



# Activities For You & Your Baby

## **Babies need to have fun, no matter how old they are.**

If your baby is having fun – you will too. It doesn't matter how tired you are – when you get that first smile, first giggle, nothing beats it!

Keeping your baby entertained in the first few days and weeks is easy – they spend most of their time asleep – if you are lucky! When they are young, a smile, the sound of your voice, a cuddle, might be all they need.

As they get older and more mobile – they become more and more demanding for attention and stimulation.



Sometimes you need a hand thinking of new things to do...

Over the following pages you can find some ideas for things for you and your baby to do together.

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### Classes and learning for two



#### Baby Massage

Baby massage is becoming more and more popular. Research has shown that baby massage is good for your baby and good for you too. As well as helping you bond with your baby, it can help reduce stress and depression. Ask your health centre or local children's centre for more information.



Baby massage can be relaxing your baby too! Massage can have physical benefits as well as emotional. It can play an important role with circulation, digestion and growth. It can help with colic and teething. It can also help babies who are premature or have physical disabilities.

#### Baby signing

Like baby massage, signing is getting more and more popular. Parents have been doing it at a basic level for years. Waving as you say 'bye bye' is signing. However, these days, baby signing builds on these simple gestures and experts say that it can help reduce your baby's frustration about letting you know what they want when they get older. It can therefore help reduce tantrums in those "terrible two" years. Signing books, DVD and classes are all available.

#### Join an exercise class.

Your local dance or fitness centre might offer classes where you can exercise with your baby – ring and ask them!



#### Mum & baby yoga classes.

These can help you to get back your strength and flexibility, also to bond with your baby. Experts believe baby yoga can help with sleep, and relaxation amongst many other things.

#### Join a music class.

Babies love music. Baby music classes are becoming more and more popular, some start when your baby is just 3 months old. Ask your local children's centre.

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## The Great Outdoors



### **Go for a picnic.**

Wait for a nice dry day, take food for you and your baby (it might just be milk for her!) and a blanket to sit on.

***Everything is entertainment when you are young, even the rustling leaves and kids playing on the swings.***

### **Tree hugging.**

Take your baby outside and sit under a big tree. She will enjoy watching the leaves and branches move. If she is young she will hear new sounds too, like rustling leaves, birds calling or the sound of traffic.

### **Remember your day.**

When you both go for a walk; collect things along the way. When you get home, put them in a keepsake container. Put the date on it and details of where you went. Let your baby hold the items and talk to her about your walk together. (Make sure the items are clean and safe for your baby.)

### **Garden fun.**

Show your baby all the exciting things in your garden.

***Flowers, trees, leaves, grass, birds, worms - everything is new to a baby.***



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# Splish Splash

### Share a bath

Listen to music, sing a relaxing song or put in some bath toys and play. It's a great bonding experience. For safety reasons, be sure not to fill the bath too high or too hot, and always have a firm hold on your baby.

Take care when getting in and out of the bath, getting your partner to hand her to you, and take her from you is a good idea.

### Swim in the bath

Being very careful to keep her mouth and chin out of the water. Hold your baby on her tummy and swish her gently up and down the bath, as if she is swimming.

### Bath toys

Children love bath toys, and this includes babies. Some babies are a little wary of bath time, others love it. A few plastic ducks bobbing around in the water will encourage her to reach out to them. And of course they go 'quack quack quack!'

### Patting water

Show your baby how to pat her hands on the surface of the water in her bath to make a nice splashy sound. At first she will probably make a fist and it won't work, but as she gets older she'll get the hang of it.

You'll probably get just as wet as her!



### Make ice cream hair.

When in the bath, use the suds from your baby's shampoo to transform her hair into wild shapes. Have a plastic mirror handy so she can see your efforts.

Always make sure you baby is secure and cannot slip when in the bath

### Go to the swimming pool.

Most pools seems to advise to wait until your baby is 12 weeks old before taking them swimming, and take care if a noisy swimming pool scares her.

But many babies just love the water!

Always check with your local pool or GP if you are unsure about taking your baby swimming.

**Remember** - while water can be fun, your baby needs to be safe at all times. Water can be very dangerous. Always check the temperature of water, make sure you have a secure hold of your baby, and make sure their face never slides beneath the water.



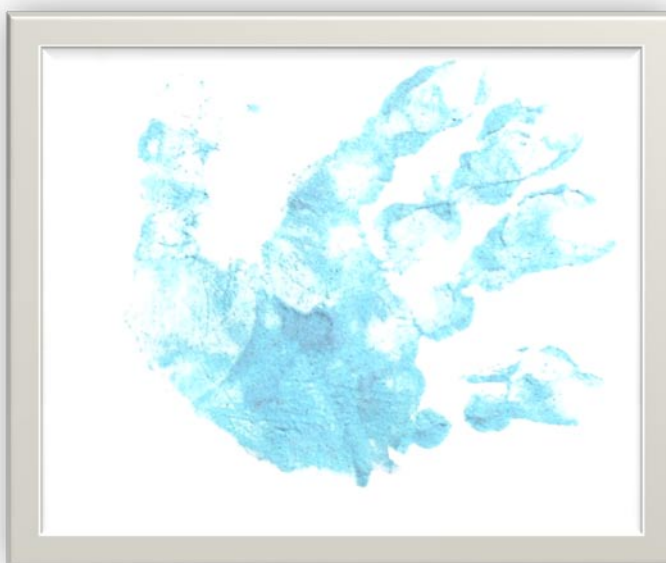
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### Get Creative

#### Make a foot or handprint of your baby.

A great souvenir to remind you of your baby's hand or foot size at 3 months, 6 months or 12 months.

Buy a handy clay-kit, or make safe paint (mix flour and water to the right consistency, add a little food colouring). Paint their hand or foot, (or press it into the clay to make an imprint), then press their hand or foot onto paper



#### Make a video for friends and family.

If you have (or can borrow) a video camera, make a video of your baby.

Laughing, gurgling, feeding – anything!

A treasure you will enjoy well into their adult years, as well as your friends and family. You can upload the video to sites on the internet, or make a DVD.

#### Make a mobile.

It doesn't have to be complicated – just safe. Hang it above her cot – out of her reach. When a baby is very young they see black and white shapes best, and then as their eyes begin to focus better, brightly coloured shapes are good.



#### Make a memory blanket.

Use her old clothes to make a memory blanket. You can use motifs from tops, or pieces in different colours and textures.

#### Make a weight/height chart.

Growth charts can make it easy for you to follow her growth, as well as being fun for your baby as she gets older.

#### Be green

Recycle - Donate. Women's shelters and other charities all are glad to take baby clothes off your hands. Clothes that are not fit for selling are usually sold to textile recycling firms that recycle the clothes into rags for commercial use.

## Activities for you and your baby

### Fun fun fun!

#### Get messy.

Fun for both of you. Play with water, cooked and cooled spaghetti, jelly – use your imagination. But make sure the “mess” is safe for your baby’s age.

#### Playing with food.

When she is older you will probably tell her not to play with her food, but playing with your food when you are a baby is all part of learning. See how many biscuits you can stack up before they fall. Try making necklaces from spaghetti or cereal and string. (The loopy kind)

#### Blanket rides.

Place her on the middle of a blanket and pull her around the room. Watch your baby laugh! (Take care though!)

#### Change the words to her favourite nursery rhymes.

Add her name in appropriate places, change different animals, and so on. “Young **Kimberley had a farm.**” instead of ‘Old MacDonald’, or “**Katie put the kettle on**” instead of ‘Polly’.

***Old MacDonald had a farm - but he can have as many animals as you can do the noises for!***



#### Play with bubbles.

Bubbles intrigue babies and watching the look of surprise on their face as bubbles burst is fantastic. You can buy child safe bubble mixture with wands in toy shops. (Check the label.)

Playing with bubbles is a good indoor or outdoor activity. Older children love joining in and your little one will be fascinated.



# Activities for you and your baby

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## **Sing Sing Sing**

If you don't know the words to nursery rhymes, don't worry. When your baby is young, it is the sound of your voice they love not whether you got the words right. TV theme tunes, adverts, pop songs – anything will do.

## **Play peek-a-boo with her toys.**

Watch her laugh when her favourite teddy cries "Boo" from behind the sofa, or from over the crib.

## **Be silly.**

Pull faces, blow raspberries, stick out your tongue. She will soon start to imitate you.

## **Giddy-up.**

Sit your baby on your knee and sing out "giddy-up" while moving your knee up and down.

## **Play peek a boo.**

Hide your face with your hands or her teddy bear and poke out from behind them, saying "boo!" in a bright, friendly voice.

Use different phrases: "peek a boo", "boo", "I see", "Where's (baby's name)", are just a few

## **Tummy time.**

Get down on the floor with your baby. As your baby gets older she will laugh at you crawling and rolling about like a baby. By being on the floor with her, you can see what she sees, watch what she watches do what she does.

## **You see the world from her perspective.**

## **Little drummer**

When your baby can sit up, place a few pots and pans on the floor and give her a wooden spoon to bash them with. You'll probably get tired of this before she does!

## **Round and round.**

A favourite game - even with quite young babies.

Sit her on you lap and hold her close, while tracing a circle round her hand, say,

***"Round and round the garden like a teddy bear."***

Then walk your fingers up her arm, saying,

***"One step, two steps, and tickly under there."***

End up by tickling her under the arm. As she gets older she'll start doing the game back to you, or to teddy.



### Nice and quiet now...

#### Snuggle time with teddy.

Encourage your baby to wrap up her favourite teddy or doll in her blanket and get snuggly.

#### Window talk.

Find a place to sit comfortably where you can see out of a window. Talk to your baby about what you can see. Point out the clouds, houses, trees, cats, dogs, rain, people – whatever you see. Make up short stories about what you see. ***"I wonder if that dog is going home for his tea."***



Are we nearly there yet?



Take your baby for a ride in the car. This can relax her (often into sleep) but also when she is a little older allows her to watch the outside world from a different perspective than her pushchair.

***(Remember to make sure an appropriate car seat is fitted correctly)***

#### Talk to your baby

Your baby might be the best listener you've ever met.

#### Rock a bye baby.

Cradle your baby in your lap. Gently rock her back and forth while you sing. ***Don't forget to support her head and back.***

#### Whisper in your baby's ear.

Whisper to your baby about anything and make different sounds – like animal noises or funny voices.

#### Skin to skin bonding

Mums often do this anyway, especially if they breastfeed, but it's great for Dad's too. Take your shirt off and cuddle the baby with just her nappy on, with your skin directly touching her.

***Great for bonding, don't be surprised if you get a tear in your eye.***

#### Are you tired?

Silly question! ***Join your baby for her afternoon nap***

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# Activities for you and your baby

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## Read, read, read!



Read anything to your baby. A book, newspaper, magazine, even the phone book! A love for books and reading starts early - and it's never too early.

Babies love to listen to your voice. When she starts to be interested in books, choose ones with colourful simple pictures and lots of rhythm in the text.

Choose board or cloth books, lift the flap books and books with holes to peek through.

As you read with your baby, point out objects in the pictures. Woof, quack, do actions, make silly voices. Do whatever special noises you can to stimulate your baby's interest.

## Dust off you CD collection and play some old tunes to your baby.

You'll walk down memory lane and you'll discover which tracks your baby likes to hear.

## Photographs of you.

Show your baby pictures of you and tell her all about where they were taken what you were doing and so on.

## “Bonjour, je vous adore!”

Talk in a foreign language to your baby. (Brush off that GCSE French!) Your baby won't pick up any words; especially if she is very young, but research has shown that hearing another language can help improve her skills in foreign languages when she is older.

## Know when your baby has reached overload.

Sometimes your child can be over-stimulated and just needs to sleep.

## And finally...

**Enjoy your baby –  
you will never get this time  
again!**



## Contents

### Classes and learning for two

Baby Massage  
Join or start a play group  
Baby signing  
Join an exercise class.  
Mum & baby yoga classes.  
Join a music class.

### The Great Outdoors

Go for a picnic  
Tree hugging.  
Remember your day.  
Garden fun.

### Splish Splash

Share a bath.  
Swim in the bath  
Bath toys  
Patting water  
Make ice cream hair.  
Go to the swimming pool.

### Get creative

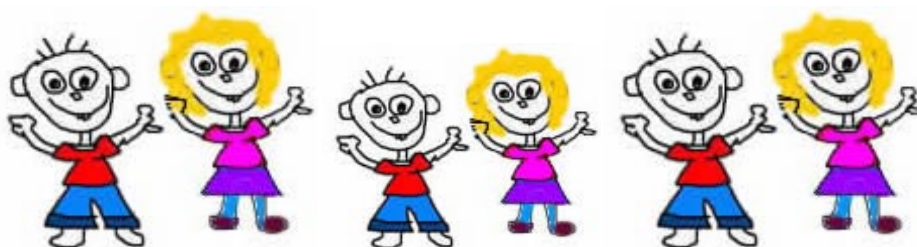
Make a foot or handprint of your baby.  
Make a video for friends and family.  
Make a mobile.  
Make a memory blanket.  
Make a weight/height chart.  
Be green

### Fun fun fun!

Get messy.  
Playing with food.  
Blanket rides.  
Change the words to her favourite nursery rhymes.  
Sing Sing Sing  
Play peek-a-boo with her toys.  
Be silly.  
Giddy-up.  
Play peek a boo.  
Little drummer  
Round and round.

### Nice and quiet now...

Snuggle time with teddy.  
Window talk.  
Whisper in your baby's ear.  
Are you tired?  
Talk to your baby  
Rock a bye baby.  
Whisper in your baby's ear.  
Skin to skin bonding  
Read, read, read!  
"Bonjour, je vous adore!"  
Are we nearly there yet?  
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Photographs of you.  
Know when your baby has reached overload



**Note.** These are ideas only. Always choose an activity that is safe for you and your baby. Make sure you have taken all reasonable precautions to avoid accidents. Choose an activity that is appropriate for your baby's age and developmental stage. Onlinemum takes no responsibility or liability for content or any inaccuracies contained in this document.