



**During the  
Home Visit:  
Engaging  
Families in  
Tummy Time  
Activities**



**NATIONAL CENTER ON**

**Early Childhood Health and Wellness**

*School Readiness Begins With Health*

## Try these strategies to introduce and promote tummy time experiences.

- Assess the home environment to ensure the baby's safety during tummy time.
- Talk with the family about their routines and daily activities. Think together about how to embed tummy time into common daily routines and favorite activities. Questions to ask include
  - What are some daily routines you share with your baby (eg, diapering, feeding, playtime, walking, bathing)?
  - What are some of your baby's favorite activities during the day (eg, a favorite toy or object; a favorite song, rhyme, or game)?
  - What position(s) is your baby usually in during these activities?
  - Where do you see opportunities to make tummy time part of these activities? (Take one routine as an example and jointly problem-solve a way to integrate tummy time.)
- Observe the baby's activities in the home. Share information about the baby's current motor development and provide anticipatory guidance around tummy time skills. Help the family to think about ways tummy time can [promote learning across all developmental domains](#). Use developmental guidelines to help parents understand which tummy time skills their baby has mastered and which skills may be next to emerge.
- Ask the family if they are currently using the tummy time position with their baby and how the experience has been for them. Explore their successes and challenges with this position.
- Practice tummy time together, and observe the baby in the tummy time position to see how she responds. Some babies resist tummy time or communicate distress when in this position. Help parents interpret this behavior through the lens of motor development: Until babies have developed the strength they need to hold their



heads up, tummy time may not feel comfortable or be a preferred position. Short but frequent periods of tummy time can be a good strategy for babies who do not prefer this position. The side-lying position (always supervised) can also be a good alternative.

- If challenges or concerns exist about tummy time, engage in joint problem-solving. Support this process by using these [guidelines](#).
  - Begin with tummy time about 2 to 3 times each day for a short period (3–5 minutes), increasing the amount of time as the baby shows he enjoys the activity. A great time to do this is following a diaper change, after dressing, or when the baby wakes up from a nap.
  - When the baby begins to fuss or show distress, gently help him to roll over onto his back before picking him up. This teaches babies the motor pattern for rolling. Distress cues may include crying or grunting, frustrated facial expressions, reddening of the face, back arching, and leg extension.
  - If the baby gets tired or falls asleep during tummy time, move him to his back for a nap in a safe place like a crib or bassinet.
  - Once a baby can roll over independently, he will typically move between tummy time and other positions during the day.
  - Babies always need to be supervised while in the tummy time position.



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