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9 Engaging Activities for Baby

Enhance baby's growth with these fun, development-boosting activities.



Babies are born scientists. From the moment they come into being, they are observing and absorbing the world around them. Countless studies tout the incredible growth and development of a child's first 3 years. More specifically, experiences and interactions within the very first year of life

have lasting impacts on a child's foundation for thought, feeling and overall well-being. Here's a list of engaging activities that [stimulate development](#), nurture curiosity and foster happiness in children under one:

During Reading Time. Everyone knows the importance of reading. Beyond simply reading a book, there are so many easy activities to incorporate into [reading time](#) to maximize the experience and impact.

1. *Word and Letter Focus*: read slowly and point to each word as you read it. Do this throughout the book to emphasize the relationship between the letters and words baby is seeing and the sounds he's hearing.
2. *Exploring Pictures*: sift through each page and point out objects and images in the pictures. Allow your child to point to images and objects and identify them. You can focus on one concept (i.e. pointing out all the red objects in the entire book) to explore and extend the activity.
3. *Playing with Tone*: add an extra element to reading time by incorporating different tones, volumes and voices. This will activate your child's cognitive skills and buoy listening and focus. Add in sound effects to buoy the pictures as well.

During Music Time. Music is the way to the heart. We now know that introducing [music in utero](#) offers a host of benefits. Little ones are primed to enjoy melodies and rhythms from the moment they enter the world. Here are few ways to [explore music](#):

1. *Transform household products into musical instruments*: turn recycled coffee canisters and plastic bottles into shakers and drums. Fill bottles with paper clips, rice, beans, anything that creates an interesting sound. Encourage your little ones to use their hands, spoons or rattles on coffee (or formula) cans to create beats.
2. *Sing-a-longs*: babies don't mind if you sing in the correct key, just that you sing. Nursery rhymes and classic children songs immediately engage little ones with their simplistic

melodies and buoy language through rhyming and repetition. Teaching babies basic hand movements allows to participate in songs before they have the verbal ability to do so.

3. *Simply listen to music:* offer varied playlists in the background and explore new genres (jazz, bluegrass, reggae). Move and groove with the music and incorporate a “freeze dance” by pausing the music to peak listening skills and practice muscle control.

During Guided Sensory Exploration. Babies are primed to explore their surroundings. Here are a few ways to create engaging opportunities for exploration:

1. *Have baby explore everyday objects:* using a large container, basket or bag, create a random assortment of objects that offer your baby different tactile sensations. A fuzzy sock, a wooden block, a squishy ball, an old remote, any and everything can be used. The varied weight, size and feel of the object are incredibly stimulating for little ones.
2. *Have baby explores things from nature:* using the same container, create a themed assortment of objects. You can incorporate objects of the same color, nature objects (pine cones, stones, seashells) or all soft objects to name a few.
3. *Don't forget water:* water is a huge point of interest to little ones. Place a large blanket or towel on the floor and fill a few tupperware containers with various amounts of water. Using basic items like spoons, droppers, or water bottles to pour water from one container to the other is instantly engaging. Simply touching the water and making small splashes is exciting for little ones, and eventually participating in transferring the water from container to container will be equally as satisfying.

Taking an extra moment to enjoy the value in seemingly small moments of exploration and play will inspire more ideas and opportunities for you to engage your baby in actual activities. Just like their parents, babies want to be engaged, stimulated and a part of the world around them. Every moment is an opportunity to grow, for you and your little one.

Photography by [Amy Frances Photography](#).



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Erin McConaghy is the co-founder of Curated Care, an online marketplace connecting families with artists and teachers for activity-based child care in the home. After co-creating a Montessori drop-off program for children 14 months-3 years in TriBeCa, Erin was inspired to make new learning experiences and activities more accessible to children and families. She holds a certification in Montessori infant/toddler education and a fine arts degree in theater performance. She lives on Manhattan's Upper East Side with her loving husband, chubby bulldog and adorable 1 year old daughter, Keira.

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