



**DOWN SYNDROME  
OF LOUISVILLE**  
SERVING KENTUCKY & INDIANA



# Activities for Newborns-Young Infants

## Midline activities

- Encourage reaching for and grasping toys placed on belly & while laying on side.
- Encourage grasping of single toy (ex. large ring) with both hands at midline.
- Encourage baby to touch faces directly in front of him/her with both hands.

## Forward arm posture

- Ensure arms and shoulders remain slightly forward while in reclined position and while baby is resting in your arms.

## Strengthening activities

- Use resistive play (i.e. gentle tug of war) with rings/links/scarves and encourage baby to pull his/her arms toward himself/herself, at his/hers side, in front, and at head level.
- While on his/her back to belly, provide resistance with your hands at baby's feet and encourage him/her to push back at your hands.
- Utilize lots of tummy time.

## Exposure to textures

- Stroke baby's feet, legs, arms, cheeks, and lips with various textures (feathers, beads, towels, scarves, Koosh balls, Bristle Blocks, etc.)

## Oral motor exploration of toys and textures

- Rub baby's lips with toys and textures and gently guide baby's arms/hands to his/her mouth when s/he is holding a toy.
- Encourage hand in mouth exploration by also gently guiding baby's arms to his/her mouth.



## Grasping of toy(s)

- Gently rub baby's palms to stimulate and "wake up" prior to these activities.
- Provide gentle squeeze over baby's hand while s/he is holding links or rings or similar toys.
- Place object in each of baby's hands.
- Gently guide baby's arms so that his/her hand is touching/tapping a toy and wait for baby to open his/her hand and guide hand to the toy.

## Awareness of environment

- Place a mirror in various positions and encourage baby to observe and talk to himself/herself.
- Continue to monitor visual and auditory tracking (both horizontally & vertically) and localization to music/voices/sounds.

## Communication

- Sing songs with simple patterns and rhymes with exaggerated facial expressions and hand/body motions.
- Repeat sounds that baby makes while establishing eye contact, pause to allow him/her to respond to you. Continue these cycles as long as s/he repeats.
- Expand baby's sound repertoire by imitating his/her sounds then add new or different combinations of simple sounds (e.g. "Oooh-Gooo" or "Aaah-Baah").

## Neurological development

- Discuss with your child's pediatrician or pharmacist the use of odorless/tasteless fish oil or similar supplement with enriched EPA, DHA, and/or Omega-3 to aid in myelination as this naturally reparative process begins to show dysfunction as early as 4-6 months of age.
- Discuss with your child's pediatrician the use of a comprehensive multivitamin (e.g. Polyvisol) as many children are susceptible to nutritional deficiencies and can experience compromised immune systems.