

20 Activities to Support Development

Ages 0-12 Months

0-2 Months

In these early weeks, your baby is just beginning to explore the world. These simple activities support early strength, sensory awareness, and bonding.

01

Tummy Time Snuggles

What to Do:

Lie down on your back and place your baby on your chest so they're tummy-down, face-to-face with you. Talk, sing, or make funny faces to keep them entertained.

How It Supports Development:

This is the gentlest, most comforting way for babies to experience tummy time for the very first time. Your chest feels safe, warm, and familiar, which helps newborns relax instead of resisting. It's the first step in getting comfortable on their tummy, while building early neck and upper-body strength.

02

Head Up, Little One

What to Do:

Place a rolled towel or nursing pillow under your baby's chest to gently elevate their shoulders, making it easier for them to push up. Position a toy, mirror, or your face in front of them to capture their attention and encourage them to look up.

How It Supports Development:

This small bit of lift makes tummy time feel easier and more comfortable for your baby. By gently elevating their shoulders, they can practice lifting their head without getting frustrated, strengthening their neck, shoulders, and upper back. These early muscles are the foundation for rolling, sitting, and eventually crawling.

03

Where's the Toy?

What to Do:

Hold a brightly colored toy or a favorite rattle about 8-10 inches from your baby's face. Slowly move it from one side of their body to the other, encouraging them to follow it with their eyes. You can also use a mobile or a soft toy attached to a string and sway it gently in front of them.

How It Supports Development:

Following a moving toy from side to side, also called visual tracking, helps your baby's eyes learn to work together, focus, and follow movement smoothly. These early visual skills lay the groundwork for reaching with purpose, crawling toward something they want, and even important pre-reading skills later on.

04

Follow My Face

What to Do:

Lay your baby on their back and lie down beside them, keeping your face close and at their level. Use silly faces, playful sounds, and warm eye contact to draw their attention. Then slowly move across their field of vision, keeping your gaze connected as they follow you.

How It Supports Development:

Watching your face move encourages your baby to practice visual tracking, eye contact, and early social engagement. Babies learn so much from studying your expressions; it helps them understand emotions, build connection, and begin the back-and-forth rhythm of communication. These simple moments lay the foundation for stronger bonding and early social skills as they grow.

05

What's That Sound?

What to Do:

Grab a rattle, bell, or any gentle noisemaker and shake it softly to one side of your baby's head, just out of their sight. Pause and wait for them to turn toward the sound, then celebrate them with a big smile or cheerful voice. Repeat on the other side, or softly call their name to see if they respond to your voice too.

How It Supports Development:

Turning toward sounds helps your baby practice early listening skills, sound recognition, and attention. It also strengthens their neck muscles as they rotate their head with curiosity. As they learn that sounds have meaning, like a toy, a parent's voice, or even their own name, they begin building the foundation for communication and language understanding.

2-6 Months

At 2-6 months, your little one begins to discover what their body can do: lifting, reaching, rolling, and connecting with you in new ways. These activities nurture their emerging strength, curiosity, and social awareness.

Reach Up High

06

What to Do:

Put your baby on their back or tummy and hold a favorite toy just out of reach. Let them stretch, swipe, and try to grab it. If they need a little encouragement, gently brush the toy against their hand so they feel what they're aiming for. Celebrate every attempt with smiles, praise, and excitement.

How It Supports Development:

Reaching for something they want teaches your baby how their eyes, hands, and body work together. Each stretch and swipe builds hand-eye coordination, arm strength, and early problem-solving. It also boosts confidence as your baby learns that their actions can make something happen.

07

Ready, Set, Roll

What to Do:

Place your baby on their tummy and hold a toy in front of them, moving it slowly from side to side to catch their attention. Once they're following it with their eyes, gently guide the toy up and over their head toward the opposite side. As they look up and back to follow it, their body will naturally shift and begin rolling onto their back.

How It Supports Development:

This gentle movement helps your baby learn the natural pattern of rolling. By following the toy, they practice shifting their weight, strengthening their core, and coordinating their head and body. Rolling is a big milestone, and this playful game helps them understand how their body can move from one position to another with confidence.

Mirror, Mirror, on the Wall

08

What to Do:

Position your baby in front of a mirror and let them explore their reflection. Make silly faces, wave your hands, or move gently to capture their attention. You can also place small toys near the mirror or guide their hands to touch the glass so they notice how their movements change what they see.

How It Supports Development:

Exploring their reflection helps your baby build early self-awareness and strengthens their visual focus and coordination. As they study faces and movement, they're also practicing early social-emotional skills and engaging their curiosity about the world and themselves.

09

First Conversations

What to Do:

Sit with your baby and gently make raspberry sounds by blowing air through your lips. Keep eye contact, smile, and wait to see if your baby tries to copy you. When they do, take turns going back and forth, turning it into a playful little conversation.

How It Supports Development:

This simple sound game introduces your baby to the joy of taking turns and communicating. Mimicking raspberries strengthens their facial muscles and helps them begin understanding cause and effect. These are important building blocks for early speech, social connection, and shared interaction.

10

Roly Poly

What to Do:

Lay your baby on their back and gently guide one leg across the center of their body. Once their leg is in place, move your hand to the back of their hip and apply soft, steady pressure to help them begin rolling. Keep your hand there as they continue the movement so you can support them all the way over. Another way to encourage rolling is to hold a toy with a ring near their hand to motivate them. Once they grab it, slowly move the toy across their body to encourage a natural twist and roll.

How It Supports Development:

Helping your baby feel how their body moves through a roll builds confidence and strengthens the muscles needed for independent movement. This guided twist teaches body awareness, coordination, and the motor pattern they'll eventually use on their own as they explore and move with more control.

6-9 Months

At 6-9 months, your baby's world becomes more interactive. These activities nurture core strength, balance, early communication, and problem-solving as they practice exciting new skills.

11

Look Who's Sitting!

What to Do:

Help your baby practice sitting by placing them in a seated position with support, such as pillows around their sides and back. Put toys within easy reach to encourage them to look, lean forward, and use their hands for balance. As they become more confident, gently reduce the amount of support and let them try sitting on their own for short stretches while you stay close to catch any wobbles.

How It Supports Development:

Learning to sit strengthens your baby's core, improves balance, and opens up a whole new way for them to play and explore. Sitting also frees up both hands for reaching, grabbing, and learning, building the foundation for fine-motor skills, sensory exploration, and more independent movement.

12

Ba Ba Ba

What to Do:

Encourage your baby to explore babbling by making playful sounds and expressions that grab their attention. Use a sing-song voice and exaggerate simple sounds like "ba-ba" or "da-da." Pause every so often to let your baby respond with their own coos, squeals, or babbles, turning it into a sweet back-and-forth exchange.

How It Supports Development:

These early sound games help your baby practice forming new sounds and understanding the rhythm of conversation. Babbling builds the foundation for communication, strengthens the muscles used for speech, and helps your baby learn that their voice has power and meaning.

Up and Down

What to Do:

Lay your baby on their back and place one hand under their armpit and the other on their upper arm, just above the elbow. Slowly roll them onto their side first, then help lift their upper body so they come into a seated position. To return to the floor, simply reverse the steps. Roll them onto their side first, then gently lower them onto their back. Moving in and out of sitting this way teaches your baby how their body can flow through the motion safely and comfortably.

How It Supports Development:

Babies aren't made to pull straight up into sitting. Their bodies learn it through rolling onto their side and pushing up from there. Guiding them through this natural pathway strengthens the muscles they need for independent sitting, transitions, and eventually crawling. It also teaches them how to move in and out of sitting safely and confidently, without getting stuck or tipping over.

Rock and Crawl

What to Do:

Help your little one experience the early feel of crawling by gently supporting them in a hands-and-knees position. Make sure their knees are under their hips, their toes point straight back, and their shoulders line up over their wrists. Place your hands gently on their hips, thumbs resting on their diaper, fingers on their thighs, and slowly rock them forward and back. You're helping them feel how to shift their weight while keeping the position comfortable and supported.

How It Supports Development:

Rocking in this position helps your baby start to understand how crawling feels. It strengthens the muscles in their arms, legs, and core, and teaches them how to shift their weight comfortably and with control. These early supported movements build the coordination and confidence they'll use once they're ready to try crawling on their own.

A Little Push Forward

What to Do:

While your baby is in a hands-and-knees position, place something flat and firm, like a book, behind their feet. Gently press the book so it stays in place, giving your baby a steady surface to push against. As you hold it, watch how they naturally start to push with their legs, using the support to explore that first little "push and move" motion.

How It Supports Development:

Having something solid behind their feet helps your baby feel what it's like to push forward with confidence. This simple support strengthens their legs and teaches the beginning mechanics of crawling. It gives them the extra boost they need as they learn how their body moves from one place to the next.

9-12 Months

At 9-12 months, your baby is ready to move, climb, and discover their world in new ways. These activities support early standing, cruising, fine-motor skills, and problem-solving as they explore with growing confidence and curiosity.

Hold On Tight

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What to Do:

Sit your baby on your lap with their knees bent at a comfortable 90-degree angle and their feet flat on the floor. Place a few toys on a low surface in front of you to get them interested in leaning forward. With your hands resting just below their hips, gently guide their hips forward and upward to help them straighten their legs and push up into a standing position. Keep it slow and steady so they can feel how their body moves through the motion.

How It Supports Development:

This gentle lift helps your baby understand the basics of standing; how to shift forward, press into their legs, and rise with support. It strengthens the muscles in their legs, hips, and core while building confidence in this new, exciting movement. These supported stands lay the groundwork for pulling up, cruising, and eventually walking.

17

Cruising Along

What to Do:

Position your baby next to a sturdy piece of furniture they can hold onto, like a couch or low table. Put a favorite toy just out of reach to encourage them to take small sideways steps. Stay close and gently support their movement as they shift their weight from one leg to the other, helping them move along the furniture toward the toy.

How It Supports Development:

Cruising teaches your baby how to balance, shift their weight, and coordinate their legs in a new way. These sideways steps strengthen the muscles needed for standing and walking. With your support nearby, your baby gains confidence as they explore this exciting next stage of movement.

Pincer Perfect

18

What to Do:

Offer your baby small, safe pieces of food on their tray—one at a time—so they practice picking them up with just their thumb and index finger. You can also use simple toys like puzzles with knobs, a tissue box, or strings. Hold the string in your hand so your baby has to use that tiny “pinch” to grab it.

How It Supports Development:

Practicing this little thumb-and-finger grasp helps your baby build fine motor control, strength, and precision. The pincer grasp is an important skill they’ll use for self-feeding, play, picking up small objects, and the early foundations of writing and dressing later on.

19

Peek-a-Boo

What to Do:

Show your baby a favorite toy, then gently hide it under a soft cloth while they watch. After a moment, lift the cloth and reveal the toy with a playful “peekaboo!” As they begin to understand the game, try waiting a little longer before uncovering it to keep the surprise fun and engaging.

How It Supports Development:

This simple game helps your baby learn object permanence, the idea that things still exist even when they’re out of sight. Understanding this concept strengthens memory, builds problem-solving skills, and helps your baby feel more confident as they explore and make sense of their world.

20

Up, Up, and Away

What to Do:

Sit your baby on the floor and place a balloon or lightweight toy in front of them. When they reach toward it, move it just slightly out of reach so they’re encouraged to rise up and stand to grab it. As they get the hang of it, gradually place the balloon a little farther away to motivate longer moments of standing and balancing.

How It Supports Development:

Reaching for a balloon encourages your baby to pull themselves up and practice standing with excitement and purpose. Each attempt strengthens their legs, improves balance, and builds confidence. Practicing standing helps prepare your little one for cruising and independent walking.