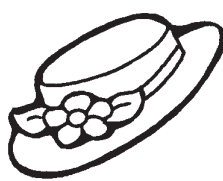
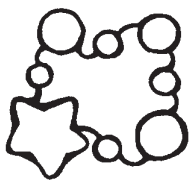
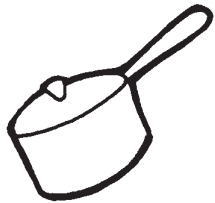
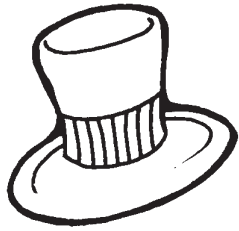
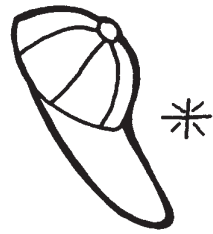


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Introduction

When they are sleeping, babies are rosy-cheeked cherubs, little miracles with tiny fingers and toes. When they are awake, they transform into world explorers. Curiosity leads them into new lands: drawers, closets, cabinets, and underneath furniture. Everything is brand new, and everything is exciting.

Through their enthusiasm, we, as parents and teachers, are allowed to experience the world anew. No longer is a bath just a way to keep clean. It becomes an opportunity for exploration and fun. A mundane trip to the supermarket is now an adventure in socialisation and an opportunity to discover new textures, colours, and sounds. No longer is a walk across the garden a routine event. Babies are fascinated by a blade of grass and blowing dandelions.

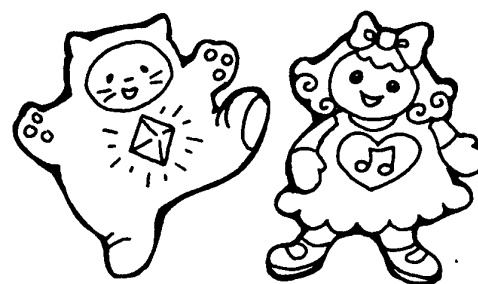
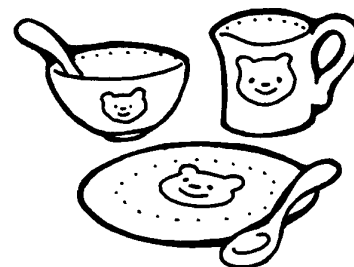
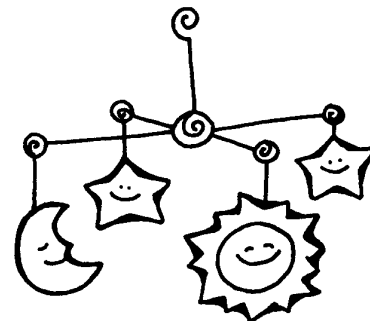
During these times of exploration and play, babies are learning about their world's colours, shapes, textures, and sounds. They are also learning about themselves: how to move, how to make sounds, how to respond to others, and much more. In the first 18 months of life, babies learn quickly and naturally. We, as the parents and teachers of our children, are their facilitators and mentors. We help provide opportunities in which learning occurs naturally, and we provide the encouragement our babies need to accomplish their developmental goals. We also make sure that our babies are safe while they are learning.

In this book there are more than a hundred activities to provide busy parents with inexpensive and interesting opportunities to promote learning while having fun with their babies. The book is divided into two large sections: Indoor Games and Outdoor Games. Each section lists activities by the ages children typically develop the skills needed to participate. Included in this book are ideas for safety-proofing your home, room by room, and for making toys with items you have around the house. This book is designed as a quick and easy reference so that you have even more time to play with your baby!

Basic Toys List

If you prefer to buy your toys rather than make them, or you'd like to have some of both, here is a simple list for 1 to 18 month olds.

- Activity blankets
- Activity centres
- Books
- Blocks
- Dish set for babies
- Mobiles
- Plastic bucket and shovel
- Rattles
- Recorded music for babies
- Safety mirrors to attach to cots
- Soft, small balls (not too small)
- Toys that light up and make noises when baby pushes a button
- Stuffed animals and dolls (Be careful about removable small parts.) Always check that the eyes and nose are securely attached.
- Trucks, cars, and other push toys

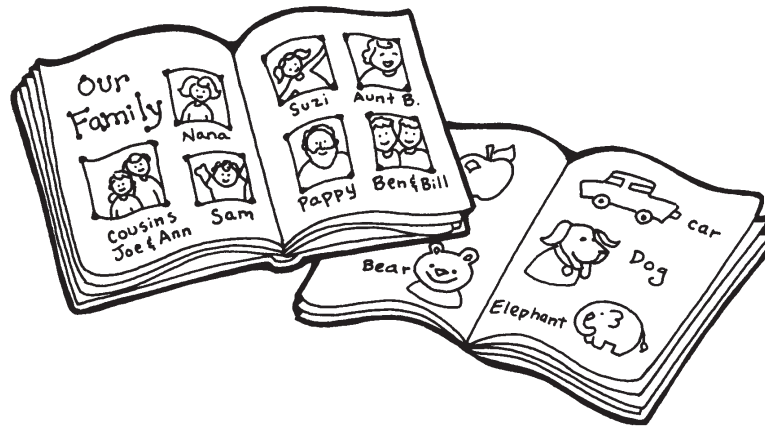


Family Album

Materials

- Album
- Recent family pictures

A family album should be a special book for you and baby. Shop around until you find an album you really like. Select very clear, recent pictures of your family members. Black and white pictures are sometimes even better than colour. Place the pictures in the album and keep it in an easily accessible place so it won't be hard to find whenever you want to take a few minutes to flip through the pages and tell baby about family members.



Naming Books

Materials

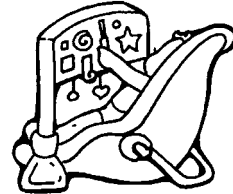
- Drawings
- Old magazines
- Pictures

Been looking for a use for all those old magazines? Cut out pictures and paste them into a book. You will have a ready reference for your baby. You may want to make several types of books: an animal book, people book, object book, etc.

Great Playing Positions

When you are playing with your baby, there are four positions you may want to use. They may give her more freedom of movement and allow her a better line of vision.

Instead of putting your newborn to two-and-a-half-month-old baby on her back and under her gym, try placing her in a carrier and putting her gym in front of her. She can see better, and she doesn't have to work against gravity to move.



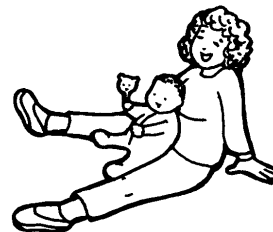
Instead of carrying baby with her face over your shoulder, try carrying her facing forward in a supported, sitting position. Her hands and feet will have more freedom, and she can see much better.



Even at a very young age, place baby on her tummy for short periods of time. This will encourage her to lift her head up to explore, and she will be able to see better.



When your baby is learning how to sit but is unable to sit alone, you should sit down, separate your legs, and put baby in front of you. You will be surprised how long she will stay in that position with your support. You are giving her more freedom of movement and a better line of vision when playing.



Stimulating Music

Game

Materials

- CD, Tape Player, or Radio
- Classical Music

A very simple and pleasant game to play with your newborn is the Stimulating Music game. Take a blanket big enough for two and put it on the floor near the stereo. Pop in a disc of classical music and watch your baby's reactions. If you don't have a stereo, grab your radio and turn it to your local classical station. Usually, classical stations play a variety of music. Soon you will discover which tunes make him laugh, smile, and sometimes even go to sleep. Don't be surprised if your playmate drifts off to dreamland before the end of the game.

Tantalising Textures

Game

Materials

- Cardboard box
- Textured materials

Newborns are exploring a brand new world, and different textures fascinate them. Collect a variety of textured materials from around the house. Keep in mind that the items should not have sharp points or have small pieces that can be easily swallowed. Sit with your baby on a blanket on the floor. Play with her using various textured items from the box. Take a soft texture, like a silk scarf, and rub it on her cheek or take a fuzzy texture, like a stuffed animal, and rub it on her tummy. As your newborn develops, she will still enjoy playing the game. Just be sure that objects can be put safely in an infant's mouth since young babies like to use their mouths to explore.