



Play

A Guide for Parents on the Important Role of Play in an Infant's Development

Play Is... Simple, Everywhere, and Easy!



- **Sing** songs with your baby.



- **Smile and talk** with your baby and let baby practice smiling and talking back!



- **Read** to your baby using different sounds, voices, and volumes to create more fun.



- **Explore books** together. You can make up your own stories with the pictures.



- Help your baby learn how to **roll**. Hold a brightly colored toy in front of baby and slowly move it to your baby's side.



- **Offer a safe toy** to your baby just beyond reach. When your baby reaches for it, make sure your baby gets it. Your baby will put it in their mouth to learn about it.



- **Play peekaboo** with your baby.



- **Messy mealtime** teaches baby to use all 5 senses when exploring food.



Strong and Happy Babies

Tummy time is important! This helps build neck muscles and is the first step towards learning how to roll and crawl. Tummy time also helps the flat spot on the back of the head round out.

- When baby is on the tummy put a colorful toy just slightly out of reach. Watch baby balance, reach, and wiggle.
- Put toys in a circle around your baby. Smile and cheer as your baby tries to reach for toys!
- While lying on your back, place your baby on your chest. Your baby will try to lift his head to see your face.

Do this for a few minutes a few times each day while your baby is awake and alert. Never leave your baby alone during tummy time.

Your baby not liking tummy time? It is hard work building strong muscles. **Keep trying!**

Find more information about newborns – 4 month olds [here](#).



Play

A Guide for Parents on the Important Role of Play in a Child's Development

Toys and Object Play

Your child uses toys to learn about their world. Banging toys on the table or throwing food teaches your child what comes next. Noises and messy meals create learning. Meal time is play time! Let your child explore food using the 5 senses.

Praise things your child does well and ignore other things. Your child is also learning to get your attention and will want to make you proud.

Physical Play

Through active play, your child learns how to use muscles, balance and to play nicely with others and solve problems when playing with friends. Let kids make their own rules and work together.

Pretend Play

Play through your child's eyes! When we play by kids' rules, we learn to understand their world. Your toddler might pretend that a banana is a phone. Your preschooler may play dress up. This type of play encourages creativity and improves communication skills.



Indoor play ideas

The best play uses your child's imagination, creativity, turn-taking and sharing.

1. Duck-Duck-Goose
2. London Bridge Is Falling Down
3. Simon Says
4. Follow The Leader
5. Limbo
6. Ring Around the Rosie
7. Musical Chairs

Play with your child often. Use electronics only when necessary.

Ohio AAP PMP Mobile App

Search Parenting at
Meal and Playtime on Apple
Store or Google Play



App Highlights...

- Physician-endorsed materials for parents to access on-demand
- Resources for parents organized by age
- Text reminders sent monthly and/or for age milestones
- Easy sign-up
- Videos on feeding, play, nutrition and more

