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# 11 Fun Activities for 6- to 12-Month-Olds

Help enhance your baby's growth—and have tons of fun—with these development-boosting activities that are perfect for babies who are 6 to 12 months old.

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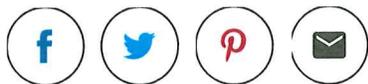


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Your baby may be halfway or more through their first year of life, but they'll experience many more physical, mental, social, and emotional

[crawling](#), cruising, or [walking](#) around in it—if they're not already.

There's no stopping their progress into toddlerhood, and with a little TLC and encouragement, you can help them reach the next stage with ease—and [have lots of fun](#) along the way.

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"Playing and connecting with our babies gets their brain development going," says [Roni Cohen Leiderman, Ph.D.](#), dean of the Mailman Segal Center for Human Development at Nova Southeastern University in Davie, Florida, and co-author of *Let's Play and Learn Together*. "Our love, attention, time, and touch with our baby are the most important parts of developmental activities. Everything is underlined with parent-child interaction."

Wondering about the best ways to encourage your baby's healthy growth and development? Dr. Leiderman and two other experts offer these simple but powerful and enjoyable development-boosting activities for 6- to 12-month-olds.

## 1. Peekaboo

**Materials needed:** Small toys or books, blanket

**What to do:** Place a toy or book under a blanket, leaving part of the object showing. Then ask your baby, "Where is it?" and encourage them to look for it.

"Babies will usually grab it and dig under the blanket," says [Robert Myers, Ph.D.](#), a child and adolescent psychologist, founder of the Child Development Institute, and assistant clinical professor of psychiatry and human behavior at the University of California, Irvine School of Medicine in Orange, California. "If yours doesn't, you could remove and then replace the blanket."

**Skills learned:** Fine motor skill development, object permanence

## 2. Stacking

**Materials needed:** Plastic measuring cups

**What to do:** Take turns stacking the cups and knocking them down. You can also have a "race," where you both stack cups at the same time.

**Skills learned:** Understanding cause and effect, fine motor skills

## 3. Puzzles

**Materials needed:** Wooden puzzles

**What to do:** Around their first birthday, your baby will be ready for large wooden puzzles, Dr. Myers says. The doctor suggests choosing ones with colorful shapes or pictures. "Show and tell them first how it works—you may have to guide their hands," he says. "Clap and cheer when they are successful." For younger babies, you can use blocks made out of softer materials.

**Skills learned:** Problem-solving, fine motor skills, visual skills

## 4. Reading

**Materials needed:** Board or cloth picture books

**What to do:** Regularly read books to your baby, pointing to the pictures as you read and engaging them by changing your voice for different characters. Invite your little one to participate by encouraging them to laugh or act surprised by the story, touch the pictures, and turn the pages.

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## 5. Clap With Me

**What to do:** Around 6 to 8 months of age, your child will learn to clap, Dr. Leiderman says, so encourage them with this rhyme:

*Clap, clap, one, two, three.*

*Clap, clap, clap with me.*

*Clap, clap, four and five.*

*Clap, clap, clap, bees in hive.*

*Clap, clap, six, seven, eight.*

*Clap, clap, clap, you are great.*

*Clap, clap, nine and ten.*

*Clap, clap, let's do it again.*

**Skills learned:** Imitation, rhyming

## 6. Rhyme Time

**What to do:** Sing songs with real or made-up words that rhyme, like "thump, thump, thump, bump, bump, bump, jump, jump, jump." You might feel a little silly, but all that rhyming is another way to boost your baby's language development.

"Like touch, talking with your baby is like food for their bodies and their minds," explains Dr. Leiderman. "A child's receptive understanding of language starts long before their expressive language, so we want to use as many opportunities as possible to drench them in language."

## 7. Shake the Bottle

**Materials needed:** Empty 16-ounce bottle, colored rice or pasta

**What to do:** Fill the bottle with the rice or pasta, and glue the top back on so your baby can safely watch and hear what happens as they shake, rattle, and roll the container.

"A bottle doesn't usually make this noise," says Dr. Leiderman, "so now they are hearing new and novel things, which brings an element of surprise. Babies this age are also learning so much about cause and effect, which is an exciting new skill."

**Skills learned:** Fine motor skills, auditory discrimination, cause and effect

## 8. Disappearing Cheerio

**Materials needed:** Cheerios, opaque plastic cups

**What to do:** Create your own version of the old-fashioned shell game by hiding a Cheerio under a cup and seeing if your baby can find it. This simple activity reinforces object permanence, a major concept for babies to learn.

**Variations:** Using two different-colored cups, put the Cheerio under one cup and move it around to see if they can remember which one was the hiding place. After they have found the Cheerio under the first cup, show them you are now putting it under the second cup and see if they remember that the Cheerio has moved.

**Skills learned:** Attention skills, memory development, object permanence

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**Materials needed:** Colored plastic containers, mini flashlights

**What to do:** Turn on some mini flashlights, and drop them into empty water bottles, Tupperware, or any colored lidded containers. Place your baby in tummy time in a dark room and let them explore the colorful lighted containers on the floor in front of them.

"The harsh light of the LEDs will be diffused for little peepers, while any loose or removable parts will be safely away from baby's mouth," says Rachel Coley, occupational therapist, author of *Begin With a Blanket: Creative Play for Infants*, and founder of [CanDo Kiddo](#). "Closely supervise as your little one grasps and turns, bangs, and rolls the containers."

**Variations:** Take a flashlight out of a container, place your baby on their back, and simply move the light slowly on a dark wall. "Pause on objects and talk to or with your child about what she's seeing," Coley adds.

**Skills learned:** Visual sensory stimulation, eye movement skills, sustained attention, socialization, bonding, body movement

## 10. Baggy Fingerpainting

**Materials needed:** Washable finger paint, a gallon-size zippered freezer bag, tape

**What to do:** Squeeze a couple of dark colors of washable finger paint into a zippered baggy and seal tightly. Add duct tape for extra security. Spread the paint around to coat the inside of the bag, then place it on the floor in front of your baby during tummy time. Show them how to make marks on the outside of the bag with their hand or finger.

"To preserve your little one's artwork, simply cut the edges off the bag and then peel off the top of the artwork, and lay flat to dry," Coley says.

**Variations:** Have an independent sitter? Try this activity in a high chair.

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## 11. Container Play

**Materials needed:** Small toys, container

**What to do:** Place a few toys (such as balls, pegs, plastic links, or other smaller items) in a container with an opening a bit bigger than the objects. (Be sure these [toys are large enough](#) that your baby can't choke on them.) Hand the container to your baby, who will probably turn it over and over, causing some toys to tumble out.

"Eventually, your baby will realize that something is rattling around inside and that toys seem to be falling out of it, so they will start shaking, banging, and reaching inside the container," Coley says. Reload the container periodically until your kiddo figures out how to do it on their own.

**Variations:** Once they've gotten good at putting items in the container, you can extend the activity by choosing a narrow-mouthed container and longer toys, like rectangular blocks, pegs, and plastic spoons. "Your baby will learn through trial and error that she has to turn the objects to fit them into containers," she adds.

**Skills learned:** Object manipulation and orientation skills

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