



ZERO TO THREE
Early connections last a lifetime



Your Baby Discovers Gravity

(and Other Fun Games)

Babies and toddlers are like little scientists. They are learning about the world around them. They test things to see what happens. Doing the same thing over and over is how they learn.

For example:

- At lunch, a baby throws their spoon on the floor and cries for you to pick it up. Then they do it again and again and again.
- A baby takes all the pots and pans out of a low kitchen cabinet, even after you say "no."
- A baby pulls all the toilet paper off the roll.
- A baby puts your hairbrush in the garbage can.

This kind of play helps babies learn:

- Cause and effect (if I drop it, it falls)
- How things work in the world around them
- Their actions lead to results
- Some things fit inside other things
- Things still exist even when they can't see them

These behaviors can be funny, cute, *and* very, very frustrating. It is important to remember that your baby is not trying to make you mad. They are not doing these things on purpose to upset you. They cannot control their actions yet. Their brain is still growing. They don't understand how their actions affect others yet.



Babies this age are not ready for discipline. Instead, you get to decide what behavior is okay and what is not okay in your home. These choices are different for every family.

When your baby gets into trouble, use simple words to guide them to something safe. Save 'no' for moments that really matter. This helps your baby understand when something is truly unsafe. Then you can focus on what they *can* do instead.

Ways to respond when your baby gets into mischief:

- **Move your baby away from places that are not safe, like the bathroom.**
- **Make play areas safer by baby-proofing rooms where your child spends most of their time.** Make sure rooms like the kitchen are baby-proofed as well.
- **Trade items they cannot play with for things that are ok.** These are things they can mouth, bang, shake, and explore.
- **Create baby-safe spaces.** Fill a low cabinet with things just for them.
- **When you take away an unsafe object, distract them with a song or a fun game.**

It is great to let your little scientist explore and learn as much as they can. At the same time, your baby needs to stay safe—and you need to stay calm. Finding the right balance is a very hard part of being a parent!

Have more questions? Talk to your baby's healthcare provider or one of the professionals supporting your family.

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