

Language & Learning

Learning From Family

Developing Creativity and Art

When babies are very small, they like to look at edges, stripes, and patterns. Some research suggests that babies who depend on their eyes for information develop a little bit of extra attention to and interest in things that they see. Having some interesting things to look at is important. Colorful crib pads and crib books, bright mobiles and busy boxes, figures on the bedroom walls, and pretty stuffed pillows and animals can all encourage your baby to use his eyes from the very beginning. Babies can attend best if they can see a few bright items at one time. You might have a busybox in the playpen, a bright crib pad and a stuffed animal in the crib, and a colorful mobile over the changing table. Babies like to look at new objects; you can introduce a new toy or animal or crib book and take away the old one occasionally.

As babies begin to use language, they also begin to enjoy creating: making marks on paper, for example, or squeezing colorful play-dough. Art activities are chances for your baby to express feelings and to experience making early marks and shapes. Art is also another way for you and your baby to have conversations. He may not be drawing or making anything you can recognize, but it won't be long before he wants to tell you what he made.

If you are working in a room, you can cover a high chair tray or play table with shelf or packing paper, put your baby in it, and hand over a crayon. If the crayon goes in the mouth, it is non-toxic. But you are there and can draw and scribble with your baby for a while. Play-dough usually has to be a shared project and you will need an old shower curtain on the floor, but it is a lot of fun!

Outside, you have sidewalk chalk, or small stones to arrange, or leaves and flowers to look at. Babies are interested in looking, touching and doing in creative ways, and your deaf or hard of hearing baby will find many opportunities for engaging you in those early conversations that turn into language in your chosen modality.