



## **Play Time with Baby – How much is Enough?**

### **By Judy Arnall**

New moms often ask, “How much should I play with baby?” The simple answer is, “As much as you wish to.” Babies love faces and the best time to interact with those they love is face-to-face contact times such as bath times, diaper changes, and feeding times.

During those contact times, it helps to sing, talk, tickle, read, make facial expressions and use vocal variety to baby. Don’t forget to smile. Babies love facial interaction and they will naturally turn their head away when they have had enough.

Try to give baby some “tummy time” for several minute periods each day. It helps baby to develop neck and upper arm muscles and it relieves pressure on the head so that the risk of plagiocephally (flat head) is reduced. Many babies don’t like tummy time, on a hard floor, so it can be helpful to put baby on parent’s chest while parent is lying down on the sofa. This counts as tummy time. Also, keep in mind that tummy time can be several minutes, several times a day, instead of a twenty-minute marathon every day.

Baby carriers are a wonderful way for babies to be stimulated and entertained through the day. Baby watching you make dinner from the elevated view of a backpack is fascinating for him and is just as stimulating for his brain development as watching “educational” videos.

In spite of our society’s intensive push to give early learning to young children, try to avoid worrying about how much stimulation and playtime she is supposed to be getting. If you enjoy spending time with baby, interacting with your natural enthusiasm, rest assured she is getting enough stimulation!

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