

## HELPING MY BABY LEARN THROUGH PLAY: having fun in sitting

The sitting position is important for play and learning, and it promotes new sensory, communication and visual experiences. Babies may enjoy a supported sitting position from a young age and by the time they are 6 months old they may be more confident sitting with a little support or even sitting by themselves for short periods. Some babies will need a little more time and help learning to sit. Here are some ideas which will allow you to support your child’s development whilst having fun together.

### Play Idea

### How to help your baby learn to sit



**The beginning of sitting on a parent’s knee – a position between sitting and lying.**

Make sure you hold your baby securely.



**Sitting with support on the floor offers a nice firm base.**

- Place your baby on the floor with support at their back and around their chest
- Use your legs and hands to provide your baby with support – give as much support as needed.
- Once your baby is showing signs of enjoying this position and comfortably playing, you can start to reduce the support by lowering the position of your hands. Firstly, to waist level and then to hip level

Make sure your baby is comfortable and is able to move.



**Use your legs for support.**

- Sit your baby on the floor between your legs. They will find it comfortable and easier to move.
- Give as much support as your baby needs

Ensure your baby sits firmly on their bottom.

Use a toy in front to help your baby have fun and sit up nice and straight.



**Using their hands to help**

- Use everyday objects you have in the home such as your baby’s plastic bath or even a sturdy cardboard box on the floor – never at a height!
- Baby is safe to play and free to move in a supported space.

Always stay and supervise your baby and be ready to help.



**Remember to keep playing and interacting with your baby – your baby loves hearing your voice and seeing your face. Sing rhymes together such as ‘round and round the garden’ – this is a great way to get your baby laughing as well as listening.**

**SAFETY NOTE: Your baby must be supervised during these activities at all times. Never leave your baby unattended.**

Play is how a child learns. This leaflet was created to provide ideas for activities for learning to sit through play. Development varies from child to child and these activities are not intended as medical or therapeutic advice. If you have any concerns about your child speak to your GP or health visitor and ask for a referral to your local therapy service .



### Support around hips and lower back

This is a more challenging sitting position as the support is now lower. Your baby will have to use their tummy and back muscles to hold this position. The cushion ensures baby feels safe and they are protected if they do lose their balance.

## Moving on...playing in a more advanced position



### Sitting on the floor with a toy in front

Your baby will love playing in this position and will feel safe with your touch. You can adjust the height of your hands. The higher your hands are, the more support you are providing. The lower your hands the more you are challenging your baby’s muscles.

#### Your Baby Will:

- Feel safe and supported
- Become stronger
- Learn to balance and support themselves
- Enjoy playing on different surfaces

## Building skills



### Sitting on your knee using a table for support

Use toys or books in this position

You could also support your baby sitting on the floor with a cardboard box in front – used as a table.



### Getting ready to move out of sitting

- Sit your baby on the floor with a toy a little to one side but still within reach and in your baby’s line of vision
- Sit behind your baby and hold them around their waist to maintain the position.
- Encourage your baby to lean over to the side of the toy and support themselves on their arms
- When your baby is ready they can try reaching for the toy with one hand

See how this baby is propping themselves with one arm and reaching with the other to play



### Kneeling on a large firm cushion for support:

When your child is more stable and ready, kneeling with support helps get ready for crawling

- Place an interesting toy on the cushion to encourage play and interaction whilst pushing up through their arms.

Avoid W sitting as it may make muscles tighter



**Look out for your baby’s communication cues to let you know they are tired, hungry or just had enough and not comfortable. Babies communicate with you through their behavioural cues and changing colour, squirming, getting irritable or crying means time for a break!**

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