
TIPS TO EXPLORE THROUGH MOVEMENT AND PLAY

With Your Infant (0-12 months)

Tummy time. Babies should sleep on their backs, but during the day while awake, make sure your baby gets supervised "tummy time." Place a few interesting toys in front of them to make it more fun.

Give objects to handle. Provide objects with different colors, shapes, and textures for your baby to explore. Try everyday items from your home and nature, like tissue paper or a pinecone.

Follow their interests. Notice what your baby looks at or reaches for. If you can, bring the object closer so they can explore it. Describe how it looks and feels.

Play peek-a-boo. Hide your face with your hands and then open them up to show a big smile. You can also hide objects under a towel or blanket.

Mirror play. Sit in front of a mirror together and make silly faces. Point to and label different body parts.

Let them move around. Let your baby explore their surroundings by reaching, rolling, scooting, and crawling. Make sure they are safe.

With Your Toddler (12-36 months)

Go outside. Observe your surroundings—what do you hear, see, feel, smell? When your child shows interest in something, stop to talk about it.

Roll a ball back and forth. You can say "My turn/your turn" as you roll it. Your child might enjoy throwing or kicking the ball.

Make art. Your toddler will enjoy scribbling with a crayon or chalk. They can also experiment with folding or tearing paper.

Mystery bag. Play guessing games. For example, put a few objects in a bag and have your child guess what's inside without looking. They can feel, smell, and shake the bag.

Act it out. Toddlers will start to imitate grown-up activities, like putting a doll to sleep or giving it a shot. You can play along or talk about what they're doing.

With Your Preschooler (36-60 months)

Move like animals. Invite your child to move like different animals. Can they hop like a frog? Flap like a bird? Slither like a snake? Help them burn off some energy and have fun.

Make a plan. Help your child make a plan before they play pretend. Ask them who or what they want to be and what they need to play that role. You can offer ideas but make sure your child feels in control.

Family portrait. Have your child draw a family picture using crayons, pencils, or markers. Talk about their creation.

Play a game of Simon Says. Give your child a pose or action to do. Then they have to stay still and quiet until you give them another direction. "Simon Says: pat your head...Simon Says: stomp your feet." After they get the hang of it, let them be Simon!

Think like scientists. Encourage your child to make predictions. "I wonder what will happen if you mix the red and green paint?" Then see if their prediction comes true.

Let Them Problem-Solve

If your child is concentrating on something, stand back and see what they can figure out by themselves. If they get stuck, give just enough help so they keep going and don't give up.