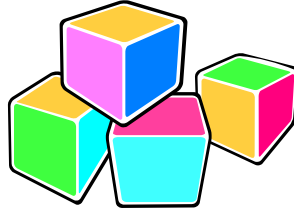


How to Play Today



A notebook created for learning about your child's growth and development through play

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This resource booklet is designed to help parents and caregivers understand the stages at which a child grows as well as specific play items that will aid in the child's growth and development physically, emotionally, socially, and mentally. Play is important for young children, and with the right age-appropriate play items, children will be encouraged to experiment, express themselves, learn, explore, and participate in positive interactions with both parents and caregivers.

Inside the resource booklet, a list of the specific stages of development a child will go through is identified to help both parents and caregivers see if their child is where they should be. Also, appropriate play items will also be listed to help encourage play and exploration for growth.

Note to Parents and Caregivers

Play can be quiet, loud, involve lots of toys, or can even be seen when a child is investigating a telephone or cabinet door. Sometimes the best play is the simplest play. This resource notebook provides information on ways to create fun play items through around the house items. Toys do not have to be either fancy or expensive, and this booklet provides references to develop quick and easy play toys that will stimulate your child's mind more so than any high technology toy.

There are so many ways to stimulate play and growth in your child without having to spend a lot of money. Seek out thrift stores and garage sales for some basic toys listed in this resource booklet. Creativity and a lively imagination are best developed through the most basic of toys.

Enjoy!

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Birth to 2 months

Fine and Gross Motor Control	Social/Communication
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Newborn reflexes are dominant in first month. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Palmar grasp (close hand when stimulated) - Plantar grasp (toes curl when stimulated) - Rooting reflex (head turns toward cheek when touched) * Infant lifts head when on back. * Hand comes to mouth. * Infant will begin to stretch, kick, and turn head more constantly. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Speaks by using throaty noises. * Smiles randomly at first begins to recognize faces around 2 months. * Enjoys being cuddled and talked to. * Begins to follow objects with eyes. * Cries as a means to get attention when hungry, uncomfortable, or wants to be held.
Cognitive	Play
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Will respond to loud voices or noises by blinking, crying, or startling and begins to detect mother's voice. * Notices bright objects and faces if in their line of vision (12-16 inches). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Loves listening to noises like music and voices. * Hold your baby * Loves to look at objects * Begins to hold a rattle around 2 months

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Suggestions for Play

During your child's first few months, it is crucial to establish a loving relationship to encourage healthy development. At this age, your infant is going to be using primarily his or her vision and hearing during play. Some cheap ways to promote your infant's development by using around the house items to make toys include:

Baby Mobile- With a plastic coat hanger, find brightly colored strips of fabric, small soft toys, rattles, cardboard shapes (cut out with scissors) or anything else you can find. Attach these to the coat hanger with string if necessary and hang above infant at a safe distance.

Homemade Rattle- By using one of the infant's old small bottles, you can place a handful of rice or pebbles inside the bottle and secure the lid tightly. Shake the bottle in front of your infant and allow the infant to try and play with the homemade rattle.

Music or reading is also a way for your infant to play because the infant will enjoy the noise. Inexpensive rattles and soft toys can be purchased at a very low cost.

2

2 to 4 months

Fine and Gross Motor Control	Social/Communication
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Can turn from side to back and might begin rolling over from tummy to back. * Begins to hold head up and steady. * Holds objects for a moment of time and begins to bang and shake the objects. * Bring hands in front of face and brings hands together at midline. * Can bring self up on forearms from laying on stomach * Follows light or objects with eyes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Enjoy playing with others. * Begins to recognize familiar faces especially the mother's face. * Enjoys being cuddled and is soothed by cuddling. * Smiles when smiled at. * Begins self soothing when upset.

Cognitive	Play
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Begins making sounds and shows awareness of own sounds by showing pleasure in them. * Beginning hand eye coordination is seen. * Can see colors. * Begins to show some memory. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Likes to grasp and manipulate bright colored objects. * Use a swing or stroller. * Enjoys interacting with family members.

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Suggestions for Play

As your infant begins, it is crucial to interact with your child to encourage good growth and development. At this age, your infant is developing rapidly and is beginning to coordinate arm movements when grasping objects. Your infant is becoming familiar with objects and faces and is beginning to make connections through memory. Some cheap ways to promote your infant's development by using around the house items to make toys include:

Play Gym: A broom handle can be made into a play gym by placing it securely on top chairs or hanging it in a place the infant can play. Attach objects that are safe, chewable, and colorful on short pieces of string (avoid tangling if possible). Rattles, lids, soft toys, and stuffed socks are just some objects that can be used.

Crinkle Creature: Pantyhose or socks can be filled with shredded paper and tied with a knot at the end to give to an infant to squeeze and make noise. A non-toxic permanent marker can be used to create different creatures and make the toy more colorful.

Swings and strollers can be purchased for a low cost at any thrift store or community garage sale. Spending time playing with your child is the best way to promote positive development.

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4 to 6 months

Fine and Gross Motor Control	Social/Communication
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Reaches and grabs things with hands. * Can sit with support. * Can roll from back to stomach and then to back. * Lifts head and shoulders when on stomach and looks around. * Transfers objects from one hand to another. * Turns to reach for objects. * Can bear some weight on legs when supported. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Recognizes familiar objects and faces. * Babbles and coos when talked to. * Expresses oneself by laughing when happy or crying when sad. * Responds to peek-a-boo games. * Loves to be talked to. * Begins to listen to familiar words.
Cognitive	Play
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Uses eyes and hands together. * Tries to talk at self in a mirror. * Uses both verbal and non-verbal cues to signal needs. * Explore objects with mouth. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Mirror play * Soft plastic rings, blocks, or keys. * Stuffed animals to hug.

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Suggestions for Play

Continue to interact with your infant by talking to, playing games with, and being affectionate. Infants at this age are beginning to explore familiar objects more and manipulate objects more independently. Some low cost ways to promote your infant's development by using around the house items to make toys include:

Sensory play mat: Find a Ziploc bag and place some water in the bag (add food coloring if available). Place small objects without sharp corners into the bag (sponges, small lids, coins, etc.). Place in another Ziploc bag then seal and tape both bags. Then infant can use his or her hands to explore and manipulate the objects in the bag. The bag should only be used under a parent's supervision.

Sock Dolls: Stuff an old sock with cotton balls or fiberfill and tie an end at the open end of the sock. Use permanent marker to draw a face, hair, and clothes on the doll. Interact with the child when hugging and holding the doll.

An old mirror can be placed in front of the child to allow the child to engage in play with the mirror's images. Play peek-a-boo and point and talk about objects in the mirror with your infant.

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6 to 8 months

Fine and Gross Motor Control	Social/Communication
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Reaches and grabs things with hands. * Can sit alone without support. * Lifts head when on back. * Plays with feet and bangs objects with hands. * May begin to crawl and creep. * Reach for spoon or cup when being fed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Separation anxiety from caregivers will start to show. * Gets upset when toys or objects are taken away. * Waves or responds to “Bye”. * Blows raspberries and babbles. * Looks for parents when named. * Lifts arms to parents or caregivers.
Cognitive	Play
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Makes noises to show displeasure or likeness. * Looks for objects when they disappear out of sight. * Will begin to imitate sounds and gestures. * Recognizes own name. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Provide lots of time for tummy play. * Play hide and seek with different objects. * Loves toys requiring manipulation. * Enjoys push and pull toys. * Bangs objects.

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Suggestions for Play

Your child will begin to show interest in specific toys and will need increased periods of play to develop new cognitive and social skills. Some low cost ways to promote your baby’s development by using around the house items to make toys include:

Noisy Boxes that Roll: Use any type of cylindrical container like an oatmeal container and place types of “noisy” materials like dried beans or rice, metal jar lids from baby food jars, or bells. Place lid on container and tape securely in place. Your baby can shake, roll, or hold this noisy toy.

Stacking Toys: Save any type of empty lids like shaving cream, hair spray lids, large jar lids, and plastic containers from food items and then give them to your baby to practice stacking, nesting inside each other, and clapping together to make noise. Make sure the lids and containers have been thoroughly cleaned as well as large enough to prevent your baby from choking on them.

Small soft toys are available at low costs at any dollar store or thrift store. Interact with your child and play games like hide and seek with toys to promote your child’s brain development.

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8 to 10 months

Fine and Gross Motor Control	Social/Communication
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Crawls and may pull entire body around by moving arms while the legs drag. * Pulls self upright and stands in crib or with the use of any appropriate height furniture. * Uses index finger and thumb to grasp small objects. * Holds bottle during feeding * Has good hand mouth coordination 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Does not like being separated from mother. * Try to talk to their image in a mirror. * Probably start to say first word. * Shouts for attention. * Shakes head no. * Says “dada” or “momma” without understanding the meaning.
Cognitive	Play
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Is very aware of people around them. * Looks for objects when they disappear out of sight. * Will begin to imitate sounds and gestures. * Resists when toys are taken away and responds to an angry adult. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Likes color and enjoys push and and pounding toys. * Lots of mirror play. * Busy boxes; manipulation toys. * Supervised water play. * Begins to favor a specific toy for comfort.

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Suggestions for Play

At this age your child really is beginning to know the people that surround him or her throughout the day. Encourage lots of social play by talking to your child and responding to their play. Some cheap ways to promote your child’s development by using around the house items to make toys include:

Busy Boxes: Recycle all empty boxes that include: cereal boxes, cracker boxes, and macaroni boxes to name a few. With these boxes tape up the openings and allow your baby to explore the boxes by stacking them, pushing them along the floor, and banging them on each other.

Play Mats: By using an old nappy or small blanket to start, sew on bright pieces of fabric in different textures and sizes, buttons, bells, ribbons to create a play mat. The small blanket will allow the baby to manipulate and explore different types of textures and colors.

Allow a lot of time for mirror play by placing a large mirror in front of your baby. Watch as they talk to themselves in the mirror. Make the play more meaningful by playing with your child in front of the mirror. Talk about their different body parts as well as other objects that can be seen in the mirror.

10 to 12 months

Fine and Gross Motor Control	Social/Communication
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Can stand alone and may even walk but balance will be poor. * Walks sideways when holding onto furniture. * Sits down from a standing position. * Can bring arms in to center of chest when playing with toys or clapping hands. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Talks a lot but most things are can not be understood. * Shows jealousy, love, and anger. * Says two to three words. * Very aware of environment and does not like strange voices. * Concerned only with self.
Cognitive	Play
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Follows simple directions. * Responds to own name. * Plays pat-a-cake. * Gives objects to others and takes objects away. * Begins to explore environment more. * Imitates simple acts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Begins to look for objects out of sight. * Enjoys music and rhythm toys. * Supervised water play. * Opening and closing objects and loves to manipulate toys. * Enjoys cause and effect toys.

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Suggestions for Play

Your child will be exploring his or her environment a lot more during this stage in development. Make sure that objects that might harm your baby are place out of reach so that they are able to explore without getting hurt. Some low cost ways to promote your child's development by using around the house items to make toys include:

Surprise Boxes: Find some old shoeboxes and decorate the outside by decorating some construction paper that can be taped on the sides of the shoe box. Glue or tape photographs, magazine clippings, mirrors, or even place an infant's favorite toy in the box. The baby will be able to remove the lids and discover what is inside. Good for brain development and recognition of shapes, faces, and objects.

Portable Sensory Table: Find a shallow tub and fill the tub with water. Place cups, objects that float, cloths, and other water toys in the tub to allow your baby to participate in water play.

Allow music time at home. Play the radio or tapes for your baby and encourage play through clapping, smiling, and movement. If able, music toys can be found at a local thrift store or any garage sale in the area.

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12 to 15 months

Fine and Gross Motor Control	Social/Communication
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Is able to walk alone and may be able to walk sideways or backwards. * Can throw a ball. * Builds tower of two or more blocks. * Creeps up stairs and climbs on furniture. * Can feed self by mostly using the fingers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Expresses him or herself through babbling. * Points to objects that he or she wants. * Imitates others. * Only concerned with self. * Repeats words.
Cognitive	Play
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Understands names of toys and people. * Knows around five to seven words. * Pays attention to people talking. * Understands and follows very simple directions. * Understands what “no” means. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Begins to look for objects that are out of the his or her sight. * Enjoys being read to and enjoys looking at and turning pages. * Likes to stack blocks and cups. * Enjoys exploring outside. * Likes toys that light up, make noise, and that open and close.

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Suggestions for Play

Your child will begin to start exploring the environment and playing alone. Allow your child to play with toys any way he or she wants because this is the way your child imagines and problem solves. Taking your child outdoors to play and explore while under supervision is good for this age as well. Some low cost ways to promote your child's independent development by using around the house items to make toys include:

Building Portraits: Use half-pint wax milk cartons you can get from any convenient store, some old newspaper, photos of your child or other pictures, tape, glue, and scissors. Away from your child, cut off the tops of the milk cartons and place newspaper inside one carton. Turn the other carton upside down and fit it inside the other carton that is stuffed with newspaper. Secure the cartons with tape and glue photos onto the carton. The new block can be stacked on top of others and watch as your child learns the names of the pictures on the block.

Baggie Books: This is a great way to create different types of picture books without having to spend the money. Use zipper-closure plastic bags to punch holes in the sides which can be fastened with ribbon or string. Cut out pictures from magazines and place them on construction paper that will fit inside the bag. This inexpensive book provides a great way for your child to look at picture books with a parent or caregiver.

Some other inexpensive ways for your child to play includes spending time outdoors for your child to explore as well as providing your child with plastic cups from the kitchen cabinet to stack and play with.

15 to 18 months

Fine and Gross Motor Control	Social/Communication
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Walks with better balance. * Is able to bend over to pick up toys. * Builds tower of three or more blocks. * May start to run clumsily. * Can walk up stairs with assistance. * Places rings on a peg and objects in a container. * Can hold crayon in hand and may be able to scribble. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Begins to throw fits when things do not go right. * Knows around 3 to 20 words. * Can shake head yes and no. * Begins repeating words heard from adults. * Will imitate sounds in the environment. (ex. car, dog, etc.)
Cognitive	Play
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Recognizes and points to pictures when named. * Responds to simple commands. * Understands up to 50 words. * Short attention span. * Looks for and finds hidden objects. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Likes to push, pull, and dump things. * Loves to stack items like boxes and blocks. * Throwing balls. * Riding toys: push and pull toys. * Looks at books. * Plays alone.

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Suggestions for Play

Even though your child is still enjoying playing alone, your child is beginning to watch as others play along side. Encourage playtime with others by taking your child to a park or have other children over to play. Since he or she is learning how to run and explore more, bring in toys that allow for lots of movement.

Soft Balls: By using two or three mismatched socks, they can be rolled together to make a ball for your child to enjoy throwing and playing with. Also, another way to make a more colorful ball would be to use scraps of cloth that can be sewn together then stuffed with cotton or more scraps.

Push and Pull Toy: Use a small sturdy cardboard box or a large shoe box and decorate the box with stickers, markers, and pictures. Cover the pictures with clear contact paper and if contact paper is unavailable just use markers and stickers to decorate the box. Poke a hole through one side of the box and then tie a string through the hole. Encourage your child to use the string to push the box around as well as allowing the child to climb in and out of the box if possible.

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18 to 24 months

Fine and Gross Motor Control	Social/Communication
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Can kick a ball. * Runs and walks backwards. * Builds tower of eight or more blocks. * Pours liquid from one cup to another. * Turn knobs on doors. * Scribbles and will imitate circles on paper. * Helps with dressing and feeds oneself well with spoon. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Does opposite of what is asked. * Identify familiar adult in picture. * Acts shy around strangers. * Talks in two word sentences and has about a 300 word vocabulary. * Starts verbalizing needs. * Begins to socialize with other children by hugging and pushing. * Uses words “me” and “mine”.
Cognitive	Play
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Can identify up to four body parts. * Chooses between two objects. * Turns picture upright if upside down. * Obeys commands. * Solves simple problems by using tools. * Follows sounds above head by looking up. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Likes to play along with others. * Likes to activate toys that move. * Has a favorite toy. * Can place different sized objects in the right size hole. * Supervised outdoor play and sand box play. * Listens to stories and songs.

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Suggestions for Play

Your child is increasingly acknowledging other children and is beginning to play with other children. Arrange for play dates and watch as your child’s play begins to cooperatively play with others. The toddler’s hand control is becoming increasingly strong, allowing him or her to scribble on paper and grab small objects. Play that includes problem solving tasks, hand manipulation, and pretend play will help encourage your child’s development at this age.

Slot toy: Use a shoe box and cut circles and slots with different widths that will fit different size objects into the lid of the shoe box. Find large plastic lids, small cups that will fit in the box, and any other shapes that are large enough not to fit in the child’s mouth. Watch as your child problem solves to find out which object will fit into which sized slot.

Sock puppets: To encourage a child to pretend play and create a toy that is geared to the child’s likes, use a sock and stuff the sock with cotton, scrap materials, or other socks and then tie the end of the sock. Use marker to draw a face and decorate the sock. If yarn is available or other cloth scraps, these materials can be used to decorate the sock as puppet as well. Encourage you child to participate in the development of the sock puppet.

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2 to 3 years

Fine and Gross Motor Control	Social/Communication
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Jumps off steps and jumps in place. * Can use spoon and fork to eat. * Can string large beads. * Use crayons and draws lines and circles. * Walks on tiptoes and may be able balance on one foot. * Can ride a tricycle. * Walks up and down stairs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Copies caregiver's and parent actions. * Large vocabulary and most words are understood. * Separates easily from parents. * Can answer simple questions. * Gives orders. * Knows differences in gender. * Talks in three word sentences.
Cognitive	Play
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Understands that there is more than one way to solve a problem. * Answers simple questions like What? and Where?. * Understands what big and little means. * Follows two step instructions. * Sorts shapes and matches similar pictures. * Can complete four piece puzzle. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Plays alongside other children and is possessive about toys. * Enjoys finding objects in favorite book. * Can recite simple songs or nursery rhymes. * Enjoys large piece puzzles. * Enjoys coloring and painting. * Outdoor play.

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Suggestions for Play

Your child is beginning to incorporate real-life experiences into pretend play. You will see you child pretending to talk on the phone or cook a meal. Reading books and singing songs are enjoyable to your child at this age because he or she is able to become more actively involved in the songs and stories. Use play to help the child learn, solve problems, and express self.

Matching games: Gather up a bunch of plastic lids around the house and cut out matching pairs of animals, colors, shapes, numbers, etc. and glue them unto the lids. Have your child try to match up the different pictures on the lids. This game can also be constructed by using a folder and cutting out matches of pictures placing one of the pictures on the folder. Have your child match the picture to the corresponding picture on the folder.

Musical instruments: Since your child will enjoy singing and dancing to music help encourage movement by creating musical instruments with around the house items. Make maracas by placing beans or rice into a small container with a removable lid. Secure the lid on with tape and decorate the container to create a fun maraca. Drums can also be assembled by finding a washed coffee, attaching the lid, and giving the child some large plastic kitchen utensils to bang on the lid of the coffee can.

Note: All lids and cans must be washed thoroughly before using as a play toy.

3 to 4 years

Fine and Gross Motor Control	Social/Communication
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Makes sharp turns when running. * Can jump from one spot to another. * Climbs jungle gyms and ladders. * Holds pencil with thumb and fingers. * Builds tower with nine cubes. * Cuts well with scissors. * Can string smaller beads. * Dresses and undresses self. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Asks questions beginning with “what”, “when”, and “where”. * Speaks in five or more word sentences. * Insists on doing everything on own. * Cooperates well with others.
Cognitive	Play
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Sorts colors and points to colors when named. * Can pick the longer of two lines. * Responds to opposites like “fire is hot” and “ice is cold”. * Identify objects that are the same and different. * Specifically plays with same sex toys. (ex. girls play with dolls) * Problem solves. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Enjoys outdoor activities especially playing on playground. * Enjoys art activities. * Engages in make believe play. * Enjoys circle games and board games.

Suggestions for Play

Your child’s vocabulary is increasing every day and with a larger vocabulary, you child can practice using words by playing games such as board games and memory games. Your child is also beginning to gain a sense of self and will begin playing with same sex toys. Encourage creativity in your child by providing many outlets for expressive play such as dress up and art activities. Allow your child to play with old clothes around the house to use when playing dress up.

Beading: Encourage the use of hands by using a thick string as a bead string and use noodles, cereal (cheerios, applejacks, etc.), straws cut into segments, to thread unto the string. The necklaces and bracelets can be use in dress up play.

Edible playdough and finger painting: This is a great way for your child to be creative and get their hands dirty with different textured food items. Edible finger paint such as ketchup, mayonnaise, mustard, gravy, etc. (anything that is edible and safe) can be used which allows your child to create fun and creative pictures. Homemade playdough which consists of 2 cups of flour, 1 cup of salt, 1 cup of water, and 1 tablespoon of oil is a cheap and fun way to allow your child to make dough creations.

Pictures of Homemade Toys



Picture 1:

- 1) Sensory Play Mat p. 6
- 2) Baggie Book p. 14



Picture 2:

- 1) Crinkle Creature p. 4
- 2) Noisy Boxes That Roll p.8

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Pictures of Homemade Toys



Picture 1:

- Homemade Playdough p.22



Picture 2:

- 1) Matching Lids p. 20
- 2) Surprise Boxes p. 12
- 3) Stacking Cardboard Boxes p. 14

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