

Activities for children Birth to 1 year old



Development and Behavior Toolkit for Children Birth to 5

Activities to Support Healthy Early Child Development

For more information, please contact the Cincinnati LEND program at LENDTraining@cchmc.org



Social & Emotional Activities:

0 - 6 months

- Cuddle, talk, and play with baby while feeding, dressing, or bathing.
- Respond to baby's cries. If not hungry or in need of a diaper change, try swaddling, rocking, singing, or taking baby for a walk.
- If baby cries, respond and comfort him/her and try to find out what he/she needs. Whisper in the ear to quiet him/her. Hold baby close and make soft sounds. The baby is letting you know something with his/her cry. When you respond, the baby learns to trust you are there. You cannot spoil your baby at this age.
- Help baby calm themselves by guiding his/her fingers to his/her mouth, giving a pacifier, or offering a favorite blanket or soft object.
- Learn baby's special rhythms and try to settle into routines, such as sleeping at night more than during the day. Be predictable and consistent when you interact with baby.
- Hold baby, sing songs, gently dance, and/or put your face close to his/hers. Make silly faces. Smile at your baby. Stick out your tongue. Yawn. Wait a few seconds and see if baby tries to repeat your actions back to you.
- Bath time is a wonderful time to have fun and be close to your baby.



Social & Emotional Activities:

0 - 6 months

- Use “reciprocal” play - smile when baby smiles and copy their sounds.
- Step back from baby so he/she cannot see you. Gently call his/her name. Watch what he/she does. Does he/she stop moving for a moment? Does he/she try to move his/her head toward your voice? Pick the baby up. Say, “Here I am,” or “You are safe.”
- Talk to baby about what he/she is doing, seeing, hearing, and feeling. Say, “I am changing your diaper. You will like being nice and dry. I love you!”
- Pay attention to what baby likes and doesn't like so that you can figure out what baby needs and how to make him/her happy.
- Get down on the floor with baby and play at their level. Look at toys, books, or objects together. Have fun, laugh, and enjoy your time together.
- Bring baby to new places to see new things. Go on a walk to a park or the mall. He/she will love to see new things while you keep him safe.
- Use baby's name when you dress, feed, and diaper him/her. Visit a friend who has a baby or young child. Stay close and let him/her know that these new people are okay. It takes a little time to warm up.



Social & Emotional Activities:

7 - 12 months

- Be available, responsive, and gentle with baby. Give lots of hugs and kisses.
- Continue with routines - which are especially important now - so that baby feels safe and secure.
- Pay attention to how baby reacts to new situations and people and try to do things that help him/her feel comfortable and happy.
- Stay close while baby explores and moves around so he/she knows that you are near.
- Play games like "my turn, your turn."
- Say what you think baby is feeling, for example, "You are sad, so we are going to try and help you feel better."
- Ask for behaviors that you want ("time to sit") rather than telling baby what not to do ("don't hit").
- Encourage baby's wanted behaviors rather than punishing unwanted behaviors. Give four times more encouragement than correction.
- Help baby learn limits by saying "no" in a firm quiet voice.
- Provide baby with choices.



Social & Emotional Activities:

7 - 12 months

- Give baby time to get to know a new caregiver - bring a favorite toy, blanket, or stuffed animal to help comfort them in a new situation.
- Include baby at mealtimes.
- Play on the floor with baby every day. Crawl around with him/her, or just get down and play on their level. Roll a ball back and forth and clap if they push back.
- Play gentle tickle games with baby, but make sure to stop when he/she lets you know they have had enough. Watch carefully and respond to their clues.
- Dance to music with baby. Hold his hands while he bends up and down.
- When you are dressing or diapering baby, talk about his/her body parts and point out your body parts. Say, "Here is Daddy's nose. Here is Destiny's nose."
- Go on a walk to a park or a place where children play. Let baby watch them and visit a little if he/she is ready.

