

EASY WAYS TO PLAY WITH YOUR BABY

0-2 months

Make eye contact with baby.	Sing lullabies or favorite songs.
Massage baby's hands and feet.	Try singing songs ("Pat-a-Cake", "Twinkle, Twinkle")
Stick out your tongue - baby can imitate!	Kiss baby's cheek, head, hands etc.
Hold baby skin-to-skin - great for dads too!	Read and talk to baby whenever you can..
Dance slowly while holding baby.	Snuggle! Snuggle as much as possible.

2-4 months

Place a rattle in their hands and help them learn to hold it for 10-20 seconds.	Place a jingle bracelet in baby's hands and watch them inspect it.
Make an arc over baby's head with a rattle; see if they will visually follow it.	Place a bag of rice or a piece of mylar under baby's feet for them to kick and make sound.
Hold baby in your lap facing you. Watch them search to locate your eyes and mouth.	Place baby in front of a mirror and notice their reaction to their reflection.
Talk slowly to baby. Watch them focus on your mouth. They are learning!	Read books while looking at baby's face. They love learning to imitate sounds!
Place a connecting ring in one of baby's hands. Help them bring it to their mouth.	Play peek-a-boo with baby in your lap looking at you. Do it slowly and keep your "peek-a-boo" quiet/calm.



EASY WAYS TO PLAY WITH YOUR BABY

4-6 months

Place a small clean washcloth over a toy and practice peek-a-boo.

Rip a sheet of newspaper in front of baby. They will probably laugh!

Play Piggie Toes... "This little piggy went to market..."

Offer baby a toy in each hand and see how long they can hold onto the toy before they let go.

Practice fun sounds in front of baby like "shhhh" and watch them turn their head toward the sound.

Get baby in the "happy baby" position on their back and encourage them to bring their feet to their belly, close to their mouth.

Shake a bell or maraca when baby isn't looking. Watch them search for the sound.

While baby is lying down and anticipating being picked up, say "Up, up, up!" and see if they can extend their hands toward you.

Sit baby on the floor between your legs and pass a ball to an older child or adult so they begin to learn a simple game of back and forth.

Practice smiling back and forth with your baby.

6-8 months

Place a maraca in baby's hand. Grab one yourself and shake it. Watch them imitate you!

Watch your baby's ability to take a toy from one hand to another, over and over.

Object permanence is developing at this age. Peek-a-boo becomes more fun as your baby gets older.

Blow bubbles in front of baby's face and watch them track them with their eyes.

Stand up as your baby sits on the floor and drop or bounce a ball. Prepare for some laughter!

Bring out pots and pans to place on the kitchen floor. Let baby bang on them with a wooden spoon or spatula.

Place baby on their tummy and move a toy slightly out of their reach in front of them or to the side. Watch baby move to get it.

Offer baby a whiff of something with a scent - cooking spices in the jar, an unlit candle - and watch them learn to sniff and smell.

Sit baby in front of a mirror - any size will do, just make sure it can't fall them. Watch them react to their reflection!

While baby is sitting, run very fast past them over and over. This will make them laugh, and they might sign for "more."

8-12 months

Blow bubbles for your baby and teach them to pop them with their hands.

Teach baby how to take off their own socks. They're going to do it eventually anyway, and it's a great developmental skill.

Encourage baby to turn the pages of board books as you read to them.

Stack blocks and teach baby to knock them over. Repeat!

Imitate and teach baby hand motions - high fives, clapping, waving and "knuckles."

Wrap a ball in a small clean towel and see if they can unwrap the "present."

Play "take the rings off" with a ring stacker. Encourage baby to do it themselves.

Model stirring a spoon in a cup and see if your baby will imitate you.

At this age babies love dump and fill activities. Try it with light-weight balls, shape sorters or blocks and a bowl or bucket.

Offer your baby an empty cup and show them how to "cheers." See if they can initiate the "cheers" and go back and forth.

