



COMMUNICATION

ACTIVITIES TO HELP YOUR BABY GROW AND LEARN 1–4 Months

Your wonderful new person communicates with her whole body. Her gaze at you tells you that you are the most important person in the world. Baby communicates with body movements, noises, and her own special cry when she needs something. Baby's favorite music is your gentle voice. Although she will enjoy the sounds of family, some quiet time is important so baby can hear family voices.

Words For Baby's Cry—As you comfort baby when she cries, talk about why she is crying. Try to figure out what is wrong. Tell her about it as you take care of her needs.

Special Talking Time—When your baby is awake cuddle him and hold him so he can see your face. Talk for a little while. Look at his face as he looks at yours. Have a conversation.

Sing And Talk Through Baby's Day—As you bathe, feed, exercise, or change your baby, sing any song. Make up your own songs. Let your baby watch your face while you talk and sing. Encourage other family members to do this.

Noticing Sounds—When sounds happen around the house, help baby notice by talking about them. "I hear the telephone ringing." "I hear your brother calling."

Nursery Rhyme Time—Introduce your baby to the chant, rhyme and rhythm of your favorite songs and nursery rhymes. Take a familiar tune and change the words. Add baby's name now and then.

Picture Books—With baby cuddled on your lap hold a book with simple, clear, colored pictures so that both of you can see. Talk softly about what you see as you point to the pictures.

Tape Your Baby's Sounds—Tape record the sounds your baby makes. Play the tape back for baby often. Your baby may fall asleep as she talks along with the tape. Save the tape and add sounds of baby's voice in a few months. Keep adding her voice over the years



GROSS MOTOR

ACTIVITIES TO HELP YOUR BABY GROW AND LEARN 1–4 Months

*B*aby is gaining strength right from the beginning. Baby practices lifting and controlling his head. He moves arms and legs, and soon will roll part way to his side while lying on his back. Your baby likes to be held in a sitting position so he can see what is going on and strengthen back and tummy muscles. He also likes being held so that his feet gently touch a surface.

Position Changes—When baby is awake, place baby in a different position, on his stomach, back or side. This will allow baby to move arms and legs in different positions.

Kicking Practice—Place your baby on her back on a firm surface. As you talk quietly to baby, encourage her to move her arms and legs. Hold a foot in each hand and gently move them back and forth.

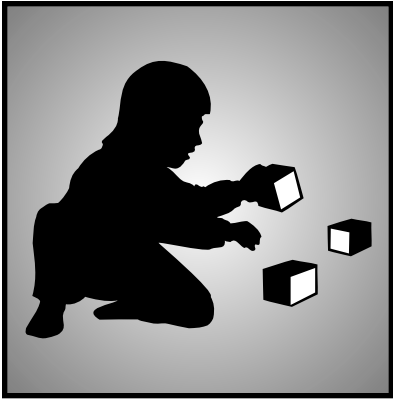
Heads Up—Put your baby on his stomach. Dangle a bright toy in front of him or make faces and sounds to encourage your baby to lift his head.

Bath Time—Bathe your baby in a baby bathtub or sink. Another way is to bathe baby in the tub with you. Allow baby to kick and splash as you hold him safely and talk and sing quietly.

Balancing (about 3–4 months)—Stand baby on your knees and bounce baby up and down gently. Let her support as much of her own weight as she can to help her strengthen leg muscles.

Roll Over—With baby on her stomach, encourage baby to roll over by holding a bright toy in front of her. Slowly move it over to the side while she watches it. You may help her roll over until she can do it herself.

Sitting Up (about 3–4 months)—When baby is lying on his back, pull him up gently and slowly by his arms. Then gently lower him and slowly pull up again in a “see-saw” game. This will help to strengthen stomach muscles and let baby see the world from a different point of view. As baby rises, greet him with a big smile!



FINE MOTOR

ACTIVITIES TO HELP YOUR BABY GROW AND LEARN 1–4 Months

Your baby is gaining control of her gaze, and can focus on an object close by for a few seconds. Soon she'll be able to follow you with her eyes while you move around. Her fist will grasp your finger and hold on tightly. She will show excitement by waving her arms. It's a wonderful time of beginning to notice what is going on in the world!

Tracking Fun—Let baby follow a rattle, a flashlight, or your face with his eyes. Hold your face or an object 10 to 12 inches from baby's face and slowly move from left to right.

Finger and Toe Rub—Rub your baby's fingers and toes one at a time. A little baby lotion makes this especially nice. Your baby will enjoy the sensation. It will increase his body awareness.

Water Drops (about 3–4 months)—While your baby is lying on a rug or sitting in her infant seat, drop a few drops of water onto the palms of her hands. Talk to her about what you are doing. Stop if baby does not like the activity. Cuddle her, talk quietly and do something else.

Scarf Pull—Gently pull a long scarf or piece of yarn across baby's palm. Encourage baby to drape his hands around the scarf. (Put the scarf/yarn out of reach when you finish the game just to keep baby safe).

Ribbon Pull—Hang a long, brightly colored ribbon or scarf loosely around your neck. When you lean over to change baby or pick him up, let him reach out and touch the ribbon. Sit and talk about what he is doing.

Finger Kiss—When feeding baby, encourage him to touch your lips (if he does not already do this by himself). Kiss his fingertips. Baby will learn the soft, wet sensation of your mouth, and soon will learn to aim his fingers toward your lips.



ADAPTIVE

ACTIVITIES TO HELP YOUR BABY GROW AND LEARN 1–4 Months

Your baby already responds to sounds and voices. He's beginning to look for the source of the noise. He also looks at his surroundings and will show an active interest in a person or toy. He likes to study things like his own hands and his favorite face—yours!

Light Touch—Stroke your baby gently with a clean paint brush or make-up brush, a feather, or a cotton ball. Your baby will enjoy the sensation as he learns to isolate different body parts. Talk to baby softly. Describe what he is feeling.

Cotton Ball Sniff—To help your baby develop her sense of smell, gently wave a cotton ball with a drop of vanilla on it, or a sweet plumeria flower past her nose so she can experience the scent. Talk about the lovely smell.

Cover Baby's Bottle—If your baby is not breast fed, place a small bright sock or terry cloth athletic wristband over her bottle to encourage her to hold her own bottle. Do this while she is safely in your lap. (Never prop baby's bottle.)

Reaching Practice (about 3–4 months)—With your baby in your lap or the lap of another special person, hold up a safe, interesting toy (a rattle or metal spoon will do) on a string for him to reach for. Let baby be successful by slowly moving the toy to his fingers.

Foot Socks—Put a brightly colored sock on your baby's foot. This will encourage her to look at her feet, then pull at them and catch a foot. This game will help baby discover parts of her own body.

Safe Sand Box—Fill a large bowl with baby oatmeal. Put the bowl on a large tray or a piece of plastic (a clean old shower curtain). Sit on the floor with your baby in your lap. Place his hands in the bowl to feel the oatmeal. As you do this describe how it feels and show him how to sift it through his fingers.



PERSONAL–SOCIAL

ACTIVITIES TO HELP YOUR BABY GROW AND LEARN 1–4 Months

*B*aby will look you in the eye to tell you “I’m yours.” She loves and needs lots of holding and physical contact. When she needs you she will fuss or cry. Your response and gentle voice will comfort her. At about seven weeks, she will respond with a beautiful smile!

Quiet Alert State—Get to know when your baby is in a quiet alert state. This is often after eating, having a diaper changed, or after resting. This is when your baby is taking in information. Use this opportunity to communicate with your baby.

Communicating Through Touch—After her bath, baby may be ready for a massage. Use baby oil and gently massage her arms, hands, legs, feet, back, tummy and bottom. Continue only as long as your baby is quiet and content.

Funny Face Play—Make an “oh” face; stick out your tongue or pucker your lips when baby seems to be studying your face. Hold that expression and see if your baby will imitate it. Watch for cues that your baby is ready to stop this game. For example, if your baby turns her face away or avoids eye contact, it’s time to change activity.

Love and Trust Building—Respond right away when baby cries. It’s her way of telling you something important. Carry, hug, smile, sing and talk to baby often. It’s your way of saying “I love you and I’ll take care of you.”

Looking In The Mirror—Hold your baby up in front of a full length mirror. He will probably be attracted to the smiling reflection. As baby looks in the mirror he is learning about your gentle touch and about himself.

Phone Time—When you are on the phone hold your baby close and look at him. Your baby will enjoy watching and listening to you. He’ll think your conversation is just for him.

Peek-A-Boo—Play “peek-a-boo” with your baby (about 3–4 months). Place your hands over your eyes then over baby’s eyes. Release hands and say “Boo.” Place the blanket over your head and come out with “Boo.” Your baby will enjoy many variations of this game for a long time to come.



COMMUNICATION

ACTIVITIES TO HELP YOUR BABY GROW AND LEARN 4–8 Months

*B*aby has learned to use his voice: he squeals and is beginning to babble to you and to others. He knows his name and may vocalize pleasure to you. He can shout for your attention, and is about to make sounds like “mama” or “dada.” A true communicator, he is learning to respond to “bye-bye.”

Baby Powder Rub—After bath time enjoy some quiet time talking with your baby as you rub her down with baby powder or baby oil. (Be sure to sprinkle the powder on your hands rather than sprinkling it directly on baby, so she will not inhale the powder.)

What Is That?—When baby notices a sound, help him locate the source. Ask your baby, “What is that? Daddy’s car?” “Did you hear a dog?”

Touch That Sound (about 5 months) As your baby begins to experiment with her voice you will probably hear “b,” “m,” “d,” “ah,” “ee” and “oo” sounds. Imitate the sounds baby makes. While you make the sound let your baby put her fingers on your lips to feel the vibrations.

Trust Building With Words—When you move away from your baby to do other things, keep in touch with your baby through your words. Tell him what you are doing as he follows with his eyes. “Billy, I’m over here; I’m picking up the clothes. I’ll be right back”

Show Your Baby Pictures—From magazines cut out some large pictures of ordinary things like a telephone, car, or spoon. Paste them on plain paper like typing or computer paper. You can even staple or tie them together to make a book. Now you can sit with your baby on your lap and “read” about the pictures.

Sing A Song—When you are bathing, diapering or changing your baby’s clothes, sing a song like this:

This is the way we wash our toss, wash our toes, wash our toes;
This is the way we wash our toes, so early in the morning.

Use this song for many other daily routines with your baby. Change the words to fit situation.



GROSS MOTOR

ACTIVITIES TO HELP YOUR BABY GROW AND LEARN 4–8 Months

*Y*our baby grows stronger every minute! She now holds her head up and looks all around at everything that is going on. She is learning to sit by herself, although at first she uses her hands for support. Baby loves bearing her weight on her legs and will soon pull to stand.

A Shiny Pan For Baby—Give your baby a big shiny pan to play with. He can see himself in the pan as he bangs it, pats it and rolls it.

Floor Time—Spread out a quilt on the floor or outside under a tree. Put your baby on the blanket on his tummy with a few of his favorite toys. Now encourage him to stretch, scoot, squirm or wiggle his way to the toys.

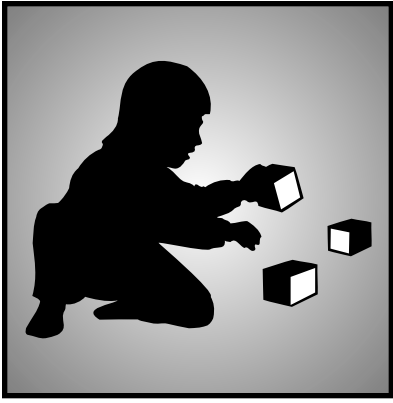
Sitting Pretty—Help your baby sit alone. Spread her feet apart for a good base, and hold her trunk firmly. Smile and talk to her. Gradually decrease support as baby learns to hold herself in a sitting position.

Standing Up ... With Help—Kneel in front of a full length mirror with your baby. Support her on her feet using your body. Talk to your baby in the mirror, point to and name different body parts and make funny faces at each other.

Obstacle Course (about seven months)—Once your baby has started to crawl, you can make a simple obstacle course of different textured pillows and blankets for your baby to crawl across. A towel rolled up and a soft stuffed toy will add interest.

Stand Up Play—At about eight months your baby may enjoy standing up while holding onto tables and chairs and reaching for different objects. Take the breakables off the low tables or shelves and line up some of his favorite toys to reach for.

Crawling Over, Under, And Through—Look through your house and find the places where your baby can safely crawl. What will she fit under? What can she crawl over? Where can she go through? How far can she reach? Allow your baby to do this, keeping watchful eyes.



FINE MOTOR

ACTIVITIES TO HELP YOUR BABY GROW AND LEARN 4–8 Months

Your baby's grasp has relaxed now, and she likes to reach and grab objects that are close by. She can hold, bang objects, and even hold something in each hand! She may watch with interest when you write or mark things with a pen. Baby wants to use her fingers, but is more successful raking small objects.

Rattles And Toys—Give your baby plenty of opportunities to try out different rattles and toys, especially the ones you make from empty plastic containers. All these different sounds and textures are new experiences to grow on.

Give Your Baby A Cup—Allow your baby to hold a cup. Put a little water in it and see what baby will do. He will probably enjoy trying to drink out of a cup. Let him experiment.

Mello Jello—Make small firm blocks of Jello with plain gelatin and 100% fruit juices. Your baby will love to catch the Jello as it squirms around on her tray.

Coffee Can Drop—When your baby has mastered the art of sitting he can sit on the floor and play some dropping games. To start, get a coffee can (be sure to file down, and tape over any rough edges) and a hard ball. Let your baby drop the ball into the can. You may need to hold your baby's hand over the can and encourage him at first. Once he hears the sound of the bouncing ball he will want to try again and again.

Finger Paint—Put a dab of plain yogurt on your baby's tray. Let her paint with her fingers.

Spaghetti Pull—Cook up some spaghetti and let it cool. Then let baby pull apart a few strands of spaghetti. This is a fun and challenging game (Always stay close by while baby eats)

Cheerio Spill—Put some Cheerios in a plastic bottle. See if your baby can figure out how to tip over the bottle to feed himself the Cheerios.



ADAPTIVE

ACTIVITIES TO HELP YOUR BABY GROW AND LEARN 4–8 Months

Your busy learner is interested in making things work! She will find a toy that is partly hidden, and will reach with all her might for something that is just out of reach. She knows when a voice is friendly or angry and prefers friendly sounds. Baby also loves peek-a-boo!

Where Did it Go? Encourage your baby to watch slowly moving objects disappear. Continue to look at the place where the object disappeared for a few seconds. Ask, “Where did it go?” Move your face or a favorite toy behind a cover while your baby is watching. Ask “Where is Mommy or Daddy?” or “Where’s your bear?” When you or the object reappears, say, “**There** it is!”

Be Safe—Take down “touch me not” mobiles and table items that baby can now reach, grasp, and pull. Your baby is no longer content to just look at interesting things. He is curious and needs to touch and put things in his mouth. We have to keep him safe.

Play “Roly-Poly”—Show baby how to tip a roly-poly toy. Baby is interested in making discoveries, and will enjoy the action of the toy as it rights itself.

Bath Time Sailboats—Put a fleet of plastic butter containers in your baby’s bath. She will delight in learning about sinking and floating, dumping, and pouring.

Reactions!—Provide baby with toys that react like squeak toys, pull toys and pop-up toys. Let baby discover ways to make things happen!

Hide A Squeak Toy—Make one of baby’s toys squeak Hide it under a blanket while your baby watches then give it a squeak. Let him try to find it.

Bounce The Balloon—Tie the string of a helium filled balloon to baby’s high chair or stroller. You might even tie it to baby’s wrist Let baby bounce the balloon and watch it move as you talk about what is going on.



PERSONAL–SOCIAL

ACTIVITIES TO HELP YOUR BABY GROW AND LEARN 4–8 Months

Your baby knows you very well now, and will lift arms to come to you. He may, begin to fret when strangers approach. He likes to play with his image in the mirror, and is really quite sociable as long as he feels safe and secure.

Body Awareness—Your baby is discovering many different body parts and probably has become very interested in her feet and hands. Encourage this awareness by playing games like “This Little Piggy Went to Market,” and making up your own hands and feet, toes and finger songs and games.

Self Feeding—Encourage your baby to pick up and feed himself safe foods. You may also give baby his own spoon to hold while you get the food into his mouth with another spoon. Do not expect too much success just yet. Self feeding takes lots of messy practice. (Try placing an old shower curtain under baby’s chair.)

Whisper To Your Baby—Whispering to your baby helps her to calm down, and provides another way to communicate with her. Whispering helps her feel very close and special.

Invite A Friend Over—Invite another mother and her baby over to play with your baby. As the babies look at, reach for, and explore each other, they will make important discoveries about toys and real people. Stay close by to keep each baby safe as they do their exploring.

Wave “Bye-Bye”—Waving “bye-bye” when you leave the room for a moment or two is a way to prepare your baby for longer departures. As you wave, tell your baby where you are going. “I am going into the kitchen to get your lunch I’ll be right back. ‘Bye-Bye.’”

Exploring Faces—While feeding baby, let him explore your face, mouth, nose, with his fingers. Talk softly about what he is touching. Nibble and suck on his fingers as he touches your mouth. “Mmm—what delicious fingers you have!”



COMMUNICATION

ACTIVITIES TO HELP YOUR BABY GROW AND LEARN 8–12 Months

Your baby now has many different sounds, and lots to “say.” She likes to play with sounds like “bababa” and is learning that some sounds mean special people, like “mama.” She understands some words and directions now, and will soon say the names of familiar people or things.

Cooking With Baby—When you are preparing a meal, bring baby into the kitchen with you and give him a pot, lid and spoon. Place baby in a clean safe area away from the stove. Talk about what you are making as he imitates your actions. When you empty a box or container, give it to your baby. Talk about what was in the box and what you did with it. “That is a box of cereal. You had some for your breakfast.”

Sleep Waltz—At nap time or bed time in the evening, hold your baby close and dance together to some quiet music. Your baby has probably spent lots of time exploring during the day. Now she needs some cuddling. This communicates to baby a feeling of closeness and intimacy.

Following Directions—Help your baby learn to listen and follow simple directions. Try simple directions like, “Find Grandma” or “Wash your tummy.” Make these directions more complex, as your baby gets older.

Grocery Shopping—When you go to the grocery store and baby is with you, talk to him about what he is seeing. Let him hold a box, or put items into the grocery cart. Point out signs in the store and read them to your baby. “That sign says **apples**.” “Let us get some nice red apples.”

Quiet Times—When baby is awake and alert, turn off the radio and TV so she only hears your voice. This helps baby hear the sounds of words more clearly. Hum and sing just for baby’s pleasure. Ask baby, “Can you hear a bird?” “Can you hear the clock?”

A Family Album—Get some pictures of your family members including baby. Put these together in a family album and let your baby look at and point to all the pictures. Talk about the people in baby’s family, and baby too. As your baby grows, continue to add to the album so there are new faces to talk about.



GROSS MOTOR

ACTIVITIES TO HELP YOUR BABY GROW AND LEARN 8–12 Months

This is a very active period for your baby! He's now pulling up on furniture, crawling and creeping into places he could not reach before, and getting ready to walk. He may walk holding on to your hand. Baby may attempt a few steps without your help. Baby is on the move!

Kick Kick—When your baby kicks his legs back and forth, play this game. Sing in rhythm to the baby's kicking. When your baby stops kicking, stop singing. When he starts again, start singing. This will develop into a fun game of stop and go. Times when this might happen are: changing your baby's diaper, getting him ready for bed, or just lying around. Your baby not only exercises his muscles, but learns the enjoyment of language as well.

Reaching For Fun—If your baby is pulling herself to a standing position, put some of her favorite toys on a low table. Let her stretch way out to reach them. This will give her practice with reaching and balancing as she becomes aware of concepts like near and far.

Rain, Rain In The Tub—This is a good time to exercise lots of different muscles. Get a small plastic empty container, put some holes in it and let your baby fill it with water and discover rain for herself in the bath tub. (Never leave baby alone in the tub.)

Balance Beam—Find a smooth board at least six inches wide and about four feet long. Sand down rough edges and places that could splinter and put it on the floor or outside on the grass. Put a toy at one end and your baby at the other. By either crawling or walking your baby will enjoy getting the toy. Hold baby's hands for balance.

Walking Practice—Once your baby has started to walk, she will want to practice lots!! Show her how to hold on to a lightweight chair and push it around the room. Sturdy cardboard boxes also make great push toys, as does the stroller. Let your baby push the stroller when you go for walks.

Tunneling—Let your baby practice more crawling and walking by going between your legs while you are doing dishes, talking on the phone or putting clothes in the dryer. He will develop his leg muscles as he learns about position in space.



FINE MOTOR

ACTIVITIES TO HELP YOUR BABY GROW AND LEARN 8–12 Months

Your busy baby can pick up tiny bits of cereal with a thumb and index finger (pincher grasp). He can take things out of a container, suck as spoons out of a plastic bowl, and can bang two toys together. If you give him a crayon and paper, he may even attempt to imitate your writing with a scribble.

“Feely” Game—Make a feely game out of a cardboard box that contains things to feel, hold, and bang. Good items might include an empty baby bottle, a rubber sink stopper, a square of velvet fabric or a sponge. Let baby reach into the box and grab something. Talk about what she is holding. This is good exercise for little muscles, and baby will explore different textures.

Hand Clapping—Help your baby bring his hands together and clap. Clap his hands and then hide them under a blanket. He will like to watch his hands go away and come back. He will also enjoy this song:

Clap your hands, one, two, three.
Play a clapping game with me.
Now your hands have gone away,
Find your hands so we can play.

Tearing—If baby loves to tear paper, get a big basket or box. Put some old magazines and wrapping paper inside. Now let your baby tear what she wants. If she is more interested in putting wads of paper in her mouth, put the box away and try this game again in a few weeks.

Sticks And Stones—Your back yard probably has lots of wonderful objects for your baby to play with. (Remember to watch out for things that might go into your baby’s mouth). Encourage your baby to gather stones in a pail, or pick up twigs and leaves. Your baby will gain fine motor coordination. His sense of touch will also be stimulated.

Crackers In A Jar—Put crackers or some cereal in a screw-top or snap-top plastic jar or butter container. Put the lid on loosely. You may have to show your baby how to take the lid off and retrieve the cereal. Soon she will do it by herself!



ADAPTIVE

ACTIVITIES TO HELP YOUR BABY GROW AND LEARN 8–12 Months

As baby learns how things work, he is busy taking them apart. He can take pieces out of a puzzle, or rings off a stack. He can find hidden objects under a blanket. Baby enjoys looking at pictures in a book and enjoys your naming the pictures. He has been so busy exploring that he probably knows the word “no-no.”

Sticky Stuff—Put a piece of scotch tape on the back of your baby’s hand. Let her pull it off. This sticky stuff will be very interesting to her. She may also try to stick it on other things. Watch that it does not go into her mouth.

Scarf Pull—Tie several colorful scarves together. Insert one end into an empty toilet paper tube. Let your baby pull the scarves through the tube. Now, can your baby stuff the scarves back into the tube?

Hide And Seek—Hide a ticking clock or a small radio under a pillow or blanket. Let your baby listen to find the sound. This will strengthen his listening skills along with problem solving skills.

A Third Toy—Give your baby a third toy when she has a toy in each hand. See if she can figure out a way to take the third toy and hold on to all three. If this is too hard for your baby right now, try it again in a few weeks.

More Hide And Seek—Put a small toy inside a paper bag or a box. As your baby works to get the toy out, he will increase his understanding of “inside” and “outside.” Another way to do this is to get a big box that your baby can crawl in and out of. This also, will increase the “inside” and “outside” concept.

Laughter—By about 11 months your baby will begin to develop a sense of humor. Do something funny like trying to drink out of her baby bottle, or pretending to put on her shoe when getting ready to go out. She will probably burst out laughing.

Magic Cups—Place two cups and a small toy on a tray for baby. Put the toy under one cup and ask, “Where is the toy?” If he does not find it, lift the cup and show your baby where it is. Do this several times then let him lift the correct cup and find the toy.



PERSONAL–SOCIAL

ACTIVITIES TO HELP YOUR BABY GROW AND LEARN 8–12 Months

Your baby may fear strangers and prefer only you. She loves to explore her environment and needs new safety precautions. She clearly shows her likes and dislikes, and may test your reactions during feeding. But baby can charm you as well; she will imitate your smile and clap her hands.

Bath Time—When your baby is taking a bath give her the washcloth. Encourage her to wash by herself. At first, she may play with the cloth and try to squeeze it. Be patient; these self help skills take lots of time and practice. As she gets older she will really be able to wash with the cloth.

Bathe The Baby Doll—Put a rubber baby doll in the bath with your baby. Wash the baby doll. Talk about being “gentle” and “careful.”

The Telephone Game—Talk to your baby on his play phone, or if you want, unplug the real phone. This works even better. When there are two phones you can both “talk” and your baby will have fun carrying on a conversation just like the big people.

Follow The Leader—Your baby probably is learning to enjoy imitation. To encourage this have your baby play follow the leader with you. Use simple gestures or hand play, like tapping on the table, or putting a hat on your head. Talk about what you are doing and see if your baby will follow along. Let your baby have a turn at being the leader.

Play With Other Children—Your baby may enjoy watching older children play. This is especially fun when there are older brothers or sisters. If there are other babies his own age in the neighborhood he will enjoy playing along side them. At first they will enjoy watching each other. Eventually, they will learn to play together.

Funny Blow—After bath time, play a funny game with baby by blowing with soft puffs on baby’s hands, feet, legs and tummy. Have a laugh together. Then blow with your lips touching baby’s skin and make a funny noise. Laugh and blow again!



COMMUNICATION

ACTIVITIES TO HELP YOUR BABY GROW AND LEARN 12–16 Months

*B*aby's babbling is beginning to sound more like talking as he practices pitching his voice high and low. He says "ma-ma" and really means it and is beginning to learn the names of things. He may say "no" quite sincerely if he is not happy. Because baby is so busy learning to walk his language use may taper off a bit. He combines a word with a point or gesture and you know very well what he means!

Everyday Talk—While you do your housework or get a meal together, talk to baby about what you are doing. Name things for baby. When baby talks, encourage her! Get her to join in the talk. Keep your conversations happy and cheerful.

Sock Puppet—Put your hand in a clean sock and make it "talk." Draw eyes and a mouth with felt pens if it's an old sock you do not need. "Hi, Jane, I am visiting you. Want a kiss?" Your child might say something or want to touch the puppet. Encourage conversation and fun!

Quiet Times—On weekends or when you are not busy, spend time with baby in a quiet place with no radio and no T.V. Talk to baby about what you are doing, or about what baby is doing. Let your baby hear your voice and see your face making words. Talk calmly and tell baby how special he is. When baby talks, encourage him. Have a conversation.

Rhythm Clapping—While listening to music, show baby how to move and clap in rhythm. Baby will enjoy the rhythm and the fun!

Listening On The Phone—When Daddy or Grandma calls, ask them to spend a few minutes talking to baby. Baby probably will not talk back to them yet, but will be delighted to hear someone's voice coming through the phone. Or, you might dial the number for time of day and let baby listen in.



GROSS MOTOR

ACTIVITIES TO HELP YOUR BABY GROW AND LEARN 12–16 Months

***B**y now your busy baby can move around the house quickly. She can stand and move around a room holding on to furniture. She may walk well. She will climb up steps, and your watchful eye is very important. Baby loves to push and pull things and is getting stronger every day.*

Pushing The Stroller—In an open area, let baby push his own stroller. He will enjoy the feeling of power as he moves something big all by himself. Be sure to watch that he keeps the stroller where it's safe.

Climbing The Stairs—Hold baby's hand while you climb up steps or a few stairs. Be patient; stairs are very high for little legs. Do not expect much luck with climbing down just yet.

Tunnel Time—Drape a sheet or bedspread over a table so that it becomes a tunnel. Encourage baby to crawl through. Siblings may have fun playing this game too.

Beach Ball—With a partially inflated beach ball, teach baby to hold out her arms and “catch.” Choose a small to medium ball. Because the ball is not inflated tightly, it will fall softly on baby's arms rather than bounce off. Show baby how to throw it back to you. Then you can show baby how to “kick” the ball to you by pushing it forward with her foot.

Finger Walk—Take a little walk with baby holding on to your finger. Baby can choose to hold on or to let go. Talk to baby about what you see and where you're going. “Let's walk over to those flowers,” or “Let's walk down the hall.” “You're a good walker!”

Baby-in-A-Box—Let baby have a cardboard box to play with, one he can climb into and out of and push around. Show baby how to hide in the box, then call for him; “Where are you, baby?” When baby lets you see him, act surprised! Later you can put some of baby's toys in the box so he can push them around.



FINE MOTOR

ACTIVITIES TO HELP YOUR BABY GROW AND LEARN 12–16 Months

*B*aby is using fingers with more skill now. She will point with her index finger, and can pick up tiny bits of cereal with her thumb and finger. She can hold and mark with a crayon or felt pen, and grasp and aim small objects, like poking sticks into a hole. Baby may even begin to prefer one hand to the other.

Budding Artist—Let baby “draw” a picture for you with a crayon and a piece of paper. Give baby a large paper and plenty of room. Baby may only make a few marks, but give lots of praise. “Look at the picture you made!” Be sure to put the crayon away when you both are finished. Your baby does not yet know that you only want marks on the paper!

Carton Construction—Rinse and save pint and quart milk cartons to use for blocks. Show baby how to stack them, then knock them down. Line them up to make a wall, then knock them down again.

Tacky Tape—Make a small wad of masking tape with the sticky side out. Give this to baby to play with. It is very entertaining and will give baby some good finger exercise.

Squeezing—Give baby a sponge or sponge ball to play with in the bath. Show baby how to squeeze the water out of it. You might also let baby play with an empty plastic dish detergent bottle. Show baby how to squirt! (Always supervise tub play.)

Corn On The Cob—Give baby a half ear of corn on the cob (cooled). Let him pinch off the kernels of corn one by one. It’s also good to eat.

Fill 'n' Dump—Give baby a plastic container or box and a few items like a clothespin, a spoon, a toy car, a spool. Show baby how to put them all in the container, then dump them all out again. Tomorrow, change the container or the objects.



ADAPTIVE

ACTIVITIES TO HELP YOUR BABY GROW AND LEARN 12–16 Months

Your baby is a busy explorer. She enjoys holding, stacking and playing with toys. She is learning her body parts and can probably point to at least one if you ask her. Baby enjoys books and will “pat” her favorite picture. She may try to help turn the page.

In The Bank—Make a “bank” out of a large coffee can or a cool-whip container. Cut a long slit in the plastic cover about ½ inch wide. Use the circular tops from frozen juices as “money,” or cut circles from a cereal or shoe box. Show your toddler how to put these “coins” into the bank.

Help With Daily Activities—Your child can help do small jobs like wiping the table with a sponge, stirring the pancake mix (with your assistance), or sweeping up sand with a small broom. He will enjoy doing something special for you while he learns about tasks. Be sure to praise him for helping.

Water Painting—Creative activities stimulate thinking skills. Give your child a clean paint brush and a small bucket of plain water. On a sunny day, go outside and let your child paint the walls, sidewalk, or fence with water. Your child will enjoy this “painting.” Then you can watch it dry, and paint again.

Problem Solving—Allow your child to figure out how things work by showing her real household items (make sure your choices are safe). Show baby how the switch turns the light on and off. Show her how the flashlight works. Twist the kitchen timer and hear it tick. Wow!

Finding Things—During quiet times ask your child to find the blanket, or get a book from another room. Ask her to get things she cannot see at the time. When baby is successful be sure to say, “Thank you!”

Just Like This—At this age, children are just beginning to notice when two things are alike, especially shoes, socks, or other things they know about. Play this game: Hold up one of baby’s slippers. Ask baby, “Where is the other one just like this?” Help baby make the match and find the other slipper. Have fun!



PERSONAL–SOCIAL

ACTIVITIES TO HELP YOUR BABY GROW AND LEARN 12–16 Months

Your sociable baby likes to play roll the ball, peek-a-boo, or other interactive games with you. He needs to know you are nearby. He actually likes to be the center of attention now! He will show you great affection, but collapse into a tantrum when he becomes frustrated. His new mobility is very exciting he's learning about the power of this new skill.

Going Out—Take baby out with you to everyday places, like where you shop, or the beach. Talk about things you see. Tell your child, “Look! See the bus? See the boat?”

Brushing Teeth—Give baby his own toothbrush. Let him see you or his siblings brushing their teeth. Put a tiny dab of toothpaste on the brush (if any) so baby can taste it. Do not expect much brushing; he will probably chew the bristles as he learns about this thing called “tooth brushing.” You will need to finish for him. Be sure to put baby’s toothbrush **away** until next time.

To Market, To Market—Take baby to the supermarket with you so baby can “help.” Let baby hold something, like a small can or a lemon. Talk about all the colors and smells. At the checkout, let baby “pay” the cashier. What a good helper!

Hide And Seek—At home, play hide-and-seek by hiding just behind a door, calling to baby, then peeking out so you can be “found.” A sibling may have fun playing this game. It helps baby understand that when you disappear, you will come back.

Bathing The Baby—When bathing baby, let her bathe a small plastic doll. Show baby how to be gentle with the doll. Later, let baby feed and hug the doll. (It’s O.K. to let little boys play with the doll—it teaches them to be loving.)

Male Time—Baby learns different things from Dads (or Uncles or Grandpas) than from Moms. Dads feel different, smell different, and sound different. Provide and encourage some special time with Dad or a favorite man in baby’s life. They can play a game, take a walk or have a talk all by themselves in their special way.



COMMUNICATION

ACTIVITIES TO HELP YOUR BABY GROW AND LEARN 16–20 Months

Your toddler is beginning to enjoy the power of language and words. She has a larger vocabulary now, and is beginning to put two words together for simple sentences. Baby also enjoys singing and will imitate “singing” favorite songs from T. V. Sometimes she may shout or screech to show strong feelings. It’s all part of learning to communicate.

Chatter Stretchers—Your toddler may use single words for requests, such as “juice” when he wants a drink. Help him stretch his sentence by saying it for him—“Would you like some juice?” “Say, I want juice, please.” Praise him when he attempts to make the sentence longer.

Remembering—When you get home from shopping or an outing, ask your child to tell someone else about what happened or what you saw. Help your child along if you need to, but let her tell as much as she can.

“Help Me” Game—Ask baby to help you by giving simple directions, like “Help mommy. Help me find my shoes!” “Now help me find your shoes!” You may need to motion with your hand or help him in the beginning. Be sure to say “Thank you!” when baby helps.

Picture Books—Find large picture books and/or magazines. Look at books and magazines often with your child. Try to get him to tell you what is happening in the pictures. Ask your child to read to someone else, like Grandpa or an older sibling.

Animal Sounds—Teach your toddler the sounds that animals make: cats, dogs, cows, etc. Read books about baby animals and play with your toddler by making the baby animal sounds. Later, pretend you are the mother animal and your toddler is the baby. Call each other with animal sounds. This game can be lots of silly fun.

Note: As children develop language skills, they will often make mistakes or sound words improperly. Listen attentively to your child and resist laughing or trying to correct speech. In time, most errors disappear. Watch for ear infections and treat them thoroughly. Ear infections interfere with your child’s learning to talk and can cause permanent damage.



GROSS MOTOR

ACTIVITIES TO HELP YOUR BABY GROW AND LEARN 16–20 Months

***B**y now your active toddler is attempting to run. He's gaining strength and coordination, and loves to push and pull large items around on the floor. He's quite good at walking upstairs with one hand held, and is getting better at walking down stairs. He can climb up into a chair and see and reach new things;. Your watchful eye is important!*

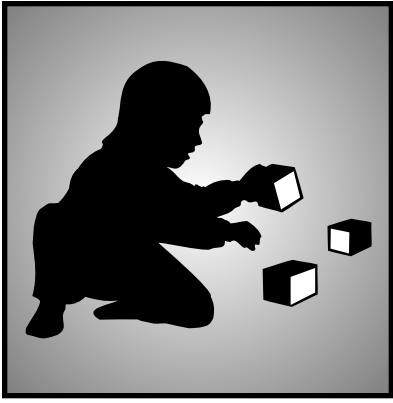
Swinging—Make a backyard swing from rope and a section of tire, or take your child to a park to swing. Be sure the swing is safe. Show your child how to push her feet out when swinging forward. Push gently so you know baby will hold on. Chant in rhythm while you push. “**Up** you go, and **down** you go!”

Bowling—Show your child how to roll a large ball toward “pins” to knock them down. Balls can be made from large wads of newspaper taped all around. Empty milk cartons or plastic soda bottles can be used for “pins.” The whole family can play.

Balancing Beam—Let your child walk the balance beam while holding on to your hand. Place a 2" x 4" length of lumber on the ground and let your child walk along putting one foot in front of the other. You might put a two-inch wide strip of masking tape on the floor or sidewalk. Let your child walk along the tape. Have your child do this barefoot, so his toes can help him balance. Praise your child. Tell him, “You really know how to balance!” Sidewalk curbs or tree roots are natural balancing equipment.

Rocking—Let your child experience rocking on a rocking horse or chair. Sit her on your lap and use your body to rock back and forth. Play “row boat” with her sitting opposite of you on the floor and gently pull and push her to and from you.

Chasing—Baby is beginning to run now. At the beach, in your yard or in a safe park, play chase with baby. Most babies love to be chased, and they love to be caught and hugged. Baby will love doing this over and over! It's good exercise for both of you.



FINE MOTOR

ACTIVITIES TO HELP YOUR BABY GROW AND LEARN 16–20 Months

Your toddler is becoming more skillful with hands and fingers. He can play with and use toys in many ways including stacking, pulling, pushing. He is also gaining skill at holding and using crayons or felt tip pens. Your child knows how to take pieces out of a simple puzzle and may put back simple round pieces.

Tearing—Show your child how to tear lettuce or cabbage leaves into a bowl. (Wash hands first!) Be sure to tell the family who made the salad. She will also like tearing strips of newspaper. Stuff them in a **paper** bag, tape it up, and make a kick ball!

Aim-And-Drop—Show your little one how to drop clothespins into a milk carton or other plastic bottle with a large opening. Play the game as long as baby enjoys it. Let baby shake the container and enjoy the noise.

Sweeping Up—Let baby help you sweep up crumbs, small pebbles, etc. by holding a dust pan steady. Let baby sweep the rubbish in with a small hand broom. An old paint brush will do as well. Later, let him try holding the dustpan with one hand and “sweeping” with the other. Be sure to say “Thank you for helping!”

Playing Music—Show baby how to play the ukulele **carefully**. Sit with baby and teach her how to stroke the strings and make a sound. At first she will use several fingers at once and may pluck more than stroke. Tell her, “You make nice music.” Other fun instruments for baby are a small keyboard instrument or rhythm sticks.

Stacking Blocks—Let baby play with blocks, either wooden or made from empty milk cartons. Show him how to stack them one on top of another. Build a tower and enjoy watching it fall down. Count aloud as you stack the blocks, so baby begins to hear the sound of numbers. (Don’t expect baby to count just yet.)

Writing Practice—Make sure baby gets lots of practice scribbling and drawing. You might keep paper and crayons in the kitchen so you can watch while getting dinner.



ADAPTIVE

ACTIVITIES TO HELP YOUR BABY GROW AND LEARN 16–20 Months

Your busy learner now recognizes animal pictures and other types of pictures, like photographs. He can paint, use play dough, and with some help, put paste on one side of a piece of paper. He is beginning to understand about things that are similar, or “go together” in some way.

Scribbling And Drawing—On a large paper, draw and scribble together with baby. Take turns. You scribble, then let baby scribble. You draw a line, let baby draw a line. Enjoy playing “copy cat;” change from straight lines to lines with curves. You might also try this on a flat up and down surface like a fence or outside wall (covered with paper). Drawing on a wall helps the development of the other skills.

Problem Solving—Allow your child a chance to play with puzzles or toys that fit together. Putting keys in locks and letters into the mailbox are great, too.

Using Tools—Let your child play games or do tasks in which tools are used. For example, provide a paddle to hit a floating balloon or suspended ball. Use a sponge to wipe off a chair. Use a strainer to play in the sand. Use a detergent scoop to play in the bath.

Socks—When you fold laundry, set aside some socks. Show baby one sock of a pair, and let your child find the other. Show her how to match the socks if she needs help. Ask her, “Whose socks are these?”

Sorting—Help your child sort objects into piles. He can sort by piling up rocks in one place and leaves in another. He can put his toy cars in a box and all the books on the shelf.

Matching—Cut out pictures of toys, food, a bar of soap, a key or other familiar objects. Mount them on cards. Then put the real item in a small box or plastic bowl. Have your child try to match cards to actual objects. Hold up the picture of the toothpaste. Ask baby “Where is the toothpaste like this? Can you find it?” You may need to hold the picture next to the toothpaste to show baby that they are alike.



PERSONAL–SOCIAL

ACTIVITIES TO HELP YOUR BABY GROW AND LEARN 16–20 Months

Your toddler is gaining more independence every day. She may show jealousy of others who get attention, especially siblings. Though she does not actually play with another child, she may begin to play by another child. She may become a little bossy and resist your suggestions. Your good humor will go far in seeing you both through the coming months.

Bigtime Mealtime—Let baby join the family for meals and eat with her own spoon. Baby can even help you set a place at the table. Talk about what a big girl she is and what a good helper she is.

Dancing The Hula—Show your toddler how to dance. Play music and show him how to imitate you or dance with you. Praise your little one. Give him a hug!

Story Time—This is a good time to establish the habit of reading a story each night. Cuddle up and enjoy a favorite book. It's especially good to read with no T.V. noises. This might also be a good special time for Dad, or for Grandma.

Comfort Me—Because your toddler is so busy and often frustrated, she will need lots of comfort and reassurance. Your baby responds to what she is feeling **right now**, and cannot really understand that she will feel better in just a little while. She will need your warm voice, a hug, and lots of comfort. *

Tickles—While getting baby ready for bed, say goodnight with a little tickle to different parts of baby, like this: “Goodnight little nose (tickle), goodnight little foot (tickle), goodnight little ear (tickle).” Ask your baby what part needs a goodnight tickle.

* For information about raising toddlers, talk to your doctor, nurse, visitor, or teacher. You can also call the Parent Line at 526-1222. Neighbor islands, call 1-800-816-1222.



COMMUNICATION

ACTIVITIES TO HELP YOUR BABY GROW AND LEARN 20–24 Months

***Y**our toddler is learning language rapidly and will imitate words he hears, good or bad. He is beginning to put two words together to make a “sentence.” He has added nouns, verbs and modifiers to his vocabulary, and most of his words are understandable. He will probably attempt to sing his favorite songs. Don’t be surprised if you hear “no” often.*

What Is That Sound?—Turn off the TV, radio, and listen with your child to sounds around the house. Listen to the refrigerator motor, wind chimes, clock ticking, people talking. Ask your child to tell you what she hears.

Following Directions—As you talk to your child, begin to give simple directions such as “Bring me the **blue** sock,” or “Put your doll **on** the chair.” At first you might have to show your child what “blue” is or where “on” is. Offer lots of praise.

Potty Books—If your child is beginning to learn about using the toilet, this is a good time to put a small basket of books in the bathroom for him to “read.” You may already have magazines or reading material in the bathroom. Add a few of baby’s books to the family’s toilet library.

New Words—Add some big words to your vocabulary just for fun. Try words like **delicious**. “This pizza is **delicious**.” Or the word **excited**. “Sue is really **excited** about her birthday!” Use them often; your child may try them too!

Singing—Your child will love learning simple songs like “Twinkle Twinkle Little Star.” Teach your child this song or a simple song you remember from childhood. Enjoy singing together. Later, ask your child to sing for someone else in the family.

Secrets—Whisper a secret into your child’s ear. Tell him “These cookies, are for Daddy. It’s a secret! Now, don’t tell.” Let your child whisper a secret to you. Tell other secrets so your child learns to listen carefully to a very quiet voice. Have fun!



GROSS MOTOR

ACTIVITIES TO HELP YOUR BABY GROW AND LEARN 20–24 Months

*The toddler is busy and fast! She can run and kick with more skill and confidence. Her leg muscles are getting stronger and she can walk up and down stairs holding on to a railing. She can squat to pick things up. She is learning to jump getting **both** feet off the ground.*

Jumping—Hold your child's hands and help him jump off a low step. Then let him try it by himself. When this is mastered, show your child how to jump over something like a small milk carton. Encourage your child with words like, "Wow! You can jump."

One Foot Balancing—Assist your child by holding her hand and asking her to stand on one foot. Then ask her to stand on the other foot. Now see if she can stand without holding your hand. You might have to do this activity over several days as your child's legs get stronger.

Riding Toys—Offer baby a riding toy that requires him to push with his feet. The activity of left–right action helps his brain and body work together. Later offer riding toys with pedals for more resistance and the circular motion.

Moving To Music—Play different kinds of music: rock and roll, western, classical, or ethnic music.* Dance and move to the music with your child. Allow him to move freely as he listens. Hold him while dancing now and then so he can feel you move. Mostly let him dance and move by himself. Let him use dancing implements, like scarves, ribbon, or a paper streamer.

More Balancing—Practice stepping up or down curbs holding your child's hand. Encourage her to walk upstairs by holding onto the railing.

Kickball—Give your child a medium sized ball (6 inches) and show her how to kick it. You can also make a ball to kick from a wad of newspaper taped all around.

* Keep the volume of music in your home and car turned down while babies and children are present. Loud noises like boom boxes, fire crackers, bulb type bicycle horns, even popped balloons, can cause injury to their ears.



FINE MOTOR

ACTIVITIES TO HELP YOUR BABY GROW AND LEARN 20–24 Months

Your busy toddler also enjoys quiet activities that build small muscles. She can stack and build with small toys. She can hold a crayon with her thumb and fingers, and can make circular and horizontal scribbles. Your toddler is becoming more skillful at stringing beads and doing other activities that require working with two hands.

Fitting Shapes And Sizes—Cut holes of different sizes and shapes into the top of a shoe box. A coffee can or ice cream tub can be substituted. Give your child things to put through these holes, like a block or a plastic film container. Show him how to turn the piece to make it fit.

Beginning Puzzles—Show your toddler how to put beginning puzzles together. You can make a puzzle by cutting the front of a cereal box into two or three wide strips. Help a little, if she needs it. Tell baby, “Good for you” You can do it!”

Letters and Shopping Lists—When you make out your shopping list or write letters, have paper and pencil for your child to write along with you. “I’m writing a letter to Tutu. You can write one too.” Be sure to include his note with your letter to Tutu.

Make Fruit Salad—Let your child use a popsicle stick or a **plastic** picnic knife to help you cut bits of banana, pineapple and soft papaya. (Wash hands first!) To make the activity easy, prepare the fruit before hand by peeling or pre-cutting strips. Don’t forget to tell the family who made the salad!

Twisting—Allow your Child to turn the knob on doors. The twisting of the wrist is the skill to be developed. Find other twisting activities, such as opening a plastic jar of peanut butter.

Circles—Draw circles in the air, in the sand, with paints or with a felt marker on paper. Drawing loops is fun too. Perfect circles are impossible but the circular motion is important.



ADAPTIVE

ACTIVITIES TO HELP YOUR BABY GROW AND LEARN 20–24 Months

Your toddler is curious about body parts and what they do. She is learning body part names. She understands more about how things are related, such as where items belong. She knows that pictures in a book represent something, and is learning that objects have purposes. Her busy mind is trying to make sense of what she sees and experiences.

Feel, Touch And Use Materials—Let your child experience pouring and filling. Provide lots of “recycled” materials like clean milk cartons, yogurt cups, detergent scoops, film containers, and plastic soda bottles for playing in the sand at the beach. At home, use a large tray or box for the sand. Provide scoopers and containers.

Pretending With Household Objects—Provide old tooth brushes, a flashlight, paint brushes, shovels, brooms so your child can pretend to do things with these items. Talk about the purpose of the items. Talk about how things work.

Follow Me—During bathtime or laptime with your child play “I can do, can you?” game. “My eyes blink; can your eyes blink? My nose can sniff; can your nose sniff? I can clap my hands. Show me you can clap too.” Do something silly. This game is lots of fun.

Prop Box Or Bag—Children need lots of experience pretending. Put together a dress-up box with hat, scarf, shoes, old jewelry, a wallet. Make a cooking box with pots, spoons, bowls. Make a doctor bag with play stethoscope (old earphones are good), bandaids, jacket, hat. Bring these out now and then for some special make-believe play.

Silly Game—Turn everyday things (books, cups, the box of cereal) upside down and see if your child notices and turns them back the right way. Have fun with this silly game!

Railroad Tracks—While your child is watching, draw two long **horizontal** lines about four inches apart on a large sheet of paper. Then show your child how to draw **vertical** lines from one to the other. Encourage him to make lots of these **vertical** lines. The design will look like a railroad track. Try it another way. You make two long vertical lines and show your child how to draw horizontal lines from one to another. Your design will look like a ladder. What fun!



PERSONAL–SOCIAL

ACTIVITIES TO HELP YOUR BABY GROW AND LEARN 20–24 Months*

*Your toddler is beginning to exercise his newly found independence. He may want to do everything by himself, even if he cannot. He wants things **now**, and quickly becomes frustrated if that does not happen. He will enjoy playing alongside other children although he is not really able to share just yet. He likes to imitate simple household tasks and can put some of his toys away with some help from you.*

Cooperation—Your child will need your help in playing with others. Stay close by when she is with other children. Cooperation is easier when there are many of the same kinds of toys. Several trucks, cars, and dolls are easier to share than one of each kind. Praise children for playing well together.

Dressing—Let your child “dress up” with a colorful shirt and show him how to button the buttons. This takes lots of practice, so be patient. Add clothing with a zipper or snaps. Old purses often have a snap, zipper and maybe some velcro for practice with opening and closing. Help out if necessary and offer lots of praise!

Playing House—Make play house furniture for your child. Turn a box over and draw the burners to make a stove. Place a plastic dishpan close by with some plastic cups, plates, and utensils. Add a doll in a box for a bed. Pretend along with your child and enjoy the play.

Separating—Begin to let a neighbor or relative watch your child for short periods of time. Never sneak away; just tell your child you will be back soon. He may cry, but he will learn that you will return. Soon he will not worry so much.

* It is an amazing and wonderful period of growth, but sometimes confusing and trying for parents. For more information, help, and even sympathy, call the Parent Line at 526-1222. Neighbor island call 1-800 816-1222.



COMMUNICATION

ACTIVITIES TO HELP YOUR BABY GROW AND LEARN 24–30 Months

Your toddler's language grows daily as she attempts to express herself, learns to sing phrases of songs, and to answer questions. Her pronunciation is also improving. She understands and uses "me" or "I" for herself. She's beginning to use plurals, but may make mistakes, such as "feets."

Name Game—Teach your toddler the names of each family member. Be sure to include a last name. Then you can help your child say her own first and last name. Teach her the names of your pets and even a doll with a first and last name.

Labels—Throughout the day, tell your child the names of things. Have him say the names back to you. When you hear your child say what something is used for, i.e. "It's for cut.," give your child the name. You can say, "Yes, it's for cutting; that's a **knife**, or **scissors**."

Reporting—At the end of a busy day, ask your child to tell others in the family what at she did during the day. Let her take her time. You might remind her if she forgets some events. Soon she will learn to tell what happened in the right order. Praise her for remembering so much!

Telling Stories—Tell stories about your child What happened when your child was born? How did you choose your child's name? Tell stories about relatives. Your child will want to hear these stories over and over.

Listening At Night—On a quiet evening take a walk outside and listen to the night noises. Talk about what you hear. Be very still and listen for a dog barking, the wind, even a bird! "Ssh—can you hear something?"

Find Me Game—Call your child from another room. Be sure she can't see you. Hide behind the door or in the closet but continue to call so she can follow your voice. When she finds you, act surprised! "Oh! You found me!"



GROSS MOTOR

ACTIVITIES TO HELP YOUR BABY GROW AND LEARN 24–30 Months

“Active” still best describes your child. Muscles are getting stronger. He is gaining more confidence with his abilities. He can walk up stairs alone now, and jump off the bottom step. His jumps are getting longer, and he may even jump backwards or sideways. Your toddler is beginning to learn to tiptoe and may be able to take a step on a low balance beam by himself!

Heavy Loads—At the beach let your child test her strength by carrying a small bucket of sand. See if she can carry a bucket that is full. Try it with water. At home, rig up a cardboard box with a heavy string or small rope. See if your child can pull a box with two cans of soup or coconuts, then three, then four. Praise your child for her efforts. “Wow, what a strong girl you are!”

Copy Me—Stand on one foot. Tell your child, “See if you can copy me, pretending to be a flamingo.” If your child stands only one second, praise him. “Wow you’re a great flamingo!” “This flamingo needs to change its foot. See if you can copy me.” Your child may not be able to change from one foot to the other very easily. Note what foot he did stand on, and try again standing on the other foot.

Soccer—Give your child a six or eight inch ball to kick over a line or piece of tape. Show him how to kick the ball more than once to get it over the line. Let him kick to you and you kick it back. Let a sibling join in!

Follow the Leader—Have your child follow and imitate you or an older sibling. Crawl, walk, “swim,” tiptoe, around the house. Have fun with this game. Play with the whole family!

Animal Steps—Teach your child how the animals move. The horse **gallops**. The kangaroo **jumps with both feet together**. You be the parent animal, and call your baby to follow you. This is a great game to play outside.

Let’s Race—Show your child how to race by making a start and finish line or place (not too far apart). Teach her to wait while you say “Ready, Set, **Go!**” Let your child win these races. Now let her be the one to say “Ready, Set, Go!” Keep it fun.



FINE MOTOR

ACTIVITIES TO HELP YOUR BABY GROW AND LEARN 24–30 Months

Your toddler's eyes and hands are becoming more coordinated. He enjoys using any kind of "writing" or drawing tool, and loves to take things apart and put them back together. He can stack small blocks; as many as eight, and may want to try cutting with scissors.

Cutting—Get your child a pair of safe scissors that cut well. Have your child cut strips of paper that you've prepared—about five inches long by a half inch wide. Your child may only make snips at first, but will get better with practice. Explain to your child where and when this activity can be done to avoid her cutting other things.

Flipping Pancakes—Trim the corners from an ordinary household sponge to make a "pancake." Give your child a small lightweight skillet and a spatula. Show him how to "flip the pancake."

Sewing—Give your child a shoelace and a piece of heavy paper or cardboard with holes punched around the edge. Show her how to "sew" with the shoelace. It's okay if she misses a few holes.

Crayon Rubbings—Glue a medium sized leaf to a piece of cardboard, vein side up. Now place a clean piece of paper over the leaf. Peel the paper from a crayon and show your child how to rub the side of the crayon over a paper to get the leaf shape. It's magic!

Squeezing—While bathing your toddler, let him play with things to squeeze, such as a sponge, a turkey baster, or a washcloth. Squeezing really helps strengthen the muscles in his hands and fingers.

Sorting Objects—Use a divided plate (or TV dinner plate), and common objects like nuts and shells. Let your child use a spoon to pick up objects and move them from one compartment of the plate to another. Using only the spoon, put the nuts in one compartment and the shells in another.



ADAPTIVE

ACTIVITIES TO HELP YOUR BABY GROW AND LEARN 24–30 Months

Your toddler enjoys picture and “feely” books. His growing imagination makes it possible for him to play simple make-believe games. He can pick out the picture of a familiar family member in a photo, and can find a common household object if you show him a picture, ie. toothpaste. As his language grows, he is beginning to understand many action words.

Find One Like This—Gather at least two of several household objects. Use two paper bags with identical objects in each. Pull one up and ask your child to find one in her bag. “Can you find something like this in your bag?”

Laundry Day—Ask your child to help with the laundry. Sort items by color, or gather only white things. Place all socks in one pile, all shirts in another. Line slippers and shoes up in the proper place. Make sure they are in **pairs**.

Copy Me—Use a crayon and paper, stick in the sand, markers on newspaper or steamy bathroom mirror and finger. Have your child copy a line you draw—up and down and side to side. You take a turn, then your child takes a turn. Then try zigzag patterns, then spirals.

Number Concepts—Teach your child about counting by doing it in simple ways. When you dress your child, count socks. Then count buttons. At snack time count crackers. Ask your child to help you count out loud. Take your time teaching your child how to count. Enjoy learning about “how many.”

Building With Boxes—Gather up several small and medium sized boxes to use as building blocks. You can use shoe boxes, cereal boxes, clean milk cartons, etc. Encourage your child to build with the boxes. Ask him, “Is that a house?” “Is it a wall?” Add toy cars or animals for more fun.



PERSONAL–SOCIAL

ACTIVITIES TO HELP YOUR BABY GROW AND LEARN 24–30 Months*

As your toddler learns to be more independent, she's also learning about separating from you. This is important learning and will take time. She may continue to be negative and even a little bossy from time to time. She may also develop fears of large animals or other situations or things that have frightened her. She'll need your calm assurance. She's beginning to show interest in playing cooperatively with other children, if only for brief periods of time.

Putting on Shorts—Taking off clothing is probably easy for your child. Now begin having her put on her own clothes. Start with loose fitting shorts. Have her sit on the floor. Put both legs in the shorts. Stand up and then pull them up. Good job!

Playmates—Invite a friend over to play for a short period of time, or take your child over to a relative's house where there is someone his age. Make sure there are enough toys to play with to avoid conflict. Later let him tell you all about it.

Feelings—Help your child name feelings when they happen. When your child is worried, you can help him understand the feeling by telling him, "You look **worried**. Can you tell me about it?" Or, if you know your child is frustrated, use the word: "I know you are really **frustrated**, but you can have a turn in a minute." When your child learns that feelings have names, he will be able to handle them more easily.

Self-Confidence—Let your child know how much you care about him. Tell him you love him. Tell him you are proud of him. When you are with other adults and your child is present, tell them what a great child he is. All kids need to know that they are special.

Holding A Baby—Let your child hold a baby; either a sibling, a relative or a neighbor's baby. Help her sit steadily and hold her arms for support. Talk about how babies must be handled gently. Tell her what a good friend she is to baby and how baby likes her. (Always supervise when a young child holds a baby.)

* Parenting toddlers is often confusing and trying, but this time will pass.



COMMUNICATION

ACTIVITIES TO HELP YOUR BABY GROW AND LEARN 30–36 Months

Your toddler can talk about many things and his sentences are longer. He may not use correct grammar, and may say things like “foots” and “mines,” but will probably learn to say these things correctly over time. He also likes stories, and may pretend to “read” favorite books by himself, using the words you have read over and over again. When you read that favorite story, he will notice if you skip a page.

Reading Magazines—“Read” the pictures in ordinary household magazines. Find pictures of household items your child will recognize, such as toothpaste, soap, diapers, pets, or cars. Point to the picture and ask, “What is this?” Then find pictures your child may **not** know, and teach him the name.

Silly Reading—Play the magazine game differently. Point to the toothpaste and ask your child, “Is that the **soap**?” Let her tell you what it really is. Act surprised and have fun! Your child will enjoy “teaching” you the right name of things.

Bandaid Game—Make “pretend” bandaids out of masking tape, or use stickers. Ask your child, “Where shall I put this?” Get your child to name as many body parts as possible, and put a bandaid on each part. This game can also be played with a doll.

Let’s Put The Groceries Away—When putting the food away after going to the market, ask your child to help. Tell her “Put the cans **on** the shelf. Put the butter **in** the refrigerator.” You’ll have fun giving some silly directions too, like “Put the lemons **under** the chair.” Your child will laugh at you. Use terms like **up** and **down** also.

What’s Going On?—When reading books or pictures, ask your child to tell you what’s happening in the picture, i.e. “What’s the baby doing?” “What is the dog doing?” Ask your child, “Why?” to see how your child will think about reasons for actions.

Saying Goodnight—As part of a good night ritual, take your child around the house and say goodnight to everyone. Blow a kiss. Say goodnight to the pets, and to the chair, and the trees outside, and whatever else your child wishes.



GROSS MOTOR

ACTIVITIES TO HELP YOUR BABY GROW AND LEARN 30–36 Months

Your child is improving skills using large muscles of the legs and arms, making them stronger, more flexible, and more coordinated and quick. She can catch an 8 inch ball, jump about 2 feet, make sharp turns around a corner, and avoid obstacles in her path.

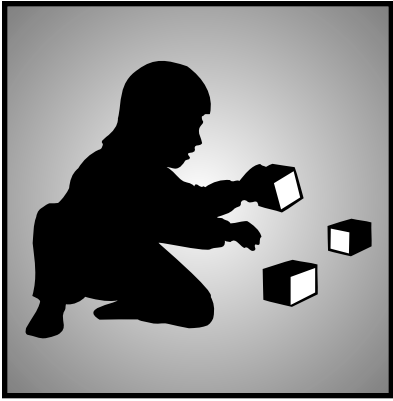
Over The River—When playing outside place a small towel or piece of cloth about 24 inches wide on the grass. This is the “river.” Have your child run and jump “over the river” without getting wet. At first you can bunch the towel up in the middle or fold it so the river is only about twelve inches wide. As your child is able, you can open the towel so that the river is wider.

Bowling—Make a “bowling” game of five plastic soda bottles, and a 6 inch ball. First let your child throw from 4 feet away, then 5 feet, then 6 feet. An older sibling may try from further away; a younger sibling from nearer. Have some family fun!

Animal Walk—Show your child how to walk like different animals (squatting like a duck, walking on all fours like a dog, etc.). Encourage him to pretend to be these animals and make noises like them. Play along. Call the cat. “Here, kitty, kitty”

Heel-To-Toe Walk—Show your child how to walk heel to toe using a line on the sidewalk or a length of small clothesline on the ground. Show your child how to use arms outstretched to balance. Have fun!

Basket Ball—Place an empty laundry basket on the floor against an empty wall. Give your child a soft ball about four inches in size or make a ball from newspaper crumpled up and taped all around. Place a string or piece of tape on the floor for a line and show your child how to throw overhand to make the goal. Start about four feet back from the basket. Move back as your child gets better.



FINE MOTOR

ACTIVITIES TO HELP YOUR BABY GROW AND LEARN 30–36 Months

Your toddler is better able to use pens, pencils, crayons, markers. Her skills with scissors are improving; she's learning to cut two and three cuts in sequence rather than snips. She can string smaller beads and stack cubes even higher! And she can complete simple puzzles.

Making Puzzles—Cut the colorful picture from your child's favorite cereal box. Make it into a "puzzle" by cutting it into four or five curvy pieces. Enjoy letting your child put this puzzle together. Make the next puzzle into six pieces.

Drawing/Writing—Show your child how to make lines and circles. You might also try simple shapes. Your child may want to learn to "write" the first letter of his name when you are playing this game. Keep it fun. You don't have to force a child to copy letters or shapes at this age, but help if your child is interested.

Using Tongs—Give your child a pair of kitchen tongs (small) or ice tongs. See if he can move cotton balls from one container into another. Then try something heavier like nuts or spools.

Nuts And Bolts—Collect large bolts and matching nuts. Let your child match the bolt to the nut and twist it on.

String-a-Snack—Give your child a small container of Cheerios or other round cereal, and a clean shoe lace or piece of string with tape around the end to make it stiff. Show her how to string the Cheerios. Make a bracelet! Make a necklace! Then bite the Cheerios off the string.



ADAPTIVE

ACTIVITIES TO HELP YOUR BABY GROW AND LEARN 30–36 Months

Your toddler can understand how one thing relates to another now. She can match similar items and sort things that go together. She can tell you what objects are longer and which are shorter. She knows “big” and “small.” She can put stacking rings in the right order. Pretend play is expanding and becoming more important.

Whose Hair Is This?—After giving your child a bath, stand or seat your child in front of a mirror. With a towel, dry different parts of her body. While drying hair, ask “What is this stuff?” While drying her shoulder ask “What is this thing?” While drying ribs ask “What are these bony things?” Have fun being together while teaching the names of body parts.

Copy Cat Cars—Line up four to five small cars or other objects in a row. Make sure your child sees what you did. Give your child some objects to line up in a row just like you did. You can line up different things like blocks, spoons, slippers, or shells. Praise your child’s efforts.

Big And Little—Show your child two items of different sizes, such as shoes, coconuts, spoons. Ask him to show you the big one, then the little one. You can play “big and little” with many things like dogs, leaves, or cars. Play this game anywhere in the house, out of doors, or at the supermarket.

Drawing And Talking—Give your child plain paper and crayons or felt pens and ask him to draw a special story for you. When your child finishes, ask her to tell you about what she drew. Write the story on your child’s drawing. Now read the story back to her.

Reading The Neighborhood—Show your child signs in the neighborhood that will be important to him, like the large yellow “M” for McDonalds, or the big red star at the gas station. Show him the STOP sign and tell him what it says. Next time you go out, ask him to read signs with you.



PERSONAL–SOCIAL

ACTIVITIES TO HELP YOUR BABY GROW AND LEARN 30–36 Months

As your toddler’s independence increases, separating from you may be becoming easier. Though he wants to be independent he may suddenly shift emotionally and need to be babied a bit. He takes great pride in his own skills and achievements, and may resist help from you. He is beginning to play interactive games or to take part in small circle games with simple rules.

Cooking—Let your child help with cooking by measuring, pouring, stirring, cutting (with cookie cutters or plastic knives), and tearing salad greens. These are **real** activities that help the family. Tell her, “Thank you for helping.”

Picking Up Rubbish—Show your child how to put rubbish in the proper container, both at home and on outings. Show your child how important it is to keep the world clean. Be a good model for your child.

Washing—Show your child how to bathe himself from top to bottom with a wash cloth. Wash face, neck, shoulders, arms, tummy, legs, and feet. Be sure to let your child know that she is doing a good job. Then give your child a towel so she can dry herself. Have fun with your child; “Whose clean child is this!?”

Praise—Praise your child for positive behaviors, such as trying new food, helping someone else, being cooperative, or throwing rubbish in the rubbish can. Let her know that you approve of her. Tell other family members about her accomplishments.

Setting Limits—Part of growing up is testing your limits for behaviors. Help your child make decisions by giving limits and stating **choices**, like this: “No ice cream now, but you can have a banana or some juice. **Which one** would you like?”*

Ring-Around-The-Rosie—Teach your toddler how to play “ring-around-the-rosie.” He will love the “all fall down” part. Invite a sibling or a friend to join in.

* For lots of information about making rules and setting limits, call Parent Line at 526-1222. Neighbor islands call 1-800-816-1222.



COMMUNICATION

ACTIVITIES TO HELP YOUR BABY GROW AND LEARN 36–48 Months

Your child now enjoys books with longer stories. She can help tell the story or make up silly stories of her own. She probably asks “why” often, not only about books, but about daily events. She can describe recent events with some detail, and with a little help, can place the events in order. She may be reading signs in the neighborhood, and knows what words and letters are. Your child probably takes pride in recognizing her own name.

Talking Books—To make “talking books,” paste pictures, one per page, in an inexpensive spiral notebook. As you look through this picture book with your child, ask him to talk about the pictures, saying things like “What’s going on here?” and asking more detailed questions like “What colors do you see?” See if your child can tell you two or three things about each picture.

Say What You Can See—When you’re out on the bus or in the car, look for things in a certain category, alive or in pictures. Choose the category or group ahead of time. You might say “Let’s see how many animals we see while we’re riding.” Both you and your child can point out real dogs and cats, as well as animals on posters, statues, etc. Try “things with wheels” or “things that are tall,” etc. Let your child pick his own categories.

My Own Stories—Your child can begin to make up stories of his own. You can encourage him to tell the stories by writing down the story he tells you on a piece of paper. He might like to draw a picture with crayons to go along with the story. You can put these stories in a folder to make a book of “my own stories.”

Fill In The Blank—When reading familiar stories, leave a word out here or there. Pause to let your child fill in the appropriate word.

Do What I Do—Do a simple action, such as clapping your hands, and tell your child “Do what I do.” Then add a second motion such as patting your stomach. Have your child do it with you first, then by herself. Now add a third motion and see if your child can remember all three, like this: clap, clap, pat pat, wink, wink. Add more as long as you child can remember them, and as long as you both are having fun!



GROSS MOTOR

ACTIVITIES TO HELP YOUR BABY GROW AND LEARN 36–48 Months

Your child is now more coordinated and will run, climb, swing and balance with more confidence. He can jump, dance, balance on one foot for longer than one second. He can walk heel to toe and begin to do forward somersaults. Your child now has the skills and understanding to pump a swing.

Obstacle Course/Follow The Leader—When playing outside, or at the park, have your child follow you through an obstacle course. Some actions might be climbing over the cooler, running around the blanket, hopping across the grass, walking backwards, sliding down a slide, etc. When done, let her take a turn leading you in an obstacle course!

T Ball—This is a fun way to teach your child how to swing a bat. Carefully balance a small or medium sized ball on the mouth of an empty plastic milk container. Use the cardboard roll from wrapping paper for a bat. SWING!

Freeze!—Put some music on, and move around with your child. When you turn the music off, show your child how to “freeze,” or stop moving. Encourage your child to freeze in many different positions: on one foot, bent over, on tip toe, etc.

Ring Toss—Take the plastic lid from coffee can or other large can and cut out the center to make a large ring. Have the child toss the ring either on to a small post (made out of a paper towel roll taped on to a piece of cardboard), or into a box that is a little further away. This is a fun game for a birthday party.

Jumping Jacks—When your child can jump landing with two feet at the same time, show her how to jump over something with height. Start with a book or block. See if your child can still keep two feet together. Now jump two or three times in a row, like a kangaroo!



FINE MOTOR

ACTIVITIES TO HELP YOUR BABY GROW AND LEARN 36–48 Months

Your child has stronger finger muscles and can show his age with his fingers with ease. Five piece puzzles are easier to do now, and he might need a bigger challenge. He might be able to trace over sample designs and is probably attempting to write the first letter of his name.

Magazine Cutting And Pasting—Give your child an old magazine and a pair of small scissors. Let her cut pictures out of the magazine (she doesn't have to cut them out perfectly), and using a glue stick, glue them on a piece of paper. You can ask your child to choose a certain kind of picture. Tell her, "Find food that you like, and cut it out." "Cut out some coupons for Mommy."

More Puzzle Pictures—Take a colorful page from a magazine, cut it in five or six pieces, and encourage your child to put the pieces together. For sturdier puzzles, glue the pictures onto cardboard before you cut them. Save the puzzles in an envelope to use again and again.

Button Hide And Seek—Provide clothes for your child that have one or two buttons or let them help you fasten a button on something of yours. As he is trying to fasten the button, pretend it is a hide and seek game, with the button hidden at first, then "peeking out" from the hole, and then all the way through!

Tweezer Games—Give your child a pair of tweezers and two cups. Put some large pieces of macaroni or small corks into one of the cups and have your child pick them up with the tweezers and put them in the other cup. Now try it with the other hand!

Winding The Clock—If you have a wind-up clock show your child how to wind the alarm or turn the hands. Not only will your child get some good fine motor practice, but she will learn something about how clocks work.



ADAPTIVE

ACTIVITIES TO HELP YOUR BABY GROW AND LEARN 36–48 Months

Your child can probably count two or three things; accurately. He can count to ten from memory but probably cannot give you ten things. His understanding of how the world works is growing. He now understands simple opposites and whether things are the same or different. He can see patterns like “cool, warm, hot water” or “big, bigger, biggest.”

Remember What Happened When...—Encourage your child to tell you about things that happened in the past. You can start with the phrase “Remember what happened when... (you went to Grandma’s, we went swimming, etc.) Then follow up with questions like “When did we do that?,” “What did you like the best?”

Color Hunt—When you are out in the car or on the bus, or even at home, have a treasure hunt for colors. With excitement, say to your child “Find something _____ (a color) and put it on the table!” When she returns, give her another color. This is a fun game for everyone to play, including older children or adults. Try to use four or five different colors. Even if she brings back the wrong color, praise her for trying.

Where Does The Sock Go?—Put any type of sock on your head or somewhere else it doesn’t belong. Ask “Where is my sock?” When he points, or says it’s on your head, then ask him where it should go. When he responds, ask him to put it on your foot. Then follow up, asking him, “Can you put the sock **under** a chair, **between** the books and **in the middle** of the table.” Have fun.

What Do You Do When?—Ask your Child simple questions like “What do we do when the baby’s wet?” “What do we do when you cut your finger?” “What do we do when the kitty is hungry?” See if your child can give you answers that make sense. Help him talk about the answers.

What Doesn’t Belong?—Gather four things together. Make sure three are very similar are in the same category, and the fourth item is different. Ask your child to tell you which one doesn’t belong and why. Examples: Three lemons and a can of soup; soap, shampoo, toilet paper and a screw driver.



PERSONAL–SOCIAL

ACTIVITIES TO HELP YOUR BABY GROW AND LEARN 36–48 Months

Your child is better at taking turns and waiting. Although she plays with other children cooperatively, she still needs adult help from time to time with problem solving. Her feelings; can be strong, but they may become more bearable when you name them. Your child also can begin to select her own clothes and dress herself. She is beginning to enjoy making friends.

Pouring—Give your child a small pitcher or measuring cup and let him pour his milk from the pitcher into his cup or bowl of cereal. Have a paper towel ready just in case. Let him pour the juice at mealtime. Praise his success.

Dress Up—Provide clothes for your child to play dress-up. Children love to imitate adults in their family and in their community. The clothes don't have to be fancy, just oversized shirts, muu-muu, scarves, hats, skirts, shoes, lei, or even loose fabric. Encourage children to dress themselves during dress-up, fastening buttons, snaps, zippers, etc. Play along: "Are you going to work today?"

Puppets—Make your own puppets as another way to pretend. Cut a magazine picture or draw a picture of a person or animal. Cut it out, paste it on cardboard, and attach a handle of popsicle stick, paint stir stick, or chop stick. You be one character, and let your child be another character. Have conversations in pretend voices.

Helpers—Your child can be helpful in many ways. This helps him feel important and builds important skills. Make him your "special helper," helping you wash the clothes, cook, feed pets, sweep, wash dishes. Be sure to allow extra time since young helpers may need it. This "helping" can become part of your child's family chores. Keep it fun, and be sure to thank him for being so helpful.

Self-Help Choices—Offer choices to your child about his activities, including taking care of himself. Sometimes it is easier to get him to cooperate when he has a choice. For example, you might offer him the choice to brush his teeth **before** he puts on his pajamas, or **after** he puts on his pajamas. These self-help skills are things children can start doing for themselves, but it's more fun and more appealing if there's a choice.

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