

10 Activities for Babies & Big Kids

Looking for activities for babies that will keep your big kids entertained too?
Try these simple ideas!

- 1 || Finger and feet paint - Big kids and babies will love the tactile experience of painting with their hands *and* feet and you may even get a cute keepsake of their hand and footprints!
- 2 || Making funny faces and funny noises - Babies love watching, listening to, and imitating big brothers and sisters as they make silly faces and noises. This is a great visual and social experience.
- 3 || Tummy time - The best entertainment during tummy time? Big kids! Let them show books and toys to the baby or sing songs.
- 4 || Bath time and lotion - Babies and big kids both love water play, so bath time is the perfect way to keep everyone happy.
- 5 || Visual sensory bottles - Fill clear, empty water bottles with dry rice and small manipulatives (big kids can help with this part!). Make sure the top is glued or taped on tight and gently roll the bottle in front of the baby for him to see.
- 6 || Books with buttons and sounds - Big kids can show babies the pages of books while pushing the buttons to make the sounds.
- 7 || Streamer play - Have big kids hold streamers above baby while she's lying on the floor to see if she can grab them. Or big kids can use the streamers to make shapes and letters in the air in front of baby.
- 8 || Finger plays and songs - Big kids will love showing babies all of their favorite tunes - 5 Little Monkeys, The Itsy Bitsy Spider, and more!
- 9 || Blowing bubbles - Blowing bubbles is a great oral sensory and visual activity for babies and big kids alike!
- 10 || Flashlight play - Big kids can make a light show on the walls or ceiling for baby to follow with her eyes!

Development-Boosting Toys for Infants

Gross Motor Toys

Tummy time play mat

Find a soft, cushioned mat that's big enough for sharing - whether it's you and your baby or a play date with a group of little ones.

Balls

Babies can start practicing rolling and throwing a soft ball to encourage visual motor development.

Cause and effect toys for movement

Find toys where babies can push a button to make them move (e.g. Fisher-Price Go Baby Go! Press And Crawl Turtle) - a great way to encourage crawling!

Wedge mat

Wedge mats (e.g. Children's Factory Butterfly Climber) are great for encouraging gross motor skills, core strengthening and more.

Play tent and tunnel

Another great prop for encouraging crawling and movement!

Fine Motor Toys

Interlocking toys

Toys that babies can grasp, push together, and pull apart are great for building strength in the hands (e.g. B. Hug Links).

Easy-to-grasp balls

Balls with holes or loops are easy for baby to hold onto and make great fine motor toys (e.g. Oball).

Stacking toys

Stacking toys are great for developing visual spatial and visual motor skills (e.g. ring stacking toy, Tobbles).

Blocks

Babies love stacking up and/or knocking down soft blocks - colorful blocks that have rattles inside offer a sensory bonus too (e.g. B. ABC Block Party set).

Shape sorters

This classic toy is a great challenge for visual and fine motor skills and encourages color/shape recognition (e.g. Melissa & Doug Match and Roll Shape Sorter).

Sensory Toys

Sensory play mat

Choose a tummy time mat that has bright colors, makes a crinkling sound, and offers interesting textures and objects. This can make playing on the floor an awesome sensory experience (e.g. Manhattan Toy Wimmer-Ferguson Crawl and Discover Play and Pat Activity Mat)!

Sensory balls

Balls are great for motor development and they can be a great sensory experience too! Choose one with sliding beads and/or rattles inside for some awesome tactile, visual, and auditory play (e.g. Infantino Discover and Play Sensory Ball)!

Oral sensory teething toys

Babies love to bite, chew, and mouth objects to explore them! Squishy toys (e.g. Sophie the Giraffe) are the perfect on-the-go oral sensory experience.

Swings and bouncers

As long as baby also has plenty of time to move and explore on the floor, swinging/bouncing/swaying in a comfy seat is a great way to provide calming vestibular input!

Development-Boosting Toys for Toddlers

Gross Motor Toys

Tumbling mat

This is such a versatile toy that can be used in any space to practice jumping, rolling, somersaulting and more!

Parachute

A great toy for any age, a parachute can encourage cooperative play, strengthening and more!

Streamers

Streamers are great props for movement play that can target tons of developmental skills including: coordination, motor control, spatial awareness, and direction-following.

Push toys

Push toys are great for new or emerging walkers to practice balancing and stepping. And older kids get a kick out of pushing them along the driveway or sidewalk too!

Fine Motor Toys

Mr. Potato Head

Younger toddlers can start with pulling the features off, and older toddlers can begin to push the facial features, arms, and legs into the holes. Great for building hand strength!

Books with flaps

Toddlers love to open and close. Opening and closing flaps on board books targets fine motor coordination and grasping skills.

Finger puppets

This is an entertaining way to practice finger isolation (moving one finger separately from the others).

Activity cube

Toddlers love to slide beads along the mazes and rods on activity cubes (e.g. B. Zany Zoo Wooden Activity Cube). This supports hand eye coordination.

Sensory Toys

Touch and feel board books

Books with textured pages offer toddlers an opportunity to engage in tactile play while also building vocabulary and language skills as they hear descriptions of how the pages feel.

Instruments

Musical instruments are the perfect way to target multiple skills and sensory systems at once. Engage the auditory system as you play a tune and tap into the vestibular and proprioceptive systems while you dance to the beat!

Scooters

Scooter boards are another great prop for encouraging gross motor development while engaging the vestibular and proprioceptive systems along the way!

Water or sensory table

Whether you fill it with water or dry beans or rice, kids will love using their sense of touch to dig, sift, scoop, and pour!