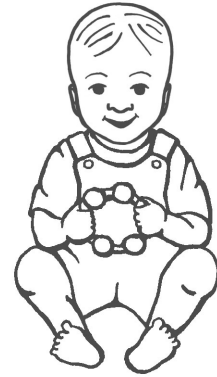




# Fine Motor

## Activities to Help Your Baby Grow and Learn



Your busy baby is beginning to pick up tiny bits of food with her thumb and forefinger. She can take things out of a container, such as spoons out of a plastic bowl, and can bang two toys together. If you give her a crayon and paper, she may even attempt to imitate your writing with a scribble.

- Feely Game** Make a feely game out of a cardboard box by including things to feel, hold, and bang. Good items might include an empty plastic baby bottle, a square of velvet fabric, and a sponge. Let baby reach into the box and grab something. Talk about what he is holding. This exercise for little muscles also helps baby explore different textures.
- Hand Clapping** Help your baby bring her hands together and clap. Clap her hands and then hide them under a blanket. She will like to watch her hands go away and come back.
- Catcher's Up** Use a small, soft ball—or make a ball out of socks rolled together—and play catch with your baby. He won't be able to really catch the ball yet, but he will enjoy trying to throw it and chase after it.
- Tearing** If baby loves to tear paper, get a big basket or box and put some old magazines and wrapping paper inside. Let your baby tear what she wants. If she is more interested in putting wads of paper in her mouth, put the box away and try again in a few weeks.
- Sticks and Stones** Take a walk outside. Encourage your baby to gather stones in a pail or small paper bag. Pick up twigs and leaves. Talk about the color or the size. "Look—this big leaf is nice!" (Remember to watch out for things that might go into your baby's mouth.)
- Goodies in a Jar** Put Cheerios or small pieces of cereal in a screw-top or snap-top plastic jar or snap-top butter container. Put the lid on loosely. Let baby take the lid off. You may have to show your baby how to take the lid off and get the cereal. Soon he will do it by himself.
- Bedtime Book Time** A great way to get ready for bed is to snuggle up and read books with your baby. Let her pick a few books and help turn the pages. Talk about the pictures, and enjoy your special time.



8–12 months



# Problem Solving

Activities to Help Your Baby Grow and Learn



As baby learns how things work, he is busy taking them apart. He can take pieces out of a puzzle or rings off of a stack. He is learning how to find hidden objects under a blanket. He enjoys looking at pictures in a book and enjoys your naming the pictures. He's been so busy exploring that he probably now knows the word "no."

**Rhythm Play** Using small blocks or spoons, try drumming on the table or clapping toys together to make sounds. Sing along and dance a little. Enjoy the music.

**Scarf Pull** Tie several colorful scarves together. Insert one end into a cardboard tube. Let your baby pull the scarves through the tube. Now, can your baby stuff the scarves back into the tube?

**Hide-and-Seek** Hide a ticking clock or a small radio under a pillow or blanket. Let your baby listen to find the sound. "Do you hear it?" "Where is it?"

**A Third Toy** Give your baby a third toy when she has a toy in each hand. See if she can figure out a way to take the third toy and hold on to all three. If this is too difficult for your baby right now, try it again in a few weeks.

**In and Out** Put a piece of cereal inside a clear plastic container or baby bottle without a lid. As your baby works to get the cereal out, he will learn more about inside and outside. Another way to show baby the ideas of inside and outside is to get a big box that your baby can crawl in and out of.

**Little Laughs** By about 11 months, your baby will begin to develop a sense of humor. Do something funny such as trying to drink out of her baby bottle or pretending to put on her shoe when getting ready to go out. She will probably burst out laughing.

**Magic Cups** Place a cup and a small toy on a tray for baby. Hide the toy under the cup and ask, "Where is the toy?" If he doesn't find it, lift the cup and show your baby where it is. Say, "You found it!" Do this several times. Soon he will lift the cup and find the toy all by himself. Later, add another cup. See if baby can remember which cup hides the toy.



8-12 months