

# 50

SIMPLE WAYS  
to STIMULATE YOUR CHILD  
to START SMARTER



## CHAT HIM/HER UP, MAKE HIM/HER LAUGH



### Blab away

Leave short pauses where your baby would speak, soon he/she'll catch on the rhythm of conversation.

### Go gaga

Your baby really tunes in to your silly cooing and high-pitched baby talk.

### Clue him/her in

When you announce, "I'm going to turn on the light now" before flipping the switch, you're teaching cause and effect.

### Tickle him/her toes

Laughter is the first step in developing a sense of humour, it teaches your child to anticipate events.

### Be a funny face

Puff up your cheeks, pull up your ear, stick out your tongue, make a funny noise. Keep to the same routine three or four times, then change the rules to keep his/her guessing.

### Joke around

Build his/her budding sense of humour.



## TEACH LANGUAGE AND COUNTING

### Take a cue from Sesame Street

Dedicate each week to a letter of the alphabet. For instance, read books that start with A, eat A foods, cut up snacks into that shape, and write the letter on your sidewalk with chalk.

### Count everything

Count the number of steps in your house. Or his/her fingers and toes. Make a habit of counting out loud and soon he/she'll join in.

### Read books

Scientists have found that babies as young as 8 months can learn to recognize the sequence of words in a story when it's read 2 or 3 times in a row, this is believed to help them learn language.

### Tell tall tales

Choose him/her favorite story and replace the main character with him/her name to make it fun.

### Go to the library

Take advantage of storytime, puppet shows, and rows and rows of books.

## Teach Texture



### Grab a tissue or two

If your baby loves pulling tissues out of the box, let him/her! For a few cents, you've got sensory playthings that he/she can crumple or smooth out. Hide small toys under and thrill your tot when you "find" them again.

### Get touchy-feely

Keep a box of different-textured fabrics: silk, terrycloth, wool and linen. Gently rub the cloths on your baby's cheek, feet and tummy, describing the way each feels.

### Feel your way

Walk around the house with your tot in arms and touch his/her hand to the cool window, some soft laundry, a smooth plant leaf, and other safe objects, labeling items as you go.

### Let your child play with him/her food

When he/she's ready, serve foods that vary in texture, he/she'll get to practice his/her pincer grasp and explore his/her senses.



## Get PHYSICAL

### Be a playground

Lie down on the floor, and let your baby climb and crawl all over you. It will help boost him/her coordination and problem-solving skills.

### Build an obstacle course

Boost motor skills by placing sofa cushions, pillows, boxes, or toys on the floor and then showing your baby how to crawl over under and around them.

### Shake it up, baby

Teach him/her to twist and shout, do the funky chicken or twirl like a ballerina.

### Play "follow the leader"

Crawl through the house, vary your speed. Stop at interesting places to play.

### Now follow his lead

As your toddler gets older, he/she'll stretch his/her creativity to see if you really will do everything he/she does, like make silly noises crawl backward or laugh.



## PLAY AND Be Silly

### Surprise him/her

Every now and then, delight your baby by gently blowing on him/her face, arms or tummy. Make a pattern out of your breaths and watch him/her react and anticipate.

### Practice three-card monte

Grab a few empty plastic food containers, and hide one of your baby's small toys under one. Shuffle the containers, and let him/her find the prize.

### Play peekaboo

Your hide-and-seek antics do more than bring on the giggles. Your baby learns that objects can disappear and then comes back.

### Pick it up

Even if it seems like your baby repeatedly drops toys off him/her high chair just to drive you nuts go fetch. He/she's learning and testing the laws of gravity.



## Stimulate BABY'S Vision

### Make eye contact

Infants recognize faces early on, each time he/she stares at you he/she is building his memory.

### Stick out your tongue

2 days old newborns can imitate simple facial movements.

### Let him reflect

Have your baby stare at him/herself in the mirror.

### Make a difference

Young infant will look back and forth and figure out the distinguishing features which sets the stage for letter recognition and reading later on.



## EXPLORE new surroundings

### Share the view

Take your baby on walks and narrate what you see to give him/her endless vocabulary-building opportunities.

### Go shopping

When you need a break from your song and dance, visit the supermarket. The faces, sounds and colors there provide perfect baby entertainment.

### Change the scenery

Switch your toddler's high chair to the other side of the table. You'll challenge his/her memory of where things are placed at meals.



# Make Memories

Baby Sign Language: Alphabet



## Make a family album

Include photographs of relatives near and far, and flip through it often to build your child's memories. When Grandma calls, show him/her, her picture as he/she listens on the phone.

## Create a zoo book

On your next visit, take photos of favorite animals to include in an album. Later "read" it together, naming all the familiar creatures or adding animals sounds and stories.

## Put him/her in the spotlight

Together, watch old home videos of your baby enjoying his/her first bath, learning to roll over, playing with Grandpa. Narrate the story to build language and memory.

## Make a mug-shot memory game

Take close-up pictures of all the important people in your child's life. As he/she gets older, you can alter the memory game by starting with the photos facedown.

# Bond every CHANCE YOU Get



## Breast-feed, if possible

Do it for as long as you can, it's a fact that schoolkids who were breast-fed as infants have higher IQs.

## Make the most of diaper time

Use moments on the changing pad to teach body parts or pieces of clothing. Narrating help your baby learn to anticipate routines.

## Turn off the tube

Your baby's brain needs one-on-one interaction that no TV show, no matter how educational, can provide.

## Don't forget to give it a rest

Spend a few minutes each day simply sitting on the floor with your baby. Let him/her explore, and see where he/she takes you.

# TIPS for TODDLERS

## Make more out of the storytime

Point out little details in the pictures, and ask your toddler questions, ranging from the abstract.

## Play it again, Sam

Dig out the box of your toddler's old rattles and mirrored baby toys. You'll be amazed at the new ways he/she finds to play with them.

## Talk feelings through

Cuddle up at bedtime, and ask your child what made him/her happy or sad that day.

## Dress up

Let your toddler play with some of Dad's old shirts, see where his/her creativity and imagination take you.

## Hunt bugs

Look at pictures of harmless insects in a book or magazine, then go to the park to find them.



## Wear rose-colored glasses

Pick a color, and ask your toddler if he/she can spot it when you go on a walk or car ride together. Then let him/her pick a color for you to hunt.

## Put your kid to work

Little tots can help sort laundry into darks and whites. Your child may even be able to pick out which clothes belong to him/her.

## Play in the rain

Jump in puddles. Sit in wet grass together, it's a way of learning about wet and dry.

## Speak volumes

Gather a few different-size cups or plastic containers and let your kid pour water from one to another at his/her next bath. Talk about which cups are bigger and which are smaller.

## Let him/her be the boss (sometimes)

Build confidence by giving your toddler a choice between two items whenever possible. He/she'll learn his/her decisions count.



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