



Radio Stations : **All Community Radio Stations**
Subject : **Early Childhood Development**
Audience : **Parents, caregivers and educators**
Program No : **Toys and playing with your baby (LOVE)**

Guidelines to the presenter

- Presenter – please familiarize yourself with the brief and the use the facts effectively by referring to them from time to time during the show.
- You should be seen as a peer rather than an authority.
- Offer guidance or opinion rather than telling people what to do.
- Encourage people to seek further information
- Always keep the objectives and outcomes in mind and drive these.
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Topic:

Toys and playing with your baby

Objectives:

- To create an understanding that babies are learning from birth, using all their senses.
- To underline the important role parents play in this learning.
- Support parents understand that toys can be items in their environment and do not need to cost money.

- Give parents ideas on how they can play with their babies during normal daily activities.

Introduction

In previous shows we have spoken often about the fact that babies learn from birth and that the greatest brain development takes place in these very early days. So as a parent you have a very important role to play in supporting your baby's brain development. This happens in the normal everyday things you do with your baby: feeding, loving, cuddling, rocking, talking and singing to your baby. Even feeding, changing a nappy and bathing are times for your baby to learn through what you do, how you do it and what you say. The time you spend with your baby is precious and very important, and supports his or her learning in so many ways.

Questions	Facts/Information
<p>1. <i>It seems to me that when babies are born they are so helpless and dependent, and can do so little, so how can a parent help them learn?</i></p>	<p>Babies are learning even when they are in the mother's womb. They learn through their senses as they grow and develop. Research shows that babies can recognise their mother's voices while they are still in the womb! After birth, babies are very sensitive to everything around them, most especially their mothers or the person caring for them for most of the day. They learn through everything they see, hear, smell, touch and through their movements. So everything you do in caring for your baby becomes an important learning experience.</p>

<p>2. <i>So what are the things a mother, father or carer can do?</i></p>	<p>Feeding times are an especially important time as you build your loving relationship with your baby. This is a time to love, cuddle, talk and sing to your baby. As your baby experiences the warmth and smell of your body, and especially the contact of his or her skin against yours as you breastfeed, he is learning to feel loved, nurtured and trusting that he will be looked after.</p>
<p>3. <i>So what I'm hearing you say is that the baby's learning takes place in the everyday things a mother, father or carer does with her baby?</i></p>	<p>Yes. All the daily activities of feeding, burping, nappy changing and bathing are important play times for your baby and we know that babies and young children learn through play. As you do all these normal everyday things, talk to your baby; tell him or her what you are doing; sing songs; repeat back to him or her the sounds your baby is making and most of all make lots of eye contact, with your face clearly visible to your baby.</p>
<p>4. <i>So even though the baby can't talk and doesn't understand what you are saying, talking to the baby is really important?</i></p>	<p>It certainly is! Babies all over the world are born with the ability to learn the languages they hear, so the more language your baby hears, the more easily he or she will learn the rich language of his parents and his culture. Your voice is your baby's most important toy!</p>

5. *So if a mother voice is a baby's most important toy, it seems that parents don't have to spend lots of money buying expensive toys to make sure their children learn?*

Absolutely! Toys for a baby are the things closest at hand and freely available – the mother's body, voice, the baby's own body and voice and the things in his environment that interest him as he grows and develops every day. As a parent, you are the most important person in your baby's life and the time you spend loving, playing and talking to her will be the important building blocks for her future.

- Babies love to be held, cuddled, stroked, patted, massaged and held in different positions.
- As they get older you can do rhythmic exercises with their arms and legs and play patting and clapping games.
- As their hands and eyes develop and they can reach out and touch, they love to explore your face, your hair, your hands and fingers.
- Peek-a-boo games will have your baby and you shrieking with laughter!

6. *I guess Dads can also do all these things?*

Yes. Playing games with your baby is a wonderful way to get Dads involved and spending special time with their precious son or daughter. After all, Dads play such an

7. *I guess there are many things a Mum or Dad can do with their baby once they start to be aware of what's around them and start to think about ideas.*

important role in their children's lives and the earlier they start the better.

Many Dads love playing sound and language games:

- After a few months, your baby will start to love action rhymes and songs that they can join in. I'm sure you know many from your own childhood, or chat to other young mothers in your community or your ECD centre to get ideas.

Yes, there are many things in and around you that can become toys for your baby to help grow their understanding of their world. As they start to grasp objects, look around and see what you can give them to hold that is safe, not sharp and can't be swallowed! Remember your baby will put everything into his mouth! Kitchen items like spoons, plastic lids, plastic dishes and other items can be wonderful toys.

- You could make a colourful mobile to hang above the place your baby sleeps or where you change her nappy, so that she can look at different shapes, colours, patterns and the movement of objects.

8. *We've gained lots of ideas about what parents can do to play with their babies. Is there anything that parents should know NOT to do?*

- You can make rattles that have different sounds by filling small plastic cold drink bottles with rice, beans, stones or sand. Make sure the lid is tightly fastened!
- Once your baby is trying to sit, an apple box filled with pillows or blankets for support, makes a marvellous place to put your baby and you can put things for her to play with on her lap. And don't be surprised when they keep being thrown out of the box and you have to fetch them. That's all part of the game!
- Giving your baby 'tummy time' and putting an object just out of reach can encourage her to crawl. An orange or gem squash makes a wonderful first ball!

Yes there are things that have been found to be harmful for babies.

- We know that babies need to be held when they are fed and should not be left with a bottle propped up. Your close touch is as important as the food!
- I think by now everyone knows that

<p>9. <i>Much of this is really common sense when you think about it and what most parents are doing anyway. But parents really want the best for their children and want to make sure they are learning so that they succeed in life. Should parents make a determined</i></p>	<p>you should never hit a baby! (or any child for that matter). Babies can't be naughty. When they cry, that's their way of telling you something is wrong; that they're hungry, wet, uncomfortable, tired or just need you close for comfort.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • So never leave a baby crying for any length of time. Your baby needs you! • Once your baby starts to roll, be careful not to leave him on the bed or table or in the bath while you rush off to fetch something. It happens so quickly that they can roll off and really hurt themselves or go under the water. In fact, never leave your baby unattended or being cared for by another young child. Accidents happen very quickly and someone responsible should always be present. <p>No. Let your baby guide you through the interest they show, their attention span and their energy. Babies all develop in much the same way, but the rate at which they develop can be very different. As you watch them closely and sensitively, you will learn when they are ready to take the next step.</p>
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<i>effort to make their baby play and learn certain things?</i>	Let your baby lead you, and most of all – have fun! Parenting is a special privilege and a wonderful treasure!
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Conclusion

So we've learned a lot today about how important you are as a mother or father in supporting your baby's development and learning through play during your everyday activities with your baby. We've also shared plenty of ideas of things you can do to help your baby learn about his environment through his or her senses, using the things around you. To those parents who phoned in, thank you for sharing with us the many ways you have fun and play with your baby.

Learning outcomes

After listening to this show the audience should:

- Be aware that babies learn about their environment through their senses.
- Understand the very important role mothers and fathers play in their baby's development.
- Understand the role that sound games and plenty of talking and singing play in their baby's development of language.
- Be aware that play takes place during normal everyday activities.
- That people and everyday items can become toys for a baby.
- Be conscious of baby safety issues.