



July's theme is *Body Parts*. Try these fun activities to help your child learn more about their body:

### Talk Together

- **For your baby:** During your baby's bath, you can sing Head and shoulders, knees and toes, knees and toes, knees and toes, head and shoulders, knees and toes. This is baby's body! Eyes and mouth and ears and nose, ears and nose, ears and nose. Eyes and mouth and ears and nose. This is baby's body! As you sing, be sure to gently touch each body part.
- **For your toddler:** Ask your toddler Where's your...NOSE? After he shows you, ask Where's your...KNEE? Continue the game, giving him a kiss on each body part. With toddlers who are potty training, it is especially important to give them words to talk about their private parts. This helps children understand what is happening during potty training and to communicate more clearly with you when they feel a need to use the potty.

### Read Together

- Read books about all of our different body parts. For babies, try: *Where is Baby's Belly Button?* and *Toes, Ears, and Nose!*, both by Karen Katz, and *Ten Little Fingers* and *Head, Shoulders, Knees, and Toes*, both by Annie Kubler. For older toddlers, good choices include *My First Body Board Book* by DK Publishing, *Horns to Toes* and *In Between* by Sandra Boynton, *From Head to Toe* by Eric Carle, and *Clarabella's Teeth* by An Vrombaut.

### Play Together

- **For your baby:** Try some infant massage techniques on your baby. Wait until your baby is relaxed, fed, and in a good mood. Then give it a try. Ask your baby if you can touch her, and then gently rub and massage her legs, arms, feet, and hands. (Use lotion or a physician-okayed body oil, if you'd like.) If your baby gets distressed or doesn't like to be touched this way, stop and try again another time.

As you touch your baby, talk about her different body parts. Activities like this help your baby know where her body begins and ends (a concept called “body awareness”).

• **For your toddler:** Toddlers love challenges, especially as they are growing stronger and more coordinated physically. Ask your child “Can you lift your leg? Can you touch your hands to your knees?” Using the names of her body parts in context helps her learn, and also gives her a chance to show you all that she can do with her growing body. You can play a similar game outside by turning a sprinkler on (keep the spray low so that it is about the same height as your child). Then ask your toddler, Can you put your foot in the water? Can you put your hand in the water? Can you jump your whole body through the water? Make the most of July’s warm weather by doing footprint paintings outside. Pour washable tempera paint into a shallow metal dish. Lay a piece of paper in front of the dish and then another shallow pan of water on the other side of the paper. Have your child step (barefoot) into the paint, then walk all around the paper, then step into the dish of water to wash off. Have a towel handy to dry her toes. Another (less messy) idea is to trace your child’s hand or feet onto a piece of paper. Let your child color in or decorate the tracing. Then trace your hand or foot. Whose is bigger or smaller? If you can find a roll of butcher paper (available at craft stores), you can even try tracing your child’s entire body. You can talk about, draw, and color all your child’s different body parts.



The theme for August is *Bubbles*. Try these fun activities to help your child learn more about bubbles, sounds, and cleaning:

### **Talk Together**

**For your baby:** As you and your baby play with bubbles, focus on repeating the words “bubble” and “pop.” Point at the bubbles floating away: “Look at the bubbles

go!” Cue your baby to “Pop the bubbles.” See if your baby tries to imitate you. Listen for “buh” or “pa” sounds.

**For your toddler:** Talk to your toddler about the “ingredients” for making bubbles. First you open the soap suds and dip the bubble wand inside. Then you gently blow and then the bubbles fly away. You can do all sorts of things with bubbles: catch them, pop them with your finger, clap them between your hands, pile them up on your palm. You’ll be amazed at all the different words you can use to talk about bubbles!

## Read Together

Read books that include some bubbles in the story. For babies, try: *Clifford Counts Bubbles* by Norman Bridwell, *Squeaky Clean* by Simon Puttock, and *Jesse Bear, What Will You Wear?* by Nancy White Carlstrom. For older toddlers, good choices include *Bubble Bubble* by Mercer Mayer, *Bubbles Bubbles* by Kathi Appelt, and *The Scrubbly-Bubbly Car Wash* by Irene O’Garden.

## Play Together

**For your baby:** Sit outside with your baby and start blowing bubbles. What does your baby do? Does he reach out to touch them? Follow them with his eyes? Catch a bubble on the bubble wand. Ask him if he wants to pop it and then let him “grab” it with his fingers. Let your baby play with oodles of bubbles. Seat him in his high chair. Meanwhile, squirt some dish detergent in the bowl and then run water into the bowl, making lots of bubbles. Scoop a handful of bubbles out and put them on your baby’s high chair tray. Watch him touch and explore these funny bubbles. Just be careful he doesn’t eat them!

**For your toddler:** Play “Pop the Bubble” outside. Tell your child that her job will be to try and “catch” as many bubbles as she can and pop them. Start blowing bubbles and watch her dash to catch them. As you play, you can sing (to the tune of Pop Goes the Weasel): Round and round the grassy yard my baby chases bubbles, Pop goes the bubbles! Make bubble art. Mix about a cup of bubble solution with about 1–2 tablespoons of washable tempera paint. Hang a piece of paper outside (use binder clips to hang on a fence) and have your child blow bubbles at the paper. An alternative is for a grown-up to put a plastic straw into the bubble-paint solution and blow, forming lots of bubbles (careful, don’t swallow). Children can then press the paper into the bubbles that are overflowing out of the bowl.



September's theme is *Cars, Trucks, and Buses*. Try these fun activities to help your child learn more about cars, motion, and the world around them:

### **Talk Together**

**For your baby:** Take a walk see how many vehicles you can spot. Point them out and repeat their names: Truck! Bus! Car! Start to help your child make sentences as you watch the traffic zooming by: Cars go. Trucks go. The bus stops. Now it goes. Watch and listen for your baby's attempt to tell you when he spots a four-wheeled wonder. Listen for *ka*, *tuck*, and *ba* sounds. Watch for your baby to point and gesture at a bright yellow bus.

**For your toddler:** This is an exciting time of year with school buses taking to the streets once again. Watch the traffic go by with your child. Use descriptor words to expand his vocabulary; notice the red car, the garbage truck, the yellow school bus. Use the actual terms for vehicles like bulldozers, front-end loaders, and cranes. Talk about how the school bus and the city bus are different. Read the stop signs with your child. Which cars does your child like best?

**Read Together** Read books with wheels! For babies, try: *My Car* and *Machines at Work* by Byron Barton, *My First Truck Board Book* by DK Publishing, *Wheels on the Bus* by Annie Kubler, *Truck Duck* by Michael Rex, and Richard Scarry's *Cars and Trucks from A to Z*. For older toddlers, good choices include *Cars, Trucks and Things That Go* by Richard Scarry, *Miss Spider's New Car* by David Kirk, *Mike Mulligan and His Steam Shovel* by Virginia Lee Burton, *Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus* by Mo Willems, and *My Race Car* and *My Fire Engine* by Michael Rex.

### **Play Together**

**For your baby:** Seat your baby in her high chair. Pour a little washable paint onto a paper plate. Tape a piece of paper to your baby's high chair tray. Dip the wheels of a die-cast car into the paint and let your baby "drive" it over the paper. Voila! Car art! Have a "car conversation" with your baby. Seat your baby on the floor and sit across from her. Roll a toy car to her and encourage her to roll it back. See if you can get this back-and-forth game going. Turn-taking activities like this one are practice for both "real" conversations later on, as well as sharing skills that will be developing over the next few years.

**For your toddler:** Play stop and go. Color one side of a paper plate red and write the word "stop" on it. Color the other side green and write the word "go." If you'd like, glue a popsicle stick to the bottom so you can easily hold it. Let your child pretend to be a car (encourage him to make brum brum honk honk noises). You will be the traffic light. The "car" has to stop at the red sign and can go at the green sign. Once your child has the hang of this game, see if he'd like to tell you when to stop and go. Have a car wash. Let your child pick out a few of his toy cars or a bicycle to wash. Fill a bucket with soapy water and give your child an assortment of rags and sponges. Watch him get everything squeaky clean. Have a towel nearby to make drying off easy when he is all done.