

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.

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 when he is placed on his tummy or in water.