

PLAY TIME ACTIVITIES FOR BABIES

Babies are born with an eagerness to learn and a natural curiosity of the world around them. As a parent you can help your baby's growth and development as well as their mastery of basic skills by providing them with plenty of fun interactive play. Simple games and lots of love and cuddling can enhance brain development in infants at any stage of growth.

1. Between 0 and 3 months, your baby will mostly sleep and eat, but in those few moments that she/he is awake, you should give her/him lots of attention, cuddling, and hugs. Play short games that use your baby's senses, especially sights, sounds, and touch. Peek-a-boo is a classic baby game that never fails to amuse little ones. Hide behind a blanket or towel and then peek out at your little one to help her/him understand object permanence. The Galt Frog in the Box is a terrific toy to add to your game of peek-a-boo.
2. Play games with your baby's fingers and toes to aid in her/his self-discovery. Move her/his arms up in the air and then back down again. Play "This Little Piggy" with her/his toes or let her/him grasp your finger in her/his hand. Play bicycle by gently moving your baby's legs in a circular motion or give her/him a gentle foot massage.
3. Find various fabrics, like slippery silk or a rough piece of burlap and let your baby explore the different feelings of the textures. Hold them in a standing position barefoot so they can feel the textures with their feet, place their hand on the fabric piece, and rub it softly on their face. Sing to your new born and read to them as well. Repetition of songs and games help your child learn. Many newborns are easily over stimulated so only play as long as your baby is interested and then move on to a new activity.
4. Three to six month olds are beginning to gain a little more independence. They can support their neck and will soon be able to roll over and sit unassisted. Tummy activities are very important for development at this age, but many babies despise tummy time. Try laying your baby on a small

towel or blanket and lie in front of her on your tummy. Use the towel to gently rock her back and forth as you talk or sing to her.

5. Explore your baby's sense of smell by introducing them to a variety of spices. Start with a mild, sweet smell like vanilla and then try other scents like cinnamon, nutmeg, or oregano. Smell candles and lotions, baby powder, and any other things around the house with an interesting odour. Take care not to get anything in your baby's eyes or nose and make sure she doesn't eat it. Remember to talk about everything you smell, describing what it is used for, how it smells, and any other words to enhance your little one's language skills.
6. Play "Where?" games with your infant after she reaches four months of age. Put a blanket over her head and say "Where's baby?" Pull the blanket off and exclaim, "There she is!". This game will delight your little one and will aid her/him understanding of objects still existing even though they can't be seen. Try this with mommy and baby's favourite toys too. Soon she/he will remove the blanket and laugh with glee at her/his discovery!

