

Activities for 3 to 6 month babies



Start with responsive, supervised floor play

Floor play is the foundation for many activities in this age range because it allows an infant to move freely and practise against a stable surface. Choose a clean, firm play mat on the floor rather than a bed, sofa, or raised surface. Place your baby on their back for many activities, and include tummy time while they are awake and continuously supervised. A few minutes may be enough at first; several short sessions spread across the day are often more manageable than one long session.

During back-lying play, position yourself within your baby's visual field and speak calmly. Move a toy slowly from side to side, allowing time for your baby to focus and follow it. Place an interesting object near, but not directly in, reach so they can attempt to extend an arm, open the hand, and make contact. These repeated attempts support visual-motor integration, the developing ability to coordinate what the eyes see with purposeful movement.

For tummy time, lie down face to face with your baby or place a small rolled towel beneath the upper chest if advised by a health professional and if it helps them tolerate the position. Encourage lifting and turning the head by positioning your face or a toy to one side, then the other. Stop when your baby

shows clear fatigue or distress. Tummy time is for awake play only; babies should be placed on their backs for sleep according to current safe-sleep guidance.

Encourage reaching, grasping, and rolling

At 3 to 6 months, hand use becomes more purposeful. Offer lightweight, age-appropriate objects that are large enough not to become choking hazards and that do not have detachable parts, sharp edges, or long cords. Soft rattles, fabric books, textured teethingers, and simple rings can be presented one at a time. Let your baby look at the object, touch it, grasp it, and bring it toward the mouth. Mouthing is a normal way for infants to gather sensory information, but every item must be clean, intact, and designed for infant use.

Hold a toy at the midline, where both hands can see it, then move it slowly toward one side. This can invite head turning, weight shifting, and reaching across the body. Alternate sides rather than repeatedly stimulating only one direction. If your baby grasps an object, wait before taking it away; the pause gives them time to examine its weight, texture, and sound.

Rolling often develops gradually. Place your baby on their back and attract attention with a toy positioned slightly to the side. You can provide encouragement with your voice, but do not force the body into a roll or pull an arm. When your baby begins rolling independently, increase floor safety: remove nearby small objects, keep them away from sofas and changing tables, and never leave them unattended on an elevated surface. Persistent movement asymmetry, marked stiffness or floppiness, or loss of a previously acquired skill warrants discussion with a pediatric clinician.

Use sensory play without overstimulation

Sensory play helps babies organize information from vision, hearing, touch, and movement. Brightly colored toys, high-contrast patterns, and a baby-safe mirror can attract visual attention. Hold one item at a comfortable distance and allow your baby to study it rather than presenting many objects at once. A mirror can support visual exploration and social interest, although infants do not need to understand their reflection for the activity to be useful.

Texture can be introduced through clean fabric squares, a soft cloth book, or toys with contrasting surfaces. Offer the item for your baby to touch with the palm and fingers. Describe what they are experiencing: "This is smooth," "This feels bumpy," or "You are holding the soft cloth." Avoid small sensory materials such as dry rice, beads, water beads, loose buttons, or uncooked pasta, which can create choking or aspiration risks.

Sound play can be simple. Shake a rattle gently from one side, pause, and observe whether your baby looks toward it. Vary your voice, sing a repetitive song, or make a quiet sound and wait for a response. Signs of overstimulation may include turning away, yawning, hiccupping, frantic movements, frowning, or becoming unusually irritable. Reduce noise and visual input, hold your baby calmly, or end the activity when these cues appear. Sensory learning does not require intense stimulation; predictable repetition is often more supportive.

Build early communication through interaction

Communication activities are most effective when they are conversational, even before a baby uses recognizable words. Sit close, make eye contact when your baby seeks it, and imitate their coos, squeals, smiles, or facial expressions. Then pause. This turn-taking pattern helps an infant experience the rhythm of communication and learn that their sounds and actions influence another person.

Talk during ordinary care, including feeding, dressing, bathing, and diaper changes. Use short sentences and name familiar people, objects, and actions. You might say, "Here is your sock," or "You are looking at the red ball." The goal is not vocabulary testing; it is sustained, emotionally attuned exposure to speech. Singing is also useful because rhythm, repetition, and changes in pitch can hold attention.

Read aloud from a sturdy baby book for a few minutes at a time. Your baby may focus on your face more than the pages, chew the book, or look away. All of these responses are normal. Follow their interest, point to a picture, and use expressive but comfortable speech. Peekaboo is another effective game. Hide your face briefly behind your hands or a cloth, then reveal it with a warm expression. Keep the cloth away from the baby's face and stop if the game causes distress. These social routines support bonding, attention, anticipation, and early concepts related to object permanence.

Add gentle movement and body awareness

Babies learn about their bodies through varied, supported movement. During awake play, gently move your baby's legs as if pedaling a bicycle, or bring the feet together and apart without forcing the joints. You can place a soft toy near the feet to encourage kicking and noticing the lower limbs. Keep movements slow and stop if your baby resists, cries, or appears uncomfortable.

Carry your baby in different safe positions while supporting the head and trunk as needed. A brief upright hold against your chest, a supported seated position on your lap, or face-to-face time while you recline can provide changes in visual perspective and proprioceptive input, meaning information about body position and movement. These positions should be closely supervised, and an infant should not be left propped in a sitting device or carrier for extended periods.

Gentle bouncing while securely held, swaying to music, or walking slowly around the room can be enjoyable forms of vestibular input, which refers to sensory information about balance and movement. Avoid vigorous bouncing, shaking, tossing, or any activity that makes the head move forcefully. Never shake a baby. Play should remain calm, controlled, and adapted to the infant's developing neck and trunk control.

Make ordinary routines into learning opportunities

You do not need a packed schedule of activities. Babies benefit from a daily pattern that alternates feeding, sleep, quiet interaction, and movement. A short activity after a nap may be more successful than play when your baby is hungry or tired. Watch for readiness cues such as relaxed limbs, alert eyes, interest in your face, and spontaneous movement. End the activity when your baby turns away, closes their eyes, becomes fussy, or shows other signs of needing a break.

Household routines can provide meaningful learning. Let your baby watch you fold laundry from a safe distance, describe water during a supervised bath, or name sounds heard during a walk. Keep the baby away from hot liquids, cooking surfaces, cleaning products, pet supplies, and objects that could be swallowed.

Screens are not necessary for infant learning; direct interaction with a responsive caregiver provides richer opportunities for social and sensory development.

Progress is not measured by how many activities you complete. One attentive conversation, a few minutes of tummy time, or a shared song can be enough. Babies differ in temperament, medical history, muscle tone, visual or hearing status, and pace of skill acquisition. If you are concerned about feeding, hearing, vision, movement, interaction, or a possible developmental regression, contact your healthcare professional rather than relying on comparison with other babies. Early assessment can clarify whether reassurance, monitoring, or additional support is appropriate.