

Early positioning is essential for healthy motor development in babies. Varied, supportive positions like tummy time and floor play encourage natural movement, build strength and coordination, and help babies develop the skills needed to reach motor milestones at their own pace. Consider the following guidelines:

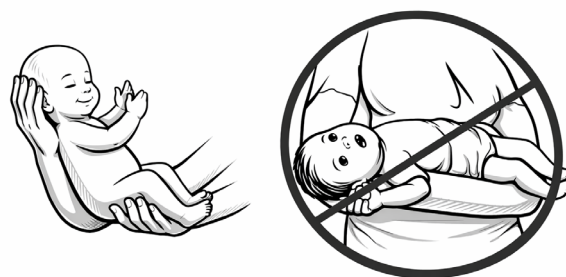
Flexion (keeping your baby bent or curled up): places the abdominal muscles in a good position to work and become stronger

Midline: encourage your baby to bring his/her head to the middle, hands to mouth, and hands to the middle to play

Head Preference: babies sometimes develop a preference for turning their head to one side. If a preference is noted:

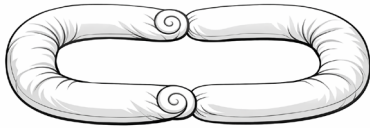
- Encourage head turning to the other side by placing yourself or toys to that side
- Place baby on their side and change sides often when they are awake
- When awake, they should spend short periods of time throughout the day on their tummy, with your supervision, and be able to look to either side
- In your baby’s crib, place them so they need to turn their head in the other direction to see you as you come into the room

Holding Your Baby: when picking up your baby, support their head, arms and bottom to bring them into a tucked or curled up position where he or she will feel controlled and secure.

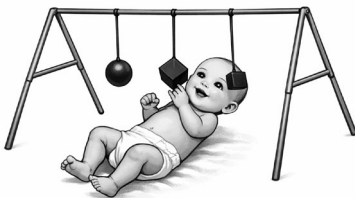


Suggestions for positioning during supervised playtime:

Roll up a receiving blanket and position it in a “U” shape to help bring your baby’s head and shoulders forward. Use a second blanket to bring your baby’s knees up. Remove rolled towels once your baby can reach to the middle and to their knees on their own.



Position toys (eg. a play arch) or your face over your baby’s chest to encourage reaching and midline play, lay your baby on your lap or encourage playing in side lying on both sides



For short periods, a baby seat is a good way to encourage a flexed position, and to encourage bringing hands to mouth and mid-line. You can also encourage early reaching for toys.

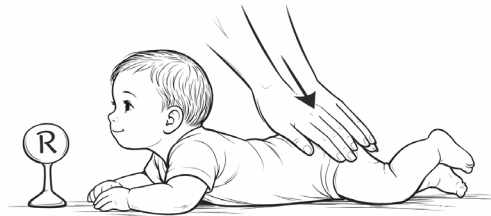


Tummy Time

Placing babies on their tummies is a very important way to promote head control and to strengthen arms and tummy muscles. Encourage your baby to lift their head by using your face, a mirror, or a favourite toy. Babies are actually encouraged to spend 50% of their supervised awake time on their tummies. If your baby does not enjoy tummy time, you may also need to provide short frequent sessions instead. Here are some ways to make this position easier.



As your baby gets stronger, you can help by placing your hand on their bottom and pressing firmly back and downward to help shift weight back to be able to lift their head.



Hip Health

When swaddling your baby, give space for their hips to move up and out. For car seats, a wider seat allows the hips to be apart, which puts the hips in a better position. For baby harnesses and slings, provide thigh support to the knees, and allow the legs space to be apart. Please refer to the following link for more information: <https://hipdysplasia.org/infant-child/hip-healthy-swaddling/>

Helpful Toys

Some of the time, give your baby “harder” toys to play with and manipulate, for example toys with rings that link together or baby rattles so they can begin to develop their hand skills.

Remember that each baby is different. Some will take longer than others to learn new skills. If you have any questions about the information in this handout, please reach out to your healthcare team.