



9-18 months

# Connecting through play

9-18 Months

As your baby grows they are learning to explore their environment. Before they set off to explore the world they need a sense that you, their carer, supports that exploration. However they are caught between the need to explore and the need to stay closely attached to their carers. When they feel safe and secure, their exploration can begin.

## So how can you help?

- Support their exploration through role modelling, praise and encouragement .
- Delight in them – love them for who they are not what they are doing
- Enjoy with them – be attentive, available and share these moments
- Help them – provide just enough help without taking over
- Watch over them – for signs of danger/safety hazards
- When they are finished exploring, welcome them back and help them manage their feelings.

## Being present for your child

Opportunities for connecting through play can occur regularly throughout the day. Notice when your child is ready for interaction and try to be present and available. If they are not ready it may be a sign that they are over stimulated and need help to regain a sense of emotional balance before they can re-engage. Go slow and be patient. Understanding your child's needs during play can enhance not only the play experience but more importantly your relationship.

## Activities for your baby

There are lots of enjoyable activities you can do with your baby. The following list are just a few ideas. Remember you are their favourite and most educational plaything. Being willing to and taking the time to follow your baby's lead, will provide you with many new experiences and insights into your baby's world. Activities that give your baby a sense of their body; provide links between cause and effect; encourage physical skills development and provide a rich environment of language and music are all ideal.

### Around 9-12 months

- Once your baby has started to crawl make a simple obstacle course
- Make bathtime fun with some simple bath toys
- Wave bye-bye when leaving a room or blowing a kiss
- Hide a toy and encourage your baby to find it
- Give your baby a saucepan and a wooden spoon to make music
- Give a block for each hand and show how to bang together
- Give different shaped objects to be put into a lid with corresponding holes
- Place objects in a container for tipping out
- Clap when your baby does something exciting or successful. They will start to clap as well.

## Around 12-18 months

- Help your baby to explore new toys. Show her/him how the toy can be turned, rolled or shaken
- Play “hide and seek” with objects of different sizes
- Make lots of animal noises when reading a book or if you see an animal
- Once your baby is walking, the park is always fun to explore
- Baby will have favourite books and want them read again and again
- They will enjoy trying to build a tower of blocks even though rarely successful
- They will enjoy water play especially in summer, pouring water from one container to another
- By now they can hold a crayon and scribble
- Tearing and scrunching paper is always fun at this age
- Use a mirror to make funny faces and encourage your baby to join in
- If you have not started a bed time ritual now is a good time to start

## Toys

Babies learn and grow rapidly in their first year, and toys can help to stimulate their development. Your baby does not need a lot of toys. The important element is your

active involvement in your baby's play – encouraging, turn taking, following their lead and repositioning the toy or your baby.

When buying or being given toys check they are safe by making sure they have no moveable parts.

## Music

Music is not only a fun activity to enjoy with your baby, but it also stimulates one of your baby's important senses, hearing. As your baby grows, they enjoy making music by banging on a saucepan with a wooden spoon or banging on a toy drum. Start to sing nursery rhymes, doing the actions. Move to the rhythm of the music while holding your baby.



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