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Towards the first steps of your infant

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1st Lesson



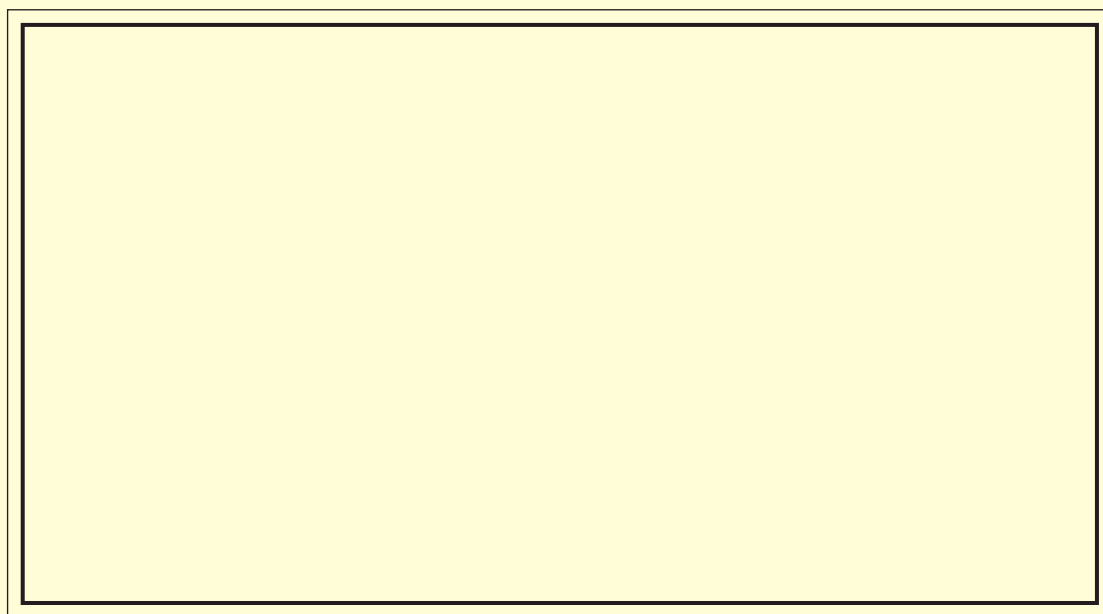
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Samanmali P. Sumanasena

Towards The First Steps of Your Child
A Specialized Guide on Early Childhood Development
by
Samanmali P. Sumanasena

2018

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1st Lesson

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Art

By Mr.Nihal Wijesinghe.

Instructions to use this book

- The milestones your child is expected to reach within every 3 months are shown in green.

Activities for you to carry out with your baby, are indicated by numbers.

Milestones

- Social and emotional
- Vision and fine motor
- Cognitive
- Language
- Motor

Instructions are grouped under the above sub headings for each age range



1. Introduction

Evidence from research in the field of developmental medicine, shows that, optimum Motor, Cognitive, Language, and Social and Emotional development takes place from 0-3 years.

Therefore it is important to expose your infant to the best stimuli during this period to achieve the best developmental potential.

This book is for all newborns and infants to achieve the best developmental potential.

If your infant was exposed to any adverse events during, the pregnancy, during the birth process or after, there is a risk of injury to the developing brain and the neural circuitries. These may result in delays or differences during the mental and physical development of the baby.

This booklet will also take you through a program of infant stimulation that will help your baby to minimize the effect of such adversities. The multidisciplinary staff in the clinic that you will be attending to obtain services will explain and demonstrate how these activities could be carried out to reach the next milestone according to the age of your child.

This booklet will give guidance on simple activities to be carried out within the natural environment of your home in addition to the instructions given by your Occupational, Physical and the Speech and Language Therapist. Continue to carry out all the advices given by the team of professionals providing interventions for your infant together with the instructions of this book.

Ensure you carry out activities mentioned in this booklet at least 10 to 20 minutes every two hours when your infant is awake. Make these activities part of the daily routine of your family. Your interventions should always be adult mediated interactive activities where the child as an active participant. There should never be passive learning

Research shows that the most rapid neuron (brain cell) development takes place from birth to 3 years of children. Therefore we aim to guide you to achieve the best development of your baby during this optimum period, minimizing any defects or delays in the development of milestones.

This book will describe how to achieve those milestones in the Gross Motor, Fine Motor, Cognitive, Social and Emotional and Language domains.

Whenever you are feeding your baby or doing activities such as bathing make sure that you carry out the activities described in this book. It should be a joyful and a satisfying learning experience for the baby and you.

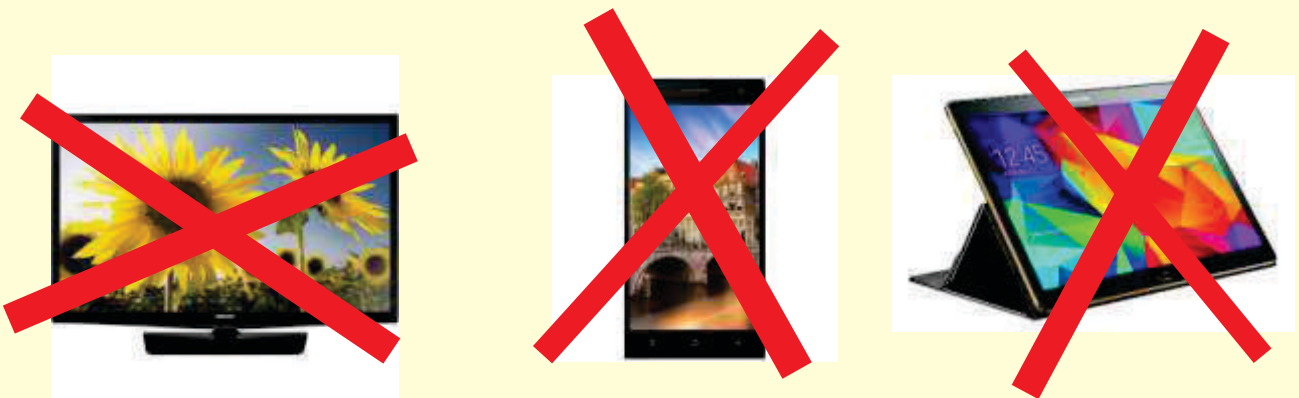
Some special messages you should always remember

- Your baby is a precious gift you have received. Therefore it is your prime duty to look after your baby with love and care.
- The main aim of this book is to provide you with ideas and suggestions on how to participate at interactive play with the child to ensure the best child - parent social interaction.
- The messages contained within this book will enable you to acquire new knowledge on how to interactively play with your child and to build up skills.
- This book will guide you to incorporate these activities to develop the milestones of your baby by making it part of your daily life routines.

• Things you should never do

Please do not give any digital screens to your child, including mobile phones, tabs, television or any other form of audio visual stimulants.

Such stimuli are proven to result in delays and deficits in child development according to research.



Milestones your infant will reach from birth to 3 months.

1#Social and emotional development

- 1.1 Turns eyes towards the caregivers face. (from few days)
- 1.2 Respond smiling with adult. (from 8 weeks)
- 1.3 Cries in response to any discomfort. (from birth)

2. Vision and fine motor development

- 2.1 Looks at an object. (from few days)
- 2.2 Can differentiate one from few objects. (from 8 week)
- 2.3 Does not keep hands tightly grasped and will open up. The majority of infants are able to follow a moving object horizontally and vertically .
(from 12 weeks)

3. Language development

- 3.1 Infant responds to environmental sounds. (from birth)
- 3.2 Infant responds by looking towards the side of the sound. (from 8 weeks)
- 3.3 Infant responds by turning the head towards the sound. (from 12 weeks)

4. Cognitive development

- 4.1 Awareness about the environment. (is sensitive to the external environment from birth)
- 4.2 Is receptive when parents or caregivers speak to the child lovingly. (responsive smiling from 8 weeks)
- 4.3 When an object is shown, the infant looks at it with interest (from 8 weeks)
- 4.4 The infant responds with interest to pictures and explained using simple words.
(from 12 weeks)

5. Motor Milestones

- 5.1 Infant should be maintained in correct postures (from birth)
- 5.2 Infant kicks with legs and moves hands vigorously (from 12 weeks)
- 5.3 Infant is able to hold head on the trunk and balance head in the upright position (from 12 weeks)
- 5.4 Is able to lift the head while on tummy (prone position) (from 12 weeks)

● Social and Emotional Development

- 1.1 Looks intently at the caregiver's face (from few days of life)

“I love to look at mother's face”

From birth till two months, the infant will begin to intently look at the face of the caregiver or any other adults' face. When somebody goes close to the infant and start speaking to him lovingly or when the mother pays attention to the infant during breast feeding, he will start intensely looking at the mommy's face.

● Activities

1. Whenever you are with your baby always smile with her, while talking in baby language and trying to get her attention.
2. During daily activities such as feeding, bathing, dressing, make various noises, smile and look at the baby's face.
3. Get closer to the baby's face and make expressions with your face and speak gently to the infant, by looking in her eyes.



1.2. Responds by smiling with an adult (from 8 weeks)

“ I like to smile with my family members when they speak to me”

When completing the second month of life infants prefer to respond happily to the stimulants provided by the adults. When parents or other adults speak to the baby in a loving manner they begin to smile in response and when the adult responds to the baby, the infant will respond more vigorously by more and more sounds and expressions to get further attention of the adults.

● Activities

1. When you speak and interact with the infant in a loving manner the baby will smile back at you in return. When the infant responds, encourage the infant to respond more by further stimulation.

1.3. Cries in response to any discomfort (from birth)

“I cry out loud when I am in discomfort or when things don't happen the way I want”

When the infant feels hungry, cold, warm or wet (due to faeces or urine), he will cry to express his feeling. The only emotion which he knows to express his discomfort is by crying.

● Activities

1. Try to find out the reason why the baby is crying and eliminate the reason by addressing the baby's need.
2. When the infant shows discomfort, be kind, gentle and responsive and try to sooth her. Then the infant will learn to the trust the caregiver.

2. Vision and Fine Motor Development

Vision is the 1st developmental domain that will mature in an infant. This is the foundation of fine motor skills achievement. With the visual development, the infant will learn to use hands to initiate activities.

2.1. Is Looks at an object (from few days)

“I like to look at objects and toys”

• Activities

1. Show colourful toys, specially red, yellow or gold closer to baby's eyes (approximately 20cm away). Gently move a toy horizontally to the left and to the right in an arc to encourage in the child to fix the focus on the object and then follow it.
2. Take the infant to a dark room or during night time, show objects that illuminate. this will encourage the infant to focus at these objects.



Eg : Use a torch, covered with transparent colourful glass paper or tissue paper and light it up in the night and use it as a toy with the infant.

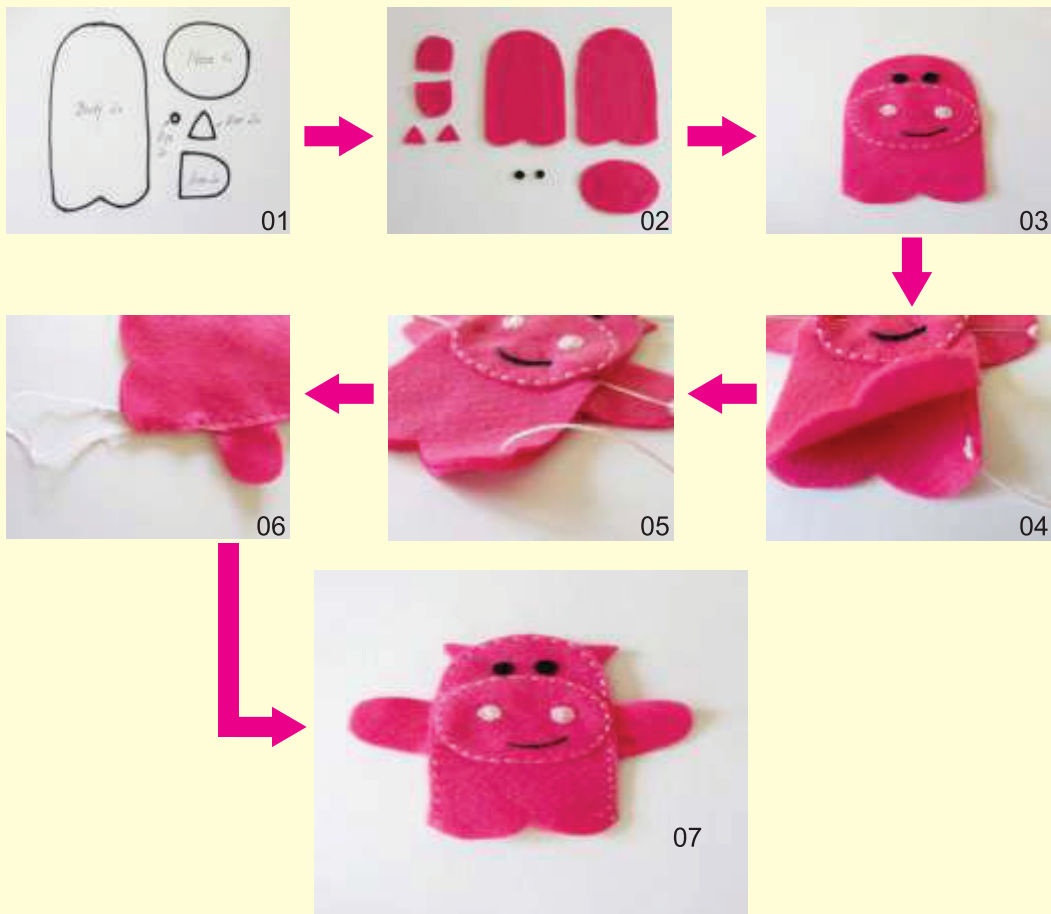
3. Show shiny objects to the infant.

Eg: Shiny necklaces, colourful lighting up balls.



Tips to make attractive toys at home

Eg : Red cotton material and cotton wool.



How to make an illuminating toy at home

1. Take a small torch.
2. Cover its face with transparent colourful paper.

Eg : Glass paper, tissue paper.

3. Use a rubber band to fix it around the face of the torch.
4. Show these toys which make colour or sound to the infant.

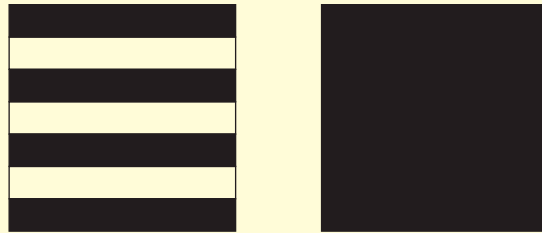


2.2. Can differentiate one from few objects (from 8 weeks)

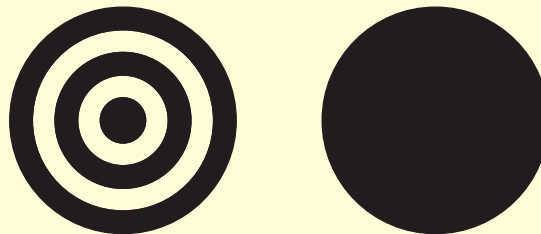
“I can identify an object and separate it from the environment”

• Activities

1. Encourage the child to focus on black and white high contrast.



2. When you show the pattern and the uniform black images to the infant simultaneously, the infant will focus on the patterned images.



3. Show pictures in bright single colour, pasted on clear white background, to the infant often.

4. Remove complex patterns and shades including curtains, shadings and wall paintings which are complex for the baby's visual field.



5. Keep the baby's environment simple with few objects or pictures which are prominent. These will help your infant to focus on those.

- 2.3. Does not keep hands tightly grasped and will open up. The majority of infants are able to follow a moving object horizontally and vertically. (from 12 weeks)

“I like to touch what I see”

When the child is able to see something moving in front of his visual fields, he should be able to open hands and reach towards the toy. For this, the child should move from fist hands to open hands.

2.3.1 How to encourage touching

● Activities

1. Give toys and cloth with different texture to touch the baby's palms.
Eg : Material with soft and rough surfaces like a towel or silk cloth.

When you are bathing the baby, rub the palms gently. Make the child's palm touch a cold metal spoon or a spoon covered in mild warm water.

2. When the surfaces have colour and noise the child will get more attracted to touch those.

3. When your child is encouraged to give attention to an object the next step is to motivate him to touch those.

eg: Use a thick cardboard and paste cotton wool or silky material in various colours and shapes resembling shapes and objects. Encourage the child to touch these.



2.3.2. Co-ordinating the eye with hand movements

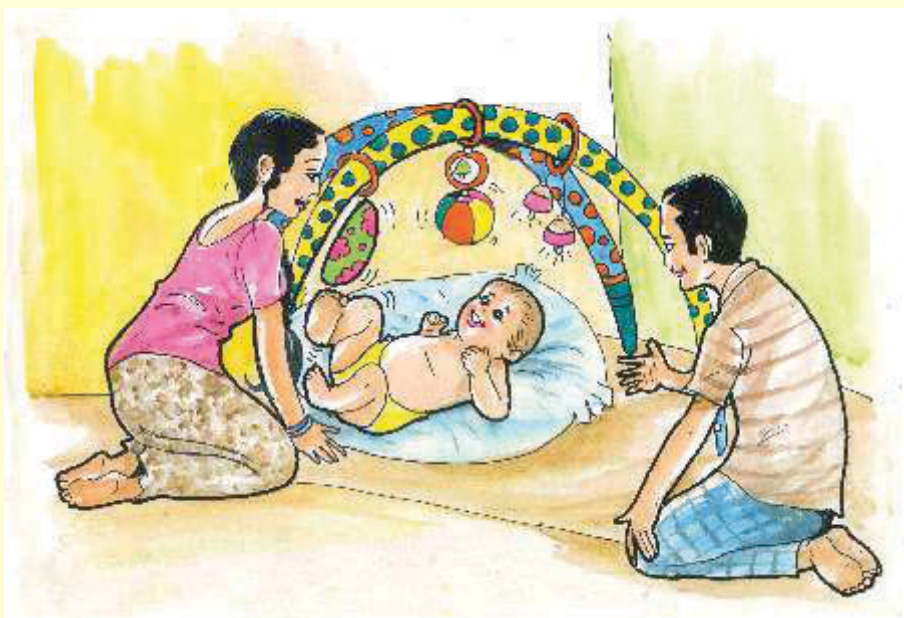
• Activities

1. As the first step to encourage these movements, encourage the child to look at the toy and then to move the hands towards it while the child is lying to the side. Offer attractive toys while the child is in this position.
2. When the child is lying on the back, encourage him to touch toys by lifting his hands and legs by using his anti gravity movements (upward movements against gravity while lying down)

2.3.3. Follows a toy moving in a horizontal plane to the left and the right with a good focus (from 12 weeks onward)

• Activities

1. When the child is lying on a surface, hang toys on a string just above his face and hands. Get the child's attention to the toys, and show the child and get him to reach towards those.



3. Language Development

3.1. Infant responds to environmental sounds (from birth)

“ When I hear sounds around me, I give attention to those”

The infant will startle at loud noises. Also he will be calmed while crying if some soothing lullabies are sung.

• Activities

1. Speak to your infant using simple clear words. Sing simple rhythms with facial expressions close to your infant's face.
Eg : “ twinkle twinkle little star...”
2. Show picture books with large clear images. Turning pages and relate as simple stories.
- 3 . Use simple rattles from either side of the infant to make gentle sounds.
4. Observe for any responses such as turning the head or looking at the face of the person singing.



How to make a home made rattle

- Take two empty yoghurt cups.
- Fill one with some pulses. (gram, dhal, cowpea)
- Put the other one on top and paste those together.
- Cover the yoghurt cups using colourful paper wrapped around it to make it look attractive to the infant. (red, yellow, green)



- 3.2. Infant responds by looking towards the side of the sound
(from 8 weeks)

“I want to turn my head towards sound”

● Activities

1. Speak to the child from both sides.
2. Paste colourful and shiny shapes and pictures on paper and introduce the words pronouncing carefully.
Eg : red flower, yellow banana



4. Cognitive Development

- 4.1. Awareness about the environment (is sensitive to the external environment from birth)

“I am interested about my surroundings”

You will soon understand how your newborn infant begins to show an interest in the surrounding environment and the changes within it.

• Activities

1. To promote awareness about the infant's surroundings bring in a variation to the environment often. If the infant sees the same things everyday his interest will gradually lessen. When the infant shows some interest in the surrounding encourage him to do so by showing your responses.
2. Even a newborn infant will respond to baby talk by parents and while showing things.
3. Always show toys which are bright in colour and will make a sound or other action.



- 4.2. Is receptive when parents or caregivers speak to the child lovingly (responsive smiling from 8 weeks)

“I smile with my mother because I know her”

When you look in the eyes of your infant and talk in a loving manner she will smile with you responsively.

- Activities

1. Talk to your child often. Identify his responses and encourage more by further stimulation.



4.3. When an object is shown, the infants looks at it with interest
(from 8 weeks)

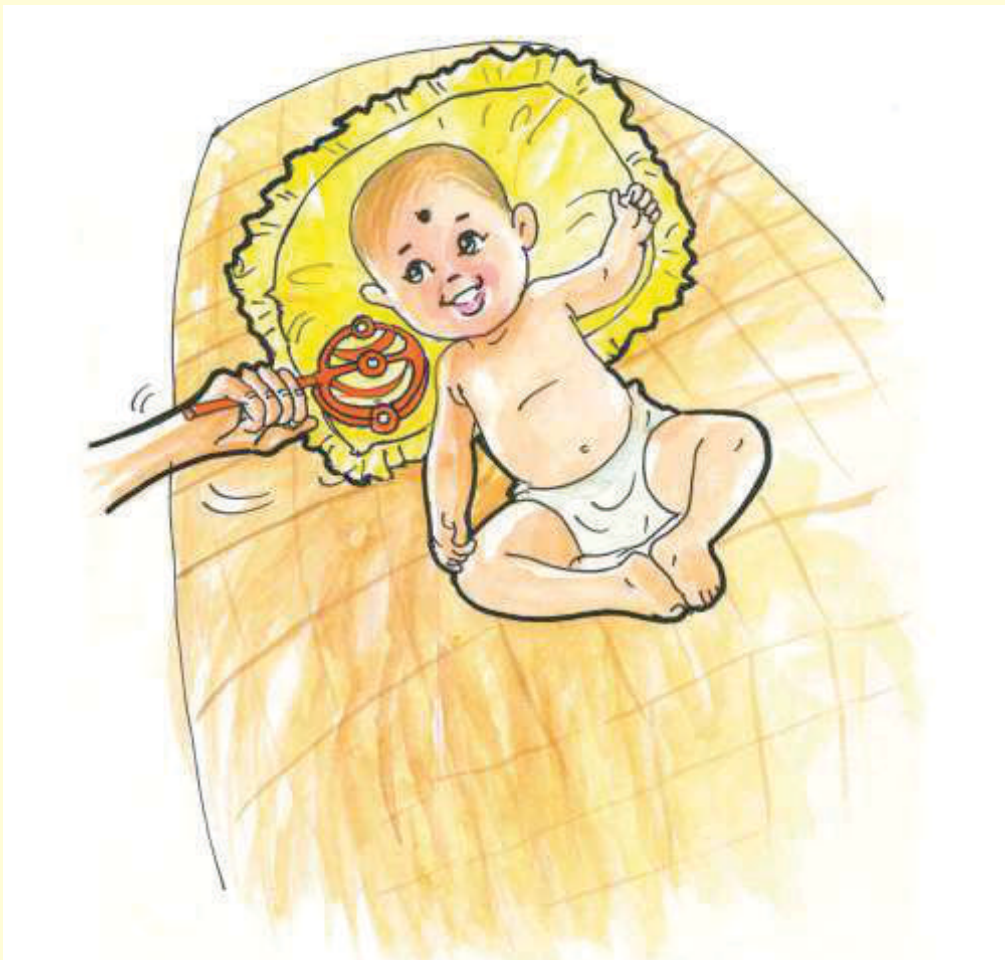
“I like to look at toys shown by my mum and enjoy those together
with her”

• Activities

1. Show a colourful object.

Show a toy that illuminates or produces sound. Light up the toy or make a sound and attract the infant to the toy. Show the infant that playing with the toy is a joyful activity.

2. Get the attention of the infant while playing with the toy and demonstrate to the infant how you can share the joy, playing with it by talking to the child and with happy expressions.



- 4.4. The child responds with interest to a book with colourful pictures and explained using simple words. (from 12 weeks)

“I love to listen to stories that my mum reads to me”

• Activities

1. Show a book with single pictures in high contrast, use simple words to describe the illustrations shown to the child.



5. Gross Motor Skills Development

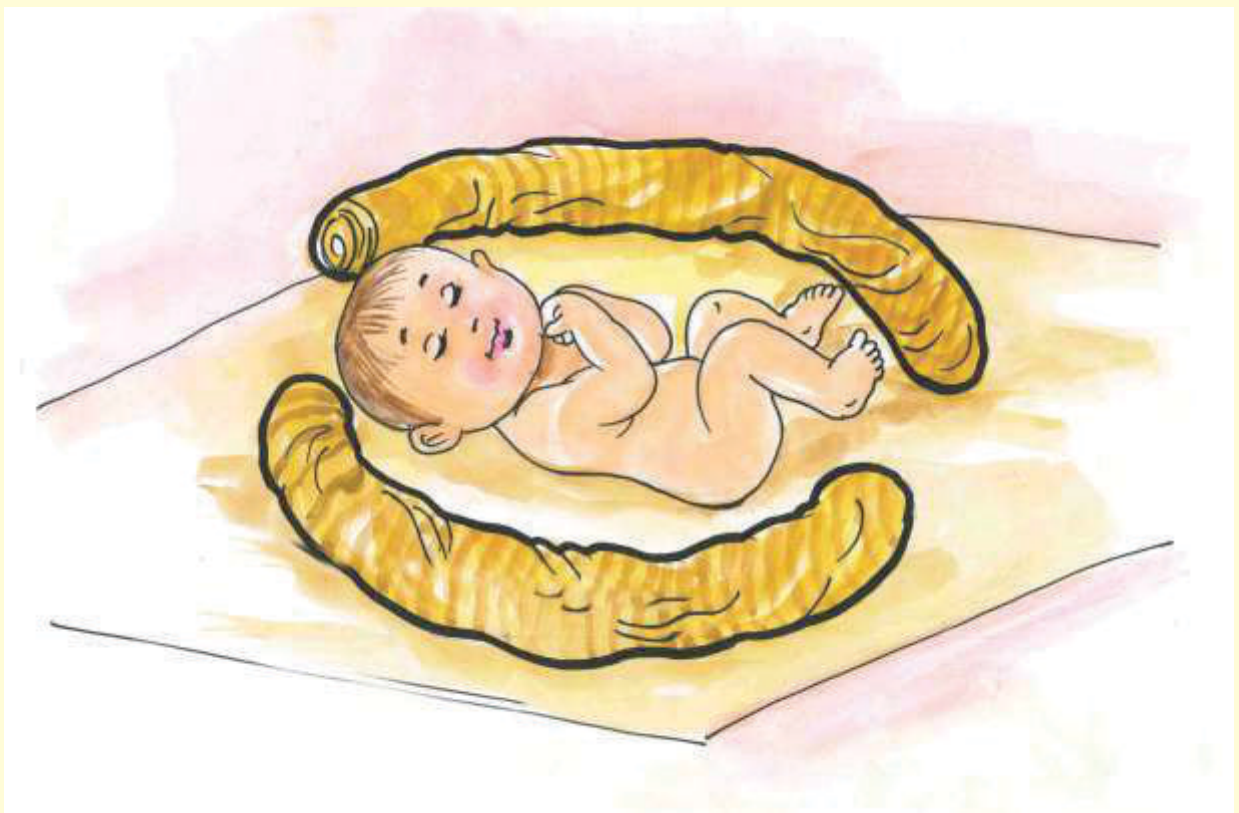
5.1. Infant should be maintained in correct postures (from birth)

“I like to be in the same posture I used to be in mother's womb
(foetal position)”

The best posture to maintain a new born infant is to keep him in a flexed posture of body and limbs as he used to be in the mother's womb.

• Activities

1. If the child spontaneously goes into a flexed posture, leave him alone like that. If not help him to gain that posture by placing him in that posture and keeping rolled towels around him as shown in the picture.



5.2. The infant moves arms and legs vigorously (from 2 weeks)

“I can move my arms and legs well”

• Activities

1. As the infant grows stronger, she will move her limbs vigorously against gravity.

Whenever she is happy or when lying on back and is alone she will continue to move her limbs.

By the end of three months the infant is able to move limbs forcefully against gravity.

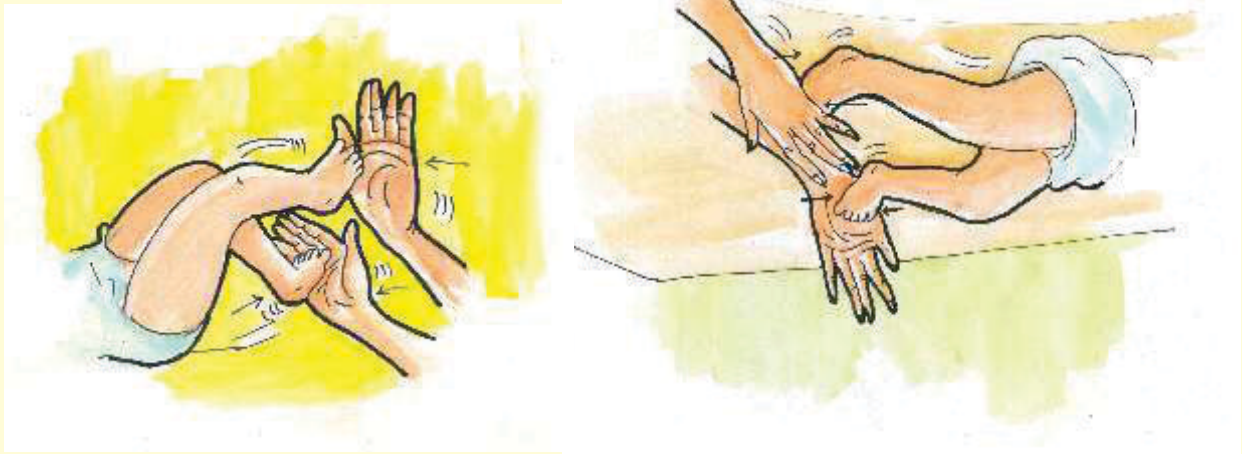


2. When the infant is moving his legs and arms up and down, encourage the infant to actively bend and stretch all joints in his limbs. Gently encourage these movements by offering toys to touch and kick. If he tends to be crying during these movements it indicates possible pain and discomfort. Be mindful of such movements and inform your clinician about it during the next visit.

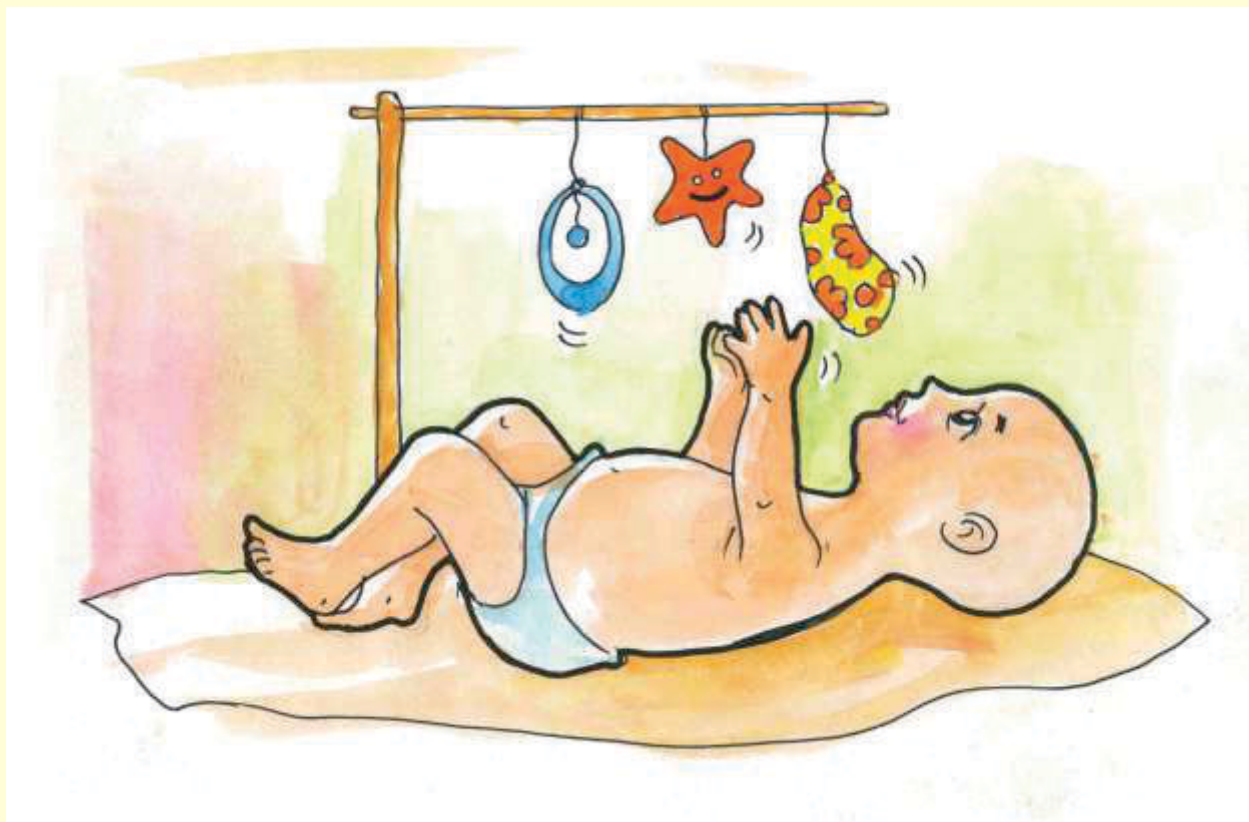
The limbs of the infant should never be passively extended or flexed by stretching. Such movements will discourage active learning and brain development.



3. When the child is moving the legs and arms, apply a gentle pressure against these movements to strengthen the movements.



4. Hang toys within reach of the child's arms and legs. So that he will be encouraged to reach the toy by touching and kicking actively. Ensure movements are carried out against gravity



5.3. Infant is able to hold head on the trunk and balance head in the upright position (from 12 weeks)

“I can hold my head straight when my mum carries me upright”

By the end of three months an infant is able to balance his head on the trunk when held upright by an adult.

• Activities

1. Keep the infant on tummy and encourage to lift the head by showing toys and making noises in front of him.



2. When carrying me, please follow the below recommendations :

It is essential to be mindful how you posture the infant while carrying and placing him. Be mindful about the head, neck and trunk while carrying the infant.

If there is a slight delay in lifting the head from the surface or achieving head control it is important to support the head while upright. But this should never be done by holding the head with the hand.

Always carry the infant facing the front and support head on the mother's chest or upper part of the arm. Support the infant to maintain the lower limbs flexed like being carried in a seated posture on the forearm of the adult.

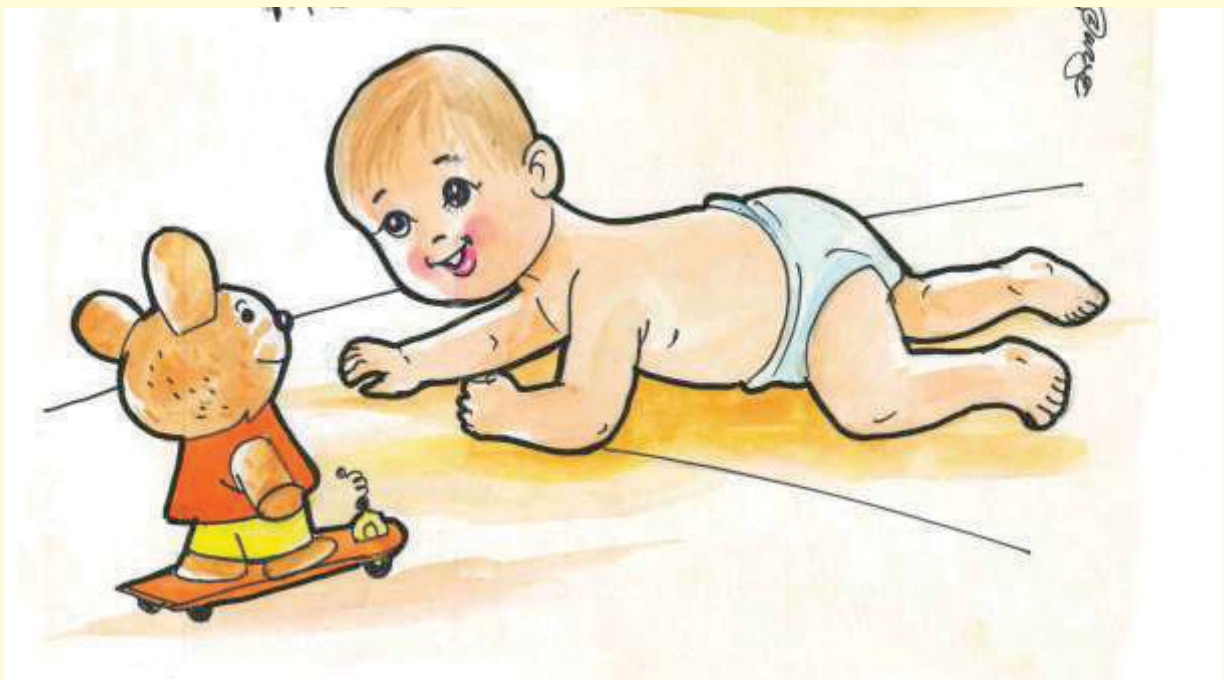


5.4. Is able to lift the head while on tummy (prone position)
(from 12 weeks)

“I can lift my head off the mat when I am lying on my tummy”

• Activities

1. Give baby tummy time by putting him on the tummy 5 – 10 minutes every 2-3 hours while he is awake.
2. While you are carrying the baby upright facing the front in a seated position encourage the baby to lift his head upwards instead of directing it downwards by showing toys and talking to the child from the front..
3. When the child is seated or while being carried, move toys to the left and the right , encouraging the movement and strengthening of the neck muscles to keep it upright.



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Towards the first steps of your infant



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