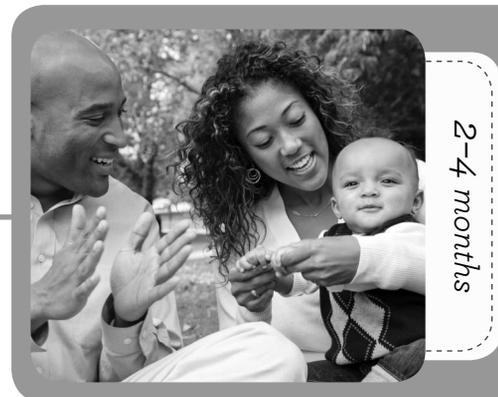


Communication

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!

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 stay with baby during bath time.

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!"

Notes:



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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!

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.