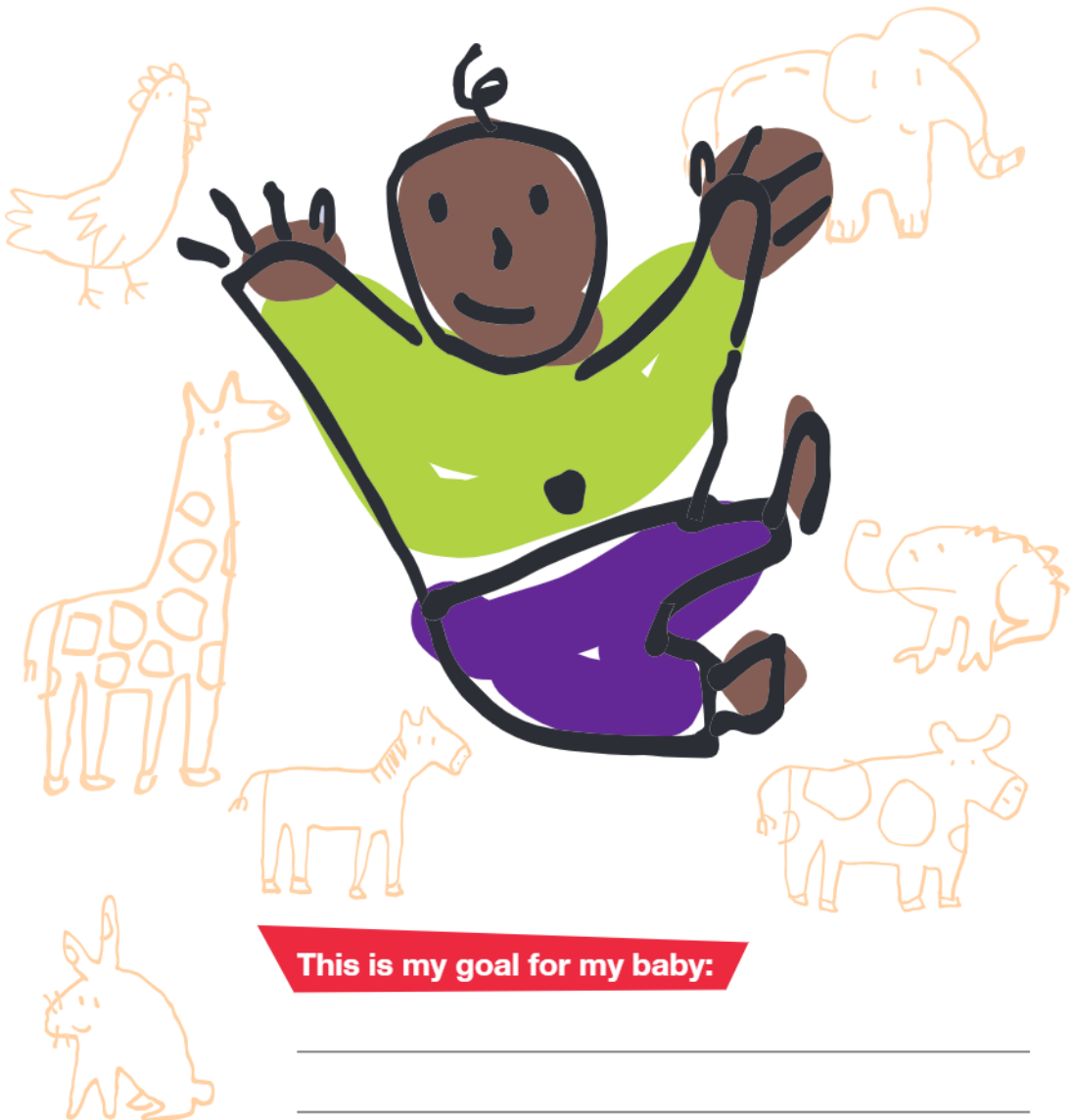




Playing with Your Baby



Why is it important for my baby to be active and play?



-  Your baby's brain grows quickly during the first year. Learning begins with play!
-  Your baby will be able to explore more and more as he learns to move around.
-  Everyone needs to be active—even babies. Play with your baby!

Get your baby out of the crib, playpen or infant seat and let him move! Put him on a soft blanket on his tummy.

What kinds of play do babies like?

-  Babies like to take things in and out of containers. They also like to reach for things out of their reach.
-  Babies like to crawl over, under and around things (pillows, chairs and boxes).
-  Babies like to play with things that are different colors, shapes and sizes.
-  Babies like to play with other babies. Invite a friend and her baby over for a play date.
-  Most of all, your baby loves to play with YOU!

You are your baby's first and most important teacher. Your baby is counting on you to play with him! Take time every day to play!

Some activities to do with your baby:

Outside

- Let your baby crawl around on a blanket outside.
- Babies love to be outdoors!



Row, Row, Row Your Boat

- While sitting on the floor, put your baby between your legs so that both of you are facing forward.
- Hold onto a rolled-up towel in front of her arms so that both of you are holding it.
- Gently move forward and back in a rowing motion.



Bubble Burst

- With your baby on the floor, blow bubbles within her reach.
- Show her how to pop the bubbles.

Be Silly!

- Show your baby how you stretch your fingers, wiggle your toes, and pat your nose. Help your baby do these things too.

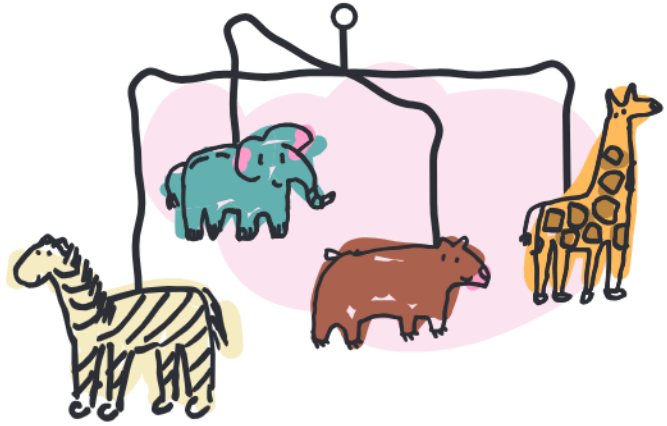
Explore

- Be sure your house is safe for baby to explore—no small things on the floor
- Empty cardboard boxes
- Turn over chairs or clothes baskets
- Put blankets over chairs
- Crawl around the floor with your baby—over, under, in and out



Toys to play with:

-  Plastic mirrors
-  Pop-up toys
-  Rattles
-  Bubbles
-  Soft blocks
-  Soft balls
-  Mobiles



Things at home to play with:

-  Spoons
-  Plastic bowls
-  Empty pie tins
-  Plastic cups
-  Empty paper towel tubes
-  Empty boxes
-  Empty baskets



Keep your baby from choking! Don't let her play with anything smaller than the inside of a toilet paper roll.

Games to play:

-  Peek-a-boo
-  Hide-and-seek
-  Pat-a-cake
-  Dance and clap to music

Playing with your baby helps your child grow smarter, stronger, healthier and happier.

Play helps your baby:

-  learn about his body and the world around him.
-  build a special bond with you and other family members.
-  sleep better.
-  have strong bones, lungs and heart.
-  build strong muscles that will help him learn to walk and learn other skills.
-  feel good...especially if you play with him!

Your baby deserves the best start. Show your baby the joy of play!

Activities to build large muscles:

-  Pulling up
-  Sitting up
-  Standing up
-  Rolling over
-  Walking
-  Climbing
-  Creeping and crawling

Activities to build small muscles:

-  Picking up
-  Reaching
-  Turning things
-  Shaking toys
-  Holding



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