



**Communication/
Language**

Exploring Words

- Option 1** (OO) A young infant participates in a book sharing that emphasizes listening to a caregiver’s voice and looking at high-contrast pictures of familiar objects.
- Option 2** (OO) An infant participates in a book sharing with opportunities to help turn the book’s pages and communicate about high-contrast pictures of familiar objects.
- Option 3** (OO) An older infant participates in a book sharing with opportunities to hold and turn pages of a book, and communicate about high-contrast pictures of familiar objects.



Cognitive

Exploring Objects

- Option 1** (OO) A young infant looks at a mobile and other objects during a caregiver-guided tour of the room.
- Option 2** (OO) An infant looks at and manipulates similar soft toys.
- Option 3** (OO) An infant looks at and manipulates different types of toys.



Self-Regulation

Paying Attention

- Option 1** (OO) An infant watches and touches a moving object with caregiver guidance.
- Option 2** (OO) An infant watches a moving object and manipulates the object with caregiver guidance.
- Option 3** (OO) An infant watches a moving object and independently manipulates the object with caregiver encouragement.



Social-Emotional

Interacting with Others

- Option 1** (OO) A young infant participates in a responsive interaction with a caregiver.
- Option 2** (OO) An infant participates in a responsive interaction with a caregiver, focused on a cause-and-effect toy.
- Option 3** (IG) Older infants participate in responsive interactions with a caregiver during a song.



Physical/Health

Moving Our Bodies

- Option 1** (OO) A nonmobile infant practices body balance and control as part of guided tummy time with a caregiver.
- Option 2** (OO) An infant practices crawling or creeping to an appealing destination created by a caregiver.
- Option 3** (IG) Mobile infants participate in a brief song that encourages up and down arm movements.

(OO)=One-to-One, (IG)=Informal Gathering

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Birth–12 Months

Option 1 One-to-One



Skill and Goal

Receptive language
Expressive language

A young infant participates in a book sharing that emphasizes listening to a caregiver's voice and looking at high-contrast pictures of familiar objects.



Key Concepts

Book
Look



Materials Needed

Black on White by Tana Hoban



Also Promotes

Cognitive

BEGIN: [Sit with a young infant reclined in your lap. Support the infant's head in the bend of your arm. This will allow for your hands to hold the book and turn the pages while also securely holding the infant.]

ACT: [Hold the book about 12 inches from the infant and point to the picture on the cover.]

I have a book for us to read together! Look, do you see the fish? (Point.)

[Point to the fish. Pause and watch for the infant's response. The young infant may show interest in the book by vocalizing, turning toward you, gazing at the picture, or reaching out and batting at the book.

Acknowledge the infant's response. Example: "You are looking at fish. I can hear you cooing!"]

EXPLAIN: Our book has pictures of different things. Let's open the book and see what's on the next page!

ACT: [Open the book to the first page. Point to and talk with the infant about the picture. Although there is no text, infants will benefit from hearing you talk about the pictures as you share the book. Example: "Do you see the spoon? (point) We use a spoon to eat cereal. You like eating cereal!"

Continue to talk with the infant about pictures in the book using strategies, such as the following:

- Point to and describe pictures. Example: "This is a butterfly. Here are the butterfly's wings. Do you see the beautiful butterfly wings?"
- Pause and talk about pictures that the infant seems particularly interested in. Example: "You are looking at the leaf. I am going to move my finger around the edge of the leaf. I think you like this picture."



**Option 1 continued**

- *Describe and respond to the infant's gestures or vocalizations. Example: "You are kicking your legs at the picture of the keys. I am going to point to each key. Here is a key. Here is a key. Here is a key. And here is another key. There are a lot of keys in this picture! I will hold the book close so you can look at the keys a bit longer."*
- *Use a soft, soothing voice.*

Transition out of the activity when the infant shows a sign of disinterest.]

RECAP: *[Describe what happened during the book sharing. Example: "We looked at a book with pictures of different things. You liked looking at the pictures. You made cooing noises when you looked at the picture of the spoon. You kicked your legs and looked at the keys for a long time! This was a fun book to read together."]*

Birth–12 Months

Option 2 One-to-One



Skill and Goal

Receptive language
Expressive language

An infant participates in a book sharing with opportunities to help turn the book's pages and communicate about high-contrast pictures of familiar objects.



Key Concepts

Book
Look



Materials Needed

Black on White by Tana Hoban



Also Promotes

Cognitive
Physical/Health

Invite an infant to sit on your lap to read a book. Introduce the book by pointing to the cover and encouraging the infant to look at the picture with you. Example: “Look, do you see the fish? Our book has pictures of different things. I wonder what we are going to see. Let’s open the book and find out!”

Encourage the infant to turn book pages with you. Share the book with strategies, such as the following:

- Point to and name objects pictured. Encourage the infant to look at the objects with you. Example: (Point to each object as you say its name.) “This is an elephant. Here is the elephant’s trunk. Here is the tail. These are the elephant’s feet.”
- Describe what the infant is looking at. Example: “These are cookies. You are looking closely at the two cookies. They are round with bumpy edges. Look at the tiny holes inside the cookies!”
- Pause and talk about the pictures that seem to be of particular interest to the infant. You may wish to provide additional context or information. Example: “You are looking at the glasses. I wear glasses on my eyes to help me see. Your mommy wears glasses too! We wear glasses on our eyes.”
- Describe and respond to gestures or vocalizations. Example: “You are touching the picture of the fork and spoon. You are smiling! You use a spoon to eat your cereal in the morning! I think you like this picture.”
- Help the infant connect book information to their own experiences and developing knowledge. Example: “This is a bib. You wear a bib when it is time to eat. Look at the next picture. What do you see? I see a spoon! First you put on a bib. Then you use a spoon to eat your cereal! What else do you see?”
- Use your voice to add interest and enjoyment.
- Follow the infant’s cues about the pace of looking at book pages.
 - Turn the pages as slowly or as quickly as the infant seems to prefer.
 - Watch the infant’s cues to know when to stop looking at the book.
- Recognize the infant’s participation in the book reading. Example: “We had fun looking at the pictures in this book together, Sam. You touched the picture of the glasses. You smiled at the cookies! You helped turn the pages. I think you liked this book!”



Birth–12 Months

Option 3 One-to-One



Skill and Goal

Receptive language
Expressive language

An older infant participates in a book sharing with opportunities to hold and turn pages of a book, and communicate about high-contrast pictures of familiar objects.



Key Concepts

Book
Look



Materials Needed

Black on White by Tana Hoban



Also Promotes

Cognitive
Physical/Health

Invite an older infant to read a book with you. The infant may wish to sit next to you or prefer to stand close while you read. Introduce the book and invite the infant to help you hold the book and turn the pages. You may wish to keep all of the pages in your right hand except for the page to be turned. This will help the infant to turn one page at a time. A standing infant may want to use one hand to help turn the pages.

Once the infant is comfortable and ready to read, point to the picture on the book cover. Example: “Look, do you see the fish? Our book has pictures of different things. Would you like to help me turn the page to look at the pictures?” The infant may help you turn the page or turn the pages independently. Use strategies, such as the following, to share the book with the infant:



- Point to and label objects in the pictures. Example: (Point to each object as you name.) “This is a clown doll. Look at the little ball on the clown’s hat! Here are the arms of the clown. Let’s touch the clown’s legs! What else do we see?”
- Invite the infant to point to objects that you label. Example: “I see a picture of a spoon. Do you see the spoon? You can point to the spoon!”
- Describe what the infant is looking at and provide additional information. Example: “You are looking at a picture of the keys. The keys are on a chain. I am going to point to each key. Here is a key. Here is a key. Here is a key. And here is another key! Wow, there are a lot of keys in this picture!”
- Describe and respond to gestures or vocalizations. Example: “You said ‘baby.’ You are looking at the picture of the clown doll. The doll looks like a baby!”
- Help the infant connect book information to his/her experiences and understandings. Example: “This is a leaf. Leaves grow on trees and plants. There are leaves on the tree on our playground.”
- Invite the infant to say (repeat) names of items you describe, such as the spoon, cookie, or “baby” (clown doll).
- Follow the infant’s cues regarding how quickly or slowly to turn the pages.
- Conclude the activity by recognizing the infant’s participation. Example: “You helped me hold our book, Franco. You opened and closed your mouth when you looked at the spoon! You pointed to the bucket. You turned the pages to see what was next! We had fun reading our book together.”



What to Look For—Options 1–3

Each of these options encourages responsive and enjoyable book sharing experiences with infants. Positive interactions during a book sharing can foster a love of books and stories. This book provides simple illustrations of familiar objects in black against a white background. Although the pictures may seem uninteresting to adults, young infants will be drawn to the contrast between the black and the white on each page. This contrast supports vision development in young infants, and older infants will enjoy looking at the clearly defined shapes of familiar objects. Look for instances of the infant gazing, pointing, touching, or using his/her hands to bat at or tap the pictures. Infants may also express interest in the book by vocalizing, including cooing, babbling, and later saying a word or making a corresponding sound (such as lip smacking when looking at the cookies). Older infants may point to and label some of the familiar objects.

An infant may signal disinterest in the book sharing by looking away, fussing, or turning his/her body away from the book. Respond to the infant's disinterest in the activity. Example: "I can see you are squirming away from the book. I don't think you want to read our book right now, Simran. I can hold you or we can find another activity."

In Options 2 and 3, some infants may be eager to turn the pages and spend limited or no time looking at the illustrations. One way to deal with this interest is to support one or two rounds of mostly turning pages (carefully), and then engage the infant in turning the pages more slowly so pictures can be looked at and talked about. It may be helpful to acknowledge the infant's page-turning interest and the purpose of sharing a book. Example: "It is fun to turn pages of a book. We also want to have fun looking at the pictures in our book. We turn the pages so we can see the pictures."

More Scaffolding Tips—Options 1–3

Extra support ■ Help a young infant focus on your voice by softly singing a description of the pictures on each page. ■ Provide an object for an infant to mouth or chew instead of the book. ■ Rather than looking at the pictures in order, support the infant in exploring pages as he/she chooses.

Enrichment ■ Invite the infant to "find" a picture as you turn the page. Example: When the butterfly and leaf are shown, encourage the infant to find one of these items (assuming the infant is familiar with one or both). ■ Provide an item similar to one shown in the book for an infant to hold and explore during or after the book sharing. Example: the infant may enjoy holding and exploring a toy elephant as he/she looks at the picture of the elephant in the book.



Interest Area

Materials Needed: several board books with high-contrast colors

Place the books in frequently-visited locations for infants to look at and manipulate. Infants may enjoy looking at the pictures during tummy time, while waiting to eat, or during floor time. Talk about what infants are looking at.



Family Child Care

Materials Needed: large piece of white paper affixed to a low table, crayons and markers in black and focal colors (red, yellow, blue, green), palm grip crayons, several board books with high-contrast colors

Invite older children to create a group art project, such as a simple mural using contrasting colors. Older children may create recognizable objects or people. Toddlers will enjoy making marks on the paper with the bold colors. Older infants may try making a mark on the paper with a palm grip crayon. Place the work on a low wall for infants as well as older children to enjoy.



Birth–12 Months

Option 1 One-to-One



Skill and Goal Object inquiry skills

A young infant looks at a mobile and other objects during a caregiver-guided tour of the room.



Key Concepts

Look
Mobile



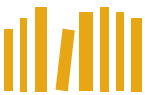
Materials Needed

Mobile or hanging shapes



Also Promotes

Communication/Language
Physical/Health



Optional Reading

My Very First Book of Shapes
by Eric Carle

Be Prepared: This activity is an opportunity for you to take one infant at a time on a brief tour of items in your room, with special focus on a mobile. An existing mobile may be used. Alternatively, use ribbon to hang a few familiar toys from a 12" length of dowel. Hang the toys where the infant can see them when held by a caregiver.

Hold an infant who is not yet reaching toward objects in a secure manner that provides a strong opportunity to fix his/her gaze on objects in the room, including the mobile.

BEGIN: [*Pick up an infant who is alert and seems ready to engage in interaction. Say "hello" in a gentle voice.*]

Let's look at some things in our room.

ACT: [*Carry the infant slowly and intentionally around your room. Stop frequently and encourage the infant to look at objects. Point to and name the object, especially objects that attract the infant's attention.*]

Describe each object that interests the infant. Examples: "This is a paper butterfly. It has bright colors." "I see you are looking at the edge of the door. We can see a light color next to a dark color."

Carry the infant to the mobile.]

EXPLAIN: Here is a mobile. Our mobile has pretty colors.

[Describe the mobile and infant's response. Example: "I see some animal shapes. I think you are looking at the red dog."

Encourage the infant to look at the mobile's movements. If necessary, blow on or touch the mobile lightly to initiate movement.]

ASK: Would you like to touch the mobile?

ACT: We will move closer so you can reach the mobile.

[Move the infant close enough to swipe at the mobile, if he/she wishes.

Describe shapes and colors on the mobile. Stay close to the mobile for about 30 seconds.

Describe the infant's responses. Examples: "You are looking at the mobile. Your legs and arms are moving and your eyes are wide. I think you like to look at the mobile." "You moved your hand and arm and made the mobile move."]

RECAP: We walked around our room together. We stopped to talk about interesting things in our room.

[Name the items that caught the infant's attention.]

**Option 1 continued**

You had fun looking at a mobile.

[Describe the infant's reactions to the mobile.]

👁️ What to Look For—Option 1

Reflect on the way people behave at a museum or an antique car show. Some individuals move slowly, looking carefully at each item, whereas others move more quickly. Be attentive to differences in the pace each infant prefers for touring the room. Some infants may like a leisurely tour with time to focus on one or two single objects. Other infants may enjoy the motion of being carried and may want to move and see things at a faster pace. Your responsive actions, including language, are key to supporting the infant's learning in this activity.

An infant may initially look at an object and then look away. You may notice an infant lean toward colorful shapes. When the infant is interested in the colorful shapes, you may notice his/her legs and arms moving. Some infants open their mouth when in contact with an interesting object. These movements are indicators the infant finds an object attractive.

Physical skills develop rapidly during infancy. Some infants may have the ability to swipe at the mobile or grasp the mobile toys. You may see younger infants enjoy looking at the mobile, or reaching their hands toward the mobile.

Infants have individual ways of letting you know "I've had enough." Be aware of how much novelty each infant can manage without feeling overwhelmed. Looking away, frowning, or fussing may be signals to change activities.

📈 More Scaffolding Tips—Option 1

Extra support ■ A little break from new stimulation may help the infant regulate his/her emotions after a new experience. If an infant shows signs of needing a brief break from the activity, walk or sway while holding the infant. ■ Move closer to an object that seems to be of particular interest to the infant. ■ If an infant holds his/her gaze on one object, remain there until it appears the infant is ready to look at another object. ■ Infants enjoy looking at the contrast of dark and light. An infant may notice a stream of light on the wall. Adjust your focus to see what the infant sees.

Enrichment ■ Infants benefit from looking at objects from more than one point of view. Change positions to allow the infant to see an interesting object from more than one perspective. Describe how the object looks in each position. ■ Provide an opportunity for the infant to touch things by moving closer to items of interest to the infant. ■ Describe the infant's fine motor actions and/or effects of the infant's actions. Examples: "You reached out with your arm and touched the mobile with your hand. Would you like to reach and touch again?" "The stars moved when you touched a ribbon with your hand."

Birth–12 Months

Option 2 One-to-One



Skill and Goal

Object inquiry skills

An infant looks at and manipulates similar soft toys.



Key Concepts

See
Out
Soft
Hear



Materials Needed

Melissa & Doug Fishbowl
Fill and Spill



Also Promotes

Communication/Language
Physical/Health

This activity is designed for an infant who can readily grasp an item. Display the container of soft toys and invite the infant to look at some toy animals that live in a sea. Sit facing the infant if he/she can sit without support. Sit on the floor and provide support with your legs if the infant is not yet sitting independently.

Place the container of soft toys in front of the infant. Encourage the infant to look at what is inside the container. Some infants may reach for the soft toys, and other infants may express surprise and delight looking into the container.

Take signals from the infant about how to proceed with the activity. If the infant begins to remove the sea creatures, encourage him/her to get another one. Describe the infant's actions. Example: "Deondre, you are taking the toy fish out of the container! Do you see more things inside the container?"

Offer short descriptions of items. Examples:

- "Our toy animals are soft."
- "I heard a rattle noise when you moved the toy. Did you hear a sound?"
- "Deondre, you are feeling the toy with your hands and mouth."
- "This toy makes a squeaky sound when we squeeze it."

Also describe the infant's actions. Examples:

- "You are taking toys out of the container."
- "The sea animal you are holding has an eye. You are touching its eye."
- "You are shaking the fish. Shake, shake."
- "You are using your mouth to find out about the toy."

You may wish to imitate the infant's actions, such as shaking a toy, if you anticipate this would not distract the infant from exploring the toys. Pace the activity so the infant has time to hold and manipulate as many toys as he/she wishes.



**Option 2 continued****👁️ What to Look For—Option 2**

The key aspect of the activity is exploration of the materials. Encourage the infant in the way he/she is playing with the toys. Allow the infant to lead the activity. Some infants may be interested in removing all of the items, and other infants may take out one item at a time and examine it closely. Playing with the container may be of interest to some infants. There are many ways to play with the soft toys and container. The colors and noise-making features of the four sea creatures are likely to be appealing to infants.

Mobile infants have experience with toys that are hard and soft. The container may introduce a new idea; toys can be in the container and toys can be taken out of the container.

ELM does not recommend coaxing an infant to play with the toys in a particular way. Simply observe the infant's actions and talk about what is most interesting to him/her. The activity may go on for several minutes. Bring the activity to a close when you see the infant losing interest.

📈 More Scaffolding Tips—Option 2

Extra support ■ If the infant does not remove any items from the container, offer gentle encouragement by removing one item and handing it to the infant. Describe your actions. ■ Provide ample time for the infant to act on the play materials.

Enrichment ■ Demonstrate how to put an item in the container. The infant may enjoy returning all toys to the container at the conclusion of the activity.

Birth–12 Months

■ **Be Prepared:** Place the two bells in the container with the four soft sea creatures.

Option 3 One-to-One



Skill and Goal

Object inquiry skills

An infant looks at and manipulates different types of toys.



Key Concepts

Soft
Hard
Shake
Ring



Materials Needed

Melissa & Doug Fishbowl
Fill and Spill
Two infant bells



Also Promotes

Communication/Language
Physical/Health

Mobile infants will enjoy a game of finding and exploring two types of toys presented in a container. Begin by sitting on the floor facing an infant who sits well without support. Place the container of toys in front of the infant. Invite the infant to explore the contents of the container. Wait for the infant to respond.

Some infants may be excited to reach inside the container. Other infants may benefit from a demonstration.

Observe the infant as he/she begins to explore the contents of the container.

Some infants may be intent on removing all the toys, whereas others may remove one soft toy or bell and spend time exploring its properties. Describe the infant's actions. Example: "You found a bell. It makes sounds when you shake it." Point to your ears and say "I hear our bell."

If the infant removes all the toys, talk about what appears to interest him/her the most.

Draw attention to the differences between the soft toys and the hard bell. Also, draw attention to how the two different types of toys can make a noise. Demonstrate shaking a toy that rattles and shaking a bell. Encourage the infant to shake each one. Emphasize key descriptive and action words as you talk with the infant, such as soft, hard, shake, and ring. Join the infant in ringing bells together.

If there is a pause in the activity, hold a bell and soft toy in your palms. Offer both to the infant. Ask "Do you want a bell or a sea creature?" Support a back-and-forth interaction with the infant.



👁️ What to Look For—Option 3

Becoming mobile represents a big change for an infant. Crawling allows an infant to move toward objects and get ahold of them. Often infants shake and mouth new objects they encounter. Providing a variety of materials and textures stimulates curiosity and exploration. Maintaining your focus on the infant's intentions and exploration is one way to support the important work

Option 3 continued

that engages infants. Learning about the properties of objects, such as soft and hard, cool, warm, sound producing and quiet, requires an infant to focus his/her attention on play. By staying close and paying attention, the infant is encouraged to explore and gets the message what he/she does is important. Describing each object and action helps an infant become more aware of language and further supports cognitive development.

 **More Scaffolding Tips—Option 3**

Extra support ■ If an infant does not begin to explore items in the container, peek into the container and describe what you see. Example: “Ashlynn, I see some toys inside.” Another approach is to pull one toy to the top of the container opening so the infant can see part of it.

Enrichment ■ Encourage an infant to put one toy into the container. ■ Place one bell into the container and shake it. Describe the bell and its sound. Example: “Our bell is in the container. We cannot see it. We hear it moving and ringing.”

 **Interest Area**

Materials Needed: mobiles, small toys, board book, art cards, play mat, hanging toys, cloth bag with stacking rings, soft vehicles and animals

Place mobiles in novel spots in your room. Encourage nonmobile infants to watch and reach for mobiles. On another day, arrange small toys infants can view, touch, and/or manipulate. Infants may bring objects to the mouth to explore textures and shapes. When the infant is done with the toy, put the toy in a basket to be washed. Open a board book and place it on the floor close to a nonmobile infant to see. Hang infant art cards for infants to view.

For an early mobile infant who is learning to reach, a simple play mat with flexible arches can be used during floor play. An infant’s development is supported by offering one or two hanging toys. Place several small toys in a dish or basket on the floor near an infant who is beginning to roll over and creep.

Place interesting play materials in containers for mobile infants to discover. Example: a cloth bag with stacking rings. Arrange soft vehicles and animals at a level crawling infants can explore. Infants who can stand will enjoy being able to reach a hanging toy by himself/herself. Display books in several areas of the room. Exploration will be more focused when infants have a few well-chosen playthings. Too many toys can distract infants from prolonged exploration.



Family Child Care

Materials Needed: magazines, tape, flashlights

The goal of helping infants visually attend to objects may be easily extended to older children in a family child care setting. Young children enjoy looking intentionally and finding things. Play an *I Spy* game during play periods indoors or outside. Adapt the clues to the age of the children, remembering most toddlers will not know color names. Examples of *I Spy* items for toddlers include a soft bear and a firetruck. Examples of *I Spy* items for preschool-age and older children include something purple and a toy emergency vehicle.

Another option is to cut pictures from magazines and tape them to your ceiling. Let children shine flashlights on the pictures, or simply lay on the floor to identify the images.

Birth–12 Months

Option 1
One-to-OneSkill and Goal
Concentration

An infant watches and touches a moving object with caregiver guidance.



Key Concepts

Watch
Touch



Materials Needed

1 textured cloth fish toy



Also Promotes

Communication/Language
Physical/Health

BEGIN: [*Hold the infant in your arms with his/her head well supported in the bend of your arm, ensuring the infant can clearly see you.*]

ACT: [*Hold the toy fish about 12 inches from the infant and begin moving it slightly from side to side.*]

ASK: Do you see the fish?

[*Pause and acknowledge the infant's response. Describe any visual attention the infant gives to the toy.*

Example: "I see you are watching the fish, Antoine. The fish is moving back and forth."]

ACT: [*Move the toy fish a little farther to one side and back toward the infant's middle. Describe the infant's response. Example: "Our 'fishy' is over here. You are watching the fish move."*

If the infant maintains a visual focus on the item, move it up slightly and continue to move it slowly from side to side. Describe your actions. Example: "I am moving our fish up higher."

Slowly move the fish toward the infant's middle. Describe your actions. Example: "I am moving the fish so you can touch it."

Encourage the infant to touch or grasp the fish. If the infant is not able to grasp the item, hold it near the infant's hands so he/she can touch and feel it.

Watch the infant's responses throughout the activity. Use strategies, such as the following, to encourage the infant's attention to the toy fish:

- *Describe the infant's actions with the toy. Example: "You are reaching out and touching the fish."*
- *Ask the infant how the toy feels. Example: "How does the fish feel?"*
- *Describe characteristics of the toy, such as color and texture. Example: "Our fish is blue and green. Let's touch it. The fish feels soft and smooth!"*
- *Respond to any infant vocalizations. Example: "I hear you talking. You are cooing. I think you like touching our fish."*



**Option 1 continued**

Transition out of the activity when the infant shows signs of disinterest (such as looking elsewhere). Example: "You are done looking at the fish. I will put the fish away. We can do something else now."

RECAP: *[Smile and make eye contact as you describe what happened. Example: "We watched our fish today. The fish went back and forth. Then you touched the fish! It felt smooth. You smiled while you touched our fish."]*



Birth–12 Months

Option 2 One-to-One



Skill and Goal Concentration

An infant watches a moving object and manipulates the object with caregiver guidance.



Key Concepts

Watch
Touch
Hold



Materials Needed

1 textured cloth fish toy



Also Promotes

Communication/Language
Physical/Health

Invite an infant who can grasp an object to sit on your lap to play with a toy. Turn the infant slightly so that he/she is secure in your arms but able to make some eye contact. Introduce the toy fish by holding it in the infant's view and moving it slowly from side to side. Encourage the infant to watch the fish as it moves in front of him/her. Example: "The fish is moving back and forth. Let's watch the fish move around!" Describe the infant's visual attention to the toy. Example: "You are moving your eyes to see the fish. You are watching the fish move."



Slowly move the toy fish toward the infant and invite him/her to touch or to hold it. If the infant initially appears reluctant to hold the toy, hold it near the infant's hands so he/she can touch and feel it. Talk with the infant about his/her actions with the toy fish. Examples: "You are touching the fish. You are feeling the smooth scales." "You are holding the fish, Camille. You are moving the fish back and forth like I did."

Monitor closely the infant's reactions to the activity. Acknowledge any responses to the toy. Example: "You are smiling and cooing at the fish. I think you like playing with our toy fish!"

Wrap up the activity and put the fish away when the infant shows signs of disinterest. Example: "I can see that you are watching Mia play. I think you are done playing with our fish today, Isaac. We will put it away." Acknowledge the infant's focus on the toy during the activity. Example: "We had fun playing with our toy fish, Christian! You watched the fish move back and forth. You held the fish. Then you moved it back and forth too! When you were done, we put the fish away."



Birth–12 Months

Option 3 One-to-One



Skill and Goal Concentration

An infant watches a moving object and independently manipulates the object with caregiver encouragement.



Key Concepts

Watch
Touch
Hold



Materials Needed

1 textured cloth fish toy



Also Promotes

Communication/Language
Physical/Health

Invite an infant who can sit independently and grasp an object to sit with you on the floor to play with a toy. Sit facing the infant with a smile and introduce the toy fish. Hold the fish in front of the infant and pretend to make the fish “swim” slowly from side to side. Encourage the infant to watch the fish move for a few moments. Example:

“You are watching our fish swim. You are moving your eyes to watch the fish.”

Invite the infant to touch or hold the fish. Example: “Now it is your turn to play with our fish. Would you like to hold the fish?”

Encourage the infant to hold, look at, and move the toy fish. Talk with the infant about his/her actions with the toy. Examples: “You are holding the fish. You are touching the fish’s eyes. What are you going to do next?” Acknowledge the infant’s responses to the activity. Example: “You are smiling and waving the fish back and forth. I can hear you cooing. You are having fun playing with the fish.”

Transition out of the activity when the infant begins to show signs of disinterest with the toy. Acknowledge the infant’s focus on the toy during the activity. Example: “You watched the fish swimming up and then down, Alex. Then you held the fish. You felt the fish’s crinkly fins and tail. When you were done, we put the fish away.”



 What to Look For—Options 1–3

Each of these options supports young infants in learning to visually focus on a moving object. Adding the sense of touch further enhances the infant’s experience of focusing on an object. Watch the infant’s interest in the toy closely to determine how much to move the toy or how long to offer the activity. Some infants may enjoy watching you move the toy, whereas others may be eager to hold the toy themselves. Remember that infants often explore new objects with their mouths as well as hands. Infants may focus on the toy for several minutes, or begin to lose interest much sooner. Infants may show disinterest by looking away, fussing, squirming, or crawling/walking away. Acknowledge each infant’s focus on the toy during the activity.

 More Scaffolding Tips—Options 1–3

Extra support ■ If an infant appears to feel uncomfortable sitting upright on your lap (Option 2) or sitting independently facing you (Option 3), you may wish to offer a prior option in this activity plan. Ensure each infant has the opportunity to enjoy and be successful at one of the activity options in this plan. ■ If an infant needs extra support to focus on the moving toy, bring the fish closer and use slower movements. Repeat a simple movement, such as gently touching the infant’s chest with the fish, moving it away (while still in view), and then bringing it back. Talk with the infant about your actions. Example: “The fishy touched your chest! Now the fish is going away. Look! It’s coming back!”

Enrichment ■ Young infants may enjoy participating with the toy fish in different positions. Try engaging with an infant who is laying on his/her tummy or on his/her back while being supported by an infant cushion. ■ If the infant seems to be enjoying your movement of the fish, offer an additional action, such as moving the toy to touch the infant’s feet and then back again. ■ Vary the position of the toy and observe the infant’s response when it is farther away.



Interest Area

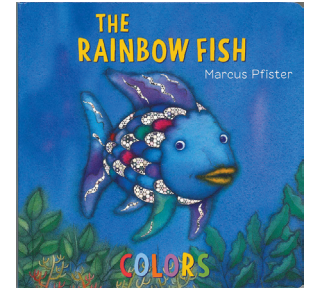
Materials Needed: several toys with interesting features, such as the toy fish in the activity plan

During floor time, select a toy to engage one or several nearby infants. Follow the steps outlined in one of the activity options and encourage infants to focus on the toy as you move it around them. Describe your actions with the toy to encourage the infants to follow your movements. Give each infant a similar toy to touch and hold. Talk with infants about their actions and responses as they explore the toys.

 Family Child Care

Materials Needed: colorful book, such as *The Rainbow Fish* by Marcus Pfister

Select a book that is interesting and colorful to support infants' engagement and focus during the activity. Read the book enthusiastically with all the children in your care. Make frequent eye contact with each infant to encourage engagement in the activity. Invite infants and older children to touch pictures in the book that are of interest. Infants and toddlers may enjoy holding a toy related to the story.



BLOCK 1

Interacting with Others



Birth–12 Months

Option 1 One-to-One



Skill and Goal

Social interaction skills

A young infant participates in a responsive interaction with a caregiver.



Key Concepts

Smile
Sounds



Materials Needed

None



Also Promotes

Cognitive
Communication/Language

BEGIN: [Sit in a comfortable position holding an infant in your arms or on your lap, facing you.

Smile and begin talking with the infant. Example: “Good morning, Hannah. I am happy to see you!” Make a happy face toward the infant and watch for his/her response. The young infant may show interest in interacting by vocalizing, gazing at you, or reaching toward you. Acknowledge the infant’s reactions, including any vocalizations or gestures. Examples: “You are watching me, Samuel. You are smiling! I am smiling back at you!” “I hear you saying ‘ba-ba-ba.’ You are talking to me, Caris! ‘Ba-ba-ba.’”]



CDC Milestones in Action

ACT: [Continue to encourage responsive interactions with the infant using strategies, such as the following:

- Encourage the infant to enter into an exchange of sounds with you. Initiate the sounds by using a phrase that includes word repetition or a nonsense phrase of early babble sounds. Examples: “Hello baby, baby!” “Ba-ba, ma-ma. Ba-ba, ma-ma.” The infant may respond by imitating your sounds or making a new sound. Acknowledge the infant’s reactions and repeat any vocalizations.
- Describe the infant’s actions. Example: “Look at you kick your legs! Hannah is kicking, kicking! Hannah has strong legs!”
- Introduce and talk about a here-and-now topic the infant is likely to find interesting, such as the following:
 - Characteristics of the infant. Examples: “I see your pretty brown eyes. And here is your nose.” “Look at these little toes! Tap, tap, tap—I’m tapping your toes!”
 - What other infants are currently doing in the room. Example: “Cayden is rolling a ball on the floor. Look at Cayden’s red ball!”
 - Current weather. Example: “It is raining today. Look at the rain! The rain is making a puddle on our sidewalk. Did you get wet in the rain?”

**Option 1 continued**

- *Describe your movements and the infant's experiences. Examples: "I am turning you so you can see the other babies in our classroom. You are listening to the sounds other children are making." "I am going to stand up now. Here we go. Up, up, up!"*
- *Watch the infant's reactions throughout the activity. Encourage all vocalizations, smiles, and other facial expressions by making similar faces and sounds.]*

RECAP: *[Offer a brief description of what happened during the activity. Example: "Samuel, we had a good time talking together! You made some sounds, and I tried to make your sounds. You smiled and I smiled! We looked at the rain outside. Thank you for sharing time with me."]*



Birth–12 Months

Option 2 One-to-One



Skill and Goal

Social interaction skills

An infant participates in a responsive interaction with a caregiver, focused on a cause-and-effect toy.



Key Concepts

Smile
Look
Touch



Materials Needed

Fisher-Price Brilliant Basics
Boppin' Activity Bugs®



Also Promotes

Cognitive
Communication/Language
Physical/Health

Invite an infant to sit with you on the floor or at a low table to explore a new toy. Encourage the infant to touch and explore the pop-up toy. Facilitate warm, responsive interactions with the infant as he/she manipulates the toy using strategies, such as the following:



- Describe the infant's actions with the toy. Example: "You are touching the buttons on our toy. Look! The yellow button is bumpy. Do you feel the bumps?"
- Provide support, if needed, to help the infant release a pop-up animal. Example: "You are touching the yellow button. I wonder what will happen if you push the button. Should we try? I can help you!"
- Recognize the infant's persistence with the new toy. Example: "You are pushing the blue button. You are trying so hard to pop up the animal! Can I help you? Let's try sliding the button this way. Pop! We did it!"
- Smile and show enthusiasm for the infant's efforts and success in manipulating the toy. Example: "Look at you, Carlos! You are smiling so big! You worked so hard, and you did it! You popped up all the animals! I bet you feel proud."
- Focus on the positive interactions between you and the infant as he/she explores the toy. Watch for opportunities to share attention, smiles, and laughter. Respond to the infant's reactions by acknowledging and imitating his/her vocalizations and facial expressions. Example: (Smile and laugh with the infant.) "You are laughing at the silly yellow bee, Natalia! You pushed the bee down. Then, pop! Up comes the bee again! You are having silly fun!"



Birth–12 Months

Option 3 Informal Gathering



Skill and Goal

Social interaction skills

Older infants participate in responsive interactions with a caregiver during a song.



Key Concepts

Smile

Song



Materials Needed

None



Also Promotes

Social-Emotional

Physical/Health

Sit on the floor facing several older infants to share a song. Some infants may wish to sit close to you, whereas others may prefer to stand close by. Explain that we are going to sing a song. Smile and make eye contact with each infant as you introduce the song. Modify the song, “If You’re Happy and You Know It,” by singing “make a smile” instead of “clap your hands.” Sing the song with enthusiasm, offering a big smile when you get to the word smile in the song. Point to the engaging smile on your face and encourage infants to smile, too. Some infants will respond to your smile, and others may wave their arms or bounce their bodies to the song. Repeat the song with additional verses if the infants remain interested. Some infants will participate by moving their bodies, whereas others may prefer to watch and listen. Acknowledge each infant’s participation in the activity.



What to Look For—Options 1–3

Each of these options encourages warm and responsive interactions with infants. As infants learn about themselves and others, they are beginning to understand that eye contact, smiles, and vocalizations are positive ways to gain and hold the attention of others. Encourage these ways to interact by making similar facial expressions and sounds in response to the infant’s actions. Infants may also show interest in interacting with you by reaching toward you, waving their arms, or kicking their legs. Engage the infant in back-and-forth interactions by watching, listening, and talking with a friendly tone. The tone of your voice and your responsiveness to the infant are just as important as the actual words used. Watch for signals that suggest the infant wishes to continue interacting. If the infant looks away, fusses, or turns his/her body away from you, shift the activity to allow a break from the interaction.

More Scaffolding Tips—Options 1–3

Extra support ■ As you interact with an infant, remember to pause frequently for the infant to respond. Strive to interact with the infant in a “serve-and-return” (back-and-forth) manner, rather than the infant simply watching you talk or move. ■ Reposition an infant slightly to give him/her an option of where to look. ■ Watch each infant’s reactions to the activities closely. Some infants may enjoy a livelier, more enthusiastic activity, whereas others may prefer calm, soothing interactions.

Enrichment ■ Offer additional sounds or facial expressions for the infant to imitate in Option 1. ■ While engaging with the toy in Option 2, encourage the infant to take turns with you in making the animals pop up. ■ Provide additional songs that the infants are familiar with during Option 3. Older infants may enjoy songs with simple hand movements, such as “Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star.”



Interest Area

Materials Needed: large mirror

Provide opportunities for infants to explore their reflections, along with yours, in a large mirror. Imitate the infants’ facial expressions in the mirror, including smiles or silly faces. Invite older infants to imitate your facial expressions. Infants may enjoy watching their reflections while making different noises in the mirror. Many infants will not recognize their own reflections in the mirror, but will likely delight in looking at the baby staring back at them!

 Family Child Care**Materials Needed:** none

Children of all ages enjoy songs with movement. Engage children in familiar songs, such as “If You’re Happy and You Know It.” Infants and young toddlers will enjoy watching and listening to the song. Older children can demonstrate the actions as well as sing many of the words. Make frequent eye contact with each infant to encourage interest in the interactions.

BLOCK
1

Moving Our Bodies



Birth–12 Months

Option 1 One-to-One



Skill and Goal

Gross motor development

A nonmobile infant practices body balance and control as part of guided tummy time with a caregiver.



Key Concepts

Lift head
Look



Materials Needed

Several small toys (see Be Prepared)



Also Promotes

Cognitive

Be Prepared: The activity description suggests use of one or several different toys to engage the infant's interest, including a nonbreakable mirror, a doll or puppet, a bell, and bold pictures.

BEGIN: [Provide a short supervised tummy time period for an infant to strengthen his/her neck and back. Lay the infant on his/her stomach on a firm surface on the floor. Sit on the floor very close to the infant. Place several colorful toys on the floor around the infant, about 12 inches away. Talk to the infant with a friendly, assuring tone. Bend lower to let the infant see your face. Example: "Hi Rose. You are on your tummy. Now you see me. You are doing a good job lifting your head up. You see our toys."]

ACT: [Gently place your hand on the infant. Talk to the infant about the experience in your own words as if he/she understands you. Example: "This is tummy time. You are resting your cheek on the pad and looking at the toy. I am right here with you. You get stronger when we play at tummy time."]

Hold one toy close for the infant to easily see. Encourage the infant to look at the toy by moving it slightly. Positively acknowledge the infant's efforts to raise his/her head and to look. Example: "Now you are holding your head up. You can see our toy."

Consider using one of several other materials that can be used to create fun and interest for a pleasurable tummy time:

- A nonbreakable mirror. Encourage the infant to look at the mirror.
- Doll, puppet, or cloth animals with a face. Animate a doll with movement, talk, and a friendly voice.
- Toys that make sounds. Ring a small bell or shake a rattle for the infant.
- Bold pictures. Show the infant books or art cards.

If an infant begins to fuss or protest, encourage the infant to look at you or a toy. If your attempt to calm the infant is unsuccessful, gently end the tummy time session.]

RECAP: You laid on your tummy and looked at toys. Your neck and back get stronger when you hold your head up. You worked hard to hold up your head!

**Option 1 continued****👁️ What to Look For—Option 1**

Infants are generally happy to move their arms, kick their feet, and turn their head while laying on their back. Tummy time offers a different position that some infants may not readily welcome when it is first introduced. Because tummy time helps an infant develop strength and body control, it is a valuable experience to offer, perhaps in very brief periods at first. Some infants may begin with only a few seconds of tummy time. Respond to crying and fussing immediately. Do not offer the activity when an infant is tired. It is important to consistently talk with the infant and offer some novelty. Remember that the sound of your voice and closeness provide assurance for the infant. As infants gain more experience and strength, you will observe infants using both arms to lift their head and chest.

📈 More Scaffolding Tips—Option 1

Extra support ■ Provide an appropriate support pillow and position the infant so his/her chest is supported. ■ Sing a familiar song to the infant where he/she can see your face.

Enrichment ■ If an infant reaches for a toy, move it close enough to touch. ■ If an infant is ready to begin rolling over, clear the space next to his/her body.



Birth–12 Months

Option 2 One-to-One



Skill and Goal

Gross motor development

An infant practices crawling or creeping to an appealing destination created by a caregiver.



Key Concepts

Moving



Materials Needed

Infant mirror
Small toys



Also Promotes

Cognitive
Communication/Language

This activity is for infants who are beginning to creep with their tummy on the floor or crawl on hands and knees. Create an appealing destination that the infant can reach with an appropriate level of effort. Arrange several desirable toy figures in front of an infant mirror. Sit on the floor and invite a mobile infant to explore the figures in front of the mirror. Describe the infant's movements. Offer the infant one of the toys. Talk with the infant about his/her skills in moving around and maybe changing positions. Acknowledge and celebrate the infant's hard work and persistence.



👁️ What to Look For—Option 2

Two dimensions of the infant's development need your attention in this activity. One is your existing knowledge of the infant's interests and motor skills so you can create (a) a highly desirable item or activity at the destination and (b) offer a challenging yet achievable distance to the destination. The other dimension to consider is how to respond to an infant who changes directions while creeping or crawling to the destination or encounters a problem, such as ending up in a corner that he/she does not have skills to navigate. The infant who appears to veer in a direction that will not lead to the desired destination may correct his/her course with a simple reminder of the location of the desired object. Example: If a bell is at the desired destination, ring the bell! Another response is to forget about the destination you created and encourage the infant to creep or crawl where he/she wishes, assuming the passage is safe. See the Extra Support tip for a suggestion on how to handle insurmountable barriers or corners.

📈 More Scaffolding Tips—Option 2

Extra support ■ Move near a child who is working hard to move to a new area. Give positive affirmations to the child as he/she moves toward his/her goal. Use your knowledge of the child's gross motor development to know when to offer physical assistance. ■ If an infant creeps into a corner and needs assistance turning around, give just enough help so the infant can begin to learn how to turn on his/her own. ■ If a crawling infant becomes distressed because of a barrier or is unsure how to navigate a corner, use an appropriate amount of physical assistance plus a calm voice to talk with the infant about refocusing his/her goal.

BLOCK
1

Moving Our Bodies *(continued)*



Option 2 continued

Enrichment ■ Place a small obstacle between a mobile infant and the interesting destination for the child to navigate. Example: Place a textured play mat for the infant to crawl over on his/her way to the destination.



Birth–12 Months

Be Prepared: Cloth animals may be used instead of or in addition to dolls.

Option 3 Informal Gathering



Skill and Goal

Gross motor development

Mobile infants participate in a brief song that encourages up and down arm movements.



Key Concepts

Move
Up
Down



Materials Needed

Dolls—1 per infant and staff



Also Promotes

Cognitive
Communication/Language



Optional Reading

Sign and Sing Along: Teddy Bear, Teddy Bear by Annie Kubler

This activity is for infants who can crawl and sit well balanced and for infants who have begun to walk. Invite several infants to sit on the floor with you for a game and song.

Give each infant one doll or cloth animal. Describe what the infants are holding. Example: “Everyone has a toy to hold for our game and song. Lucy has a bear and Mateo has a baby

doll. We will call the dolls and animals our friends.” Demonstrate moving your animal and invite the infants to also move their doll or animal. Example: “Let’s all make our animals or dolls move. We can make them move!”

Point to your ear and say “Please listen to the words. Are you ready?” Offer the following song and corresponding actions. Encourage infants to follow your actions.



Our friends go up, up!

[Demonstrate lifting the doll with two hands.]

Our friends go down, down.

[Move the doll to the floor.]

Our friends can touch the sky.

[Hold the doll up. Stand if all infants can walk.]

All our friends sit back down.

[Maintain or return to sitting position on the floor.]

Repeat the sequence if the infants are interested in moving the toys again. Conclude the activity by demonstrating and inviting infants to hold the dolls on their laps.

👁️ What to Look For—Option 3

An informal gathering at this young age may be quite brief, as described in the *ELM Curriculum User Guide: Birth–36 Months*. Presenting one activity and related song is often sufficient. If you notice infants who seem to want to continue with a song or actions, offer a simple finger play or sing a familiar song with movements.

Some infants will be very interested in imitating your actions. Some infants may play with the doll or animal in their own way. Anticipate that some infants

Option 3 continued

may not easily move a toy or listen to your movement guidance. Use your cheerful voice and enthusiasm to create interest in moving the toys up and down. Offer praise and support for infants' efforts.

 More Scaffolding Tips—Option 3

Extra support ■ Sing the song and do the actions slowly, especially the first time. ■ Demonstrate raising the toy up and down while emphasizing the words up and down.

Enrichment ■ Encourage children to repeat the word up with you. ■ During a follow-up play period, use toys an infant has chosen to practice moving a toy up and down.

 Interest Area

Materials Needed: colorful mat, small toys, stacking cups, balls, large vehicles, dolls, soft animals

Sit on the floor with nonmobile infants. Allow the infants to move freely on a colorful mat. Place several small toys near the infants. Use your time on the floor to foster the natural interests of each infant.

Set up a destination with stacking cups and balls for crawling infants. Place balls on top of the cups. Infants will be curious and interested in separating the toys.



Walking infants will enjoy large vehicles to push along the floor. Arrange dolls and soft animals on low surfaces for infants to hold or carry. Think of yourself as a coach who is supporting numerous emerging skills of increasingly mobile infants. Move around the play space to offer support to each infant.

 Family Child Care

Materials Needed: *The Gingerbread Man* by Parragon Books

Some preschool-age children may enjoy talking to infants or singing a little song during the tummy time activity. Explain to children that the infants are getting stronger and will someday learn to crawl. Remind the preschool-age children they were infants and learned to crawl and walk! Offer a challenge for preschool-age and older children by suggesting different ways to move and freeze. Make up your own version of a move and freeze game. Explain freeze means holding completely still. Make sure each child standing has plenty of space to move freely. Some possibilities include: Move your arms like a bird flying. Move your arms like you are swimming. Stand on one foot. Stand on one foot and move your arms.

Share the book *The Gingerbread Man* by Parragon Books. Emphasize the way people, animals, and the Gingerbread Man move their bodies in the pictures.