

Play helps your baby:

- Learn about her body and the world around her.
- Build a special bond with you and other family members.
- Sleep better.
- Have strong bones, lungs and heart.
- Build strong muscles that will help him learn to sit, crawl and walk.
- Feel good!

Activities to build your baby's muscles — and her brain!

Large muscle activities

- Rolling over
- Pulling up
- Creeping, crawling, climbing
- Sitting, standing, walking

Small muscle activities

- Reaching, grasping, holding, shaking, turning

**Your baby deserves the best start.
Show him the joy of play!**



WIC WOMEN
INFANTS
CHILDREN
We nourish families.

 **VERMONT**
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

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**PLAYING
WITH YOUR
BABY**

Let's try this:

Why is it important for my baby to be active and play?

- Your baby's brain grows quickly during the first year of life. Learning begins with play.
- Your baby will be able to explore more and more as he learns to move around.

Everyone needs to be active — even babies. Play with your baby!

You are your baby's first and most important teacher. Your baby is counting on you to play with him. Play every day!

What kinds of play do babies like?

- Babies like to move things from one hand to the other. They also like to take things in and out of containers.
- Babies like to be on their tummies and reach for things in front of them. Remember — babies should always sleep on their backs, but when they're awake they need tummy time to build strong muscles.
- Babies like to creep and crawl over, under and around things (like pillows, chairs and boxes).
- Babies like to play with things that are different colors, shapes and sizes.

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends no television for children under the age of 2.

Get your baby out of the play pen or infant seat and let her move.

READY...SET...GO PLAY!



The Great Outdoors

Go outside with your baby, put a blanket on the ground and let him crawl around. Babies love to be outdoors!

Explorers

Be sure your house is safe for baby to explore! No small objects on the floor! Make an obstacle course for you and your baby. Make tunnels out of chairs covered with blankets, put down some pillows and empty cardboard boxes. Get on the floor with your baby and crawl around, over, under, in and out.

Stretch and Wiggle

Say this rhyme out loud as you help your baby do the movements.
Stretch your arms,
Wiggle your toes,
Shake your rattle,
And pat your nose

Bubble Burst

Sit your baby in her seat, on your lap or on the floor between your legs. Blow bubbles within her reach. Show her how to pop them.

Row, Row, Row Our Boat

While sitting on the floor, put your baby between your legs, so both of you are facing forward. Grasp a rolled up dish towel in front of you so that both of you can hold on to it. Gently lean forward and back in a rowing motion.

Household things to play with

- Just open your cupboards!
- Wooden spoons
- Plastic cups and bowls
- Empty pie tins
- Empty cardboard boxes — like cereal boxes
- Paper towel tubes

To prevent your baby from choking, make sure all play things are bigger than the inside of a toilet paper tube.

Toys to play with

- Good gifts from family and friends
- Plastic mirrors
- Pop-up toys
- Stacking toys
- Rattles
- Mobiles
- Soft blocks or balls

Games to play

- Peek-a-boo
- Hide and seek
- Pat-a-cake
- Monkey see, monkey do



Playing with your baby helps her grow smarter, stronger, healthier and happier!