



Play From the Very Start

Playing with your baby is not only fun, it's one of the most important ways you can nurture her development. There are no rules when it comes to play, and you don't need fancy toys. In fact, you are your child's favorite toy.

What You Can Do

Engage all of his senses

His eyes, ears, nose, hands, and mouth are his tools. During playtime he will see, hear, touch, smell, taste, move and be moved. Show him objects, touch his cheek with a soft cloth, give him a toy he can put in his mouth, bounce, rock, sway and move around holding him in different positions

Back and Forth play

Coo and talk to your baby. You can imitate her sounds and wait for her to respond. Encourage her to copy you, too. Show her that pushing the button makes the toy dog bark or how she can turn the pages of a book.

Peek-a-Boo

Try hiding behind your hands, a wash cloth, or a onesie as you dress your baby. Early on, he may show his pleasure simply by paying close attention. Then he may smile, kick his legs, and make sounds. By 9 months, he may pull your hands away from your face to "find" you.

Sing and Dance

Listen to different kinds of music and dance in different ways to see what your baby likes best. Sing a favorite song that has been passed down through your family. Don't worry about the sound of your voice — he loves to hear you.

Play with toys

Offer a toy with different colors and textures. Let your baby explore it with all her senses. Encourage her to see what else she can do with it.

What is your baby learning during play time?

- Sounds of words and the rhythm of language as you talk, read and sing with him.
- Communication as you engage in a back-and-forth "conversation" reading and responding to her cues.
- His own self-worth as he sees how much pleasure you get from playing with him.
- Imitation and cause and effect when she shakes the rattle like you and hears the noise.
- Hand-eye coordination as he reaches and grasps the rattle.
- About objects when she hears the rattle's sounds, sees its colors, feels its texture, and even smells and tastes it.