

Playtime from 5 months helps your baby discover...



Their body

Children develop in their own way and at their own pace, but they need us to provide them with opportunities to develop their skills.

- Continue to place your baby on their tummy as their main floor play position until they choose their own by rolling from tummy to back and back to tummy. A padded but firm surface (a large rug, mat or soft grass area) and minimum clothing encourages them to be confident to move around.
- Offer two or three toys at a time, with different shapes, sizes and textures. Encourage your baby to reach out for toys and to move their bodies where they want to go by placing toys just out of reach.
- Get excited with them when they succeed. If your baby is trying to reach a toy, wait to see if they can work out how to get it. If necessary push against their feet to move them a little closer so they can reach it.
- Babies use toys to practise reaching, feeling, grasping, mouthing, chewing, smelling, shaking, listening, banging, dropping and throwing. They will also enjoy “finding” a toy after they have watched you partially hide it under the corner of the rug.
- Encourage your baby to hold things in both hands at the same time, by making sure their shoulders are forward. They may soon be able to swap things from one hand to the other using their chest for support.
- Let your baby help as much as possible with their daily routines. Encourage them to find and grasp their feet during nappy change time, expect them to help when pulling to sit.
- Your baby may also enjoy sitting with support. They will need back and side support as they are not able to put their hands out to stop themselves falling yet. They may like being helped to stand and take the weight through their legs.



- Babies love to move around. Spending more than two hours per day in equipment like strollers, rockers, swings, baby seats, walkers and jolly jumpers when awake, has been linked with a delay in the development of movement skills such as rolling, crawling and walking.

The world around them

- Your baby will start to enjoy fun rhyming games and “tickling” experiences; “peek-a-boo”, “giddy-up-horsy”, “round and round the garden” and blowing on their tummy are favourites. If rhymes and movements are done slowly and repeated your baby will soon look forward to them.
- Repetition helps your baby’s understanding. There is much to learn when they drop your keys and they miraculously reappear when you pick them up over and over again.
- Babies love to be in sight of you, and will want to be carried around. Plan ahead and try to position them nearby while doing household tasks and your own self care. Use mats or a playpen in preference to a baby seat where practical.
- Your baby learns by using the information they receive through their senses (eyes, ears, nose, mouth, skin, muscles and joints) so turn off distractions, like the T.V so they can experience the world around them.
- As your baby’s mouth develops, particularly after the introduction of solids, they will be able to babble with more sounds. They will want to play turn taking games and have little “conversations” with you. They will also enjoy watching you talk to others.
- They may start becoming more selective about who they will go to. They will want to cling to those people who understand their needs and make them feel safe.
- Pretty soon babies will start playing with their food. This is a great time for them to experience touch. Be sure to allow enough time for cleaning up!

