

# Playtime during the first few months helps your baby discover...



## Their body

When your baby is born their body responds automatically to certain movements and positions. As they grow and gain more control over both their head and body these reflexes disappear.

### Here are some things you can do to help your baby develop control:

- Stroke them and draw attention to their body parts as you wash, dry, massage, dress and change them
- Talk to them as you change their position. Move them slowly so they can keep control and have a chance to respond
- Place them in different positions and encourage them to look at and reach out for things. At first they will be more interested in your facial expressions than toys
- Help them to see and suck their fingers
- If your baby finds it hard to bring their hands forward where they can explore them:
  - Place them on their side to play
  - Put a pair of rolled up socks under each shoulder when they are lying on their back
  - Round their shoulders forward as you cuddle them.



## Have daily tummy time

- If your baby does not like being on their tummy:
  - Place a rolled up towel under their chest keeping their arms over and in front of the towel. This balances their weight and helps them lift their head
  - Lie on the floor in front of them so they can see your face
  - Place a baby safe mirror in front of them where they can see it
  - Lay them on your chest.



## The world around them

Plenty of quiet interaction and sleep are important for your baby's development at this age. Babies are trying to make sense of what they are seeing, hearing, tasting, smelling and feeling so:

- Limit how much stimulation they are having at one time, for example allow them to look away from you or close their eyes when feeding
- Make use of the short time they are fully awake and alert by interacting with them without distractions, for example turn off the TV or radio
- Watch out for signs that show you your baby is tired and needs settling, like grizzling, crying, fist clenching, eye rubbing or yawning
- Even if they appear to like it, do not put your baby in front of the TV or electronic toys as the noise and flashing lights can overstimulate them and make it hard for them to settle.