



**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 about saying goodnight.
- Option 2** (OO) An infant participates in a book sharing that includes opportunities to help turn the book’s pages and communicate about saying goodnight.
- Option 3** (OO) An older infant participates in a book sharing that includes opportunities to hold and turn the pages of a book, and communicate about saying goodnight.



**Cognitive**

**Exploring Objects**

- Option 1** (OO) An infant engages in cause-and-effect play with a water mat.
- Option 2** (OO) An older infant engages in cause-and-effect play with a ball and toy dump truck.



**Self-Regulation**

**Focusing and Remembering**

- Option 1** (OO) A young infant participates in guided play that supports persistence in exploring a novel fish toy.
- Option 2** (OO) An older infant participates in guided play that supports persistence in moving toward, grasping, and exploring a novel fish toy.



**Social-Emotional**

**Interacting with Others**

- Option 1** (OO) A young infant participates in responsive interactions with a caregiver using fabric stacking rings.
- Option 2** (OO) An infant participates in a back-and-forth interaction with a caregiver while playing with stacking rings.



**Physical/Health**

**Using Our Hands**

- Option 1** (OO) A young infant participates in hand and arm movements at and across the midline guided by a caregiver.
- Option 2** (OO) An older infant participates in guided play that encourages bringing both hands, or crossing both hands, at the midline.
- Option 3** (IG) Older infants participate in a game of reaching across the midline to catch floating toys in a water tub.

(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 about saying goodnight.



#### Key Concepts

Book  
Look  
Goodnight



#### Materials Needed

*Goodnight Moon* by  
Margaret Wise Brown



#### Also Promotes

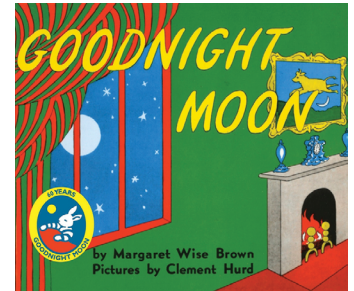
Cognitive

**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.]

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

**ACT:** I have a book for us to read together! Look, do you see the moon in the sky?

[Pause and watch for infant's response. Respond to infant's interest in the book sharing. Example: "You are looking at the moon on our book, Jordan. I can hear you cooing!"]



Our book is about going to bed and saying goodnight! A bunny in our book says goodnight to a lot of things.

[Open the book to the first page. Point to and describe the bunny. Example: "This is the bunny. The bunny is going night night. The bunny is in his bed."]

Use the following strategies to engage the infant with the book:

- Look at and talk about pictures that you think will be of most interest to the infant. The book is longer than most infants may want to read. Describe what the infant seems to be looking at. Example: "You are looking at the red balloon. The balloon is floating on a string. I think you like balloons."
- Acknowledge gestures and/or vocalizations. Example: "You are waving your arms at the picture of the little house. Goodnight, little house!"
- Use your voice to add interest, such as a slightly higher pitch and a slower tempo, as you talk about the pictures. Emphasize goodnight.

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

**RECAP:** Describe some highlights of the book sharing. Example: "We read a book about going to bed and saying goodnight! A bunny said goodnight to a lot of things! We liked the pictures of the bunny's room, the red balloon, and the little house. We said goodnight to lots of things in our book!"]

## Birth–12 Months

### Option 2 One-to-One



#### Skill and Goal

**Receptive language**  
**Expressive language**

An infant participates in a book sharing that includes opportunities to help turn the book's pages and communicate about saying goodnight.



#### Key Concepts

Book  
Look  
Goodnight



#### Materials Needed

*Goodnight Moon* by  
Margaret Wise Brown

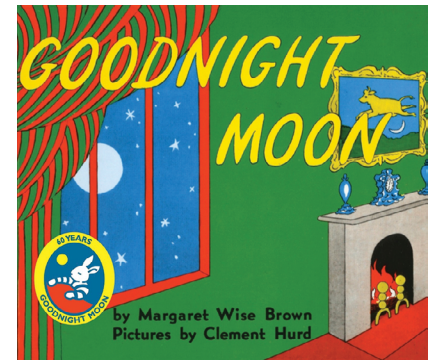


#### Also Promotes

Cognitive  
Physical/Health

Invite an infant to sit on your lap to read a book. Introduce the book by pointing to and describing the picture of the moon. Explain that we can see a moon at nighttime. Our book is about a bunny saying goodnight to many different things. Use the following strategies to share the book with the infant:

- Invite the infant to help you turn the pages. Be flexible about the pace of page turning. The book is longer than some infants may wish to pursue. It is fine to skip pictures.
- Describe what infant seems to be looking at. Point to items that you describe. Example: "This is a picture of the bunny's room. There are green walls and a red floor. Here are curtains! Can you see the moon peeking out?"
- Spend more time talking about pictures that appear to be of particular interest to the infant. Example: "You are looking at the kittens. Oh my, what are the kittens doing? They are playing with the big bunny's yarn. The kittens are having fun."
- Acknowledge gestures and/or vocalizations. Example: "You are touching the picture of the cow. You are smiling! This is a silly picture. The cow is jumping over the moon!"
- Help infant connect book information to his/her own experiences. Example: "Here is the bunny's bed. Do you sleep in a bed like the bunny?"
- Use your voice to add interest to the book reading. Emphasize the word goodnight.
- Recognize the infant's participation in the book sharing. Example: "We had fun reading this book together, Trinity. You helped turn the pages. You looked at the pictures of the bunny's room. You touched the picture of the cow. You smiled when I said goodnight to all the things in the bunny's room."



## Birth–12 Months

### Option 3 One-to-One



#### Skill and Goal

**Receptive language**  
**Expressive language**

An older infant participates in a book sharing that includes opportunities to hold and turn the pages of a book, and communicate about saying goodnight.



#### Key Concepts

Book  
Look  
Goodnight



#### Materials Needed

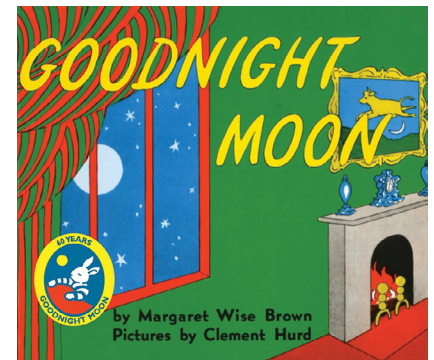
*Goodnight Moon* by  
Margaret Wise Brown



#### Also Promotes

Cognitive  
Physical/Health

Invite an infant to read a book with you. The infant may wish to sit next to you or stand close while you read. Invite the infant to hold the book and turn the pages. You may wish to keep all the pages in your right hand except for the page to be turned. This will help the infant to turn one page at a time. A standing infant may want to use one hand to help turn the pages. Follow the infant's preference for how quickly or slowly to turn the pages. The book has more pictures than the infant may wish to look at. It is fine to skip pages.



Once the infant is comfortable and ready to read, point to and describe the picture on the book cover. Example: “Look, do you see the moon in the window? The sky is dark and the moon is out. Our book is about going to bed and saying goodnight! A bunny says goodnight to many things in our book.” Use the following strategies to share the book:

- Point to and label objects in the pictures. Example: “This is a comb. This is a brush. This is called a bowl full of mush. Mush is like cereal. Do you see the spoon?”
- Invite the infant to point to items that you name. Example: “The kittens are playing! Where are the kittens in this picture?”
- Spend more time on pictures that appear to be of particular interest to the infant.
- Example: “The bunny is in his bed. The bunny has a green blanket. It is nighttime. The bunny is going to go night night in his bed. Goodnight, bunny!”
- Acknowledge gestures and/or vocalizations. Example: “You said ‘night night!’ Yes, it is time to go night night. Goodnight kittens! Goodnight mittens!”
- Help the infant connect book information to his/her experiences. Example: “This is a picture of the room where bunny sleeps. We see a bed and books and toys. Do you have books and toys where you live?”
- Emphasize the word goodnight and encourage the infant to say the word, or part of the word, with you throughout the book. Example: “Please help me say goodnight to the moon! Goodnight!” Speak slowly.
- Recognize the infant's participation in the book sharing. Example: “You helped me hold our book, Matthew. You pointed to the red balloon. You said ‘night night’ when you looked at the bunny in his bed. You said goodnight to the moon! We had fun reading this book together.”



### What to Look For—Options 1–3

The goodnight theme will be familiar and the high-contrast pictures will be appealing to most infants. Although it is not necessary or appropriate to teach colors to infants, it is fine to use color names in describing some of the bold images in the book. Spend more time on pictures that seem to be of special interest to the infant, as suggested in the activity plan. It is not necessary to look at and talk about each picture in this book. Older infants will likely enjoy saying goodnight (or part of the word) with you. Infants also may enjoy making some of the sounds associated with several of the items, such as a meow of a kitten.

### More Scaffolding Tips—Options 1–3

**Extra support** ■ Provide a soft toy or other object for a young infant to hold during the book sharing.

**Enrichment** ■ As a follow-up to the book sharing, invite the infant to say goodnight to some items or people in the room. The infant may wish to wave his/her hand while saying goodnight.



#### Interest Area

**Materials Needed:** several books with a goodnight theme, such as *Goodnight Moon*

Provide the goodnight-themed books to explore during floor time. Look at the pictures with infants and invite them to help you say goodnight (or night night) to items shown in the pictures. Older infants may enjoy pretending to go “night night.” Place a small blanket over an interested infant’s legs and say goodnight. Example: “Tomas is going to sleep. Night night, Tomas!”



#### Family Child Care

**Materials Needed:** *Goodnight Moon* by Margaret Wise Brown

*Goodnight Moon* is a favorite of children of all ages. Provide props or toys for infants and toddlers to hold during the activity. After the book sharing, invite older toddlers and preschool-age children to engage in play related to a goodnight theme. Describe what children do. Example: “Sasha is rocking her baby. I think Sasha’s baby is going to sleep. Let’s all say ‘goodnight baby.’”



## Birth–12 Months

### Option 1 One-to-One



#### Skill and Goal

##### Object inquiry skills

An infant engages in cause-and-effect play with a water mat.



#### Key Concepts

Look  
Push  
Pat  
Move



#### Materials Needed

Fill n' Fun Water Mat



#### Also Promotes

Physical/Health  
Communication/Language

**Be Prepared:** Fill the mat with warm water. Place the mat where tummy time typically occurs.

**BEGIN:** *[This activity is for an infant who can lift his/her torso while on his/her tummy. Move the infant to his/her tummy to reach the mat.]*

**ACT:** *[Point to and describe the colored fish inside the mat. Show the infant what happens when the mat is pushed. Example: "Isabella, look at the fish in the water. Here is a fish. There is another fish by your hand. Let's push on the water mat and see what happens."]*



Did the fish move inside our mat?

*[Describe the infant's reactions. Example: "You are smiling. You saw the fish move when I went 'pat-pat' on our mat."]*

*Demonstrate and describe a patting motion. Example: "Pat-pat. I am patting the warm water in our mat."]*

Do you want to pat our mat?

*[Encourage the infant to pat the mat. Describe the infant's action and what happens. Example: "You went 'pat-pat' on our water mat. The fish moved when you pushed the water mat."]*

*Invite the infant to pat the mat again. Describe the infant's action and emphasize what happens. Examples: "Look, Isabella! You made the fish move! Your hand went 'pat-pat' and the fish moved." "You pushed the mat and the fish moved. You are smiling and looking at the fish move inside the water mat."]*

*Repeat and extend the infant's vocalizations. Example: "You said 'ko ko.' Yes, you are making the fish move in the water."]*

*Continue to describe the infant's actions with the mat. Example: "Now you are pushing on the edge of the mat. The edge feels different than the rest of the mat."]*

*Hold the infant on your lap if there is fussing or other signals the infant wants a change. Example: "I think your fussy sounds say you are all done playing on your tummy. I am putting you on my lap. You can still see the fish." Point to the water mat.]*

**Option 1 continued**

Let's say "bye-bye, fish."

**RECAP:** *[Point to the mat and describe the infant's play. Example: "Isabella, you pushed on the mat to make the fish move. You watched the fish move when you patted the water mat. Your word for the moving fish was 'ko-ko!']*

**👁️ What to Look For—Option 1**

The activity plan suggests you repeatedly describe, with slightly different phrasing, the infant's actions and what happens as a result of the infant's actions. This repetition is intended to support the infant's emerging awareness of cause and effect (cause: I pat the mat/water; effect: the fish moves).

Watch the infant's gaze carefully and adapt your focus to the infant's interest. Some infants may be more interested in the sensory feel of the water-filled mat and/or looking at what is inside the mat. An infant may maintain interest in the water mat for 15–60 seconds. It is not necessary to coax the infant back to the water mat if his/her attention shifts.

**📊 More Scaffolding Tips—Option 1**

**Extra support** ■ Place a folded blanket under an infant's chest and tummy to raise him/her slightly higher than the water mat. The blanket will serve to support the infant's torso and make it easier to use both hands. ■ If the infant appears uneasy on his/her tummy near the mat, help him/her to a supported sitting position that may be more comfortable. ■ Point to your eyes when you say "Look."

**Enrichment** ■ Hold the infant on your lap so he/she can put his/her toes on the mat. Patting the mat with a foot may feel interesting to the infant and potentially broaden the infant's understanding of how to make things move inside the mat. ■ Move the water mat to the floor in front of a nonbreakable mirror so the infant may watch actions with the mat.



## Birth–12 Months

■ **Be Prepared:** The toy truck needs a dump box that tips.

### Option 2 One-to-One



#### Skill and Goal

##### Object inquiry skills

An older infant engages in cause-and-effect play with a ball and toy dump truck.



#### Key Concepts

In  
Out



#### Materials Needed

Toy dump truck (see Be Prepared)  
Small ball



#### Also Promotes

Physical/Health  
Communication/Language



#### Optional Reading

*I am a Dump Truck* by Josephine Page  
*I am a Garbage Truck* by Ace Landers

Sit on the floor with a mobile infant and invite him/her to play with a dump truck. Provide time for the infant to explore the toy truck, including its dump box and wheels. Then introduce the ball by putting it in the dump box of the truck. Describe your action. Emphasize the word “in.” Encourage the infant to tip the dump box. Draw attention to how the ball rolled out of the truck when the dump box was tipped. Emphasize the word “out.” Offer an enthusiastic description of how the infant caused the ball to roll out of the truck. Example: “Wow, Hilary! You tipped the back of the truck and the ball rolled out!”



Encourage the infant to repeat the cycle: put the ball in the truck, tip the back of the truck, and watch the ball roll out. Offer verbal guidance as appropriate. The infant may prefer that you do one of the actions, such as put the ball in the truck. Share delight with the infant each time the ball rolls out of the truck. Continue to emphasize that the ball rolls out of the truck when the infant tips back the truck bed. Some infants may be interested in pushing or pulling the truck to make it go.

### 👁️ What to Look For—Option 2

As suggested in the activity plan, the infant may like you to participate in the routine by doing one of the actions, most likely the task of putting the ball in the truck. Infants will enjoy tipping the dump box and watching the ball roll out. Some infants will want to do the activity over and over. This repetition is beneficial to the infant’s awareness of cause and effect in the activity.

At this age, infants are not able to judge size. You may see an infant attempt to sit in or stand on the truck.

### 📈 More Scaffolding Tips—Option 2

**Extra support** ■ Demonstrate how to tip the truck bed if the infant seems uncertain about how the truck bed works. Describe your action and encourage the infant to tip the truck several times, with or without the ball in it. ■ Get a similar truck and ball to use when you demonstrate the actions. Your own set could also be used for parallel play with the infant.

**Enrichment** ■ Provide a second ball to put in the truck. ■ If the infant readily puts the ball in the truck and then tips the truck bed, add the action of moving the truck a short distance after the ball is put in the truck bed.





### Interest Area

**Materials Needed:** baby gym with hanging toys, spinning top, vehicle toys, balls, tubes, blocks, push/ride toys

Arrange colorful toys hanging from a baby gym that nonmobile infants can hit or kick to make them move. Put out a spinning top, vehicle toys, and balls for early mobile infants to crawl to and explore. Arrange tubes and small balls, blocks to stack and push down, and toys to ride and push for mobile infants. Each of these materials supports an infant's emerging awareness of cause and effect.



### Family Child Care

**Materials Needed:** dot markers, paper, salt, cookie tray

As a complement to the two activity options for infants, provide toddlers and preschool-age children with items that support awareness of cause and effect actions. Dot markers in bright colors are simple tools. Each time a child presses the dot marker down, a bright dot appears on the paper. To provide a sensory experience related to cause and effect, make a salt tray for children to use for drawing and scribbles. Pour one cup of table salt into a cookie tray or large art tray. Encourage children to draw or write with one finger. Older children can practice making shapes or letters.



## Birth–12 Months

### Option 1 One-to-One



#### Skill and Goal Executive function

A young infant participates in guided play that supports persistence in exploring a novel fish toy.



#### Key Concepts

Reach  
Touch



#### Materials Needed

Melissa & Doug® Flip Fish  
Soft Baby Toy (see Be  
Prepared)



#### Also Promotes

Communication/Language  
Physical/Health

**Be Prepared:** Use a toy fish with textured scales that provide tactile and visual stimulation when manipulated.

**BEGIN:** *[Place the infant on his/her tummy. Sit close to the infant so he/she can see your face and hear your voice.]*

**ACT:** *[Animate the fish toy by “swimming” the fish slowly from side to side, about 12 inches from the infant.]*



Look at this fish! You can reach for the fish. You can play with the fish.

*[Describe the infant’s initial actions. Example: “Christopher, you are holding your head up and reaching for the fish. This is a big job for you!”*

*Carefully position the toy within reasonable reach of the infant. Do not immediately place the toy in the infant’s hand(s). The intent is to provide a small challenge for the infant to reach the toy. If the infant shows signs of frustration in reaching the toy, offer reassurance with encouraging words and a pat on his/her back. If frustration in reaching the toy continues, move the fish toy closer to the infant so it is easier to reach.*

*Describe the infant’s persistence and actions. Example: “You reached for the fish. You got it! Now you are playing with the fish.”*

*Use your finger and thumb to make a sound with a scale. Then encourage the infant to feel the textured scales. Example: “Listen to the sound this makes. You can touch it, too!”*

*Respond to vocalizations and facial expressions. Example: “You are smiling at the fish. You are touching the fish. I think you like listening to sounds you can make with the fish!”*

*Stay focused with the infant for as long as he/she wishes to explore the toy. It is not necessary or appropriate to coax the infant to continue the activity.]*

**RECAP:** *[Smile and make eye contact with the infant as you offer a brief summary of the infant’s actions. Example: “You reached for the fish. You held the fish. You touched different parts of the fish. You had fun playing with the fish toy!”]*

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

When you first show the fish toy to the infant, look carefully at his/her reactions to determine a reasonable distance between the toy and the infant's hand. Provide a small amount of challenge for the infant to reach for and grasp the toy. Too much distance may lead to inappropriate frustration or disinterest. Too little distance, such as immediately handing the toy to the infant, defeats the activity's goal of promoting the infant's persistence.

Also, watch and support the infant's exploration of a textured scale(s) or other toy features. In addition to the textured scales, the colorful toy has many features that may appeal to an infant. These include the ring, eyes, squeaky tail, small pictures hidden under the scales, and contrast of textured (on top) and plain (on bottom) surfaces. A young infant may show interest in one or several features, but probably not all features. Draw attention to the scales, as suggested in the activity plan, but do not attempt to point out all interesting aspects of the toy. If the infant tries to move a scale, give time for the infant to do this on his/her own. Offer assistance if the infant seems unclear about what to do. Your descriptions of the infant's actions with the toy promote persistence in exploring the fish.

**📈 More Scaffolding Tips—Option 1**

**Extra support** ■ Make sure your comments about the infant's actions are on-time descriptions of what you see. Example: "You are giving the fish a hug!" is said when the infant is actually hugging the toy.

**Enrichment** ■ If it appears the infant is losing interest in the toy after a brief time with it, draw attention to the bumpy, squeaky tail by pressing on the tail to create a sound. If this does not prompt further exploration, conclude the play period if the infant continues to show signs of wanting to do something else.



## Birth–12 Months

### Option 2 One-to-One



#### Skill and Goal

##### Executive function

An older infant participates in guided play that supports persistence in moving toward, grasping, and exploring a novel fish toy.



#### Key Concepts

Touch  
Flip



#### Materials Needed

Melissa & Doug® Flip Fish  
Soft Baby Toy



#### Also Promotes

Communication/Language  
Physical/Health

**Be Prepared:** Use a toy fish with textured scales that provide tactile and visual stimulation when manipulated.

Sit or kneel several feet from a mobile infant. Softly call the infant's name, explain that you have a fish toy, and manipulate the fish in a swimming movement to draw the infant's attention. Invite the infant to move toward you to see (or get) the toy fish. Slowly "swim" the fish from side to side as the infant gets closer to you. Describe the infant's persistence and progress. Examples: "I see you are coming to get this pretty fish! You are working hard to get here." "You are almost here!"



When the infant is within close proximity, hold the fish a reasonable distance from the infant so there is a slight challenge for the infant in reaching for and grasping the toy. Offer verbal encouragement. Example: "Your hand is almost touching our pretty fish." After securing the toy, the infant may shift his/her position to sit on the floor or may want to sit on your lap.

Encourage the infant to hold and manipulate the fish. After a brief period of independent exploration of the toy, encourage the infant to touch the textured scales if he/she has not discovered these. Show how to flip a scale to see a hidden picture. Invite the infant to flip a scale. Offer an enthusiastic response to lifting a scale and draw attention to the small picture hidden under the scale. Offer another demonstration of how to flip a scale to see a hidden picture if it seems the infant is not clear on what to do.

Acknowledge the infant's discoveries of the toy's features. Example: "You are squeezing the tail! The tail is making a squeaking sound. You are laughing!" Respond to the infant's vocalizations and facial expressions.

Support the infant's exploration by talking and maintaining your focus on his/her play. Describe the infant's actions. Example: "You crawled to me and got the fish! You are smiling. You are touching parts of the fish."

Conclude the activity after several minutes or when the infant begins to lose interest. Acknowledge the infant's persistence. Example: "You scooted to me to get the fish toy! We found some neat parts of our toy. You liked the squeaking sound of the fish tail. You laughed a lot!"

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

Look carefully at the infant's reactions to the toy at three key points: when you first show the toy, when the infant tries to reach the toy with his/her hand, and when you demonstrate how to flip a scale to see a hidden picture. Each of these points offers an opportunity to adjust your actions so the infant experiences an appropriate amount of challenge in pursuing his/her interests. As indicated in the Option 1 plan, too much challenge may lead to inappropriate frustration or disinterest. Too little challenge defeats the activity's goal of promoting the infant's persistence.

**More Scaffolding Tips—Option 2**

**Extra support** ■ An infant is more likely to persist when he/she is alert, comfortable, and not distracted by other things in the room. Be sure to offer the activity in an area where other toys and activities will not compete for the infant's attention.

**Enrichment** ■ Show and slightly manipulate two toys, the fish toy and one other toy, when you invite the infant to move toward you to see and play with a toy. Encourage the infant to pick one of the toys when he/she reaches you.

**Interest Area**

**Materials Needed:** jumbo ocean animal toys, tub with a thin layer of room temperature water

Place several ocean animals in the tub with a small amount of water. Invite two infants to play with the materials. Talk with the infants about their discoveries and what they are doing with the toys. Infants will likely explore the wet toys with their mouths. Remove the toys from the activity area when the infants are finished, rather than returning them to the tub. Replace the water and toys between each pair of infants.

**Family Child Care**

**Materials Needed:** Melissa & Doug® Flip Fish Soft Baby Toy—1 per child

Invite several preschool-age children in your setting to play together with the fish toys involved in the activity plan. Provide one toy for each child. Encourage the children to flip the scales on his/her fish and figure out whether the toys have same or different hidden pictures.



## Birth–12 Months

### Option 1 One-to-One



#### Skill and Goal

##### Social interaction skills

A young infant participates in responsive interactions with a caregiver using fabric stacking rings.



#### Key Concepts

Look  
Listen  
Ring



#### Materials Needed

Lamaze® Rainbow Stacking Rings



#### Also Promotes

Communication/Language  
Physical/Health  
Cognitive

**BEGIN:** [Place the infant on his/her back in a comfortable reclining position. Begin the activity with two stacking rings only. Keep the remaining rings for possible use later in the activity. The peg is not used in this option except as an Enrichment possibility.]

Smile and begin talking with the infant. Example: “Hello, Grayson! You had your bottle and we changed your diaper. Would you like to play with me?” Acknowledge the infant’s reactions. Example: “I can hear you cooing, Layla. You are talking to me. I think you are ready to play!”]

**ACT:** [Hold the two rings about 12 inches from the infant.]

Look, I have two rings for us to play with! The rings feel soft. Listen to the sound they make when you touch them! Maybe you would like to touch and hold the rings.



[The infant may reach for one or both of the rings. If the infant looks but does not take a ring, gently squeeze a ring to make a crinkle sound. Describe your actions and draw attention to the sound. Also, you may wish to move the rings slowly from side to side to keep the infant’s attention.]

Describe the infant’s reactions to the rings. Examples: “You are kicking your feet! You are listening to the crinkling sound, Mia. I will hold it close so you can touch it.” “You are holding both rings, Logan! Now you are waving the rings back and forth!”

Respond to vocalizations by repeating an utterance. Example: “Ba-ba-ma-ma. I hear you talking!” Acknowledge facial expressions.

If the infant remains interested in the rings, introduce one more ring.]

**RECAP:** [Offer a brief description of the interaction. Example: “Thank you for playing with me, Carter. You held both of the rings! You smiled at me and I smiled at you! We had fun together!”]



## Birth–12 Months

### Option 2 One-to-One



#### Skill and Goal

##### Social interaction skills

An infant participates in a back-and-forth interaction with a caregiver while playing with stacking rings.



#### Key Concepts

Look  
Rings



#### Materials Needed

Stacking rings



#### Also Promotes

Communication/Language  
Physical/Health

**Be Prepared:** This activity uses the two largest rings and the base. The remaining rings can be placed aside.

Invite an infant to sit with you on the floor to play with stacking rings. Place the toy between you, with the two rings on the base. While the infant is watching, remove both rings. You may wish to invite the infant to help you remove the rings.

Place the rings in front of the infant near the stand. Provide time for the infant to explore the items as he/she wishes. Describe the infant's actions.

If it appears the infant would like some guidance on using the toys, point to and describe the toy. Example: "Look, we have two rings. We can put the rings on this base." Demonstrate by holding one ring over the peg on the base. Invite the infant to try placing the ring on the peg. The infant may imitate your actions, explore the items in his/her own way, or disengage from the activity. Acknowledge the infant's exploration of the toy, whether or not he/she tries to place the rings over the peg.



### 👁️ What to Look For—Options 1–2

The activity options continue the practice of using a toy to facilitate social exchanges between you and an infant. Both options involve your following the child's lead with the toys and serving in a support role. In each option, the plan suggests you offer possible actions with the toys (making a crinkling noise in Option 1, stacking the rings in Option 2) but whether these ideas are pursued is the infant's decision. Focus on positive interactions between you and the infant and not on particular uses of the toys.

### 📈 More Scaffolding Tips—Options 1–2

**Extra support** ■ Use the largest and the smallest rings in Option 1 to provide contrast in the two toys. ■ If an infant shows interest in stacking the rings on the peg in Option 2, offer assistance only if the infant seems frustrated or uncertain about what to do. Affirm the infant's efforts to stack the rings. Example: "You stacked the rings on the peg! You made the rings work!"

**Enrichment** ■ If an infant shows strong enjoyment of ring exploration in Option 1, make all of the rings available, organized on the peg. The infant is likely to enjoy removing the rings from the peg. Use of the peg is to organize the rings. A young infant is not expected to put rings on the peg. ■ If an infant in Option 2 stacks the two rings, suggest the infant repeat the activity. You may wish to offer a third ring.



### Interest Area

**Materials Needed:** two or more ring stacking toys, basket to hold the assortment of rings

**Be Prepared:** Remove the rings from the bases and place the assorted rings in a basket. Place the pegged bases nearby.

Encourage infants to explore the toys in their own ways. Some infants will enjoy removing the rings from the basket, and may enjoy returning the rings to the basket. Older infants may work to place the rings on a pegged base. Watch for opportunities to comment on infants' actions and provide assistance when appropriate.



### Family Child Care

**Materials Needed:** ring toss toys, several stacking ring toys

Supplement the activity options for infants with opportunities for toddlers and preschool-age children to explore characteristics of stacking rings, such as shape, texture, color, and size. Explain how rings can fit over a peg because of the hole in the middle. Talk with children about their interests with the toys.





## Birth–12 Months

### Option 1 One-to-One



#### Skill and Goal

##### Fine motor development

A young infant participates in hand and arm movements at and across the midline guided by a caregiver.



#### Key Concepts

Move



#### Materials Needed

None



#### Also Promotes

Cognitive

Communication/Language

Place the infant on his/her back on the floor. Engage the infant in the activity only when he/she is alert and seems ready for some action. Use a playful and gentle approach to moving the infant's hands to a rhyme or song of your choice. Use your voice, not a recording. Slowly move the infant's hands/arms at or across the midline as follows: (1) hands up and down the midline at the same time; (2) hands from side to side across the midline at the same time; and (3) clapping hands at the midline, near the center of the infant's chest. Maintain eye contact and a big smile throughout the activity. Talk with the infant about how we are moving our hands. Stop if the infant protests or pulls his/her hands away. Conclude the activity with enthusiastic comments. Describe the infant's participation. The activity should last about one minute.



## Birth–12 Months

### Option 2 One-to-One



#### Skill and Goal

##### Fine motor development

An older infant participates in guided play that encourages bringing both hands, or crossing both hands, at the midline.



#### Key Concepts

Tap



#### Materials Needed

Small toys—2 per infant and caregiver (see Be Prepared)



#### Also Promotes

Social-Emotional

**Be Prepared:** Select two different small toys that are related in type. The toys should be no bigger than the infant's palm. The activity description below uses animal toys, such as those shown in the picture.

Sit on the floor facing an infant who can sit independently or with support. Be sure an infant feels secure before you begin the play with toys.



Present one toy for the infant to grasp and hold with one or both hands.

Support interest in the toy by acknowledging the infant's reaction. Example: "Mateo, I see a big smile. You like this little turtle toy!" Offer the second toy. Encourage the infant to hold one toy in each hand. Most infants will be interested in exploring the toys by mouthing them.

Hold two toys, one in each hand at your midline at about the center of your chest. Show your toys to the infant. Tap your two toys together in a playful manner at your midline. Describe what you are doing. Example: "My animals go tap, tap, tap." Invite the infant to tap his/her animals together. Example: "Would you like to tap your animals?" Demonstrate tapping the animals together. Enthusiastically acknowledge any infant effort to move his/her toys to the midline.

Below are two additional ways to encourage the infant to bring his/her hands (toys) to the midline:

- Pretend your toys are dancing while you hold them at your midline and move them around, especially crossing the midline. Invite the infant to have his/her toys dance.
- Pretend your two toys are talking with one another while you hold them at your midline and move them slightly. Example: "Turtle says hi to Hedgehog! Hedgehog says hi to Turtle. Hi. Hi. Turtle and Hedgehog say hi to your toys!" Invite the infant to have his/her toys say hi to each other.

Describe the infant's actions with his/her toys, especially efforts to bring the toys to the midline.

If a toy drops, wait for the infant to reach for the toy. Explain: "The turtle fell down. You can get it." Some infants may look at you or vocalize. Ask "Would you like help?"

If an infant attempts to put a toy to your mouth, simply reply in a cheerful manner. "No thanks. Let's make the animals dance."

The activity may last for a few minutes or maybe less.



## Birth–12 Months

### Option 3 Informal Gathering



#### Skill and Goal

##### Fine motor development

Older infants participate in a game of reaching across the midline to catch floating toys in a water tub.



#### Key Concepts

Reach  
Catch



#### Materials Needed

Water smocks—1 per infant  
Floating toys  
Container (see Be Prepared)  
Sensory tub (see Be Prepared)



#### Also Promotes

Social-Emotional  
Cognitive

**Be Prepared:** Prepare a sensory tub with a few inches of warm water. Place small toys that float, such as shapes, into a container. The toys should be small enough for infants to hold.

Invite 2–3 infants who can readily stand to play a game of catching toys that are floating in a tub. Drop a toy from the container into the tub to demonstrate how to catch it. The toy will move slightly after being dropped into the water. Use one hand/arm to reach for the toy and use your other hand to nudge the floating toy to your “reaching” hand. Then grasp the toy with both hands. If you anticipate this two-step approach to using both hands will be too challenging, demonstrate using both of your hands to catch a floating toy.

Drop a set of toys from the container into the water, let the toys float briefly, and then encourage the infants to reach for and catch a toy. Describe each infant’s actions. Example: “Robert caught a star! He used both hands.” Invite infants to place their “caught” toy in the container that you manage. Drop the toys back into the water for a repeat of the activity.



Avoid competition. You may wish to drop into the water only as many toys as there are infants at the tub and invite infants to catch one toy per drop.

Encourage infants to use both hands. After the initial drop of toys, encourage infants to catch a toy that involves movement of their hands across the midline. You may wish to drop the toys in areas of the tub that promote moving across the midline.

### 👁️ What to Look For—Options 1–3

Each of the three activity options offers age-appropriate support for moving hands at or across the midline. Joining hands together (typically 3–4 months of age) and reaching across the midline (6+ months) involve coordination of both sides of the body. These actions are related to important aspects of brain development, as described in the *ELM Curriculum User Guide* for infants and toddlers, and continue to be refined over the first 3–4 years of life.

In Option 1, it is important to use your (vs. a recorded) voice so you can vary the tempo and volume in response to the infant’s responses. This brief activity could be done at the beginning of another activity with a young infant.

In Option 2, anticipate that an infant may not imitate your actions and will want to use the toys in his/her way. Positively acknowledge the infant’s uses of the toys. After a short period of exploring the toys as the infant wishes, consider placing the infant without the toys on your lap for an adaptation

of Option 1. In Option 2, an infant who is teething may be mostly interested in chewing the toy. Offer a teething toy. If a teething toy does not help the infant focus on the toys, offer guided play with the toys at a later time.

The floating toys in Option 3 add a little challenge visually to the task of reaching for a toy. Use a lower, slower drop if the amount of floating is a concern for infants.

### More Scaffolding Tips—Options 1–3

**Extra support** ■ In Option 2, offer two different toys if the infant seems uninterested in what you offer initially. ■ In Option 3, kneel next to an infant who needs reassurance or extra support. Increase the number of toys so the task of catching one is more achievable.

**Enrichment** ■ In Option 2, place one or both of the toys on the floor in front of the infant so he/she has the experience of reaching for a toy(s). ■ In Option 2, use a different combination of toys for tapping if this action is of continuing interest to an infant. ■ In Option 3, vary the size of the floating toys.



### Interest Area

**Materials Needed:** sound makers (such as ball with beads inside), water mat

For nonmobile infants, arrange on the floor play materials that will make a sound when moved, such as a ball with beads inside. Hold sound makers for nonmobile infants to kick or swipe.

For early mobile infants, place the water mat (used in Cognitive Option 1 in this block) on the floor and encourage infants to push on the mat with both hands at the same time. The result will be visible movements of the toys inside the mat.

Sit on the floor to observe mobile infants at play. Watch for and comment on hand actions that bring hands and/or feet to the midline. Example: If an infant begins to move his/her feet together and apart, encourage him/her to try it again.

A small brown house icon with a chimney, positioned to the left of the text "Family Child Care".

### Family Child Care

**Materials Needed:** blue painter's tape, paper stars, board book *Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star* by Caroline Jayne Church

Provide additional materials to encourage infants to cross the midline with their hands. One possibility is to make small loops of blue painter's tape and attach a small paper star to each one. Tape the stars in your home's play area at heights infants, toddlers, and preschool-age children can reach. Encourage children to reach for a star with one hand and then with the opposite hand. For a related experience, hang a few small stars over the diaper table. Hold an infant so he/she can swipe at the stars with one hand and the other.

Another possibility is to share the *Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star* board book with children and then encourage them to pretend to catch stars. Emphasize reaching across the midline to catch pretend stars. You may wish to sing the first verse of "Catch a Falling Star" (see an online source for the lyrics, tune, and motions).