Baby Extra Activities
1. The Thirsty Caterpillar

You will need:

1 straw
Open cup of water

Method:

CUP (5 months and older)

1. Put a small amount of water in a cup and bring it to your baby's mouth, tilting the cup gently, until the water reaches their lips.
2. Hold the cup still and watch your baby naturally sip from the cup.
3. Older babies can also learn how to drink from an open cup and can be given more independence to hold their cups by themselves.

STRAW (8 months and older)

1. First just give your baby a straw and see what they do. They might take it straight to their mouth, especially if they have seen people drinking with straws. If they don't know what to do try the next step.
2. Put the straw into a cup of water and put your finger over the opening at the top. Keep your finger over the opening so you are holding the liquid in the straw as you pull the straw out of the water. Hold the straw up over your baby's open mouth and release the liquid so it falls into their mouth – being careful not to allow too much water to go in at a time, start with a few drops. With some repetition, your baby will start to close their mouth around the straw.
3. Once they are closing their mouth around the straw, keep your finger over the other end of the straw so they have to suck to get the liquid out. Now try putting the straw directly into the cup and letting them take a drink.sip through the straw.

Precaution: Babies must be seated upright when trying this. Some coughing might occur as babies get used to coordinating their sucking and swallowing at first. If they are always coughing with straw drinking, give it a break for a few weeks and try again OR try drinking a thicker liquid such as a runny puree/smoothie/cereal.

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2. Baby Mouth Massage

You wiLL need:

Nothing!

Method:

1. <u>Cheek circles</u> – gently move cheeks in circular motion, and inward to make "fishy lips". Thumb on one cheek, index finger on the other. Repeat x5

2. <u>Over the ears and under the jaw-</u> With both hands, stroke from each cheek to the temples, then around the ears and under the jaw. Repeat x5

3. <u>Trace top lips and bottom lips with your finger</u> – "applying lip ice". Repeat x5.

4. <u>Trace down from nose to lip to chin</u> –Use your finger or knuckle to stroke from the bridge of nose down to the top lip, bottom lip and chin – gently rolling the bottom lip out (only if baby allows) and gently pressing the chin down as if the baby is opening their mouth (only if baby allows).

5. Remember to do each movement several times, with gentle pressure, slowly and deliberately. The entire "routine" should take less than 30 seconds.

Some babies benefit from "waking up" the smaLL muscLes around their mouths before eating. This is a great activity to try right before your baby is about to eat.

For young babies, do these exercises with them Lying down.

For oLder babies you might need to pLay a bit of a game – first do the "massage" on yourseLf and then on your baby. Do whatever makes your baby comfortabLe with these "massages".

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3. Kissing Caterpillar

You will need:

Caterpillar from main activity

Mirror

Pureed food item (or yogurt/peanut butter)
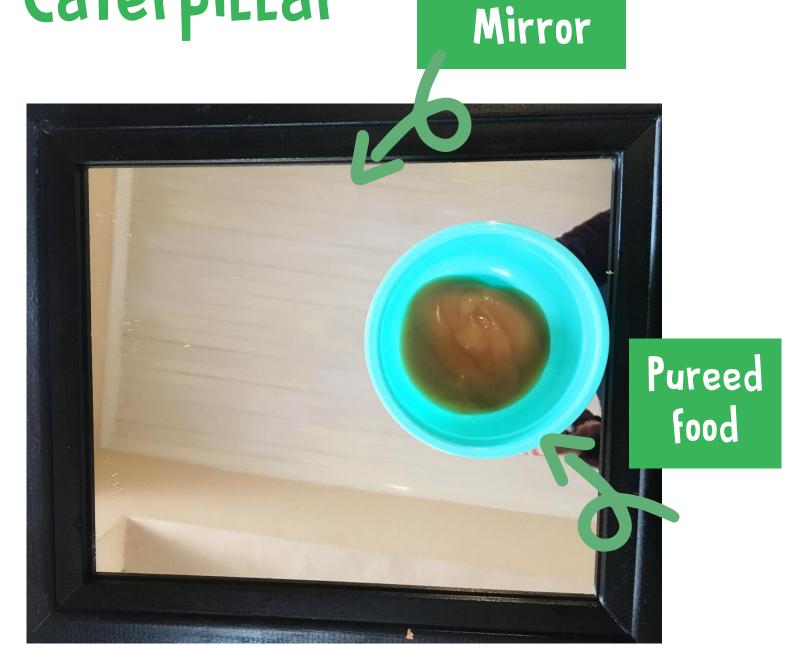
Apron

Towel to sit on

Mirror

Pureed food

Method:

1. Get your baby used to the idea of kissing – Practice kissing yourself in the mirror and make the caterpillar kiss itself too. See if your baby will also kiss the mirror or kiss the caterpillar.

2. Now place some edible, smooth food such as peanut butter or yoghurt onto the mirror and draw a caterpillar in the food.

3. See if your baby will kiss the caterpillar. If not, just let your baby explore the food – when they realise it is food they will likely bring their hands to their mouths or their mouths to the mirror!

4. You can also try putting some food on your baby's mouth to see what they do!

5. Let your baby continue to explore the food with their hands and mouth.

Sit with your baby in front of a mirror, with your caterpillar from our main activity ready.

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