



Links to Learning

SEPTEMBER INFANTS

Links to Home: Shared Activities for Parents & Children

ACTIVITY:

Interacting with your baby in front of a mirror helps the child focus, track images and explore facial expressions while promoting social and emotional development. Sit with your baby so he can see his reflection in the mirror. Point to your baby's facial features and name them aloud. Afterwards, point to and name your own facial features. Make funny faces and see if your baby reacts.



BABY SIGN LANGUAGE

This Month's Baby Sign is "HAPPY."

To sign the word "happy," place your hands in front of your chest and brush upwards repeatedly. For further assistance, have your child's teacher show you how to make the baby sign, or refer to videos and articles on the Web.

In our infant program, we start using baby sign language from the earliest months. Baby signs are common terms that have been modified and simplified from American Sign Language. As your baby reaches approximately six to eight months of age, he will begin to recognize and perhaps sign back to you on his own.

Baby signs are a good way to help children express themselves and lessen frustration in the early stages of language development. Signing helps young children learn to recognize, and eventually verbalize, the word associated with the sign.

Signing with your child is fun. Say the word as you sign. You can sign while holding your baby, and have him feel the sign that you are making. Baths and diaper changes are great times to practice baby signs.



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OCTOBER INFANTS

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ACTIVITY:

Dancing slowly with your baby is a soothing activity that replicates movement in the womb and promotes a sense of balance and security. Turn on soft rhythmic music and hold your baby securely against your chest. Dance slowly and smoothly around the room. For older infants, consider providing musical toys to play along with the music once you are finished dancing.



BABY SIGN LANGUAGE

This Month's Baby Sign is "MOMMY."

To sign the word "mommy," tap your thumb on your chin repeatedly. For further assistance, have your child's teacher show you how to make the baby sign, or refer to videos and articles on the Web.

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NOVEMBER INFANTS

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ACTIVITY:

Tummy time is important so your baby can learn to push up, roll over, sit up and eventually crawl. Place your baby on his stomach and shine a flashlight near him. Once you have captured his attention, shine the flashlight in a rhythmic pattern. For older infants, encourage the baby to move, crawl or take steps toward the light.



BABY SIGN LANGUAGE

This Month's Baby Sign is "MORE."

To sign the word "more," make an "O" shape with each hand and tap together repeatedly. For further assistance, have your child's teacher show you how to make the baby sign, or refer to videos and articles on the Web.

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DECEMBER INFANTS

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ACTIVITY:

Encourage your baby's efforts to move and grab things by placing attractive objects just beyond her reach. Objects such as brightly colored balls, plush toys and picture books work well. Encourage your baby to retrieve the objects, either by creeping forward, rolling over or stretching. If your baby gets frustrated, hand her the toy and praise the effort.



BABY SIGN LANGUAGE

This Month's Baby Sign is "DADDY."

To sign the word "daddy," tap your thumb on your forehead repeatedly. For further assistance, have your child's teacher show you how to make the baby sign, or refer to videos and articles on the Web.

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JANUARY INFANTS

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ACTIVITY:

Place a fuzzy sock over a rattle. Give the rattle to your baby and let him play with it. After a few minutes, remove the sock and hand the rattle back to your baby. Does he show greater interest in holding the rattle when it is covered with the textured sock? Try using different colored socks. Try this activity with your baby's bottle as well. This will encourage interest in holding his own bottle.



BABY SIGN LANGUAGE

This Month's Baby Sign is "MILK."

To sign the word "milk," open and close your hand to resemble milking a cow. For further assistance, have your child's teacher show you how to make the baby sign, or refer to videos and articles on the Web.

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FEBRUARY INFANTS

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ACTIVITY:

Decorate a medium sized container (i.e. shoe box, plastic bin or paper shopping bag) with bright colors and patterns. Each week place three or four different items into the container. Take the items out one at a time and say the name of the item out loud. Allow your baby to touch and explore the new items. For older infants, label the items and encourage her to repeat the new word.



BABY SIGN LANGUAGE

This Month's Baby Sign is "ALL DONE."

To sign the phrase "all done," place both hands in front of your chest and flip them outwards and inwards. For further assistance, have your child's teacher show you how to make the baby sign, or refer to videos and articles on the Web.

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MARCH INFANTS

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ACTIVITY:

Blow bubbles for your baby to enhance his developing visual and motor skills. If you aim bubbles at a soft cloth or carpet, the bubbles will stick longer and give older infants time to catch them.



BABY SIGN LANGUAGE

This Month's Baby Signs are "BROTHER" & "SISTER."

To sign the word "brother," make both hands into an "L" shape. Hold one hand down by your chest and place the other hand at your forehead. Bring your top hand down to meet your lower hand. To sign the word "sister," make the same motion as "brother," but place your one hand at your chin and the other in front of your chest. For further assistance, have your child's teacher show you how to make the baby sign, or refer to videos and articles on the Web.

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APRIL INFANTS

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ACTIVITY:

Give your baby plastic cooking utensils, such as spoons and spatulas, along with a large bowl. Place appropriate finger foods in the bowl, and encourage your baby to pick up the utensils and use them to move the food around. Choose utensils with different sized handles so your baby learns how to grasp and hold objects in various ways.



BABY SIGN LANGUAGE

This Month's Baby Sign is "EAT."

To sign the word "eat," make an "O" shape with your hand and bring your hand up to your mouth repeatedly. For further assistance, have your child's teacher show you how to make the baby sign, or refer to videos and articles on the Web.

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MAY INFANTS

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ACTIVITY:

Your infant is naturally curious. He wants to explore and learn about everything in his environment, and you can help. Find cloths of different textures (i.e. satin pillowcase, bumpy washcloth, soft cotton blanket) and gently rub them over your baby's arms or legs. Make sure you do this very slowly and gently. Talk about what he feels. Afterwards, let your infant grab and touch the items.



BABY SIGN LANGUAGE

This Month's Baby Sign is "DIAPER."

To sign the word "diaper," place your hands near your waist. With each hand, tap your index and middle finger against your thumb repeatedly. For further assistance, have your child's teacher show you how to make the baby sign, or refer to videos and articles on the Web.

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JUNE INFANTS

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ACTIVITY:

Place different textured fabrics in front of your baby (i.e. cardboard, velvet, bubblewrap, corduroy). Encourage her to explore and crawl on the different textures.



BABY SIGN LANGUAGE

This Month's Baby Signs are "DOG" & "CAT."

To sign the word "dog," tap your hand flat against your thigh repeatedly. To sign the word "cat," pinch your thumb and index finger together by the side of each cheek, while keeping your remaining fingers straight. The action resembles pulling your whiskers straight. For further assistance, have your child's teacher show you how to make the baby sign, or refer to videos and articles on the Web.

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JULY INFANTS

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ACTIVITY:

Collect pictures of people your baby knows. Place the pictures where your baby can see and reach them. Talk about the picture with your baby, for example "Look, John, here's your grandmom. Who's she holding? That's you, John."



BABY SIGN LANGUAGE

This Month's Baby Sign is "BOOK."

To sign the word "book," press your hands together, palm-to-palm. Holding your pinky fingers together, open up your hands as if opening a book. For further assistance, have your child's teacher show you how to make the baby sign, or refer to videos and articles on the Web.

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AUGUST INFANTS

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ACTIVITY:

Poke a scarf through a paper towel roll to create a fun hide and seek game. Talk to your baby while playing to engage her. "Where's the scarf? Where did it go? Oh, there it is! Peek-a-boo." Allow older infants to try to pull the scarf out independently.



BABY SIGN LANGUAGE

This Month's Baby Sign is "BEAR."

To sign the word "bear," make your hands into claws and cross your arms by your chest. Scratch up and down repeatedly. For further assistance, have your child's teacher show you how to make the baby sign, or refer to videos and articles on the Web.

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