

# Tummy Time to Play

## A Lesson on the Importance Tummy Time

### Playgroup # 14

#### Materials Needed

- Parents should bring blankets or towels for baby to lie on.
- Bring toys, mirrors, and pictures of faces for babies to play with and look at while on their tummies.

#### Handouts

- Tummy Time with Your Baby
- Back to Sleep, Tummy Time to Play

### Introduction

Have the mothers in your group place their young children on their tummies. Have them observe their babies for about a minute. Discuss as a group what was observed and how lying on their bellies can help with motor development.

### Lesson Plan

#### Lesson Objectives

- Know what tummy time is
- Understand the benefits of tummy time
- Understand how to promote your baby's development during tummy time

### What is Tummy Time?

Due to the *Back to Sleep* campaign to prevent SIDS, babies today are spending more and more time on their backs and missing out on important time spent on their tummies. Tummy time is just like it sounds: having your baby spend time each day on his or her tummy (the prone position). Tummy time should only be performed when your baby is awake and supervised.

### Benefits of Tummy Time

- Tummy time helps your baby to grow stronger. Placing baby on his tummy helps to develop arm and neck strength at an earlier age. Arm strength is important so that your baby will learn to crawl. Neck strength helps your baby to steady and hold his head upright, which is important as he begins to eat solid foods.
- Tummy time helps develop gross motor skills. As baby spends time on his stomach, he learns to lift himself with his arms, roll over, and scoot side to side. This will help him progress to reaching for objects and eventually crawling. Some studies have found that supine (back) sleeping is associated with delays in gross motor milestones. This is most likely due to baby spending more time on his back while awake. Remember: back to sleep, tummy time to play.

- Tummy time helps baby to develop balance and coordination, which are essential for the progress of all motor skills. Baby also develops hand-eye coordination as he can easily bring his hands to his face.
- Tummy time can help a fussy baby calm down.
- As baby's motor skills enhance, he will begin to explore the world around him. This helps him to develop confidence and independence.
- Can soothe a babies upset stomach by applying pressure to their tummy. This is best done over a parent's lap or on a parent's chest.

### **How to Promote Tummy Time**

There are some children who many not enjoy tummy time at first, it is still crucial that parents persist and encourage tummy time. There are several ways you can help your baby to enjoy tummy time.

- You can first introduce your baby to tummy time by lying him face down on your chest while you are sitting in a reclined position. Baby will left his head to look at your face. This is a good time to socialize and bond with your baby.
- You can place a rolled blanket or towel under your baby's armpits to help lift his chest off the ground. This makes tummy time easier and more enjoyable. As baby spends more time on his tummy, he will develop the strength to hold himself up on his own.
- Place a toy or yourself just out of your babies reach as he lies on his stomach. This will encourage him to reach for what is in front of him.
- Place toys in a circle around your baby. This will help him learn the skills to roll over and scoot as he reaches in different directions.
- If you have older children, encourage them to get on the floor and play with baby during tummy time. Have the older child hold toys just out of babies reach or hold a mirror in front of babies face so he can look at himself.

### **Activity**

Ahead of time, tell each mother to bring a blanket or two for their baby to lie on and toys for baby to play with.

Again have the mothers place their babies on their tummies. Encourage them to use the suggestions from the lesson under "How to Promote Tummy Time." If they have older children, they can have them get on the floor and play with other babies in the group.

## **References**

American Academy of Pediatrics (n.d.). Back to sleep, tummy time to play. Retrieved on March 21, 2008, from <http://www.healthychildcare.org/pdf/SIDStummytime.pdf>

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Stein, M. (2007). Infants need daily "tummy time" for early motor development. *Journal Watch*. Retrieved on March 21, 2008, from <http://pediatrics.jwatch.org/cgi/content/full/2007/131/1#>