

Infants

Physical Development

Standards:

- **Gross motor skills**
- **Fine motor skills**
- **Self-help skills**
- **Health and safety skills**



Activities and Strategies for Development



Side to Side

- Sit with an infant on a comfortable mat on the floor. Lay him on his back and put a toy that makes noise on the floor to the left side of his head.
- Shake the toy and see if the child turns his head toward it.
- As the baby watches, move the toy slowly to the right side. Repeat several times as the child moves his head from one side to the other. If he reaches for the toy, give it to him to hold.
- Talk to the child and describe what you are doing! "Watch the clown Nathaniel. It's moving to this side now."
- Turn the baby onto his stomach and try this again.

Special Needs Tip

If the baby has a visual or hearing impairment, use a musical toy with lights. The lights and sounds will help capture the baby's attention.

Tummy Time



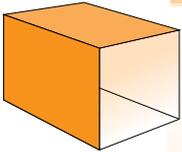
- Since safety requires that infants sleep on their backs, encourage them to spend supervised time on their stomachs for exercise. Here are a few ideas for "tummy time:"
 - Sit with one or two infants on a comfortable mat on the floor so they can see you. Put a colorful toy in front of their faces as they lie on their tummies. Lift up the toy slightly so they will have to rise up to see it better. Encourage them to push up with their arms.
 - Lie down on your stomach, facing the babies, and lift your head and talk to them as you encourage them to push up.
 - Try putting the infants on their tummies in front of a mirror. See if they will push up to see the babies in the mirror!
 - Prop up young babies on a "boppy" to support their head and chest.
 - Have the infants spend some "tummy time" on a mat outside in the sunshine where they can push up and see what's going on around them!
- Some children are uncomfortable on their tummies and might not want to stay in this position for long. Do not force it. Try again another time.

Up the Hill



- Stack some firm cushions or pillows on a carpet or floor mat. (The cushions should be filled with solid foam or other firm substance so that a baby's face does not "sink" into them.) If you have a commercial soft play structure indoors, use that instead!
- As the children watch, put a popular toy at the top of the "hill." Sit next to the cushions and encourage the children to crawl up to get the toy. Be prepared to help anyone who needs assistance and to catch anyone who slides or rolls down.
- Show excitement when a child reaches the toy. Encourage her to crawl the rest of the way across the cushions, turn around and crawl back.
- Here's a variation for children who are just learning to crawl. Instead of stacking the cushions, put the toy on the far side of one low cushion and encourage the child to crawl over it to reach the toy.

Crawling in the Tunnel



- Get a box large enough for your infants to crawl through. Lay the box on its side, open both ends, and cut off the flaps or fold them firmly inside. Cover with attractive contact paper.
- When a baby crawls over to one end, sit at the other and encourage him to crawl to you. If he seems unsure about crawling inside, put a pull toy (with a string) inside and gradually pull the toy toward you. Talk to him as he's crawling to encourage him to keep going. Show excitement when he comes all the way through!
- Try crawling through the tunnel yourself to encourage the infants to follow!
- You can also use a commercially-made fabric tunnel. Some are made with clear fabric or "windows" so you can see in and the children can see out!