

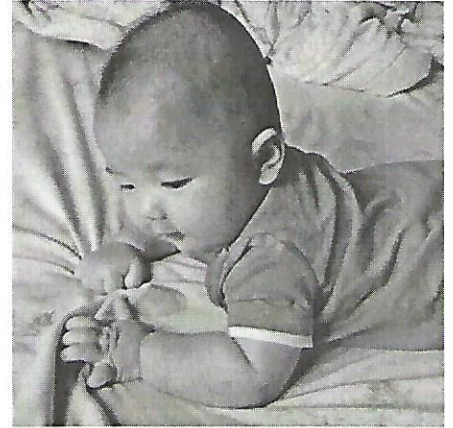


Movement is key for healthy newborn and infant development

Activity is important for all children's development, and it's equally key for newborns and infants. Babies need freedom of movement every day to develop and build muscles before they begin sitting up, crawling or walking.

Freedom of movement for a baby is time spent interacting with and exploring his or her environment outside of a bouncer, stroller or carrier. Time spent in those secure seats doesn't count as active time for a child.

Tummy time is one of the best ways to help newborns and infants be active and develop muscle strength. For tummy time, lay the baby on his stomach so he can lift his head up and look around. Start with a short period of time and gradually increase as the child grows. Tummy time should always be supervised.



Here are additional ways to encourage active, free movement for newborns and infants.

1-5 months

- Encourage your baby to lift his head by holding toys at eye level in front of him.
- Give your baby something to reach for and hold onto such as your finger or a toy.
- Hold your baby upright with her feet on the floor, and sing and talk to her.
- Use toys that are soft, safe for infants and colorful to attract attention.
- Place your baby on his back to sleep during naps and at nighttime.

6-8 months

- Place toys near your baby so she can move and reach for them.
- Put toys just out of reach to encourage him to roll over from his tummy or back to reach them.
- Hold your baby up while she sits or support her with pillows; let her look around or give her toys to look at while she balances.
- Play on the floor with your baby every day.

9-11 months

- Give baby a large, safe place to move around and explore.
- Stay close by as your baby explores and moves around so she knows that you are near.
- Put your baby close to furniture that she can safely use to pull up to stand.
- Child-proof your home as your baby begins to move about on his own. Use safety gates, lock up cleaning, laundry, lawn care and car care products, and lock outside and basement doors.

For more information about encouraging a child's development, visit www.helpmegrowmn.org.