



Month 1: Tummy Time, Rolling and Crawling Infant Activities

Tummy Time

While baby is awake, it is important to have tummy time.

- Important muscles used for moving and exploring are strengthened (legs, arms, back, and neck).
 - Whenever possible, remove baby from bouncy seat, highchair, or off your knee and let her move and explore on the floor.
 - If baby doesn't like being on tummy, try placing on tummy for short periods while you play with him. Some babies enjoy tummy time more when they are lying on you!
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- Lie on your back with baby lying facing you on your tummy
 - Dance with baby while holding and supporting her on her tummy
 - Lie on your back and lay him on your legs on his tummy. Lift him up and down gently.
 - Read a book to her while she is on her tummy.
 - Massage him after a bath while he lies on his tummy.
 - Roll a ball in front of her while she lies on her tummy so she will lift her head to watch it.
 - Blow bubbles near him so he can watch them move.

Songs to sing in tummy time:

Hickory Dickory Dock

Hickory dickory dock,
(touch baby's toes, knees, hips)
The mouse ran up the clock.
(tickle up his back)
The clock struck one,
(touch his neck)
The mouse ran down,
(tickle down his back)
Hickory dickory dock.
(touch is toes, knees and hips)

Itsy Bitsy Spider

Itsy, Bitsy spider

Climbed up the waterspout
Down came the rain
And washed the spider out.
Out came the sun
And dried up all the rain
And the Itsy Bitsy spider
Went up the waterspout again.

*Use your hand to be the spider that climbs up your child's back or arm.
Your child might like to be the spider and use her fingers to climb up your arm!*

Round and Round the Garden

Round and round the garden, went the teddy bear.
One step, two steps,
Tickle under there.

Walk your fingers around you child's lower back. Take steps with your fingers up their back, and then tickle the back of their neck or armpit.

Rolling

Rolling helps infants to develop balance, strength, and their eyes. Most babies learn to roll from back to front, and then front to back.

Roll Around

- Lay baby on her back and gently lift her leg up (not too high). While holding the other leg down, slowly move the raised leg in a small circular movement. Repeat with the other leg.
- Lay baby on his back and gently lift up his leg (not too high). While holding the other leg down, cross the lifted leg over the leg on the floor to the other side and roll him over onto his tummy.
- Lay 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.

Rock and Roll ... to develop a sense of balance and upper body strength. Slightly deflate a small beach ball and set the baby on it, belly down. Hold him securely, while gently rolling him on the ball back and forth, and side to side. Sing a song while you roll to make it even more fun.

Crawling

Infants need to crawl along the ground and then push themselves into a sitting position, when they are able to hold their bodies off the ground.

- What do I need to know about crawling?

- Encourage your baby to crawl rather than bottom shuffle so his muscles develop and he learns to use the opposite arm, opposite leg movement.
- Before your baby crawls, she may rock back and forth for a few weeks. She is checking she can shift her weight from her upper body to lower body.
- All children are different and learn to do things at different times and in different ways. An infant may commando crawl on his tummy (pull himself along) before he gets up on his hands and feet or he may go straight to crawling.

Crawl with Me ... to develop a sense of balance, upper body strength and global mobility.

Lay your baby on his stomach on the floor. Roll up a towel and hold it behind his feet. This towel will act as a stopper. Hold the towel firmly and the baby will naturally push against it. You can help him move forward by stretching him gently, but don't push. You can also place a toy just out of reach so he has to crawl a little to reach it.

Let's Crawl

- Once crawling, encourage your child to crawl over and around the furniture, crawl on the grass outside, crawl over surfaces that feel different.
- Place toys just out of reach and encourage her to crawl forward.
- Crawl down an incline – gently hold onto his waist as he does this. If you have a grassy slope nearby, crawl up and down this.
- Chase her as she crawls around the room and let her chase you too.
- Play games crawling through boxes
- Allow her to crawl under your outstretched arm
- Make tunnels out of chairs to crawl through.

References:

Invest in Kids Foundation. (2001). What a child will be depends on you and me: A resource kit for a child's first five years. Toronto (ON): Invest in Kids Foundation.

SPARC: Sports and Recreation New Zealand. (2008). Tummy time, rolling and crawling. Active Movement.

Muskoka District Best Start Network

Module 2: Tummy Time, Rolling and Crawling Infant Ideas

Tummy time is a great time to incorporate massage into your child's routine ...

Why is massage good for your infant?

- It is a lovely way to relax with a baby or your child.
- It helps our children to feel welcome, loved and respected.
- It is beneficial for children of all ages, not just for infants.
- It soothes, relaxes and calms both of you, while also helping her brain and sensory system.
- It strengthens the muscles.

How do infants learn from touch?

- Touch is an infant's strongest sense and the one he learns the most from.
 - Sensory receptors in the skin send messages to the brain, helping it to grow and make new connections
 - The most sensitive receptors are in the mouth. By putting everything in her mouth, she learns about size, shape and texture.
 - Touch helps him learn how his body fits together, what everything is called, how big it is and how it fits within a space.
- When you touch her bare feet, she learns where her toes are.
- When he chews on his toes, he is learning that the toes belong to him

What can you do when massaging?

- You have a warm room, warm hands, and a warm child
- She is lying on a soft, comfortable surface
- You use raindrop movements down his body to his fingertips and toes
- One hand is always touching the child. Try to make the massage seamless.
- Stroke down the body and out along the arms
- Work your thumb down her body in circles
- Use raindrop movements down his body to his fingertips and toes
- Use different materials on her skin and talk about the different feelings eg. This one feels rough, this is prickly, this is smooth.
- Gently squeeze down the body and along the arms and legs (remember her finger and toes).

- Tell a story while you massage. You could make up a story that is based on what you're doing. For example, gently tap your fingers on her skin like raindrops while making up a story about them.
- You can also sing gently to him. He will think you have a wonderful voice.
- Make a massage box to use at "touching time". It could include:
 - A scarf
 - Ribbons
 - Soft fabric
 - Coloured string to gently pull between the fingers and toes
 - Wool
 - A rubber ball
 - A koosh ball
 - A cardboard cylinder to roll on the skin
 - A straw to blow on the skin
 - Feathers

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Tips for success:

1. **Keep your eye on the prize** – If your child isn't keen on trying a new skill or activity, use a brightly coloured toy to draw him in. Hold the toy in the direction you want him to turn, roll or crawl.
2. **Get Social** – Join or create your own playgroup with other parents, children or caregivers in your neighbourhood. This is a great way for children and adults to socialize, exercise and trade tips, toys and techniques.
3. **Be a role model** – You are your child's greatest role model. Children are much more likely to be active and enjoy if they see their parents or caregivers being active.
4. **Don't fence me in** – Limit time in baby seats, car seats, loungers and cribs. Babies spend most of their first year sleeping, so their waking hours should be spent stretching their mental and physical muscles.
5. **Get out ... Often** – Fresh air is a great way to boost your child's chances and desire to move his body. Many children also sleep better after being outdoors.
6. **Be a cheerleader** – Clap, giggle, snuggle, sing and praise your child's efforts, not just his accomplishments.