



Activities



FUN & EASY SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL ACTIVITIES

Try these activities with your 2-month-old—a great way to have fun together and support your child's social-emotional development.

Sing songs you remember from childhood to your baby. Hold your baby close in your arms or in a baby carrier. Gently dance with your baby.

With your baby on her back, take a tissue and wave it above your baby for her to see. Tissues also can fly, float, and tickle parts of your baby's body. See how your baby responds. If she fusses, then stop playing.

If your baby cries, find out what he needs. He is letting you know something with his cry. When you respond, he learns to trust you are there for him. You cannot spoil your baby at this age.

Hold your baby and put your face close to hers. Make silly faces. Smile at your baby. Stick out your tongue. Yawn. Wait a few seconds and see if she tries to repeat your actions back to you.

Step back from your baby so he cannot see you. Gently call his name. Watch what he does. Does he stop moving for a moment? Does he try to move his head toward your voice? Pick him up. Say, "Here I am."

Place interesting things close to her bed for her to look at. Hang objects or toys out of reach. Tape simple pictures from magazines on the wall.

Introduce new, safe* objects for your baby to explore. Simple objects such as plastic cups and big wooden spoons are all new to him.

**Be sure to review safety guidelines with your health care provider.*

Talk to your baby about what she is doing, seeing, hearing, and feeling. Say, "I am changing your diaper. You will like being nice and dry. I love you!"



Activities

AGE
6
MONTHS

FUN & EASY SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL ACTIVITIES

Try these activities with your 6-month-old—a great way to have fun together and support your child's social-emotional development.

Get down on the floor with your baby and play with him on his level. Look at toys, books, or objects together. Have fun, laugh, and enjoy your time together.

Learn your baby's special rhythms, and try to settle into a regular routine for eating, sleeping, and diapering.

Talk to your baby about his routines. This will help your baby feel secure and content.

When your baby cries, respond to her. Whisper in her ear to quiet her. Hold her close and make soft sounds. This will help her know that you are always there and that you love her.

Let your baby begin to feed herself bits of food and use a spoon and a cup. She will begin to enjoy doing things herself.

Bring your baby to new places to see new things. Go on a walk to a park or in the mall, or just bring him shopping. He will love to see new things while you keep him safe.

Use your baby's name when you dress, feed, and diaper him. Say, "Here is Dusty's finger. Here is Dusty's foot."

Visit a friend who has a baby or young child. Stay close to your baby and let her know that these new people are okay. It takes a little time to warm up.

Bath time* is a wonderful time to have fun and be close with your baby. Sponges, plastic cups, and washcloths make simple, inexpensive tub toys.

**Be sure to review safety guidelines with your health care provider.*



FUN & EASY SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL ACTIVITIES

Try these activities with your 1-year-old—a great way to have fun together and support your child's social-emotional development.

Play on the floor with your baby every day. Crawl around with her, or just get down and play on her level. She will really enjoy having you to herself.

Dance to music with your baby. Hold his hands while he bends up and down. Clap and praise him when he "dances" by himself.

Let your baby know every day how much you love him and how special he is—when he wakes up in the morning and when he goes to sleep at night.

Play gentle tickle games with your baby, but make sure to stop when she lets you know she has had enough. Watch her carefully and you will know.

When you are dressing or diapering your baby, talk about her body parts and show her your body parts. Say, "Here is Daddy's nose. Here is Destiny's nose."

Go on a walk to a park or a place where children play. Let your baby watch them and visit a little if he is ready.

Twirl your baby around. He will enjoy a little rough-and-tumble play, but make sure you stop when he has had enough.

Sit on the floor with your baby and roll a ball back and forth. Clap your hands when your baby pushes the ball or "catches" the ball with his hands.





Activities



FUN & EASY SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL ACTIVITIES

Try these activities with your 18-month-old—a great way to have fun together and support your child's social-emotional development.

Your toddler likes to have a regular daily routine. Talk to him about what you are doing now and what will be happening next. Give him time to be active and time to be quiet.

Have a pretend party with stuffed animals or dolls. You can cut out little "presents" from a magazine, make a pretend cake, and sing the birthday song.

Your toddler needs a lot of time to move around and exercise. Go for a walk, visit a playground, or take a trip to a shopping mall.

Dance with your toddler. Make a simple instrument out of a large plastic food tub (for a drum) or a small plastic container filled with beans or rice (for a shaker).

Your toddler will love to help with daily tasks. Give her simple "jobs" to do and let her know what a big girl she is. She can wipe off a table, put her toys away, or help sweep up.

Help your child learn about emotions. Make happy faces, sad faces, mad faces, and silly faces in front of a mirror. This is fun!

Set up playtimes with other children. Your child doesn't understand how to share yet, so make sure there are plenty of toys. Stay close by and help him learn how to play with other children.

Storytimes, especially before naptime and bedtime, are a great way to settle down before sleep. Let your child choose books to read and help turn pages. Help him name what he sees.





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FUN & EASY SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL ACTIVITIES

Try these activities with your 2-year-old—a great way to have fun together and support your child's social-emotional development.

Play Parade or Follow the Leader with your toddler. Your child will love to copy you—and be the leader!

Try to have **set routines** during the day, and let your child know what will be happening next. Say, "Remember, after we brush your hair, we get dressed."

Have a special **reading time** every day with your toddler. Snuggle up and get close. Before bedtime or naptime is a great time to read together.

Give your toddler choices, but keep them simple. Let her choose a red or a blue shirt while dressing. Let her choose milk or juice at lunch.

Encourage your child to **pretend play**. Put a few small chairs in a row to make a "bus." Cut up some paper "money" to pay the driver. Ask, "Where will we go today?"

Teach your child simple songs and finger plays, such as "The Itsy-Bitsy Spider."

Your toddler is learning **all about emotions**. Help him label his feelings when he is mad, sad, happy, or silly. Say, "You are really happy" or "You seem really mad."

Get down on the floor and play with your child. Try to follow your child's lead by playing with toys he chooses and trying his ideas.



Activities

AGE 30 MONTHS

FUN & EASY SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL ACTIVITIES

Try these activities with your 30-month-old—a great way to have fun together and support your child's social-emotional development.

Give your child directions that have two steps.

Say, "Put all of the LEGOs in the box, and then put the box in the closet." Let him know what a big help he is!

Make a "Me Book" with your child.

Take some pieces of paper and glue in pictures of your child, family members, pets, or other special things. Tape or staple the pages together.

Let your child help when you are cooking and cleaning.*

She can do things such as helping to stir, putting flour in a cup, or putting away spoons and forks in the drawer.

**Be sure to review safety guidelines with your health care provider.*

Let your child do more things for himself. He can put on his shoes and coat when you go out. Make sure you give him plenty of time to work on these new skills. Say, "What a big boy!"

Your child loves to imitate you.

Try new words, animal sounds, and noises, and see if your child can imitate what you say or how you sound.

Encourage creative play, such as drawing with crayons, painting, and playing with playdough. Playing with chalk on the sidewalk is fun.

Play with your child and help her learn how to share. Show her how to share and praise her when he shares with you. This is a new thing for her, so do not expect too much at this age.

Invite a friend with a child over for a playdate. Keep it short, such as 1 or 2 hours. Have some playtime with enough toys for two, snack time, and some outdoor play. Say, "That was fun! See you next time."



FUN & EASY SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL ACTIVITIES

Try these activities with your 3-year-old—a great way to have fun together and support your child's social-emotional development.

Tell your child a simple story about something she did that was funny or interesting. See if your child can tell a different story about herself.

Draw simple pictures of faces that show happy, sad, excited, or silly expressions. Cut them out and glue them on a Popsicle stick or pencil. Let your child act out the different feelings with the puppets.

At dinner time, let family members talk about their day. Help your child tell about her day. Say, "Latoya and I went to the park today. Latoya, tell your sister what you did at the park."

Give your child directions that have at least two steps when you and he are cooking, dressing, or cleaning. Say, "Put that pan in the sink, and then pick up the red spoon."

Tell your child a favorite story, such as the Three Little Pigs or Goldilocks and the Three Bears. See if your child can tell you how the animals felt in the story.

Tell silly jokes with your child. Simple "What am I?" riddles are also fun. Have a good time and laugh with your child.

Play games that involve following simple rules, such as Mother May I and Red Light, Green Light.

Create a pretend argument between stuffed animals or dolls. Talk with your child about what happened, feelings, and how best to work out problems when they come up.





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FUN & EASY SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL ACTIVITIES

Try these activities with your 4-year-old—a great way to have fun together and support your child's social-emotional development.

Introduce a new feeling each day, such as bored. Use pictures, gestures, and words. Encourage your child to use a variety of words to describe how he feels.

Encourage activities that involve sharing, such as building with blocks, coloring with crayons, and playing dress up. Teach your child how to ask a friend for a turn. Give your child a lot of time to play with other children.

Take your child to the library for story hour. She can learn about sitting in a group and listening to stories.

Take your child to the store, a restaurant, or the library. Explore new places. Talk with her about how people are alike and how they are different.

Provide opportunities for your child to be creative. Empty containers, glue, newspapers, rubber bands, and magazines can be used to make new inventions.

Make puppets out of Popsicle sticks by gluing on paper faces, adding yarn for hair, and so forth. Put on a show about two children who meet and become friends.

When doing housework or yard work, allow your child to do a small part on his own. Let him empty the wastebasket or clean crumbs off the table.

Use stuffed animals to act out an argument. Talk first about how the different animals are feeling. Then, talk about different ways to come to an agreement.



FUN & EASY SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL ACTIVITIES

Try these activities with your 5-year-old—a great way to have fun together and support your child's social-emotional development.

When your child has friends over, encourage them to play games that require working together. Try building a tent out of old blankets, playing catch, or acting out stories.

Build a store, house, puppet stage, or fire truck out of old boxes.

Your child can invite a friend over to play store or house, have a puppet show, or be firefighters.

Ask your child her birthday, telephone number, and first and last name. Practice what she would do if she was separated from you at the store.

Tell your child a favorite nursery rhyme that involves the idea of "right" and "wrong." Discuss what kinds of choices the characters made in the story.

Gather old shirts, hats, and other clothes from friends or a thrift store. Encourage dramatic play—acting out stories, songs, and scenes from the neighborhood.

Play games with your child such as Go Fish, Checkers, or Candy Land. Board games or card games that have three or more rules are great.

Show your child pictures in magazines of people from different cultures. Talk about things that are the same or different between your family and other families.

Talk about real dangers (fire, guns, cars) and make-believe dangers (monsters under the bed) using hand-drawn pictures or pictures cut out from a magazine.

