

Children's Occupational Therapy Service

Move and play Birth - 9 months



Your baby needs to learn about the world around them and how to move within it. They should develop skills to hold their own head up, roll around the floor and sit up during this period.

Your child needs your help to explore, move and find out how their body works.

The following ideas will help you and your baby to enjoy play. They will also help your child to strengthen their muscles and learn to move on their own.

- Make sure you place your baby in a variety of positions to practice movements.
- Try sitting your baby on your knee facing you so you can help them to support their head. Talk or sing to your baby, make faces or sounds to keep their interest. Encourage them to look at and play with their hands and feet.
- Tummy time is very important. It may take a while for your baby to get used to this position, but it is great for strengthening neck, back and arm muscles in preparation for learning to sit and crawl. Place a small rolled up blanket or towel under their chest to raise them up off the floor whilst on their tummy to play.
- Play peek-a-boo. Look in the mirror, make faces, clap your hands, sing songs and nursery rhymes whilst playing with your child on the floor in different positions, e.g. on their side.
- When their head is stronger help them to sit, supporting them with cushions.

- Some children will need to be encouraged to take toys and food to their mouth. Messy play with food and textured toys can help this, with you watching closely.
- Children need to learn how to move from one position to another e.g. lying to sitting, sitting to standing. Encourage them to want to move towards the toys that are placed in different positions around them, assisting them to roll, kneel and sit should they need a little help.
- Children need to be encouraged to explore their surroundings. To help children learn to move and balance, first place toys just out of reach then encourage them to stretch or move to get the toys.
- We do not recommend the use of baby walkers. They do not help children to walk properly and are unsafe. Instead, encourage them to use push along toys
- Find objects that are interesting to play with and attract attention e.g. noisy toys, bright colours, flashing lights and bubbles. Encourage your baby to reach for these or follow them with their eyes.



M Motivate your baby to move and explore their surroundings.

O Opportunity to spend time on the floor, especially on their tummy playing games, helps your baby's muscles to get strong.

V Vary the toys you play with to hold your little one's attention.

E Encourage your baby to do as much as they can independently, placing toys just out of their reach.

P Play should be fun for both you and your baby.

L Look at things your baby enjoys playing with and use these to motivate them to move.

A Attention, what does your baby take notice of; noisy toys that light up, rattles, reflections in a mirror? Use these toys to keep your baby's attention during tummy time.

Y Your time with your baby is important to provide opportunities for them to learn through play.

Use this space to write down what progress your child is making and any questions you have for the professional who gave you this leaflet.

A sheet of lined paper with 20 horizontal lines, suitable for writing or drawing. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across the width of the page.

If you have any concerns or would like further information about your child's development, please contact your public health nurse (health visitor) or:

Children's Occupational Therapy Service

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