



# Explore Through Movement and Play

## WHY?

Movement and play are good for children's coordination, strength and overall health. They are also ways that children explore and learn about the world. Each stage of development comes with new opportunities for learning. For example, an infant might explore by touching, grasping, chewing or crawling. A toddler might explore by walking or climbing.

Young children are like scientists—curious and excited to explore their surroundings. See where your child's curiosity takes them. The more you pay attention, the more you will learn about the person they are becoming.

## Tips for Infants (Newborn – 12 months)

### Do Tummy Time

Give your infant regular "tummy time." When they lift their head to look around, they strengthen the upper body and prepare muscles to crawl. They also get a new view of their surroundings!

### Practice Reaching

Hold a toy over your infant's head or put one on the floor just beyond their reach. This will encourage your infant to reach and build coordination.

### Play Peek-a-Boo

This game teaches infants that objects (and people) exist even when hidden. It's also a fun way to bond with your child.

### Give Them Things to Handle

Provide objects of different colors, shapes and textures to play with. Handling objects helps with hand-eye coordination and motor skills. Use everyday objects. You don't need fancy toys to keep your baby's attention!

### Support Discovery

Your infant discovers how the world works by experimenting. They also learn through repetition, so they might drop a spoon over and over to see what happens. Watch and assist!

## **Play Search and Find**

Put an object under a bucket or blanket and see if your child can find it.

## **Let Them Move Around**

Let your child explore their surroundings by reaching, rolling, scooting and crawling. This is good for coordination. It also strengthens their “mind’s eye” as they see things from new angles and sense where they are in space. Just make sure they are safe!

## **Sink or Float**

During bath time, guess which objects will sink or float. Then place it in the water and find out. Try a different object to see what happens. Talk about it.

## **On and Off**

Help your baby push buttons or turn things off and on (with supervision). Think doorbells, light switches and faucets. Talk about what they did and what happened.

## **Container Play**

Once your baby can grasp objects, they will enjoy picking them up and dropping them into containers. What objects/containers could they use? Describe their actions.

## **Move Arms and Legs**

When playing with your baby, help them experience new movements. Gently bicycle their legs. Or clap their hands or feet together in a rhythm while you sing or chant.

## **Mirror Play**

Give your baby a small mirror to play with or sit in front of a large mirror together and make faces. Point to and label their body parts.