**Play and learning: 7-17 months**

*Playing games, reading books and singing songs with your baby helps baby learn and grow. You can use everyday activities and objects to make learning easy and have fun with your baby.*

[Mum is playing ‘This little piggy’ with baby]

Narrator: Using what’s around you makes learning fun and easy. When you name and touch parts of the body, or things you see, your baby starts to connect the words to the objects. You can help your child learn, as her brain makes the connection between words and objects.

[Mum and son are on the floor playing with a heavy box]

Mum: Oh, what’s that loud sound? Look, knock knock.

Narrator: Playing with your baby at his level helps you to get to know each other. Talking about what you are doing, exploring and playing together helps your baby learn and understand the world while feeling safe and secure.

Mum: Oh, that’s loud isn’t it? See? When you hit it, it goes loud.

[Mum and baby daughter are counting fingers on the couch]

Mum [counting baby’s fingers]: One, two, three, four, five. Yay! [they both clap]. [Then counting her own fingers] One, two ...

Narrator: Remember, any moment can be a learning opportunity. Even simple play can be a chance to learn simple language and even maths. Repeating things like words and numbers helps your child make sense of the world around her.

Narrator: Physical games are great for bonding with your child, teaching about touch, and building coordination.

[Mum is on the floor with her child. She pretends to attack baby with a stuffed toy]

Narrator: Watch your child’s reactions and stop, or change the game, if your child gets upset. Play also tells you a lot about your child’s personality and temperament. You’ll soon get to know which games are your child’s favourites.

[Mum is on the floor playing peek-a-boo with her son]

Narrator: Games like peek-a-boo are lots of fun for your baby. They give your child a chance to copy what you do and take turns doing the actions. Babies enjoy that little bit of suspense and not knowing when you will pop out again.

[Mum sings ‘Twinkle twinkle, little star’ with baby, and does the actions]

Narrator: Action songs are great fun too. They are a great way to help your baby learn new words and to move her body to the music. Try doing the actions together or copying each other.

Mum: [singing] Twinkle, twinkle, little star, how I wonder what you are. Beautiful! Clap hands. [claps] Good job!

[Mum and daughter are sitting on the couch reading a board book]

Mum [reading]: ‘Look at my picture. What’s baby painted? Smile please. Look at the camera.’

Narrator: Books help your child learn to understand the world. Sturdy board books are best as they're tough enough to survive your little one. Bright colours and different textures are fun and offer a chance to explore. If your child’s birthday is coming up, keep in mind that books make great presents.

[Mum reads a book to baby and talks about things on the pages]

Narrator: Talking as you read teaches your baby about language. You can point at the pictures and talk to your baby about the things you see.

Mum: Oh look they’re coming out of the page. It’s like magic! [reading] ‘Peter Rabbit has had a busy day, with all his friends and workers.’ Say nigh nighs. Mummy say nigh nighs. [kisses book] Kiss nigh nighs.