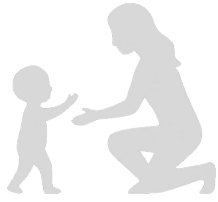


Play, Learn, Grow

Ways to Support Your Baby's Milestones



Activities for 1-4 Months

Communication

- Talk softly with your baby when feeding them, changing their diaper, or holding them
- When you see your baby responding to your voice, praise and cuddle them. Talk back to them and see if they respond again.
- Sing to your baby (even if you don't do it well). Repetition of songs and lullabies helps your baby learn and listen.
- Take your baby on a nature walk and talk about everything you see. They may not understand, but they will like to be outside and hear your voice.

Fine Motor

- Gently shake a rattle or another baby toy that makes a noise. Put it in your baby's hand and encourage them to grasp it.
- Place a teething toy in your baby's hand, assist them in bringing it towards their mouth.
- Lay your baby on their back and gently tap or rub on their hands and fingers. Play "Pat-a-Cake" or another nursery rhyme.
- Wrap one of your baby's toys in newspaper and encourage them to unwrap it.

Gross Motor

- Place your baby on their stomach. Encourage them to lift up their head and push up on their arms (you can place a rolled towel or small blanket under the baby's chest for support).
- While your baby is laying on their back, dangle toys above their head and encourage them to reach for the toys.
- Lay your baby on their back and let them kick freely or gently move their legs in a "bicycle" motion.
- Sit your baby upright with support and place toys in front of them to encourage them to reach for the toys.

Sensory

- **Provide plenty of skin-to-skin contact with the baby while feeding, sleeping, or other activities.**
- **While changing their diaper, smile at the baby, touch different parts of their body and say “beep”. See how they react to your touch and voice.**
- **Play with their toes and feet, tickling lightly. Add the “This Little Piggy Went to Market” rhyme, touching a different toe with each verse.**
- **Holding your baby securely on your knee, lightly move your knees up and down and to the side.**

Visual

- **Put a sock puppet or small sock on your finger. Say your baby’s name while moving the puppet or sock up and down. See whether they follow the movement.**
- **With your baby lying on their back, hold a brightly colored toy above their head in their line of vision. Watch if your baby tracks the toy as you move it back and forth.**
- **With white paper and black marker, create several easy-to-recognize images on each paper (or print images). Place the pictures 8”-12” inches from their face or tape them next to their crib.**
- **Place your baby in a carrier or wrap while doing house chores. Talk to your baby about what they see and what you are doing.**



Activities for 4-8 Months

Communication

- Sit your baby up to face you and blow “raspberries”, at them. Encourage them to do it back to you.
- Sing songs to your baby and incorporate hand movements to engage your baby.
- Encourage your baby to make noise and respond to them as if you are having a conversation. Repeat the sounds they make and add new words.
- Use hand movements when you speak to teach your baby how to communicate with gestures.

Fine Motor

- Sit your baby on the floor with a small container of toys in front of them. Show them how to drop a toy into the bucket and then give them a turn.
- Use building toys to stack them on top of one another. Let them try to knock them down and build them up again.
- Fill an empty tissue box with strips of paper (do not use colored newsprint, magazines, plastic bags or wraps). Encourage your baby to pull them out.
- With your baby sitting in a highchair, give them food they normally eat but cut into small pieces. Encourage them to try to pick it up with their fingers.

Gross Motor

- If your baby is rocking back and forth while on their tummy, place toys in front of them to encourage creeping and crawling towards the toys.
- Start with your baby sitting and place toys in front of them to reach for. Slowly move the toys to each side of them so they reach across their body.
- During tummy time, raise and lower a toy over their head to simulate “baby push-ups”.
- With your baby lying on their back, place a toy within sight but out of reach to encourage them to roll and get the toy.

Sensory

- **Place a windup or musical toy beside or behind your baby. See if your baby searches for the sound.**
- **Gently rub your baby with a soft cloth, paper, towel, or nylon. Talk about how these items feel (soft, rough, slippery, etc.).**
- **After a bath or during changing, gently massage your baby with lotion.**
- **Lift the baby above your head, then bring them back down to eye level. You can incorporate sounds like an airplane or “whoosh”.**

Visual

- **Play with toys that move (such as a Jack-in-the-box or wind-up toy).**
- **Place the baby in front of a shatterproof mirror. Tap on the mirror and say the baby’s name. Over time, they will begin to understand who the baby in the mirror is.**
- **Show your baby bright, high-contrast picture books or boards.**
- **Partially hide a toy under a cloth and let your baby find it.**



Activities for 8-12 Months

Communication

- Say “hi” and wave when entering a room with your baby. Encourage your baby to imitate (help your baby wave and greet others).
- Let your baby make choices. Offer two toys or food and see which one your baby picks by pointing or reaching.
- Sit the baby upright in your lap and sing the “Hokey Pokey” while taking turns holding each of their arms and legs out.
- During diaper changes or playtime, stick your tongue out at your baby. Encourage them to mimic you.

Fine Motor

- Give your baby a plastic container with large beads or blocks. Encourage them to put them in the container and take them out.
- Let your baby poke at a play telephone or buttons using their index fingers.
- During bathtime, let your baby play with plastic cups or small containers. Show them how to fill them with water and pour it out.
- Give your baby spoons or toys to clap together or bang with.

Gross Motor

- Turn on music and hold your baby in a standing position. Let your baby bounce and dance to the music. If your baby can stand with a little support, hold their hands and dance with them like dance partners.
- Play ball games with your baby. While sitting up, roll a ball to them and encourage (or have a partner support) them in rolling the ball back to you.
- Let the baby stand next to or behind a soft piece of furniture for support. Encourage them to reach to one side for a toy.
- Introduce push toys to allow the baby to practice walking with support.

Sensory

- **Offer your baby new types of food. If they don't like one food, try it again on a different day.**
- **Seeing new places and meeting people are good experiences for your baby. Let your baby watch, listen, and move at their own speed. Your baby will tell you when they are ready for more.**
- **Allow your baby to experience different textures and temperatures. Textured toys like teething rings or a wet, cold washcloth are fun for your baby to experience.**
- **Put some beads, glitter, or marbles in a sealed water bottle. Allow them to shake it around and experiment with different sounds.**

Visual

- **Play hide and go seek with your baby, placing yourself or objects out of their sight and letting them find it or you.**
- **Smile and make faces together in front of a mirror.**
- **Read baby books or colorful magazines and point out what is in each picture. Let your baby pat the pictures in the book or magazine.**
- **Have your baby sit at the table with you during mealtime to notice the different foods you are eating.**