

MUMS
ALOUD

Activities Guide for Babies/Toddlers

SURVIVAL GUIDE / ACTIVITIES BABY (0-12 months)

INDOORS

Tummy Time Textures – Place baby on different fabrics (cotton, silk, faux fur)

Sensory Bottles – Fill clear bottles with water, glitter, or beads (seal tightly)

Nature Touch – Let baby feel grass, leaves, or warm sand (supervised)

Tracking Toys – Move a rattle slowly for baby to follow with eyes

Kick Piano – Place a toy piano under feet during diaper changes

Babywearing Dance – Move to Afrobeat

Face-to-Face Chat – Exaggerate facial expressions and vowel sounds

Storytime – Listen or watch

Gentle Massage: After a bath or during a quiet moment, give your baby a gentle massage with baby-safe lotion. This promotes bonding and relaxation.

Reaching & Grasping: Offer soft rattles, crinkly toys, or fabric rings for them to reach for and grasp. Place them just out of reach to encourage stretching.

Mirror Play – Show baby their reflection with playful sounds

OUTDOORS

Host a "Coffee & Cuddles" morning: Invite one or two other mums over. Even if it's just for 30 minutes, having adult conversation while babies play (or sleep!) nearby can be incredibly uplifting.

Go to another mum's house: A change of scenery for you, and new faces for baby to observe.

Meet at a baby-friendly café: Many cafes are welcoming to prams and have space for babies. It's a low-pressure way to get out.

Local Children's Centre / Family Hub sessions: These often have free "Stay & Play" sessions, baby massage, or postnatal groups. Check your local council website or ask your health visitor.

Library Rhymetime / Storytime: Free, engaging, and a great way to meet other parents. Babies love the songs and sounds.

Baby Massage Classes: A wonderful way to bond with your baby and connect with other new mums. Many are free or low-cost.

Baby Sensory / Music Classes: Structured classes that offer sensory stimulation, songs, and interaction. Often have taster sessions.

NCT Bumps & Babies / Walk & Talk Groups: The National Childbirth Trust (NCT) often runs free, informal meet-ups and buggy walks – perfect for fresh air and adult conversation.

Soft Play Centres (with dedicated baby zones): Look for centres that have a separate, safe area with soft mats and age-appropriate toys for non-mobile babies. This allows your toddler to play more freely while the baby is safe.

Community Centre Playgroups: Many local community halls or church halls run informal drop-in playgroups, often with a baby-friendly corner.

Museums & Art Galleries (with baby-friendly days): Some larger institutions offer specific "baby-friendly" days or tours where noise and prams are welcome.

Simply getting out for a walk in the park, around the block, or to the shops. Fresh air is good for everyone. Wave at people, point out things to baby, and enjoy the change of pace.

Shopping Centre Stroll: The lights, sounds, and people can be stimulating for baby (and a chance for you to stretch your legs).

Aquarium / Zoo (Baby-friendly sections): The colours, movement, and sounds of animals can captivate babies. Look for quiet times to visit.

Visit a Garden Centre: The colours of the flowers and plants, and the gentle sounds, can be very calming and visually interesting for baby.

Public Transport Adventure: A short bus or train ride can be a whole new experience for baby, with new sights and sounds.

SURVIVAL GUIDE/ ACTIVITIES TODDLER (1-4 years)

Dance Party (Afrobeats Welcome!): Put on some lively music and just freestyle! Encourage big movements, jumping, spinning. It's great for energy release and pure joy.

Pillow Obstacle Course: Arrange cushions, blankets, and soft toys to crawl over, under, and through.

Balloon Volleyball: Keep a light balloon in the air together – great for hand-eye coordination and laughter.

Outdoor Play & Exploration: Head to the park for swings and slides, or simply explore your garden. Collect leaves, stones, or watch the clouds. Fresh air is a game-changer!

Chasing Bubbles: Simple, magical, and gets them moving!

Pasta Threading: Use large pasta shapes (like penne or rigatoni) and shoelaces or pipe cleaners. Fantastic for hand-eye coordination.

Laundry "Helping": Let them "help" sort socks, fold washcloths, or put clean clothes into baskets. They love feeling useful!

Water Play (Transferring): A shallow tub or sink with cups, spoons, and small containers for pouring and transferring water. (Always supervised!)

Plant Care: Give them a small spray bottle to "water" a houseplant (or just pretend!).

Opening and Closing of Bottles/Containers: Provide various bottles, jars, and containers with different lids for them to practice opening and closing.

Scissor Activity: With age-appropriate safety scissors, let them snip paper strips.

Potty Training: Integrate consistent potty breaks into your routine when they show readiness cues.

Personal Hygiene Practice: Make brushing teeth, washing hands, and getting dressed a fun, interactive part of the day.

Finger Painting: Use yogurt and food coloring for edible paint for younger ones, or washable paints for older toddlers. Spread on a large sheet of paper or a tray.

DIY Drum Set: Grab some pots, pans, and wooden spoons – instant band!

Water Painting: A brush and a bowl of water on an outdoor surface or dark paper. It "disappears" magic!

Painting and Drawing: Provide chunky crayons, washable markers, and large paper. Encourage free expression.

Sensory Bins/Bottles: Fill clear, tightly sealed bottles with water, glitter, beads, or small toys for a mesmerizing visual. For bins, use dried pasta, rice, or sand with scoops and small toys.

Shadow Play: Use a flashlight and your hands (or small toys) to create shadows on the wall – endless imaginative possibilities.

Story Time / Read Aloud: Make reading a daily ritual. Point to pictures, ask questions, and make animal sounds. Visit the library for new books!

Storytelling Basket: Fill a basket with random objects (a toy car, a feather, a block). Pull one out and start a silly story together.

Puppet Shows: Use stuffed animals or simple sock puppets to act out stories or everyday scenarios.

Language Cards: Create simple cards with pictures of household items (e.g., "chair," "door," "table") and label them in your native tongue. Point and repeat.

Learn Colours, Shapes, Sounds, Numbers, ABCs: Integrate learning into play – "Find the red block," "What shape is that?" "How many cars?"

Family Photo Chat: Look through family photos and name relatives. "Who's this? What are they doing?"

Stack Cups: Simple plastic cups for stacking, nesting, and knocking down.

Building Blocks: Large wooden blocks, Duplo, or Mega Bloks for building towers, houses, or anything they can imagine.

Puzzles: Start with simple knob puzzles and progress to larger piece puzzles as they grow.

Pretend Play: Encourage imaginary scenarios – tea parties, doctor visits, cooking. Join in and follow their lead.

Cooking Together: Involve them in simple, safe kitchen tasks: stirring ingredients, washing vegetables, or "seasoning" a meal with pretend spices.

Simple Science Experiments: Floating and sinking objects in water, mixing colours with food dye, observing ice melt.

Nature Exploration: Collect items from outside (leaves, small sticks, feathers) and talk about their textures and colours.

Screen Time: If you choose to include screen time, opt for educational, interactive content. Set clear time limits and watch together when possible, discussing what you see.