

These activities help Young babies improve their ability to see (visual skills) and their listening skills

Bright Eyes

For Babies Under 2 Months



Does your baby stare at things? Very young babies see things best if they are 7 to 8 inches away. They also like to look at circles more than lines. Hold a picture of a circle 7 to 8 inches away from your baby and let him look at it.

Who Is That?

Your baby likes to look at the same faces over and over, especially if they are smiling. Show your baby a picture of mom's face and say, "This is Mommy!" Show your baby a picture of dad's face and say, "This is Daddy!" Show your baby pictures of anyone else who lives in the house and name them—such as, "This is your Grandma Sally." Be sure to hold the pictures 8 inches away so your baby can see.

Searching For Sounds

Shake a rattle first on one side of the baby's head, then on the other. Begin by shaking it slowly, then a little faster. After a while, your baby will realize that the sound she hears comes from outside herself. She will search with her eyes and turn her head to find the thing that is making the sound. Try it with a small bell. Better yet, use your own voice. Tell your baby what's happening!

For Babies 2-3 Months Old



Paste pictures of faces from a magazine or family photos on the sides of a paper sack. Let your baby look at the pictures while slowly turning the sack. Hold it about a foot away so baby can see. Sometimes move it up and down. Tell your baby about the pictures. Change the pictures often. Use wrapping paper or other pictures for a change. Babies look longer at things that are moving.

Show your baby a picture of mommy and someone else. Does the baby look at Mommy longer? Say, "Here's Mommy and here's Aunt Mary. They are smiling at you." You can hold the pictures about a foot away. Your baby can see better now.

Tell your baby what those sounds are that she hears, such as when the phone rings, when you turn on the water in the sink, when the dog barks, or when the door closes. Say, "Did you hear that? The phone is ringing. I better answer it." Or, "Did you hear that? I turned on the water to get a drink."

Literacy and Language Development

What your child is doing

- Can see, hear, taste, smell and feel at birth, but vision can only see things close up
- Recognizes your face, voice and smell
- Follows slow-moving objects
- Responds to your smile with pleasure
- Feels better when you help comfort her

What your child is saying and learning

- Listens to your voice
- Looks at colors, circles, edges and faces
- Listens to baby songs and nursery rhymes
- Tells you how she is feeling by crying, turning away, smiling and wiggling

What you can do

- Cuddle, sing, talk and play with her
- Sing nursery rhymes and baby songs
- Make eye contact with her
- Learn and respond to her signals
- Read simple books with bright colors and patterns
- Hold book close so she can see
 - ♥ At 1 month, hold book 8 inches from her
 - ♥ At 2 months, hold book 10 inches from her
 - ♥ At 3 months, hold book 12 inches from her
- You don't have to read the whole book. It's okay to stop if your baby gets tired or fidgety and start again at another time. Keep trying to read to your baby every day



Suggestions for Reading *Circle to Babies*



For babies age 0-3 months

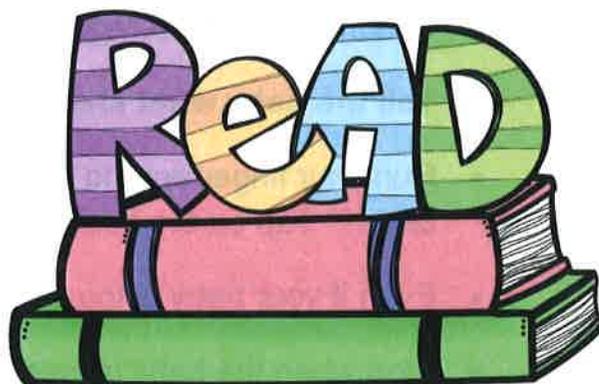
Read all or parts of the book to your baby. Here are some strategies for sharing *Circle*:

- Hold the book the appropriate distance from the baby depending on age (demonstrate 8 inches for newborns to 1-month-olds, then 12 inches for 2- to 3-month-olds; then regular distance for older babies).
- **Tell the baby what she is looking at** (“Look! Black and yellow circles!”).
- Run your finger around edge of the page and say, “This is a circle. See the circle?” Tap on the book or move it in front of his eyes to **get his attention**.
- Even if your baby is too young to talk, **ask**, “**What’s this?** It’s a kitty face.”
- Stop when the baby is tired and go back to the same book later.
- Read when baby is awake and not hungry.

Other Books for This Age

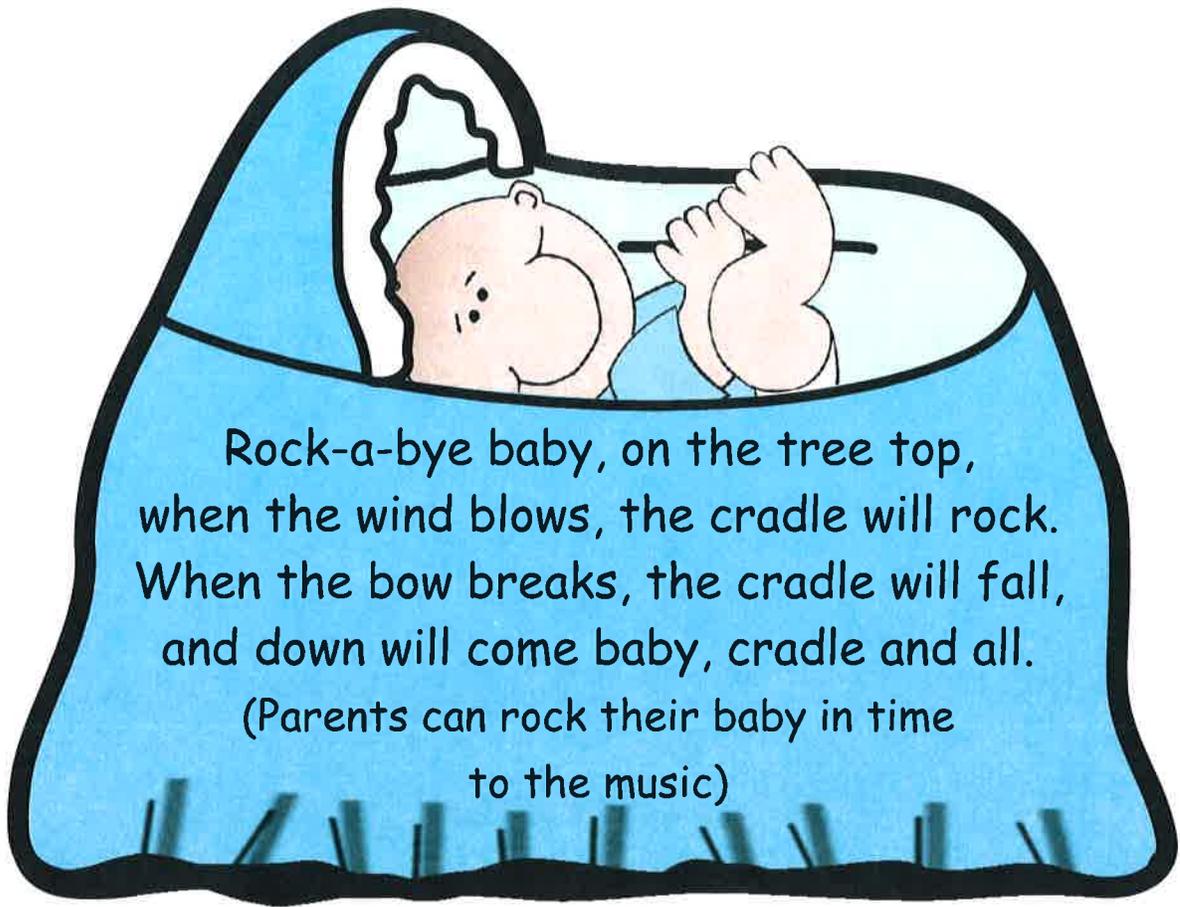
Vision is not well developed at birth. This is why simple pictures in books with high contrasts (black and white books or books with bright colors) are the best choices to interest young babies. Even at this early age, it is important to share simple books with babies.

- *Black & White* by Tana Hoban. Greenwillow, 2007
- *Look at Baby's House* by Peter Linenthal. Dutton Children's Books, 2008
- *Look Look!* by Peter Linenthal. Dutton Books for Young Readers, 1998
- *Spots and Dots* by Chez Picthall. Cooper Square Publishing, 2007
- *What Does Baby See?* by Begin Smart Books. Begin Smart, 2009



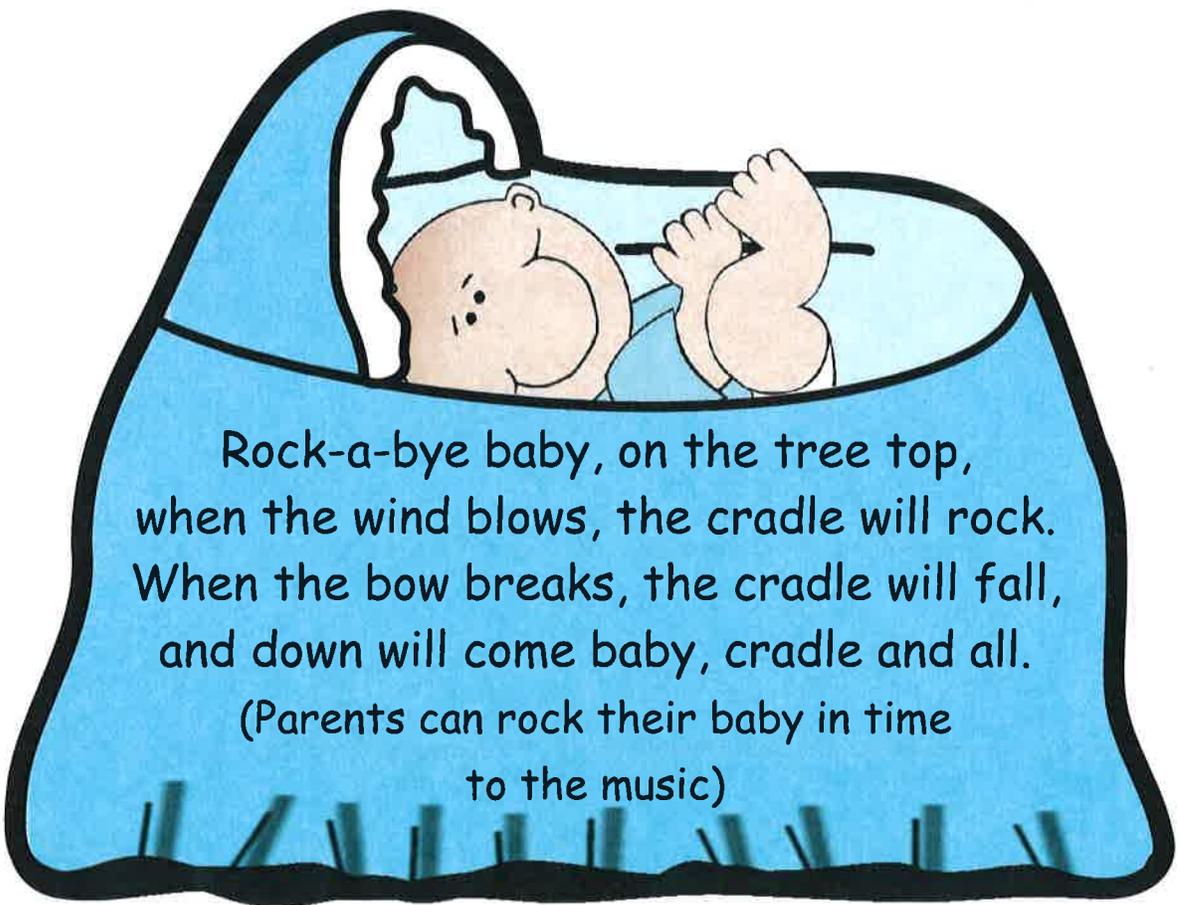
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Rock-a-bye baby, on the tree top,
when the wind blows, the cradle will rock.
When the bow breaks, the cradle will fall,
and down will come baby, cradle and all.

(Parents can rock their baby in time
to the music)



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