

A child's interests are

Windows of Opportunity

to fun and enjoyable learning

Swinging is a powerful learning activity for many young children



Places to learn and activities to enjoy **AT HOME**

Indoors

- A baby or young child who loves the feeling of swinging might respond happily to smooth, back-and-forth motions from a variety of sources. Some examples: Swing your baby gently in your arms. Lull him to sleep in a swinging cradle, rocking chair, or glider. See if he smiles with contentment in the seat of a mechanical baby swing.
- Find out if your young child likes seeing and making other things swing. Hang a variety of safe objects and toys by lengths of ribbon or elastic (at least 1¾ inches wide) over baby's crib, play area, or high chair. Let her discover how to reach for them and swing them about with her hands or feet. Praise her efforts. Give her plenty of time to realize that she is causing the objects to swing.
- If baby also enjoys music, listen to music together or play a musical instrument as he swings. As an added touch, try to choose music that matches the back-and-forth rhythm of the swing.
- Let your young child imitate you and push favorite dolls or stuffed toys in his swing.



Outdoors

- Hold your young child in your lap or sit cozily side by side as you read aloud storybooks on an outdoor swing or glider.
- Hang a safe baby swing in a convenient outside spot where you'll use it frequently—from the porch ceiling, a sturdy tree branch, or a home playground structure, for example. Enjoy some of these activities together as you push your little one:
 - Push the swing from the front so baby can see and interact with you.
 - Chat, sing, recite poems and rhymes, rap, chant, etc., in time with the back-and-forth rhythm of the swing.
 - Tickle baby's toes (or do something else that delights him) each time he swings toward you.
 - Let baby try to touch you with her foot (or grab a handkerchief or toy with her hands) when she swings toward you.

Places to learn and activities to enjoy **AWAY FROM HOME**

At a playground

- As your baby plays on the swing, use “opposites” like *high/low*, *fast/slow*, *up/down*, and *back/forth* to describe her movement in the swing.
- Use simple hand signs (American Sign Language) as you talk with your baby about swinging. Praise his efforts to imitate the signs and use them to let you know what he wants to do in the swing. Some useful signs for young swingers are:
 - **Swing**—Hold the left “pointer” finger and middle finger together, extending flat out like the seat of a swing. Curve the right “pointer” and middle fingers like “legs” over the “seat.” Swing your hands back and forth in front of you as you say, “swing.”



- **Push**—Hold both hands in front of you with palms facing forward. Move them both away from your body as you say the word “push.”



- **Up**—Point the right “pointer” finger straight up and say, “up.”

- **Down**—Point the right “pointer” finger straight down and say “down.”



- **More**—Hold curved fingers of both hands with fingertips touching lightly. Move hands apart and together so that right and left fingertips touch as you say, “more.”



- Share a swing with your small child. Try different swinging positions such as letting him sit in your lap and face you as you swing or letting him sit face-forward.
- Let your child experience being pushed in a swing by another child or grown-up with your supervision. She gets to interact with another person, listen to them talk, and perhaps hear new songs or swinging rhymes.
- Play simple games together as part of swinging on playground swings. Some ideas:
 - Play pat-a-cake as your child swings toward you, reciting each line and patting hands together in time with the swing.
 - Play “How high can you fly?” As your child “flies” toward you in a swing, hold your hand out and invite her to try to touch it with her toes. “Can you fly this high? Wow! Look how high you can fly!”



While traveling

- Be on the lookout for swinging opportunities for your young child. Some possibilities: relaxing in a cloth hammock with you; sharing a tire swing with other small children at a play park; and walking with assistance or being carried across a suspension-type footbridge that swings gently with each step.

