**Meg:**  Yeah and you know, they actually say that babies need approximately 14 childhood illnesses before they actually go to school, you know, and before they go to playgroup and if they don't get them. So there's little ones who are kind more corseted and kept at home and don't have exposure to any other children. They get properly sick when they start with crèche. So, you know, and in fact second children often get way less sick when they start with crèche because they've had an older sibling who's been at playgroup or nursery who's been bringing back all the germs. So they get them when they're younger. So either they're going to get all 14 in one year as they as they start or they're going to spread it out over the time. So, it's going to happen either way. And yeah, developing that immunity is important.

But actually on that, I mean it would be interesting to ask, so 22 weeks old are you still sterilizing his dummies and his bottles?

**Cass:**  Yes.

**Meg:**  Okay, so interesting.

**Cass:**  And if you say I don't need to, that would be the best present in my world.

**Meg:**  Okay. So it's such an interesting one because moms ask me this all the time, like what, when can I stop sterilizing? And the reality is you can stop sterilizing as soon as your little one is lying on the floor and bringing a toy to his mouth but as been resting on the floor. So if he’s lying on the floor…

**Cass:**  And he does

**Meg:**  What is the right thing to do now? Washing in hot water is still very important. So you have to wash dummies and bottles, absolutely. But you don't have to sterilize anymore, definitely not.

**Cass:**  So, just being in the dishwasher?

**Meg:**  In fact, the dishwasher actually constitutes sterilizing out of interest because the temperature that the dishwasher is high enough to kill any germs. So if you are putting his bottles in the dishwasher then that's definitely fine. But even for those mums who are not putting dummies, and bottles in dishwasher, like for instance, dummies might go the dishwasher, it's a good wash with some so hot water and that's fine. I mean the actual fact is that even if you are sterilizing, if it's touched the surface after that it's not sterile anyway. So you can definitely, 22 weeks you can stop sterilizing, good news.

**Cass:**  That is…I can't tell you that. I mean I might even have some time in the morning before I'm rushing out the door to drink my tea.

**Meg:**  Yeah, you mentioned that.

**Cass:**  Of course, I won’t, something else come up.

**Meg:**  Absolutely, don't bank on that. You've got about 10 years before you can enjoy a cup of tea on your own again. So don't hold a breath.

**Cass:**  My husband said to me this morning if I'd like a cup of tea and I was like, I would, but there's just no point.

**Meg:**  It'll go cold by the time you get to it.

**Cass:**  Exactly. I'd like a warm cup of tea, so...

**Meg:**  Well, I can tell you very excitingly what is coming your way is that enjoy going the toilet on your own at the moment because that is going to be short-lived as soon as he's mobile there's no more toilet on your own. And the amount of time sat down on the toilet with little ones and just…my friends kids, just opened the door and walked into the bathroom because, obviously is for all. So enjoy that one. He is not mobile.

**Cass:**  Oh dear. Well there's a lot of things I'm enjoying while he's not mobile, but I don't think it's very far off at all. The other day, you know, his knees kind of came up underneath his body when he was lying on his tummy, and then went back down again. So I he's growing fast.

**Meg:**  That’s awesome. That's good flexion. That's really awesome. So we've kind of a spoken about the good things, which was, which centered around the swing and took us in to immunity, what were the challenges of the week?

**Cass:**  Okay, I feel like I bring this up a lot, but I'm still not sure. And it is the night change. In fact I was listening to the podcast from weeks ago and I was talking about this then, I think it was like seven weeks or something. We're now on 22 and it's still…But the reason is because he feeds really well. He's waking up once in the night and he feeds and then he will quite hardly go down again and I don't need…Previously I would have to change him to try and wake him up as I swapped boobs and that sort of thing. But now he's doing the whole bottle and then we're kind of sitting there doing a bit of wind and I could put him down at that stage. And so on a couple of nights I thought, well that's what I'm going to do because he hasn't soiled his nappy. And generally speaking, everything I've read says if they haven't soiled then you can put them straight down. And so I put him down and in the morning his clothes were wet or he was waking because he is nappy had leaked.

So, then I went a size up because he was kind of on the cusp, I thought maybe the nappy’s not big enough. I went a size up and while I was buying the next size up, I saw that size actually did nighttime nappies, which were extra absorbent lasted 12 hours, blah blah blah. So I thought, oh great, this is fabulous news. So then the next night I put that nappy on and the next morning he had…He hadn't necessarily leaked so much, but all around his sort of under the nappy, his skin was just wet. And I thought that was…That's not comfortable, I'm not sure it's great for him to be sitting in that. So I'm still…I've gone back to changing his nappy but he will be nearly asleep on my shoulder and just not long after his feed. And then I'll have to change his nappy and then of course he wakes up, I can put him down and he will then coo and ah and play and for a good half an hour alone in his cot and then he'll go back to sleep. So it's not disturbing my night anymore. It's not necessarily a problem but it just feels like why can't I just leave him? Is it he just is seemingly doing so many wees.

**Meg:**  Yeah.

**Interlude**
If you enjoy my podcast, I would like to share one of my favorite podcasts with you, The Honest Hour. Christine Masuriek is mom to two boys and a third little boy on the way. She's an American expat living in Cape Town, South Africa since 2008 and decided to start sharing her experiences in parenting since 2017. Having grown up in a dysfunctional family environment in her own childhood, which led to her adoption at the age of 10, Christina is passionate about finding purpose and presence in parenting as well as exploring our own opportunity for healing and personal growth as we navigate the world of parenting our own children. Christina believes in ending the trauma cycle and that in parenting our own children we can learn how to re-parent ourselves. So, pop over to Christina's podcast the Honest Hour.

**Meg:**  So a couple of things. So first of all you can leave him, it's the nappy isn’t so good if it’s leaking moisture right way. I wouldn't worry about him being a little bit down underneath this. So if he's got nappy where, yes he'll be a little bit inside but he's kind of seeing it through to the morning and remember that that moisture's now going to be the same temperature as his body because it's against his body so it's not going to be cold. And as long as he's not getting nappy rashes, which is not, then it's absolutely fine.

 Having said that, there is another solution or well so that's the one side. The other side is that actually if he's a really good self-soother, which he clearly is, because if you putting him down and he's able to just kind of coo little bit and fall of asleep then and it's not disturbing his sleep, then you could actually change it. There is an argument you made that actually if you want him to have a clean nappy then absolutely no problem with that. So my recommendation of not changing nappies is very much based on those moms who the fussy ones weren't settled easily and then mom has to rock them back to sleep in order to get them back to sleep. And then you start up with habits, so rather than start habits then rather don't change the nappy.

Having said that, there is another solution and that is to change the nappy before the feed. So remember the feed is the calming part. So what you do, they come up, change his nappy because then you've got rid of the urine that would been in there from the evening sleep, he's now got wee nappy, he now feeds, he'll get himself nice and drowsy and then you can put him straight back down afterwards and that'll serve the same purpose.

**Cass:**  Yeah, it might be a noisy nappy change, but that's okay

**Meg:**  Yeah, because he'll be hungry.

**Cass:**  Yeah, I mean he now recognizes his bottle as well. I remember really, really early on, in fact, it would've been very soon after we introduced a bottle about six or seven weeks old, we were in a restaurant and I put the bottle on the table and asked the waiter for some hot water and my mom, and he was just sitting on my lap, and my mom said to me, there will come a time that you won't be able to just leave that bottle on the table because he'll see it and he'll want it. And that time has certainly come, he and his mouth is like open heading for the bottle and he grabs the bottle and shoves it in his face. So yeah, but I mean I suppose and he will now know when I go in at that time I'm going in to feed him but I'll definitely try it, you know, and if he's got his comforter, he might be okay to just sort of shout a bit, because he doesn't wake up crying for his feed, he just kind of, it's almost like he's enthusiastically telling me with a bit of a shout that it's time but he doesn't cry.

**Meg:**  So you might have a little bit of tears if you change it.

**Cass:**  Possibly, but I’d give it a go, yeah.

**Meg:**  Give it a go. Excellent, great. And is he rolling now?

**Cass:**  He rolls both ways and I mean sometimes when I will leave him talking of kind of the not being mobile, when I leave him, there will be times when I'll then come back in the room a couple of minutes later and he is not where I left him. He's kind of rolled himself to a different part of the room. So I'm already getting the idea of before I leave I have to make sure he's got a lot of just empty carpet space. I can't remember if we've mentioned this before, but he's got a play mat with an arch that goes over it and I sort of feel that it restricts him. So I've actually started putting a huge muslin out with toys on it so he can just roll around as much as he wants rather than restricting it. And in bed, now his preferred sleeping position is on his side, he roll over every morning. As put him down, he rolls over onto his side, cuddling his comfort and that's how he falls asleep.

**Meg:**  Wow. Oh amazing. Amazing. And I remember last time when we were chatting last week, we talked about the fact you…You actually asked the question, what is pushing up on arms mean as a milestone? And I said, well it'll first be pushing up to elbows and then up onto four arms and onto extended arms and then one day he'll accidentally roll over and you sent me the most gorgeous video literally that afternoon on him doing exactly that. So it's quite amazing how, you know, every mom of a 22 week old is going to be experiencing the same stuff because that's what they do.

**Cass:**  Yeah. And it's interesting because he does seem to go through phases and we've discussed it before where he'll just roll all the time and then you can't get him to roll at all and then he'll be rolling nonstop again. So as it, it's really interesting watching him go through these little phases where he's obsessed about doing one thing and then he goes off it and then he does another thing and…But he's so proud of himself when he goes onto his back. Like he just, he's slightly shocked because I think it goes quite quick. He's moves quite quickly. So one second, he's on his front, the next he’s…So there's a moment of shock and then the delight across his face of what a clever boy he thinks he is, is just fabulous.

**Meg:**  Wonderful, Cass. So before we finish off, are there any activities that you've been doing on the app this week that you've enjoyed? Stimulation activities?

**Cass:**  Yeah, so there was one around an empty box and it was just kind of putting him in and pulling him for that movement and it kind of, he does love empty boxes and empty plastic bottles. There was also one around playing with an empty plastic bottle and I use that and sort of because it's got the sensory side from the sound when he squish it. And his nanny made him, which is also in one of the activities, using an empty bottle, she made him a glitter bottle sort of with liquid and glitter. And so we've been recycling or up-cycling sort of things because it is the case where you can, he's got all of these wonderful toys but also he doesn't have so many that we're constantly chopping and changing them. So, it's new and different when he gets a piece of rubbish. .

**Meg:**  Well, I mean, I actually always said it's the very best thing. They're four toys that you need at this age. The one is a box, the other one is blocks, the other one is a ball and the other one's a book. So they're the four Bs, that actually all babies need. And you know, I think unfortunately, and I'm not going to, certainly not going to mention any brands, but unfortunately we are conned into believing that the switch toys with this tunes and the reactive buttons are things that they need. And it just completely isn't. And we know that in terms of creativity and play and all sorts of things, it's actually just better to do… Add bottles as well into the mix, are definitely good.

**Cass:**  Yeah. I mean anything he can put in his mouth.

**Meg:**  I would say that almost, I would say 5% of the activities in the Parent Sense App, in fact have toys. The majority of them are actually things that you use around the house or your own self; activities you do with yourself. So, yeah, you are always the best toy anyway.

**Cass:**  Yeah, exactly.

**Meg:**  Yeah, exactly.

**Meg:**  Yeah, Cass, it's been wonderful catching up with your little 22-week-old and I really do look forward to meeting up next week again to hear what a 23-week-old is getting up to.

**Cass:**  Every week is getting more…There's just so much happening each week now. It's crazy; maybe because he's awake a lot more than he was before.

**Meg:**  Yes, of course, yes, that's week shift. Ah, lovely, Cass. Well, thanks for joining us. We'll see you next week, bye.

**Cass:**  See you next week, bye.

**Outro**

Thanks to everyone who joined us. We will see you the same time next week. Until then, download Parent Sense App, and take the guesswork out of parenting.