



Thinking Abilities and General Knowledge Activity for Birth to 6 Months

Tasting and Touching to Play

Babies learn and play mostly by holding, looking, and mouthing things.

Materials:

- Easy-to-grip toys
- Variety of small rattles

What to do:

1. Let the baby play with and mouth easy-to-grasp toys when she is in different positions (sitting in an infant seat, cradled in your arms, lying on her back or side). At this stage, the infant's "play" may be brief.
2. Help the baby hold and play with toys in her left and right hands on different occasions so she can practice holding in each hand.
3. Offer a variety of rattles or small toys. Watch what item the baby plays with the most.
4. Show the baby what she can do with it the toy, but then give the baby time to explore the toy by herself — at her pace, and in her way.
5. Tell the baby what she is doing when she is playing with a rattle. "Oh, you're tasting your rattle," or "Oops! You dropped your rattle!"

Safety alert! Always check and monitor the infant's rattles, squeeze toys and teethingers to make sure there are:

- *NO small or ball-shaped ends that could extend into the back of the mouth and block the airway*
- *NO squeakers or small pieces that could detach*
- *NO toys or toy parts less than 1 3/4 inch in diameter; they are a choking hazard if they fit inside a paper-towel roll.*

