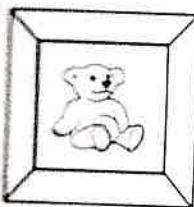


# Joy and Laughter





# Conceptual Overview

LOVE  
TOPIC 4

1. **Emotions are the language of infancy.** Infants are able to understand the feelings of their parents by their tone of voice, their facial expressions, their touch, and even their smell. Babies communicate their needs to parents in the same way, with emotional signals. This means that the first connections we experience with others are emotional connections. Emotions are our communication link to one another. Throughout life, we will continue to understand and connect through shared emotions.
2. **Love is built with joy and laughter.** Sharing fun, developing an idea, working together on a task brings us close. It gives us a feeling of shared goals and beliefs. Sharing a laugh or a positive experience is often the beginning of a relationship. Positive emotional connections keep us close. Sharing positive feelings builds confidence; we feel valued by one another. This leads to feelings of safety and contentment. We are open to new learning. We become more collaborative and creative.

Shared positive emotions are contagious. Others become more positive when we share interest, joy, and laughter. Parents who learn songs, lullabies, and rhymes for their babies will bring love and joy into both of their lives. Sharing positive emotions will usually repair a negative feeling in a relationship. It opens the door to discussion and problem solving. Always end the day, end the argument, end the discipline with shared positive emotions.

3. **Sharing positive emotions is the most powerful gift parents can give their child.** Infants and toddlers imitate the emotions of their parents. What interests or delights a parent will also interest a baby. Sharing positive emotions is a key to building self-esteem, independence, and resiliency in a child. It is also a key to regulating behavior, diverting a child from problems, and calming a fear.

Parents' emotions will become the pattern for their children. The way parents regulate their own emotions will be the way their babies learn to behave. If babies are around positive people, they will use these emotions to connect with others. This will lead to a pattern of connection and positive relationships. In turn, these relationships will continue to give them interest, excitement, and fun in their surroundings. They will feel emotional stability and resiliency.

4. **Love also involves sharing negative emotions.** We all become angry, sad, or fearful sometimes, and these feelings are shared by our loved ones, especially by our children. Shared negative emotions send different chemicals to the brain. These emotions caution and alert us. We stop what we were doing or thinking and re-evaluate. We focus on protecting ourselves. Shared negative emotions arouse very different kinds of actions within us. It is important that we learn about them so that we can use them with caution.

## LOVE

### TOPIC 4

Expressing negative emotions should be done with temperance and control. When we express fear, it alerts others to be cautious and avoid danger. In this way, shared negative emotions serve a purpose. When a mother sees her toddler about to run into the street, she shares her fear with a gasp and a cry. The toddler stops. However, fear is such a powerful feeling, it stays in memory and may expand to other situations. The toddler may withdraw and become fearful of going out or leaving his mother's side. Shared negative emotions need to be repaired by calmly teaching about the action or thing that was frightening and then ending with shared positive emotions and successful actions. "Hold my hand and we will go down together."

Expressing strong negative emotion can be detrimental. Sharing strong feelings of fear or anger can lead the child to internalized feelings of insecurity and defensiveness that will inhibit learning. Shared sadness is an equally powerful inhibitor when these emotions are prevalent in a child's life.

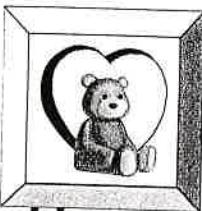
5. **Sharing a loved one's negative emotions without joining him or her is important.** When a parent says, "I hear you are angry," or "I hear you are sad," it will help release some of the pain of negative feelings in the child, and he or she will feel better. Your children need to feel safe in letting you know that they are frightened, sad, or angry. They need to feel that you understand their pain. But it is not helpful for you to take on their negative feelings and become angry or sad too.

Infants and toddlers rely on their parents to help them regulate and repair their negative emotions, not scold them or reject them. Just a touch or a hug can quiet anger, fear, or pain. This does not mean giving in or joining in. "I hear that you are sad" does not mean "Okay, okay, have whatever you want." This is the important difference between being emotionally attuned to your child and spoiling her.

6. **Emotions are a mark of our humanity.** We share them in all interaction. It is important to keep more positive emotions in our lives than negative and to work toward keeping our negative emotions under control.

Babies understand how they feel when they laugh or cry, and they can also understand how others are feeling when they show these same emotions. Sharing positive emotions creates a deep bond, a feeling of "oneness." This emotional connection is what allows children to care about the feelings of others. Concern about the other, or empathy, is crucial to a love relationship. Empathy is also the foundation of conscience. It guides the "do's and don'ts" of human relationships and the development of values.

When we share our emotions with our children, we teach empathy. They begin to understand that their actions affect how others feel. When we join them in their joys and pleasures, we enhance their learning. When we help them regulate their emotions, we teach them self-control, problem solving, and resiliency. Sharing emotions wisely is a layer of love.



# Emotions Allow Babies to

## ♥ Communicate

The baby cries to signal distress.  
The baby laughs to signal joy.  
The baby points and kicks to signal interest.  
The baby yawns to signal tiredness.  
The baby turns away to signal overload.  
The baby stiffens and tightens body to signal fear.

"I need you."  
"I like this."  
"What is that?"  
"Put me to bed."  
"I need a break."  
"Hold me; help me."

## ♥ Feel Effective

The baby screeches and adults turn.  
The baby coughs and parents come.  
The baby laughs and everyone laughs.

"Look, they noticed me!"  
"I can get them to come to me."  
"They heard me; they like me."

## ♥ Be Energized or Motivated

"This is fun. I'll kick and laugh again and again."  
"I don't want to be alone. I'll scream until somebody comes."  
"I'm afraid. I'll pant and grunt and reach up for help."  
"I'm interested. I'm learning. I want to keep practicing."

## ♥ Connect With Other Humans

"I laugh when they laugh. I'm one of the group."  
"I cry and they come. We understand each other."  
"I stop when they frown. I may be in danger."  
"I want to belong. I will copy my parents."





# Sharing Emotions

Emotions are universal – the same for all humans.

- ♥ We understand others through emotional signals.
- ♥ We read and act on emotional signals before we hear and process words.
- ♥ We connect with people who understand our emotional signals.

Even newborns express and understand emotional signals.

- ♥ By expressing emotional signals, babies get help to survive.
- ♥ Babies read the touch, voice, and face of their parents. Babies regulate their actions in response to these emotional signals.
- ♥ By understanding emotional signals, babies share the joy and pain of others. This is how they learn to understand and accept another's feelings. This is called empathy. This is how babies learn respect for others.

The way parents share emotions with babies becomes a pattern.

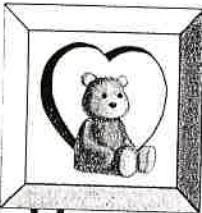
- ♥ Sharing emotions is how relationships are built. The way parents and babies share emotions becomes the pattern for the next relationship. This pattern becomes set in the baby's mind.
- ♥ The relationship pattern that babies learned from their parents is what they will use to form other relationships. Babies will expect all relationships to be like the first one.

Patterns of shared emotions give babies a sense of right and wrong.

- ♥ By reading others' emotions, babies learn what others like and don't like.
- ♥ They try to behave in ways that increase shared positive emotions.
- ♥ They try hard to avoid negative emotions.
- ♥ Babies want to fit in with other people and to be accepted and liked. We motivate and regulate one another through emotion. This is how we join into families and communities.

Sharing emotions is how we learn to respect and value other humans.

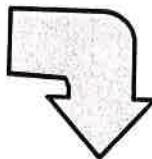
- ♥ It is one of the most powerful and effective skills we possess.



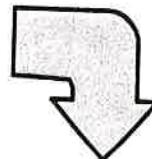
# The Power of Sharing Emotions

Shared Emotions Lead To:

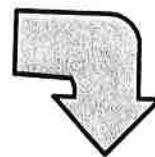
♥ Shared Understanding



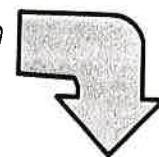
♥ Shared Intentions



♥ Shared Motivations



♥ Patterns of Interaction



♥ Expectations for Relationships



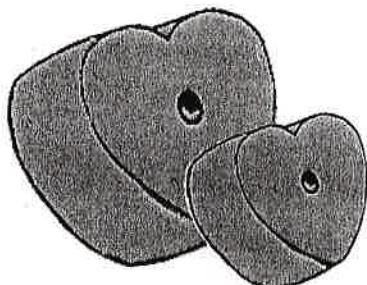


## How Shared Positive Emotions Work

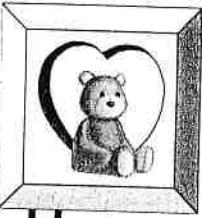
Parents who share more positive emotions than negative emotions have children who are confident, motivated, cooperative, and creative.

- ♥ Positive emotions influence relationships differently than negative emotions do. They are processed differently by the brain and the nervous system.
- ♥ Positive emotions include interest, surprise, joy, excitement, and contentment.
- ♥ Shared positive emotions give us pleasure: they let us feel close, safe, and accepted.
- ♥ Shared positive emotions are motivating. They encourage us to sustain or expand the experience. We want to recreate the experience and continue the relationship.
- ♥ When we share positive emotions, we feel close. We begin to trust one another and to collaborate together.
- ♥ Sharing positive emotions gives us feelings of safety. When we share positives with another, over time, we gain confidence in ourselves and in our relationship. We become willing to explore and venture into new skills and ideas.
- ♥ When we share positive emotions, we feel accepted. We know we are valued; we feel worthy. This makes us feel proud. It leads to self-esteem.

Do you know people who seem to be always on the "bright side" of things?



- Is it their personal style?
- Do you think they practice this?
- Do they seem to have more fun?
- Do they enjoy their children?



## Techniques to Enhance Shared Positive Emotions

1. Approach with a smile or laugh.
2. Use eye contact.
3. Show fun, excitement, and wonder in your voice when you talk to your baby.
4. Use rhythm or song in your voice to spark the baby's interest.
5. Start gently - it takes time for a baby to get the idea. A baby may move slowly from one state to another. He or she may seem overwhelmed.
6. Regulate or divert the baby with fun or interest, rather than scolding.





## Block Play Activity

Role play and then discuss sharing positive emotions during play.

Mom sits facing baby.

Mom has a bag of blocks. (She smiles and talks to the baby.)

Mom looks inside the bag. "Oh! What is in here?" (She uses excitement & wonder in her voice.)

Mom lets the baby look inside the bag. "What is it?" (She builds suspense and surprise.)

Mom allows the baby to open the bag and pour out the blocks.

Mom waits while the baby handles the blocks. "Look at all those blocks." (She expresses interest.)

Mom bangs two blocks together. "See! Listen!" (She expresses and encourages more interest.)

Baby bangs blocks together. (Mom laughs.)

Baby bangs blocks on the floor. (Mom imitates the baby and smiles.)

Baby hands block out toward Mom. "I see. It's a red block." (She expresses interest.) Mom holds out her hand and lets the baby give her the block.

Mom returns the block to the baby. "Thank you. It's very pretty." (She expresses pleasure.)

Mom puts blocks into a dump truck.

"Look, we can load the truck!" (She expresses interest and surprise.)

Baby puts some blocks in also.

"Good, you are loading the truck too! We are working together."

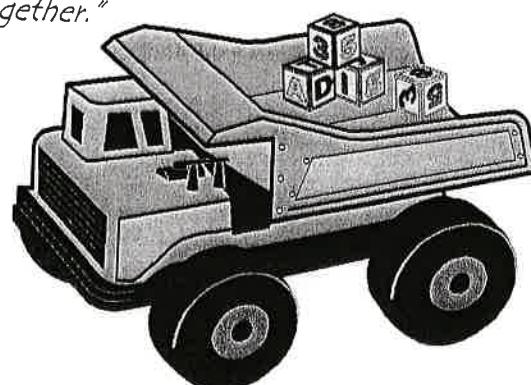
(She expresses pleasure and encouragement.)

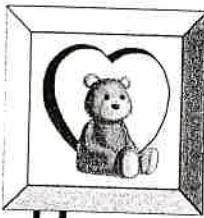
Mom drives the truck away.

"Rummm, Rummm!" (Mom has fun and acts silly.)

Baby laughs. Mom laughs.

"Wasn't that fun!" (Mom kisses her baby.)





## How Shared Negative Emotions Work

Babies take on the emotions of their parents. Babies cannot stay neutral. They often become overwhelmed by the negative emotions of others, especially of their parents. Strong negative emotions, such as anger, fear, or sadness, give children feelings of fear or shame. Babies will try to escape these feelings.

Sharing negative emotions must be used sparingly to be effective. Positive and negative emotions are processed differently in the nervous system, which in turn sends different chemicals to the brain. Extreme negative emotion stops learning and can slow development.

Sharing negative emotions bring feelings of displeasure. We feel alerted, and become cautious. We re-evaluate what we are doing. Because of this, giving negative signals can play a useful role for parents in alerting their babies to danger. It can signal when behaviors are unacceptable or unkind. Controlled negative emotions can establish rules of respect for others. Setting limits is one way that babies learn right from wrong. It is one way babies can feel protected or regulated by their parents, if they know that negative emotions are directed at their behavior and not at them.

Shared negative emotions motivate us to eliminate the negative feelings. The baby wants to withdraw from the people or things that cause them. However, when parents help babies understand what they do want, then learning occurs. When sharing a parent's emotions causes feelings of fear, anger, or sadness in the baby, he or she may become emotionally out of control. Learning then is side-tracked.

If shared negative emotions happen too often in a relationship or are too strong, they cause us to feel insecure, and to distrust the person or place where they happened. We may withdraw and quit learning or we begin to defend against them by attacking or destroying something. Sometimes when we feel helpless, we tend to save our bad feelings until we attack someone weaker than we are.

When shared negative emotions happen too often in a relationship, they cause both partners to feel rejected and devalued. This leads to feelings of shame and guilt, which are not deserved. These feelings damage self-confidence and can remain with a child for a lifetime.

Negative emotions – used sparingly – are helpful. They regulate, teach, and define respect.

Negative emotions – used too often – are destructive to each person in the relationship. It is crucial to the emotional health of the child that the parents learn how to minimize negative emotions, to control them, and to relieve them in others. Take a “Big Breath” and ask “Why?”

# Communication

## Activities to Help Your Baby Grow and Learn

Your baby's babbling is beginning to sound more like talking. He says "mama" and really means it. He also is beginning to learn the names of things. He may say "no" if he is not happy. Because he's so busy learning to walk, his language use may slow down a bit. He may combine a word with pointing or using his hand to gesture, but you know very well what he means.



### Hide the Noises

Show your baby two things that make noise, such as a squeak toy, a set of measuring spoons, keys on a ring, or a rattle. Let baby play with them for a while, then hide the items under a box or cloth and make a noise with one. Take the cloth off and ask baby, "Which one made the noise?" See if she can guess.

### Quiet Time

On weekends or at a time that's not busy, spend time with baby in a quiet place with no music and no television (perhaps outside). Talk to your baby about what you're doing or about what baby is doing. Let your baby hear your voice and see your face making words. Talk calmly and tell baby how special he is. When your baby talks, encourage him. Have a conversation.

### Rhythm Clapping

While listening to music, show baby how to move and clap in rhythm. Your baby will enjoy moving to the beat. Play different types of music, such as rock, country, hip-hop, funk, electronic, pop, or classical. Be sure to keep the volume down. Those sweet ears have to last a long time!

### Listening on the Phone

When Uncle or Grandpa calls, ask him to spend a few minutes talking to baby. Baby probably won't talk back yet, but she will be delighted to hear someone's voice coming through the phone.

### Big Talk

While you do housework or get a meal together, talk to your baby about what you are doing. Encourage your little one to use two words together to make baby sentences, such as "Help me" or "More juice." This big language step will grow into a lot of talk.

### Little Reader

Read to your baby every day. Snuggle up and make this a special time. Point to pictures and name things for her. Sometimes ask her to find something: "Where's the cat? Oh, here it is." She may need a little help from you at first.

### Big Helper

Your baby can be a big helper. Give him simple directions: "Can you get me a napkin?" or "Give me your shirt, please." He may need you to point or help a little. Say, "What a big help. Thanks!"

Notes:



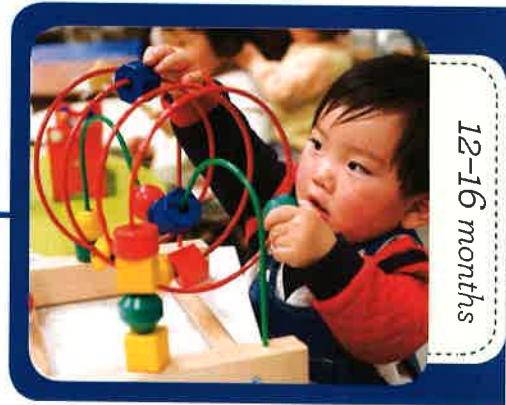
#### Don't Forget!

Activities should be supervised at all times by an adult. Any material, food, or toy given to a young child should be reviewed for safety.

# Fine Motor

## Activities to Help Your Baby Grow and Learn

Baby is using fingers with more skill now. He will point with his index finger and can pick up tiny bits of cereal with his thumb and finger. He can hold and mark with a crayon or washable marker and grasp small objects, such as small blocks or other small toys.



### Budding Artist

Let baby draw a picture for you with a crayon and a large piece of paper. Give baby plenty of room. She may only make a few marks, but give a lot of praise: "Look at the picture you made!" Be sure to put the crayon away when you are finished. Your baby doesn't yet know that you only want marks on the paper.

### Ball Toss

Encourage your baby to practice throwing a small, soft ball. A rolled up pair of socks works just fine. Have him stand in one spot and throw the ball. Try again and see how far it goes. At first, he may need you to show him how to throw the ball. Say, "Wow, look how far it went!"

### Carton Construction

Save different sizes of paper cereal boxes or juice boxes to use for blocks. Show baby how to stack them, then knock them down. Line them up to make a wall and then knock them down again: "What fun to knock them all down!"

### Tacky Tape

Make a small wad of masking tape with the sticky side out. Give this to baby to play with. It is very entertaining and will give baby some good finger exercise.

### Squeezing

Give baby a sponge, washcloth, or sponge ball to play with in the bath. Show baby how to squeeze the water out. You might also let baby play with plastic squirt toys. That's really fun!

### Fill and Dump

Give baby a container or box and a few items such as clothespins, spoons, and small cars. Make sure the items are big enough that they can't be swallowed. Show baby how to put them all in the container, then dump them out again. The next day, change the container or the objects. Make this activity a bit more challenging by choosing a container with a smaller opening.

### Library Time

Find a time every 2 weeks or so to go to a library or bookstore. Pick out new books with your child. Cuddle every day and read together. Read the story, talk about pictures, and let her take turns pointing to pictures and turning pages. What a special time together!

Notes:

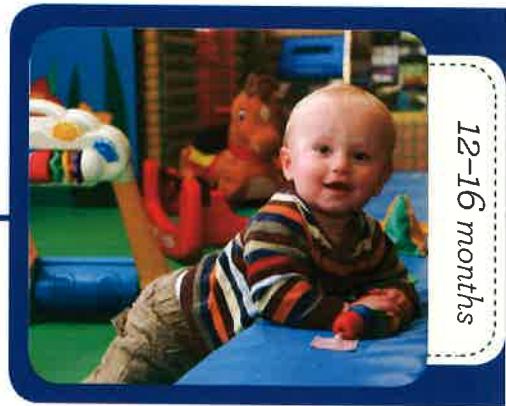


**Don't Forget!** Activities should be supervised at all times by an adult. Any material, food, or toy given to a young child should be reviewed for safety. Always watch baby during bath time.

# Gross Motor

## Activities to Help Your Baby Grow and Learn

By now your busy baby can move around the house quickly. She may be standing by herself, walking while holding onto furniture, or walking well on her own. She will try to climb up steps, so your watchful eye is very important. Baby loves to push and pull things and is getting stronger every day.



12-16 months

### Let's Go for a Walk

Your baby will love going for walks and seeing new things. Talk to her about what you are seeing. In an open area, let baby push her own stroller. She will enjoy the feeling of power as she moves something big all by herself. Be sure to watch that she keeps the stroller where it is safe.

### Row the Boat

Let your child experience rocking on a rocking horse or in a chair. Sit him on your lap and use your body to rock back and forth. Play with him sitting opposite you on the floor. Hold hands and gently pull and push him to and from you. Sing a little song, such as "Row, Row, Row Your Boat," while you rock back and forth.

### Moving Day

Give your baby a box large enough to push while standing. Show her how to fill it with a few toys, small cartons, or boxes. Let her push these things around the room from one area to another. She may want to take everything out. If so, show her how to put it all back in again!

### Have a Ball

Your baby will enjoy playing with balls. You can sit across from him and roll a ball to him. Encourage him to roll it back. Clap your hands when he does. If the ball is big and soft (e.g., beach ball with some of the air out), he may be able to "catch" it by stopping it when it gets to him.

### Finger Walk

Take a little walk with baby holding on to your finger. Baby can choose to hold on or to let go. Talk to baby about what you see and where you're going: "Let's walk over to those plants. Let's walk down the hall. You're a good walker!"

### Dance Party

Play some fun dancing music and show baby how to dance! Wiggle and turn, clap, and stomp your feet. Try lots of different kinds of music. Wave around some scarves and ribbons. Get other family members to join in. Have a dance party.

Notes:



**Don't Forget!** Activities should be supervised at all times by an adult. Any material, food, or toy given to a young child should be reviewed for safety.

# Personal-Social

## Activities to Help Your Baby Grow and Learn

Your sociable baby likes to roll the ball and play Peekaboo or other games with you. He needs to know you are nearby. He actually likes to be the center of attention now! He will show you great affection but may collapse into a tantrum when things don't go his way. He is proud of his new skills, and he wants to learn how to do things by himself.



### Happy Hats

Your baby may enjoy trying on different hats and looking at herself in the mirror. Make a dress-up box with a few hats. As your child gets older, you can add new things now and then.

### Help Me Clean

Your baby can help do small jobs, such as wiping the table with a sponge, stirring pancake mix (with your help), or sweeping up a little dirt with a small broom. He will enjoy doing something special for you. Give him opportunities to be a helper, and let him know he is being helpful.

### Brushing Teeth

Give baby her own toothbrush. Let her see you or her siblings brushing their teeth. Put a tiny dab of toothpaste (without fluoride) on the brush so baby can taste it. Don't expect much brushing. She will probably chew the bristles as she learns about this new thing, and you may need to finish for her. Be sure to cover baby's toothbrush and store it in a clean, safe place until next time.

### To Market, To Market

Take baby to the supermarket with you so baby can "help." Talk about all of the colors and smells. Let baby hold something, such as a small can or a lemon. At the checkout, let baby "pay" the cashier. What a good helper!

### Find Me!

At home, play Hide and Seek by hiding just behind a door, calling to baby, then peeking out so you can be found. A sibling may have fun playing this game. It helps baby understand that when you disappear, you will come back.

### Bathing Baby

When bathing baby, let him bathe a small plastic doll. Show baby how to be gentle with the doll. Later, let him dry and hug the doll. It will teach him to be loving.

### Cleanup Time

Ask baby to help you put the toys away. You will need a box with a safe cover or a shelf where toys should be placed. Show baby how to pick up the toys and where to put them. Keep this task easy and brief right now. It's a good idea to do it together and have fun: "What a good helper!"

Notes:



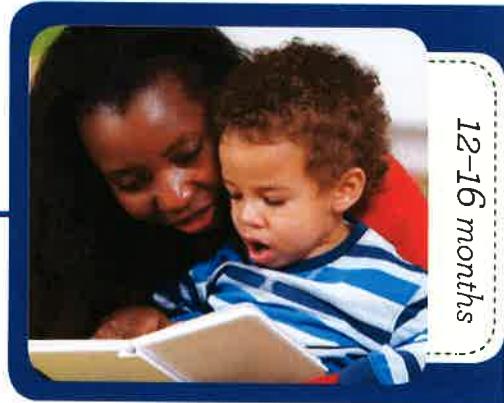
*Don't Forget!* Activities should be supervised at all times by an adult. Any material, food, or toy given to a young child should be reviewed for safety.



# Problem Solving

## Activities to Help Your Baby Grow and Learn

Your baby is a busy explorer. She enjoys holding, stacking, and playing with toys. She is learning her body parts and can probably point to at least one if you ask her. She enjoys books and will "pat" her favorite picture. She may try to help turn pages in a book. She enjoys learning about how things work.



### Fill the Bank

Make a money bank out of a large can or a plastic container. Cut a long slit in the plastic cover about a half-inch wide. Cut circles from cardboard to use as "money" and show your baby how to put these "coins" into the bank.

### Water Painting

Give your baby a clean paintbrush and a small bucket of plain water. On a sunny day, go outside and let your child paint the walls, sidewalk, or fence with water. Your child will enjoy this "painting." Then you can watch it dry and paint again. Try this inside with a small paintbrush and a brown paper bag. Watch the painting disappear!

### Problem Solving

Let your baby figure out how things work and what they do. Show baby how the switch turns the light on and off. Show him how the flashlight works. Talk to him about what you are doing and why: "I'm putting on a coat because I am cold."

### Little Hunter

During quiet times, ask your baby to find the blanket or to get a book from another room. Ask her to get things she cannot see at the time. She might need a little help. When baby is successful, be sure to say, "Thank you. You found it."

### Matching Game

Children this age are just beginning to notice when two things are alike, especially shoes, socks, or other objects they know. Hold up one of baby's shoes or a sock. Ask baby, "Where's the other one just like this?" Help baby make the match: "Yes, these two are the same."

### Copy Me

Play a game with your baby. You do something and then try to get baby to imitate you. Clap your hands. If he tries to imitate you, say, "Look, you can clap, too!" Touch your nose, stick out your tongue, and say, "You try." When he does something new, imitate him. Be silly and have fun.

Notes:



**Don't Forget!** Activities should be supervised at all times by an adult. Any material, food, or toy given to a young child should be reviewed for safety.