

6-9 Months

1. **Mom's Still Here**-Babies at 7-9 months often go through separation anxiety and like to be in constant sight and hearing of their parents. You can help your baby with separation while at home by leaving the room for a minute & then returning and happily reassuring your infant that you are still here and did not leave them. Skills: Socialization, separation, object permanence.
2. **I Can Sit**-By about 8 months many babies can sit independently with their hands free to play. Help your baby to get into and out of a sitting position by rolling your baby to his side and placing your one hand under his shoulder and your other hand on his opposite hip and guide him upwards into sitting instead of picking him straight up. This is easy to do after each diaper change. To get out of sitting have your baby rotate to the side and put both hands on the floor as if to go into a hand-knee crawling position and guide him gently to the floor. **Skills:** Gross motor, transitioning in/out of sitting, balance, body rotation.
3. **Let's Crawl**-Place toys just out of reach of your baby and encourage a hand-knee position. You can help your baby assume this position if needed and even place your lower leg under his tummy if he has trouble maintaining this position. Gently rock back and forth and side to side to help your baby shift his weight, reach for toys and begin to crawl reciprocally. **Skills:** Gross motor, strength, fine motor, reach, sensory, weight bearing.
4. **Pick it Up**-Babies are starting to use their fingers and thumb to secure tiny objects, working toward a neat pincer grasp. Place single puffs or Cheerios on their high chair tray and encourage them to use fingers and thumb to secure them. **Skills:** Fine motor, refining reach and grasp.
5. **Reach Across**-Instead of presenting toys always directly in front of your child present toys to either side and encourage him to reach across his body with his left hands to grasp a toy on the right and vice versa. **Skills:** Fine Motor, reach, grasp, crossing midline.
6. **Straw Cups**-Babies as young as about 7 months can learn to drink from a straw cup. Straw cups promote a more mature oral motor pattern than sipper cups. You can start with a juice box and using juice or water, squeeze a bit into the straw as you encourage your baby to suck. It will take a while for them to get the hang of this new skill, but once they learn to use a straw there is no need to go backwards to using a sipper. **Skills:** Self-feeding, oral motor strengthening
7. **Board Books**-Babies love ripping paper at this age, so stick to board books with heavy pages. They can look at these book, or cloth book on their own and even put them into their mouths without much damage. They can also use their little fingers to learn to turn pages. **Skills:** Fine Motor, cognitive, language.
8. **½ Kneeling**-Soon your baby will be wanting to pull up to stand at the furniture. You can get your baby ready for this skill by working on pulling up on low cardboard boxes or over turned laundry baskets and by helping your baby into a kneeling and then a half

kneeling position, by bringing the left or right foot out in front in order to facilitate pulling to stand. **Skills:** Gross motor, strength, coordination.

9. **Reach on All 4's**-Help your baby into a hand & knee crawling position, either independently or supported by your leg or a cushion under his tummy. Place toys to the front and sides and encourage your baby to bear weight on hands/knees and reach with one hand to secure a toy. **Skills:** Gross Motor, Fine Motor, weight bearing, strength, coordination, reach, grasp.
10. **Don't Box Me In**-A fun place for a baby to play in supported sitting is inside the corner of a sturdy cardboard box or laundry basket. Place small toys inside and see how long your baby is entertained by sitting inside with your supervision. **Skills:** Gross Motor, sitting balance, Fine motor, reach and grasp.
11. **Bang, Bang, Bang**-Babies love to bang toys together and on surfaces. Demonstrate this task for them by holding two small toys in your hands and banging them together while saying "bang, bang, bang" or show your baby how to make noise on his highchair tray by banging toys onto a surface. **Skills:** Fine Motor, Cognitive, cause & effect.
12. **Ball Tilt**-Use a large exercise ball and place your baby into a sitting position on the ball. Only give your baby as much support as he needs to remain seated & stable on the ball. Hold him low at the hips when possible. Gently tilt him to the left and right side and even backwards and forwards and give him time to "right" his body in space or bring himself back into a sitting position. **Skills:** Gross Motor, sitting balance, trunk strength & stability, body righting reactions.
13. **Rip it Up**-Babies love paper and ripping paper can be fun. Save your old phone books and let your baby go to town ripping and tearing sheets of paper while supervised. **Skills:** Fine motor, reach, grasp.
14. **Uh Oh**-Babies attention is held by fun sounds and environmental sounds, one of the first sounds sometimes repeated by babies is "uh oh". When playing with your baby and he drops something exclaim "uh oh!" or if he topples over while sitting or pulling to stand say "uh oh!" and eventually your baby will begin to repeat this fun sound. **Skills:** Receptive/Expressive Language
15. **Cause/Effect**-When babies begin to understand cause/effect relationships, it means they know that their action causes a reaction and they are apt to repeat it. This is when your baby begins to push a button on a pop up box and toy pops up & he repeats it again and again. Or he finds the button on your phone that makes noise, or notices that flipping the light switch makes the lights go off. **Skills:** Cognitive, cause/effect relationships.
16. **Object Permanence**-The understanding of object permanence is an important skill for babies. This means that something that is out of sight, is not out of mind, it still exists when it disappears. Very young babies do not understand this concept, as you will notice if you place a toy under their blanket, they will not search for it, but will simply turn to another toy that is within eye sight and reach. Older babies will start to know, when a ball rolls under the couch, it is still there and they will move toward the ball in an attempt to find it. You can help babies practice this skill by first partially hiding a toy

beneath a cloth and helping them find it, and then eventually completely hiding a toy and encouraging them to find it. Remember the toy has to be motivating enough for a child to seek it out when it is hidden. **Skills:** Cognitive, object permanence, problem solving.

- 17. Stand and Bounce-**Hold your baby at the hips and help her stand and bear some weight on her legs. Let her straddle your leg on the floor if that helps. Encourage her to bounce in this position while you sing or talk to her. **Skills:** Gross motor, weight bearing, language.
- 18. Stepping-**When your baby is able to bear full weight on her legs, gently hold her at the hips and shift her weight by tipping her slightly to the left or right sides and see if she willingly takes a step. If she does, tip her to the other side and look for her to do the same stepping motion. **Skills:** Gross motor, weight bearing, stepping, weight shifting.
- 19. Pat-a-Cake-**Play pat-a-cake with your baby encouraging her to bring hands together at the center of her body in a clapping motion. **Skills:** Fine motor, hands to midline.
- 20. Pull the string-**Tie a ring or small toy to a string or use a store bough pull toy (supervised). Place the toy within sight of the child and demonstrate pulling the string to bring the toy closer to the child. See if he can do it on his own. **Skills:** Cognitive, cause/effect, problem solving, fine motor, reach, grasp.
- 21. Pick it up Daddy-**As babies start to understand cause/effect and object permanence they will start to drop toys, bottles, food off their highchair trays. This often becomes a fun game & although some parents tire of it quickly, it shows that a baby has learned an important skill. **Skills:** Cognitive, cause/effect, object permanence, fine motor, reach, grasp, voluntary release.
- 22. Textured objects-**Let him play with different texture objects and hold them— to enhance his grasp -plastic things from the kitchen, pots and pans, sponges, paper, empty tins with lids, velvet, fur, lace, toweling, cardboard, fine sandpaper etc. **Skills:** Fine motor, sensory, tactile exploration.
- 23. This Little Piggy-**Use this nursery rhyme while you play with and massage baby's toes and feet. **Skills:** Body awareness, listening, receptive/expressive language, sensory.
- 24. Hats on/off-**Use different sizes and types of hats & place them onto your baby's head. He can pull them off or let them slide down over his eyes as a way of playing peek a boo. **Skills:** Fine motor, dressing, socialization.
- 25. Push and crawl-**Use large trucks or toys on wheels and show your baby how to push the toy while crawling along beside it. Make car or animal sounds as you play. **Skills:** Gross motor, fine motor, imitation, language.
- 26. Arms Up/Legs Up-**Encourage your baby to cooperate with dressing and undressing by lifting arms above head or lifting legs up in the air. Talk about body parts and make it fun and silly. **Skills:** Dressing, self-help, socialization, language.
- 27. Bat the Balloon-**Using a helium or regular balloon, toss it into the air above your baby and see if they can reach for it and bat at it. **Skills:** Fine motor, reach, grasp, visual tracking.

- 28. Pull it Off**-Use sticky Velcro and place pieces into easily grasped toys and objects. Stick them to a Velcro sheet and encourage your child to pull the objects off. **Skills:** Fine motor, reach, grasp, hand/finger strength.
- 29. Messy Food Play**-Place a large table cloth under your child's highchair during meals. Encourage use of fingers and messy play during eating instead of constantly wiping your child's face and hands. This is an important developmental skill. **Skills:** Self-feeding, tactile & oral sensory.
- 30. Socks Off**-When your baby is able to bring her feet up where she can grab them, pull her socks off a bit from her toes and see if she can grab her feet and pull her socks the rest of the way off by herself. **Skills:** Gross motor, strengthening, dressing.