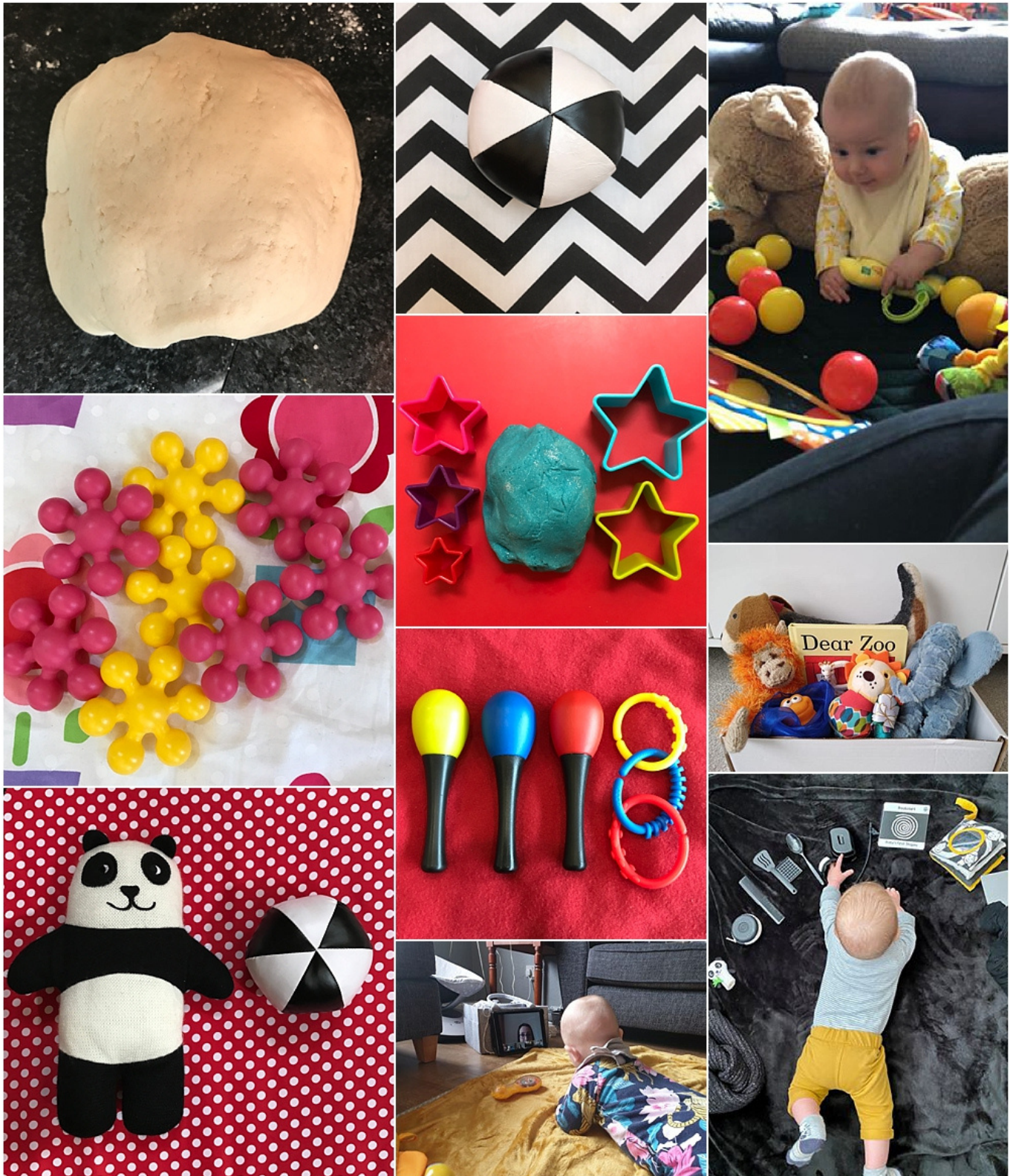


Play in May - week two



Play in May

Welcome along to week 2 of our Play in May themed printables.

Each week we'll be sending you a printable with 5 different activities that you can try with our little one during lockdown. We'll give you information on why it is beneficial for your baby's brain & their sensory development too.

We really want to give you opportunities to play during your week, it helps add structure, is incredible for helping your little one develop brain connections, adds structure during this unusual time and can help bring us all together.

This pack is full of play suggestions, ideas on activities you can do with your little one, repeat them, choose your favourites, miss a day, work around your family, there is no strict way to play and nobody is ever behind.

Please post photos in our facebook group. We would LOVE to see what you get up to.



Play in May

Safety first - These activities are suggestions of how to engage your baby in play. They need to be carried out with adult supervision and you taking full responsibility for your baby during play. Please ensure that your little one is supervised with the toy at all times. Keep your little one in arms reach and eye sight when they are playing.



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Two texture toys



Creating two textured toys at home are a great way to increase your baby's opportunity to process textures through their touch receptors and it is also a great way to get your little one to experience a different texture in each of their hands at the same time. Our little one's brains are expecting both of their hands to feel the same texture at the same time so giving them lots of opportunities to feel different textures in each hand is really helpful.

You can simply create a two texture toy by using a chiffon and a link or using a chiffon and an oball. Both are brilliant for fine finger control, motor planning skills and hand to eye co-ordination too.

Tie your chiffon around a link and give your baby the chiffon in one hand and the link in the other. Popping a chiffon in an oball is an amazing way for an older baby to develop finger isolation as they poke and pull to get the chiffon out of the ball.

black, white and red



We love to take opportunities to do contrast play with our babies. Contrast play is amazing for visual development! When our little one's are born their visual system is the least developed of their senses as it gets the least amount of stimulation in the womb. Initially they see in light and shade, their eyes have the capacity in seeing in colour, their brain just doesn't have the ability to process it yet.

Their colour scheme comes through with colours of red and yellow initially at around 3-4 months and by the age of 2 their visual system is fully developed so we have lots of opportunities to help them with their visual development.

Playing with contrast colours not only helps the muscles in the back of their eyes work together, ocular motor control, it helps attract their interest, concentration and develop their vision.

black, white and red



We have a set of contrast cards and some ideas that you can use to help your little one's vision available as a free download on your dashboard and we have a new set of contrast cards coming to you in the post soon too!

To help your baby's visual development, pop together a play area that focuses on contrast and some single colour red as one of the first colours they can see in focus.

For resources some of our favourites are puppets by The Puppet Company. Amazing baby do a great set of black and white books in lots of different formats, board, fabric, etc and Ikea for fabrics and plush toys.

Our challenge for you is to dig around your toy basket and find some contrast toys to do a little concentrated play with your baby. Do send us images, we'd love to hear how you get on.

play dough



We just love making play dough for use in our sessions. It is great texture play, helps concentration and imaginative play, it is amazing for fine finger control and bilateral co-ordination and the toddlers who come along to our sessions just love it. We have made a lot of dough over the years and this recipe is definitely our favourite!

Play dough ingredients

- 1 cup of flour
- half a cup of salt
- 1 tablespoon of cream of tartar
- 1 tablespoon of vegetable oil
- half a cup of boiling water

play dough

To make the play dough

Add all of the dry ingredients into a mixing bowl and add the tablespoon of vegetable oil. With a metal spoon stir the mixture and add the boiling water into the mixture in stages. The mixture quickly forms into a dough and you may not need all of the water so adding gradually is helpful. As soon as the mixture forms, take it out of the bowl and kneed it for a couple of minutes, be careful of the temperature of the dough from the boiling water. The dough quickly becomes smooth and stretchy and it is amazingly tactile.

The ingredients can be doubled up to make a larger batch of dough. If you are adding colour, mix a small amount with the boiling water and add it at that stage. We use these smaller batches to make several colours of dough,.

Store the dough in the fridge in an airtight container or bag and it'll last for several weeks. Do check the condition of the dough before offering it to your child.

This activity is for an older baby, who is successfully weaning just in case any dough is consumed. This dough is made with edible ingredients but it doesn't taste that pleasant, just really salty. Please never leave your little one unattended with play dough.

rainbow themed activity



Our rainbow themed activity is in appreciation of our NHS staff and all the keyworkers who are keeping us all well and safe during the pandemic. This week we are using rainbow ribbons which are amazing two texture toys. To create one at home use a link, curtain hoop, bracelet or napkin ring and loop fabric, ribbon, tissue or sugar paper around it.

For our younger babies in a lying down position

Shake the rainbow ribbon above them, aiming towards their nose rather than forehead so that they are looking in front of them rather than tilting necks backwards.

rainbow themed activity

Hold it still to give them a chance of fixing their gaze on the toy and slowly move it side to side but within their eyeline so they are practicing their eye muscle control. Hold it over to one side to try and get them to turn their head towards the toy, practicing a motor response in response to the toy, and then do to the opposite side too. If you find that they are more reluctant to move to one side, this is the side that you need to keep practicing on to make sure that they have full motor control. Run the toy over hands and feet so that they can feel the ribbons, open up little hands to grab the hoop.

Tummy time

Tummy time is a great opportunity to use the rainbow ribbon, it is a great toy for distraction and attract their attention. For our babies who are starting to move, pop the toy just out of arms reach to get them to stretch and balance for it.

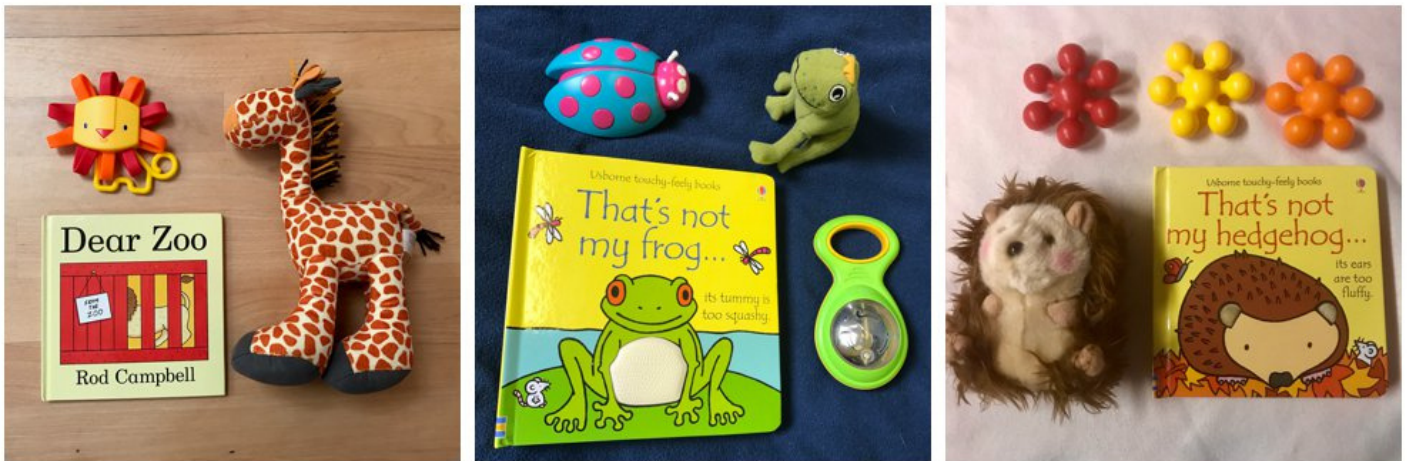
rainbow themed activity

For older babies, in a sitting position

Shake the rainbow ribbon in front of them to get both hands to come to the centre to catch the toy. This works their balance, motor skills and hand to eye co-ordination. If your little one is just getting their sitting balance make sure that they have cushions next to them to give them some extra support. After perfecting the two handed grab it is time to hold it to one side to get one hand to come out and grab the toy, make sure you practice on both sides and if they find it harder to do on one side, do give them lots of opportunity to practice. Give your little one the ribbon toy and persuade them to do some shaking, see if they can copy your movements.



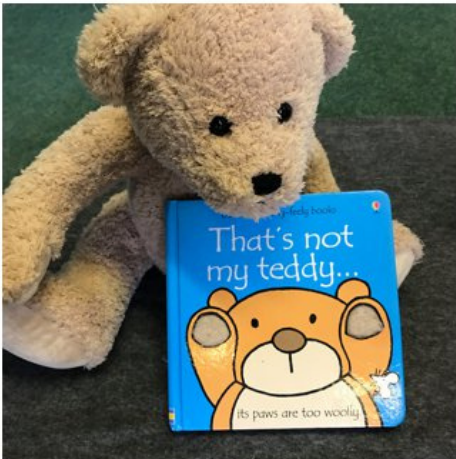
reading to your baby



Reading to your baby from a young age is amazing for their brain development and we know from lots of research that has been conducted that little ones who have early exposure to books have better language acquisition and have better cognitive processing speeds that have a positive impact on their education so you really are helping build your little one's brain! Introducing books to your baby is something you can do from birth and it is great to have as part of your daily routine.

Many of our parents tell us that they haven't introduced books to their little one because they can't understand the story yet, but there are so many benefits of reading to little one, it is amazing for their development!

reading to your baby



Reading helps your baby develop

- language skills
- cognitive processing skills
- visual skills
- listening skills and attention
- motor skills as they co-ordinate their eye muscles and as they get older help turn pages
- communication skills

We also know that children who are read to every day have been shown to be almost 12 months ahead of their age group when they start school, it really does help to build brains and shows the importance of reading to babies.

reading to your baby

Tips for reading to your baby

- Start today! dig out a book and cuddle your baby
- Think about books that have repetitive language patterns 'that's not my' usbourne books are great for this
- Match a book with a toy like we have in our images, that way you can have really authentic conversations with your baby about what they are looking at. You can pick a yellow toy to match the colour of the book cover or a toy that features in a book, for example we have a book that has a ladybird on the last page, when we get to it the ladybird finger puppet appears, it builds anticipation!
- Pick a book with texture to add more opportunity for sensory development
- Read the same books often, repetition is amazing for brain development
- Think about the time of day you read together, when your little one is alert and active might not be the best time to get their full attention, choose a quieter time

reading to your baby

- Think of their position when you are reading, lying beside them, cuddling or in tummy are great positions for reading
- Choose contrast image books for younger babies
- Make it part of your daily routine, read a book before bed or before a nap at a quiet time.
- Get others involved in reading too, listening to lots of different voices is an amazing opportunity to concentrate on developing those listening and language skills
- Have lots of fun and as always ensure that your little one is safe at all times, keep them in eye-sight and arms reach when playing

