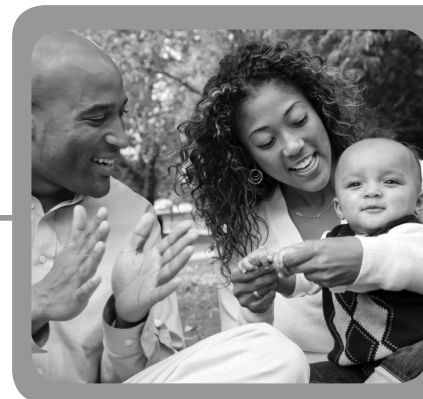


# Communication

## Activities to Help Your Baby Grow and Learn



0-2 months

Your newborn is already a communicator. He frets and cries if he needs you, and he may gurgle and coo when he's calm. Even wiggles and squirms are part of his communication. Your baby communicates with his eyes as he looks for yours. He seems to be saying, "You are my most important person." Soon your baby will capture your heart with a real smile!

### Humming and Holding

Hold your baby close to the skin of your chest or neck. She loves the feel and smell of that wonderful body. As you walk or rock or simply rest, hum a little tune or lullaby. Baby will hear and feel your soft song.

### Squirmy Wiggles

Sometimes your baby will frown, squint his little eyes, and tighten up his little tummy. Ask about that as you hold him to your shoulder and gently stroke his body: "Is air in there? Do you need a little burp?"

### Happy Talk

When baby seems to be smiling, have a happy talk about it and smile right back: "Look at that smile!" Soon you'll know when your baby is really smiling at you! It's a magic time for both of you.

### "Ooo" to You

While baby is rested, relaxed, and looking at your face, softly say a long "oooooooo" sound. Watch how she reacts. When baby is a few weeks old, she may think your "ooooo" face is very interesting and try to make one, too. Soon baby will try to say "oooooooo" back. What a conversation!

### Calling, Calling You!

When you are out of sight and baby starts to cry, tell baby that you hear him and that help is on the way: "I hear you, little one, and I'm coming to you." Your baby will learn that your voice is like a promise and that your face will soon appear. How wonderful!

### Talking and Teaching

When your baby is awake and relaxed, take a walk around the room or step outside if the weather is nice. Tell her about the people and things in his world: "This is your window. This is your sofa. This is your sister. Look, this is your flower. These are just for you."

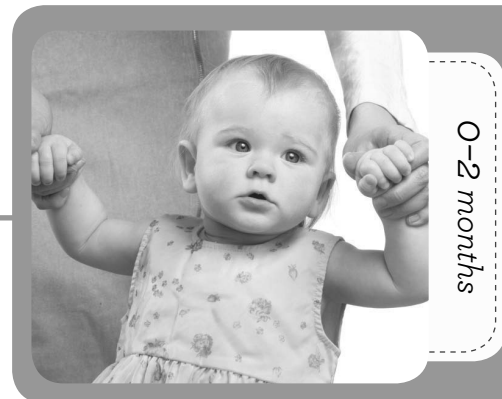
Notes:



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# Gross Motor

## Activities to Help Your Baby Grow and Learn



Your amazing new baby will grow rapidly during these first weeks. Her limbs are held close to her body and her fists are tightly closed. Although her neck is not yet very strong, she will soon want to lift her head, especially while on her tummy. (Your careful supervision is important anytime baby lies on her tummy.) Within a few weeks, she will be able to hold her head up for a few seconds while you hold her up to your shoulder. Her knees are usually pulled up toward her tummy, but soon she will relax and practice kicking.

### Open Wide!

After bath time when your baby is feeling relaxed and awake, hold baby's fists close to her chest, then gently pull them apart to an open position, then pull them closed again. Make a little song about it: "Close the baby. Now open up the baby. Now close the baby. Now kiss the baby!" Baby will have fun playing and watching your happy face.

### Baby Tummy Time

While baby is on his tummy, lie beside him with your face by his. Hold his fingers and meet his eyes. Talk a bit and sing. Smile and let him know how wonderful he is. What a happy way to visit! Next time place yourself on baby's other side.

### Tickle Toes

While your baby is on her back, help her learn about her feet by playing games with her feet and toes. Put her feet together and kiss the bottoms: "Yum yum, what tasty little feet you have!" Nibble her little toes and blow little buzzing sounds into her toes. Be sure to watch baby's face to make sure she's having fun.

### Things Are Looking Up!

While baby is on his tummy, watch for signs that his head and neck are getting stronger. When baby begins to lift his head, place an interesting toy or a shiny spoon in front of his gaze, and encourage him to raise his head to get a better look. Talk about how strong he is when he lifts his head.

### Hide the Mommy (or Daddy)

While baby is lying on her back, place yourself on one side with your face at about her level. Talk to her and call her name: "Hi, little baby. Where's your mommy?" When baby turns her head to your voice, be sure to smile and show a happy face: "You found me!" Now play the game from the other side.

### Beautiful Bath Time

While bathing baby, take a little time to give him some extra massage. Talk to him while you gently rub his "special little neck," "rumply little tummy," or "strong back and beautiful bottom." You might also talk as you pat baby dry after the bath. Your hands on these body parts will teach baby about his body, and he will hear the love in your voice.

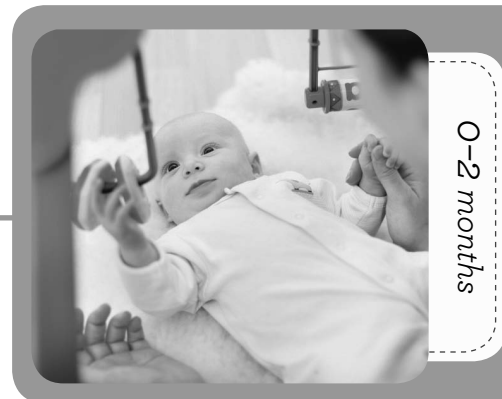
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# Fine Motor

## Activities to Help Your Baby Grow and Learn



Your new baby's hands are usually closed in little fists. If you place your finger in her little hand, you will be surprised at the strength of her grip. If you place a small toy in her hand, that grip will help her hold on to it, although it may be only for a very short time. As she grows, her hands will begin to relax. She will find textures and surfaces interesting, so she may move her fingers against cloth or your face or may grasp your hair, even though she has no knowledge that it is attached to you!

### Tiny Tugging

While your baby is relaxed and rested, place your finger in baby's fist. Feel baby's grip on your finger. Now slowly tug baby's hand just a bit. If she holds on, relax and tug once more. Tell baby how strong she is. Switch hands and tug again. Make up a little tugging song to sing as you gently tug and relax.

### Happy Holder

Give your baby some experience holding different things with different textures. Place different safe items in baby's grip. Let him hold on to a spoon (cool and hard). Later, let baby hold on to the corner of his washcloth (damp and warm). Let him hold on to a toy or a sock. Just letting him hold different things is a way to teach him about the world.

### Family Fingers

Let baby play with the members of her family by holding their fingers. Wash hands before playing this game! When Grandma places her finger in baby's hand, she can greet baby and have a little talk: "Hello, beautiful! I'm your grandma, and you are holding on to my finger!" Next, let brother or sister have a turn. Stop when your baby gets tired or starts to fuss.

### Happy Hands

After baby's bath, rub some baby oil or lotion on his hands. Gently massage the wrist, palms, and each tiny finger. Tell baby about what you're doing: "I'm rubbing your beautiful little thumb."

### Scarf Pull

Place one corner of a smooth scarf or handkerchief in baby's hand. Now pull it through slowly, open it, and let the colors flutter in front of baby's gaze. What a colorful surprise!

Notes:



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# Problem Solving

## Activities to Help Your Baby Grow and Learn



Your newborn baby can do amazing things. Your baby can see your face when you hold her close. She can hear your voice. She can hold your finger in her hand. Your baby's brain is growing very fast, and play is very important for her brain development. Right now play is about interacting with you and very simple objects or toys. In the first months, your baby can only see things that are about 8–10 inches away; everything else is fuzzy. Your baby's brain is taking in sounds she hears from the very beginning. Very soon she will begin to understand simple words.

### Circles and Waves

You can make a simple picture for your baby to look at. Use a piece of cardboard and nontoxic black or red markers. Draw thick, simple, large lines with curves or circles. To help him focus, bring it close (about 10 inches). Wow. That is cool!

### Rattles and Rainbows

When your baby is lying on her back, hold an object about 10 inches above her head. A rattle that makes a little noise will help get her attention. Slowly move the object back and forth in a rainbow arch from side to side. You can also make a rainbow from her belly to above her forehead. Your baby will watch the object with her eyes.

### Look at Me!

Hold your baby close to your face. Smile, stick out your tongue, or make a silly face. Do this slowly so baby can take it all in. Watch what he does!

### Simple Stories

At quiet times and before sleep, talk to your baby in a soft, gentle voice. Tell her simple stories or talk about the day. She will not understand you at first, but she will very soon. What she will love is being cuddled and looked at and listening to your voice.

### Sing to Me

Baby will love to hear your high, sing-songy voice. Talk slowly in a high voice. You do not have to talk "baby talk." You can look at a picture book and talk about the pictures. Or just talk! He will soon begin to make sounds to talk to you.

### Lap Time

After a few weeks, your baby can hold her head up while you hold her in your lap. Put new things close to her to look at on the floor or the table. She will enjoy seeing these things up close. Tell your baby what she is seeing: "Cup. That's your cup." "Look, here is your sock."

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# Personal-Social

## Activities to Help Your Baby Grow and Learn



Your new baby needs you right now. She depends on you to feed her and keep her warm and safe. Your baby interacts by looking at you or using her voice to get your attention. When you respond to her cries, she learns to trust you. She will enjoy being held and talked to by others in the family, but you are the most important person in your baby's world.

### Mealtime Moments

As baby nurses or takes a bottle, softly touch her little cheek, forehead, or tiny ears. Look her in the eyes and tell her she is like no other—your own little miracle. Your baby may want to stay right there in your arms, even if she is not eating.

### What Did You Say?

As soon as your baby is born, he is trying to tell you something. Babies' first "words" are cries that say, "I want you," "I'm cold," "I'm hungry," or "I'm tired." Listen and learn what each cry means. Talk to him: "Are you hungry?" "Are you tired, little baby?"

### Whose Hand Is That?

When your baby is rested and not hungry, place her on her back and sit next to her. Stay close. Tell her you love her. Talk to baby about her body: "Look at your hands! Your fingers!" Everything is new and interesting to her. Even her body parts are amazing!

### Smiley Face

Smile at your baby all day, especially when diapering, bathing, or feeding your baby. Give him little nose kisses. In the first few weeks, your baby's smile is mostly a reflex, but soon he will smile back at you. What a wonderful sight!

### What's Next?

Talk to your baby about her day and what is going to happen next. She does not know the words yet but will very soon. This will help your baby learn the routine: "It's time for a nap." "It's time to eat."

### Give Me a Break!

Your wonderful baby is able to let you know he needs a break. He may do things like look away, yawn, cry, or arch his back. He may need a nap or just a little break. After a rest, he will be ready to enjoy his interesting world again.

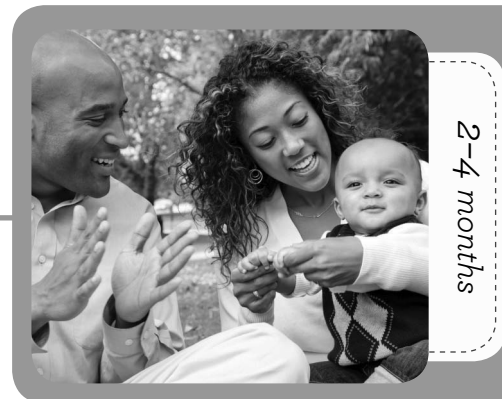
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# Communication

## Activities to Help Your Baby Grow and Learn



Your wonderful new person communicates with her whole body. Her gaze tells you that you are the most important person in the world. She communicates with body movements, noises, and her own special cry when she needs something. Your baby's favorite music is your gentle voice. Even though your baby enjoys the sounds of a busy household, some quiet time is important so that she can hear family voices.

### Musical Moments

Sing as you bathe, feed, exercise, or change your baby. Introduce favorite tunes and rhymes, or make up your own. Add baby's name now and then. "Twinkle, twinkle, little Andie. How I love my little Andie." Let your baby watch your face. Baby knows how important she is!

### Funny Baby

During quiet and happy times, encourage your baby to smile. Make funny (not scary) faces that he likes. When baby smiles, be sure to make that face again. Tell baby how funny he is!

### Picture Books

With your baby cuddled on your lap, hold a book with simple, clear, colorful pictures so that both of you can see. You could also look at magazine pictures, newspaper food advertisements, or family photos. Talk softly about what you see as you point to the pictures. Baby will learn that reading time is very special.

### Special Talking Time

When your baby is awake, cuddle her and hold her so she can see your face. Talk for a little while. Look at her face as she looks at yours. Encourage her to make different sounds, coos, and squeals. Have a conversation.

### Words for Baby's Cry

As you comfort baby when he cries, talk about why he is crying. Try to figure out what is wrong, and tell him about it as you take care of his needs.

### Noticing Sounds

When sounds happen around the house, help baby notice by talking about them: "I hear the phone ringing. I hear your brother calling."

### Phone Time

When talking on the phone, hold your baby close and look at her. Baby will enjoy watching and listening to you. She'll think your conversation is just for her!

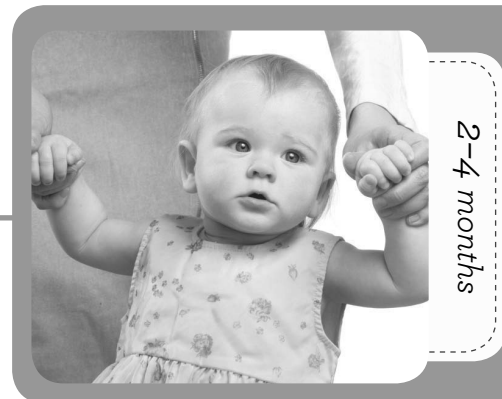
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# Gross Motor

## Activities to Help Your Baby Grow and Learn



Baby is gaining strength right from the beginning. He practices lifting and controlling his head. He moves his arms and legs. Soon he will be able to roll from his back to his side. He likes being held so that his feet gently touch a surface. He likes to be held in a sitting position so that he can strengthen his back and tummy muscles and see what's going on.

### Position Changes

When baby is awake, place baby in different positions, such as on her stomach or side. This will allow baby to move her arms and legs in different ways or directions. This also will strengthen baby's body and make her view more interesting.

### Kicking Practice

Place baby on his back on a firm surface. As you talk quietly to baby, encourage him to move his legs. Hold a foot in each hand and gently move his feet back and forth.

### Heads Up

Put baby on her stomach. Dangle a bright toy in front of her, or make faces and sounds to encourage your baby to lift her head. Then give her a big smile. While you walk with your baby's head by your shoulder, pass by a bright curtain or picture. Give her time to lift her head and look: "Wow, little one, look at that! Your neck is so strong!"

### Bath Time for Two

One special way to bathe baby is with you. Enjoy gently massaging his legs, arms, tummy, and back. Allow baby to kick and splash as you hold him safely and talk and sing a little bath time song.

### Balancing Act *(about 3-4 months)*

Stand baby on your knees. With your hands around her little body, gently hold her in a standing position. Let her support as much of her own weight as she can to help her strengthen her legs and gain balance. Hold her so she looks at you, and then smile. Next time hold her so she's looking out. There's so much to see!

### Roll Over

Encourage baby to roll from his stomach to his back by holding a bright toy in front of him and slowly moving it over to the side. You may need to help him roll over with your hand until he can do it himself.

### Pretty Pull-Ups *(about 3-4 months)*

Place baby on your lap facing you. Pull her up slowly by her arms. Then, gently lower her in an up-and-down game. Talk to her as she moves up and down. This will help to strengthen stomach muscles and let baby see the world and your smiling face from a different point of view.

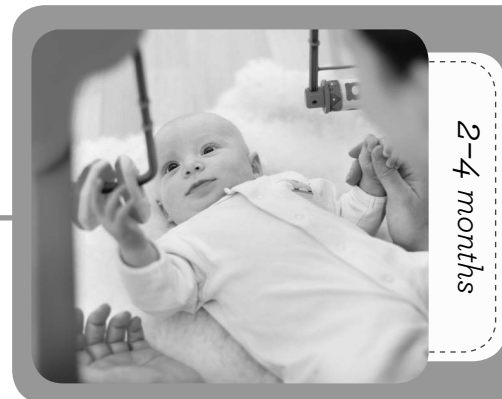
### Notes:



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# Fine Motor

## Activities to Help Your Baby Grow and Learn



Your baby is gaining control of her gaze and can focus on a nearby object for a few seconds. Soon she'll be able to follow you with her eyes while you move around. Her fist will grasp your finger and hold on tightly. She will show excitement by waving her arms. She is beginning to notice what's going on in the world; what a wonderful time!

### Finger Kiss

When feeding baby, encourage him to touch your lips (if he doesn't do this spontaneously). Kiss his fingertips. Baby will learn the soft, wet sensation of your lips and soon will learn to aim his fingers toward your lips.

### Gotcha *(about 3-4 months)*

While your baby is lying on a firm surface or sitting so that she faces you, offer a toy or something to grasp just beyond her reach. When she reaches for it, make sure she gets it. She'll probably taste it, too!

### Finger Grip

Let your baby grab your finger and grip it tightly. Gently tug a little just to let your baby know you're there: "My, you are so strong!"

### Finger and Toe Rub

Rub your baby's fingers and toes one at a time. A little oil or baby lotion makes this especially nice. Your baby will enjoy the way it feels. It will also help baby learn about his body. Talk softly as you rub him: "I love your beautiful little toes."

### Ribbon Flutter

Hang a long, brightly colored ribbon or scarf loosely around your neck. When you lean over to change baby or pick her up, let her reach out and touch the ribbon. Talk about what she is doing: "You touched the pretty ribbon. I wore it just for you!"

### Tuggy Tug

Let baby grasp a dishcloth or the corner of a washcloth. Slightly tug the other end. Tell him how strong he is. Let go gently and let him win the pulling game!

Notes:



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# Problem Solving

## Activities to Help Your Baby Grow and Learn



Your baby already responds to sounds and voices. He's beginning to look for the source of the noise. He also looks at his surroundings and will show an active interest in a person or toy. He likes to study things, such as his own hands and his favorite face—yours!

### Tracking Fun

Let baby follow a rattle, a shiny spoon, or your face with his eyes. Hold your face or an object 10–12 inches from baby's face and slowly move from left to right. Talk softly as you play. Baby will enjoy being part of the action.

### Light Touch

Stroke your baby gently with a feather, a cotton ball, or the edge of a cloth. Your baby will enjoy the sensation as she learns to find and feel different body parts. Talk to baby softly. Describe what she is feeling.

### Cotton Ball Sniff

To help your baby develop his sense of smell, put a bit of toothpaste on your finger, or hold a sweet smelling bar of soap. If you have them in your kitchen, you might put a drop of mint or vanilla on a tissue or cotton ball. Gently wave these smells near baby so he can experience the scent: "Mmm, it smells so good."

### Making Faces

With baby on her back, lean over her and make surprised or happy faces. Encourage her to reach for your nose or lips or mouth. Have a little laugh together.

### Colorful Socks

Put brightly colored socks on your baby's feet. This will encourage him to look at his feet and start to reach for them! This game will help baby discover parts of his own body: "Wow, look at those pretty feet!"

### Spoon Sounds

Lay your baby on her back and dangle a couple of shiny spoons above her so she can reach and bat them: "Listen. Did you hear them tinkling?" Shiny spoons also make a nice hanging crib toy to entertain baby as long as they are safely out of reach.

### Reaching Practice

*(about 3–4 months)*

Place baby in your lap or the lap of another special person. Hold up a safe and interesting toy for baby to reach for. Let baby be successful by slowly moving the toy to his fingers: "You got it!"

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# Personal-Social

## Activities to Help Your Baby Grow and Learn



Baby will look into your eyes to tell you, "I'm yours." She loves and needs a lot of holding and physical contact. When she needs you, she will fuss or cry. Your response and gentle voice will comfort her. When she is taking in information, she will be calmer. This is often after eating, resting, or having a diaper changed. She is now able to smile at happy faces that please her, mostly yours!

### Love and Trust Building

Respond right away when baby cries. It's her way of telling you something important. Carry, hug, smile, sing, and talk to baby often. It's your way of saying, "I love you, and I'll take care of you."

### Communicating Through Touch

After his bath, baby may be ready for a massage. Use baby oil and gently massage his arms, hands, legs, feet, back, tummy, and bottom. Continue only as long as your baby is quiet and content. Talk or sing a little song. You can make it up—baby won't mind.

### Funny Face Play

Make an *oh* face; slowly stick out your tongue or pucker your lips when baby seems to be studying your face. Hold that expression and see if your baby will imitate it. Smile if baby copies you!

### Looking in the Mirror

Hold your baby up in front of a mirror. She may enjoy smiling and making noises at herself. As baby looks in the mirror, she is learning about your gentle touch and about the "other baby" she sees.

### Peekaboo

Play Peekaboo with your baby. Place your hands over your eyes. Release your hands and say, "Boo." Place a blanket over your head then drop the blanket and say, "Boo!" Your baby will enjoy many variations of this game for a long time to come.

### Firm Grip

As baby's fist begins to relax, place a small toy in his hand. He won't be very good at letting go just yet. Let him grasp your finger while he nurses. Smile and tell him how strong he is!

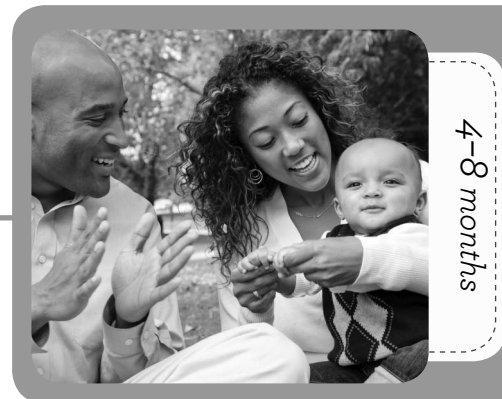
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# Communication

## Activities to Help Your Baby Grow and Learn



Your baby knows his name and may use his voice to let you know he is happy. He can shout for your attention. He squeals and is beginning to babble to you and to others. He makes sounds such as “mama” or “dada.” He also is learning to respond to “bye-bye.”

### Baby Rubdown

After bath time, enjoy some quiet time talking with your baby as you gently rub him down with lotion or oil. Tell him about your day and ask about his: “We went to the market today. You wore your new shirt from Grandma.”

### What’s That?

When your baby notices a sound, help her locate the source. Ask your baby questions: “What’s that? Daddy’s car? Did you hear a dog?”

### Touch that Sound

As your baby begins to experiment with his voice at about 5 months, you will probably hear “ba,” “mmm,” and “da” and “ah,” “ee,” and “oo” sounds. Imitate the sounds baby makes. While you make the sound, let your baby put his fingers on your lips to feel the vibrations.

### Trust Building with Words

When you move away from your baby to do other things, keep in touch with your baby through your words. Tell her what you are doing as she follows with her eyes: “I’m over here. I’m picking up the clothes. I’ll be right back.” Now and then step out of sight but continue to talk until you return: “Did you miss me?”

### Reading Time

Your baby will enjoy looking at pictures in magazines or books. Choose things such as a phone, dog, car, or spoon. Sit with your baby on your lap and read or talk about the pictures. Tell a little story: “See the phone? It’s for you.”

### Sing a Song

When you are bathing, diapering, or changing your baby’s clothes, sing a song: “This is the way we wash our toes, wash our toes, wash our toes. This is the way we wash our toes, so early in the morning.”

### Hide and Seek

Move just out of sight and call baby’s name. Wait a few seconds and then reappear: “Here I am!” Now find another place and hide again.

### Notes:



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# Gross Motor

## Activities to Help Your Baby Grow and Learn



Your baby gets stronger every minute. She now holds her head up and looks all around at everything that's going on. She is learning to sit by herself, even though at first she uses her hands for support. She loves standing while you hold her. Soon she will be able to pull herself up.

### Floor Time

Spread out a quilt on the floor or outside in a shaded spot. Put your baby on the blanket on her tummy with a few of her favorite toys and encourage her to stretch, scoot, roll, squirm, or wiggle her way to the toys. Be sure to give some time for baby to be on her back, too.

### Sitting Pretty

Help your baby sit alone. Sit behind him and give him some gentle support. A big sister or brother could also do this. At first, baby might want to help hold himself up with his hands. Later baby can hold a toy or a book. Whisper in his ear that he is a wonderful baby! As he learns to sit by himself, you can give him less help.

### Bouncy Baby

Hold on to your baby's hands and help her stand up. Have fun bouncing up and down while she's standing on the floor, the sofa, or your lap. Sing a little bouncing chant: "Bouncy, bouncy, bouncy, stop." What fun!

### Stand-Up Play

*(about 7 months)*

Your baby may enjoy standing up while holding on to tables and chairs and reaching for different objects. Remove breakable items from low tables or shelves, and line up some of his favorite toys to reach for.

### Little Explorer

Now that baby is learning to crawl, she'll want to explore the whole house: "What's under the table? What's behind the chair?" Make sure the areas where she can explore are safe and clean. What good exercise for both of you!

### Obstacle Course

*(about 6-7 months)*

Once your baby has started to crawl, you can make a simple obstacle course of pillows and blankets for your baby to crawl across and around.

### Kitchen Helper

As your baby gets better at sitting alone, give your baby a small pan or pot lid and a spoon to play with. Baby will enjoy the noise as he bangs it, pats it, and rolls it.

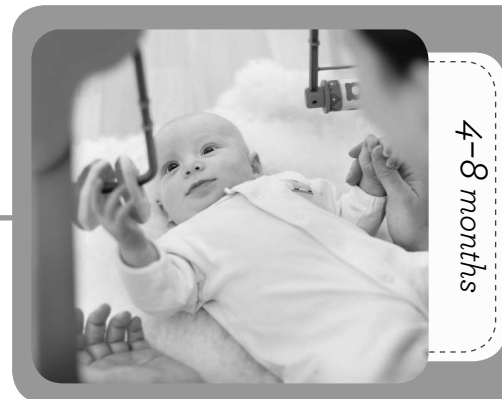
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# Fine Motor

## Activities to Help Your Baby Grow and Learn



Your baby's grasp has relaxed now, and he likes to reach and grab nearby objects. He can hold and bang objects and even hold something in each hand! He may watch you scribble with interest. He's learning how to use his fingers and is getting better at it every day.

### Rattles and Toys

Give your baby plenty of opportunities to try out different toys. Things that feel different or toys that make sounds will be very interesting to your baby. Some of the best toys aren't toys at all, such as spoons.

### Picky, Picky (6 months or older)

When your baby starts eating solid food, he will enjoy trying to pick up small bits with his thumb and forefinger. Don't worry about the mess. This fun activity strengthens eyes and fingers.

### Ice Is Nice

Crush ice into very small pieces that baby can safely eat. Your baby will love to explore the cold ice as it squirms around in a bowl. The crushed ice and cool fingers will feel good on baby's gums and new little teeth!

### Drop and Dump

As soon as your baby can sit alone, she can sit on the floor and play some dropping games. Use a plastic container and a small ball, block, or toy. Let your baby drop the ball into the container. You may need to help her at first. Now dump it out. She will want to try it again and again!

### Finger Paint

Put a dab of soft, smooth food (e.g., yogurt, soft mashed carrots) on a plate or cookie sheet and let your baby "paint" with her fingers. It's all right if he eats the "paint."

### Noodle Pull

Give baby a serving of cool, cooked noodles. Let baby pull apart a few strands. This is a fun way to practice using fingers and to snack at the same time.

### Cereal Spill

Put a few pieces of round dry cereal in a plastic bottle. See if your baby can figure out how to tip over the bottle to feed herself the cereal.

### Busy Bath Time

Make bath time fun. This is a good time to practice holding and pouring. Add plastic cups and a plastic pitcher to baby's bath. What wet, bubbly fun!

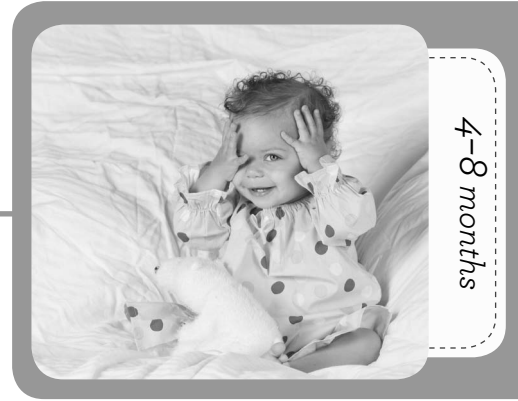
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# Problem Solving

## Activities to Help Your Baby Grow and Learn



Your busy learner is interested in making things work! She will find a toy that's partly hidden and will reach with all her might for something that's just out of reach. She knows when a voice is friendly or angry and much prefers friendly sounds. She also loves playing hiding games, such as Peekaboo!

### Where Did It Go?

Move your face or a favorite toy behind a cover while your baby is watching. Ask, "Where is Mommy?" Drop the cover and say, "Here I am!" Cover baby's doll or bear. Ask, "Where is the bear?" Move the cloth and say, "There he is!"

### Bath Time Boats

Put several plastic containers in your baby's bath. She will delight in learning about sinking, floating, dumping, and pouring.

### Reactions

Provide baby with toys that react such as squeak toys, pull toys, and pop-up toys. Let baby discover ways to make things happen! Share baby's surprise: "Look what happened!"

### Hide a Squeak Toy

Hide a toy or some item that makes noise, such as a bell or set of measuring spoons, under a blanket while your baby watches. Reach under the blanket and make the sound. Let him try to find it. Now hide the toy to the side, then behind your baby. Let him look around, then "help" him find it!

### Music Maker

Give baby a spoon or a block for each hand. Show her how to bang them on a tabletop or highchair tray while you sing a song. Sing and tap loudly, then sing and tap very softly. Hooray for the band!

### Hide the Baby

This is a fun version of Peekaboo. While folding laundry or doing the dishes, cover baby with a sheet, towel, or dishcloth. Say, "Where's the baby?" Wait a second and pull down the cloth. "Surprise! There's the baby!"

### Safe Sandbox

In a small container or tray, let baby touch some flour. As you do this, talk about how it feels and show him how to sift it through his fingers: "Ooh, that's so soft."

Notes:



**Don't Forget!** Activities should be supervised at all times by an adult. Any material, food, or toy given to a young child should be reviewed for safety. Always watch baby when she is in water.

# Personal-Social

## Activities to Help Your Baby Grow and Learn



Your baby knows you very well now and will lift his arms to come to you. He may begin to fret when strangers approach. He likes to play with his image in the mirror and is really quite sociable as long as he feels safe and secure.

### A Cup for Baby

Allow your baby to hold a plastic cup. Put a little water in it and see what baby will do. She will probably enjoy trying to drink out of a cup. Let her experiment. A bib is a good idea. (You might also want to have a small towel handy!)

### Body Awareness

Your baby is discovering different body parts and probably has become very interested in his feet and hands. Encourage him by playing games with fingers and toes, such as "This Little Piggy." Talk about his body parts. When he touches his feet, say, "You found your feet!"

### Self-Feeding

Encourage your baby to pick up and eat safe foods, such as crackers or cereal bits. You may also give baby her own spoon to hold while you feed her with another spoon. Try taking turns—you pretend to eat a little and then offer a bite to your baby. Baby will understand that feeding herself is the way to go.

### Whisper Power

Rock, walk, or dance and whisper sweet words in your baby's ear. Whispering to your baby helps him to calm down and provides another way to talk in a quiet and loving voice.

### A Social Hour

Invite another parent and baby over to play with your baby. As the babies look at, reach for, and explore each other, they will make important discoveries about real people. Stay close by to keep each baby safe as they do their exploring.

### Wave Bye-Bye

Wave bye-bye when you leave the room for a moment or two. As you wave, tell your baby where you are going: "I am going into your bedroom to get your blanket. I'll be right back. Bye-bye."

### Faces in the Mirror

While looking in the mirror with your baby, talk about body parts, such as the eyes, nose, and ears. Touch your nose and say, "Daddy's nose!" Touch baby's nose and say, "Baby's nose." Then say, "Daddy's eyes, baby's eyes." Play this game as long as baby seems interested.

### Notes:



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# Communication

## Activities to Help Your Baby Grow and Learn



Your baby now has many different sounds and a lot to say. She likes to play with sounds, such as “ba ba ba,” and is learning that some sounds mean special people, such as “dada” and “papa.” She understands some words and directions now and will soon say the names of familiar people or things.

### Following Directions

Help your baby learn to listen and follow simple directions. Try simple directions, such as “Show me Grandma,” “Wash your tummy,” or “Hold the diaper.” When baby responds or follows the direction, be sure to let him know you notice: “Oh, there’s Grandma” or “Thank you for holding the diaper.”

### Grocery Time Is Learning Time

When you go to the food market, talk to baby about what she is seeing. Let her hold a small box or a piece of fruit. Point out signs in the store and read them to your baby: “That sign says apples. Let’s get some nice red apples.”

### The Phone Game

Talk to your baby on a play phone or an old cell phone. Be sure to remove the battery before giving it to baby. When there are two phones, you can both “talk,” even though baby may only make her baby sounds or pretend to listen. Your baby will have fun carrying on a conversation just like big people.

### Sleep Waltz

At naptime or bedtime, hold your baby close and dance together to some quiet music. Your baby has probably spent a lot of time exploring during the day. Now she needs some cuddling. This communicates to baby a feeling of closeness and intimacy.

### Just My Voice

When baby is awake and alert, turn off the television and other household sounds so that he only hears your voice. This helps baby hear the sounds of words more clearly. Hum and sing just for baby’s pleasure. Ask baby, “Can you hear a bird? Can you hear the rain?”

### Baby Babble Game

When your baby makes a sound, such as “ba,” repeat the sound back: “Ba ba ba.” Your baby will enjoy playing with sounds and making conversation.

### Applause, Applause

When baby does something new or fun, give baby a hand. Clap and say, “Yeah!” Baby will love the attention and may start to clap, too!

### Reading Fun

Read to your baby every day. Cuddle up, get close, and make this a special time together. Point to pictures in books or ask her to find something: “Where’s the kitty? Where are baby’s socks?”

Notes:

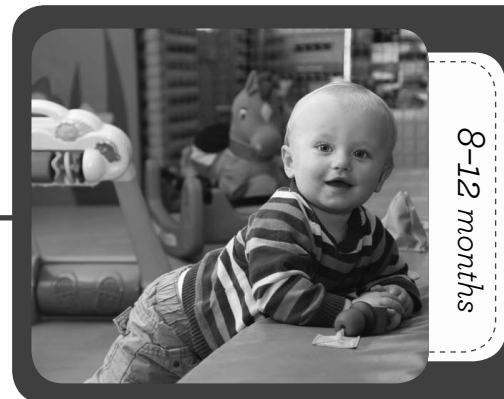


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# Gross Motor

## Activities to Help Your Baby Grow and Learn



This is a very active period for your baby. He's now pulling up on furniture, crawling and creeping into places he couldn't reach before, and getting ready to walk. In fact, he will probably walk holding on to your hand and attempt a few steps without your help. Baby is on the move!

### Money in the Bank

Save large lids from jars to use as "money." Now that your baby can sit on her own, let her put these round things into a clean container. Then shake the container and make a great noise. Dump them out and put the "money" in the bank again.

### Kick, Kick

When you are changing your baby's diaper or getting him ready for bed, play this game. As your baby kicks his legs, sing in rhythm to the kicking. When your baby stops kicking, stop singing. When he starts again, start singing. This will develop into a fun game of stop and go. Your baby not only exercises his muscles, but he gets to be the boss.

### Reaching for Fun

If your baby is pulling herself to a standing position, put some of her favorite toys on a low table and let her stretch way out to reach them. This will give her practice with reaching and balancing. She will also be learning about ideas such as near and far.

### Rain, Rain in the Tub

Get a small empty plastic container, put some holes in it, and let your baby fill it with water during bath time. Help him to hold it up and discover "rain" for himself while you supervise.

### Walking Practice

Once your baby has started to walk, she will want to practice a lot. Show her how to hold on to a lightweight but stable chair or stool and push it around the room. Sturdy cardboard boxes also make great push toys. Let your baby push things indoors and outside.

### Tunneling

While folding laundry, throw a blanket or sheet over a table or the backs of two chairs. Let your little explorer crawl into the "tunnel." When he's out of sight, call him. Then, greet him with surprise when he finds you: "Oh, there you are!"

Notes:



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# Fine Motor

## Activities to Help Your Baby Grow and Learn



Your busy baby is beginning to pick up tiny bits of food with her thumb and forefinger. She can take things out of a container, such as spoons out of a plastic bowl, and can bang two toys together. If you give her a crayon and paper, she may even attempt to imitate your writing with a scribble.

### Feely Game

In a cardboard box, collect things to feel, hold, and bang. Good items might include an empty plastic bottle, a toothbrush, and a little shoe. Let baby reach into the box to grab something and pull it out to show you. Talk about what he is holding. This exercise for little muscles also helps baby explore how different things feel.

### Find the Feet

With baby sitting on the floor or the bed, drop a towel or small blanket over baby's feet. Ask baby, "Where are your feet?" Let baby pull off the blanket and show you her feet: "Hooray! There they are." Then play it again!

### Catcher's Up

Use a small, soft ball (or make a ball out of socks rolled together) and play catch with your baby. He won't be able to really catch the ball yet, but he will enjoy trying to throw it and chase after it.

### Tearing

Get a big basket or box and put some old magazines and wrapping paper inside. Let your baby tear what she wants. If she is more interested in putting wads of paper in her mouth, put the box away and try again in a few weeks.

### Sticks and Stones

Take a walk outside. Encourage your baby to pick up items, such as stones, twigs, and leaves. Put them in a pail or paper bag. Talk about the color or the size: "Look, this big leaf is nice!"

### Goodies in a Jar

Put small pieces of cereal in a screw-top or snap-top plastic container. Put the lid on loosely. Let baby take the lid off. You may have to show your baby how to take the lid off and get the cereal. Soon he will do it by himself.

### Bedtime Book Time

A great way to get ready for bed is to snuggle up and read books with your baby. Let her pick a few books and help turn the pages. Talk about the pictures and ask her to point to things she sees. Enjoy your special time.

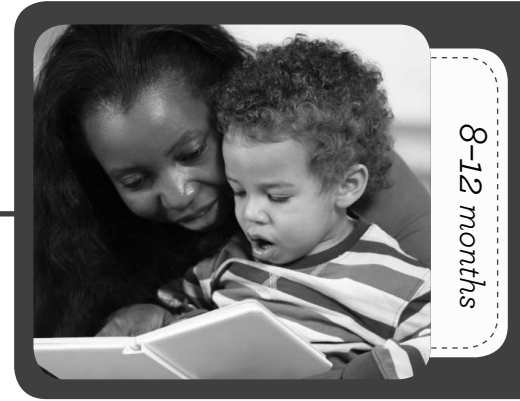
Notes:



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# Problem Solving

## Activities to Help Your Baby Grow and Learn



As baby learns how things work, he will be busy taking them apart. He can take pieces out of a puzzle or rings off a stack. He is learning how to find hidden objects under a blanket. He enjoys looking at pictures in a book and enjoys when you name the pictures. He's been so busy exploring that he probably now knows the word *no*.

### Rhythm Play

Give your baby spoons to drum on a table or a pot. Clap blocks or sticks together to make sounds. Sing along and dance a little. Enjoy the music!

### Scarf Play

Tie several colorful scarves together. Insert one end into a cardboard tube. Let your baby pull the scarves through the tube. Now see if your baby can stuff the scarves back into the tube.

### Listen and Find

Hide a ticking clock or a toy that makes sounds under a pillow or blanket. Let your baby listen to find the sound: "Do you hear it? Where is it? Can you find it?"

### A Third Toy

Give your baby a toy or object when she is holding something in each hand. See if she can figure out a way to take the third item and hold on to all three. If this is too difficult for your baby right now, try it again in a few weeks.

### In and Out

Put a piece of cereal inside a clear plastic container or bottle without a lid. As your baby works to get the cereal out, he will learn more about inside and outside. Another way to show baby *inside* and *outside* is to get a big box that your baby can crawl into and out of.

### Little Laughs *(about 11 months)*

Your baby is beginning to develop a sense of humor. Do something funny, such as trying to put baby's sock on your foot or putting a clean pair of pants on your head. She just might giggle or laugh out loud! Funny Mommy! Silly Daddy!

### Lift the Cup

Place a cup and a small toy on a tray for baby. Hide the toy under the cup and ask, "Where is the toy?" If he doesn't find it, lift the cup and show your baby where it is. Say, "You found it!" Do this several times. Soon he will lift the cup and find the toy all by himself. Later, add another cup. See if baby can remember which cup hides the toy.

Notes:



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# Personal-Social

## Activities to Help Your Baby Grow and Learn



Your baby may fear strangers and want only you. She loves to explore her environment and needs your watchful eye to keep her safe. She knows her likes and dislikes and shows love for you and even favorite toys. She can help you dress her by holding up a foot for a sock or pushing her arm into a sleeve, but she is not ready to dress herself independently.

### Bath-Time Helper

When your baby is taking a bath, give her the washcloth. Encourage her to wash by herself. After the bath, let your baby help herself get dressed by pushing her arm through her nightshirt. Be patient; these self-help skills take a lot of time and practice. Be sure to give her lots of praise: "What a good job you did getting dressed!"

### Follow Me

Your baby is learning to enjoy imitation. Encourage this by showing your baby how to play Follow the Leader. Use simple movements, such as tapping on the table or putting a hat on your head. Talk about what you are doing. Say, "It's your turn," and see if your baby will follow along. Let your baby have a turn at being the leader.

### Party Time

Your baby may enjoy watching older children play, especially when he has older brothers or sisters. If there are other babies his age in the neighborhood, he will enjoy playing alongside them. At first, they will enjoy watching each other. Eventually, they will learn to play together.

### Little Helper

Give your baby a damp sponge. Let her wipe the table, chairs, floor, walls, and doors—whatever she can reach. She may enjoy doing this while you are getting dinner ready or washing dishes. Baby won't really clean anything but will feel proud of doing things "just like mommy." Tell baby, "Thank you for helping Mommy (or Daddy)."

### Snack Time

Your baby will enjoy feeding himself during snack time. Give him a few choices of simple foods such as crackers, pieces of fruit, or bits of cereal. He'll even enjoy trying to drink out of an open cup with a little help.

### Mirror, Mirror

When you have a moment at home or while running errands, stop and encourage your baby to look at her face in a mirror. Make silly faces. Tell her what a big girl she is getting to be!

### Roly-Poly Game

While sitting on the floor, roll a small ball to baby, and then ask him to roll it back. Now do it again. Then do it just a little faster! This is a fun game to play with an older sister or brother.

### Notes:



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# Communication

## Activities to Help Your Baby Grow and Learn



Your baby's babbling is beginning to sound more like talking. He says "mama" and really means it. He also is beginning to learn the names of things. He may say "no" if he is not happy. Because he's so busy learning to walk, his language use may slow down a bit. He may combine a word with pointing or using his hand to gesture, but you know very well what he means.

### Hide the Noises

Show your baby two things that make noise, such as a squeak toy, a set of measuring spoons, keys on a ring, or a rattle. Let baby play with them for a while, then hide the items under a box or cloth and make a noise with one. Take the cloth off and ask baby, "Which one made the noise?" See if she can guess.

### Quiet Time

On weekends or at a time that's not busy, spend time with baby in a quiet place with no music and no television (perhaps outside). Talk to your baby about what you're doing or about what baby is doing. Let your baby hear your voice and see your face making words. Talk calmly and tell baby how special he is. When your baby talks, encourage him. Have a conversation.

### Rhythm Clapping

While listening to music, show baby how to move and clap in rhythm. Your baby will enjoy moving to the beat. Play different types of music, such as rock, country, hip-hop, funk, electronic, pop, or classical. Be sure to keep the volume down. Those sweet ears have to last a long time!

### Listening on the Phone

When Uncle or Grandpa calls, ask him to spend a few minutes talking to baby. Baby probably won't talk back yet, but she will be delighted to hear someone's voice coming through the phone.

### Big Talk

While you do housework or get a meal together, talk to your baby about what you are doing. Encourage your little one to use two words together to make baby sentences, such as "Help me" or "More juice." This big language step will grow into a lot of talk.

### Little Reader

Read to your baby every day. Snuggle up and make this a special time. Point to pictures and name things for her. Sometimes ask her to find something: "Where's the cat? Oh, here it is." She may need a little help from you at first.

### Big Helper

Your baby can be a big helper. Give him simple directions: "Can you get me a napkin?" or "Give me your shirt, please." He may need you to point or help a little. Say, "What a big help. Thanks!"

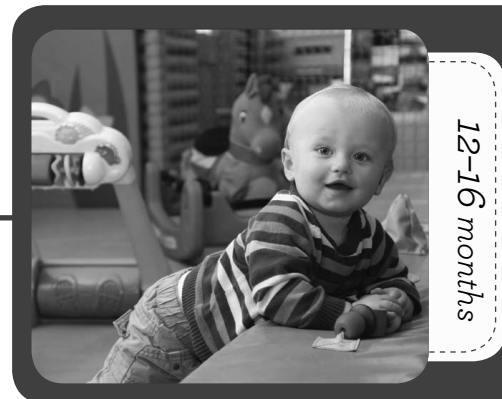
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# Gross Motor

## Activities to Help Your Baby Grow and Learn



By now your busy baby can move around the house quickly. She may be standing by herself, walking while holding onto furniture, or walking well on her own. She will try to climb up steps, so your watchful eye is very important. Baby loves to push and pull things and is getting stronger every day.

### Let's Go for a Walk

Your baby will love going for walks and seeing new things. Talk to her about what you are seeing. In an open area, let baby push her own stroller. She will enjoy the feeling of power as she moves something big all by herself. Be sure to watch that she keeps the stroller where it is safe.

### Row the Boat

Let your child experience rocking on a rocking horse or in a chair. Sit him on your lap and use your body to rock back and forth. Play with him sitting opposite you on the floor. Hold hands and gently pull and push him to and from you. Sing a little song, such as "Row, Row, Row Your Boat," while you rock back and forth.

### Moving Day

Give your baby a box large enough to push while standing. Show her how to fill it with a few toys, small cartons, or boxes. Let her push these things around the room from one area to another. She may want to take everything out. If so, show her how to put it all back in again!

### Have a Ball

Your baby will enjoy playing with balls. You can sit across from him and roll a ball to him. Encourage him to roll it back. Clap your hands when he does. If the ball is big and soft (e.g., beach ball with some of the air out), he may be able to "catch" it by stopping it when it gets to him.

### Finger Walk

Take a little walk with baby holding on to your finger. Baby can choose to hold on or to let go. Talk to baby about what you see and where you're going: "Let's walk over to those plants. Let's walk down the hall. You're a good walker!"

### Dance Party

Play some fun dancing music and show baby how to dance! Wiggle and turn, clap, and stomp your feet. Try lots of different kinds of music. Wave around some scarves and ribbons. Get other family members to join in. Have a dance party.

Notes:



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# Fine Motor

## Activities to Help Your Baby Grow and Learn



Baby is using fingers with more skill now. He will point with his index finger and can pick up tiny bits of cereal with his thumb and finger. He can hold and mark with a crayon or washable marker and grasp small objects, such as small blocks or other small toys.

### Budding Artist

Let baby draw a picture for you with a crayon and a large piece of paper. Give baby plenty of room. She may only make a few marks, but give a lot of praise: "Look at the picture you made!" Be sure to put the crayon away when you are finished. Your baby doesn't yet know that you only want marks on the paper.

### Ball Toss

Encourage your baby to practice throwing a small, soft ball. A rolled up pair of socks works just fine. Have him stand in one spot and throw the ball. Try again and see how far it goes. At first, he may need you to show him how to throw the ball. Say, "Wow, look how far it went!"

### Carton Construction

Save different sizes of paper cereal boxes or juice boxes to use for blocks. Show baby how to stack them, then knock them down. Line them up to make a wall and then knock them down again: "What fun to knock them all down!"

### Tacky Tape

Make a small wad of masking tape with the sticky side out. Give this to baby to play with. It is very entertaining and will give baby some good finger exercise.

### Squeezing

Give baby a sponge, washcloth, or sponge ball to play with in the bath. Show baby how to squeeze the water out. You might also let baby play with plastic squirt toys. That's really fun!

### Fill and Dump

Give baby a container or box and a few items such as clothespins, spoons, and small cars. Make sure the items are big enough that they can't be swallowed. Show baby how to put them all in the container, then dump them out again. The next day, change the container or the objects. Make this activity a bit more challenging by choosing a container with a smaller opening.

### Library Time

Find a time every 2 weeks or so to go to a library or bookstore. Pick out new books with your child. Cuddle every day and read together. Read the story, talk about pictures, and let her take turns pointing to pictures and turning pages. What a special time together!

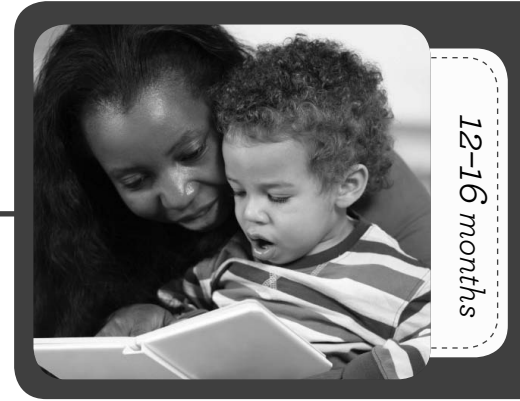
### Notes:



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# Problem Solving

## Activities to Help Your Baby Grow and Learn



Your baby is a busy explorer. She enjoys holding, stacking, and playing with toys. She is learning her body parts and can probably point to at least one if you ask her. She enjoys books and will “pat” her favorite picture. She may try to help turn pages in a book. She enjoys learning about how things work.

### Fill the Bank

Make a money bank out of a large can or a plastic container. Cut a long slit in the plastic cover about a half-inch wide. Cut circles from cardboard to use as “money” and show your baby how to put these “coins” into the bank.

### Water Painting

Give your baby a clean paintbrush and a small bucket of plain water. On a sunny day, go outside and let your child paint the walls, sidewalk, or fence with water. Your child will enjoy this “painting.” Then you can watch it dry and paint again. Try this inside with a small paintbrush and a brown paper bag. Watch the painting disappear!

### Problem Solving

Let your baby figure out how things work and what they do. Show baby how the switch turns the light on and off. Show him how the flashlight works. Talk to him about what you are doing and why: “I’m putting on a coat because I am cold.”

### Little Hunter

During quiet times, ask your baby to find the blanket or to get a book from another room. Ask her to get things she cannot see at the time. She might need a little help. When baby is successful, be sure to say, “Thank you. You found it.”

### Matching Game

Children this age are just beginning to notice when two things are alike, especially shoes, socks, or other objects they know. Hold up one of baby’s shoes or a sock. Ask baby, “Where’s the other one just like this?” Help baby make the match: “Yes, these two are the same.”

### Copy Me

Play a game with your baby. You do something and then try to get baby to imitate you. Clap your hands. If he tries to imitate you, say, “Look, you can clap, too!” Touch your nose, stick out your tongue, and say, “You try.” When he does something new, imitate him. Be silly and have fun.

Notes:

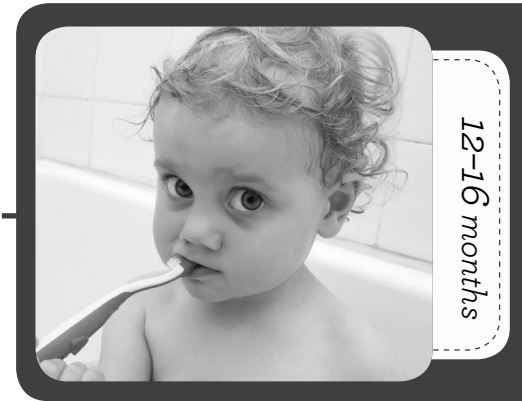


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# Personal-Social

## Activities to Help Your Baby Grow and Learn



Your sociable baby likes to roll the ball and play Peekaboo or other games with you. He needs to know you are nearby. He actually likes to be the center of attention now! He will show you great affection but may collapse into a tantrum when things don't go his way. He is proud of his new skills, and he wants to learn how to do things by himself.

### Happy Hats

Your baby may enjoy trying on different hats and looking at herself in the mirror. Make a dress-up box with a few hats. As your child gets older, you can add new things now and then.

### Help Me Clean

Your baby can help do small jobs, such as wiping the table with a sponge, stirring pancake mix (with your help), or sweeping up a little dirt with a small broom. He will enjoy doing something special for you. Give him opportunities to be a helper, and let him know he is being helpful.

### Brushing Teeth

Give baby her own toothbrush. Let her see you or her siblings brushing their teeth. Put a tiny dab of toothpaste (without fluoride) on the brush so baby can taste it. Don't expect much brushing. She will probably chew the bristles as she learns about this new thing, and you may need to finish for her. Be sure to cover baby's toothbrush and store it in a clean, safe place until next time.

### To Market, To Market

Take baby to the supermarket with you so baby can "help." Talk about all of the colors and smells. Let baby hold something, such as a small can or a lemon. At the checkout, let baby "pay" the cashier. What a good helper!

### Find Me!

At home, play Hide and Seek by hiding just behind a door, calling to baby, then peeking out so you can be found. A sibling may have fun playing this game. It helps baby understand that when you disappear, you will come back.

### Bathing Baby

When bathing baby, let him bathe a small plastic doll. Show baby how to be gentle with the doll. Later, let him dry and hug the doll. It will teach him to be loving.

### Cleanup Time

Ask baby to help you put the toys away. You will need a box with a safe cover or a shelf where toys should be placed. Show baby how to pick up the toys and where to put them. Keep this task easy and brief right now. It's a good idea to do it together and have fun: "What a good helper!"

Notes:



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# Communication

## Activities to Help Your Toddler Grow and Learn



Your toddler is beginning to enjoy language and words. She has many new words now and is beginning to put two words together for simple sentences. She looks at you when you are talking to her; she says “hi” and “bye,” and she points to things she wants. She also enjoys singing and will try to sing her favorite songs.

### Chatter Stretchers

Your toddler may use single words for requests, such as “juice” when he wants a drink. Help him stretch his sentence by saying it for him: “Would you like some juice? Say, ‘I want juice, please.’” Praise him when he attempts to make the sentence longer.

### What Happened Today?

When you get home from an outing, ask your toddler to tell someone else about what happened or what the two of you saw: “Tell Grandpa about the horse we saw.” Help her if you need to, but let her tell as much as she can.

### “Help Me” Game

Ask your toddler to help you by giving him simple directions, such as “Give Daddy his book,” “Can you get my shoe?” or “Could you bring me a diaper?” You may need to point with your finger to help him in the beginning. Be sure to say, “Thank you,” when he helps.

### Animal Sounds

Teach your toddler the sounds that animals make. Read books about baby animals, and play with your toddler by making the baby animal sounds. Later, pretend you are the animal’s parent and your toddler is the baby animal. Call each other with animal sounds. This game can be a lot of silly fun.

### Read, Read, Read

Find times to “read” throughout the day. You can point to pictures and words, and your child will begin to learn what words are about. At the grocery store, point to and read signs to your child. At a restaurant, let your child “read” a menu. At home, help her “read” magazines by looking at pictures together and talking about them.

### Treasure Box

Put together a treasure box of safe, everyday items that are interesting to explore and feel—plastic cups, a soft sock, a little ball, a hairbrush, a small shoe. When your child pulls something out of the box, say, “Look, you found a soft blue sock” or “That sponge is squishy.” Use new language for your child, and change items in the box every few days.

Notes:



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# Gross Motor

## Activities to Help Your Toddler Grow and Learn



By now, your active toddler may be attempting to run. He can carry large items and toys and loves to push and pull big things such as boxes around on the floor. He's learning how to walk upstairs with one hand held by you and is getting better at walking down stairs. He may climb up into a chair to see and reach new things. Your watchful eye is important.

### Swinging

Take your child to a playground to swing. Be sure the swing is safe and has a seat belt. Show your child how to push her feet out when swinging forward. Push gently so you know she will hold on. Chant in rhythm while you push: "Up you go, and up you go!"

### Climbing the Stairs

Hold your child's hand while you climb up steps or a few stairs. Be patient; stairs are very high for little legs. Don't expect much luck with climbing down just yet. If you don't have any stairs in your house or yard, a playground may have places to practice, such as a small slide or a jungle gym platform.

### Balance Beam

With a strip of tape or with chalk, make a line on the floor or outside on the sidewalk. Show your child how to walk along the tape, placing one foot in front of the other. Encourage your child's new skill. Tell him, "You are learning how to balance!"

### Chasing

Your toddler is beginning to run now. In a grassy part of your yard or a safe park, play chase with your little one. Most toddlers love to be chased, and they love to be caught and hugged. Your child will love doing this over and over! It's good exercise.

### Wagon Pull

Give your child a small wagon or a box with a pull string for hauling toys around. Your child can load the wagon and unload at a different place. Maybe the teddy bear wants to ride!

### Playing Music

Your toddler will love making and moving to music. You can make a drum with an oatmeal container, large plastic containers, and wooden spoons or chopsticks. Join her for a little music making. Take turns making music and dancing and moving to different rhythms.

### Kickball

Give your child a medium-size ball (6 inches) and show him how to kick it. You can also make a ball from a wad of newspaper taped all around. See how far he can make it go. Kick it and chase it!

Notes:



**Don't Forget!** Activities should be supervised at all times by an adult. Any material, food, or toy given to a young child should be reviewed for safety.

# Fine Motor

## Activities to Help Your Toddler Grow and Learn

Your toddler is becoming more skilled with hands and fingers. She can play with and use toys in many ways, including stacking, poking, pushing, and pulling. She is also gaining skill at holding and using crayons or washable markers. She knows to take apart pieces of a simple puzzle and may try to put the pieces back together.



### Tear It Up

After you each wash your hands, show your child how to tear lettuce or spinach leaves into a bowl. Help her tear small pieces just right to eat. Be sure to tell the family who made the salad. Your child also may like tearing strips of magazines or junk mail.

### Aim and Drop

Show your little one how to drop a clothespin, spool, or dry pasta (uncooked) into an empty milk jug or plastic container with a large opening. Play the game as long as your toddler enjoys it. Let him shake the container and enjoy the sound.

### Stacking Blocks

Let your little one play with small wooden cubes or blocks. Little plastic containers can be washed out and stacked, too. Show her how to stack one on top of another. Build a tower. Count aloud as you stack the blocks so that she begins to hear the sound of numbers. She'll love knocking down the tower.

### String a Snack

Give your toddler a small container of round cereal pieces and a piece of string with tape around the end to make it stiff. Show him how to string the cereal. He can wear his necklace or nibble on it!

### Place Mats

Make sure your toddler gets lots of chances to practice writing and drawing. You might keep paper and crayons or washable markers in the kitchen so you can keep an eye on her while getting dinner ready. Use drawings for placemats for the family. She will be so proud!

### Help Make a Snack

Let your toddler help make a snack. He can unscrew lids from containers such as applesauce once you get the lid loosened. He can help scoop and/or spread butter with a plastic knife. He can also help eat. Yummy!

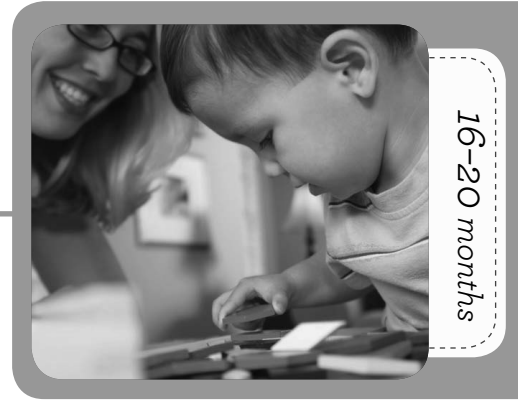
Notes:



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# Problem Solving

## Activities to Help Your Toddler Grow and Learn



16-20 months

Your busy learner now recognizes pictures of animals and other pictures, such as pictures of family members. He enjoys a lot of new activities with your help, such as painting and playing with playdough. He is beginning to understand about things that are similar or that go together in some way. He is very curious about how things work.

### Copy Cat

On a large piece of paper, draw and scribble together with your toddler. Take turns. You scribble, and then let her scribble. You draw a line, and then let her draw a line. Let her take a turn, and then you copy her scribbles.

### Making Things Fit

Allow your child to play with puzzles or toys that fit together or inside each other. Plastic containers that nest are also fun. Use the word *fit* when you can: "That piece *fits* in the puzzle."

### Tool Play

Help your child play games or do tasks that use tools. For example, use a sponge to wipe off a chair. Use a strainer and a scoop to play in the sand. Use measuring cups and funnels to fill up containers in the bathtub. Be sure to use the correct names for these items. You'll be surprised at how fast your busy little one learns them.

### Match the Socks

When you fold laundry, set aside some of the socks, both large and small. Show your toddler one sock of a pair and let him find the other. Show him how to match the socks if he needs help. Ask him, "Whose big blue socks are these?" and "Where is the other one like this?"

### Nature Walk

Go on a neighborhood walk, collecting little things such as rocks and leaves in a small pail or plastic tub. At home, try to put things together into different groups. For example, help your child sort big and little rocks, rocks from leaves, or black rocks from white rocks. Your child will learn about grouping things.

### Matching Pictures

Cut out pictures of toys, food, and other familiar objects, and glue them on cards. Have your child try to match cards to actual objects in your home. Show your child a picture of a toothbrush. Ask him, "Where is a toothbrush like this?" Then show him a picture of a chair: "Can you find something like this?"

### Notes:



**Don't Forget!** Activities should be supervised at all times by an adult. Any material, food, or toy given to a young child should be reviewed for safety. Make sure your toddler doesn't put anything in her mouth while playing outside.

# Personal-Social

## Activities to Help Your Toddler Grow and Learn



16-20 months

Your toddler is gaining more independence every day. She may show jealousy if others get attention, especially siblings. She is very interested in other children. She likes to do things by herself and may become a little bossy and resist your suggestions. Your good humor will go far in seeing you both through the coming months.

### Big Time Mealtime

When the family is at the table for meals, encourage your toddler to eat with his own utensils. He may need a booster seat to reach the table. He can begin to drink from a small plastic cup (just don't fill it to the top). Talk about what a big boy he is.

### Family Dancing

Show your toddler how to dance. Play music, and show her how to follow you or dance with you. Invite other family members to dance along. Pick up your toddler and dance with her. Praise your little one. Give her a hug.

### Storytime

This is a good time to make a routine of reading stories every night before bed. After getting ready for bed, cuddle up to enjoy a favorite book. It is especially good to read with the television turned off. Your child will hear the words and the expression in your voice. This also might be a special time for another member of the family to read with your toddler.

### Comfort Me

Your toddler is busy and often frustrated. He will need a lot of comfort and support to understand his feelings. He responds to what he's feeling right now and does not know that he will feel better in a little while. Give him words for how he is feeling: "You are sad that mom is leaving. I will be back after nap" or "It's really frustrating when you can't get that sock on." He will need your warm voice, a hug, and comfort.

### Helping Hands

Your child can begin to help in little ways. She can use a sponge to wipe up the table after dinner. She can put toys or socks in a basket. She will feel good about helping. Let her know you notice: "What a big helper!"

### Tickles and Kisses

While getting your toddler ready for bed, say goodnight with a little tickle or kiss to different parts of baby: "Goodnight, little nose [tickle]. Goodnight, little foot [tickle]. Goodnight, little ear [tickle]." Ask him what part needs a goodnight tickle or a goodnight kiss.

### Bear Bedtime

Let your child put a doll or stuffed animal to bed. She can help her bear brush his teeth. Read bear a story. Tuck bear in and kiss him goodnight.

### Notes:



**Don't Forget!** Activities should be supervised at all times by an adult. Any material, food, or toy given to a young child should be reviewed for safety. Always watch your toddler during mealtime.