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As adults, we give the term 'child's play' to a task that we find particularly easy. But for your child, playing is of the upmost importance for their development. Baby development month by month can be significantly aided by playtime!

Playing can improve social skills, speech development and helps them to understand what is being said to them. But obviously, the way children play changes over their first few months. Here is our guide:

0-3 months:

At this age your baby will be learning how to recognise faces, listen to your voice and observe her close surroundings. She will also start to turn her head from side to side and attempt to squirm and roll around on the floor.

Colourful mobiles are excellent for her to watch and she could perhaps listen to music from a radio or a music box. Pictures and mirrors can also be fixed in her cot. In general, toys which they can interact with, using their hands and feet are a good idea.

Talking to your baby is most important. Just chat, or even sing, about your surroundings or what you are doing. Let her 'exercise' without clothes or nappies to give her more freedom.

3-6 months:

Your baby is now reaching out and grasping at things. She will be forever putting items in her mouth and chewing them. At this stage she will be seeing objects further away and be capable of following them with her eyes. Baby-friendly toys such as rattles and chewy teething rings are a must at this age. It is nice to have playthings with different textures so that she can explore how they feel- furry animals, fabric books and rubber squidgy toys are perfect.

Remember that at this age she will be desperate to explore so encourage this with some fun activities. Try putting her favourite toy just out of reach so that she has to wriggle along to get to it, or find some safe household items for her to bang and chew. Plastic containers and spoons are excellent for this.

6-12 months

By now your baby is recognising other people and communicating by making sounds. She can move around quite efficiently by crawling and wriggling. Her coordination has improved considerably and she will pick up small objects and pass them between her hands. She is now capable of understanding what different items are for.

This is the age for lots of interactive play with your. Ball games, stacking colourful plastic boxes (and knocking them down again!), books full of pictures and an abundance of soft cuddly creatures are all in the top ten of her favourite pastimes.

Take her out where she can explore and see other people and keep talking to her about what she can see. She will respond with her version of talking so make sure you listen and react to her baby gibberish!

Quality play time really is a way to improve baby development month by month.

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