



**Communication/
Language**

Exploring Words

- Option 1** (OO) A young infant participates in a book sharing that emphasizes listening to the caregiver’s voice and looking at pictures of babies doing different things.
- Option 2** (OO) An infant participates in a book sharing that includes opportunities to turn the book’s pages and communicate about pictures of babies doing different things.
- Option 3** (OO) An older infant participates in a book sharing that includes opportunities to help manage a book, and talk about and imitate babies doing different things.



Cognitive

Solving Problems

- Option 1** (OO) A young infant watches a toy briefly disappear, with follow-up opportunities to explore the toy.
- Option 2** (OO) An older infant watches a toy hop toward him/her and then disappear, with an opportunity to find the toy.
- Option 3** (OO) An older infant searches for a hidden toy.



Self-Regulation

Getting Calm

- Option 1** (OO) A young infant practices calming down after a mildly stimulating rhyme activity.
- Option 2** (OO) An older infant practices calming down after a mildly stimulating rhyme activity.



Social-Emotional

Interacting With Others

- Option 1** (OO) A young infant participates with a caregiver in responsive interactions focused on gentle touches.
- Option 2** (IG) Older infants participate in guided play with teddy bears focused on gentle touches.



Physical/Health

Using Our Hands

- Option 1** (OO) A young infant practices eye-hand coordination while reaching for and grasping novel items.
- Option 2** (OO) An older infant practices using thumb and finger separately while playing with a musical toy that has holes.
- Option 3** (IG) Older infants practice using thumb and finger separately with a novel toy that offers finger holes and a sock rattle inside.

(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 the caregiver's voice and looking at pictures of babies doing different things.



Key Concepts

Book
Look
Hands



Materials Needed

Clap Hands by Helen Oxenbury



Also Promotes

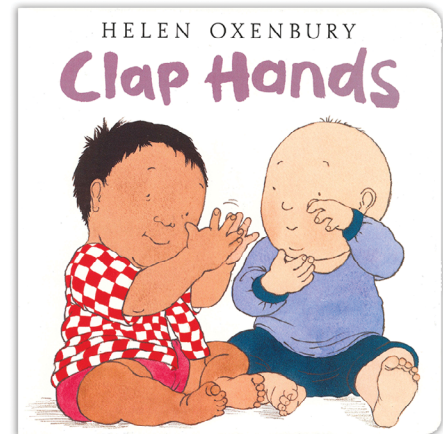
Cognitive

BEGIN: [Place the infant securely in your lap. 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 babies?

[Pause and acknowledge the infant's response. Example: "You are looking at the babies. You are kicking your legs!"]

The babies are clapping their hands! Our book is about babies doing different things. Let's open the book and look at pictures of babies!



[Open the book to the first page. Use the following strategies to engage the infant in the book:

- In addition to reading the few words of text on each page, use your own words to describe pictures. Example: "The babies are waving to Daddy. The babies are waving to Mommy! The babies look happy."
- Spend more time talking about pictures that seem to be of particular interest to the infant. It is not necessary to look at all pictures.
- Describe and respond to the infant's gestures and/or vocalizations. Example: "You are kicking your legs and looking at the picture of the babies dancing."
- Use your voice to add interest and enjoyment to the book sharing.]

RECAP: [Describe what happened during the book sharing. Example: "We read a book about babies. You smiled at the picture of babies clapping their hands. You liked looking at the babies dancing. Thank you for sharing this book with me!"]

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 turn the book's pages and communicate about pictures of babies doing different things.



Key Concepts

Book
Look
Hands
Clap



Materials Needed

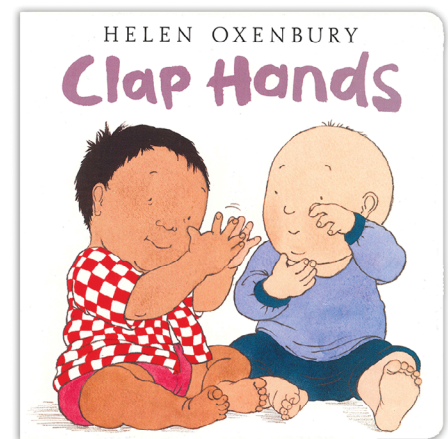
Clap Hands by Helen Oxenbury



Also Promotes

Cognitive
Physical/Health

Invite an infant to join in to look at a book about babies. Clap your hands while smiling and encourage the infant to clap his/her hands. Say "Clap! Clap!" Explain that the first picture in our book shows babies clapping their hands. Invite the infant to sit on your lap. Introduce the book by pointing to and describing the actions of babies on the cover. Example: "Look, do you see the babies? The babies are using their hands to clap! We just clapped our hands!"



Open the book and begin looking at the pictures and reading the text, using the following strategies:

- Invite the infant to help you turn the pages of the book. Turn the pages as slowly or as quickly as the infant seems to prefer. It is not necessary to look at each page.
- Read the few words of text on each page and use your own words to describe pictures.
- Spend more time on pictures that appear to be of particular interest to the infant. Offer more information about what is shown in the picture. Example: "You are looking at the babies making music. This baby is banging on a drum. This baby is pretending to blow a trumpet! The babies are having fun making different sounds."
- Describe and respond to gestures and/or vocalizations.
- Help the infant connect book information to his/her own experiences. Example: "These babies are having a snack. This baby is putting food in his mouth. This baby is drinking from a cup. We have snacks in our room. You drink from milk from a cup. Look, the milk in this picture is spilling! Uh-oh!"
- Vary the tone and pace of your voice to add interest to the book sharing.
- Recognize the infant's participation in the book reading. Example: "We had fun reading this book together, Logan. You looked at the pictures of the babies. The babies were doing different things. We clapped our hands like the babies in the pictures! You said 'bye' at the picture of the babies waving."

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 help manage a book, and talk about and imitate babies doing different things.



Key Concepts

Book
Look
Hands
Clap
Wave



Materials Needed

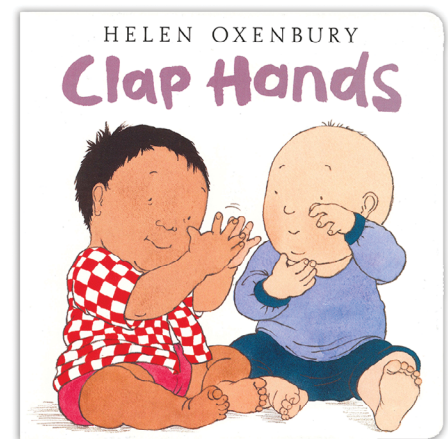
Clap Hands by Helen Oxenbury



Also Promotes

Cognitive
Physical/Health

Invite an older infant to read a book with you. The infant may wish to sit next to you or stand close while you read. Invite the infant to help you hold the book and turn its 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. Follow infant's cues as to how quickly or slowly to turn the pages. The infant may want to return to a favorite page several times. It is not necessary to look at all pictures.



Once the infant is comfortable and ready, point to the picture on the book cover. Example: “Look, the babies are moving their hands. The babies are clapping their hands! We can clap our hands, too. Let’s clap our hands!”

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

- Read the text on each page and use your own words to describe what is happening in the illustrations.
- Invite the infant to point to objects that you label. Example: “One of the babies in this picture is drinking from a cup. Where is the cup?”
- Spend more time talking about pictures that seem to be of particular interest to the infant. Offer more information about the picture. Example: “These babies are dancing. The babies are moving their hands and bodies. This baby is clapping. This baby is turning around! I think the babies are having fun dancing together.”
- Invite the infant to imitate some of the actions of the babies shown in the book, such as clapping, dancing, and waving hello.
- Describe and respond to the infant’s gestures and/or vocalizations.
- Help the infant connect book information to his/her experiences. Example: “The babies are waving. Sometimes we wave hello. Sometimes we wave bye-bye. You waved bye-bye to your daddy this morning!”
- Recognize the infant’s participation in the book reading. Example: “You helped me hold our book, Jordan. You turned the pages to look at the pictures. You clapped your hands. You waved your hands. You bounced your body and danced! We had fun together with our book!”



What to Look For—Options 1–3

Most infants will enjoy the illustrations of the babies in this book doing different things. Some of the actions of the pictured babies will be familiar. Look for opportunities to name and describe objects that may not be familiar to the infant, such as a trumpet or drum. Older infants are likely to differ in whether and how much they would like to imitate some of the actions shown in the book. The larger size of this board book supports an infant's motor skills for managing a book.

More Scaffolding Tips—Options 1–3

Extra support ■ Remember the benefit of using your own words to describe illustrations. Point to actions and objects as you talk about them. Most of the book's brief text is general.

Enrichment ■ Point out some details of illustrations, such as one baby taking the food of another baby who is drinking from a cup. ■ Invite the infant to find and point to the hands of the babies on each page.



Interest Area

Materials Needed: *Clap Hands* by Helen Oxenbury, several large pots, several large plastic spoons with thick handles

Infants may enjoy making music with common objects suggested here. Share pertinent pictures of the book with infants and demonstrate how the pictured babies are banging on the pots (drums) with the spoons. Introduce the pots and spoons and invite infants to explore the new materials. Describe infants' actions with the materials.



Family Child Care

Materials Needed: *Clap Hands* by Helen Oxenbury, several large pots, several large spoons, toilet paper or paper towel tubes—1 per toddler and child

Adapt the Interest Area suggestion to accommodate all children in your setting. Ensure each child has a turn with the pots and spoons. You may wish to play soft, but lively, music and encourage the children to "play" along. Be sure each child is given a new paper tube that has not been used by another. Younger infants may enjoy participating by holding a rattle or bell.

Birth–12 Months

Option 1 One-to-One



Skill and Goal Problem-solving

A young infant watches a toy briefly disappear, with follow-up opportunities to explore the toy.



Key Concepts See



Materials Needed

- Soft rattle
- Sheer scarf



Also Promotes

- Communication/Language
- Physical/Health

Carry a nonmobile infant to an activity area and lay him/her on the floor facing up. Use your voice and facial expressions to put the infant at ease. Infants enjoy hearing their name and looking at the face of a familiar caregiver. Speak clearly and allow time between phrases for the infant to respond. Example: “Good morning, Tamara.” (*The infant may look toward you.*) “I am glad to see you today.” (*The infant may move his/her hands, arms, or legs.*) “Tamara, you have a nice smile.” (*The infant may look again, increasing the length of his/her gaze.*) “Would you like to play with a soft rattle?”

Show the rattle to the infant by holding it near the center of his/her chest. Slightly move and/or jiggle the rattle while holding it in front of the infant. Describe what you are doing with the rattle. While the infant is watching the toy, cover it with the scarf for a moment. Remove the scarf and announce “Here is our toy! Now we can see our rattle!” Explain to the infant “Our toy was under the scarf. Now you see it!” If the infant looks away, draw his/her attention back to the covered toy by jiggling it.



Hold the toy for the infant to grasp. Allow time for the infant’s further exploration through looking, touching, and/or mouthing. If the infant shakes the rattle and produces a sound, comment on his/her actions. If the infant releases the rattle, show it to him/her again.

If the infant has not yet learned to grasp, move the rattle close to his/her hand. Wait for the infant to react to the rattle. Describe the infant’s actions. Example: “Yes, you can see our rattle. I think you are interested in the pretty color and the little face. Your arms and legs are moving.” (*Pause*) “I am going to move the rattle to your hand.” The infant may swipe at the rattle or close his/her fingers around it.

What to Look For—Option 1

Some infants may not react to the brief covering of the toy. It is not necessary to repeat the brief disappearance of the rattle. Object permanence develops gradually, and there are opportunities to support object permanence with other activity plans. You also may wish to offer this activity again in several weeks.

**Option 1 continued**

If an infant does not respond to the rattle, try a different toy. You also may wish to alter your voice in describing the rattle. Infants generally respond to adult voices when pitched just a little higher than normal. Pronounced “baby talk” is not necessary.

 **More Scaffolding Tips—Option 1**

Extra support ■ Reposition the infant if he/she appears uncomfortable. ■ You may touch the infant’s hand with the soft toy.

Enrichment ■ If the infant shows interest in the brief disappearance of the rattle, cover your face with the scarf. Say “peek-a-boo” when removing it. ■ If the infant shows interest in the scarf, offer it for the infant to feel. Tie the scarf into a loose knot to make it manageable for an infant to hold.

Birth–12 Months

Option 2 One-to-One



Skill and Goal

Problem-solving

An older infant watches a toy hop toward him/her and then disappear, with an opportunity to find the toy.



Key Concepts

Hide

Find



Materials Needed

Small novel toy (see Be Prepared)

Box with opening (see Be Prepared)



Also Promotes

Physical/Health

Communication/Language

Self-Regulation



Optional Reading

Baby Faces Peek-a-Boo by DK Publishing

Be Prepared: Select a small toy that will appeal to the infant involved in this activity. Many infants enjoy a toy with a smiling face. Secure a small box, about 4 x 4 inches, that has all but one side closed. The open side is used for briefly hiding the small toy during the activity.

Sit on the floor with an early mobile infant and show him/her the small toy. Place the box between you and the infant with the opening facing away from the infant.

Move the toy toward the infant with a hopping motion. Use a cheerful voice as you say, “Here comes the little (name of toy). Closer and closer and closer to your toes!” Touch the infant’s foot with the toy. Repeat the hopping action, along with your words, if the infant enjoyed the action.

The infant will now be interested in watching the toy move closer to his/her foot.

Next, again hop the toy closer to the infant but this time put the toy inside the box while the infant watches. Ask the infant “Where did (name of toy) go?” Pause for the infant’s response.

Some infants will eagerly look for and find the toy in the box. Enthusiastically acknowledge the infant’s efforts to find the toy.

Talk with the infant about the toy hiding in the box. Example: “The toy was hopping toward your toes and went inside the box. You found our toy in the box!” Some infants may want you to repeat the toy hopping and hiding actions. Others may want to hold and explore the toy.

What to Look For—Option 2

The infant is likely to get excited during the toy hopping action because he/she knows or anticipates the toy will “get” his/her toes. Waiting for the toy to touch his/her toes involves anticipation and self-control. Support self-regulation by laughing with the infant when the toy reaches his/her toes to create a little excitement. At this age, infants often enjoy games involving anticipation. Pace the hopping so the infant can manage the excitement. Avoid tickling the infant.

Some infants may think the toy is gone and turn their attention away from the game. If the infant does not attempt to find the toy, rotate the box so the infant sees the opening with the toy inside. Encourage the infant to get the toy.



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

Extra support ■ If an infant expresses displeasure when the toy comes toward his/her feet, simply draw attention to the toy before placing it inside the box. Encourage the infant to search for the toy.

■ When you talk with the infant about how the toy was hiding in the box, use pointing and partial demonstrations to supplement your words.

Enrichment ■ If the infant is interested in a repeat of the hopping and hiding actions, vary the angle of the box. ■ In repeated actions, add challenge by tipping the box so the toy is completely covered.



Birth–12 Months

Option 3 One-to-One



Skill and Goal

Problem-solving

An older infant searches for a hidden toy.



Key Concepts

Hide
Find
Under



Materials Needed

Small toy pig
Box with opening (see Be Prepared)



Also Promotes

Self-Regulation
Communication/Language



Optional Reading

This Little Piggy (Finger Puppet Book) by Cottage Door Press

Be Prepared: Secure a small box, about 4 x 4 inches, that has all but one side closed. The open side is used for briefly hiding the small toy during the activity.

BEGIN: *[Invite a mobile infant to play a game with the little toy pig. Place the box and toy pig on the floor.]*

ACT: Here is piggy. Piggy is a fun toy!

[Provide time for the infant to explore and become comfortable with the novel toy.

Support the infant's interest in the toy. Example: If the infant points to the eyes, talk about the pig's eyes. Point to your eyes and ask the infant to point to his/her eyes. The infant may be interested in pointing to the feet, tail, and ears of the toy pig.

After a minute or two, ask the infant if he/she wants to play a piggy game.

Say and move the toy as follows:



Here comes a little piggy.

[Move pig toward the infant in a playful manner.]

Feeling very jiggy.

[Hop the toy pig toward the infant.]

This little piggy goes to market.

[Tap the infant's foot with the toy.]

This little piggy goes wee, wee, wee all the way home!

[Cover the toy pig with the box.]

Encourage the infant to find the toy pig. Share the infant's delight at finding the toy pig. Example: "Hooray! You found piggy!"

Move the box slightly to a new position. Repeat the sequence. Pace the game to align with the infant's interest in the game.]

RECAP: Little piggy was hiding under the box. You found our little pig.

👁️ What to Look For—Option 3

Anticipation of the pig reaching his/her foot will be fun and exciting for most mobile infants when presented in a playful manner. Generally, infants will be very interested in finding the pig. If an infant does not search for the pig, repeat the sequence and encourage the infant to look for the pig. Ask the infant "Did piggy go under the box?"

Option 3 continued

If an infant does not respond to the first sequence, use your own words with a different scenario. Some infants may be more interested in a simple story, such as “Piggy is looking for a home.” Move the toy around and then place it into the box. Encourage the infant to search for the toy pig.

Another day, when an infant has become familiar with the game, encourage the infant to hide or cover himself/herself. Pretend to look for the infant in one place before you find him/her. Example: (*Searching.*) “Is piggy under our chair?” (*Pause.*) “Here you are, piggy!” For infants, closing their eyes or covering their eyes is the same as hiding.

 More Scaffolding Tips—Option 3

Extra support ■ Move the toy slowly so the infant sees it go under the box.

Enrichment ■ Add a second box for possible hiding. ■ Use different materials with a similar game.
■ Mobile infants will enjoy the rhyme and pictures in the optional book, *This Little Piggy* by Child’s Play.



Interest Area

Materials Needed: familiar and novel toys, small balls, shallow bowls, animal and people figures, small boxes, peek-a-boo books (such as *Baby Faces Peekaboo* and books with flaps)

Provide both familiar toys and novel items for infants to explore, such as small balls in shallow bowls. Sit next to an infant and partially cover a toy that is within sight. Uncover the toy as you say “Here it is” or “Peek-a-boo!” Place several small toys under lightweight containers for infants to discover as they move around the room. Place animal figures and people figures in small boxes or enclosures that serve as houses. Share peek-a-boo books with infants.



Family Child Care

Materials Needed: animal figures in a toy barn, toy, felt square, heavy paper

Toddlers are likely to enjoy the materials and activities suggested in the Interest Area. Offer a theme-based approach to hiding toys for toddlers, such as covering animal figures with felt squares.

Preschool-age children will enjoy finding items hidden in your setting. If preschool children recognize the first letter of their names, cut capital letters from heavy paper and hide them in the indoor play space.

Toddlers and preschool-age children often enjoy the “Paw Paw Patch” game and song. Two children from the gathering hide and another pair of children search for them. The song asks “Where oh, where are (child) and (child). Way down yonder in the paw paw patch.” The song can be found on the Internet. Pair each toddler with a preschool-age child. Older children may be interested to know a paw-paw is a large native fruit of North America. It grows throughout Appalachia.



Birth–12 Months

Option 1 One-to-One



Skill and Goal

Self-control

A young infant practices calming down after a mildly stimulating rhyme activity.



Key Concepts

Calm



Materials Needed

none



Also Promotes

Communication/Language

Physical/Health

Be Prepared: This activity is for nonmobile infants who cannot sit independently or with support. You can become familiar with the words and actions of the “Pat-A-Cake” rhyme through an online source.

BEGIN: [*Place the infant on his/her back in front of you. Smile and make eye contact.*]

ACT: Are you ready for a fun rhyme?

[*Pause and acknowledge the infant’s response. Example: “You are looking at me and smiling. You want to play!”*]

We are going to play *Pat-A-Cake*. I am going to hold and move your hands while we play.

[*Smile and enthusiastically recite the “Pat-A-Cake” rhyme while moving the infant’s hands in the corresponding actions. You may wish to repeat the rhyme one or more times if the infant is enjoying the activity. Acknowledge the infant’s pleasure. Example: “What a big smile you have! You are kicking your legs. You are telling me you like playing Pat-A-Cake!”*]

Modify or stop the activity if the infant pulls back his/her hands, develops a frown, or appears at all distressed. Modifications might include reciting the rhyme without the motions or gentle clapping without the rhyme. Describe your response to the infant’s reaction. Example: “You are making a sad face. Let’s stop our rhyme. We can find a way to feel calm and happy.”

At the conclusion of the rhyme, announce that “Our rhyme is over. All done. We can calm down now.” Reposition the infant to provide a clear signal that the activity is over. 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 mention highlights of the activity. Example: “We had fun playing Pat-A-Cake, Jordan! You told me with your big smile that you liked the rhyme and clapping. We stopped, and you got calm again.”*]



Birth–12 Months

Option 2 One-to-One



Skill and Goal

Self-control

An older infant practices calming down after a mildly stimulating rhyme activity.



Key Concepts

Play
Calm



Materials Needed

None



Also Promotes

Communication/Language
Physical/Health

Be Prepared: This activity is for an infant who can sit independently or with support. You can become familiar with the words and actions of the “Pat-a-Cake” rhyme through an online source.

Invite an infant to join you on the floor to play *Pat-a-Cake*. Sit facing the infant and gently hold his/her hands. Make eye contact and ensure the infant is ready to play. Explain the activity. Example: “We are going to play *Pat-a-Cake*. I am going to say the rhyme and help you clap your hands. Are you ready?”

Recite the rhyme with an enthusiastic voice while moving the infant’s hands in the corresponding actions. Repeat the rhyme and actions 1–2 times if the toddler enjoys the activity. Modify or stop the activity if the infant shows any signs of distress. Describe the infant’s reaction to the activity. Examples: “You had fun clapping while we played *Pat-a-Cake* today, Kiara!” “You didn’t want me to hold your hands, but you enjoyed listening to the words of the rhyme, Timothy!”

After the rhyme, encourage 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 become calm. If needed, support the infant by patting his/her back, quietly humming or singing a favorite song, or offering gentle reminders that it is time to rest. Acknowledge the infant’s efforts to become calm. Example: “You had fun playing *Pat-a-Cake*! Now you are sitting with me and resting. We are feeling calm.”

What to Look For—Options 1–2

Infants will vary in their participation in the rhyme and in becoming calm after the stimulating experience. Follow the infant’s lead during the rhyme, varying the rhythm and extent of actions to match the infant’s interest and response. Some infants may let you know that they are ready for a more enthusiastic version of the rhyme by vocalizing, moving their hands, kicking their legs, or bouncing. Others may prefer a slower and quieter experience. Some infants may not want their hands to be held during the activity, but may enjoy watching you clap your own while you recite the rhyme. Ensure this activity is enjoyable for the infant.

More Scaffolding Tips—Options 1–2

Extra support ■ Consistently monitor whether the rhyme might be too stimulating for an infant. Infants who might become overly excited during the activity may benefit from a slower, quieter version of the rhyme. ■ If an infant needs extra support to become calm, hold the infant while shifting your weight from one foot to the other to create a gentle swaying motion.



Enrichment ■ If the infant is enjoying the activity, imitate his/her facial expressions. ■ Vary the speed of the rhyme by starting slowly, speeding up, and then returning to a slower pace. ■ Invite the infant to clap his/her hands independently while you recite the rhyme.



Interest Area

Materials Needed: assortment of nursery rhyme books

Encourage infants to explore nursery rhyme books. Engage them in the rhymes they appear most interested in. This can be done with individual infants or several infants at a time. Use strategies suggested in the activity options to help infants calm down, if necessary.



Family Child Care

Materials Needed: none

Nursery rhymes and finger plays can be enjoyed by children of all ages. Invite children to choose their favorite rhymes. Take turns reciting a simple rhyme using each child's name. Infants and toddlers will enjoy watching their older peers recite and do the motions of familiar rhymes. Older children may enjoy helping infants and young toddlers do hand motions, such as clapping for the "Pat-a-Cake" rhyme. Before moving to the next activity, invite children to rest by sitting quietly for a few moments.



Birth–12 Months

Option 1 One-to-One



Skill and Goal

Social interaction skills

A young infant participates with a caregiver in responsive interactions focused on gentle touches.



Key Concepts

Look
Teddy bear
Touch



Materials Needed

Teddy bear



Also Promotes

Communication/Language
Physical/Health

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

Smile and begin talking with the infant. Example: “Good morning, Antonella! I am happy to see you today. Would you like to play with me?” Acknowledge the infant’s reactions. Example: “You are looking at me and smiling. I think you would like to play!”]

ACT: [Hold the teddy bear about 12 inches from the infant. Move the teddy bear slowly from side to side to attract the infant’s attention.]

Look, I have our special friend with me today!

[Use a different voice for the bear to greet the infant. Example: “Hello, Lincoln! Would you like to play with me?”]

Invite the infant to touch the bear.]

Our friend is a teddy bear. The teddy bear has soft fur. You can touch the soft fur!

[Move the teddy bear close to the infant’s hand and encourage him/her to touch the bear’s fur. Use your voice, not the bear’s voice, to describe the infant’s response to the bear. Example: “You are touching the teddy bear’s fur. The fur is soft. You are smiling at the bear. I think you like our teddy bear friend!”]

Use the bear to interact with the infant for several moments. Invite the infant to continue to gently touch the bear. Demonstrate a gentle touch with the teddy bear. Example: “Look, I am patting the teddy bear’s head gently. I am using gentle touches. Would you like to touch our teddy bear’s head? You can pat our teddy bear’s head with gentle touches.” Describe the infant’s actions with the teddy bear. “Our friend likes your gentle touches!”

A very young infant may enjoy the bear softly touching him/her. Example: “The teddy bear is touching your arm. Do you feel the gentle touches? The teddy bear’s fur is soft.”

Gently redirect any touches that are not soft. Example: “Our teddy bear friend does not like you hitting his head. He likes gentle touches, like this. (Demonstrate.) We use gentle touches with the bear.





Option 1 continued

Describe and respond to the infant's vocalizations and/or gestures, paying particular attention to any gentle touches. Example: "You touched the teddy bear's soft fur. You used gentle touches with our teddy bear friend."]

RECAP: *[Briefly describe highlights of the interaction. Example: "We had fun with our teddy bear friend! You touched the teddy bear's soft fur. You used gentle touches on the teddy bear's head. You used gentle touches on the teddy bear's arm."]*



Birth–12 Months

Option 2 Informal Gathering



Skill and Goal

Social interaction skills

Older infants participate in guided play with teddy bears focused on gentle touches.



Key Concepts

Teddy bear
Touch
Gentle



Materials Needed

Teddy bears—1 per infant and caregiver



Also Promotes

Communication/Language
Physical/Health

Invite two infants to play with you and the teddy bears. Encourage the infants to sit near one another. Give each infant a bear to touch and hold. Use the following strategies to encourage gentle touches with the teddy bears:

- Demonstrate gentle touches with your bear and encourage the infants to imitate your actions. Example: “My teddy bear has a soft head. I am using a gentle touch to pat my teddy bear’s head. Can you pat your teddy bear’s head with gentle touches?”
- Recognize any gentle touches. Example: “Dylan is feeling the teddy bear’s soft fur. Dylan, you are using gentle touches with your teddy bear.”
- Watch for opportunities to encourage gentle touches between infants. Example: “Kinsley, you are patting Dylan’s arm. You are using gentle touches with Dylan! You are watching Dylan play with his teddy bear.”



If the infants remain interested in the bears, invite them to gently rock their bears back and forth. You may wish to sing a soft lullaby. At the conclusion of the song, announce that it is time for the bears to go to sleep. Show the infants how to gently place the bears in a basket or on a shelf. Acknowledge each infant’s efforts to use gentle touches. Example: “Kinsley, you hugged your teddy bear gently. Then you rocked your teddy bear to sleep! Night night teddy bears!”

👁️ What to Look For—Options 1–2

Some infants will use gentle touch with occasional prompts, whereas others may need more frequent reminders. Not surprisingly, a gentle touch will be challenging for infants to use if their usual pattern of play with toys is rougher. Repeatedly demonstrating a simple act of gently patting a teddy bear may be appropriate to pursue with some infants. Promptly and strongly reinforce an infant’s imitations of gentle treatment of a teddy bear.

📊 More Scaffolding Tips—Options 1–2

Extra support ■ Limiting Option 2 to two infants provides time and space for individualized attention. ■ Some infants may not like being touched by others. Acknowledge and respect an infant’s preferences for touch.



Enrichment ■ Option 2 may be offered with soft animal toys. ■ Provide opportunities for older infants to touch one another in gentle ways, such as holding hands and touching palms similar to a “high five.” ■ Encourage infants to say “no,” or shake their head “no,” when they do not like a touch from another infant.



Interest Area

Materials Needed: soft toys

Provide teddy bears, soft toy animals, or other types of soft toys for infants to play with as you acknowledge and encourage positive interactions with the toys, and with other infants. Lead older infants in simple finger plays that involve gently touching the fingers of our own hands. Also, lead children in gently clapping their hands together. Emphasize the word gentle.



Family Child Care

Materials Needed: none

Invite children in your care to participate in a rhyme or song that involves touch. Familiar nursery rhymes, such as “Ring Around the Rosie” (holding hands) or “London Bridge” (two children hold hands in an arch for others to pass underneath), are possibilities. Encourage children to use gentle touches during the rhymes. Infants may enjoy rhymes or games that involve touch, such as *Pat-a-Cake* or *This Little Piggy*.



Birth–12 Months

Option 1 One-to-One



Skill and Goal Fine motor development

A young infant practices eye-hand coordination while reaching for and grasping novel items.



Key Concepts

Hold
Reach



Materials Needed

Sock rattles
Small cloth toys



Also Promotes

Cognitive
Communication/Language

Sit on the floor facing a young infant who is on his/her back and ready to play. Greet the infant by name and present a soft toy he/she can grasp with two hands.

Cheerfully encourage the infant to hold the toy. If the infant shows interest in continuing to interact with you (or on another day), put colorful socks or sock rattles on the infant. Encourage the infant to grab his/her feet. Talk with the infant about his/her reaching and holding. If an infant is not receptive to holding the object or reaching for his/her feet, hold the infant in your lap to engage in a back-and-forth interaction of making sounds and looking at one another. Present the toy again when the infant appears ready.



👁️ What to Look For—Option 1

The brief (probably 30–60 seconds) sets of actions suggested in this plan offer support for the infant’s eye-hand coordination. An infant’s eyes and hands begin working together in the first few months of life and become gradually more refined as the infant grows. A nonmobile infant will usually work hard to visually track objects you hold and move slowly from side to side. At about three months, the infant may begin to extend his/her arms toward a toy or other appealing objects.

The way you respond to the infant shapes the activity. The experience is enriched for the infant when you talk with the infant during the activity and describe his/her actions. Use reassuring tones and words to talk with the infant.

📈 More Scaffolding Tips—Option 1

Extra support ■ Lightly touch the infant’s feet and hands as you name them. “Here are your little feet, Kier!”

Enrichment ■ Notice changes in the nonmobile infants as you present this activity over the next couple of weeks. Add variety with different toys.



Birth–12 Months

■ **Be Prepared:** Toy possibilities include OBall® Musical Toy and Jingle and Shake Pal.

Option 2 One-to-One



Skill and Goal

Fine motor development

An older infant practices using thumb and finger separately while playing with a musical toy that has holes.



Key Concepts

Hole
Finger



Materials Needed

Musical toy with holes (see Be Prepared)



Also Promotes

Cognitive

BEGIN: [*Sit on the floor facing a mobile infant and invite him/her to play with the musical toy. Greet the infant by name and place the toy within easy reach. Encourage the infant to explore the toy on his/her own. The novel toy with the sound maker inside will almost certainly capture the infant's interest.*]



EXPLAIN: We have a toy with many holes.

[*Point to the toy.*]

Let's find out about this toy. I see a little ball inside.

[*Point to the small ball inside the toy.*]

ACT: [*Observe and describe how the infant handles the toy. Example: "You are shaking the toy. The little ball makes a musical sound." Pause for the infant's reaction.*]

An infant may hold the toy with one hand and use his/her pointer finger on the opposite hand to poke the little ball. Talk about the infant's actions. Emphasize "your finger."

Some infants may be interested in moving the small rings on the side of the musical toy. Touch one small ring with one finger and make it move. Encourage the infant to touch the rings with one finger.

Continue talking with the infant about the toy with the ball inside as long as he/she remains interested.

Acknowledge persistence in exploring the toy. Example: "You are really trying to move the little ball with your finger."

RECAP: [*Describe the toy and what happened. Example: "We played with a toy that makes sounds. Our toy has holes. You used one finger to poke the ball inside. You shook the toy and moved the little rings on the side. We heard sounds when the ball moved."*]

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

The activity option supports an infant's emerging skill in isolating use of the pointer finger. At about eight months, infants begin to use the thumb and pointer finger separately from the rest of the hand. Infants will enjoy poking one finger into a toy with holes in this activity.

Before an infant can differentiate finger use, he/she typically uses a raking motion, with all fingers at the same time, to grasp small objects. The raking action strengthens fingers and develops coordination. Infants generally hold objects with their whole hand, and reach with either the left or right hand before more refined hand motions emerge. Exploring objects with two hands is supported by the ability to sit with good balance.

To an infant, it may seem the little ball can come out of the musical toy. Some infants may use fingers to poke and move the ball little ball inside, intent on freeing it. Allow the infant time to manipulate the toy on his/her own. Talk about the toy and the infant's actions. Example: "You are poking the little ball with your finger and making it move inside the toy. The little ball is inside the toy."

📈 More Scaffolding Tips—Option 2

Extra support ■ Encourage an infant to point to the eyes on the musical toy.

Enrichment ■ Demonstrate spinning the rings on the side of the toy. Encourage the infant to move the rings with his/her fingers. ■ Present a toy phone and encourage the infant to push buttons using one index finger. ■ The activity can be adapted for use with 2–3 infants if each has the recommended toy.



Birth–12 Months

Option 3 Informal Gathering



Skill and Goal

Fine motor development

Older infants practice using thumb and finger separately with a novel toy that offers finger holes and a sock rattle inside.



Key Concepts

Finger



Materials Needed

OBalls®—1 per infant (see Be Prepared)
Sock rattles—1 per infant (see Be Prepared)



Also Promotes

Cognitive
Self-Regulation

Be Prepared: This activity is for infants who enjoyed Option 2 and are ready for a fun challenge. Prepare one OBall® for each infant by putting one sock rattle inside. Wiggle the sock through one hole and poke it into the middle of the toy with your finger.

Sit on the floor facing the infants during a play period. Some infants may use one finger to simply touch the sock, and some infants may work to remove it. Talk with the infants about the OBall®. Acknowledge each infant for using their fingers to reach into the OBall®. Repeated experiences handling objects of various sizes and shapes begin to refine an infant’s eye-hand coordination and skill.



👁️ What to Look For—Option 3

You may notice different responses to the OBall®, depending upon the development and interests of each infant. Infants who stand and walk may focus on carrying or throwing the ball. Some infants will be fascinated by the sock inside. Infants who have developed an efficient way to poke one finger into a hole may be very interested in touching the sock. If an infant removes the sock from the ball, enthusiastically recognize his/her persistence. Put the sock back into the ball or keep it in your pocket to put away later. Young infants who are at a stage of watching and reaching for toys may enjoy sitting on your lap with one OBall®. Vary your responses to the infants based upon their actions. Some infants may enjoy simply passing the ball back and forth to you. You can give your attention to one infant at a time during the activity, not unlike a waiter serving three people at one table.

📈 More Scaffolding Tips—Option 3

Extra support ■ To draw attention to the sock rattle, put your finger in the hole and describe how the sock rattle moves when you touch it. ■ If the infant seems interested, but too challenged to reach the sock, pull a small portion of the sock out of a hole of the OBall®.

Enrichment ■ Offer a sock rattle and an empty OBall®. Encourage the infant to push the sock rattle into a hole.



Interest Area

Materials Needed: several balls (such as whiffle balls), basket, muffin pan, toys with buttons (such as a toy phone)

Set up a space where nonmobile infants can move freely while learning to control their bodies through rolling and reaching. Include some (but not too many) different types of colorful toys. Sit on the floor and describe infants' actions.

Place several balls in a basket for early-mobile infants to remove. A muffin pan on a low surface is a good container for balls. Infants who grasp with their whole hand can remove the toys from the muffin pan. Provide whiffle-type balls with holes along with a variety of other infant balls in several areas of the room

Mobile infants will enjoy toys with buttons, such as the toy phone. Some infants may use a hand to press the buttons, and others may push a button with one index finger. The phone button serves as a target for the visually guided index finger.



Family Child Care

Materials Needed: nonbreakable bottles, snap-link beads, pegboards, muffin pan

In addition to offering the activity options for infants, toddlers may enjoy putting their pointer fingers into nonbreakable bottles or poking their fingers into the holes of snap-link beads.

Preschool-age and older children will benefit from playing with pegboards. Younger infants will enjoy being held and offered small toys to hold. Infants who creep will enjoy getting ahold of objects you place into a muffin pan. Infants are not expected to return the items to the pan.

