

What Games Look Like Birth to 8 Months

Children Show Interest in Others

Newborns like to look at people's faces. They love to hear people talk and sing. Within the first few days they can recognize and prefer the sight, smell, and sound of the person who takes care of them.

Babies soon smile real smiles. They look you in the eye and then look away.

Older babies in this range kick, smile, and /or hold out their arms to be picked up or for you to feed them.

Older babies love to play with people more than any toy.

How Adults Can Help Promote Learning

Hold babies close. Look at babies in the eye. Talk and sing.

Smile back. Say, "What a wonderful smile you have." Ask, "Do you have a smile for me?"

Talk to babies. Say, "Kick, kick, kick, kick" or use the airplane game when feeding to expand their visual tracking field and improve attention to task.

Play with babies. Dance. Take walks with the stroller. Show them what you are doing. Sing. Make up poems. Read stories. Play games like, "Patty Cake", "Peek-a-Boo" and "This Little Piggy".



Babies in this age range begin to have interactions purposefully, other than just to request or protest to having their needs met. **Simple games** using daily routines are both easy and make the routine a learning experience that is fun for both the care giver and the child. Children can begin to **understand directions**, so by simply asking questions and responding will be an interactive game during those daily routines for your family.

What Games Look Like 8 months to 18 months

Children Become More Aware of the World

- If you hide a toy under one or two diapers while babies watch, they can find the toy.
- Waddlers carry blocks and try to stack them.
- These babies are persistent in looking for a hidden toy.
- This age group is fascinated with movement, use balls and bubbles to create chances to move.
- Toddlers love fitting objects into spaces.

How Adults Can Help

- Play hiding toys.
- Provide empty containers or blocks in various shapes and sizes.
- Play hiding games: hide favorite toys- under a blanket, on the table, behind the chair...etc.
- Pop the bubble, bounce the ball, and roll the ball..
- Begin to use large peg wooden puzzles and shape sorters.

Children in this age range can begin to **model roles** that are familiar to them, show independence with daily routines such as getting dressed, **show more affection** to family members and have feelings of separation. Prepare your child for what the day looks like prior to the event.



What Games Look Like 18 Months to 2 ½ Years

Children Become More Aware of the World

By now, children usually can identify six or more of their body parts.

Toddlers thread large wooden beads on shoestrings.

This age group can identify some objects by touch.

During this period, children begin to have more control when they express emotions.

Children in this age group can sort objects into two groups (such as hard and soft or green and blue)

How Adults Can Help

Use finger plays, songs, mirrors, and dress-up clothes to help with identification of body parts.

Tie a knot on the end of a shoestring so beads don't slip off. Use large colored beads found in the craft section to add colors and patterns.

Use an old shoe box to put some familiar objects in and have them place their hand in to identify what the object is, one object at a time is a great start. You can put objects out on the table and have them turn their head while you put one in. Place a towel over the rest of the objects, if they cannot identify by touch use the objects as a visual cue to, "What's missing..."

Retell daily stories of recent events. "Yesterday, you fell down and cried at the park." How did you feel, show your sad face....Play back and forth with making faces and guessing what face you are sharing.

Use real opportunities to sort (classify). We need a pile of spoons and a pile of forks. This drawer is for socks and this drawer is for shirts.



Young children in this age range enjoy **repetition and routine**. This helps them feel confident and gives a chance to show new skills learned. **Hide and Seek, tag, using stairs and slides** are all good for this age groups. They become more fearful of the dark or monsters for the first time. Games with **flashlights** help them manage the unknown. **Memory games** are also a fun time with familiar characters and letters/numbers.

What Games Look Like 2 ½ Years to 3 Years

Children Become More Aware of the World

How Adults Can Help

Children at this age begin to recognize musical melodies, match a few tones and move in reasonably good time to music.

Children's muscles grow stronger and coordination improves.

Musical play is fun ways for children to begin participate alongside friends. This is the time friendships are beginning to bud. Musical chairs or Move with the Music/ Freeze when it stops are hits among this age group.

Connecting puzzles, pegboards, construction sets, blunt scissors, and materials for pouring are needed to increase the small muscles in the hands. Bicycles, climbers, tee-ball and other large motor activities will allow them to demonstrate new skills or take new challenges. This is the beginning of team/social experiences to function in a group setting.

Three year olds are **curious**. They want to experiment with cause and effect. They take things apart with glee. They can make **predictions** and can use language to solve problems and figure out how the world works. **Eye spy, tag, board games, and puzzles 5-10 pieces, games with numbers up to 5-10** along with some letters are now appropriate. It becomes important to allow for choices to be made by the child as they become independent. At this age they also form an understanding of **immediate time**, so games with timers are good. This is the age for establishing an understanding of **real and pretend**. Playing games with your child is the first step in helping create some positive turn taking and cooperation involving objects. Take advantage of the opportunities and **enjoy the fun**.



Did You Know?

The First three years of life are a period of incredible growth in all areas of baby's development.

A newborn's brain is about 25 percent of its approximate adult weight. But by age 3, it has grown dramatically by producing billions of cells and hundreds of trillions of connections, or synapses, between these cells!

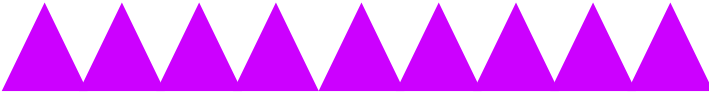


Play is Work



Between Birth and Age 3, babies learn to give and receive love, to roll, crawl, stand, walk, and run; talk, joke, rhyme, and sing!

But development doesn't happen in the same way, at the same time, for all children. Each child develops at his own pace and in his own way!!!



When your children play with YOU, they are also learning— that they are LOVED and Important, and that they are fun to be around. These social-emotional skills give them the self-esteem and self-confidence they need to continue building loving and supportive relationships all their lives.



During your time in the home, take daily routines and create simple games with your young child. Sorting laundry, grocery shopping, setting the table are all examples of how you can incorporate simple games with your child. Ask questions to provoke thinking skills appropriate for things your child is familiar with, a toddler may need a diaper change and by asking what do you need will help them to organize thoughts as well as sequencing of events. Remember to enjoy your time and talk, talk, talk!

There's a lot happening during playtime. Little ones are lifting, dropping, looking, pouring, bouncing, hiding, building, knocking down and more. Children are busy when they're playing. And, more than that, they are learning! They are learning scientific concepts, such as what sinks and floats; mathematical concepts, including how to balance blocks to build a tower; and literacy skills, such as trying out new vocabulary or storytelling skills as children "act out" different roles. Play is the True work of Childhood.



A child's social-emotional development is as important as the brain and physical development. It is the desire to connect with others that motivates her to learn. Her sense of who she is in the world deeply impacts how much and how well she learns, as well as the quality of the relationships she builds with others.

