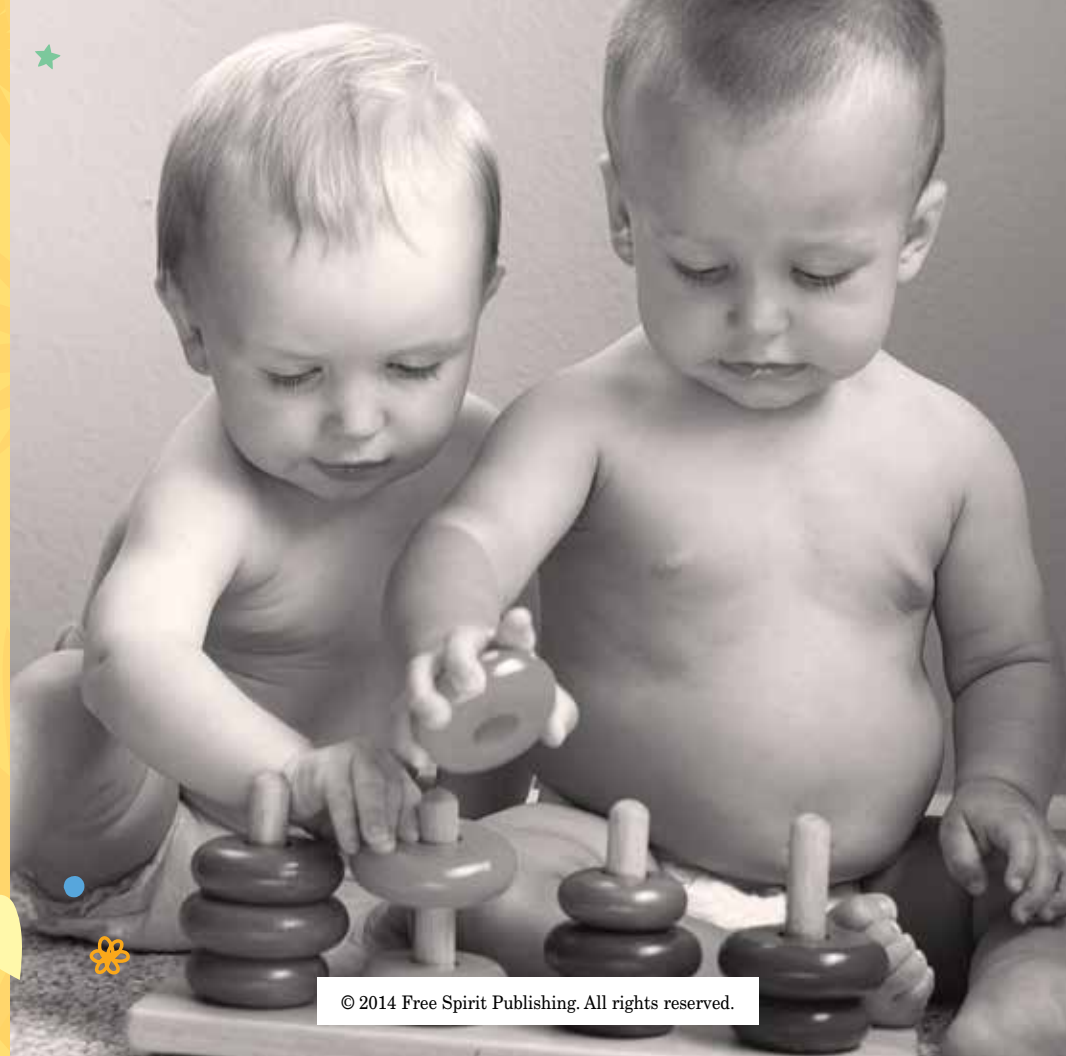


play

Elizabeth Verdick  
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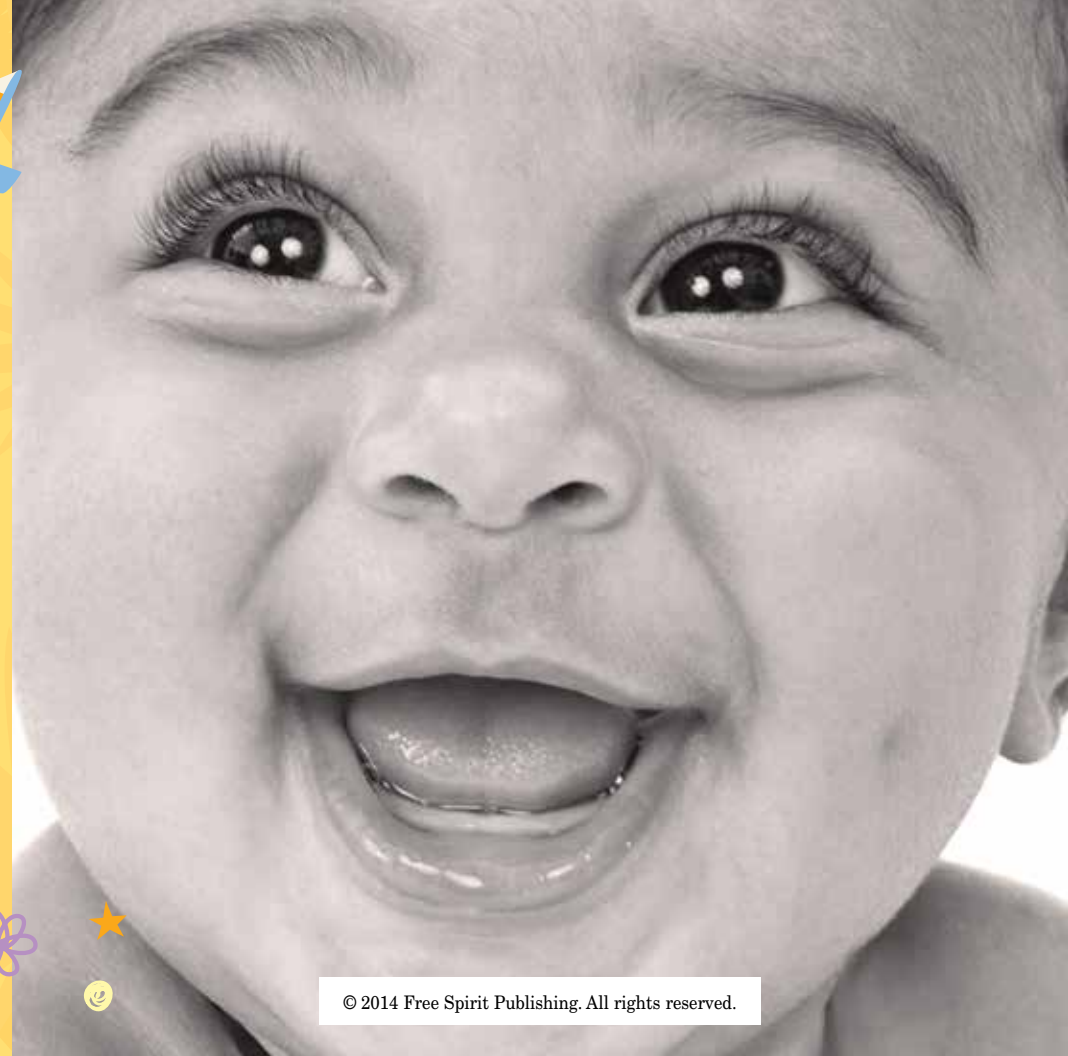
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Every day, in every way,  
babies play.





Happy baby,  
can you smile?



# Playing Tips for Parents and Care Providers

- ♥ Play is the ultimate skill-builder for babies. Physical, social, emotional, communication, and thinking skills all grow stronger when babies play with parents or caregivers.
- ★ Your baby learns about the world through his senses—through his eyes, ears, nose, hands, and mouth. Engage the senses through play. Sing or hum, bounce or swing your baby (gently), and find creative ways to make baby smile. Talk and laugh as you play, so your baby tunes in.
- ♥ Babies have short attention spans and may only play for brief periods of time before becoming overstimulated. How does your baby say “No more play”? Look for cues such as turning away from you, rubbing the eyes, fussing, or crying. Take a break until your baby is ready to play again.
- ★ Watch for milestones such as turning the head, reaching, rolling, and pulling up. As your baby moves, she gains strength and balance. Encourage physical development by helping your baby make these moves (according to her age and ability) through play.

- ♥ Engage your baby using your hands. Play peek-a-boo and pat-a-cake; wave and clap. See if your baby coos, gurgles, or giggles. Play is *interaction*. It’s how your baby learns “give and take.”
- ★ Offer toys that encourage exploration: textured balls and blocks, rattles and rings to hold and shake, shape sorters, toys that make noise, and jack-in-the-boxes. Make sure the toys don’t have parts that can come off or could fit all the way in baby’s mouth (they’re choking hazards).
- ♥ Most of all, have fun.

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