

# A year of Baby Play!

## January

Let your baby (6 months and up) do ice play. Put a few wet ice cubes on her high chair. Does she try to touch and play with them? How does she respond to this cold, wet stuff?



## March

Play with "rain" inside. In the bathtub, you can pour water out of a plastic pitcher to make rain. Does your baby prefer the water to come out slowly or quickly? Does she try to grab the stream of water? Try pouring water through a strainer and watch it sprinkle out. You can also pour water onto a plastic plate and let it splash every which way. Blow bubbles while your child is in the bathtub and sing Rain, Rain Go Away as the bubble "raindrops" float over her head.

## February

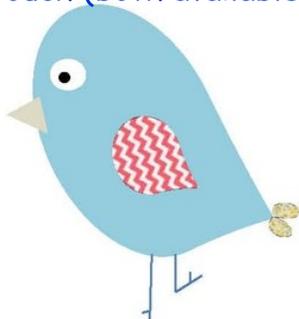
Make a texture book for your child. In honor of Valentine's Day, cut heart shapes from a variety of differently-textured fabrics and papers—lace, satin, cotton, corduroy, sandpaper, corrugated cardboard, etc.. You can glue these into a book and write the texture on each page ("silky" "scratchy" etc.)

## April

Make color trays. Take a muffin tray and in each opening place an object that is red, for example. You could place a strawberry, a red teether, a piece of red watermelon, a red mitten or sock, and a red foam ball (make sure it is not a choking hazard). Let your baby touch and play with these objects, but supervise closely since babies this age are likely to "mouth" things they find interesting in order to learn more about them. As your baby plays, you can repeat the word "red"—a red ball, a red strawberry, a red sock. Try making trays of different colored objects.

## May

Babies are often captivated by watching animals outside or through the window. Stick with your baby and let him watch as long as he wants, though be very cautious about approaching animals you do not know. Teaching your child animal safety begins early. You can support your baby's interest in animals by, for example, installing a bird feeder to encourage birds to visit. For an indoor activity, you can give your baby swatches of fake fur and feathers to touch (both available at craft stores).



## July

Try some infant massage techniques on your baby. Wait until your baby is relaxed, fed, and in a good mood. Then give it a try. Ask your baby if you can touch him, and then gently rub and massage his legs, arms, feet, and hands. (Use lotion or a physician-okayed body oil, if you'd like.) If your baby gets distressed or doesn't like to be touched this way, stop and try again another time. As you touch your baby, talk about his different body parts. Activities like this help your baby know where his body begins and ends (a concept called "body awareness"). See attachment for Massage techniques

## June



For babies on solid foods, you can slice into bite-sized pieces several different fruits and vegetables (ask your health care provider before introducing new foods). Let your baby play with the food, touch it, and lick it. Maybe he will even taste it. Which ones does he like the best? You can also let your baby touch different fruits and vegetables so he can experience their very different textures and colors. Which ones does he like to touch? Which ones doesn't he like?

## August

Sit outside with your baby and start blowing bubbles. What does your baby do? Does she reach out to touch them? Follow them with her eyes? Catch a bubble on the bubble wand. Ask her if she wants to pop it and then let her "grab" it with her fingers.

HICKORY DICKORY DOCK, the MOUSE RAN UP the CLOCK, the CLOCK STRUCK ONE,  
the MOUSE RAN DOWN, HICKORY DICKORY DOCK

Peas porridge hot, Peas porridge cold, Peas porridge In the pot 9 days old, Some like it hot,  
Some like it cold, Some like in the pot 9 days old

## September

Seat your baby in her high chair. Pour a little washable paint onto a paper plate. Tape a piece of paper to your baby's high chair tray. Dip the wheels of a die-cast car into the paint and let your baby "drive" it over the paper. Voila! Car art! Have a "car conversation" with your baby. Seat your baby on the floor and sit across from him. Roll a toy car to him and encourage him to roll it back. See if you can get this back-and-forth game going. Turn-taking activities like this one are practice for both "real" conversations later on, as well as sharing skills that will be developing over the next few years.

## November

Collect a few leaves, some crinkly, some not. Give them to your baby to play with and explore with his hands. Crinkle one so he can listen to the sound the leaf makes. Which leaves does he seem to like best? What does he like to do with the leaves? Play leaf peek-a-boo. Find a big leaf that you can use to cover (most) of your face. Hold it in front of you and then pull it away: Peek-a-boo! See if your baby wants to take the leaf and play peek-a-boo with you.



## October

Purchase a tiny pumpkin (or gourd) and let your baby finger-paint it using washable tempera paints. Give your baby a taste of pumpkin pie filling (look for a low/no sugar brand) or a pumpkin muffin. (But first talk to your pediatrician before introducing any new fruits and vegetables into your baby's diet.) What does your baby think of this new taste?

## December

Play "basketstar" with your baby. Buy a few star-shaped cookie cutters in different shapes or cut star shapes out of cardboard. Let your baby touch these and play with them. If you hold out a metal bowl, see if your baby will drop the cookie cutters in (they will make an exciting clatter). When she's done, you can take them out and play "basketstar" all over again.