



Month 8

Swinging, Spinning and Rocking

Infant

Fishing Boat

Lie on your back, knees to your chest, ankles together. Have your child lie on your shins, straddling your ankles, with his knees bent and toes in the air. For a secure “mooring”, you can hook your toes outward and anchor them around the back of his thighs. Hold his hands or shoulders. Then rock back and forth from head to toe, as if riding the waves.

Airplane

Lie on your back, knees bent, toes pointing outward. Take your child’s hands in yours, place your feet on his lower abdomen, and lift him up for a smooth “take-off”. When he is suspended over your head, encourage him to straighten his legs horizontally. How high can the little airplane fly? It all depends on your child’s delight and comfort. Keep your knees bent and place your hands under his chest, if he feels more secure flying low. Stiffen your arms and legs, if he’s ready to soar.

Sheet Swing

Using a blanket and two adults, have the child sit or lie in the blanket. Each adult holds an end and swings the blanket.

Rocking Together

Snuggle with your child in a sitting position. Hold your child while rocking side to side and back and forth.

Spinning Roll

Lay your baby on a raised surface so there is a slight incline. Gently roll her down the incline. Go back to the top and roll the other way.

Just Dance!

Turn on some music and while holding your baby in your arms, providing whatever support they require, dance around the room. Your young infant will require head support with you holding him close to your chest, but older infants

(over 6 months) can just be held at the waist or pelvis, so that they have to hold their body's upright with your movements. Be sure to slowly spin your baby around, rock their bodies by "dipping" them, and just have fun!

And a final word about equipment ...

Many homes have infant swings that provide a variety of movements and other sensory experiences – music, lights, etc. These can be great ways for your infant to enjoy movement and relax, while also providing parents with a break. It is important to remember, however, that children should not remain in any one piece of equipment for prolonged periods of time. Children who lay in one position for prolonged periods of time, with their heads resting on any surface are at risk of developing plagiocephally or "baby flathead". This is why changing a young infant's position regularly is so important.

Exersaucers can also provide some "spinning" movements, as many of the seats rotate around when the child pushes with their feet. Children must have head and trunk control before they can be safely placed in an exersaucer. A good rule is to not place children in an exersaucer until they can sit and play independently on the floor for at least 5 minutes without falling over. And again, time in an exersaucer should be limited to no more than 20 minutes.

References:

SPARC: Sports and Recreation New Zealand (2008). Balance: swinging, spinning and rocking. Active Movement.

Yack, E., Sutton, S., Aquilla, P. (1998) Building Bridges through Sensory Integration. Willowdale (ON): Print 3, Syd and Ellen Lerer