

Playing Means Learning

From the first couple of days after your baby is born they become interested in what is going on in their environment. As your baby grows, play activities become crucial in helping your child develop socially, physically, and cognitively.

- Introduce your baby to the idea of play by exposing them to different senses of touch, sound and smells. Move their hands and legs back and forth playfully, rub scented oils or lotions on their skin.
- While your baby is awake and lying on their back, place a toy or doll within their view at arm's length away. Toys that light up or make sound usually provide more of an interest.
- Introduce the concept of cause-and-effect. Present toys that he/she can light up or activate.
- Play games of hide-and-seek with a toy or simply by hiding behind a towel. This is a playful way to teach object permanence.
- Play active games to exercise gross motor skills. If your baby is crawling, make a game of pushing the toy across the floor and encouraging her to chase after it.
- Open the cabinets and let your child play with pots, pans and wooden spoons. Your baby will smile as they realize they are making sounds.
- Play interactive games like rolling or tossing a ball to your child. These activities encourage turn-taking skills.
- Play letter or number games. Pick a letter and find something in the room that begins with that letter or you can count how many times you bounce a ball.
- Play with toys to encourage language. Talk about the colors and shapes, and introduce concepts such as bigger and smaller and top and bottom.
- Introduce “pretend play” to your child by making up games or scenarios that encourage your child to use their imagination.

