

Infant Activities (Birth-12 Months)

Social-Emotional Support: Can You Make Fish Lips

As infants begin to develop their social emotional skills, they learn how to understand and communicate their emotions. Infants start expressing their emotions by making different sounds and facial expressions. Notice your infants sounds, such as cooing, babbling, and grunting. Watch for your infants facial expressions, such as “fish lips”, smiling, and pouting as ways she is trying to communicate with you. Let your infant know you understand her emotions by imitating what you see. If your infant is making fish lips, imitate that expression back to her. When you imitate your infant’s sounds and expressions, you are creating a safe place for her to communicate with you.

Cognitive Development: Something is Fishy

Infants are born with a natural curiosity to figure out how things work. The more curious your infant is the more he learns. Try playing games, such as “peek-a-boo” or splashing your infant’s bath water to make a toy bob up and down. Your infant will be curious to see what will happen next. You can also play with toys that your infant can “restart” when they stop, for example a music box or a wind-up toy. Nurturing your infant’s curiosity is one of the most important ways that you can help him become a lifelong learner.

Playful Parenting: Move like a Puhi

Get your infant moving like a puhi (eel) with infant yoga. Speak directly to your infant and maintain eye contact as you guide her body through each pose. It will help her to feel comfortable and safe. Practice moving like a puhi (eel) by laying your infant on her tummy. Then together wiggle, wiggle, wiggle like a puhi (eel) in the ocean. For fun, create more ocean animal poses. The puhi (eel) pose helps your infant to gain an understanding of her neck and head position. This knowledge will support your infant’s ability to roll over on her own. Give it a try!

Toddler Activities (12-24 Months)

Social-Emotional Support: Silly Seahorses

Providing positive social-emotional opportunities will help keiki feel good about themselves and develop confidence. Your keiki will form secure relationships with others and ultimately will be able to focus and learn. This strong and healthy foundation will lead to future academic success. Encourage your keiki to try new things, such as a simple game called “Silly Seahorses.” You can do this together by being silly and jumping while wiggling and waving your arms like the ocean waves. Help your keiki see what she is capable of and let her know you are pleased with all of her accomplishments.

Cognitive Development: Ocean Art

Keiki are always experimenting, thinking, and solving problems through play. Your keiki can create ocean art through playing with items you have at home. Find ocean-like materials and art supplies you already have. You can use foil, bubble wrap, scrap material, paper, crayons, markers, chalk and finger paint. Allow your keiki to take the lead in creating his ocean art using the materials and art supplies in front of him. When keiki takes the lead you are supporting his learning to make decisions.

Playful Parenting : 1-2-3-4-5 Let’s Re-Apply!

Keiki who are not protected by the sun’s UV rays have a higher chance of getting skin cancer later in life. While outdoors or at the beach, remember the importance of re-applying sunscreen. You should use a broad-spectrum sunscreen SPF 30+ that is safe for keiki and our coral reefs, such as Neutrogena Pure and Free Baby Sunscreen Lotion SPF 50 broad-spectrum. Make sun-protection fun by using a timer set for 2 hrs. after each application. When the timer goes off, say “1-2-3-4-5 Let’s re-apply!” together while re-applying sunscreen. Adopting a sunscreen habit is practicing smart sun protection.

Preschooler Activities (24-48 Months)

Social-Emotional Support: Calming Ocean

As keiki explore their environment, there many times when they become over stimulated causing them to have a meltdown. By creating a calming corner in your home, you can help your keiki to calm down. The sound of the ocean waves (pink noise) has a calming effect on our minds. You can play sounds of the ocean in your keiki's calming corner. You can also have in your keiki's calming corner, snuggly pillows to hug and calming sensory items, such as lavender play dough to squeeze. When you create a calming environment, you help keiki learn how to independently regulate their emotions.

Cognitive Development: Ocean Sensory Bag

After a trip to the beach making an ocean sensory bag with keiki is a great summer activity. Start by placing a quart sized freezer bag upright so keiki can pour in the following items. First, add sand to fill the bottom half of the freezer bag. Next, add toy ocean animals and sea-shells you may have collected from the beach. If you don't have toy ocean animals, help keiki draw ocean animals on the bag using a permanent marker. To create the "ocean", add blue body wash, hand soap, or gel. Lastly, close and seal the bag. Squeeze out as much air as you can so the bag will lay flat. Add a strip of heavy duty tape around each of the edges to prevent the bag from opening. As your keiki explores his completed ocean sensory bag, encourage him to talk about his day at the beach. Spending time with keiki is something he will remember forever and makes learning fun!

Playful Parenting: Reef Fizz...

Explore the beautiful colorful coral reefs with your keiki with some fizz art fun! Pour 1 box of baking soda in a small pan and shake gently so that the baking soda is evenly spread out. Using 3-4 small bowls, pour 1/2 cup of vinegar in each bowl. Squeeze about 6 drops of food coloring or extra Easter egg dye into each bowl of vinegar and stir well. Fill a dropper with colored vinegar, squeeze it onto the baking soda, and watch your reef fizz! As keiki begin to mix colors ask keiki, "What color do you think this will be?" Asking questions helps keiki to further explore and then identify a possible solutions to the questions being asked.