

Parenting Potentials

BABY EDITION



Not all babies smile, reach or roll at exactly the same age or exactly the same way, but they do develop in a predictable way. If your baby is not meeting developmental milestones, consult your pediatrician. In many cases, **Occupational Therapy (OT) and Physical Therapy (PT) can help.**

Trust your instincts – the "wait and see" approach is not the best approach. Studies show that early intervention is best.

TODAY'S TOP STORY

Tummy Time: What It Is and Why We Do It

What it is: Tummy time involves placing your baby on her belly for short periods of time while she is awake and supervised.

Why we do it: Tummy time strengthens shoulder, back, and belly muscles and develops wrist and hand strength for fine motor skills. Ultimately, this will help her learn to lift her head and gain a new view of the world.

Practical advice: Tummy time can be a challenge for some infants but there are ways to make it more enjoyable for everyone. You can start these activities from birth except as noted.

- Go chest-to-chest or face-to-face (remember, you are their favorite toy!)
- Use a [Boppy](#) pillow
- Lay your baby face-down across your lap
- Use a [tummy time mirror](#)
- Introduce a [water pat mat](#) when they are 2-3 months old
- Hold your baby across your arm in the football position
- Use a therapy ball or peanut ball



QUICK THOUGHTS

Signs Your Baby May Need OT or PT

OT may help if:

- Difficulty controlling a floppy head
- Poor muscle tone making their body seem too stiff or floppy
- Under-reactive or over-reactive to stimuli
- Little active movement of arms or legs
- Hands remain fisted after 3 months
- Unable to grasp an object after 3 months
- Unable to self-soothe after 3 months

PT may help if:

- *Note: Premies are at risk and should be screened early*
- Prefers to turn head only to one side
- Developing a flat spot on the back or side of head
- Does not tolerate tummy time or modified tummy time
- Difficulty lifting and turning their head while on tummy by 3 months
- Favors one side of the body or tilts the head to one side only
- Not taking weight on legs in supported standing by 6 months



A WORD OF CAUTION

Jumpers, Exersaucers, and Walkers, Oh My!

While we understand the devices like jumpers, exersaucers, and walkers can free you up during meal prep or bathroom breaks, it's important to ensure **they do not substitute free play on the ground – especially during tummy time.**

Potential effects of overuse

1. Delayed muscle development in the legs
2. Toe-walking when they begin walking on their own
3. Altered pelvic positioning, weakened core muscles, and shortened hip flexors

Our recommendation

1. Limit the amount of time in these devices to 30 minutes per day
2. Have your baby spend more time in a safe environment on the ground so they can learn and explore independently



A TOY TO EXPLORE

Baby Paper

[Baby Paper](#) has a crinkle sound that almost all babies love. It's a six-inch square of crinkly fun and small enough for little hands to grasp. This is a simple toy that uses all the senses – vision, touch, hearing and oral. It comes in a variety of patterns and is machine washable.



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