

365

activities

you and your baby
will love



GYMBOREE® play & music

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author

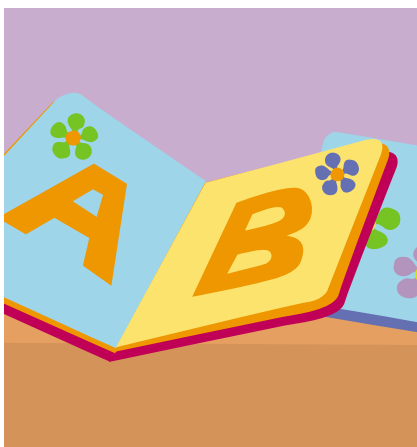
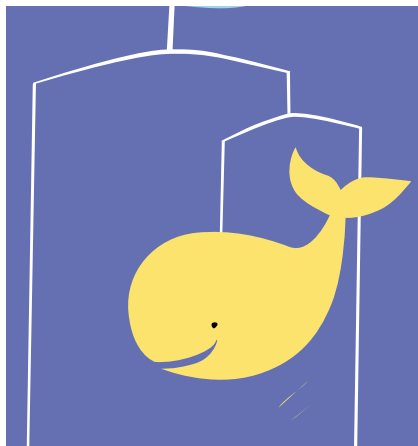
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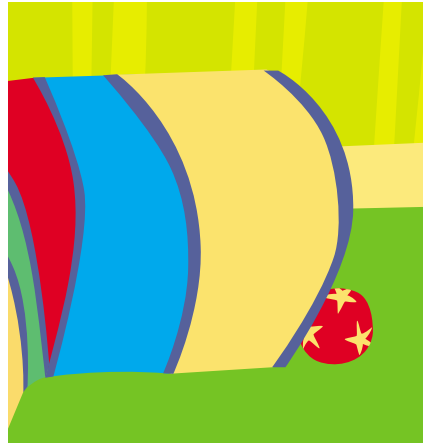
birth
& up
1



three
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months & up

172



nine
months & up

264

0+

from birth & up

Newborns are fascinating creatures—their senses are developing, they're highly attuned to you, and they're engaged in their very first experiences of the world. At this age play has more to do with comfort, bonding, and trust than it does with lively interactive activities. You can help your baby develop his muscles and sensory abilities at this stage, too. Just take it slow, and give him plenty of breaks to ensure that he doesn't get overstimulated.



1

soothe with heartbeats

Studies show that newborns are soothed by the sound of a human heartbeat, which they grew accustomed to hearing in the womb. Let your baby experience this comforting sound often by lying with him on your chest, skin to skin. Or sit in a chair and let his head rest against the left side of your chest, which psychologist Lee Salk and others have noted is the side most mothers intuitively hold their babies on anyway. Notice how the sound and feel of your beating heart can calm your newborn.



5

lie under the trees

Together you and your newborn can watch the dance of light and shadow, feel the breeze upon your skin, and listen to the gentle *shhh shhh* of rustling leaves.

6

smile away

Smile often at your baby. This simple act makes her feel special and shows her she's loved. When she smiles back, you'll feel loved, too.

7

revel in her reflection

Babies are very aware of faces, especially those of other babies. Let your baby indulge in this fascination by gazing at herself in the mirror for awhile. She won't know who's looking back at her until she is about 15 months old, but she's bound to like what she sees.

51



sing a scrub-a-dub song

Sing this simple ditty to the tune of "Frère Jacques"
to entertain your baby during bath time.

Now we're washing

Now we're washing

Baby's toes

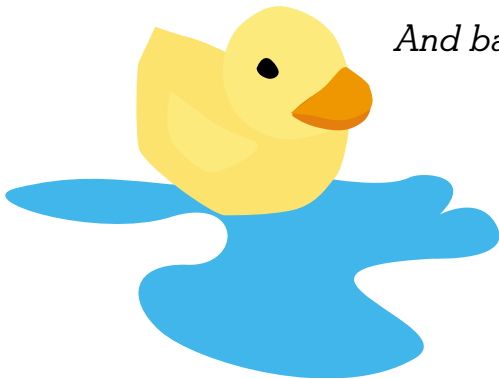
Baby's toes.

Now we're washing knees and

Now we're washing elbows

And baby's nose

And baby's nose.



52

bathe with baby

Taking a bath together is one of life's great pleasures—for baby and parent alike. Cradle your baby in your arms, play little splashing games, and experiment with textured cloths and sponges. The water should be warm but not hot. Before you get out of the tub, hand your baby to another grown-up or place him on a thick towel near the tub (never stand up with a wet, slippery baby in your hands).



73 get out and about

Beat cabin fever by taking short daily trips together. You can take your baby just about anywhere—to the market, a park, or the mall. New sights are stimulating and will introduce her to a variety of social situations.

74

stroke his hands

Help your baby become more aware of the way his hands open and close. When his fists are tightly clenched, stroke the back of each one, an action that generally makes a baby relax his grip.

75

change her perspective

Offer your infant a new view and strengthen her body at the same time by propping her on her side with rolled-up blankets or turning her over onto her tummy. Be attuned to signs that she's uninterested or tired—for example, if she fusses or cries. And remember, when it's time for her to sleep, lay her on her back.

3+

three months & up

Sometimes called the honeymoon period, the second three months of your baby's life are a time of glorious smiles, belly laughs, exploring hands, and joyfully kicking feet. Many babies learn to sit during this stage, a core skill that allows them to see the world more clearly and to manipulate objects with greater precision. Most infants are picking up crucial social skills now, too, such as how to babble, giggle, and even flirt.



92

sit like a frog

It takes some time for babies to learn how to balance on their bottoms well enough to sit. You can help your infant gain stability by putting his legs in a diamond-shaped (or frog-like) position. Move his heels closer to his bottom, bending his legs out to the sides. With a wider base, he's less likely to topple!

3+

3 months & up



102

“let me feel...
silk, satin,
a smooth small stone,
feathers, felt,
a rough pine cone”

103

help her stand tall

When she uses your hands to pull herself up and starts bouncing, encourage her enthusiastically. Many babies can do this for long stretches of time and that's fine—it's a great way to both strengthen their leg muscles and boost their self esteem (it will give your arms a good workout, too).

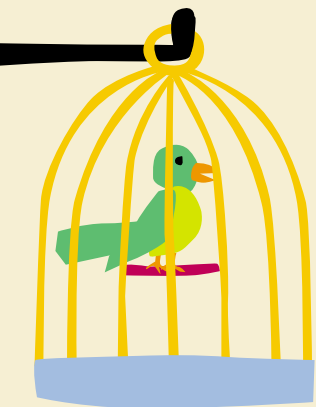
3+

3 months & up

104

give him a hand

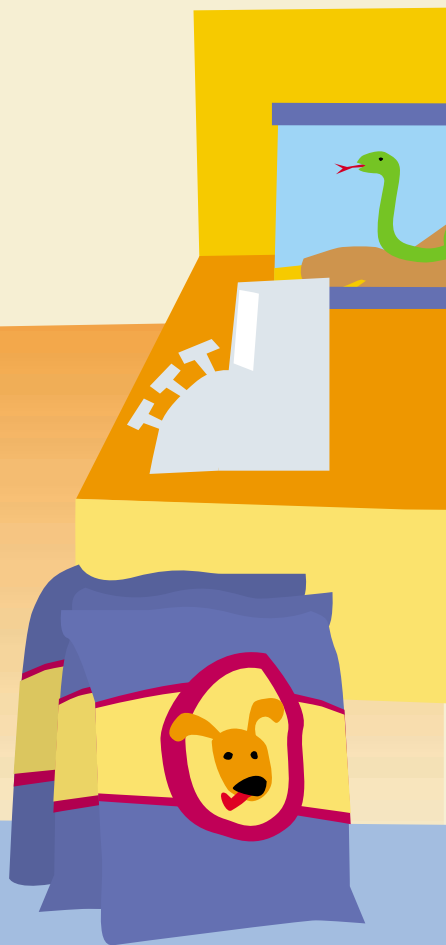
By six months, many babies are ready to learn to clap. Gently hold your baby's hands between yours and clap them together while chanting a nursery rhyme, such as "Patty Cake." Eventually he'll get the hang of it himself and will start clapping on his own.



234

watch the animals

You may not be ready to bring home a pet goldfish, guinea pig, puppy, or iguana, but your baby will love seeing the animal world in action. And a well-stocked pet store can provide just as much fun as a zoo, since babies are as captivated by a domestic mouse as they are by an African lion.



235

introduce activity books

Now that your baby has developed some fine motor skills, she'll love opening flaps, pushing buttons, and stroking the faux fur in touch-and-feel activity books. Actively engaging her with books—in addition to hearing you read the words—is key to developing a love of reading.

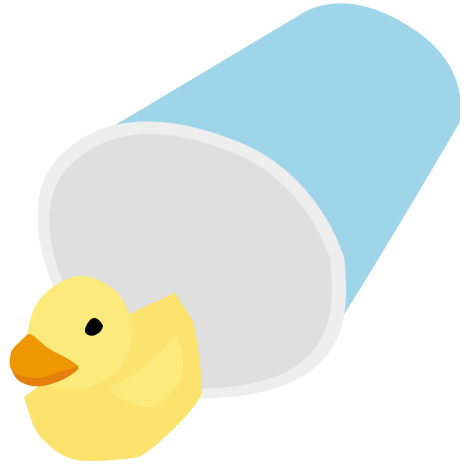
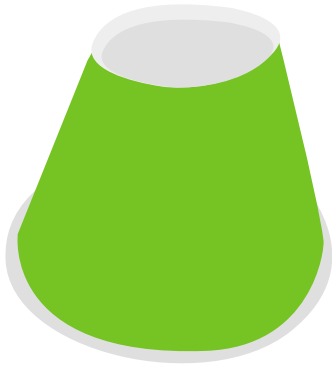
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play tug-of-war

Give your infant one end of a cloth diaper or blanket to hold, then pull gently on the other end. As your baby pulls, increase your resistance a tiny bit. This gentle tugging game helps him develop upper body strength and a sense of success (just don't pull so hard that he'll tumble backward if he lets go).

6+

6 months & up



324

shuffle the magic cups

Called a shell game on city streets, a slower, simpler version can be challenging for babies. Show your child that you're putting a small toy or ball under a plastic cup. Then turn a second cup upside down. Move the two cups around slowly. Stop and ask your baby where the toy is. She may not get it right away, but if you move the cups very slowly, eventually your baby will be able to guess correctly. And by playing this game, she'll strengthen her visual tracking abilities and expand her powers of concentration.

325

puzzle it out

Exercise your baby's spatial and fine motor skills with a durable wooden puzzle. Choose one with easy-to-grasp knobs, bright colors, and matching pictures on the board to help him decide where each piece goes. Show him how to guide the pieces into place by turning and sliding them around.

326

let 'er rip!

Before you toss out your monthly magazines, hand one or two to your baby to explore something different: the fun feeling of ripping out the pages!

The ripping action sounds great—and helps her develop both gross and fine motor skills. Watch her closely so she doesn't put any paper in her mouth.

9+

9 months & up