

Mobility

- For pre schoolers

Being active takes brain and muscle power it plays an important part in your baby's development, as they grow, you can help them by playing with them and helping them make new movements and explore their surroundings. Most of all you can help them by making sure they can move around freely, easily and safely.

Once your child can walk without holding on to something try to keep them active throughout the day and encourage their enjoyment of motor activities.

Ideas for active play



Cuddles and wiggles

Even very little babies can be active! Getting them out of their cot or rocker for a cuddle or a game of peek-a-boo is a great way of getting them to interact and move their muscles. They also love to kick their legs and wiggle about so make sure they have enough space when they lie down.

Singing and talking

Babies love being sung or talked to, and spending time with your baby is an important part of their development. So sing a song or nursery rhyme, clap their hands or rock them to the rhythm. The more you do this the quicker and better your child will grasp and understand language and there for begin speaking themselves. The use of your voice by talking to the child and getting their attention is great whilst doing activities to get them to move and change positions.

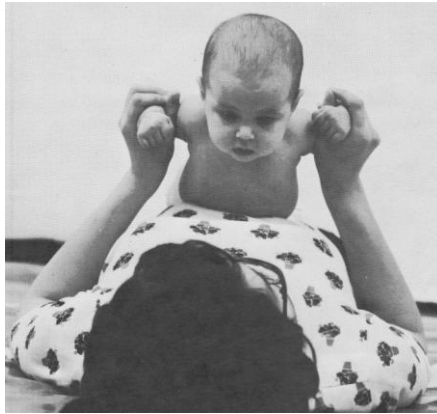
Playing

Whether it's with toys, mum, dad, or friends, any form of play helps babies to interact, even when they are tiny. Reaching for, pulling and pushing toys or other objects are all simple ways to stimulate your baby and improve their coordination. Your child will respond well to shiny, noisy and brightly coloured toys.

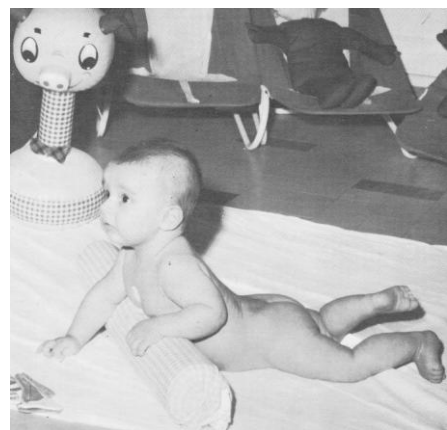
Tummy time

Putting babies on their tummies gives them a different view of the world! They'll learn to roll over, and will start to try to crawl towards the things that catch their eye. This will really help them strengthen the muscles in their back and neck and eventually you will begin to see them pushing up through their arms, which is great in preparing them for crawling.

Games having the child playing on their tummy on top of your tummy whilst your lying on your back are great for getting the child to lift their head and make eye contact. Keeping vocal and encouraging is really important.

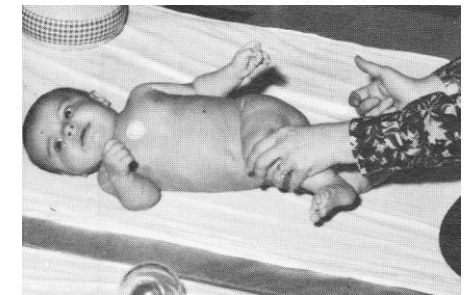
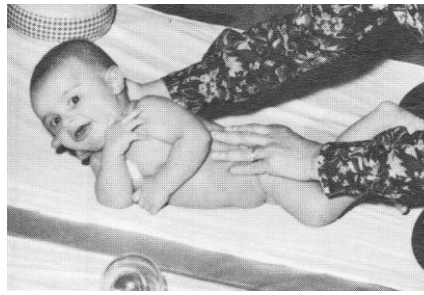
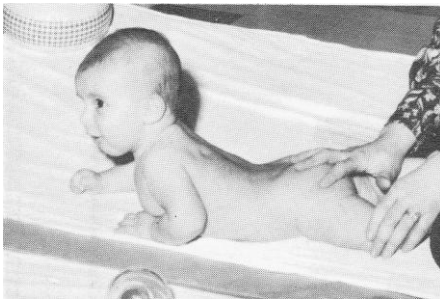
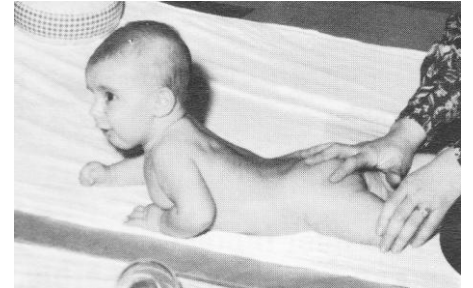


Playing on their tummy over a foam roller or even a rolled up towel or cushion is great for getting them to reach out in front of them and place their hands on the floor putting weight through their shoulders, is really useful for the child to strengthen them for crawling.

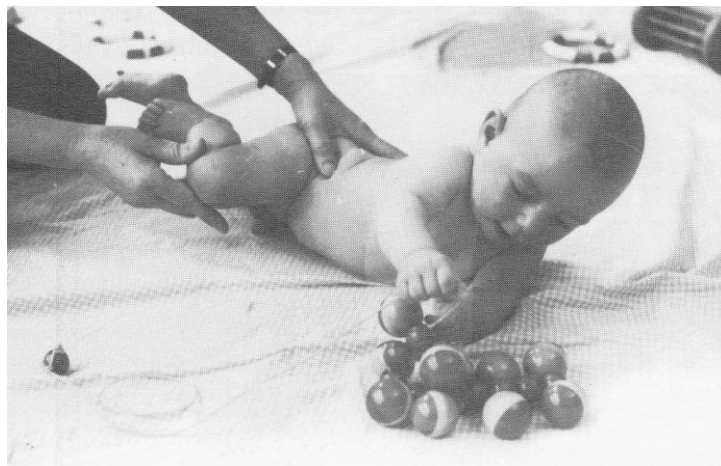


Rolling

Rolling is important in the child's development and often is the first point of independent movement. Work on rolling from lying on their back to lying on their front and back again.



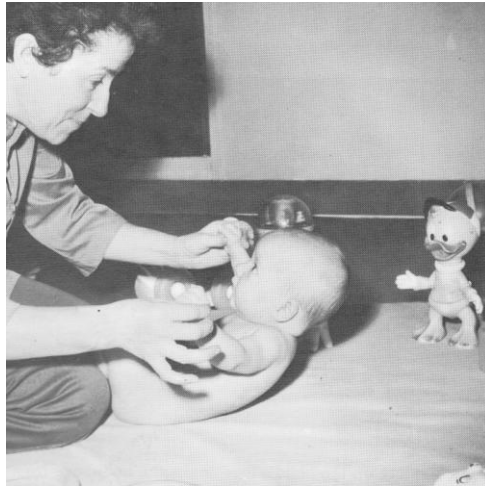
An easy way to do this is to provide a little bit of support for the child to roll and encouraging them with toys getting them to reach for the toys.



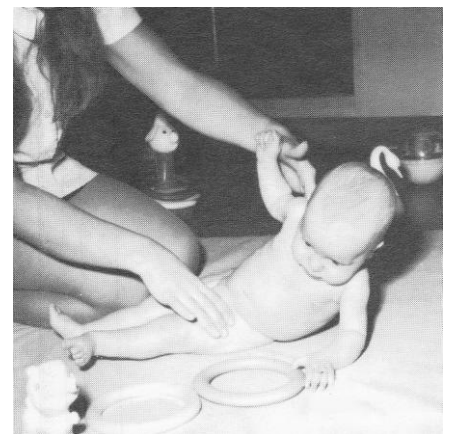
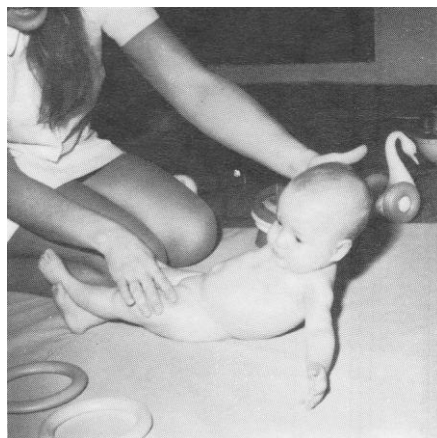
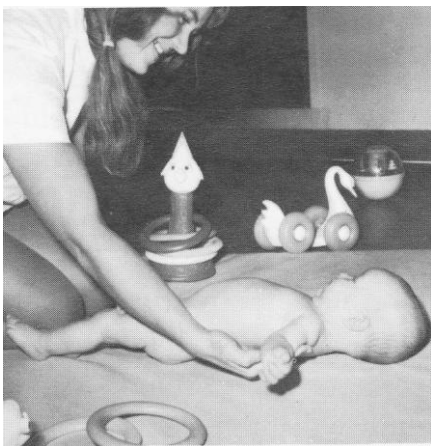
Sitting

Sitting is a great position to get your child to play in as it will work on the muscles in your back and abdomen important for keeping you upright.

Games like row, row, row your boat is great for encouraging your child to get from a lying to a sitting position. By having the child sat out in front of you and holding their hands you can rock back and forward whilst singing a song trying to encourage the child to work as hard as possible to pull themselves up as much as they can.

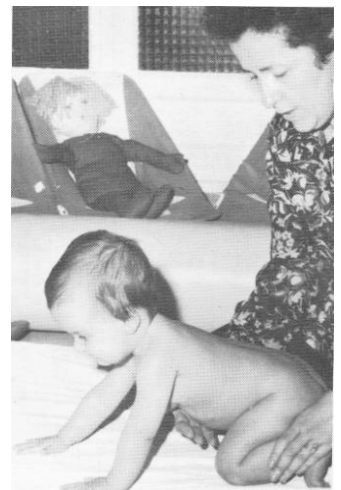


Another good method of getting the child into sitting from lying is to get them rolling onto side and getting them to push up with their arm into a sitting position. This is good to work on muscle used for twisting and rotating the body. This is why it's important to get them going on both sides to strengthen the muscle on both sides of the body.



Transition from sitting

Movement from sitting to kneeling positions and on hands and knees is the next stage in encouraging crawling. A great way to do this is to get them into a side sitting position, which is where the child has their legs bent with both feet on the same side of the body. From this position your child will find it easier to get into a kneeling or hands and knees position.



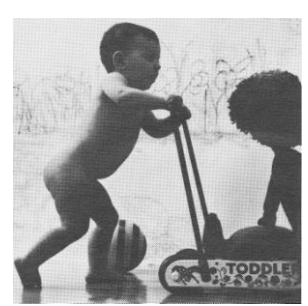
Crawling

From four point kneeling or on hands and knees your child will then find it easier to crawl and get moving. This can be encouraged by getting your child to reach out for toys in front of them.

It's the first time your baby has the chance to explore, and the living room is an exciting place to be. Make some space for them to explore their surroundings safely.

Pulling to stand and cruising

From a crawling position you can encourage your child to pull to stand and cruise (walk sideways) by putting toys just out of reach on a sofa. Cruising is another way to encourage movement, this is where they are able to stand by a table or sofa for support and walking from side to side along the support. It is really helpful in working on weight transfer from side to side which will only help once they are walking independently. Push and go toys is another nice way to learn to pull to stand.



Toddling around

Practice makes perfect, and it's an important part of growing up, so it's good to try and make sure your baby is free to have a toddle when they get the urge. Let them try walking with you, rather than using a buggy.

Walking with your support is a great way to get them moving you can also use push and go toys.

Parent and baby swim sessions

Most swimming pools have separate areas or times for parents with babies or toddlers. Babies will love the feel of being in the water, as well as gentle play or splashing in the pool. Just like adults, they use different muscles in the water so it's good for their development too.

Things to watch out for

An active baby makes for a happy, healthy baby, so it's important to make sure they are free to move their bodies. Here are some things to watch out for:

Baby signs

Babies like moving about, but sometimes they can't because they may be strapped into a rocker or pushchair, or perhaps their clothes are restricting their movement, making it difficult for them to move around freely.

Rockers, walking aids and baby bouncers

These are all useful for busy mums, but babies who are strapped into them don't get the freedom to move around properly. Try making a space for them to crawl or wriggle – do stay with your baby though to make sure they are safe.

Pictures referenced from: Exercises for your baby

by Dr Jannine Levy Published by Panthion Books 1973

From : <http://www.nhs.uk/start4life/Pages/baby-activities.aspx>

Other websites:

www.babymoves.co.uk

APCP tummy time leaflet/ trust leaflet

For primary school aged children

Physical development should be seen as being as important in a young child as intellectual development. Research has shown that physical activity in young children can enhance concentration, motivation, learning and well-being.

Generally, our lives have become more inactive and our children have less opportunity for physical activity each day. The reasons for our increased inactivity include:

- Excessive television viewing
 - Computers
 - Fewer family members to play with
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- Fewer safe outside play areas

Children enjoy physical play, indoors and outdoors. They revel in freedom of movement and in play that is inventive, adventurous and stimulating. Children also learn social skills as they cooperate with one another and show consideration for one another.

Large Muscle Development – gross motor and locomotor skills

- Walk forwards, backwards and sideways
- Walk on tip-toes (balance)
- Running, stopping and starting
- Climb up steps or a ladder with one foot leading
- Pivot around and around on feet
- Jump up and down on the spot on both feet
- Jump a distance
- Balance along a plank 18cms from the ground
- Balance on one leg for 4 seconds
- Crawl through a barrel or tunnel

From: <http://www.early-years.org/parents/docs/learning-through-physical-play.pdf>

Physical play includes activities that use physical movements to allow children to use their energy, and it gives children the chance to develop gross and fine motor skills, learn new things and socialize. Physical play also benefits a child's health. Understanding the importance of physical play is vital to your child's development.

Learning

According to the Child Development Institute, 75 percent of brain development occurs after birth. Physical play helps a child to develop connections between the nerve cells and the brain. As these connections develop, a child's fine and gross motor skills, socialization, personal awareness, language, creativity and problem solving are improved. Ideal physical play incorporates play with social interactions and problem solving.

Health

Physical play provides various health benefits. According to the North Carolina Child Care Health and Safety Resource Center, physical activity promotes early brain development and learning in infants and young children. It also decreases the risk of developing health conditions like coronary heart disease, high blood pressure, diabetes mellitus, obesity and many other chronic health conditions.

Outdoor Play

Physical play mostly occurs outside and provides children the opportunity to release their energy using vigorous activity and loud voices. According to the North Carolina Child Care Health and Safety Resource Center, "All children birth to age five as well as school age children should engage in daily physical activity that promotes health-related fitness and movement skills."

Most children naturally develop the ability to run and walk. However, they require practice and instruction to develop hopping, galloping, sliding, catching, jumping, throwing, kicking, bouncing and striking skills. Children incorporate these skills into sports, games and dance. Playgrounds are perfect places for a child to develop mental connections, socialize and develop fine and gross motor skills.

Indoor Play

Many children lack indoor physical play because many environments are not conducive to indoor physical play. However, indoor physical play provides a safe, supervised way to incorporate learning. If space is lacking, move furniture, use a hallway or use a covered outdoor area (like a covered porch, pavilion area or awning) to provide space for guided physical play. These areas provide the perfect environment for gentle games of catch, Duck-Duck-Goose, bowling, Simon Says, dancing or various other physically active games.

Technology

According to the Child Development Institute, electronic media--including television, video games, movies, cell phones, and the Internet--has a great effect on physical play. Children are spending more and more time engaged in passive play, using a keyboard or electronic device. While this can have some benefits, they should spend most of their time physically playing and interacting with others. Parents need to understand their child's play needs and provide an environment that will allow for both passive and physical play.

From: <http://www.livestrong.com/article/86563-importance-physical-play-child-development/>

Move for Health Kids, part of our current Move for Health campaign, aims to help children be more active and improve their diet.

From: <http://www.csp.org.uk/your-health/healthy-living/move-health-campaign/move-health-kids>

Change4Life is an English initiative that has recently been launched in Wales, which encourages young children primarily aged 0-11 years old, pregnant women and women planning a pregnancy to improve their health by eating well and being physically active so to live a longer and healthier life. Change4Life will work alongside Health Challenge Swansea to encourage people to eat well, move more and live longer.

From: www.healthchallengeswansea.org.uk/index.cfm?articleid=33237

Other websites:

www.change4lifewales.org.uk

Children of secondary school age

www.5x60.org.uk

www.sportwales.org.uk