



**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 pictures of a little boy’s routine.
- Option 2** (OO) An infant participates in a book sharing with opportunities to help turn the book’s pages and communicate about pictures of a little boy’s routine.
- Option 3** (OO) An older infant participates in a book sharing with opportunities to hold and turn the pages of a book, and communicate about pictures of a little boy’s routine.



Cognitive

Exploring Objects

- Option 1** (OO) An infant holds, looks at, and manipulates 2–3 nesting cups.
- Option 2** (OO) An infant participates in open-ended play with several small toys and a basket.
- Option 3** (OO) An infant participates with a caregiver in open-ended play with 2–3 nesting cups.



Self-Regulation

Getting Calm

- Option 1** (OO) An infant practices calming down after a mildly stimulating activity of touching and holding a novel ball.
- Option 2** (OO) An infant practices calming down after a mildly stimulating activity of shaking a sound-making ball.
- Option 3** (OO) An infant practices calming down after a mildly stimulating activity of rolling a sound-making ball.



Social-Emotional

Interacting with Others

- Option 1** (OO) A young infant participates in responsive interactions with a puppet managed by a caregiver.
- Option 2** (IG) Infants participate in responsive interactions with a caregiver while looking at book illustrations.
- Option 3** (IG) Older infants participate in responsive interactions with a caregiver while playing with blocks and animal figures.



Physical/Health

Using Our Bodies

- Option 1** (OO) An infant participates in open-ended play with a toy that includes opportunities to reach for the toy.
- Option 2** (OO) An infant practices extending his/her arms to reach and grasp different objects.
- Option 3** (OO) An infant practices reaching and grasping by moving pop beads from one bowl to another bowl.

(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 pictures of a little boy's routine.



Key Concepts

Book
Look



Materials Needed

Peekaboo Morning by Rachel Isadora



Also Promotes

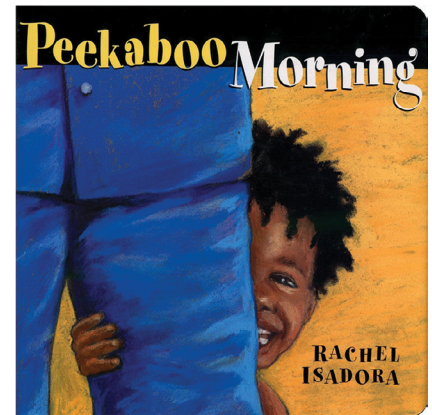
Cognitive
Social-Emotional

BEGIN: [Sit with the 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.]

ASK: I have a book for us to read together! Look, do you see the little boy? The little boy is peeking at us!

[Pause 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 the little boy peeking. Let's turn the page and see what's next!"]



EXPLAIN: This is a little boy. He is peeking out at us! Our book is about what the little boy sees in the morning. 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. At this age, it is not necessary to read the text. Infants will benefit from hearing you talk about the pictures as you share the book together. Example: "Do you see the little boy? The little boy is in bed. His eyes are open. The little boy is waking up!"

Continue to engage the infant in the book, using strategies, such as the following:

- Point to and describe pictures. Examples: "Peekaboo! The little boy sees his mommy. The mommy is holding her little boy. The little boy looks happy." "What is the little boy going to see next? The door is open. The little boy is looking outside. Let's turn the page to see what he is looking at outside!"
- Spend a little more time talking about pictures that seem to be of particular interest to the infant. Example: "You are looking at the little boy's toy train. The little boy is playing with his train! What is he going to see next?"

**Option 1 continued**

- *Describe and respond to gestures or vocalizations. Example: "You are kicking your legs and looking at the little boy's puppy. Oh my! The little boy is using his spoon to feed his puppy!"*
- *Use your voice to add interest and enjoyment to the book sharing. Infants may enjoy a slightly higher pitch and a slower tempo as you talk about the pictures. You may wish to use a sing-song voice to emphasize the rhythm of the rhyming text.*

Transition out of the activity when the infant shows signs of disinterest.]

RECAP: *[Describe what happened during the book sharing. Example: "We read a book about everything a little boy sees when he wakes up in the morning. We looked at pictures of the little boy's family. You kicked your legs when you looked at the picture of the boy's puppy! You smiled at the picture of the little boy's friend. 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 pictures of a little boy's routine.



Key Concepts

Book
Look



Materials Needed

Peekaboo Morning by
Rachel Isadora



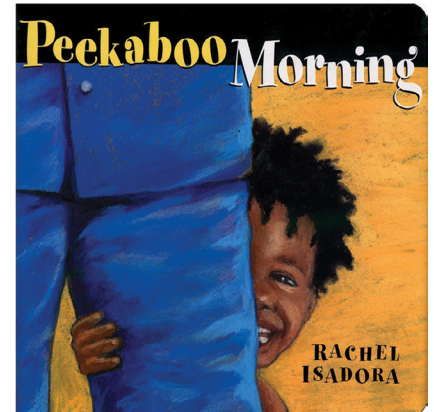
Also Promotes

Cognitive
Social-Emotional
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 little boy? The little boy is peeking out! Our book is about all the things the little boy sees when he wakes up in the morning. I wonder what the little boy is going to see first.”

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

- Point to and name pictured objects. Encourage the infant to look at the objects you point to and describe. Example: “The little boy is eating cereal. Here is the bowl for his cereal. This is the boy’s spoon. Look. The little boy is using his spoon to feed his puppy! What else do you see?”
- Be sure to talk about 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 little boy’s toy train. His toy train is blue. Look at how the boy is using a string to pull his train. Where do you think he wants to take his train?”
- Describe and respond to gestures or vocalizations. Example: “You said ‘boo!’ The little boy’s friend is covering his eyes. I think she is playing *Peekaboo* with him! Let’s turn the page and see what is next!”
- Help the infant connect book information to his/her experiences and developing knowledge. Example: “The little boy is smiling. He is playing with his daddy. You play with your daddy! What do you like to play with your daddy?”
- Use your voice to add interest and enjoyment to the book reading. Infants may enjoy some anticipation as you say “Peekaboo! I see. . . .” Turn the page with enthusiasm to reveal what the little boy sees.
- Follow the infant’s cues about the pace of book reading. Turn the pages as slowly or as quickly as the infant seems to prefer. Watch for an infant’s signal to stop the book reading.
- Recognize the infant’s participation in the book reading. Example: “We had fun reading this book together, Gabrielle. You looked at the pictures of the little boy and his family. You touched the picture of the puppy! You smiled at the picture of the little boy with his friend. 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 the pages of a book, and communicate about pictures of a little boy's routine.



Key Concepts

Book
Look



Materials Needed

Peekaboo Morning by
Rachel Isadora

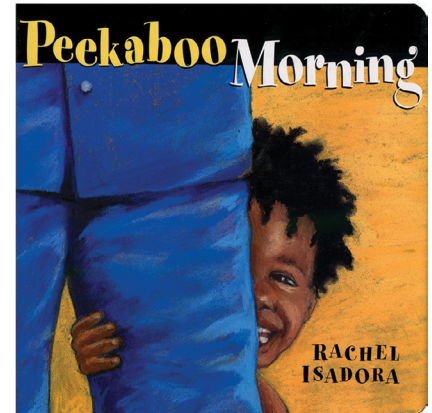


Also Promotes

Cognitive
Social-Emotional
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 hold the book and turn the pages. A standing infant may want to use one hand to help 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.

Once the infant is comfortable and ready to read, point to the picture on the book cover. Example: “Look! Do you see the little boy? The little boy is peeking out at us! Our book is about this little boy and all the things he sees in the morning! Would you like to help me turn the page to read the book?” 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: “This is the little boy. He is looking at his grandma! His grandma is wearing a hat. She is holding a green frog!”
- Invite the infant to point to objects that you label. Example: “The little boy sees a bunny! Peekaboo bunny! Where is the bunny in our picture?”
- Describe what the infant is looking at and provide additional context or information. Example: “You are looking at the little boy giving his grandpa a kiss. His grandpa is smiling. I think the little boy loves his grandpa!”
- Describe and respond to gestures or vocalizations. Examples: “You said ‘woof!’ Dogs and puppies say ‘woof!’ The little boy is feeding his puppy!”
- Help the infant connect book information to his/her experiences and developing knowledge. Example: “The little boy wakes up and sees his mommy. Then the little boy sees his daddy. Who do you see when you wake up in the morning?”
- Show enjoyment and enthusiasm as you read the text. Emphasize ‘peekaboo!’ throughout the book. Some infants may repeat a version of the word ‘peekaboo’ with you.
- Follow the infant’s cues as to how quickly or slowly to look at and talk about illustrations. Some infants may turn pages forward and backward, and others may want to return to a favorite page several times.

**Option 3 continued**

- Recognize the infant's participation in the book reading. Example: "You helped hold our book, Cameron. You pointed to the little boy's puppy. You said 'woof!' You turned the pages to see what was next! We had fun reading this book together."

👁️ What to Look For—Options 1–3

Many infants will connect with this book's familiar theme of waking up in the morning. Infants will likely enjoy looking at the pictures of what the little boy sees when he wakes up, including his family. Infants will show interest in the pictures by 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 a train 'choo-choo.'). Older infants may imitate your sounds and/or intonation as you read. Older infants may also express interest by pointing or turning the pages in the book to a particular picture. Encourage the infant to have an enjoyable experience with the book in his/her own way. Some book sharing activities may be long, others much shorter.

📊 More Scaffolding Tips—Options 1–3

Extra support ■ Softly sing or chant "peekaboo, I see . . ." on each page as you or the infant turns to the next picture. ■ Be flexible about skipping pages or returning to pages of interest to the infant. The book does not follow a plot that is essential to understanding the story.

Enrichment ■ Provide an object or prop related to the book for the infant to hold during or after the book sharing, such as a blanket, spoon, toy dog, toy train, or stuffed rabbit.

**Interest Area**

Materials Needed: *Peekaboo Morning* by Rachel Isadora, several stuffed animals or baby dolls, several small blankets or scarves

Share the book with the infants during floor time. Provide stuffed animals or dolls for the infants to touch and hold. Help an infant place a blanket over their doll or animal for "bedtime." Then announce that it is morning and encourage them to lift the blanket in a *Peekaboo* game. Infants may enjoy repeating this game several times.

 Family Child Care

Materials Needed: *Peekaboo Morning* by Rachel Isadora; new materials for the housekeeping area, such as dolls, pillows and blankets, toothbrushes, hairbrushes, bottles, dress up “pajamas,” and lullaby books

Share the morning-themed book with children and talk about their morning routines. Invite children to play with the new materials in the housekeeping area. If appropriate, suggest play themes that include morning routines. Infants may prefer to interact with one or two props during the activity.



Birth–12 Months

Option 1 One-to-One



Skill and Goal

Object inquiry skills Problem-solving

An infant holds, looks at, and manipulates 2–3 nesting cups.



Key Concepts

Hold
Look



Materials Needed

3 nesting cups



Also Promotes

Physical/Health

BEGIN: [Sit on the floor facing an infant who can sit alone or an infant on his/her back. Establish a connection with the infant by talking about what the infant is doing. Example: “Hi, Joseph. You are sucking on your hand.”]

After about 15 seconds of interaction, hold a medium-size nesting cup close to the infant at the center of his/her chest and within the infant’s line of vision. Move the cup gently around or from side to side, and explain that this is a cup we can play with. Slowly move your finger on the side of the cup and describe how it feels smooth. Do not place the cup in the infant’s hand without first providing a chance for the infant to reach for the cup with one or both of his/her hands.]

ASK: (Infant’s name), would you like to hold the cup?

EXPLAIN: [*Describe the infant’s reaction to the cup. Example: “You are holding the cup and looking at the cup. Now you are shaking the cup!” “You are using your mouth to feel the rim of the cup.”]*]

ASK: Do you want to hold another cup?

[*Offer the smallest cup at the infant’s midline at a distance comfortable for reaching. If the infant does not show interest in the second cup, explain that you will hold the cup in your hand while the infant plays with the other cup. Hold the second cup in the palm of your hand within the infant’s vision.*]

Describe the infant’s actions with one or both cups. Examples: “You are feeling the cup with your finger.” “You are holding one cup in each hand.” “You are making a sound by tapping the two cups together.”]

ACT: [*For a sitting infant only: Place the largest (third) nesting cup in your palm and offer it to the infant.*]

If the infant takes the third cup, describe what the infant does. Examples: “You put the little cup on the floor so you can hold the big cup. That is a good idea!” “You are looking at the big cup. You put the little cup under your arm and took the big cup. Good idea!”



Option 1 continued

If the infant does not take the third cup, hold it in the palm of your hand so the infant can see it. Describe the situation with the third cup. Example: "I think you do not want to hold the big cup. You are looking away from me. I will hold the big cup. You are holding two smaller cups. Good idea!"

RECAP: *[Briefly describe what the infant did with the cup(s). Examples: "We played with cups. You decided to play with one cup only. I got to hold the other cup." "You felt with your hand." "You tapped two cups together. You made a sound."]*

 **What to Look For—Option 1**

The nesting cups offer a smooth surface for an infant to explore. Offering each cup at the center of the infant's body is intentional, aimed at facilitating the infant's ease of potentially reaching for a cup and seeing the cup. There is no right or wrong way for an infant to approach the opportunity to hold, look at, and manipulate two or three cups. When presented with a second or third cup, an infant may drop a cup(s) in order to grasp a different cup. Or a sitting infant may solve the problem of how to hold an additional cup by putting a cup in his/her lap. An infant may show great pleasure in making a sound by tapping two cups together. Avoid telling the infant what to do with a cup. Few infants will discover the cups can be nested together. It is not necessary to demonstrate or describe how to hold, manipulate, or organize two or three cups.

 **More Scaffolding Tips—Option 1**

Extra support ■ Offer the smallest rather than medium-size nesting cup if a smaller cup will be easier for an infant to hold and manipulate. ■ The infant may need your help in holding a cup while he/she explores it. ■ If an infant is used to drinking from a cup, you may need to explain that our cup is empty. It is a cup to play with. ■ If a cup falls to the floor, hold it close to the infant's chest where it is easy to grasp. Encourage the infant to take the cup. If the infant does not take the cup, hold the cup in the palm of your hand so the infant can see it.

Enrichment ■ The infant may enjoy passing nesting cups back and forth to you. ■ If a sitting infant shows interest in continuing to explore the cups, you might place the cups on the floor within easy reach of the infant so the infant experiences a different way of seeing and reaching for the cups. If the infant indicates a desire to continue, hold all three cups in your palm close to the infant's chest so he/she may grasp the cups. Another option is to stack the three cups and place them near the infant so the infant experiences a different configuration of the cups.





Birth–12 Months

Option 2 One-to-One



Skill and Goal

Object inquiry skills

An infant participates in open-ended play with several small toys and a basket.



Key Concepts

Look



Materials Needed

3 small bright toys
small basket



Also Promotes

Physical/Health
Communication/Language

Select three small, attractive toys (that are not necessarily similar) for an infant to grasp and manipulate. Select toys based upon the infant's interests and development. Place the toys near a basket, all within easy reach of a sitting or standing infant.

Encourage the infant to look at and play with the toys. Infants will differ in how they approach this opportunity. Some may enjoy putting items in the basket and then emptying the basket or removing items one at a time from the basket. An infant who can walk might carry the basket with one, two, or three of the toys to another part of the room. Some infants may ignore the basket. It is not necessary to instruct the infant or to expect a certain outcome. You may see infants react in distinctly different ways to the materials you present. Quietly describe the infant's actions and characteristics of the toys explored.

What to Look For—Option 2

Infants have a strong drive to learn about their environments and generally use all their senses to form an understanding of how something works. Finding familiar items together near a basket is an opportunity to see and touch objects and to discover how they are the same or different. The development of crawling gives infants greater opportunities to explore.

Although infants have individual styles for learning, some strategies are widely used by infants, such as mouthing, banging the object on the floor or table, and shaking the object. It is important to give the infant time to explore in his/her own way.

An essential aspect of the activity is your role in describing objects and actions. Your simple descriptions help an infant begin to understand that each object has a name and that his/her actions with the object can be described. If an infant shows interest in one of the toys only, direct your comments and focus accordingly. It is not necessary for the infant to explore all three toys.

More Scaffolding Tips—Option 2

Extra support ■ Point to an object when you offer its name. ■ Offer two rather than three toys if you anticipate the infant will respond better to a smaller collection. ■ Place the toys in the basket, rather than next to the basket, if the infant enjoys taking things out of containers.

Enrichment ■ Offer an achievable challenge by using the basket to cover the toys as the infant watches. Some infants may be interested in finding the toys.



Birth–12 Months

Be Prepared: Place the cups inside the bag and fold the bag’s top to hide the cups.

Option 3 One-to-One



Skill and Goal Problem-solving Object inquiry skills

An infant participates with a caregiver in open-ended play with 2–3 nesting cups.



Key Concepts

Open
In



Materials Needed

3 nesting cups (small, medium, and large)
Cloth bag



Also Promotes

Physical/Health
Communication/Language

Invite a mobile infant to explore the cloth bag and toys inside. Sit on the floor facing the infant. Infants who have learned to walk may prefer to stand and explore on a low surface. Point to the bag and explain there are toys inside. Use your voice to create interest in the surprise!

Encourage the infant to open the bag and remove the cups. Assist the infant in opening the cloth bag if needed. If an infant does not begin to look for the toys, touch the outside of the bag and talk about what you feel. Example: “This bag feels bumpy. Let’s look in this bag and find a toy!”

Describe the infant’s discovery of a cup. Examples: “You found a little red cup in the bag.” “This cup is big.” Encourage the infant to look until all three cups are found. Describe the infant’s actions with the cups.

If an infant seems interested in putting the cups together, offer an invitation that the infant may or may not pursue. Example: “Let’s find out more about the cups.” Demonstrate nesting the cups by placing the smallest cup into the medium-size cup. Point to the two cups. Explain: “Our small cup fits in the larger cup.” Remove the smaller cup and encourage the infant to nest the cups. Some infants may enjoy placing one cup into a bigger cup. Some infants may prefer to take three nested cups apart. Use the activity to support an infant’s emerging development and interests.

What to Look For—Option 3

Watch how the infant manages the two different problem-solving opportunities embedded in the activity: the basic task of opening the bag and removing the cups, and the more challenging task of fitting 2–3 cups together. Some infants may open the bag and peek inside, and others may dump the toys by holding or shaking the cloth bag. Describe the strategy used by the infant to get to the toys hidden inside. For many mobile infants, finding surprises in bags or boxes is an enjoyable experience.

For the more challenging problem-solving opportunity, the activity plan suggests that you demonstrate fitting one cup inside another if the infant shows interest. Give just enough help so that an infant can fit one cup into another that is slightly larger. To nest 2–3 cups requires an infant to have a beginning idea of size, along with fine motor skills to place one cup inside another. This portion is offered for infants who show interest. Do not offer this opportunity if the infant shows no interest in fitting together the cups. Also, at this age, most infants will not be able to stack the cups. Some infants will be pleased to open the bag and remove the cups.

Option 3 continued

Also look at how the infant explores characteristics of the cups (object inquiry skills). Infants are active learners who find out about objects in their environments by looking, touching, mouthing, grasping, moving, or manipulating them. In this cognitive activity, an infant is supported in exploring each individual cup and exploring the set of three cups. An infant may act upon the cups by tapping them together, holding the cups, or knocking them down. Observe the infant's responses to the cups and talk with him/her about each one. Some infants may vocalize a reaction to the toys. Repeat and extend an infant's vocalizations. Example: "Ooh, yes! You found the biggest cup!"

Some infants may engage in a pretend action with the cup that suggests he/she knows that we can drink from a cup.

 More Scaffolding Tips—Option 3

Extra support ■ Place two rather than three cups in the bag. ■ Hold the bag open so an infant can reach his/her hand inside to get the cups. ■ If an infant seems cautious about opening the bag, remove the cups one by one as you describe each one. Then put the cups back in the bag and encourage the infant to remove them.

Enrichment ■ Place the cups on the floor or table with the smallest cup to the child's left. Starting at the left supports later reading and writing from left to right. Point to and describe each of the three cups. Begin with the smallest cup on the infant's left. Emphasize words that describe the cups. ■ Hold the bag open and encourage the infant to drop one or all of the cups back into the bag. The infant may wish to repeat the activity.



Interest Area

Materials Needed: cloth and board books, soft toys, rattles, mirror, bowl, small balls, dolls, nesting cups, push toys, puzzles

On the floor next to an infant mirror, arrange small toys for nonmobile infants to view, such as cloth books, soft toys, and rattles. Early mobile infants may enjoy putting items into bowls and then taking them out. Arrange nesting cups on the floor to be discovered by crawling infants. Place a second group of nesting cups on the floor next to a nonbreakable mirror. On another day, arrange the nesting cups with small toys inside. Stack the nesting cups for infants to topple. Mobile infants will enjoy playing with objects they can carry, wheel toys to push, and toys that fit into containers.



Family Child Care

Materials Needed: nesting cups, large cups

In addition to engaging an infant in one of the activity options, offer older children an opportunity to play with nesting cups. Toddlers will enjoy putting small nesting cups inside the larger cups. Adjust the level of challenge so the toddler can be successful. Limit the number of nesting cups to three if nesting more cups is too challenging. Preschool-age children will enjoy building a tower with nesting cups.



Birth–12 Months

Option 1 One-to-One



Skill and Goal Self-control

An infant practices calming down after a mildly stimulating activity of touching and holding a novel ball.



Key Concepts

Touch
Hold
Calm



Materials Needed

Oball Rollin' Rainstick Rattle®



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. Smile and make eye contact. Introduce the toy by holding it up for the infant to see and touch.*]

ASK: I have a toy. Would you like to play with it?

[*Pause and acknowledge infant's response. Example: "I see you are looking at the toy. I will hold it so you can touch it."*]

ACT: [*Provide mildly stimulating uses of the ball for the infant. Hold the ball close for the infant to touch if he/she wishes. Provide assistance in exploring the ball's features, such as shape, feel, and sound. Examples: "Our ball is round. It has holes for our fingers to hold onto. "Let's look inside. What do we see? I see lots of tiny balls in different colors!"*]



[*Follow the infant's interest in looking at and manipulating the ball. Some infants will enjoy watching you move and touch the ball. Others may prefer to hold the ball and possibly place their mouth on exposed areas. If the infant appears disinterested or distressed at any time, remove the ball and provide comfort.*]

[*After the infant has an opportunity to fully explore the ball, put it away and explain that it is time for us to calm down. Hold the infant close to provide physical comfort, such as gently swaying back and forth in a calming motion. You also may wish to quietly sing a familiar song, or offer soft-voice reminders that it is time to rest. It may be helpful to reposition the infant to provide a clear signal that playtime with the ball is over.*]

RECAP: [*Smile and make eye contact as you review the activity. Example: "We had fun with our new toy! You told me with your big smile that you liked to hold the ball. Then we put the ball away. I held you while you got calm again."*]



Birth–12 Months

Option 2 One-to-One



Skill and Goal

Self-control

An infant practices calming down after a mildly stimulating activity of shaking a sound-making ball.



Key Concepts

Shake
Calm



Materials Needed

Oball Rollin' Rainstick
Rattle®



Also Promotes

Communication/Language
Physical/Health

Invite an infant to sit on your lap to play with a toy. Place the infant on your lap facing out. Introduce the ball and invite the infant to touch and hold it. Encourage the infant to hold the new toy and feel its characteristics. The infant may try to put a part of the ball in his/her mouth.



Explain that you want to shake the ball to find out how it sounds. Example: "I wonder what our ball would sound like if we shook it. Would you like me to shake it so we can listen together?" Do not shake the ball if the infant shows a clear "no" response, such as looking away or trying to push away the ball. Instead, encourage the infant to touch or hold the ball, similar to Option 1. If the infant seems interested in your shaking the ball, make sounds with the ball by moving it in front of the infant. Carefully watch the infant's response. Shake the ball with less intensity or stop shaking the ball if the infant shows signs of not liking the sound or the action.

- If the infant has a positive or curious response to your shaking the ball, invite the infant to shake it. Help the infant hold and shake the ball, if appropriate. Describe the actions that cause the sound.
- After the infant has an opportunity to hold, touch, and/or shake the ball, quietly announce that we are done playing with the ball. It is time for us to rest and be calm. Put the ball away and support the infant in returning to a calmer state. Hold the infant and provide physical comfort, such as slowly patting your hand on his/her back. It also may be helpful to quietly hum or sing a familiar song. Provide gentle reminders as needed.
- Acknowledge the infant's efforts to be calm after the exciting activity. Example: "We had fun playing with our new toy! We shook the ball and listened to the sounds it made. Then we put the ball away. We are resting. You are sitting with me and we are calm."



Birth–12 Months

Option 3 One-to-One



Skill and Goal

Self-control

An infant practices calming down after a mildly stimulating activity of rolling a sound-making ball.



Key Concepts

Roll
Calm



Materials Needed

Oball Rollin' Rainstick Rattle®



Also Promotes

Communication/Language
Physical/Health

Invite a mobile infant to join you on the floor to play with a new toy. Sit facing the infant and give him/her the ball to hold and feel. Encourage the infant to move or shake the ball and listen to the sound it makes. Offer to roll the ball on the floor with the infant, while listening to the sound of the rain stick inside the ball. Example: “I wonder what our ball would sound like if we rolled it on the floor. Would you like to roll the ball with me and we can listen together?” The infant may prefer for you to roll the ball. After several rolls of the ball on the floor, invite the infant to roll the ball toward you. A back-and-forth rolling exchange may emerge. Describe actions with the ball (yours and the infant’s) and emphasize the sound it is making. The colorful movement of the ball may appeal to the infant, too.



After the infant has had the opportunity to roll the ball (or watch you roll the ball), offer a reminder or brief summary of what happened with the ball. Example: “You had fun rolling the ball on the floor with me today, Sofia. We listened to the sounds it made!” Then announce it is time to put the ball away and to become calm. Example: “We put the ball away. The ball is quiet now. It is time for us to rest and become calm.” The infant may want to sit near you or on your lap. Provide quiet time and offer to pat the infant on his/her back. You also may wish to quietly hum or sing a favorite song. Offer gentle reminders that it is time to rest, if needed.

Recognize and acknowledge the infant’s behavior as he/she becomes calm after the activity. Example: “We had fun playing with our new toy! Now you are sitting with me and resting. We are feeling calm.”

👁️ What to Look For—Options 1–3

The three options offered in this activity plan correspond to an infant’s motor skills in exploring the ball. Option 1 assumes an infant interested in the ball is able to touch and perhaps hold the ball, but is not yet ready to shake the ball. The Option 3 focus on rolling the ball offers the most advanced opportunity in this plan for manipulating the ball. Pay close attention to the infant’s reactions throughout the activity and make adjustments if needed. Keep in mind that an infant may have the motor skills to vigorously shake or roll the ball but this action may be too stimulating. In these instances, it is important to share control of the ball with the infant. Stop the activity and provide comfort if the infant shows any signs of distress.

It is valuable for an infant to play with the ball as long as the infant shows interest and not signs of overstimulation or fatigue. Severely limiting the playtime may prompt strong protests when the ball is taken away. But not limiting the playtime may provide too much stimulation or decrease interest in the ball. Watching the infant's reactions will provide cues on when to transition to the calming segment of the activity.

More Scaffolding Tips—Options 1–3

Extra support ■ If rolling the ball in Option 3 is too stimulating, shift to the Option 2 approach to the ball. ■ Take a brief break from the ball (without taking it away) if the infant seems too excited.

Enrichment ■ In Option 3, promote a back-and-forth rolling exchange with the ball if the infant is readily rolling the ball and seems interested in participating in a roll pattern with the ball.

Interest Area

Materials Needed: clear spinning top with balls inside

Invite an infant to interact with a toy that is likely to provide mild excitement when you have time to actively support the infant's transition to a calmer state. Infants will enjoy seeing the balls move when the top spins. Some infants will be able to help you spin the top, and others may spin it independently. When the infant begins to indicate signs of high excitement or disinterest, such as looking away or shifting focus to another activity, use a calm voice to tell the infant that playtime with the top has come to an end. Support the infant's interest in pursuing another activity or help the infant become calm by using the strategies suggested in Options 1–3.



Family Child Care

Materials Needed: assortment of different balls including the Oball Rollin' Rainstick Rattle®

Children of all ages enjoy playing with new and different balls. Older children may enjoy sitting in a circle with legs wide and feet touching their neighbor to roll a ball back and forth. Toddlers may participate by being placed next to an older child to help the game progress more smoothly. Infants can be a part of the circle by sitting on your lap. Before moving on to the next activity, invite all the children to sit quietly for a few moments. You may wish to softly recite a simple rhyme while sitting with the children.



Birth–12 Months

Option 1 One-to-One



Skill and Goal

Social interaction skills

A young infant participates in responsive interactions with a puppet managed by a caregiver.



Key Concepts

Look
Listen



Materials Needed

Hand puppet
Infant pillow/cushion



Also Promotes

Communication/Language

BEGIN: [Place the infant on his/her back on the pillow/cushion so the infant is supported in a reclining position.]

Smile and begin talking with the infant. Example: “Hello, Ana! I am happy you are here today. Would you like to play with me?” Acknowledge the infant’s reactions to you, including any vocalizations, facial expressions, or gestures. Example: “You are kicking your legs, James! You are looking at me. I think you would like to play!”]

ACT: [Introduce the puppet. Example: “Look, I have a special friend with me today! You can listen to our friend talk. Would you like to talk to our friend?”]

Hold the puppet about 12 inches from the infant. Talk softly with the infant and move the puppet slowly from side to side to attract the infant’s attention. Watch for the infant to respond, perhaps by gazing, batting at, or reaching for the puppet.

Puppets may be new to some infants. Offer reassurance if the infant seems to be uncertain about the puppet. Example: “Our puppet is nice. I can make the puppet talk when I put the puppet on my hand, like this.” Describe the puppet using the puppet’s voice. Example: “I have soft fur. Would you like to pat my head?” Demonstrate patting the puppet’s head, if appropriate.

If the infant is not yet reaching or grasping, bring the puppet to the infant’s hand to touch.

Use the puppet to interact with the infant. Describe the infant’s reactions, including vocalizations or facial expressions. Examples: “You are smiling at our puppet. Your eyes are watching the puppet move from side to side!” “You reached for the puppet. You touched the puppet’s head and the puppet’s eyes!”

Wrap up the activity when the infant begins to show signs of disinterest.]

RECAP: [Offer a brief description of the interaction. Example: “You had fun talking with our puppet friend today, Carly! You kicked your legs when the puppet sang you a song. Then you patted the puppet’s head! The puppet felt soft. I think you liked our puppet friend.”]



Birth–12 Months

Option 2 Informal Gathering



Skill and Goal

Social interaction skills

Infants participate in responsive interactions with a caregiver while looking at book illustrations.



Key Concepts

Look



Materials Needed

Picture book (see Be Prepared)



Also Promotes

Communication/Language
Cognitive

Be Prepared: Select a picture book, such as one in the *Baby Touch and Feel* series by DK Publishing, that you anticipate will be of interest to infants and has not been used extensively in your room.

Engage several infants who can sit with support or sit independently in looking at pictures in a book. Display and talk about the pictures, making sure all infants can easily see the illustrations. Encourage infants to look at a picture as you describe it. Use the book sharing as an opportunity to (a) show responsiveness to an infant’s interest in a picture and (b) demonstrate you are paying attention to the infant’s reactions and participation in the session. Examples: “I see you are looking at the picture, Isaiah.” “Kiara, you are smiling at the picture of the kitten. I think you like kittens.” Acknowledge any infant attempts to gain your attention. Focus on interactions between the infants and you. The books are in a secondary role in support of this goal.



Birth–12 Months

Option 3 Informal Gathering



Skill and Goal

Social interaction skills

Older infants participate in responsive interactions with a caregiver while playing with blocks and animal figures.



Key Concepts

Play
Blocks
Animals



Materials Needed

Soft blocks (see Be Prepared)
Animal figures
Basket



Also Promotes

Communication/Language
Physical/Health

Be Prepared: For each infant, secure 2–3 blocks and 1–2 animal figures you anticipate you will appeal to the infants. Place the animal figures in the basket.

Invite two infants to play on the floor with you. Place the blocks in front of the infants. Invite each infant to select 1–2 animals from the basket. Encourage the infants to play with the blocks and animals. Example: “Let’s play with the blocks and animals! What would you like to do with your blocks and animals?”

Use the play time as an opportunity to demonstrate you are paying attention to each infant’s play with the materials and potential bids for your attention.

Watch for opportunities to promptly acknowledge an infant’s bid for your attention. Examples: “Yes, Ivanna, I see your cow. What are you going to do with your cow?” “I hear you saying something, Jamal. I will move closer so I can hear you.”

Describe for an infant how his/her look, gesture, and/or vocalization got your attention. Examples: “Jamie, you are holding a block out to me. I think you want me to look at your red block. Would you like me to move the block with you?” “You are tapping me, Jasmine. I would like to help you. Can you point to what you need?”

👁️ What to Look For—Options 1–3

The activities provide opportunities to (a) let infants know you are paying attention to their actions and (b) respond positively to infants’ bids for attention. Some requests for your attention will be obvious, such as waving, tapping you, climbing on your lap, or vocalizing. Other requests may be more subtle, such as moving closer to you without looking directly at you. Use both obvious and subtle requests to show an infant that his/her requests will be warmly acknowledged. Your responses help an infant develop social-emotional strengths in interacting with a familiar adult. Your responsiveness also fosters an infant’s emerging sense of competence in knowing how to meet one’s needs for comfort, contact, reassurance, and closeness.

 More Scaffolding Tips—Options 1–3

Extra support ■ Smile and nod frequently at infants to acknowledge their play actions. ■ Move closer to an infant to let him/her know you are available and open to his/her communications. ■ At the beginning of Option 3, distribute the animals to each infant from the basket if you anticipate it may be challenging for some infants to choose or limit their selection.

Enrichment ■ Provide a second puppet for the infant to touch and hold during Option 1. ■ Provide a greater selection of books for the infants to select from in Option 2. ■ Provide additional animals and other materials for the infants to play with during Option 3.



Interest Area

Materials Needed: several age-appropriate animal puppets, such as Get Ready Kids Bigmouth Farm Puppet Set (with embroidered eyes)

Provide opportunities for infants to explore the puppets independently. Infants will likely be excited to explore the puppets. Older infants may attempt to place the puppets on their hands and others may touch and examine features of the puppets.

Sit on the floor near the puppets and watch for requests for attention. Respond warmly and positively when an infant brings a puppet to show you or approaches you for interaction and closeness.



Family Child Care

Materials Needed: assortment of books with a variety of challenge levels

Provide designated time for all children to select and look at books independently. Maintain close proximity and watch for requests for attention. Use responses, such as those suggested in Options 2 and 3, to let children know you are interested in their efforts.



Birth–12 Months

Option 1 One-to-One



Skill and Goal

Fine motor development
Gross motor development

An infant participates in open-ended play with a toy that includes opportunities to reach for the toy.



Key Concepts

Reach



Materials Needed

Small toy
Baby links



Also Promotes

Cognitive
Self-Regulation

Be Prepared: Attach a chain of connecting links to a small toy that you anticipate will be of strong interest to the infant.

BEGIN: [Place an infant on his/her back on a firm surface, such as a carpet or activity mat. Kneel or sit at the infant's feet. Begin by engaging the infant in an interaction with you by talking, smiling, and making eye contact. Example: "Hi Niko. Are you ready to play?" Pause for the infant to react non-verbally or with a sound.]

Describe the infant's reactions to your voice. Example: "Niko, you are smiling and kicking your feet. Your eyes got wide when I said your name. I think you are ready to play!"]

ACT: [Hold the connecting links with the toy suspended over the infant's chest within his/her reach. "Maybe you would like to move our toy or hold our toy."]

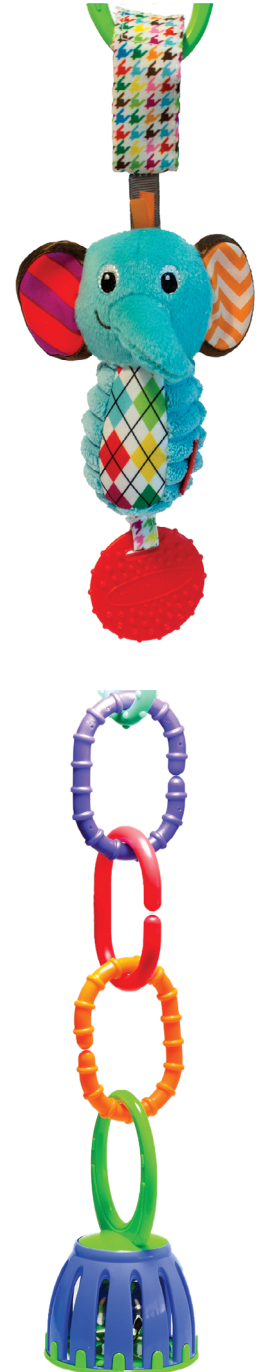
Encourage the infant to reach for the toy. Be sure to hold the object at the midline over the center of the infant's chest. Offer encouraging words if the infant tries to reach for the toy. Example: "You are reaching for our toy, Niko!"]

ASK: Would you like to hold our toy?

[The infant will likely adjust his/her reaching as the toy naturally sways. Swinging the connecting links is not advised because it prevents the infant from successfully reaching the toy. Leave pauses in your speech for the infant to respond to you or to focus fully on the toy.]

ACT: [Remove the toy from the links so the infant can explore the toy by touching and moving it on his/her own. The infant may also bring the toy to his/her mouth for more exploration. After several minutes, change the infant's position and bring the activity to an end.]

RECAP: [Describe the infant's specific actions and responses to the activity. Example: "Niko, you really liked our toy swinging over your chest. You liked kicking your feet and swiping at the toy with your hands."]



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

Watch carefully the infant's level of interest in the activity. Lack of attention may indicate a need to increase or decrease the challenge. Keep in mind that swinging the links does not help the infant reach for the toy. Lack of attention also might indicate the toy is not of interest to the infant. You may wish to try a different toy.

An infant who has learned to roll over may change positions after he/she has a hold on the toy.

If an infant becomes overstimulated during the activity, talk softly to him/her and place your hand on his/her leg, tummy, or upper arm. Some infants may need to be held in order to regain a calm state.

📈 More Scaffolding Tips—Option 1

Extra support ■ If touching a hanging toy is too difficult, remove the links and hold the toy in your hands over the infant's chest so the toy is clearly visible to the infant. The important goal of the activity is to encourage the infant to reach for a desired object.

Enrichment ■ For an infant who can hold his/her head up, place several toys on a low surface and hold the infant in a supported sitting position. Encourage the infant to reach for the toys. ■ Move the toy above the infant's feet. Touch the infant's feet with the toy. Next move the toy a few inches above the infant's feet. Encourage the infant to touch the toy with his/her foot.



Birth–12 Months

Option 2 One-to-One



Skill and Goal

Fine motor development

Gross motor development

An infant practices extending his/her arms to reach and grasp different objects.



Key Concepts

Reach

Touch

Hold



Materials Needed

3 or 4 small blocks



Also Promotes

Cognitive

Self-Regulation



Gather several small blocks.

Invite an infant who is learning to sit independently to sit on your lap facing a low table. Sit close to the table and hold your hands around the infant's torso to provide support. You may also wrap one arm around the infant's middle for support.

Place one block close to the infant. Encourage the infant to reach his/her arms out to touch the block. Next, place a second block close to the infant. Watch the infant's reaction to seeing two blocks. An infant may drop the first block to reach the second, or hold one block in each hand.

Pay attention to how far the infant can extend his/her arm and hand. These actions are central to reaching. Place items within challenging but achievable reach. If an infant seems agreeable, briefly remove one block and then put it back to provide another reaching opportunity and to support the infant's attention to the block. Be aware of signs of fatigue and bring the activity to a close if the infant appears tired or stressed.

At about six months, many infants develop the upper body strength needed to lean forward and return to an upright position to examine a toy. Muscles supporting the head and back are engaged when the infant leans forward and/or manipulates the blocks. Returning to an upright and balanced position may be a challenge for some infants. If sitting at a low table is not comfortable for the infant, move the activity to the floor. Sit behind the infant to give extra support for sitting if needed. Some infants may enjoy leaning forward and changing to a prone position to explore the toy.

What to Look For—Option 2

Include small animal figures to strengthen interest in reaching. Depending upon your knowledge of the infant, consider adding playful sounds to your interaction, such as saying “Ta-da!” when the infant grasps a toy. Some infants may enjoy the feeling of tapping the blocks on the tabletop.

More Scaffolding Tips—Option 2

More Scaffolding Tips—Option 2

Extra support ■ Place the infant in a supportive sitting position. Hold a block in the palm of each of your hands near the infant. Make sure the blocks are in the infant's line of vision and can be reached by the infant. ■ Carry on a responsive dialogue with the infant as he/she makes vocalizations while working to reach and grasp the blocks. Repeat babbles, coos, or gurgles made by the infant.

BLOCK
5

Using Our Hands *(continued)*



Option 2 continued

Enrichment ■ If an infant has fun leaning, encourage him/her to reach to the side with the opposite hand. Give the infant a toy to hold in his/her right hand. Place another toy on the table that the infant can grasp by leaning and reaching with the opposite hand.



Birth–12 Months

Option 3 One-to-One



Skill and Goal

Fine motor development
Gross motor development

An infant practices reaching and grasping by moving pop beads from one bowl to another bowl.



Key Concepts

Reach
Pick up



Materials Needed

2–4 nonbreakable bowls
4–5 pop beads per participant



Also Promotes

Communication/Language
Social-Emotional

Sit on the floor next to an infant who sits independently. Place several pop beads into one bowl. Ask the infant if he/she would like to join you in playing with the beads. Begin to transfer pop beads from one bowl to the other. Encourage the infant to move the pop beads from one bowl to another. Describe the infant's actions. Example: "You are using your arm to reach for a bead. You are using your hand to pick up a bead."

You may wish to use separate bowls, one set for the infant and one set for you. This arrangement supports parallel activity with the beads. Another option is to use two bowls only, with both you and the infant moving beads from one bowl to another. This decision may rest on whether you expect to continue moving beads after the infant engages in transferring beads from one bowl to another.

Other small toys may be used instead of pop beads.

What to Look For—Option 3

This activity builds on infants' inherent interest in moving objects from one place to another place. It is rarely a boring activity in the very early years. Look for opportunities to emphasize how the infant is using his arm to reach and his hand to pick up a bead.

An infant who can stand or walk may enjoy the activity on a low surface. Be sure to place the materials at a suitable height, so the activity remains focused on arm and hand movement.

Note the Enrichment tip about promoting use of a different hand. Imagine the infant's midline as an invisible line marking left and right sides of the body. Encouraging an infant to reach to one side with the opposite hand while maintaining balance supports the development of body coordination, strength, and balance.

More Scaffolding Tips—Option 3

Extra support ■ Bring the bowl of pop beads closer to the infant if reaching and grasping are challenging. ■ Encourage the infant to take one pop bead at a time. You may wish to hold the bowl of available beads for the infant to take one and then move it slightly away from the infant after he/she takes a bead, so the infant focuses on putting the bead in the other bowl. ■ Clap when the infant places a pop bead in the other bowl.

Option 3 continued

Enrichment ■ Make a little game out of moving the bowl to one side to encourage an infant to reach to one side with the opposite hand so that the infant's hand crosses the midline. Example: Place the bowl to the infant's left and encourage him/her to use one hand, and then the opposite hand, to drop the toy in. ■ Add fun by making a silly sound each time a toy drops into the bowl! Example: "S-w-i-sh. Plunk." ■ Consider using toys that make a sound when they are dropped.

**Interest Area**

Materials Needed: infant gym, sock rattle, pop beads, bowl, muffin pans, tennis balls

Playing on the floor helps infants develop strength and coordination. For a few minutes, a nonmobile infant may enjoy swiping at toys attached to an infant gym. Infants generally enjoy kicking their feet. Placing a sock rattle on one or both of an infant's feet also promotes kicking. For infants who can sit independently, place loose toys, such as pop beads, in a bowl on the floor. Crawling to the bowl to dump the toys out will be enjoyable for some infants. Infants will move from hands and knees position to a sitting position in order to tip the container or remove the toys one by one. On another day, place muffin pans with tennis balls in a location where crawling infants will discover them.



Infants who have learned to pull up to stand will enjoy manipulating play materials on a low surface. Infants often delight in dropping toys from a low surface to the floor. Return the play materials to the low surface and encourage the infants to try again. Infants who can walk will enjoy discovering pop beads and muffin pans in the sensory table. Some infants may place pop beads into the muffin pan. At this age, infants are not expected to put pop beads together.

**Family Child Care**

Offer toddlers and preschool-age children opportunities that incorporate moving their legs and arms at the same time. Example: play a game of make-believe with children, such as pretending to be birds. Encourage children to flap their "wings" as they move from place to place. When playing indoors, the children might pretend to fly from an imaginary branch to a nest. Structure the pretend game by making up and singing a song about movements or destinations. Encourage children to listen to the song to learn what to do. Examples: "see the birds flying high," "see the birds fly to their nest . . . it is time to rest."