



Play at Home Guide

Discovery Days



**Songs, Stretches and Sensory Play
For Babies from 2 months to Crawling.**

www.totsplay.co.uk



Welcome to the *Discovery Days* Play at Home Guide

The first few weeks and months of your baby's life are a truly amazing time. There is so much for them to experience and discover, and also for you to learn about them. These really are "Discovery Days" for you both, as you get to know this new little person who has come in to your life and they get to know you, as well as the world they have joined.

The aim of this guide, and indeed the Tots Play programme as a whole, is to help you to make the most of this precious time with your little one, enhancing the joy, wonder and love that these Discovery Days bring.

This guide will introduce a variety of simple activity ideas, songs and information which I hope will encourage and give you inspiration to enjoy special play times with your baby. You will also have the reassurance of knowing that you are helping boost his or her development in a variety of areas.

You may want to get other members of the family involved with the activities so that they can share the Tots Play experience too!

In this guide you will find:

- Ideas for sensory play, and for simple toys to make at home to stimulate your baby's senses and boost brain development.
- A selection of simple songs and nursery rhymes, with actions and movement ideas to go with each one, designed to promote your baby's physical development.
- Extra activities ideas designed to further promote your baby's physical development, brain power and awareness of the world around them, including information on how these different types of activity benefit your baby.

These ideas are designed to be a starting point for your play time together, so mix, match, adapt and build on each one as your baby grows, following your child's interests at each different time.

You will get the most from this guide when it is used in conjunction with the Discovery Days Play at Home Resources Pack. This contains a variety of items to enhance your play times including a CD with the songs described in the guide and sensory resources mentioned in some of the activities. You can get this pack from Tots Play classes or from the [Tots Play Online Store](http://www.totsplay.co.uk) at www.totsplay.co.uk

We would love to hear how you get on with the activities. Please post your comments plus pictures or video of your playtime on our Facebook page www.facebook.com/totsplay.

Happy Playing!

Sensory Play Activities

Babies and young children explore and learn about the world using their whole body and all their senses – much more so than we do as adults.

Sensory play helps to further this exploration process and provides lots of opportunities for learning. The development of each of baby's senses can be encouraged by consciously providing a variety of play experiences designed to stimulate one or more of them. Each of these experiences starts to build connections and pathways in the brain that provide the basis for all future learning.

Sensory play involves using what you have around the house, find while out and about, or can easily make, to provide baby with a range of stimulation for all the senses and give them experiences they may not get through other toys and play things.

Try out the ideas below, letting your baby be the guide as to what interests them during each play session, and adapting and extending each activity to build on their interests as they grow.

Faces in the Mirror

Stimulate vision, introduce emotions and strengthen the bond with your child by making faces in the mirror with them.

You will need:

- A mirror.

How to play:

- Sit so yours and your baby's face is reflected in a mirror. Make eye contact through the reflection.
- Make a variety of facial expressions as baby watches, describing what you are doing,
 - eg I'm sticking out my tongue.
- Encourage your child to copy, can (baby's name) stick out your tongue too?
- Include expressions that are linked with emotions, such as happy or sad faces. Naming these emotions will help your baby start to recognise and understand them better.



Bath Time Sounds

Boost your baby's listening and language skills at bath time by making some fun sounds.

You will need:

- A bath full of water, or you could also play the game with a bowl of water or paddling pool.
- Some bath toys.

How to play:

- Splash the water and encourage your baby to copy. Say the word splash each time the water splashes. Emphasise the shh sound, and vary how loud you say the word depending on how big a splash you make.
- Play the game with some of your baby's bath toys too. Make a duck quack as it splashes, or a boat rev its engine. Use your imagination to bring each one to life, helping your baby to focus on particular sounds and begin to link words, sounds and objects together.
- If you know the sign language for "splash", "bath" or any other associated words you can use those too.



Musical Statues

Help your baby to focus on their sense of hearing and enjoy holding them close, as you move with them in a game of musical statues.

You will need:

- Some music playing, or your singing voice. Try different types and rhythms of music for variety.

How to play:

- Put on some music and dance to it while holding your baby. You might enjoy the songs on the CD that is included in the Play at Home Resources pack that accompanies this guide.
- Stop the music and stand still holding baby close. Put the music on and dance some more, repeating this as many times as you would like.
- The contrast between movement and stillness helps to emphasise the stopping and starting of the music and allows baby to learn using all their senses.



Wardrobe Wonders

Your wardrobe can be a wonderful source of sensory experiences for your baby. Go through and pull out some items for him or her to explore.

You will need:

- A selection of different textured, coloured and patterned fabrics from the clothes in your wardrobe.

How to play

Try some of the following or just be led by what your baby seems most interested in.

- Run soft or silky fabrics over babies face, hands and feet. Let him or her run their hands over anything beaded, embroidered or embellished. Lay clothing with different textures (but no sharp parts) side by side on the floor and roll baby over them.
- A wool jumper, silky top, denim jeans, leather belt etc provide a great way to stimulate baby's sense of touch and introduce concepts such as rough and smooth, and hard and soft.
- Brightly coloured or patterned clothing also help to stimulate baby's vision, and almost any item of clothing can be utilized for an impromptu game of peek-a-boo



Feathers

A feather is a great item to use to stimulate your baby's sense of touch as you enjoy some tickling time together.

You will need:

- A medium sized soft, clean, feather. One is included in the Play at Home Resources pack that accompanies this guide.

How to Play:

- Talk about the different parts of the body that the feather is touching as you tickle your baby with it. This helps to aid body awareness and language skills.
- Move the feather in different shapes or patterns on your baby's skin.
- Tickle with the feather, then stop and ask baby if they would like more tickles. Use sign language for "more" if you know it.



Ball Play

Use a ball to give baby a fun sensory experience while also boosting language development and awareness of the different parts of the body.

You will need:

- A small to medium sized ball.

How to Play:

- With baby sitting or lying in front of you place the ball on your baby's head, make eye contact and say "this is (baby's name)'s head".
- Keeping the ball in contact with your baby all the time start to roll it down his or her body, naming the body parts the ball is touching as it passes them, eg "this is (name)'s nose", "this is (name)'s chest", etc.
- Continue to roll the ball all over the front of the body all the way to the toes and also up and down the arms, then turn baby over or around and do the same over the back of the body for as long as baby enjoys the game.



Ringing Bells

Encourage baby to kick and move their legs plus learn about cause and effect by attaching some bells, or anything that will make a sound when moved, to one of their legs or arms.

You will need:

- One or more bells that can be fastened to baby's clothes or around their ankle or wrist.
- A bell can be found in the Play at Home Resources pack that accompanies this guide, or you could sew individual bells on to one of baby's socks. Alternatively place something near to your baby's foot that will make a sound when he or she kicks it.

How to Play:

- Start by attaching the bell to baby's clothing near to one of his or her ankles or feet.
- Move that foot so the sound can be heard. Talk to your baby about the sounds you can hear. Repeat a few times.
- Now move the other foot and remark that there is no sound. Repeat the movement of each foot a few times, then let your baby explore the movement by themselves to see if they can find the sound.



Lights On, Lights Off

To help your baby understand what can be quite complex concepts, use pairs of opposite actions. It is much easier to grasp the idea of up, for example, when it is linked with down, than it would be on its own. On and off is another simple one to demonstrate and talk about with your baby using light. This is also great for stimulating and highlighting their sense of sight.

You will need:

The main light switch for a room, a lamp or a light up toy, such as the flashing star included in the Play at Home Resources pack that accompanies this guide.

How to Play:

- Find somewhere where you can darken the room to sit with your baby then turn on the main light, lamp or light up toy and say "lights on".
- Turn the light off again so the room is darker and say "lights off".
- Repeat a few times and perhaps with different lights to make it more fun for your baby.



Far and Near

Help baby practice their listening skills using the bell or shaker.

You will need:

- A bell, shaker or other instrument. You will find a bell and a shaker in the sensory resources pack that accompanies this guide.

How to Play:

- Shake the bell, shaker or other instrument close to your baby in front of his or her face.
- Now shake the instrument to one side of your baby, again staying close to them, and then move it to their other side and encourage him or her to look for the sound by turning their head.
- Repeat this game with the instrument further away from your baby, and continue to play, moving it further away and then closer again. See how your baby reacts to the changes in the sound.
- You can play this game using your voice too, calling your baby's name while different distances from them and at different positions in the room. This not only helps your baby's listening skills but also their awareness of the space around them.



Fabric Canopy

This activity is very stimulating for all of your baby's senses, but can also be very soothing and relaxing.

You will need:

- A piece of sheer, lightweight fabric big enough to cover most or all of your baby's body. Baby should be able to see you through the fabric. The scarf from the Play at Home Resource pack that accompanies this guide works well.
- A second person to hold the fabric with you if possible.

How to play:

- Lay your baby on his or her back on a rug or blanket.
- With you and your partner each holding one side of the fabric, hold it horizontally, just above your baby.
- Lower the fabric down so that it comes to rest on your baby's body so that they can feel it all over, then lift the fabric again, and continue to lift and lower at a relaxed pace. You may want to sing or play a lullaby such as Twinkle, twinkle, little star as you play.
- Some babies do not like having their face covered, but using a fabric that is see through allows your baby to have the experience of feeling the sensation of it over their whole body. without losing site of you which helps them to feel more secure.



Peek-a-Boo

A simple game of peek-a-boo is not only great fun but also helps your baby to learn about the concept of object permanence, the fact that things continue to exist even when they can't be seen.

Vary the game by peeking out from behind your hands, from behind an object eg a chair, or by using a piece of light fabric or a scarf, such as the one included in the resource pack that accompanies this guide, to cover yours or baby's face. Encourage baby to "find" you by pulling the fabric off. Try saying "Boo" in a variety of different voices or change the expression on your face each time you uncover it.



Food Play

Food items can provide a great opportunity for sensory exploration, and, as that exploration is likely to include being put in the mouth, they are also safe and inexpensive to use. Allowing young children to explore foods outside of mealtimes can also help them to be less fussy and happier to try new foods as they get older.

You will need:

- A variety of food items. Try cooked and dry pasta, porridge oats, rice, cold mashed potato, custard, dried cereals like corn flakes or cheerios, jelly.
- Plastic cups, spoons etc for tipping, pouring and stirring.

How to play:

- Give baby some of one or more of the foods to play with.
- Either place a small amount on the tray of their high chair for them to discover with their hands, or in the bath or on a messy mat on the floor to explore with their whole body.
- Talk about textures, colours, smell, even taste.
- Next time you play try different food items.



Foil Blanket Play

A foil blanket is a great sensory resource to use with your baby, as it provides stimulation for several senses at the same time.

You will need:

A foil (survival) blanket. One can be found in the Play at Home Resources pack that accompanies this guide.

How to play:

Use the blanket in different ways to highlight the senses.

- Sight - Look at the shiny, reflective surface with your baby to stimulate their vision. Talk about what you can see.
- Sound - Scrunch the blanket between your fingers and show your baby how to do the same to produce a pleasing crinkling sound.
- Touch – let your baby feel the smooth or crumpled up texture of the blanket on different parts of his or her body.

You may also like to try:

➤ Discovery Play

Sit with your baby and let him or her take the blanket in their hands. Watch as he or she discovers what happens when they shake, wave, scrunch and probably try to taste the blanket.

➤ Peek-a-Boo Games

Play peek-a-boo games, hiding you, or your baby behind the blanket then peeking out.

You can also hide objects underneath and help your baby find them again.

These games help babies learn that objects and people still exist even when they can't be seen.

➤ Reaching Out

Lie your baby on his or her back and, with another person if possible, hold on to opposite sides of the blanket and lift and lower it above your baby. Encourage your baby to reach out to try to touch the blanket with hands, feet, or both by lowering it until it is a few centimetres above them.



Treasure Basket Play

Place a variety of objects, designed to stimulate one or more of baby's senses, in a small, shallow basket or container, or on a tray, and sit with your baby as you let him or her examine the different objects. Let your baby be the guide as to which objects are of most interest.

Consider that your little one is likely to want to put the things in their mouth, so ensure none are small enough to be swallowed or have small parts that may come off.

Try the following ideas;

Treasure Basket - Touch.

- Include everyday objects with different textures. Some things to try could be a wooden spoon, a sponge, a sieve, different types of brushes eg paint, pastry, shaving, a pine cone, a shell, different fabrics etc
- Talk with your baby about how each object feels, hard, soft, rough, prickly etc.
- Add or swap around the objects every so often to add interest.

Treasure Basket - Smells

Smell is a strong sense in baby's and important to them as they start to make sense of their surroundings. A treasure basket of objects with interesting smells for your child to experience could include:

- Scented soaps, candles and lotions.
- Natural items such as flowers, herbs and fruits.
- Small containers with food items such as coffee, spices, mints, and cotton balls soaked in essences like vanilla, peppermint or lemon.
- Talk with your baby as they play, commenting on which smells they seem to respond to most, and what the different items are called to build language skills



Sensory Toys to Make

You don't need to spend large amounts of money to provide your little one with valuable, and engaging sensory experiences which will also help boost their development. Try some of these ideas for inexpensive sensory toys to make at home.

Faces Mobile

Babies love to look at faces, and they learn a great deal from them. Not only do they find out who the important people in their life are, they also learn about the feelings and emotions that go along with the different expressions that they see. A faces mobile will provide your baby with all these benefits plus help to stimulate their vision.

You will need:

- Some pictures of family members.
- Some old CD's that you no longer use.
- Some ribbon or string.
- A wire coat hanger or similar item that you can hang things from.

How to make it:

- Attach one end of a piece of ribbon or string to each CD.
- Stick the pictures of family member's faces on to one or both sides of the CD's, covering the ribbon/string.
- Attach the other end of the ribbon/string to the coat hanger.

How to play:

- Hang the mobile above your baby's cot so that they can watch the faces of their loved ones swing and twirl above them as they are lying there.

Ribbon Stick

Stimulate baby's vision and introduce colours with a ribbon stick.

You will need:

- A few lengths of narrow ribbon or thin strips of fabric in different colours. Primary colours, black and white are easiest for baby to see and start to recognise.
- A short length of dowling or a wooden spoon.
- Tape (optional)

How to make it:

- Attach one end of each length of ribbon to the dowling or the handle of the wooden spoon, either by tying them on or using tape (electrical tape works well and comes in different colours to add interest).

How to use it:

- Hold the stick up for your baby so that the long ends of the ribbon dangle down in front of them. Shake it a little to gain their attention.
- For young babies encourage them to reach out for the ribbon or follow it with their eyes as you move it slowly from side to side in front of them.
- Older babies may want to touch and pull the coloured ribbons as well as examine the stick or spoon. Talk about the colours they can see, what the ribbon feels like, how it moves etc as they play.



Shakers

A simple shaker provides lots of opportunity to stimulate your baby's sense of hearing. You are also introducing the concept of cause and effect as your baby learns that he or she can create a sound by moving the shaker.

You will need:

- A small plastic bottle with a screw top lid. (A small drink bottle works well as does a one pint plastic milk carton as it has a small handle, good for tiny fingers. Make sure the bottle is clean and dry before using.)
- Dried peas, rice, lentils, pasta or similar.
- Electrical Tape or similar.
- Stickers, sticky backed plastic (optional).

How to make it:

- Tip the dried peas or rice or whatever you have chosen to use into the bottle until it is about a quarter full.
- Screw the lid on to the bottle tightly, and secure with tape all the way around the lid.
- If you want to you can decorate the bottle with colourful stickers then wrap the bottle in clear, sticky backed plastic to secure them.



How to use it:

- Show baby how to shake the bottle and talk about the sound it makes.
- Vary the game by shaking fast and slow or loudly and softly.
- Give the shaker to your little one and let them work out how to make the sound.
- To develop the activity further, make more bottles filled with different items and talk about the different sounds they make. Let baby play with the different bottles and choose which interest them the most.

Lava Lamp Bottles

This fun, easy to make toy can help to stimulate your baby's visual development.

You will need:

- A small clear plastic bottle with a screw top lid
- Some water
- Oil (normal cooking oil is fine)
- Food colouring
- Glitter (optional)
- Tape

How to make it:

- Fill the bottle about two thirds full with water.
- Add a few drops of food colouring (you can make several and use different colours for each).
- Pour oil into the bottle leaving a small amount of space at the top.
- Add glitter or other small interesting items if you would like to for extra effect.
- Put the lid on the bottle making sure it is well sealed. Put tape round the top for added security. Electrical tape works well.

How to use it:

- Slowly turn the bottle upside down, then the right way up again. Continue to move the bottle in different directions. You could also roll it along the floor. Bubbles of oil, and glitter if you have used any, will move about the bottle creating different shapes and patterns for your baby to watch.
- As you baby gets older he or she will be able to move and shake the bottle themselves - an introduction to cause and effect.



Rolling Book

Encourage crawling as well as language development with a rolling book.

You will need:

- A sturdy tube or round tin (a large poster tube or formula milk tin work well).
- Some brightly coloured paper.
- Some pictures of things your baby is familiar with such as photographs of family members, animals, toys or household items. You could cut pictures from magazines, or do an image search online for suitable pictures.
- Glue or tape.
- Clear, sticky backed plastic.



How to make it:

- Cover the tin or tube with brightly coloured paper.
- Stick the pictures you have cut out on to the tube all the way round it.
- Cover the whole tube with clear sticky backed plastic to stop baby being able to pull the pictures off.

How to play:

- Give it to your baby to play with. Show them how to roll it along the ground and encourage them to crawl after it, once they are at this stage of their development. Talk about the pictures that are on the tube. As they get older ask them to find particular pictures for you, rolling the book along to find them.
- If your child likes this you could make tubes with pictures that relate to a favourite story or nursery rhyme, and tell the story or sing the rhyme as you look at the rolling book together.

Physical Play Activities

Movement is a key element of the Tots Play programme. Practising various types of movement and physical play activities with your baby is a great way to help them learn more about how their body works. These activities will help to boost the process of physical development, as baby progresses from near helpless newborn to independent crawler and beyond.

The play ideas and movements suggested here are influenced by naturally developing patterns of movement, parent and child bonding exercises and yoga practices. The activities have been split to focus on various aspects of development as explained below, and for each one there are a number of activities for your baby and you to try. Many of the activities provide benefits that overlap in to more than one of these areas however, and any time your baby is moving their brain is also active, so do consider these ideas as a starting point and adapt your play times as your baby grows to suit his or her age, stage of development and interests. Always take each activity at your child's pace and never force any of the movements.

Sing along using the words on the song sheets at the end of this pack, use the CD included in the Play at Home Resources pack that accompanies it, or download the music from the Tots Play Online Store, to make your play times even more fun and engaging. Try the actions and movements suggested for each song, along with the additional play activities, to work on different aspects of your baby's development. The instructions that accompany each song often suggests movements that will contribute to your baby's development in more than one of the areas mentioned, as well as providing additional benefits. See the guides provided for each song at the end of this booklet for more details.

Body Awareness and Sensory Stimulation

Babies learn with their whole body and all their senses. The first stages of this are for your baby to gain an awareness of their own body, learn what it can do and start to be able to control its movements. Games and songs that help your baby build greater understanding of their body, how the different parts fit together, move and work are a wonderful way to set the foundation for future learning and understanding of the world around them.

Try the following activities, along with the songs suggested, to help boost your baby's body awareness and stimulate their senses. Note what your baby responds to and how their responses change over time.

Kissy feet

What to do:

- Lay your baby on their back with their feet nearest you.
- Placing your thumbs on the outside of the ankles and wrapping your fingers along the inside of ankles and lower legs, bring the soles of baby's feet together, allowing the knees to drop open.
- Clap the feet together with a steady rhythm.
- Stretch baby's legs towards you to finish.

How your Baby Benefits:

- The sensory nerve endings in the feet are stimulated, helping baby become more aware of how their legs and feet connect to the rest of the body.
- Opens and stretches out the hips to improve flexibility.
- Improves circulation in the legs.

See also Guide for Song: Pat-a-Cake



Rock and Roll

What to do:

- Lay your baby on their back with their feet nearest to you.
- Bring both of baby's hands together above their chest and hold them in one of your hands.
- With other hand bring each foot in turn up into your hands so you have a foot and hand in each of your hands, all held together above baby's chest.
- Keeping the hands and feet together, rock baby from side to side. Start slowly and increase the speed if baby seems happy with this. The head should move with the body, staying aligned with their heart at all times.

How your Baby Benefits:

- This movement stimulates the whole body, massaging the back and internal organs.
- Also good for co-ordination.

See also Guide for Song: Rock-a-babe.



Headstand

What to do:

- Sit with your legs stretched out in front of you. Lay baby on their back on your legs with their head closest to your feet. Place your hands on baby's hips to hold them steady, then bend your knees slowly, up to 45 degrees so that baby's head is lower than their body. Hold for up to 10 seconds then bring your legs back down to the floor and let baby rest for a minute before repeating.
- You may want to start by just bringing your knees up a little way and gradually increasing this as your baby gets used to the sensation. You can also vary the length of time you hold baby in this position, always bringing them down straight away if they show signs that they have had enough.

How your Baby Benefits:

- Inverted positions such as this, stimulate the nervous system and all the senses, heightening your baby's awareness of the world around them, and also helping to develop their sense of balance.
- A fresh blood supply is sent to the brain, boosting brain activity.
- Baby is given a new perspective on their environment which helps to increase learning.



Leg Stretch, Lift and Drop

What to do:

- Lay your baby on their back with their feet nearest to you.
- Holding one of baby's feet in each hand stretch the legs out and lift them as far as is comfortable for your baby.
- Let the feet go, allowing the legs to relax and flop down to the floor.
- Gradually increase the lift until you are also lifting the hips slightly from the floor. Repeat a few times.

How your Baby Benefits:

- Stretching out and putting tension on the muscles of the legs and then releasing that tension, highlights the difference between the feelings of muscles stretching and relaxing. Learning how this feels is the first stage to your baby being able to consciously produce the state of relaxation on their own. This is important for self calming and can help regulate sleep patterns.

See also Guide for Song: Incy Wincy Spider.



Hand Massage

What to do:

- Glide your thumb over the palm of baby's hand, opening out and stretching the fingers. Repeat a few times to cover the whole of the palm and all the fingers.
- Placing your thumb and forefinger either side of each of your baby's fingers in turn, squeeze and roll their finger between yours, working from the base to the tip of each finger.
- Gently stroke over the back of their hand to finish, then repeat all of the above on the other hand.



How your Baby Benefits:

- The massage stimulates the many sensory nerves in the hands, helping to highlight the sense of touch for your baby.
- Young babies often spend much of the time with their hands closed into a fist, so massaging the fingers can help encourage them to stretch those fingers out, improving flexibility and also awareness of the hands in preparation for making more use of them for reaching out, touching and manipulating objects.

See also Guide for Song: Tommy Thumb

Roly Poly

What to do:

- Lay a towel or small sheet on the floor and place your baby so they are lying parallel to the shorter edge.
- Making sure their head is clear of the upper edge of the towel or sheet, start to roll your baby up in it.
- Move slowly and talk to your baby all the time about what is happening, ie "Now we are rolling you on to your tummy, now we are rolling you on to your back – I can see you!"
- After a couple of rolls in one direction unroll baby again then pick them up for a big hug.

How your Baby Benefits:

- The feeling of the towel or sheet provides stimulation for the entire body, heightening awareness of the body as a whole, of the sensations of the rolling action, and of the body's relation to gravity through this movement. This movement also helps with the development of balance.

Using a Beach Ball for Massage and Relaxation

What to do:

- Lie baby on his or her back over the ball with it partially deflated.
- Bring baby's arms above the head and stretch out the spine.
- Gently bounce baby on the ball, move the arms and legs up and down, and side to side.
- Hold baby's hands and pull up a few centimetres, then release. Do this slowly and gently, supporting the head if needed.
- Gently massage baby's hands, feet and face if they enjoy it. You can also place baby over the ball on his or her tummy and massage the back.

Co-ordination

Learning to control and co-ordinate the movements of their body is one of the key things your baby is learning in their first months of life. The activities included in this section, which can be enhanced with the use of the songs suggested, will help boost this process and the confidence your baby has in using his or her body to explore the environment during play. They are also lots of fun!

Diagonal Stretch and Touch

What to do:

- Lay your baby on their back with their feet nearest to you.
- Gently grasp one of their hands and then the foot on the opposite side of their body.
- Lengthen each arm and leg in the opposite direction giving a diagonal stretch. Hold for a few seconds then bring hand and foot together towards each other, to touch if they can, above the centre of your baby's body.
- Repeat a few times then switch sides and stretch in the opposite direction.



How your Baby Benefits:

- Bringing hand and foot from either side of the body together helps to develop your baby's co-ordination and motor skills, boosting brain activity which helps your baby learn to improve the control they have over the movements they make with their body.
- Stretching out to the furthest point of their reach, contrasting with bringing the hands and feet to the centre of the body, helps your baby become more aware of their own body and improves spatial awareness.

Leg Cross and stretch

What to do:

- Lay your baby on their back with their feet nearest to you.
- Holding one of your baby's feet in each of your hands, and keeping their legs straight, cross the legs over each other.
- Uncross the legs and move them apart as far as is comfortable.
- Cross them again, this time with the opposite leg on top.
- Continue to cross and uncross, alternating which leg is on top.



How your Baby Benefits:

- The midline is an invisible vertical line down the middle of the body, splitting it in to a left and a right side. Any time part of one side of the body moves to the other side, for example if you touch your left hand to your right shoulder, or in the case of this activity cross the legs over each other, it is called crossing the midline. This is an important activity to practice as it forces the left and right parts of the brain to communicate, building pathways within the brain that will allow your baby to learn how to do actions that involve co-ordinating the two sides of the body independently, such as crawling, walking and later, writing.
- This exercise also builds muscle tone in the legs, improving strength.

See also Guide for Song: Row, row, row your boat.

Marching Legs

What to do:

- Sit with baby lying on their back in front of you with feet closest to you.
- Hold baby's right foot with your left hand, with thumb on sole of foot and fingers resting on top side of foot. Hold other foot with other hand in the same way.
- Pump baby's knees towards her chest alternating feet.

How your Baby Benefits:

- The alternating action helps baby's co-ordination while toning the legs.
- This activity also strengthens the digestive system and can help relieve constipation.

See also Guide for Song: The Grand Old Duke of York.



Muscle Tone and Strength

As your baby starts to build muscle tone and strength throughout their body they will start to be able to increase the range of movements they can make independently and explore and experience their surroundings in new ways. Try some of the following exercises as well as the movements for the suggested songs to have some fun with your baby while you help build up their strength.

Sole pushes

What to do:

- Lay your baby on their back with their feet closest to you.
- Starting with baby's legs out straight, place the palms of your hands against the soles of baby's feet and push down, gently, but firmly. Release and repeat a few times. If you feel baby push back against your hands increase the pressure slightly in response.

How your Baby Benefits:

- The activity increases muscle tone and strength in legs by providing resistance and also encourages a kicking action.

See also Guide for Song: Pat-a-Cake.



Baby Pull Ups

What to do:

- Start with baby lying on their back in front of you.
- If your baby has good control of their head, hold one of their hands in each of yours and slowly pull them up to a sitting position.
- For younger babies, hold both of their hands in one of yours and as you start to lift bring your other hand behind baby's head to support it as it comes up, again to a sitting position.
- Slowly lower baby back down to the ground. Repeat 2 or 3 times.
- As your baby get stronger, you can continue to pull up to standing if they would like to.

How your Baby Benefits:

- Builds strength in the muscles of the core and upper body.

See also Guide for Song: Pull, Pull, Pull Me Up.



Supported Standing

What to do:

- Sit with your legs out in front of you, and sit your baby sideways on one of your legs, so that their legs dangle towards the floor.
- With one of your hands on baby's chest and the other on their upper back, tilt baby forwards until their feet are flat on the floor, and they are in a standing position. The majority of their weight should be supported by the hand that is across their chest, with the hand on their back there for balance.
- Adjust their position when ready to encourage them to bear some of their weight on their legs. Hold for a few seconds then lower them back down to sit on to your legs.



How your Baby Benefits:

- Bearing weight on the legs helps to strengthen the muscles in legs. This activity also helps improve balance and body awareness.

See also Guide for Song: I'm a little teapot.

Upper and Lower Back Stretches

What to do:

- For upper back stretch: Lie your baby on their front across your lap. Place one hand on the small of their back and press down, gently but firmly. Bring the other hand under baby's chest, close to the chin and slowly raise the chest, keeping the pressure on the base of the back with the other hand. This should just be a small movement, don't lift too high or hold for more than a few seconds. Be guided by your baby as to what feels right for them. Release the stretch and repeat a few times.
- For lower back stretch: Start in the same position as the previous pose, this time hold baby's ankles with one hand and keeping the legs as straight as you can, place the other hand on the upper back just below the shoulder blades. Slowly stretch and lift the legs as far as baby is happy with, but not too high, keeping slight pressure on the upper back. Release and repeat.



How your Baby Benefits:

- These stretches help to strengthen and improve flexibility in the back. This will help your baby with all aspects of the new physical skills they are, or will be, learning in the coming months such as rolling, sitting and crawling. These stretches can also be used as part of your tummy time play, along with the activities described below.

See also Guide for Song: See Saw Marjory Daw.

Bearing Weight on Legs and Arms

What to do:

- Bearing Weight on Legs: Using a beach ball, such as the one included in the sensory resources pack that accompanies this guide, or other similar sized ball, sit baby on the ball, holding his or her hands securely and gently move their whole body forwards and back a few times. When they are comfortable with this then pull further forwards until their feet touch the floor. Let them take their weight on their legs as you pull them up to standing.
- Bearing Weight on Hands: Again using the beach ball or other suitable ball lay baby on his or her tummy over the ball and Roll all the way forward until his or her hands touch the floor. When baby is ready encourage him or her to put weight on their hands, and build up to forwards hand walking, letting the body roll forwards on the ball.



Tummy Time Play

Giving your baby some time playing while on their tummy is also an important way to helping to improve their head control, upper body strength and overall physical development, getting them ready for independent sitting and movement. Just a few minutes on their tummy each day will be enough for your baby to start with. Always keep this play time positive and fun, stopping once your baby is showing signs that they have had enough for that session. Try some of these ideas to help make your tummy time play fun and productive.

One on one

What to do:

- Lie on your back with baby on your chest lying on their stomach. Holding baby securely lie still for a few moments, then rock your whole body from side to side, slowly at first then faster. Gradually slow the rocking down again until you become still. Lie there relaxed for as long as you both would like.
- While in this position you can also lift your head and call your baby's name and talk or sing to them softly. This will encourage your baby to lift his or her head to see you.



How your Baby Benefits:

- This activity helps to improve your baby's balance, body and spatial awareness and is a lovely bonding activity for the two of you. It is also a good way to start tummy time play with your baby, giving them the reassurance of being close to you, while providing encouragement and the incentive to start to lift their head to see you as you talk with them.

Flying leg lift

What to do:

- Starting in the same position as for the activity above, lying on your back, bend your knees and bring them up to a 90 degree angle. Lift your baby so their stomach is resting on your shins and they have a good view of your face. Holding on to your baby securely, bounce your legs up and down, slowly at first, increasing the speed and intensity as your baby likes. You can also rock gently from side to side.
- Talk or sing to your baby as you zoom them through the sky, encouraging them to keep their head lifted to look at you.



How your Baby Benefits:

- This is a great activity for tummy time play and also helps improve baby's spatial awareness. From this position your baby is encouraged to lift their head a little way and keep it steady, slowly building strength in their neck and upper body, with the reward of seeing you and having your full attention.

Rolling Surprise

What to do:

- Lay your baby on his or her back and place a different toy to each side of the body.
- Say "time to roll" and then help or encourage your baby to roll over. Give them, or help them reach for, the toy on the side they have rolled to and let them play with it while on their tummy.
- To keep their attention longer, come down to your baby's level so you are face to face and can play together.
- After a few minutes, help or encourage your baby to roll onto their back and then over the other way to find the other toy.
- You can continue this game for as long as your baby enjoys it, changing the toy each time they roll.

How your Baby Benefits:

- A good way to keep tummy time interesting for your baby and encouraging a rolling action.

More Tummy Time Fun

What to do:

- With both of you lying on the floor facing one another, lift your head and encourage baby to do the same by calling his or her name. Place a rolled up towel or small pillow under his or her chest to give some height and make it easier for baby to be able to lift their head enough to see you when starting out with tummy time play.
- Sit with your legs out in front of you and prop baby up so that their chest is resting on one of your legs. Give them a small toy to play with.
- Using a slightly deflated beach ball, lie your baby over the ball on his or her tummy. Encourage your baby to keep their head lifted as you rock the ball forwards and back, and side to side.
- Once baby is able to lift their head while on their tummy,
 - Place a mirror in front of them so that they can see themselves.
 - Roll a small ball towards them
 - Rock baby all the way forward until his or her hands touch the floor. Place a toy in front for baby to reach out for and pick up.
 - Shake a rattle or instrument, such as the shaker included in the sensory resources pack that accompanies this guide, above them and to the sides to encourage them to look up and from side to side.



Stretching and Flexibility

Doing stretches with your baby will help improve their overall muscle tone and flexibility, which in turn will help with all the other activities we have talked about, particularly the strengthening exercises. There are a few suggestions here, along with songs to accompany them, but you may want to add other stretches of your own. Remember to go at your baby's pace, never forcing any of the stretches or movements but always staying with what's comfortable. You will be able to build up the range of movement and number or repetitions that your baby can manage over time.

Circling with Legs and Arms

What to do:

- For the legs – With your baby either lying on their back or sitting up in your lap, hold one of baby's thighs. If baby is lying down your fingers should be in on top of the leg and thumb underneath, if sitting up this will be the other way around. Gently lift the leg, keeping your other hand on the other leg to keep it still and supported. Move the first leg in small circles with the movement starting at the hip. Circle a few times in one direction and then in the opposite direction before repeating the movements with the other leg.
- For the arms – Again this can be done with baby either lying or sitting. Take hold of each of your baby's hands and move the arm in a circular motion. The movement should come from the shoulder. Make the circles as big as your baby is comfortable with. Circle a few times in one direction then reverse the direction and repeat the movement.

How your Baby Benefits:

- Improves flexibility of the hip and shoulder joints and muscle tone in the arms and legs preparing the body for independent movement.

See also Guide for Song: Round and Round the Garden.



Hip Stretches

What to do:

- Lay your baby on their back and hold on to both of their feet. Bring the soles of the feet together so that the knees drop open and gently push them in towards the body. Release and repeat 2 or 3 times. Once you have finished this pose, hold baby's ankles and bring them together, then draw them slightly towards you.

How your Baby Benefits:

- This stretch helps to improve the suppleness of hip joints and strengthen the legs.

See also Guide for Song: Pat-a-Cake.



Knee Press

What to do:

- Lay your baby on their back with feet closest to you and slide your thumbs under your baby's uppermost thighs, resting your fingers loosely on top of the thighs. You can also hold on to their feet if your baby prefers this.
- Slowly lift your baby's knees and press them in towards chest as far as is comfortable. Hold the knees there for 3-10 seconds.
- Slowly lower the legs down keeping hands cupped around them. Repeat a few times.

How your Baby Benefits:

- This movement builds strength in the legs, improves flexibility of the knee and hip joints and can also help aid digestion, in particular easing trapped wind and constipation.

See also Guide for Song: Hide Away.



Vestibular Stimulation

The vestibular system is a system of the body, linked closely with the inner ear, which co-ordinates information from the senses, the bones and the muscles relating to movement and the position on our body in space, and relays them to the brain. This information allows us to balance, co-ordinate our movements and maintain focus while moving. Certain types of movement stimulate the vestibular system and help it to develop and function effectively. These movements can, at different times, help to soothe an unsettled baby (you may naturally rock or walk around with your baby), or provide stimulation for those wanting to play and interact. Try some of the movement activities below, along with the songs suggested, to provide vestibular stimulation, and lots of fun, for your baby and you.

Spinning

What to do:

- Stand up and hold your baby securely, facing towards you, either against your chest or just out in front of you. Spin yourself around on the spot, slowly at first then faster if your baby likes it. Stop after a few spins and go the other way. Stop if you feel dizzy at any point.

How your Baby Benefits:

- A spinning action stimulates the vestibular system as described above and can help to soothe your baby when they are upset and need support to become calm. Often the faster the spin the more effective it is for calming, but always be guided by your baby as to the speed and intensity of movement they prefer.

See also Guide for Song: The Wheels on the Bus



Mini Lift and Drop

What to do:

- Stand up and support your baby with their back against your chest. Hold them with one hand under their bottom and the other across their chest, supporting the head under the chin if necessary. Lift your baby a little way then slowly then drop them down to the starting position a little bit faster. Repeat a few times, increasing the height of the height of the lift and the speed of the drop as your baby likes.

How your Baby Benefits:

- Stimulating for the vestibular system and helps develop spatial awareness.

See also Guide for Song: 3 Little Monkeys.



Knee Bend Drop

What to do:

- Hold your baby in the same position as for the mini drop, but this time stand with your legs wider than hip distance apart, toes turned out slightly.
- Keeping baby supported against you, and making sure their head stays in line with their body. Keep your back straight and bend your knees, dropping quite quickly in to a wide squat position. Stay there for a few seconds then return to the starting position. Repeat a few times.

How your Baby Benefits:

- This is another movement that can soothe a baby who is fussy or upset, as well as stimulating the vestibular system.

See also Guide for Song: 3 Little Monkeys.



Side Swing

What to do:

- Stand up and support your baby with one hand under their bottom and the other behind the neck and shoulders, so they are laying across your forearm. Hold the upper arm furthest from you between your thumb and forefinger. Support the head as needed. From this position start to rock baby from side to side, then increase to a swing. If baby enjoys this progress to bigger, wider swings.

How your Baby Benefits:

- Stimulating for the vestibular system. Also promotes spatial awareness and balance.

See also Guide for Song: Miss Polly had a Dolly.



Balance

Babies have no sense of balance when they are born. It is another thing learned over those first few months by the brain recording information from the movements of the body, allowing it to feel and gradually understand what it is like to be in and out of balance. All movement contributes to this but especially spins, rolling, inverted positions and movements that stimulate the vestibular system as described above. Once your baby has developed a good level of head control you can also try the exercise below to develop the sense of balance even further. A beach ball, such as the one found in the sensory resources pack that complements this guide, or an exercise ball are also great tools for working on balance with your baby.

Baby Balance

What to do:

- Sit with your legs out in front of you, and hold your baby in a sitting position on your knees facing towards you.
- Holding your baby securely, raise your knees, lifting baby up. Keep your feet flat on the floor.
- While in this position, gradually loosen your hold on baby, keeping your hands in place. Your baby is now having to do some of the work of holding their head steady and keeping themselves balanced. Catch and bring your baby back to the balance point as needed.
- The more you practice this, the longer baby will be able to stay balanced as his or her neck and back muscles strengthen and sense of balance improves.



How your Baby Benefits:

- A sense of balance is the foundation needed for the development of physical skills such as independent sitting, crawling and walking.

See also Guide for Song: Humpty Dumpty

Beach Ball Balance

What to do:

- Sit baby on top of the ball, and holding them securely, rock the ball in different directions.

How your Baby Benefits:

- This will help to strengthen baby's core muscles as they naturally move to regain balance.

Spatial Awareness

Spatial awareness allows your baby to understand their location and the location of objects in relation to their own body. In general, children naturally develop spatial awareness as they explore the world and engage in play, but as always you can help with this process with movements and games such as those suggested here. Don't forget to use the songs to make your play times even more fun.

Standing Jumps

What to do:

- Hold your baby in a supported standing position, facing towards you, with your hands at each side of their rib cage. Bring your fingers round to support your baby's head if needed. Lift baby a little way off the ground, then return to the starting position, letting the feet touch the ground. Repeat this a few times, varying the height of the lift but always making sure the feet return to touch the ground each time.

How your Baby Benefits:

- The movement and the feeling of their feet touching and then coming away from the ground helps to improve your baby's awareness of the space around them, and of the feeling of gravity acting on their body.

See also Guide for Song: Little Green Frogs.



Depth and Distance

What to do:

- While seated or standing, hold your baby facing towards you, supporting them at each side of their rib cage.
- Extend your arms until they are straight out in front of you, moving your baby away from you, then bend your arms to bring them closer to you again. Repeat a few times.

How your Baby Benefits:

- This movement improves spatial awareness, particularly around depth and distance, and also stimulates the vestibular system.

See also Guide for Song: The Wheels on the bus.



“Whizzing” Side to Side

What to do:

- Sit your baby on your lap, facing towards you, with his or her legs around your waist, one at either side of your body.
- Holding your baby securely either side of their rib cage and supporting their head if needed, twist your body from one side to the other moving your baby with you in a “whizzing” motion.
- Repeat the action a few times, starting slowly then get faster once your baby is comfortable with the movement. Make sure you keep eye contact all the way through the activity.

How your Baby Benefits:

- This activity sends sensory messages to the brain about baby’s position in space, how to move their eyes while changing positions, the muscles needed to keep the body in different positions, and it is also stimulating for speech and the vestibular system.

Using Music and Rhymes to Increase Learning

All these activities can be enhanced with the use of music and rhymes, so put on the CD or mp3 tracks that you can get to accompany this guide if you would like to and use the song sheets that follow to give each activity a new perspective. Your baby thinks that your voice is the most wonderful in the world, so don’t be shy, sing along and enjoy these Discovery Days with your baby!

Tots Play Welcome Song

Let's discover, let's have fun, with all our friends today.
Clap your hands and stamp your feet, and now we're on our way.
Stretch your arms way up high, bring them way down low.
Laugh and smile let's play awhile, we're ready now, let's go!

Actions and Movements

- Sit with your legs outstretched and have your child sitting on your lap or sitting independently to do the movements.
- Start by tapping both hands on the knees with a nice steady beat in time with the music.
- Follow along with the actions as described in the song, clapping, tapping, stretching and smiling.
- Finish off by bringing the hands up high above the head as you shout "let's go!"



Developmental Benefits

- Simple movements and stretches like these are an ideal way to help your child "warm up" ready for more play time fun.
- Repetition of activities helps strengthen the pathways in the brain making learning easier and more rapid. Recognising familiar songs and activities gives a child confidence in themselves and their ability and more likely to both join in with the familiar activity and be willing to try new things.
- This song is sung at the start of each Tots Play class so that the children come to recognise it feel confident to join in quickly.

Row, Row, Row Your Boat

Row, row, row your boat,
Gently down the stream,
Merrily, merrily, merrily, merrily,
Life is but a dream.

Row, row, row your boat,
Gently down the stream,
If you see a crocodile,
Don't forget to scream!

Actions and Movements

- With baby lying down on his or her back, take one foot in each of your hands. Keeping baby's legs straight, cross them over each other as you start to sing the song.
- Uncross the legs and move them apart as far as is comfortable.
- Cross them again, this time with the opposite leg on top. Continue to cross and uncross, alternating which leg is on top. Match the movements to the rhythm of the song.
- At the end of the last line of the song, wave both baby's legs in the air and give a scream as if you have seen the crocodile!



Developmental Benefits

- Exercising the legs builds muscle tone.
- Crossing the midline of the body (invisible line that divides the body into its left and right sides) by moving the legs across each other, boosts brain activity and co-ordination.
- Introducing rhythm, by co-ordinating music and actions.
- Promotes bonding and interaction through eye contact and touch while singing.

Rock-a-Babe

Rock a babe from side to side, rock a babe from side to side,
Rock a babe from side to side, and over we go.

Stroke a babe from head to toe, stroke a babe from head to toe,
Stroke a babe from head to toe, and over we go.

Rock a babe from side to side, rock a babe from side to side,
Rock a babe from side to side, and up we go.

Actions and Movements

- Sit in front of baby as they lie on their back. Bring baby's hands, and then their feet to meet together in front of their body and hold them there.
- From this position, gently rock baby from side to side in time with the music.
- On the line "and over we go" release the legs down and roll baby over on to their tummy.
- Starting at the head, use both hands to stroke all the way down the back of baby's body on each repetition of the line "stroke a babe from head to toe".
- Roll baby over on to their back again, and bring their hands and feet together to rock them for the last verse.
- On the line "up we go" release baby's feet and use their hands to pull them up to a sitting position.



Developmental Benefits

- The rocking and stroking actions provide a nice massage for the back, boosting sensory awareness and co-ordination.
- Movement creates activity in the brain and helps develop spatial awareness.
- Introduces rhythm, by co-ordinating music and actions.
- Repetition and rhyme and boost language development.

Humpty Dumpty

Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall,
Humpty Dumpty had a great fall,
All the king's horses and all the king's men,
Couldn't put Humpty together again.

Actions and Movements

- Sit with your legs stretched out in front of you and sit baby on your knees facing towards you. Holding baby securely, supporting the head if needed, raise your knees, lifting baby up. Keep your feet flat on the floor.
- If baby is strong enough to keep their head steady in this position you may want to work on their sense of balance by gradually loosening your hold on baby, while still keeping your hands in place. Baby is now having to do some of the work of keeping themselves balanced. Catch and rebalance baby as needed.
- On the words, "had a great fall", tighten your hold on your baby and drop your knees down to the ground.
- Bounce baby on your knees to the rhythm of the music for the remainder of the song.



Developmental Benefits

- Develops and improves baby's sense of balance.
- Builds strength in the neck and back muscles which will help with head control, sitting and movement.
- Introduces rhythm, by co-ordinating music and actions.
- Promotes bonding and interaction through eye contact and touch while singing.

Incy Wincy Spider

Incy Wincy spider climbed up the water spout.
Down came the rain and washed the spider out.
Out came the sunshine and dried up all the rain.
So Incy Wincy spider climbed up the spout again.

Actions and Movements

- Start with baby lying on his or her back, feet closest to you. Place both of your hands under baby's bottom.
- Pretend your fingers are Incy Wincy spider and run them up the back of baby's legs to the ankles, lifting the legs and tickling as you go.
- When you reach baby's ankles, hold on to them and stretch the legs. Then let go, allowing the legs to relax and flop down to the floor.
- Repeat these actions for each line of the song, gradually increasing the lift until you are also lifting the hips slightly off the ground, and stretching the legs as much as baby will allow.



Developmental Benefits

- Allows baby to experience the difference between muscles stretching and relaxing. This is an important step in learning how to relax and calm themselves.
- Builds muscle tone in the legs, and abdominal area.
- Introduces rhythm, by co-ordinating music and actions.
- Repetition and rhyme and boost language development.
- Promotes bonding and interaction through eye contact and touch while singing.

Pull, Pull, Pull Me Up

Pull, pull, pull me up, slowly as we go,
Down, down, down again, makes me strong like so.

Actions and Movements

- Sit with baby lying on their back in front of you with their feet closest to you.
- Holding baby's hands in yours, slowly pull them up to a sitting position. Pause, then slowly lower back down again. For older babies they may like to come all the way up to standing.
- Baby's head should stay in line with their body during these movements. If baby does not yet have full control of their head, hold both of their hands in one of yours and bring your other hand behind their head to support it, keeping it aligned with the body as you lift and lower baby through the song.



Developmental Benefits

- Repetition of these slow, controlled movements improves core and upper body strength.
- Introduces rhythm, by co-ordinating music and actions.
- Repetition and rhyme and boost language development.
- Promotes bonding and interaction through eye contact, facial expressions and touch while singing.

The Grand Old Duke of York

Oh, the grand old Duke of York
He had ten thousand men
He marched them up to the top of the hill
And he marched them down again
And when they were up, they were up
And when they were down they were down
And when they were only half way up
They were neither up nor down.

Actions and Movements

- Start with baby lying on his or her back with legs closest to you. With your fingers on top and thumb underneath hold one of baby's thighs in each hand.
- On the parts of the song where the Duke is marching "up the hill" lift the thighs so that the hips are raised off the ground. Don't lift too high and make sure that the shoulders, neck and head stay flat on the floor. When the Duke marches "down again" during the song, lower the hips down to the starting position.
- Continue to lift and lower the hips on the "ups" and "downs" in the song.
- During the instrumental part of the song you can "march" baby's legs, by holding one of baby's legs in each hand, close to the ankle, and alternately bending each leg at the knee and pressing it in towards the body, keeping the other leg straight.



Developmental Benefits

- Builds strength and muscle tone in the legs and abdomen.
- Stimulates the digestive system, which helps to aid digestion and can alleviate discomfort in this area due to trapped wind, constipation etc.
- Introduces rhythm, by co-ordinating music and actions.

The Wheels on the Bus

The wheels on the bus go round and round, round and round,
round and round.

The wheels on the bus go round and round, all day long.

The wipers on the bus go swish, swish swish.....

The horn on the bus goes beep, beep, beep.....

The conductor on the bus says move along please.....

The people on the bus go up and down.....

The babies on the bus are fast asleep.....

The wheels on the bus go round and round.....All day long.

Actions and Movements

- Stand, and hold baby in an upright position in front of you, facing towards you. For the first and last verse of the song, where the "Wheels go round and round" hold baby securely and spin around on the spot.
- For the "wipers on the bus" hold baby out in front of you and tilt him or her from side to side in a "swishing" motion.
- To "beep the horn" lift and lower baby in front of you with small, punchy movements for each "beep".
- For the "Conductor" extend your arms out in front of you, moving baby away from and then back towards you on each "move along please".
- For the next verse lift baby high in the air on the word "Up" and lower towards the ground on the word "down".
- Cuddle and rock baby as if they were sleeping for "the babies on the bus are fast asleep".
- Spin around, as before, holding baby in front of you again to be the "Wheels" going round for the final verse.



Developmental Benefits

- The various movements in the song stimulate and strengthen baby's vestibular system and co-ordination.
- Movement creates activity in the brain and helps develop spatial awareness.
- Introduces rhythm, by co-ordinating music and actions.
- Promotes bonding and interaction through eye contact, facial expressions and touch while singing.

Miss Polly had a Dolly

Miss Polly had a dolly who was sick, sick, sick,
So she called for the doctor to come quick, quick, quick.

The doctor came with his bag and his hat
and he knocked on the door with a rat-a-tat-tat.

He looked at the dolly and he shook his head,
He said "Miss Polly put her straight to bed"

He wrote on a paper for a pill, pill, pill,
"I'll be back in the morning yes I will, will, will."

Actions and Movements

- Stand up and hold baby slightly in front of you. Place one of your hands under his or her bottom, and the other arm behind the neck and shoulders, so that baby is lying back on to it. Support the head if needed. Hold the upper arm furthest from you between your thumb and index finger for support.
- From this position start to rock baby from side to side, then increase to a swing.
- If baby enjoys this you can progress to bigger, wider swings, lifting high and dipping down low. Keep your swings in time with the music.
- During the instrumental part of the song, turn baby round to face the opposite direction and repeat the swinging action in this position for the remainder of the song.



Developmental Benefits

- This type of movement stimulates the vestibular system, which co-ordinates information from all the senses and is closely related to balance and movement.
- Vestibular stimulation can help calm an over stimulated or fussy baby.
- Movement creates activity in the brain and helps develop spatial awareness.
- Introduces rhythm, by co-ordinating music and actions.
- Promotes bonding and interaction through eye contact and touch while singing.

Pat-a-Cake

Pat-a-cake, pat-a-cake, baker's man,
Bake me a cake as fast as you can.
Pat it and prick it and mark it with B,
And put it in the oven for baby and me.

Actions and Movements

- Start with baby lying on his or her back with feet closest to you. Taking one of baby's feet in each of your hands bring the soles of the feet together, allowing the knees to drop open to each side. Move the feet apart slightly, then tap together. Repeat this action in time with the music.
- Bring the soles of baby's feet together again and hold them there as you gently push the feet in towards the body. Release and repeat 2 or 3 times.
- Place the palms of your hands against the soles of baby's feet and push down, gently, but firmly. Release and repeat a few times. If you feel baby push back against your hands increase the pressure slightly in response.
- Start with the first action again and repeat each one in turn until the end of the song.



Developmental Benefits

- Bringing the soles of the feet together stimulates the sensory nerves in the feet.
- The movements help maintain or improve the flexibility of the hip joints, build strength in the muscles of the legs and encourage a kicking action.
- Introduces rhythm, by co-ordinating music and actions.
- Repetition and rhyme and boost language development.
- Promotes bonding and interaction through eye contact, facial expressions and touch while singing.

Round and Round the Garden

Round and round the garden, like a teddy bear,
One step, two steps, tickle you under there.
When I see your smiling face laughter fills the air,
One step, two steps, tickle you under there.

Actions and Movements

- Start with baby lying on his or her back with feet closest to you. Hold one of baby's thighs, with one hand. Have your fingers on top and thumb underneath the leg.
- Gently lift the leg and move it in small circles with the movement starting at the hip. Continue this movement as you sing the first two lines of the song. Give baby's feet a tickle on the words "tickle you under there".
- Circle the leg in the opposite direction during the last two lines of the song, again tickling the toes at the end.
- Repeat the whole song, this time working with baby's other leg.



Developmental Benefits

- Improves flexibility of the hip joints.
- Builds muscle tone in the legs.
- Introduces rhythm, by co-ordinating music and actions.
- Promotes bonding and interaction through eye contact and touch while singing.

See Saw Marjorie Daw

See saw, Marjorie daw,
Jonnie shall have a new master.
He shall have but a penny a day,
Because he can't work any faster.

Actions and Movements

- There are two stretches for the back that you can try to this song, one for the upper and one for the lower back. For each one start by laying baby on their front across your lap.
- Upper Back Stretch - Place one hand on the small of baby's back and press down, gently but firmly. Bring the other hand under the chest, close to the chin and slowly raise the chest, keeping the pressure on the base of the back with the other hand.
- Hold for a few seconds then release, and lower baby back down. Repeat these actions in time with the song, creating a rocking movement.
- Lower Back Stretch - Hold both baby's ankles with one hand, and place the other hand on the upper back, just below the shoulder blades.
- Slowly stretch and lift the legs, keeping slight pressure on the upper back, creating a slight curve in the back. Hold for a few seconds, then release the legs down. Repeat these actions in time with the song, creating a rocking movement.



Developmental Benefits

- Back stretches stimulate the digestive system, develop the breathing capacity and strengthen the back.
- Spending time on their tummy encourages babies to lift their head, improving head control and strengthening the muscles in the neck and shoulders necessary for sitting and later crawling and walking.

I'm a Little Teapot

I'm a little teapot, short and stout,
Here's my handle, here's my spout.
When I see the tea cups hear me shout,
Tip me up and pour me out.

Actions and Movements

- Sit with your legs out straight in front of you. Sit baby on one of your legs, facing sideways so that baby's legs hang down towards the ground. Support baby in this position with one hand on their chest and the other on their back.
- Gently rock baby so that their body is tipping forwards then backwards with the rhythm of the music.
- Gradually increase the range of movement by leaving a gap between your two hands, so that baby moves from one hand to the other as you rock them.
- On the line "tip me up and pour me out" bring baby forward so that their feet touch the floor and you are supporting them in a standing position.
- Repeat these movements on the same side then turn baby around and sit them on your other leg and do all the movements again on this side.



Developmental Benefits

- Strengthens muscles in the neck and back while developing balance and co-ordination.
- Builds strength in the lower body while in the supporting standing position.
- Movement creates activity in the brain and helps develop spatial awareness.
- Introduces rhythm, by co-ordinating music and actions.

3 Little Monkeys

3 little monkeys, bouncing on the bed,
One fell off and bumped his head,
Mummy called the doctor and the doctor said,
“No more monkeys bouncing on the bed”.
2 little monkeys....
1 little monkey....
No little monkeys bouncing on the bed....
they’re all bouncing on the sofa instead!

Actions and Movements

- Stand with your feet just wider than shoulder width apart. Holding baby with their back against your chest, support them with one hand across their chest and the other under their bottom.
- Bounce baby up and down in front of you during the line "3 little monkeys bouncing on the bed"
- On the line "One fell off..." keeping your back straight and baby held securely against your chest, bend your knees in one quick movement in to a wide squat, dropping you and baby downwards, then stand up straight again.
- Turn around on the spot in one direction, then the other, before bouncing baby up and down in front of you again for the last line of the song. Repeat for remaining verses.



Developmental Benefits

- Lifts, drops and spins stimulate the vestibular system, helping baby to make sense of messages from the eyes, ears and limbs relating to balance and movement.
- The quick dropping motion can help calm a baby who is fussy or unsettled.
- Strengthens muscles in the neck and back improving head control and balance.
- Movement creates activity in the brain and helps develop spatial awareness.
- Introduces rhythm, by co-ordinating music and actions.

Little Green Frogs

Jump, jump went the little green frogs one day,
Jump, jump went the little green frogs,
Jump, jump went the little green frogs one day,
and their eyes went blink, blink, blink.

Jump, jump went the little green frogs one day,
...and their tongues went bleugh, bleugh, bleugh.
...and their mummy's went kiss, kiss, kiss.
...and we all shout out hoorav. hoorav!

Actions and Movements

- Sit comfortably and hold baby in a standing position in front of you, facing towards you. Support with your hands either side of his or her ribcage.
- On the first "jump" of each line of the song, lift baby a little way off the ground.
- On the second "jump" lift a little higher. Then lower to the ground during the rest of the line.
- Make eye contact with your baby and do the actions described in the song on the last line of each verse, ie blink your eyes, stick out your tongue and give baby lots of kisses.
- On the final verse of the song, lift baby high in the air for the last hoorav!



Developmental Benefits

- Strengthens muscles in the neck and back while developing balance and co-ordination.
- Movement creates activity in the brain and helps develop spatial awareness.
- Repetition and rhyme and boost language development.
- Promotes bonding and interaction through eye contact, facial expressions and touch while singing.

Hide Away

Hide away, where did you go?
I can find you – peekaboo.
It's our favourite game to play,
Peekaboo all through the day.
Peekaboo, peekaboo, I can see you.
Peekaboo, peekaboo, I can see you.

Actions and Movements

- Sit in front of your baby and lie them down on their back with their feet closest to you.
- Holding both baby's legs at the ankles bend their knees and press them in towards baby's body. As you do this, duck down to hide behind the raised legs.
- On the line, "I can find you – peekaboo" stretch the legs out, lean forwards and make eye contact with your baby.
- Continue this movement, pressing the legs in towards the body then stretching them out to "peek" at your baby as you sing the word peekaboo.



Developmental Benefits

- Pressing the knees in towards the body aids digestion and can system provide relief from trapped wind or constipation.
- Builds muscle tone in the legs and abdomen.
- Promotes bonding and interaction through eye contact, facial expressions and touch while singing.
- Help baby to learn that people and objects still exist, even when they can't be seen.
- Introduces rhythm, by co-ordinating music and actions.

Tommy Thumb

Tommy Thumb, Tommy Thumb, where are you?

Here I am, here I am, how do you do?

Peter Pointer, Peter Pointer, where are you?

Here I am, here I am, how do you do?

Toby Tall, Toby Tall, where are you?

Here I am, here I am, how do you do?

Ruby Ring, Ruby Ring, where are you?

Here I am, here I am, how do you do?

Baby Small, Baby Small, where are you?

Here I am, here I am, how do you do?

Actions and Movements

- Sit with baby either sitting on your lap or lying down. You should be able to reach his or her hands easily in order to massage the fingers through the song.
- Hold baby's thumb between your thumb and index finger. Squeeze and roll the thumb in between them, working from the base to the tip.
- Holding the tip of the thumb move it around in a circle, first in one direction, then the other on the words "here I am, here I am".
- On the words "how do you do", bend and straighten the thumb at the knuckle a few times.
- Repeat the squeeze and roll, circling and bending actions for the other fingers as they are mentioned in the song.
- When you have done one hand repeat on the other one.



Developmental Benefits

- Improving the flexibility of the joints in the fingers and hands.
- Stimulating the sensory nerves in the fingers.
- Encouraging the fingers to stretch and open out.
- Introducing rhythm, by co-ordinating music and actions.
- Bonding and interaction through eye contact and touch while singing.

Discovery Days Play at Home Resources Pack

Get the most out of this guide by using it in conjunction with the Discovery Days Resources Pack. Each pack includes a beach ball, foil blanket, scarf, feather, clip on bell and light up soft star as well as a CD with all the songs referred to in the guide.

You can get the pack from your local class leader or order directly from the [Tots Play Online Store](#), where we also stock a wide range of other sensory resources, instruments and toys.

List of Tracks on the Discovery Days CD or Download

(available separately or as part of the Play at Home Pack)

- 1) Welcome Song
- 2) Warm up music
- 3) Row your Boat
- 4) Rock-a-babe
- 5) Humpty Dumpty
- 6) Incy Wincy Spider
- 7) Pull me up
- 8) Grand Old Duke of York
- 9) Wheels on the Bus
- 10) Miss Polly has a Dolly
- 11) Pat-a-cake
- 12) Round and round the garden
- 13) See Saw Marjory Daw
- 14) I'm a Little Teapot
- 15) 3 Little Monkeys
- 16) Little Green Frogs
- 17) Hide Away
- 18) Tommy Thumb
- 19) Twinkle, twinkle
- 20) Bubbles

Thank You for Playing!

I hope you have enjoyed the activities in the Tots Play Discovery Days Guide, and that you will continue to use them to help boost your baby's development during lots more fun play times together.

We would love to hear your comments about your experience with this Activity Guide so please get in touch at info@totsplay.co.uk or on Facebook at www.facebook.com/totsplay

As your baby grows and becomes more active you may also like to try the activities in the follow on guide – **Social Climbers – Music, Movement and Play for Crawlers and Walkers**, available at www.totsplay.co.uk or from your local Tots Play class leader.

To find out more about Tots Play classes in your area, or how you can set up your own classes through our franchise programme please visit www.totsplay.co.uk.