



Five things to do with under ones: expressive arts and design

Provide a quiet time where you play them music or sing to them. Choose familiar songs and tunes and introduce new ones. Try playing music they may have heard while in the womb as evidence shows babies react to music even before they are born. Watch for their reactions and move them gently to the music's rhythm.



Provide books and toys with sharp contrasts such as bold patterns or black and white colours. These help to attract and retain young babies' attention. As they get older start to show them books with simple pictures they can recognise, such as animals or babies.

Provide things for babies to hear – scrunchy paper, toys that rattle or squeak, wind chimes or make some shakers, music. You can make simple shakers by placing dried lentils or rice in plastic bottles with a secure screwed top.

If you enjoy messy play, make a small tray of gloop (a mix of cornflour and water) to let older babies put their fingers and hands in. You can make gloop by mixing 2 cups of cornflour with one of water. You can also add a few drops of food colouring to make different colours.

Once you baby can sit, let them touch and feel different materials. Try making a treasure basket using any small container with heavy and light items such as pebbles and ribbons, smooth and rough items like silky material and pinecones, a bouncy ball and clothes pegs – in fact anything that holds your baby's interest.