

Baby Steps
to my development
When I am ready to play

Give me face to face time. It provides me training in tracking objects and learning expressions

Give me a mobile to look at when I am on my back. I particularly like bright colors and black and white.

Keep me in the middle of things. I like to be where the action is so that I can learn about the world.

Have me practice "tummy time". Even though I may not like it, it is important for me to practice so that I can gain core strength to crawl and walk.

Make silly faces at me. Stick your tongue out. Imitate my sounds. This teaches me how to read facial expressions, and learn social cues, and expands my vocabulary..

Sing, hum, and dance with me. I like the interaction, and the rhythm, and music is good for my brain.

Read to me; it helps my language and social development .

Let me touch and feel the world around me, different fabrics, and surfaces teach me tactile lessons.

Let me explore in a safe space. I need to have a chance to play on my own.

Narrate your life to me. Tell me about what we are doing together. You may feel silly, but it teaches me new vocabulary and makes me feel included.

Help me to kick my legs and arms by pushing off of you so that I can practice using my muscles and understanding how they work.

Reading to children regularly, from an early age, helps children learn new words, grasp language, have a larger vocabulary, and do better in school.



Baby Steps

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to my development
When I am sleepy

Cuddle me close to you so that I can feel your warmth and be soothed by you. Physical closeness is important for me.

Let me sleep in your bedroom (but not in your bed), so that I know you are close.

Respond to me, my cry, my coo, don't ignore me.

Sometimes I just need to cry, it helps to relieve tension and calm me down. You can comfort me, swaddle me, let me lie on my back and cry it out. But NEVER SHAKE ME.

Learn my cues that say I am overstimulated (I look away, fuss, get rigid or limp), and let me rest.

Learn what my different cries mean and act. Am I hungry, teething, or just in need of love? Helping to soothe me won't spoil me, it will relax me. And remember if you are tense, I will sense it.

Try giving me a gentle massage with a firm but gentle rhythmic motion. This will help soothe me and put me to sleep.

Take a nap with me, or do other relaxing activities. That way I get used to sleeping with some noise, and you get to relax and reenergize too.

Offer me a pacifier since sucking is a natural soothing reflex for me.

Help me to soothe myself, by creating a better environment. I like dark, quiet places, and I may like being swaddled so I feel safe. Singing, humming, or rocking me might also help.

Remember, preemies develop along the same path as full term infants but at a slower rate. Even after leaving the NICU they may continue to be more sensitive to overstimulation.