

Play is the key way children learn about themselves, others and the world they live in. It is essential to their learning, development, health, and physical, mental and social well-being – and it's FUN! Play provides the building blocks to be ready for school.



Sensory Play

Babies are born ready to explore the world around them. Touching, looking, listening, moving and exploring with their mouth is how babies learn as they play.

Development of senses – sight, hearing, touch, smell, taste, and senses of balance and movement are the foundation for all other learning.

Did you know?

Crinkle bags, furry materials and noisy shakers are great toys to stimulate your baby's senses and keep tummy-time fun. Babies need lots of tummy time to build up their head, neck and upper body strength.

Add language

Use words that go with the sounds, sights and things you baby can feel around them e.g. noisy, wet, warm, smooth, etc.

Other development

Movement is an important sensory experience too! It stimulates your baby's body systems that control direction, position, balance and coordination. Some simple ideas for doing this with your baby are gently bouncing them on your knee or holding them in the air or cuddling them close while you dance.

Slow songs and movement are good for calming and soothing.



Variations

Going for a walk outside or taking mat time outdoors, provides a natural sensory experience for both you and your baby. You can look and listen for birds and planes, or touch and smell the flowers to engage the senses.

Baby massage is a calming sensory experience that also helps bonding between your baby and you. A short and simple massage after bath or nappy change time can become a special part of your routine. Watch your baby and tune in to when your baby has had enough. Your baby can get overwhelmed by too much sensory input (sights, smells, sounds, touch, movement). All babies need some regular quiet times of stillness and silence.

Safety

Be aware of small or loose items that could be a choking hazard for babies.

Playgroup WA has a treasure trove of play activities for babies, toddlers and 3-5 year olds, for home and playgroup. These play activities cover a balanced diet of play across sensory, movement, language and thinking skill areas.

You can find them at www.playgroupwa.com.au/playideas or visit www.facebook.com/playgroupwa