

What Play Does For Your Baby

Babies learn about their world and themselves through you. They learn this through everything you do together.



Newborns can already recognize familiar voices and sounds they have heard before birth. Your voice and face become a familiar source of comfort, nourishment and warmth and they respond to your soothing touch. Your baby will look to you to help to understand the new sights sounds and experiences around him.

Play is a major way infants learn how to communicate, socialize and understand their surroundings and their internal feelings. What play involves depends on the developmental age of your baby. It starts with very simple things involving their senses, looking, listening, touching and tasting and as baby develops more complex things can be included.

Bubble blowing and Peek-a-boo. A simple game of “now you see it, now you don’t” will initially be an amusing activity to watch for your baby but over time will become one that they can play and enjoy with you, actively anticipating the return of your face or the next stream of bubbles and delighting in the predictability of the game. Using objects like cylinders or scarves can also add variety to this game.

Singing rhymes. Your baby loves the sound of your voice and the closeness of you singing for them. The nursery rhymes that you know are a good place to start and later you can add more songs to your repertoire. Often they are completed by a sensational tickling finish and accompanied by a rhyme such as “This Little Piggy Went to Market,” whilst a parent takes each toe and recites what it does.

Your imitation of your child’s movements can make your older infant laugh and try to imitate you. Watching you imitate him adds a consciousness of his own movements. A mirror hypnotises him for the same reason.

Talking to your baby while you do things. Naming games involving the child’s nose, toes, feet, hands, eyes, and mouth, emphasise body parts and self-concepts.

Touching and feeling things. Simple toys allow baby to exercise their sense of touch. Soft toys, rattles and textured toys all help to stimulate their brain to develop.