

BABIES > BABY DEVELOPMENT > BABY GROWTH & DEVELOPMENT

11 Simple Activities for Babies 0 to 6 Months Old

Encourage your infant's development with these fun and easy activities for newborns to 6-month-olds.

By [Ellen Sturm Niz](#) | Updated on September 2, 2022



PHOTO: JGI/JAMIE GRILL/GETTY IMAGES

The first six months of a baby's life are an amazing time, as they transform from a floppy-headed newborn into a tiny person who can sit and play.

"Stimulating your child's brain during this time and providing situations where they can explore helps them to learn things that get them in touch with their environment," says child and adolescent psychologist Robert Myers, Ph.D., founder of the Child Development Institute and assistant clinical professor of Psychiatry and Human Behavior at the University of California, Irvine School of Medicine.

"Doing developmental activities with them also bonds parents to their child and makes them a better observer, so when they go to the pediatrician, they can give the doctor good information about where the child is developmentally."

To help get your creative juices flowing, we rounded up some simple, development-promoting activities suggested by three leading child development experts. Read on, and get inspired!

RELATED: [A Week-by-Week Guide to Your Baby's First Year Milestones](#)

1. Listening

What to do: Sing, talk, and [read out loud](#) to your baby using exaggerated tones of voice. Watch your baby's facial expressions and see how they react to different pitches.

Skills learned: Language development

2. Tracking

Materials needed: A [small, soft, colorful toy](#), like a sponge ball or stuffed animal

What to do: While your baby is lying on their back, hold the toy in front of their face and, if needed, wiggle it slowly or gently touch them with it to

Skills learned: Visual tracking, visual development

3. Dancing

Materials needed: Music

What to do: Put on one of your favorite songs and, while holding your baby securely to your chest, gently move around together in time to the music.

Skills learned: Listening.

"This also encourages an interest in music and strengthens bonding with the parent, which is important for emotional development," Dr. Myers points out.

RELATED: [The Benefits of Introducing Baby to Music](#)

4. Singing

What to do: Next time [your little one is having a meltdown](#) or resisting a nap, sing them a lullaby in a soothing voice. Don't remember any of the classics? No problem—you can find song lyrics online or just make up your own.

Skills learned: Listening, emotional regulation

5. Reflections

Materials needed: Baby-safe mirror

What to do: Show your baby their reflection in the mirror, then ask, "Who is that?" Repeat with your own reflection and a sibling's or a stuffed

Skills learned: Visual, social, and emotional development

6. Baby Sit-Ups

What to do: If your [baby has good head control](#), lay them on their back, place your hands under their arms, and gently guide them into a sitting position. As they gain muscle tone and strength, do these sit-ups by holding their hands and slowly bringing them up to a sitting position.

"Just like adults' muscles strengthen when used over and over, the same is true with babies," explains Roni Cohen Leiderman, Ph.D., dean of the Mailman Segal Center for Human Development at Nova Southeastern University and co-author of *Let's Play and Learn Together*. "In fact, as your baby develops strength and balance, he may begin pulling himself up faster than you are guiding him."

Skills learned: Motor skills, head control

7. Baby Massage

What to do: When your baby is in a quiet and alert state, undress them down to their diaper and lay them face up on a soft towel or blanket in a warm, quiet room. Working in sections as their tolerance allows, gently but firmly stroke their legs, arms, and belly. "We want to make sure babies are touched often and gently," Dr. Leiderman says. "That touch is how babies thrive."

Skills learned: Body awareness, bonding

RELATED: [How to Massage a Baby](#)

8. Follow the Leader

Tip: Start with something your baby is already doing, like banging a fist on the table.

Variations: Increase the challenge by adding new and more complex movements, but pay attention to your baby's reactions. Scale back if they seem frustrated—the activity should be fun.

Skills learned: Imitation, back-and-forth conversation, memory

9. Flying

What to do: Lay your baby belly-down across your lap, and place your hands around their midsection, so they're fully supported. Then gently lift them and move up, down, back, and forth, like a rocket jetting into space.

[For extra giggles](#), add sound effects. "Babies like the element of surprise and learn through it," says Dr. Leiderman. "They are also seeing the world from a different perspective, and there's a gleeful aspect to that."

Skills learned: Body movement and stimulation

10. Kicking

Materials needed: Tissue paper

What to do: Tuck one or two sheets of new or used tissue paper under the cushion of a sofa or upholstered chair so that it hangs down to the floor like a curtain. Remove baby's socks, and place them on their back, with their feet against the tissue and knees slightly bent.

"If she's slow to start kicking, gently rustle the paper with your hand or tap her feet against it," suggests Rachel Coley, occupational therapist, author of *Begin With a Blanket: Creative Play for Infants*, and founder of [CanDo Kiddo](#).

11. Grabbing Basket

Materials needed: Empty paper towel or toilet paper tubes cut into 1- to 2-inch rings, a low basket, or a shallow pan.

What to do: Fill the basket or pan with the paper tube rings, and place it in front of your baby while they're doing [tummy time](#), propped on a pillow, or sitting on your lap with their hands free to play. Encourage them to push and bump their hands up against the rings or use the wall of the container to help them grasp them.

Variations: Swap out the cut tubes with ribbon strips or bath puffs to provide a different [tactile sensation](#). (Always keep eyes on your baby and keep them within arm's reach when using ribbons.) Golf balls are another fun filler, as they make a great noise when placed in a metal pan.

Skills learned: Grasp and release, tactile stimulation, hand-eye coordination

Was this page helpful?



Related Articles