

Fostering Development After Discharge

What activities can I do to foster normal development of muscle tone and control in my preemie?

The following are age-specific activities that you and your baby can try. In all examples, age is determined by correcting for the week of prematurity. For example, if your baby was two months early, activities listed at two months would be expected at four months. Another way is to use your baby's due date, not the actual date of birth.

Age 0-2 months Corrected Age: ____ months

-To help develop head control, when held at your shoulder:

1. Hold your baby high enough that he/she can look around
2. Let your baby raise his/her head, but keep a hand near to support if necessary
3. Turn your back to a mirror so the baby can see him/herself
4. Have someone stand behind you and talk to your baby
5. Walk around so that there are new things to see

-Tummy time, when awake only. This helps strengthen neck and shoulder muscles. This should be done on a flat surface like a mattress or covered floor.

1. Place baby on tummy with the arms forward and elbows in line with the shoulders.
2. Place a toy 6-8 inches in front of your baby or place your baby in front of a mirror.
3. Gradually increase tummy time. At first your baby will tire easily.
4. Hold your baby on his/her tummy while in your lap.

1-4 months Corrected Age: ____ months

Baby is able to:

- smile when spoken to
- show some head control in an upright position
- open hands most of the time now
- may begin to sleep 5-6 hours during the night and take 3 naps during the day.
- show interest in seeing different things and hearing different sounds

Offer your baby:

- a pacifier to sooth him/her
- a massage after bathing, she/he likes your touch
- repetition of sounds that he/she makes
- stimulation by opening closing your mouth/eyes
- musical toys
- tummy time

4, 5, and 6 months Corrected Age: _____ months

Baby is able to:

- smile, laugh and squeal
- roll over from stomach to back
- reach for and bat at objects
- pass toy from hand to hand
- show signs of stranger anxiety
- recognize own name
- stand up supported
- bring toy to mouth
- make single sounds
- hold head up, raise body on hands, arch back and rock when on tummy

Offer your baby:

- respond when he/she "talks" to you
- safe squeaky toys and rattle
- play pat-a-cake
- sit in front of mirror to look at self
- increase tummy time
- teething rings

7, 8, and 9 months Corrected Age: _____ months

Baby is able to:

- sit up alone
- babble
- roll around
- scoot on tummy and crawl
- put toes in mouth and explore with his/her fingers
- simple problem solving (make a bell ring)
- look at and study things for a long time

Offer your baby:

- container to put things into
- opportunity to explore
- read books together
- hide a toy under a cloth or cup for baby to find

10-12 months Corrected Age: _____ months

Baby is able to:

- crawl
- sit alone and turn body in a complete circle
- pull self up on furniture and walk while holding on
- walk with support

-sit down from a standing position

Offer your baby:

- animal sounds
- play hide and seek
- roll a ball back and forth
- pick up toys with him/her

13-14 months Corrected Age: _____ months

Child is able to:

- climb onto a low edge or step
- stand alone and walk
- stoop and stand back up
- speak two or three word sentences
- wave "goodbye"
- take off clothes
- open/close doors
- look into correct direction when asked where something is