Touch, Sight and Hearing
Things To Look Forward To

Here are some ideas for children newborn to three.

Heads Up (Newborn-1 month) – The first hour after birth is a magical time for parents and infants. Don’t be afraid to touch newborns. They enjoy a gentle touch from head to toe. Your baby heard you in the womb. Your voice was muffled, but it was reassuring. Your baby came into the world with good hearing. Talk to her, sing to her and read to her. Get used to carrying on a conversation. While you are talking to her you are introducing her to the world of sounds. Tell her what you are doing while you are feeding, bathing, and changing her. She will look at you, studying your face. She can follow an object that is slowly moved from side to side. Make a seasons mobile with pictures of the sun, birds, flowers, butterflies, snowflakes, leaves or shells, for her to look at.

The Looker (1-4 months) – If you have already done the baby massage with your newborn, keep it up—if not, start now. Apply baby lotion after bath or diaper changing. Not only is it good for your baby’s skin, but it feels good too. Your baby likes to be held, snuggled and stroked. Provide interesting textures for your baby by placing him on a soft rug. Let him touch a stuffed animal or a real dog or cat. Tell him what he is feeling—rough, smooth, soft, hard, etc. Continue talking, singing, reading. Mirror back the sounds that your baby is starting to string together. Hum and stop and see if he heard you. Hold two objects that are different colors. Move one slowly. Is he tracking the object that is moving or the one that is still? Do the same thing with two rattles. Is she listening to the one you are shaking or the one you are holding still? Let baby look at himself in the mirror. Put him in an infant seat so he can see you do your work. He can find his hand and maybe his feet. He will swing at objects that interest him and wants to see something new rather than something he has already memorized. Hang a wind chime out of baby’s reach.

Creeper-Crawler (4-8 months) – Introduce “hot” and “cold” to your baby’s vocabulary. Make sure her bath water is not too hot. Never leave her in the tub unattended. Make sure your house is baby-proofed. Check for rough or sharp objects in the floor or furniture. Protect her feet with socks when she is crawling outdoors. Some of the sounds she makes are becoming understandable. She will make sounds for her own entertainment. Make homemade toys that have interesting sounds.
The Cruiser (8-12 months) – Make a texture collection for your baby. Keep it in a safe place, and bring it out for a special quiet time activity. Read the story Pat the Bunny. Talk about the things you feel on the pages. Play the mirror game—touch the child’s mouth and say, “mouth.” Use words for body parts. Try peek-a-boo mirror games by covering a mirror. Say, “Where is baby?” Lift the cover and say, “There he is!” Bang out a rhythm; sing a rhyming song when he claps his hands.

The Walker (12-18 months) – Put a Texture Box together for your toddler. Keep it in a safe place and bring it out when you have time to talk to her about the different objects and how they feel. Look through a paper towel tube with colored cellophane on the ends (tunnel vision). Play hide and seek games. Sing songs with animal sounds like Old McDonald Had A Farm.

The Doer (18-24 months) – Look through a paper towel tube without cellophane on one end (tunnel vision.) Take a texture walk and feel the different surfaces around the house. Give the names to textures and objects that you are touching. Help your toddler learn to “see with his fingers. This is the perfect time to do some crayon rubbing. Tape and piece of paper over a piece of sandpaper so it won’t slip off. Give your toddler a crayon and let him scribble on the paper. See if he notices the bumpy pattern that appears on the paper. Remove the paper from the sand paper and repeat the activity only this time he will color on a smooth surface. Can he see the difference?

The Tester (24-36 months) – Place colored cellophane on the end of a flashlight, and talk about what she sees and how it happens. Go on a sound walk. Fill plastic film cans or plastic eggs with different sounding objects (beans, macaroni, marshmallow, rocks, paper clips, cereal, etc.) Shake the cans. Which is quiet, which is loud? Can you guess what is inside? Have your child close her eyes, and lead her around touching and feeling objects and guessing what they are. Soft? Smooth? Bumpy? Take your toddler on a smell walk. She could close her eyes and guess much like she did with the texture walk, or she could keep her eyes open and tell you what category the smell goes in—sweet, sour, and so forth.