



**Communication/
Language**

Exploring Words

- Option 1** (OO) A young infant participates in a repetitive, simple *Peekaboo* game with a caregiver.
- Option 2** (OO) An older infant participates with a caregiver in a repetitive *Peekaboo* game using a scarf.



Cognitive

Exploring Textures

- Option 1** (OO) A young infant looks at and/or touches similar toys with different textures.
- Option 2** (OO) An older infant touches and manipulates two different types of initially connected objects.
- Option 3** (IG) Older infants touch and manipulate two types of objects with highly different textures.



Self-Regulation

Getting Calm

- Option 1** (OO) A young infant practices calming down after a mildly stimulating activity while being held in a caregiver's arms.
- Option 2** (OO) An infant practices calming down after a mildly stimulating activity while sitting on a caregiver's lap.
- Option 3** (OO) An older infant practices calming down after a mildly stimulating activity while sitting independently, facing a caregiver.



Social-Emotional

Interacting with Others

- Option 1** (OO) A young infant and caregiver play together with a musical toy, with opportunity to engage in back-and-forth interactions.
- Option 2** (OO) An older infant participates in back-and-forth interactions with a caregiver focused on playing a musical toy.



Physical/Health

Using Our Hands

- Option 1** (OO) A young infant watches a caregiver manipulate toys with opportunities, for the infant to grasp and hold a toy.
- Option 2** (OO) An older infant practices releasing an infant snap-lock bead.
- Option 3** (IG) Older infants together practice picking up and releasing infant snap-lock beads, including dropping beads into a small container.

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



Birth–12 Months

Option 1 One-to-One



Skill and Goal

Receptive language

Expressive language

A young infant participates in a repetitive, simple Peekaboo game with a caregiver.



Key Concepts

Game

Peekaboo



Materials Needed

None



Also Promotes

Cognitive



Optional Reading

Eyes, Nose, Toes Peekaboo!
by DK Publishing

BEGIN: [Place the infant on his/her back in a comfortable reclining position. Ensure the infant can clearly see you. Smile and encourage the infant to make eye contact with you.]

EXPLAIN: Would you like to play a game with me? Our game is called Peekaboo! I think you will like this game.

[Pause and watch for the infant's response.]

The young infant may show interest in the activity by smiling, kicking his/her legs, reaching, vocalizing, or making eye contact. Describe the infant's response. Example: "You are looking at me. You are smiling! I think you are ready for our game."

ACT: I am going to cover my face, like this.

[Place your hands loosely over your eyes, ensuring the majority of your face is showing.]

Where am I? Do you see me?

[With enthusiasm, remove your hands to reveal the rest of your face.]

Peekaboo! Here I am!

[Describe the infant's reaction to the game, including any gestures or vocalizations. Example: "You are smiling and cooing! You watched me hide my face. Then you smiled and kicked your legs when I said 'peekaboo!'"]

Would you like to play the game again?

[The infant may want to repeat the game several times. Use the following strategies to repeat steps of the game:

- Say the same phrases each time:
 - "Where am I?"
 - "Peekaboo! Here I am!"
- Use your voice to add interest and excitement to the game. Pause as you cover your face, then say the word "peekaboo" with enthusiasm.
- Describe the infant's reactions.

Transition out of the activity when the infant begins to show signs of disinterest.]



Option 1 continued

RECAP: *[Describe what happened during the game. Example: "We played a Peekaboo game. You watched me hide my face. You giggled when I said 'peekaboo!' You wanted to play over and over again. This was a fun game to play together!"]*

Birth–12 Months

Option 2 One-to-One



Skill and Goal

Receptive language
Expressive language

An older infant participates with a caregiver in a repetitive *Peekaboo* game using a scarf.



Key Concepts

Game
Peekaboo



Materials Needed

1 sheer scarf



Also Promotes

Cognitive
Physical/Health



Optional Reading

Eyes, Nose, Toes Peekaboo!
by DK Publishing

This activity is for an infant who sits with support or independently. Position the infant across from you in a secure position. Introduce the scarf and explain the *Peekaboo* game. Example: “We are going to play the *Peekaboo* game! I am going to put the scarf on my head. Then I will take the scarf off! You can watch me!” Place the scarf over your head and with anticipation say “Where am I? Where did I go?” Pull the scarf off with enthusiasm and say “Peekaboo! Here I am!” Describe the infant’s reactions to the game. Example: “You watched me cover my head. You kicked your legs before I said ‘peekaboo!’ Now you are smiling!” Repeat your words and actions unless the infant shows distress or a lack of interest in the game.

Invite the infant to cover his/her head with the scarf to play *Peekaboo* with you. Example: “Now it is your turn! May I put the scarf over you? (*Gently place the scarf over infant’s head.*) Where is Riley? Where did Riley go?” With enthusiasm, remove the scarf. Example: “Peekaboo! Here is Riley!” Describe the infant’s reactions. Example: “You were quiet when you were under the scarf. Then you laughed and waved your arms when I said ‘peekaboo!’ You are having fun with this game!”

The infant may want to play the game several more times. Each time, ask the infant who should be under the scarf. Example: “You are kicking your legs and smiling. You want to play again! Where do you want the scarf to go? Should I put the scarf on you?” Move the scarf in the direction of the two possibilities (your face, the infant’s face) as you describe each. When you repeat the game, offer the same phrases and describe the infant’s reaction.

Show anticipation and excitement during each round of the game. Invite the infant to help you say a version of the word “peekaboo.” Consistently describe the infant’s actions and responses during the activity. Example: “Where is Zander? I hear giggles, but I don’t see him! The scarf is moving . . . peekaboo, Zander! There you are!”

Watch the infant’s reactions to determine when to end the activity. Conclude by recognizing the infant’s participation. Example: “You played the *Peekaboo* game with me! First I hid under the scarf and said ‘peekaboo!’ Then you hid under the scarf! You laughed and waved your arms when I took the scarf off! We had fun playing this game together.”

What to Look For—Options 1–2

Each of these options encourage a responsive and interactive game experience with infants. Many infants are familiar with the *Peekaboo* game and will delight in sharing the game with a trusted caregiver. A book about *Peekaboo* is shared in Block 5. Many infants will want to repeat the game over and over. While this game may appear boring to adults, the repetitive pattern



of words and actions supports the infant's growth and development in many areas, such as object permanence, motor skill development, social interactions, and recognition of patterns. Repeating the key words of the game actively supports vocabulary awareness.

Infants will show interest in the game by showing signs of anticipation and surprise, such as smiling, giggling, watching, waving their arms, or kicking their legs. In Option 2, some infants may reach for or grasp the scarf. Infants may also express interest in the game by vocalizing, including cooing, babbling, and later saying a version of "peekaboo." Young infants may be more comfortable watching you cover and then reveal your face. Older infants may delight in covering and then revealing themselves over and over.

More Scaffolding Tips—Options 1–2

Extra support ■ In Option 2, some infants may be uncomfortable with a scarf over their head. Provide time for the infant to explore the scarf prior to the activity. Start the game by gently placing the scarf on top of the infant's head and then removing it immediately. If the infant continues to appear uncomfortable, remove the scarf and offer the game with you covering your eyes with your hands, as demonstrated in Option 1. ■ Watch the infant's responses to the game closely. If the infant becomes startled by your enthusiasm, slow the actions of the game and speak in a calmer, more soothing voice.

Enrichment ■ If the infant shows interest in saying "peekaboo," encourage use of part of the word such as "peek" or "boo." ■ Invite several infants to join you in the game. Provide a scarf for each infant to explore the scarves. Invite infants to hide under their scarves. Demonstrate enthusiasm and excitement as they reveal themselves. Draw attention to each infant's actions.



Interest Area

Materials Needed: several sheer or thin scarves

Sheer scarves are a wonderful prop for infants to play *Peekaboo*. Most infants are familiar with and enjoy playing *Peekaboo*. Provide the scarves during floor time for the infants to explore. Provide a clear clue for playing *Peekaboo* with the scarves, such as placing one over your head or over a favorite toy. Invite an infant to grasp the scarf to remove it, or to watch you reveal a covered toy. Provide anticipation, enthusiasm, and then excitement when the scarf is removed. Infants may enjoy these games being repeated several times.

A simple brown icon of a house with a chimney.

Family Child Care

Materials Needed: several sheer or thin scarves

Peekaboo is a favorite game of many children. Options 1 and 2 can be easily adapted for toddlers and young preschool-age children. In small groups, invite one child at a time to use the scarf to play *Peekaboo*. While the child hides under the scarf, sing a short peekaboo song. (Tune: "Where Has My Little Dog Gone")

Where, oh where, has our Zoe gone?

Where, oh where, can she be?

Invite children to say "peekaboo" together when the child removes the scarf. Ensure each child has a turn to hide under the scarf. Infants who are comfortable being under the scarf can participate also.



Birth–12 Months

Option 1 One-to-One



Skill and Goal

Object inquiry skills

A young infant looks at and/or touches similar toys with different textures.



Key Concepts

Look
Touch
Hold
Feel
Different



Materials Needed

3 teddy bears of different textures



Also Promotes

Physical/Health



Optional Reading

Baby Touch and Feel Cuddly Animals by DK Publishing

BEGIN: [Sit close to an infant who is able to sit independently on the floor or hold the infant on your lap.]

EXPLAIN: We have teddy bears to touch or hold. Each bear feels different.

[Hold two of the bears at the infant's chest. Describe the bear(s) the infant looks at. Example: "This white bear feels soft and fluffy. The brown bear feels soft and bumpy."]



ASK: Would you like to hold (or touch) a bear?

[Pause for and comment on the infant's response. The infant may look, vocalize, and/or reach for a bear. Example: "You made a noise. I think you want to look at the bear."]

Help the infant just enough so he/she can touch or grasp one bear. Hold the toy bear within easy access for an infant who is not able or interested in holding the toy.]

ACT: [The infant may explore the bear with his/her hands or by mouthing the bear.

Describe the infant's action with the teddy bear and the texture of the bear. Example: "You are looking at the fluffy bear. Here is the fluffy bear for you to hold (or touch)."

Offer another bear for the infant to feel by holding it near the infant's chest. The infant may release the first bear or may need your help in trying to hold both bears. Or the infant may look at the second bear while holding the first bear. Describe the infant's actions and the texture characteristics of the second bear. Point to the characteristics you describe.

Offer an opportunity for the infant to feel the two bears positioned near each other. If the infant seems interested, point to and describe texture differences between the two bears. Example: "You are looking at the teddy bears. This is the fluffy bear. This is the bumpy bear. The bumps are soft."

Display a third bear and ask the infant if he/she would like to see another bear. Hold the third bear near the infant's chest if the infant

Option 1 continued

seems interested. Describe texture characteristics of the bear and the infant's actions with the third bear.


Continue to talk about the infant's actions and the bear characteristics. The infant will give signals when he/she is interested in moving to a different activity.]

RECAP: *[Briefly summarize the infant's actions with the toy bears. Example: "(Infant's name), you looked at the bumpy, brown bear. Then you looked at the fluffy, white bear. You held one bear at a time. You used your fingers and mouth to learn about the bear. You are learning how things can be different."]*

 **What to Look For—Option 1**

Some infants may wish to hold and manipulate three bears. Some infants may be more focused on looking. Other infants may be especially interested in one aspect of the bear, such as the eyes. The activity offers the infant an opportunity to explore objects that feel different without explicitly teaching the infant about textures. Although some infants may want to mouth the toy(s), generally infants have a keen interest in touching objects. Feeling objects with different textures fosters an infant's ability to begin organizing bits of information about things in his/her setting. Follow the infant's lead to determine the length of the activity.

Talk about what is of interest to the infant and gently draw his/her attention to the texture during a portion of the activity. A young infant will likely not understand any or most of the words you offer, but over time the key descriptions will be meaningful.

 **More Scaffolding Tips—Option 1**

Extra support ■ Find a comfortable pace of interaction with the infant by adjusting your words and actions in response to the infant's approach to the toys. ■ Repeat key words, such as soft, fluffy, and bumpy. ■ If a young infant cannot grasp the bear, touch his/her hand lightly with the toy. ■ You may wish to lightly touch an infant's hand with the bear if the infant does not touch the bear when it is offered.

Enrichment ■ Briefly animate the bears to create interest. Make the bears talk to the infant without losing focus on texture differences.



Birth–12 Months

Option 2 One-to-One



Skill and Goal

Object inquiry skills

An older infant touches and manipulates two different types of initially connected objects.



Key Concepts

Touch
Feel
Pull



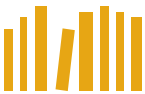
Materials Needed

1–2 balls with holes
3 silky scarves for each ball



Also Promotes

Physical/Health



Optional Reading

Baby Touch and Feel Cuddly Animals by DK Publishing

Put several silky scarves inside 1–2 balls. Leave edges exposed so an infant can grasp part of the scarf. Invite a mobile infant to explore scarves that are inside a ball. Encourage the infant to touch and feel the soft, silky textures. The infant may or may not need gentle encouragement for pulling scarves from the ball.

Sit close to the infant and describe his/her actions. Example: “You smiled when you pulled the scarf from the ball.” Gently draw attention to the soft scarf and the firm ball. Lightly touch the scarf to the infant’s skin. Invite the infant to play with a scarf by waving it.

There are several possibilities to consider if you prepare two balls with scarves. One is to keep the second ball in reserve so it can be offered if the infant appears interested in more exploration. Another possibility is for you to explore one ball with scarves while the infant explores the other ball with scarves, keeping in mind that your actions are likely to be of keen interest to the infant.

On another day, consider using other textured fabric in the ball, such as a terry washcloth, a four-inch square of corduroy, or a four-inch square of cotton fabric. Through repeated experiences with a variety of textures, an infant will begin to discriminate the feel of objects.

What to Look For—Option 2

A ball with scarves is a highly appealing object to most infants. An infant may use both his/her hands and mouth to explore a ball and scarves. Some infants initially may want to roll the ball. An interaction with you, focused on rolling a ball, can be beneficial. But if it appears the infant does not notice the scarves in the ball, pull a scarf a little further out of the ball.

Infants will be interested in the contrasting feel of the firm ball and silky, soft scarves. Watch the infant’s reaction to discovering there are several scarves inside the ball. The scarves may become a major focus of attention.

Remember that an important aspect of the activity is the presence and interest of a familiar adult. Talking to the infant about the textures and describing his/her actions lets the infant know the exploration has meaning and associated words, even though the infant does not understand specific words.

More Scaffolding Tips—Option 2

Extra support ■ Give the ball to the infant if it rolls away. ■ Pull a sizable edge of a scarf out of the ball so the infant has an adequate amount to explore, especially if the infant seems frustrated in pulling on a scarf.

BLOCK
8

Exploring Textures *(continued)*



Option 2 continued

Enrichment ■ The infant will be interested in actions you take related to the ball. Model exploration of the ball by using your finger to extract a scarf from the ball. The infant may imitate your actions and discover how to get out more scarf material.



Birth–12 Months

Option 3 Informal Gathering



Skill and Goal

Object inquiry skills

Older infants touch and manipulate two types of objects with highly different textures.



Key Concepts

Feel
Hard
Soft



Materials Needed

Tub or sensory table
12 silky scarves
10 plastic rings (see Be Prepared)



Also Promotes

Physical/Health
Communication/Language



Optional Reading

Baby Touch and Feel Cuddly Animals by DK Publishing

Be Prepared: Plastic ring possibilities include rings from a stacking ring toy. If rings are not available, use other smooth toys, such as small balls, and adjust the activity described below.

Place the plastic rings covered with silky scarves on the sensory table. Invite infants who can stand to join you at the sensory table to explore how things feel. Kneel next to the sensory table so you are at eye level with the infants. Announce their actions and discoveries. Put one scarf through the hole in a ring. Infants will enjoy pulling the scarf out of the ring. Hold the ring so an infant can pull the scarf through the hole, if necessary. Talk with infants about contrasting textures, especially the contrast of silky scarf and smooth plastic ring. Emphasize and repeat soft and hard as infants touch and manipulate scarves and rings.

Throughout the week notice and point out to infants some different textures in your room. Example: Describe the feeling of play materials, surfaces, and clothing. The infants may not understand what you say, but they will begin to learn there are words for what they touch and manipulate in their environment.

What to Look For—Option 3

The combination of high-contrast materials is an appealing aspect of this activity for infants. The infants may approach the objects in different ways. Some infants may enjoy a simple game of finding rings you have covered with scarves. Others may focus on pulling a scarf through a ring. Some may want to mouth a ring while exploring objects on the table.

Watch for opportunities to provide words for actions. Example: “The ring fell down.” Talk in short, clear phrases. Also, watch for an infant’s attempt to imitate a word you say. Repeat the word. Acknowledge the infant’s utterance. Example: “You said ‘ring.’” Infants will be attuned to words you say to describe the scarves and rings.

More Scaffolding Tips—Option 3

Extra support ■ Draw attention to the ring hole by placing a ring on your finger. ■ Demonstrate how to pull a scarf through a ring.

Enrichment ■ If putting a scarf into a ring is of interest to an infant, suggest the infant put a scarf through the holes of two rings. The distance between the rings might be of interest to some infants. The infant may pull on each of the two rings to remove the scarf.

 Interest Area

Materials needed: texture board books (such as *Baby Touch and Feel Cuddly Animals* by DK Publishing), texture balls, soft dolls or animals, textured play mat

Display the book in your room along with other books with texture pages. Share the books with 1–2 infants at a time. Place several texture balls in a basket where mobile infants will discover them. On another day, place soft dolls or animals on a textured play mat on the floor to create an interesting area to explore.

 Family Child Care

Materials needed: textured balls; mesh laundry bag; box or bag; textured toys; paper; drawing tools; textured objects, such as leaves, yarn, or card stock shapes

Engage older children in your setting in exploring different textures while you offer Option 2 or 3 to infants. Toddlers will enjoy removing textured balls from a small mesh laundry bag. Preschool-age children may reach into a box or bag to find soft, hard, or bumpy textured toys. Preschool-age and older children may enjoy coloring on paper that has flat, textured objects underneath, such as leaves, short pieces of yarn, or shapes cut from card stock.



Birth–12 Months

Option 1 One-to-One



Skill and Goal Self-control

A young infant practices calming down after a mildly stimulating activity while being held in a caregiver's arms.



Key Concepts Calm



Materials Needed None



Also Promotes Communication/Language Physical/Health

Be Prepared: Be familiar with the words and actions of the *Little Mousie* game (see adjacent description).

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

ASK: Are you ready for a fun game?

[*Pause for and acknowledge infant's response.*]

Example: "I see you are looking at me now. I think you want to play."]

ACT: [*Smile and make eye contact with the infant. Walk your fingers gently from the infant's foot toward his/her midsection while reciting the "Little Mousie" rhyme. Offer a light touch at the point you say "Right here!" Avoid tickling.*]

Watch the infant's reactions to the game closely. If the infant turns away or appears at all distressed, stop the activity. The infant may signal for you to repeat the game. Describe the infant's reaction to mousie. Examples: "What a big smile you have! You like the Mousie game!" "You are making a sad face. Let's stop our mousie game and find a way to feel calm and happy." Describe your response to the infant's expression. Examples: "You liked having mousie visit. We can do our mousie game one more time!" "You did not want to play the Mousie game, so I stopped. We can calm down now."

Conclude the activity by announcing that the game is over. Pretend to put the mouse in your pocket. Example: "Our game is all done. Bye-bye mouse. We can calm down now."

Hold the infant and provide comfort, such as patting on the back, quietly singing a familiar song, or offering soft-voice reminders that it is time to rest.]

RECAP: [*Smile and make eye contact as you review the activity. Examples: "We had fun with the Little Mousie game, Lucia! You laughed and told me with your big smile that you liked the game. We stopped, and I held you while you got calm again."*]

Little Mousie Game

Here comes a little mousie

[*Start a finger walking up the leg from the foot*]

Looking for a housie.

[*Walk finger up the leg to the body*]

He runs and runs

[*Continue up to the neck*]

**And finds one
Right here!**

[*Gently wiggle your fingers near the infant's neck for one second*]





Birth–12 Months

Option 2 One-to-One



Skill and Goal

Self-control

An infant practices calming down after a mildly stimulating activity while sitting on a caregiver's lap.



Key Concepts

Calm



Materials Needed

None



Also Promotes

Communication/Language

Physical/Health

Be Prepared: Be familiar with the words and actions of the *Little Mousie* game (see description in Option 1).

Invite an infant to sit on your lap to play the *Little Mousie* game. Turn the infant slightly so that he/she is secure in your arms while also able to make some eye contact with you. Ensure the infant feels secure and comfortable prior to beginning the game. Example: "We are going to play the *Little Mousie* game. My fingers are going to walk up your leg! Are you ready to play?" Acknowledge that the infant is ready. Example: "I see you are kicking your legs and smiling. I think you are ready to play!" Begin reciting the rhyme while gently walking your fingers up the infant's leg. Show enthusiasm when the "mousie" stops "Right here!" Be sure to use a light touch and avoid tickling or startling the infant.

Watch closely for the infant's reactions to the activity. If the infant shows signs of enjoyment, you may repeat the rhyme one or more times. If the infant shows signs of disinterest or distress at any time, stop the rhyme. Talk with the infant about his/her response to the activity. Examples: "You had fun playing the *Little Mousie* game today, Isaac! You laughed when the mousie walked up your leg." "You did not like the mousie touching your leg, Julieta. You did not want to play the *Little Mousie* game. We stopped, and now we are getting calm again."

After the rhyme, quietly announce that our game is over and it is time to rest and be calm. Provide gentle reminders if necessary. Bring the infant gently toward you, holding him/her with his/her back against you and your arms around the infant. Quietly hum or sing a familiar song. Provide quiet time for the infant to calm him/herself. Describe the activity. Example: "We had fun playing the *Little Mousie* game today! We rested when our game was over. Now you are sitting with me, and we are calm."



Birth–12 Months

Be Prepared: Be familiar with the words and actions of the *Little Mousie* game (see description in Option 1).

Option 3 One-to-One



Skill and Goal

Self-control

An older infant practices calming down after a mildly stimulating activity while sitting independently, facing a caregiver.



Key Concepts

Calm



Materials Needed

None



Also Promotes

Communication/Language
Physical/Health

Invite an infant to join you on the floor to play the *Little Mousie* game. Sit facing the infant with a smile and ensure the infant is ready to play. Example: “We are going to play the *Little Mousie* game. My fingers are going to be a pretend mousie that walks up your leg! Are you ready?” Begin reciting the rhyme and gently walk your fingers from the infant’s foot to his/her midsection. Show enthusiasm when the mousie stops, using a light touch. If the infant is enjoying the activity, you may repeat the rhyme several times. If the infant shows signs of disinterest or distress at any time, end the rhyme. Describe the infant’s response to the rhyme and motions. Example: “You had fun playing the *Little Mousie* game today, Sebastian! You smiled and laughed when the mousie walked up your leg.”

After the rhyme, ask the infant to sit and rest with you. The infant may want to sit near you or on your lap. Provide quiet time for the infant to calm him/herself. If needed, support the infant by patting his/her back, quietly humming or singing a favorite song, and/or offering gentle reminders that it is time to rest. Describe the infant’s actions. Example: “You had fun playing the *Little Mousie* game. Now you are sitting with me and resting. We are feeling calm.”

👁️ What to Look For—Options 1–3

This activity is a version of the Block 2 “Rig-a-Jig-Jig” activity designed to help infants learn to calm down. The three options in the current *Little Mousie* game correspond with the infant’s level of mobility. Option 3 emphasizes some infant independence in calming down, but it is certainly appropriate to offer the strategies used in Option 2 (and also Option 1) if an infant has difficulty calming down through your verbal support only. In general, some infants may move toward a calm state independently when you indicate the game is over. Others may need additional support to become calm. The plan is designed for an infant who is alert and comfortable. The game is not meant to distract an infant from emotional distress or discomfort.

Most infants will enjoy the anticipation of the gentle touch accompanying the “Right here!” words at the end of the rhyme. Infants may express their delight with smiles and laughter. Some infants may signal they would like you to repeat the rhyme by smiling and making eye contact, kicking their legs, or vocalizing their interest by cooing or laughing aloud. It is important to also watch closely for indications of disinterest or distress during the activity. Some infants may not enjoy the feeling of your fingers walking, or the anticipation



of the gentle touch at the end of the rhyme. As described in the option plans, promptly stop the activity and provide comfort if the infant shows any signs of distress.

Your most important role in the activity is to help the infant calm himself/herself. Carefully watch the infant's responses to a strategy (or strategies) you use. Especially in Options 2 and 3, give the infant a few moments of quiet time to respond to a strategy before offering additional help.

More Scaffolding Tips—Options 1–3

Extra support ■ Infants who are new to a game of this type may be more comfortable with a slow introduction to “mousie.” Begin moving your fingers in the air slightly above the infant’s body and then lightly touch the infant at the end. Moving your fingers in the air without touching the infant offers less stimulation and an opportunity for the infant to see what the mousie is doing.

Enrichment ■ If the infant is familiar with the game, heighten the infant’s anticipation of the “right here!”
■ Repeat the rhyme, varying the speed by starting slowly, speeding up, and then returning to a slow pace.

Interest Area

Materials Needed: none

During floor play, engage infants in similar rhymes that involve a moment of anticipation. “This Little Piggy” is a good example. Remember to use a light touch at the end, not a tickle. Infants may enjoy watching the anticipation of a peer engaged in the rhyme. Ensure each interested infant gets a turn to participate. Be sure to encourage infants to calm down after the exciting activity, using one or more of the strategies in this plan as needed.

Family Child Care

Materials Needed: none

Play a related *Little Mousie* game with older toddlers and preschool-age children in your care. This may be an appropriate activity for outdoor play. Invite older toddlers and preschool-age children to be little mice looking for a home. You may wish to substitute the word “run” with the word “creep.” Encourage children to slowly creep around, pretending to look for a home. When the rhyme reaches the end, the children can jump to the ground in their “home” when you say “Right here!” Infants will enjoy participating by being held during the activity. Before moving to the next activity, support children in resting by sitting quietly and, if necessary, using one or more of the strategies suggested in the activity options.



Birth–12 Months

Option 1 One-to-One



Skill and Goal

Social interaction skills

A young infant and caregiver play together with a musical toy, with opportunity to engage in back-and-forth interactions.



Key Concepts

Look
Listen
Play



Materials Needed

Set of maracas



Also Promotes

Communication/Language
Physical/Health

BEGIN: [Place the infant on his/her back in a comfortable reclining position.]

Smile and greet the infant using his/her name.

Acknowledge the infant's reactions, including vocalizations, facial expressions, and/or gestures. Examples: "You are smiling and looking at me, Simon! I smiled at you, and you are smiling at me!"

ACT: [Introduce the two maracas by holding both toys about 12 inches from the infant.]

I have two toys for us to play with! Listen, these toys make noise!

[Gently shake the maracas and then hold them out within reach of the infant.]



ASK: Would you like to play with the toys?

[Gently shake one or both of the maracas and describe their sound. Example: "Listen, do you hear the sound of the toys when I shake them? It is fun to listen to the sounds of our toys."]

If the infant does not reach for a toy, gently shake one maraca and offer it again. If the infant seems mostly interested in watching you play with the maracas, shake one or both toys gently as you describe the sounds. Especially describe the infant's reactions to the sounds and your actions. Imitate and describe a facial expression the infant offers in response to your movement of a maraca. It is not necessary for the infant to hold or manipulate a maraca for meaningful interaction between you and the infant.

If the infant holds or manipulates a maraca, use the following strategies to encourage a back-and-forth exchange with the infant:

- Describe the infant's reactions and actions with the toys. Examples: "You are smiling and reaching for the toy!" "You are holding the toy and waving it back and forth. You are listening to the sound it makes!"
- Imitate the infant's actions as well as any facial expressions or vocalizations. Example: "You are waving the toy back and forth. I am waving my toy back and forth too! Listen to the sounds of our toys!"

**Option 1 continued**

- *Acknowledge any attempt the infant makes to imitate your actions. Example: "You are tapping your toy on your tummy. I am tapping my toy on my leg. Tap, tap, tap."*
- *Offer brief pauses in your communication for the infant to respond.*

Maintain your focus on the same toy or action that interests the infant. If the infant shifts his/her attention to other objects or people in the room, shift your attention to the same object or person. Describe what you think the infant sees. Wrap up the activity when the infant begins to show signs of disinterest.]

RECAP: *[Offer a brief description of what happened during the activity. Example: "Thank you for sharing time with me, Adrianna. We played with toys that make noise! You waved your toy back and forth. I waved my toy back and forth! We listened to the sounds. We had fun together!"]*

Birth–12 Months

Option 2 One-to-One



Skill and Goal

Social interaction skills

An older infant participates in back-and-forth interactions with a caregiver focused on playing a musical toy.



Key Concepts

Look
Listen
Play



Materials Needed

Toy piano or xylophone with mallets



Also Promotes

Communication/Language
Physical/Health

Invite an infant to sit with you on the floor to play with a toy piano or xylophone. Place the toy instrument on the floor between you. Describe the toy. Example: “Look, I have a toy piano for us to play with today! The piano makes different sounds.” Demonstrate how to make a sound on the instrument. Describe your actions. Make an exaggerated happy face and describe what happened when you hit a key. Example: “Did you hear the sound? I pushed this key, and the piano made a sound. Listen, I’m going to push it again!” Then invite the infant to make a sound on the instrument.

If the infant makes a sound on the instrument, use an exaggerated happy face and tone to affirm his/her actions. Example: “You did it! You pushed the key and made a sound! What are you going to do next?”

Encourage back-and-forth interactions with the infant using the following strategies:

- Imitate the infant’s actions. Example: “You pushed the yellow key and made a sound! Now, I am going to push the yellow key. I made a sound too!”
- Invite the infant to imitate your actions with the toy. Example: “I pushed the blue key and made a sound! Now it’s your turn! Which key are you going to push?”
- Recognize and respond to ways the infant participates in the activity. Example: “You clapped your hands when you made a sound on our piano! You are making music with our toy piano!”

As you interact with the infant, remember to pause and allow time for the infant to respond to your words and to the activity itself. Continue to encourage imitation behaviors by imitating the infant’s actions and encouraging him/her to imitate yours.

👁️ What to Look For—Options 1–2

The toy is a means to your interaction with the infant. An infant’s familiarity with a toy will likely influence his/her participation with the item. Some infants may wish to explore the toy in some detail. There is a lot for the infant to consider, including the range of different keys and how pushing a key (or





using a mallet to hit a key on a xylophone) makes a sound. Describe the infant’s explorations without directing the actions. Remember that, at this age, infants are not expected to be taught or to learn colors, but you may wish to refer to colors of keys in your descriptions of an instrument.

After a period of exploration, watch for the infant to look at you, point to the toy, reach for your hand, or vocalize interest in playing with you regarding the toy. Some infants may prefer to watch and listen as you manipulate the toy, as noted in the Option 1 description.

More Scaffolding Tips—Options 1–2

Extra support ■ Adjust your talk to the infant’s level of excitement during the activity. Examples: If an infant seems excited about the activity, you might say “Oh, wow, Clara! You are using the mallet to tap the keys! I can hear the sounds you are making!” If an infant offers a quieter reaction to the activity, consider providing a calm and informative response such as, “You are pushing on each key on our piano. You are listening to the different sounds. Blue key, yellow key. You are pushing the keys.” ■ In your demonstration of an instrument in the opening segment of Option 2, invite the infant to point to a key for you to tap.

Enrichment ■ In Option 1, use a maraca to gently tap the infant while naming body parts. Example: “I tap your nose. I tap your toes. Where should I tap next?” ■ If an infant shows interest in how a maraca makes sound, point to and describe how the little balls make a noise.

Interest Area

Materials Needed: assortment of musical toys (with duplicates), such as maracas, rattles, caged bells, and shakers

Place musical toys near several infants. Sit close and encourage the infants’ awareness of one another, including their use of instruments. Describe the actions of the infants as they interact with the toys. Recognize facial expressions and repeat and extend vocalizations as infants play.

Family Child Care

Materials Needed: assortment of musical toys

Option 2 can be adapted for older children in your setting. Encourage two older toddlers or preschool-age children to take turns making sounds with one or two instruments. Promote interactions among the children. If two instruments are available, invite the children to play their instruments at the same time and then play alone while the other listens.



Birth–12 Months

Be Prepared: Select different toys that appeal to the infant and are easy for the infant to grasp.

Option 1 One-to-One



Skill and Goal

Fine motor development

A young infant watches a caregiver manipulate toys, with opportunities for the infant to grasp and hold a toy.



Key Concepts

Reach
Grasp
Hold



Materials Needed

2 small toys (see Be Prepared)



Also Promotes

Communication/Language
Cognitive
Self-Regulation

Warmly greet the infant and lay him/her on his/her back on a firm mat or carpet. Sit on the floor with the infant's feet toward you. Hold one of the toys about 13 inches in front of the infant so he/she can see easily. Talk with the infant as you move the toy slightly. Example: "Angel, you see our toy. I am moving our toy side to side."

Move the toy to one side and back to center. Next move the toy to the opposite side and back to the center. Observe and describe the infant's eye movements and his/her reaction to seeing the toy. Example: "I think you are excited about seeing our little toy. You watched the toy as it moved from side to side!"

Offer the infant an opportunity to hold the toy. Place it in the infant's hand if interested. Some infants may hold the toy briefly.

Present the next toy by holding it a few inches from the infant. Observe the infant's reaction. Some infants may see the toy and reach for it. Allow the infant to grasp the toy. Some infants may be more interested in their own hands and not actually touch the toys.

👁️ What to Look For—Option 1

If the infant does not appear to pay attention to the toy, observe to learn where his/her focus is directed. Talk with the infant about what he/she is doing at that moment. If the infant is looking at another object, make another attempt to engage the infant by saying his/her name cheerfully. Infants enjoy seeing a familiar caregiver smiling and saying hello.

If the infant is uncomfortable, take action to relieve the discomfort. A young infant may need to be held upright. Try patting the infant's back. If you notice the infant pulling his/her knees to the chest, it may indicate pressure in the tummy. Hold the infant and rub his/her back. Often patting the back and/or holding the infant upright with light pressure on the tummy gives relief. Allow time for the infant to bring his/her attention back to the activity. Reintroduce a toy. Watch the infant's reactions and respond as if you are having a conversation.

**Option 1 continued**A small icon consisting of three black squares of increasing size, stacked vertically. **More Scaffolding Tips—Option 1**

Extra support ■ If the infant drops a toy, pick it up, show the toy to the infant, and place it in the infant's hand. ■ If the infant is more interested in her/his hands, describe how the infant is using her/his hands.

Enrichment ■ Continue moving the toy as the infant follows it with his/her eye movements. Increase the range of motion that the toys is moved. Move the toy forward slightly and backward slightly along with moving it from side to side.



Birth–12 Months

Option 2 One-to-One



Skill and Goal

Fine motor development

An older infant practices releasing an infant snap-lock bead.



Key Concepts

Reach
Hold
Let go



Materials Needed

1-quart plastic tub
4 infant snap-lock beads
(see Be Prepared)



Also Promotes

Communication/Language
Cognitive

Be Prepared: Snap-lock beads are available commercially for infants six months and older.

BEGIN: [Sit on the floor facing the infant. Invite the infant to play with you and some pretty beads. Place the snap-lock beads on the floor where the infant can easily reach them. Describe the colorful beads. Hold one snap-lock bead close to the center of the infant's chest. Encourage the infant to reach for and grasp the bead.]



EXPLAIN: [Describe the infant's actions. Example: "You are holding a big bead! You looked at the bead and got it with your hand."]

Hold one bead in your hand for the infant to see.]

You have a bead. This is my bead.

ACT: [Hold your bead between your thumb and finger(s). Let the bead drop to the floor when you describe your "let go" action. Emphasize the words let go.]

I am holding my bead with my fingers. Now I am going to let go of my bead.

Look at what happened to my bead when I let it go. I let go of my bead. My bead dropped to the floor.

[Move the tub close to the infant. When the infant is watching your actions, point to the tub.]

This is our tub. Our beads can go into the tub.

[Hold one bead between your thumb and fingers so the infant can see it. Explain that you are going to let go of your bead. The bead will drop into the tub. Use the infant's name. Emphasize "let go." Example: "Daniel, I am holding a red bead. I am going to let go of my bead. The bead will drop into our tub. Watch what happens." Release your bead. Wait for the infant's verbal or nonverbal response. If appropriate, acknowledge the infant's attention to your action. Example: "You watched me let go of the bead. The bead dropped into our bucket."]

**Option 2 continued**

ASK: Would you like to let go of your bead?

ACT: *[Encourage the infant to let go of his/her bead. Describe the infant's actions. Offer the infant another bead and encourage him/her to let go of the bead so the bead can drop into the tub. Comment on the infant's actions. Example: "You let go of some more beads!" Respond to all vocalizations and nonverbal reactions.]*

Hold several more beads, one at a time, and release each so it drops into the tub. Your actions will provide a model for the infant or serve as a parallel activity. When all beads have been dropped into the tub, pour them onto the floor so the infant can repeat the activity, if interested. Describe your pouring actions.

Ask whether the infant wishes to hold and release more beads. Example: Pick up one of the beads on the floor. Show it to the infant and then release it into the tub. "I let go of a bead. Do you want to drop more beads into our tub?" The infant may show signs of wanting to continue the activity or may be ready for another activity.

End the activity by describing the process of putting away the beads. Encourage the infant to help you put away the beads. Example: "We are all done. Let's put all the beads in the tub. Here is a red bead. I put it in the tub. Now put a blue bead in the tub. Lots of beads go into our tub."]

RECAP: You can hold on and let go! We played a game with beads and a tub. You held a bead and then let go of a bead. We dropped our beads into our tub. We know how to hold and then let go of things.

👁️ What to Look For—Option 2

Look carefully at how the infant manages each of the fine motor skills involved in this activity: reach, hold (grasp), let go. Some infants may pick up beads from the floor, and other infants will wait for you to offer a bead. Offer encouragement and just enough help for the infant to reach the beads and grasp them on his/her own. Let the infant lead the activity. If an infant prefers to hold, shake, and/or mouth the beads, adjust the activity to match the infant's interest and ability. Some infants may want to look into the tub to see the bead. Ask the infant "Where did it go?" Or look into the tub with the infant. "There is your blue bead. You let go of your blue bead. Your bead dropped into the tub!"

At this age, it is not important for infants to prefer one hand or the other. The infant may be interested in the activity for a few minutes or longer. Infants are not expected to understand or contribute to "cleanup" although some will enjoy putting the beads into the tub at the end of the activity.

The activity involves elements that will be appealing to most infants. Infants will enjoy the sound of the beads landing in the tub. Infants also may enjoy looking at the different colors of the beads while you describe them and then let go of each.

**Option 2 continued****More Scaffolding Tips—Option 2**

Extra support ■ Be sure the tub is in close proximity to the infant. ■ Say “let go” when the infant lets go of the bead. ■ If the infant holds onto a snap-lock bead rather than letting it go, continue talking about the beads. Hold a bead for the infant to see. While the infant is watching, let go of the bead so it drops into the tub. Encourage the infant to reach toward the mid-point of his/her chest. ■ Give the infant a bead for each hand.

Enrichment ■ An infant who readily grasps and lets go of a bead may enjoy having one bead in each hand. ■ If the sound of a bead landing in the tub appeals to an infant, connect two beads to provide more weight and offer it to the infant to let go into the tub. ■ An infant may enjoy the challenge of dropping other items into the container.

Birth–12 Months

Option 3 Informal Gathering



Skill and Goal

Fine motor development

Older infants together practice picking up and releasing infant snap-lock beads, including dropping beads into a small container.



Key Concepts

Pick up
Let go



Materials Needed

16 infant snap-lock beads
(see Be Prepared)
1 small pail with handle—1
per infant



Also Promotes

Communication/Language
Cognitive

Be Prepared: Snap-lock beads are available commercially for infants six months and older.

Sit on the floor next to mobile infants. Show and describe the pails and snap-lock beads. Demonstrate how to pick up and then let go of a bead (one at a time) so it drops into a pail. Invite each infant to join you in picking up and then releasing a bead into his/her own pail.



Describe infants' actions. Emphasize let go when an infant releases a bead. You may wish to place snap-lock beads in a central spot so all infants can reach them or hold a snap-lock bead for each infant to grasp. Draw attention to the sound of beads landing in the buckets. Connect several beads to create a slightly louder landing sound. Use your pail of beads to demonstrate pouring beads onto the floor. Invite the infants to do the same. An infant who is crawling may enjoy manipulating the small pail or pulling it along as he/she crawls. Walking infants will enjoy carrying the pail.

👁️ What to Look For—Option 3

You may observe that infants who sit well balanced are increasingly focused on fine motor skills, like filling a pail or putting their index finger into the bead hole. Playing with toys changes once an infant has the strength and balance to sit independently. Gains in fine motor and gross motor skills make it possible for infants to broaden their explorations. The infant has more skills for getting toys, including the items involved in the current activity option.

Playing with pails and beads offers valuable sensory experiences for infants. You can enrich the play by paying attention to each infant and making comments to support learning. Examples: "Your beads are in the pail." "You took all the beads out." An infant may respond to a comment with a look, an action, or a vocalization. Some infants may enjoy taking turns putting beads into the pail with you.

📊 More Scaffolding Tips—Option 3

Extra support ■ Demonstrate how to open and shut your hand. Say "open and shut" as you open and shut your hand. Hold a bead and say "shut," showing how your hand is closed around the bead. Say "open" and open your hand. Say "I let go of the bead. I opened my hand and let go." ■ Place a bead in infant's hand. Ask "Do you want to let it go?"

Option 3 continued

Enrichment ■ Describe the noise that the bead made when it landed in the bucket. Drop beads that are connected to each other and describe the noise as being louder.

**Interest Area**

Materials Needed: pail with small toys, infant snap-lock beads, star builders, sensory tub with water

Provide different objects for infants to view from the floor. Also, create an attractive arrangement a non-mobile infant can see when he/she is held by a caregiver. Non-mobile infants may enjoy holding a toy after a bottle feeding. Take a few moments to reintroduce the toy and observe the infant's reaction.

Infants who are crawling will enjoy finding a pail of small toys to empty. Place several beads on a low surface where standing infants can reach them. Encourage the infant to drop the beads into a container. On another day, provide different toys (such as linking star shapes) to let go into a container.

Place two inches of water in the sensory tub and encourage infants who stand to drop snap-lock beads into the water. Draw attention to the sound and feel of the splashing water.

**Family Child Care**

Materials Needed: plastic jars or bottles, small toys, muffin pan set of small items, set of tongs

Older children in your setting can experience expanded versions of the plan's three options. Provide an activity for toddlers to hold and then let go of small toys into plastic jars or bottles. Give each preschool-age child a muffin pan and a set of small items. Explain that the same number of items should go in each opening (hole) in the muffin pan. Provide one item per opening or increase the challenge by providing two items per opening. You also may wish to offer a set of tongs that an older child may use for picking up and releasing (letting go of) one or more items per opening.