Activities for infants aged 0–4 months

Babies develop skills for speech and language by listening to sounds around them.
Some activities apply to more than one development domain. Supervise infants at all times when enjoying these activities.

Communication	Fine motor	Gross motor	Personal social	Problem solving
Talk softly to your baby when feeding him, changing his nappy and holding him	Place your finger in your baby's hand and watch how strong her grip is	When baby is awake, place him in different positions, such as on his stomach or side	Play music and sing to baby	
	Put baby on different surfaces like rugs or mats so that she can feel the different textures		Make eye contact with your baby and smile, chuckle and coo at them	Let your baby follow a rattle, spoon or toy with his eyes. Talk softly as you play
Read simple books to your baby	Put toys near where baby can reach them	Put baby on her stomach when she is awake. Stay close. Babies need tummy time every day	Encourage baby to smile back at you	Play peek-a-boo with your baby
Make up songs to sing to your baby		While baby is lying on her back, help her learn about her feet by playing games with her feet and toes		Hold your baby up in front of a mirror. He may enjoy smiling and making noises at himself
Don't forget that baby loves to hear your voice	Rub your baby's fingers and toes one at a time. Your baby will enjoy the way it feels		Gently massage baby with oil – talk and sing to her while you do this	

Adapted from the *Ages and Stages Questionnaires 3rd Edition User Guide*, Squires & Bricker, 2009 and *ASQ3 Learning Activities*, Twombly and Frank, 2013; *Get up and grow Get moving birth to one year*, Commonwealth of Australia 2012; *Play in early childhood: from birth to six years 3rd Edition*, Mary Sheridan.

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Activities for infants aged 4–8 months

Babies are curious at this age and want to learn about the things they see and hear.
Some activities apply to more than one development domain. Supervise infants at all times when enjoying these activities.

Communication	Fine motor	Gross motor	Personal social	Problem solving
Talk to your baby during everyday activities such as nappy changing and meal times	Give your baby a toy to hold in his hands	Put your baby on her tummy with a toy slightly out of reach. Encourage her to reach out for it		Make different sounds for your baby to hear. Watch to see if she searches for the sounds
	Give your baby a spoon to grasp and chew on		In a mirror, smile and wave to your baby	Play peek-a-boo with your baby
Give your baby things to look at while she is lying on her back		On the floor, sit baby between your legs, providing as much support as he needs. Place a toy in front of him to reach for	Place your baby on your knee facing you. Bounce him to the rhythm of a nursery rhyme	
	Encourage your baby to pass a toy from one hand to another		Spend time outdoors with your baby. She will love being out and about with you	
Talk to your baby about what she can see and hear.	Sit in front of your baby on the floor, supporting him. Drop a ball into a plastic container	Stand baby on your knees. Hold her so she looks at you, keeping her heels down	Read to your baby, making lots of different sounds	Place toys close to the change table and high chair so baby can reach for them

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Activities for infants aged 8–12 months

Your baby needs opportunities to explore and experiment with new skills.
Some activities apply to more than one development domain. Supervise infants at all times when enjoying these activities.

Communication	Fine motor	Gross motor	Personal social	Problem solving
	Your baby will begin to use his index finger to poke. Encourage baby to point at objects too		Let your baby play with plastic measuring cups in the bathtub. Bath time is a great learning time	Your baby will be interested in banging objects to make noises. Show him how to bang things together
Use single/simple words when talking to your baby. Repeat them over and over		Put toys on a table so that your baby can practice standing and stepping sideways while playing with them		Let your baby make choices. Offer two toys or two types of foods and see which one she picks
Read baby books or colourful magazines. Let your baby touch pictures in the book	Let your baby feed herself. This gives her experience with textures in her hands and mouth	Find a big box that your baby can crawl in and out of. You can do this together, or with a sibling	Mirrors are exciting at this age. Smile and make faces together in the mirror	
	Make a simple puzzle for your baby by putting blocks inside a muffin pan or egg carton	Play ball games. Roll a ball to your baby. Beach balls or soft balls are great for this game		Play pat-a-cake, clap hands together, or take turns
Talk to your baby during everyday activities such as nappy changing and meal times		Clap hands with your baby. Encourage her to make sounds as she plays	Name the body parts as your baby touches your face	Play hide and seek games with objects. Help her find the object

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Activities for children aged 12–16 months

Reading aloud, singing to your child and sharing stories assists with your child's development.
Some activities apply to more than one development domain. Supervise children at all times when enjoying these activities.

Communication	Fine motor	Gross motor	Personal social	Problem solving
Name the object your child wants. See if he can repeat the word back to you	Cut up safe finger foods (not foods that are a choking risk) for your child and allow him to feed himself		Let your child help you clean up. Play 'feed the rubbish bin' or 'give it to mummy and daddy'	
Play the naming game. Name body parts, common objects and people		Most children enjoy music. Clap and dance to the music together	Let your child 'help' during daily routines. Encourage her to get the cup and spoon for meal times, for example	Children love games at this age Try pat-a-cake, this little piggy went to market, or different ways of playing games
	Draw pictures on butcher's paper with your child and let her draw as well	Encourage your child to walk by holding his hand or pushing toys around	Play 'pretend' with a toy animal or doll. Show and tell your child what the doll is doing (walking, going to bed or eating)	Loosely wrap a small toy in a paper towel or tissue without tape. Your child can unwrap it and find a surprise
Make puppets out of a sock and play a game with her	Get your baby to put small objects into containers. Use safe objects for this game	Hold your child in a standing position, facing another person. Have him step towards the other person to get a favourite toy	Give your child a lot of things to roll, push, pull, hug, shake, poke, turn, stack, spin and stir	
Read your child a book and use lots of voices and sounds to attract his attention		Play simple puzzles with your child		Make sound shakers by filling empty plastic bottles with rice. Be careful to secure lids tightly

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Activities for children aged 16–20 months

Physical activity can be part of your child's everyday play.
Some activities apply to more than one development domain. Supervise children at all times when enjoying these activities.

Communication	Fine motor	Gross motor	Personal social	Problem solving
Place your child's clothes on her bed before dressing. Ask her to give you a shirt, pants, shoes and socks	Save small empty cartons. Your child can stack them to make towers	Children love to play in water. Put squeezable objects in the bathtub, such as sponges or squeeze bottles	Pretend play becomes even more fun at this age. Encourage your child to have a doll or stuffed toy to imitate people they know	
Find times to read throughout the day. You can point to pictures and words and your child will begin to learn what words are about	Make a picture book by putting common, simple pictures cut from magazines into a photo album	Children are interested in playing with balls. Try to roll, throw or kick a beach ball together, or encourage your child to throw bean bags or balls into boxes and buckets	Play hide and seek. Your child can hide with another person or by herself for you to find	Help your child sort objects into piles. She can help you sort laundry by putting socks in one pile and shirts in another
Play the "What's that?" game by pointing to clothing, toys, body parts, objects, or pictures and ask your child to name them	Your child may become interested in art activities. Use large, non-toxic crayons and a large pad of paper		Make instant pudding together. Let your child 'help' by mixing, stirring and pouring the pudding	Play with puzzles together and make the sounds of the pictures on the pieces
Put your child's favourite toys in a laundry basket. Request the objects, giving her a reason to communicate	Make sure your child gets lots of chances to practice writing and drawing. Use drawings for place mats for the family. She will be so proud!	Children love movement. Take him to the park to ride on rocking toys, swings and small slides	Your child can help in little ways. He can use a sponge to wipe up the table after dinner or put toys away in a basket	Children are excited about bubbles. Let him try to blow bubbles or have her watch you blow bubbles through a straw
Make the hand actions and sing action songs together such as *Ring Around the Rosy* and *This is the Way We Wash Our Hands*. Do the actions together		Hold your child's hand while you climb up stairs. Be patient; stairs are very high for little legs. If you don't have stairs, go to a park and practice on a small slide or jungle gym	Enjoy playing dress-ups and role playing with household items such as going shopping	Get two toys that look the same. Hide one toy under one container while your child watches. Ask her, "Where did it go?"

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Activities for children aged 20–24 months

Children are becoming independent and are keen to try more things for themselves.
Some activities apply to more than one development domain. Supervise children at all times when enjoying these activities.

Communication	Fine motor	Gross motor	Personal social	Problem solving
Talk with your child about everyday things such as toys, cooking and household items/furniture	Dress-ups are a fun way for your child to practice putting clothes on and off and using buttons and zippers		Children enjoy pretend play. Encourage your child to pretend to feed a doll or to use a phone	
Sing songs such as *Head, Shoulders Knees and Toes* together. Add in other body parts too, such as teeth, eyebrows and fingers, for example	Your child may become interested in how to put basic puzzles together	Children are interested in playing with balls. Let her try to roll, kick and throw a ball overhand		Children are inquisitive. Hide a loud, ticking clock in a room and have her try to find it. Take turns by letting her hide the clock and you trying to find it
Sing rhymes and songs with actions together such as *Itsy Bitsy Spider* and *I'm a Little Teapot*. Make up your own songs and rhymes	Your child will enjoy helping to make their own snacks. They may be able to spread hummus and butter, for example	Hold your child's hands and help her jump off a low step then let her try it by herself, or let her bounce on a trampoline with your help	Make a bed for your child's doll or teddy using a shoe box. A small piece of cloth makes a blanket or a pillow. She can read doll/teddy a story and tuck them into bed	
	Provide pencils or crayons and paper for drawing and scribbling	Play outdoors, giving your child the opportunity to explore the environment using water and sand		Put uncooked rice or pasta in a large tray or box with scoops and containers. Talk about what he is doing, using words such as 'empty', 'full' and 'pouring', for example
Read together and ask your child to find a familiar object in a picture book or to make animal sounds like "moo". Encourage your child to turn the pages		Your child may enjoy a riding toy without pedals, which will see him use his feet to move the toy forward	Your child will enjoy trying to feed himself. Give him a chance to use a spoon and cup and maybe a fork by himself	Provide bath toys that encourage measuring, filling and pouring

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Queensland Government

Activities for children aged 24–30 months

Children enjoy using their imaginations during art, pretend play, games and songs.
Some activities apply to more than one development domain. Supervise children at all times when enjoying these activities.

Communication	Fine motor	Gross motor	Personal social	Problem solving
	Children enjoy drawing. Provide paper and crayons. Draw large shapes and let her colour them in. Take turns	Play "follow the leader". Walk on tiptoes, walk backward, walk slow or fast with big steps and little steps		Play games together which compare sizes and shapes. For example, big/little balls
Read together and ask your child to select pictures of actions or colours. For example, "Who is running?", or "Which ones are red?"	Use boxes for both pretend and creative play. A box can become a cubby house or decorate with crayons, or paints as a fun activity to do together		Children enjoy pretend play. Together, pretend you are different animals, like a dog or cat. Make animal sounds and actions	Your child will begin to be able to make choices. Give choices of what to wear (red shorts or blue shorts) or to eat (two kinds of drink, fruit etc)
Add actions to nursery rhymes and songs. For example: *Here We Go Round the Mulberry Bush*, *The Wheels on the Bus* and *Ring around the Rosy*		Children will enjoy kicking, throwing and catching a ball. Do this together outside or in the park	Children enjoy imitating. Pretend to wash a dirty toy, plastic dishes, or dolls' clothes	Cook with your child, giving them simple things to do. For example, how to toss a salad or make sandwiches
	Use play dough to make snakes or balls. Roll out play dough with a small rolling pin. Large cookie cutters can be used to make new play dough shapes	Play tossing a ball or bean bag into a bucket, counting as you go		Children enjoy playing in sand – try wetting some of the sand and show your child how to pack the container with the wet sand and turn it over to make sand cakes
Children of this age love outings. Go to the library to find picture books. Make a special time for reading (like bedtime stories)	Children enjoy finger painting. Help him to spread it around and draw pictures with his fingers. Add food colouring to give more colours	Make an obstacle course using chairs, pillows, or large cartons. Encourage your child to crawl over, under, through, behind, in front of, or between	Encourage your child to dress themselves, naming clothing/ colours as they do	

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Activities for children aged 30–36 months

Children become more skillful at kicking, throwing and catching a ball.
Some activities apply to more than one development domain. Supervise children at all times when enjoying these activities.

Communication	Fine motor	Gross motor	Personal social	Problem solving
Children enjoy reading familiar stories. Pause during reading to leave out a word, asking your child to "fill it in". For example, Little Red Riding Hood said: "Grandmother, what a big '……' you have"		Pretend to be different animals that 'bear walk' by walking on hands and feet, or gallop and jump like a kangaroo or a frog	Have your child help you set and clear the table for mealtimes	
Draw an outline around your child's body on a large piece of butcher's paper. Talk about body parts and write the words on the paper	Use safety scissors to cut shapes from old magazines and glue to cardboard with a glue stick		Collect empty boxes (cereal, fruit boxes and egg cartons, for example) and help your child to set up his own grocery store	Count pieces of fruit and place in your child's cup ("one for you") and one in your cup ("one for me"). Take turns and count the pieces
	Use a pencil to trace around simple objects with your child using cups of different sizes, blocks, or your hands	Your child may be able to ride a tricycle using pedals	Put an old blanket over a table or chairs to make a tent or cubby house	Let your child help with cooking by measuring, pouring, stirring, washing and cutting foods with a plastic knife
Help your child learn new describing words. Describe objects by colour, size and shape. For example, "the blue cup", and "the big ball". Describe how things move, too. For example, "a car goes fast", and "a turtle moves slowly"	Build towers of nine or ten cubes	Jump from bottom steps with two feet together		Show your child signs in your neighbourhood, such as a stop sign. Talk about what that means. Read signs in a restaurant or when you are out grocery shopping
	Thread large wooden beads onto a piece of string or shoelace	Children enjoy kicking, throwing and catching balls	Meet other families for a play in the park and encourage your child to climb on play equipment	

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