

School Readiness Program

Provided by the WIC Program and First 5 LA

Look at me! I'm so much fun!

Playtime! 3-5 month-olds begin to play more actively. This is when babies are really fun. They will laugh and smile when you read and play with them.

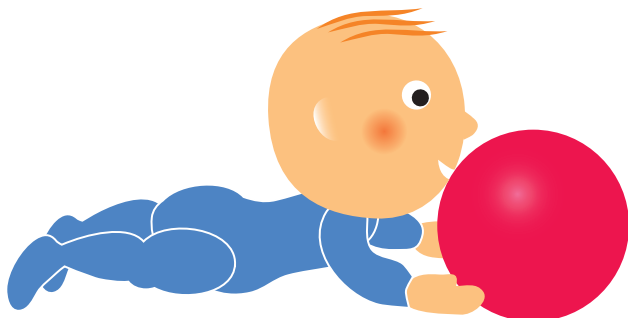
Your 3-5 month-old baby communicates with you. This is the beginning of conversation.

Your baby is exploring the world. Exploring helps your baby's brain grow.



Try this!

Peek-a-boo! Peek-a-boo! Mommy is magic and Daddy is too! Many babies this age love to see Mommy and Daddy disappear and come back. You can hide behind your hands, behind a door, or behind a cloth. Peek-a-boo is fun as long as it is not too scary or too loud. Saying words that rhyme and have a fun rhythm or beat will add to the fun.



You are the expert on your baby.

Look inside this handout for information about how your baby is communicating, growing and changing.

You are the expert! When you take your baby to the doctor for his 4-month doctor's appointment, you may notice that you feel more confident. You have learned what your baby likes and does not like. You know how your baby likes to be held and comforted. You can tell the doctor how much your baby sleeps and how often your baby wants to be fed.

You may also have questions for your doctor. It is easy to forget to ask questions at the appointment. Write them down at home when you think of them. This will help you remember.

Babies grow in different ways and at different speeds. Your baby will be different from his brothers, sisters, cousins and friends. If you are worried about how your baby is growing, **ask your doctor.**

At the 4-month appointment, the doctor will weigh and measure your baby. The doctor will be able to tell you how your baby is growing. The doctor will check your baby's eyes and ears. The doctor will look at how your baby is moving. The doctor will ask you questions about what your baby is doing at home and how they are eating. If your baby needs some extra help, the doctor will help you find people who can help.



Try this!

You can make a fun toy for your baby by drawing a face on your baby's sock with non-toxic markers. Put the sock on your baby's foot. Your baby will try to reach for the sock. With practice, your baby will be able to grab the sock. You can play with your baby, helping her take off the sock. Babies this age explore everything with their mouths and will work very hard to put their toes in their mouths.

Try this!

Keep reading to your baby every day. Babies at this age really like to look at books.

QUESTION: I love to hold my baby. Am I spoiling my baby?

ANSWER: No. 3-5 month-old babies are still too young to spoil. Your baby cries because they need something. And guess what? You are getting better at figuring out what your baby needs. You are teaching your baby that you take care of her. When you respond, your baby learns to feel safe and loved. Of course, sometimes you cannot pick up your baby right away. You can use words to tell your baby that you will be there soon. Just hearing your voice gives comfort.

QUESTION: How does my 3-5 month-old baby communicate?

ANSWER: Babies use their bodies and make noises to let their parents know when they need to eat, rest, learn or play. These are called **cues**. When your baby has a relaxed face and body, follows your face and voice, reaches toward you, stares at your face and raises her head, your baby is telling you that she is ready to play and learn. When your baby turns away, arches her back, frowns, has a glazed look in her eyes, stiffens her hands, arms or legs, yawns or falls asleep, your baby is telling you that she needs something to be different. Responding to these **cues** quickly before your baby starts to fuss may help your baby cry less. **Hint: You will miss your baby's cues if you are looking at your phone.**



Exploring the world!

QUESTION: What does my 3-5 month-old baby SEE?

ANSWER: Your baby now sees all of the colors. Many 3-5 month-old babies like red or blue best. They like to look at brightly colored pictures and toys. Your baby can see objects and people that are all the way across the room and can follow objects with his or her eyes. If your baby does not seem interested in looking at new things, ask your doctor. **Your 3-5 month old baby is too young for screens. Put them away and play.**



Try this!

Listen to your baby. You can change the sounds that your baby is making into words. For example, if your baby is saying, "Ba, Ba, Ba," you can show your baby that you are listening by repeating the sounds. Then you can introduce your baby to a word by holding up a ball and saying, "Ball." Then you can hold up a book and say, "Book." Your baby will not say the words, but he is listening to them.

QUESTION: What does my 3-5 month-old baby HEAR?

ANSWER: Since birth, your baby has noticed the pitch and loudness of your voice. Now your baby is beginning to notice the different sounds you make. 3-5 month-old babies begin to hear and notice vowels and consonants. Your baby notices how you put sounds together to make words and sentences.

Your baby still has very sensitive hearing. Loud music can be too much for your baby, and can even damage his ears. Babies like quiet music.

QUESTION: What are 3-5 month-old babies' MOVEMENTS like?

ANSWER: Your baby can hold his head up. Some babies this age roll over, but don't worry if your baby doesn't. A few babies begin to try to reach for toys and objects. Many will learn to reach in the next month or two. Your baby may begin to sit while leaning forward onto his hands. Many babies begin to like to straighten their legs and to try to stand while you hold them. This is good exercise, but your baby will not stand or walk for several months.

Try this!

When you read, put as much feeling into your voice as you can. You may feel a bit silly saying, "Look! A truck!" with excitement in your voice, but your baby's smiles will show you how much your baby likes the way you read.

Try this!

Listen carefully. Is your baby making some of the sounds of language? Can you hear his voice going up at the end of a sentence as if your baby is asking you a question?



4-month-old babies love to put things into their mouths. This is one way they explore. Check your baby's toys often so your baby can explore safely. Babies can choke on small objects. Make sure that none of your baby's toys have small parts (like eyes on stuffed animals) that can come off. If an object fits through a toilet paper roll, it is too small. **Never let babies hold balloons. They can bite them and choke.** More children choke on balloons than on anything else.

QUESTION: Is my baby SLEEPING too much or too little?

ANSWER: At 4 months, most babies still need at least two naps during the day. Some babies this age can sleep 8 to 12 hours at night, but many do not. **Your baby should still sleep on his or her back.** That is the safest way for babies to sleep. Some 4-month-old babies can roll over. These babies may roll to their stomachs in their sleep. Don't worry if your baby will not stay on his or her back, but make sure they sleep on a safe surface without pillows, heavy blankets or toys.



QUESTION: How can I teach my baby to go to sleep at night?

ANSWER: One way to help your baby learn to sleep at night is to try to make bedtime as similar as possible every night. If you sing lullabies, rock your baby, breastfeed, or cuddle every night before bedtime, your baby will learn that these activities mean it is time to go to sleep. If you help her relax and put her to bed sleepy, but not quite asleep, you will teach your baby to go to sleep. **Screen time is not recommended because even babies can be overstimulated by screens and miss the sleep they need to grow.**

QUESTION: My baby cries out in the middle of the night. What should I do?

ANSWER: Like adults, babies have times when they are deeply asleep and times when they are almost awake. During the night, your baby goes through a light sleep every 90 minutes. Sometimes, babies cry out during these lighter sleeps. Wait a couple of minutes. You are teaching your baby to calm down without help. Listen carefully. If your baby begins crying louder and does not seem to be able to calm down, check on her. Talk to your baby. Stroke your baby gently. When she settles down, leave and let your baby go to sleep.



QUESTION: What are the best TOYS for 3-5 month-old babies?

ANSWER: Board and cloth books are great for babies. This is a great time to read to your baby.



Screen time is not recommended for infants under 18 months. Remember, this is a great time to read to your baby.

Safety Corner



Smoke alarms can save lives.

- Smoke alarms provide an early warning so that families can escape from fire.
- Most deaths by fire occur at night and are caused by smoke.
- Smoke alarms are recommended in each bedroom and throughout the living areas of a house or apartment.
- Alarms should be checked monthly by pushing the test button.
- Replace batteries in smoke alarms at least once a year. If an alarm "chirps", replace the low battery right away.



First 5 LA

First 5 LA is a child advocacy and grant making organization created by California voters to invest Proposition 10 tobacco tax revenues in programs for improving the lives of children from prenatal through age 5 in Los Angeles County. First 5 LA champions health, education and safety causes concerning young children and families. For more information, please visit www.first5la.org.



The WIC Program

WIC provides nutrition and health education services, breastfeeding support, referrals to community agencies and healthy food to eligible women, infants and children under age five. This institution is an equal opportunity provider. For more information, please visit www.wicworks.ca.gov.