

Activities to do with your 0-12 months old child

Some of these activities can be done with your baby from the time they are born, other activities may require some motor control. You know your baby best, you will best be able to judge when your child is ready for a particular activity.

Singing Time: Sing to your baby, it doesn't matter if you sing the silliest of songs to the most complex opera, children learn about language through hearing music.



Babies and Books: Read to your infant, while they might not even be able to focus on the pictures yet, you CAN start reading to your infant, read early and often, especially books with repetitive sounds.

Name It: Look at things with high contrast around the house or in the environment and name them, babies also LOVE to look at faces.

Tree Trance: Lie on a blanket under a tree with your baby. Together you can watch the dance of light and shadow, listen to the leaves and feel the breeze.

Light Show: Turn off the lights, turn on your favorite music, lie on the bed or floor with your child next to you with a flashlight. Shine the flashlight in different areas of the room. For more fun place colored saran wrap at the end of the flashlight secured with a rubber band. As your child gets older and starts to move you can continue this game and have your child chase the light, always being careful to not shine the light in his/her eyes.

Out and About: Take your baby somewhere they haven't been before, new sights and sounds are stimulating for their growing brains.

Beach Ball Toss: With your baby on her back toss a colorful lightweight beach ball in the air and catch it right above her.

Animal Talk: Stimulate baby's language by making various animal noises. Pay attention to your child's reaction.

Diaper Dance: Next time you are changing your infant's diaper, take your hand and turn it into a creature a dance it up your baby's body. Do this with a slight bit of pressure. Start at the bottom and create anticipation. While you are doing this talk to your child. The touch along with the conversation are very stimulating for your child.



Close and Faraway: Lying on your back hold your infant by their midsection (make sure they have full head control before attempting this) Lift them up and away from your body and say something to the effect that baby is so far away, and then bring them back down right in front of your face and say something about baby being sooooo close. Changing the pitch of your voice is also good. There is a bonus of a great upper arm workout for the parent.

Hats Off!: Use a collection of different hats (nothing scary). Face your baby and try on the hats and begin your show of words and play about the hats and who you might be. Lean toward your baby so the baby can grasp your hat or pull it off yourself for more fun.



Tubular Talk: Take a cardboard tube from a roll of paper towels and use it to “talk” to your infant. Place the end of the tube near your child’s ear and talk gently into the tube, being careful not to talk too loudly as it will magnify your voice. If your child seems confused let them see your mouth moving so he knows it is you doing the talking.



Tummy Time: Place your infant on a blanket on her tummy with a variety of interesting things to look at, some infants really don’t like this, but it is important. This activity helps develop the muscles they need to hold up their heads and to roll over.

Where is it?: Play Hide and Seek with a toy, cover a toy say where is it with your child watching and then uncover it and say here it is.

Tickle Tickle: Find opportunities to give your child a little tickle. Pay attention to their reaction and stop if they look like they have had enough or are not enjoying it.

Cause and Effect: Give your child toys or rattles that make noise when you shake or grasp them, make sure they are safe to be put in their mouth. Your child will eventually connect their action to the noise that is coming from the toy.



Buzzy Bee: Place Baby on his back on a soft blanket. Make a sound imitating a buzzing bee as you move your finger toward baby’s body. After a few seconds touch baby and say Buzzy Bee!!! Repeat with the “Buzzy” landing on different parts of his body.

Bike Hike: With your baby lying on his back on the floor, couch, or changing table, grasp him gently by each ankle and move his legs slowly in a circle, as if he were riding a bicycle. Exaggerate the movement slightly, bringing his knees up close to his chest and stretching each leg out straight on the “down” side. Hold your face close to his, and speak to him softly about what you’re doing. Vary the rhythm of the cycles, alternately speeding up and slowing down. The motion strengthens his legs and abdomen, and your voice perks up his hearing.

Baby Signs: Learn some baby signs: there are many sites on the internet to help you. Knowing some basic signs reduces frustration and promotes language development. You can even make up your own, the important thing is that you understand what your child is communicating and respond.

Stimulating Sounds: Produce funny sounds for your child using only your mouth. Try squawking like a parrot, honking like a truck horn or saying “hello hello hello” in a squeaky voice. Your baby will be both amused and amazed.

Savvy Shopper: The grocery store newspaper ads can be very visually stimulating. Position your child in your lap so that they can see the items and but not touch the paper and point to the different items and name them.

Play Ball!: Roll a ball (large enough not to be a choking hazard) slowly to your seated infant, keep repeating eventually this will turn into a back and forth game.

Tub Fun: In the bath give baby plastic drinking cups and measuring cups to fill and dump in the tub. Let baby enjoy the sound of cascading water. (Never leave baby alone in the tub).

Peek a Boo: An oldie but goodie, cover and uncover your face with your hands and say something every time you uncover your face. Watch your child for signs that they are done. This is a game that you can play throughout your child's early years.



This Little Piggy: Play the classic rhyme on your child's fingers or toes, find other rhymes, or make up your own, touch is very important to your infant's development. This little piggy went to market, This little piggy stayed home, this little piggy had roast beef, this little piggy had none, and this little piggy went wee, wee, wee all the way home.

Toy Tease: While playing on the floor with your infant, put some of their favorite toys just out of their reach, this should encourage them to move forward, don't be discouraged if they go backwards at first, they will get it eventually.

Bubble Blowing: Talk about the size and colors of the bubbles as they blow gently past baby. Baby will try and grab for them. If they land on him name the body part they landed on. Take care not to get the bubble solution in his eyes. Bubbles are available commercially or can be homemade with recipes from the internet.

Play with their food!: That is right, I said play with their food, let them squish it through their fingers and use all their senses to explore their food. Most pediatricians now recommend waiting until your child is 6 months old to introduce them to food.



Cushion Crossing: Take cushions off the couch, pillows off the bed, or small throw pillows and pile them up and surround your baby. Do not stack them too high or it will be frustrating. They will have to work to crawl over the obstacle.

Mealtime Adventures: Introduce your child to eating utensils. As soon as your child is eating and can grasp, give them an infant sized eating utensil, it will be a while before they get the mechanics down and the process will be messy.

Magical Measuring Cups: Give your child a set of non-metal measuring cups, they can be used for so many activities, stacking, nesting, pouring water or just banging together. This is a toy/tool with longevity, as they get older they can actually use them to measure.

Please and Thank You: During diaper changes have your child hold the clean diaper and when you are ready to use the new diaper ask them to please hand me the diaper, and when they do say thank you.

Photo Fun: Babies love to look at pictures of real people. Take pictures of people in your family or are close to you and create a “photo album” for your child. There are commercial baby photo albums available or you can create your own, making sure the end product is something that is safe for baby to put in their mouth.

Bang, Shake and Rattle: Sit on the floor and give baby some things to shake, bang or rattle. Follow the baby’s lead. Or introduce a rhythm or beat and see if baby follows. Make some beautiful music together.

Basket Of Fun: Give your child an empty laundry basket and see what they do. It can be so many things, something to get in, under, creep around, fill up, dump out and on and on.

Bucket of Blocks: Sit on the floor with a bucket of blocks. Follow your child’s lead with dumping, stacking refilling.

Drumming Fun: Sit with your baby and drum with pans, and wooden, plastic, metal spoons and whisk. Take turns.

Crayon Creativity: Infants who can grasp, can color. There are crayons made with 100% beeswax that are safe if baby takes a little nibble. Give your baby a piece of paper and some beeswax crayons and let them explore. This works best if your child is either contained in a seat or in your lap. (This needs to be a 100% supervised activity)

Cruising Course: If your child is pulling up on furniture, create a safe place for them to travel from one piece of furniture to the next, watch for sharp corners.

Milk Carton Madness: Take ½ gallon milk or juice cartons, rinse them out and tape up the open end. They make perfect building blocks and when your child is no longer using them just recycle.

