

## SING



Your baby enjoys the sound of your voice, even if you think you're not a very good singer. Sing to him during daily routines such as bath time, to soothe him when he is fussy, or sing his favorite book to him. Make up simple songs using his name (*I love Billy, yes I do*).

**Listen to music together.** Play a variety of music at a low volume for your baby. Slowly dance and sway with her as you listen to quiet lullabies. She likes being held close to you and will feel loved and enjoy the patterns and rhythms that occur in music.

**Share rhymes.** Rhymes help you share affection with your baby. Help him feel and hear the rhythm of rhymes by gently tapping on his arm, gently bouncing him on your lap, and gently clapping his hands. Share rhymes from your childhood with your baby.

## TALK

Your baby's brain is wired to learn language starting from birth. He is able to perceive sounds in all languages and develops connections in his brain for speech as he watches and hears you talk to him. He recognizes the sound of your voice from birth. Talk to him in your native language to help build his receptive vocabulary -words he'll understand before he starts to use them in speech.

**Respond quickly to your baby's crying.** Crying is your baby's first way of communicating with you. She cries to tell you when she's hungry, uncomfortable, or even bored. Research shows that a baby who can depend on someone to respond to her cries will cry less in time. Consistently respond to her cries with gentle and warm attention and she will learn that her world is a safe and caring place. You cannot spoil her during the first six months of her life by responding to her cries.

**Hold your baby close.** When you speak with your baby, hold him in a face-to-face position and make eye contact with him. He enjoys looking into your eyes and watching your facial expressions. Talk to him in a high and exaggerated voice to keep his interest. Before you pick him up, first touch him and tell him what you are going to do before you do it (*Hi Max. Daddy's going to pick you up now*). Speak with your baby as if you are having a conversation with a friend.

**Tour your baby's environment together.** Carry your baby around your home and outside for her to see her world from different perspectives. Describe what you see, smell, and hear. By listening to you, she will learn about the world and what things are called. Be an active listener -when she makes a sound or babbles, respond by making your own sounds and responding as if you know what she is saying.

## PLAY

When your baby is alert, enjoy him! Playtime is one of the best ways to give your baby loving and shared attention--when you are both focused on the same activity and you provide him with words to describe what you are doing. He learns by interacting with you.

**Provide safe toys.** Put safe toys that have different colors, textures, and sounds within your baby's reach. Show her how to play with toys--touch her hand with a rattle for her to grasp it, show her how to bang two objects together or stack one block on top of the other. Show your excitement when she accomplishes a small task such as holding onto a rattle for the first time. Smile and say, "*Look at my strong girl.*"

**Encourage Tummy Time.** Since your baby spends a lot of time on his back, it's important for him to have time on his stomach. Tummy time helps him learn to lift his head and strengthen his neck muscles and arms to prepare him for crawling. During tummy time, bring his arms forward and place his palms down. Provide him with interesting things to look at such as a musical toy or prop up a book. Lay down in front of him and talk to him since he enjoys seeing your smiling face and hearing your loving voice.

**Play baby games.** Your baby can see 8-10 inches at birth. Play tracking games with her by slowly moving a toy up and down and side to side within her line of vision. Play "peek-a-boo" with her by covering your face with your hands and then peek out. Whisper her name or shake a rattle to encourage her to turn towards the sound. Lay her on a blanket so she can stretch out and play with her toys and fingers. Use a baby gym to encourage her to reach for objects. Follow your baby's lead in play. If she becomes fussy or looks away from you during play, stop and give her some quiet time.

## READ

Read to your baby starting from birth. She loves to hear your voice and will associate reading as a special and loving time to snuggle with you. She'll enjoy books with simple, bright, and colorful illustrations and photographs of human faces. Your baby learns about her world by using all of her senses to figure out how the world works and how things are organized. Choose cloth, vinyl, and board books that are safe for her to explore with her mouth.

**Read in small intervals when your baby is alert.** Your baby's attention span will allow him to enjoy a book for a few minutes at a time. Read to him during feedings, before naptimes, play, bath time, and bedtime. Repeated reading of the same book will help him learn words and anticipate what will happen next in the story. Open books flat and stand them at the side of the crib or changing table for him to look at.

**Show enthusiasm while reading.** Read to your baby in the language that you are most comfortable with. To keep her attention, speak in a tone of voice that's higher in pitch and slower. Point to the pictures and describe to her what you see (*Look at the cat sleeping in the sun*) and ask her questions (*Do you see the bee? The bee is on the flower*). You can also go on a book walk by looking at each of the pages and talking about the pictures.

