

June 2020 - Baby Play

Baby play is a fun and engaging way to play and teach everyday routines to your child. It helps to develop listening, language, thinking & play! This activity can be adapted depending on your child's age and language level. You don't have to use a baby, it can be any toy that your child enjoys playing with. Be creative and to use whatever is easily available in your home. The goal here is to have fun and to strengthen your bond with your child as you play and communicate together. Gather the items you want to use while you engage in this activity.

Some examples might be:

Baby doll
Small towel
Spoon
Cup
Blanket
Duck
Socks
Hat

Take a moment to consider the environment for where you plan to play and what will work best for your child based on their specific hearing needs. Is hearing assistive technology being worn and working properly? Does your child need to see your face while communicating? Are you and the objects inside their "listening bubble"?

Sit across from your child to give them access to your face, sounds, signs, joint attention opportunities, and where possible reduce background noise and distractions.

Tips:

Remember to talk about what you're going to play 'Let's play with baby'. This encourages conversation. If your little one has another idea, like bubbles - go with that! 'Oh! Baby likes bubbles!'

Adjust your language to the level that's right for your child. If your child is using single words/signs, help them to build their vocabulary by repeating words/phrases and encouraging turn taking, following directions, and problem solving opportunities. 'We need water' 'Oh No! The tub is empty. What should we do?'

Encourage your child to express their ideas to make fun things happen! You could pour a little water in the bath and then pause expectantly for your little one to talk or sign for 'more'. When they are using 50+ words or signs show them how to put two together, 'Wah wah - baby's crying' 'He wants milk'.

Encourage your child to find two items from a small selection - 'We need a cup and a duck' 'Where's baby's hat and socks?'

Bathing baby is a good time to go over vocabulary for body parts 'Can you wash baby's hands, tummy, face etc'

Use lots of verbs during play - eating, crying, sleeping, playing, drying. 'Baby's splashing - splash splash' Singing and signing rhythms and movement also encourage your child to take turns - leave a pause in the song for them to fill in. 'This is the way we wash the baby, wash the baby, wash the baby. This is the way we wash the baby _____ (wash wash wash)'.

To develop play and thinking skills while you're having fun - try to add another idea in the play to make a short sequence - e.g. feed the baby and then put him to bed, dress the baby and then play with him.

Little problems in play encourage shared thinking and problem solving - e.g. 'Baby's cold'. Help your child to problem solve, giving them the opportunity to fill in the gap to solve the problem first - we need a _____ (blanket); or modelling the solution 'He's cold so let's get a blanket'.

Cleaning up is an opportunity to help your child build their auditory memory in a fun meaningful way. 'Can you give me the spoon and the duck'.

****Pick one or a few of these tips to focus on each time you play. Repetition is key to building vocabulary - so have fun playing this everyday activity many times this month!**