



**Communication/  
Language**

**Exploring Sounds**

**Option 1** (OO) An infant listens to the sounds of two farm animal puppets.

**Option 2** (OO) An older infant listens to the sounds of four farm animal puppets, with opportunities to engage in pretend feeding of farm animals and making their sounds.



**Cognitive**

**Exploring Objects**

**Option 1** (OO) A young infant watches and listens to a sound-making toy, with opportunities to touch and manipulate the toy.

**Option 2** (OO) An older infant pushes on part of a toy and sees or hears an effect.

**Option 3** (OO) An older infant helps build a block tower and push it over.



**Self-Regulation**

**Focusing and Remembering**

**Option 1** (OO) An infant watches a caregiver manipulate and hide a toy.

**Option 2** (OO) An older infant hides a toy under a cup for a caregiver to find.



**Social-Emotional**

**Interacting with Others**

**Option 1** (IG) Young infants play with toys close to one another.

**Option 2** (IG) Older infants play alongside each other using shared materials, with guided opportunities to notice what others are doing.



**Physical/Health**

**Moving Our Bodies**

**Option 1** (OO) A young infant experiences gentle, guided movements of arms and legs.

**Option 2** (OO) An infant scoots or crawls to a set of toys and grasps one of the toys.

**Option 3** (IG) Older infants crawl while pretending to be an animal featured in a book.

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



## Birth–12 Months

### Option 1 One-to-One



#### Skill and Goal

**Receptive language**  
**Expressive language**  
**Awareness of differences in sounds**

An infant listens to the sounds of two farm animal puppets.



#### Key Concepts

Listen  
Sound



#### Materials Needed

2 animal puppets (see Be Prepared)



#### Also Promotes

Cognitive  
Physical/Health

**Be Prepared:** This activity is for an infant who can sit independently or with support. One possible source of animal puppets is the Get Ready Kids Bigmouth Farm Puppet Set, which includes a pig, cow, duck, and horse, each with embroidered eyes. The activity plan below uses a pig and a cow.

Sit across from the infant and place the puppets behind you, out of the infant's view.

Explain that two farm animals are going to visit today. Slowly introduce one of the puppets from behind your back. Keep the puppet closer to you than to the infant and use your voice, not a puppet voice, to say the name of the animal. Encourage the infant to listen to the sound made by the animal. Point to your ear when you say "listen." Make the sound of the animal and then repeat the sound as you move the puppet's head. Example: "This is a pig. The pig is our friend. A pig says 'oink, oink. Oink, oink.'"

Put the puppet on the floor next to you or behind you. Slowly introduce the other puppet, using the same approach. Example: "Here is another animal friend. This is a cow. The cow is our friend. A cow says 'moo, moo. Moo, moo.'"

Then slowly present the two puppets together, one on each of your hands. Move the head of each puppet as the puppets take turns making their sound. "Oink, oink. Moo, moo. Oink, oink. Moo, moo." Use your voice to make a distinctive animal sound. Example: a faster, higher-pitched "oink, oink," and a drawn out "moo, moo" with a lower voice.

Describe the infant's reaction to the animal sounds. You may wish to invite the infant to join you in making an animal sound and/or saying the name of the animal. If the infant reaches for a puppet, hold the puppet in your open hand so the infant can touch or grasp it. Avoid putting the puppet in the infant's hand.

If the infant remains interested in the puppets, you may wish to play a *Peekaboo* game by hiding a puppet briefly behind your back and saying the animal's sound when it appears. You also might make up a short story about one or both puppets that includes the infant's name. Example: "Once upon a time Mason had a farm! Mason had a pig on his farm! Mason's pig says 'oink, oink!'"

Conclude the activity with a brief description of what happened, including the infant's actions and the sounds made by the two animal puppets.



## Birth–12 Months

### Option 2 One-to-One



#### Skill and Goal

Receptive language

Expressive language

Awareness of differences  
in sounds

An older infant listens to the sounds of four farm animal puppets, with opportunities to engage in pretend feeding of farm animals and making their sounds.



#### Key Concepts

Pretend

Listen

Sound



#### Materials Needed

4 animal puppets (see Be Prepared)

Small bowl

Cloth bag



#### Also Promotes

Cognitive

Physical/Health

**Be Prepared:** This activity is for an infant who can readily grasp and manipulate a small object. One possible source of animal puppets is the Get Ready Kids Bigmouth Farm Puppet Set, which includes a pig, cow, duck, and horse, each with embroidered eyes. Place the puppets in the cloth bag.

Sit across from the infant with the bag of animal puppets next to you. Explain that some farm animals are going to visit today. Slowly remove one of the puppets from the bag and show it to the infant. Keep the puppet closer to you than to the infant and use your voice, not a puppet voice, to say the name of the animal. Encourage the infant to listen to the sound made by the animal. Point to your ear when you say “listen.” Make the sound of the animal and then repeat the sound as you move the puppet’s head. Example: “This is a duck. The duck is our friend. A duck says ‘quack, quack. Quack, quack.’”



Put the puppet on the floor next to you. Slowly introduce a second puppet, using the same approach. Example: “Here is another animal friend. This is a cow. The cow is our friend. A cow says ‘moo, moo. Moo, moo.’”

Then present the two just-introduced puppets together, one on each of your hands. Move the head of each puppet as the puppets take turns making their sound. “Quack, quack. Moo, moo. Quack, quack. Moo, moo.” Use your voice to make a distinctive animal sound. Example: a faster ‘quack, quack,’ and slower ‘moo, moo.’ Describe the infant’s reaction to the animal sounds. Remind the infant we are listening to sounds. Point again to your ear when you emphasize listen.

You may wish to invite the infant to join you in making an animal sound and/or saying the name of the animal. If the infant reaches for a puppet, hold the puppet in your open hand so the infant can touch or grasp it. Avoid putting the puppet in the infant’s hand.

Put the two puppets on the floor to your side. Introduce two more animal puppets from your bag, one at a time, using the approach described above. Include the use of both puppets at the same time, so the infant has the experience of hearing two different animal sounds back to back.

If the infant remains interested in the puppets, engage the infant in pretending to feed one or more of the animal puppets. Encourage the infant to hold the puppet or hold the bowl. The puppet’s head can be put close to



the bowl in pretend eating. Make the animal's sound during or at the end of the feeding. Example: "Moo, moo" (in animal voice). "Our cow puppet liked the food! Our cow is saying 'moo, moo'" (in your voice).

Conclude the activity with a brief description of what happened, including the infant's actions and the sounds made by the four animal puppets. Remind the infant that we listened to sounds. Point to your ear when you say "listen."

### What to Look For—Options 1–2

The activity options extend and refine the Block 23 attention to pictures and sounds of farm animals. The current options focus on a smaller number of animals and offer opportunities for an infant to repeatedly hear two different animal sounds back to back. Infants are not expected to learn the sounds made by specific types of animals. At a more general level, the puppets can help infants develop an early awareness that different kinds of things (such as farm animals), make different kinds of sounds. Infants' daily experiences actively support this idea, of course, through frequent exposure to different voices at home and in a child development center. Encouraging infants to imitate different sounds (or part of a sound) can support awareness of sound differences. Older infants may enjoy saying the name (or part of the name) of a familiar animal.

Infants are likely to differ in the extent to which they key in on the animal sounds. For younger infants especially, the novelty of puppets and the features of different puppets may be the main attraction of an activity.

Although most infants enjoy puppets, watch for signs of uncertainty about a puppet and promptly adapt your use of a puppet. You may wish to create more physical distance between the infant and the puppet, use only one puppet at a time, and/or assure the infant with your own voice (not the puppet's voice) that you are still present. Put away the puppet if the infant seems frightened. As indicated in the Extra Support tips, use the puppet to make an animal sound. At this young age, avoid using the puppet as a character who talks to the infant.

### More Scaffolding Tips—Options 1–2

**Extra support** ■ Slowly animate the puppet's head when it makes its sound. This can support an infant's awareness of the part of the animal's body that produces sound. Avoid dramatic movements of the puppet that might startle an infant. Use the puppet for making the appropriate animal sound. Use your voice, not an animal puppet voice, for talking with the infant. ■ Use three puppets in Option 2 if you anticipate four may be too many. One animal that seems to be of interest to the infant can be used in both sets of sound comparisons. Example: Pig and cow. Duck and cow.

**Enrichment** ■ Offer one bowl for each puppet's pretend eating time. Play alongside the infant in feeding two animals (one animal each) at the same time.



### Interest Area

**Materials Needed:** several age-appropriate puppets

Offer puppets for infants to play with during floor time. Infants will appreciate your presence when they play with a puppet. Offer assistance to an infant who wants to place his/her own hand/arm into a puppet. Watch the infants' play and promptly provide props that might extend or enrich their interests.



### Family Child Care

**Materials Needed:** assortment of puppets

Children of all ages can enjoy and benefit from interactions with puppets. You may use puppets to announce transitions to older children, offer entertainment while waiting, support social interactions, and enhance play experiences. Invite older children to use puppets to act out familiar routines, such as washing hands. Older children may enjoy creating a short puppet show for toddlers and infants to watch.



## Birth–12 Months

### Option 1 One-to-One



#### Skill and Goal

##### Object inquiry skills

A young infant watches and listens to a sound-making toy, with opportunities to touch and manipulate the toy.



#### Key Concepts

Watch  
Move  
Sound



#### Materials Needed

Simple sound-making toy  
(see Be Prepared)



#### Also Promotes

Physical/Health  
Communication/Language



#### Optional Reading

*I Hear* by Helen Oxenbury

**Be Prepared:** Secure a rattle or other small toy that makes a sound when moved. A toy in a bold color(s) will enhance its appeal.

**BEGIN:** [*Hold the infant in your arms so he/she is looking up at you. Say the infant's name and talk quietly about what is happening. Example: "Hi, Shivani. You are awake now and looking around."*]

*Hold the rattle about 12 inches from the infant.]*

**ACT:** [*Hold the toy steady for the infant to see. Then move the toy to create a gentle sound. Use simple, clear words to describe the toy. Examples: "Our rattle is pretty." "We hear a little sound when the rattle moves."*]

*Move the rattle slowly to one side of the infant and then to the other. Encourage the infant to follow the rattle by making a light noise with it periodically and by saying the infant's name. Describe the infant's actions. Example: "You are watching our rattle. Our rattle is moving."*

*Hold the rattle close to the infant's hand. If the infant grasps the rattle, describe the movements, such as shaking it or bringing it to his/her mouth. Example: "You moved the rattle and made a little sound."*

*If the infant continues to look at the rattle, talk about what he/she sees. Acknowledge the infant's gaze, movements, and/or sounds.]*

**RECAP:** [*Briefly describe the infant's reactions to the toy. Example: "You looked at our rattle. You listened when the little rattle made a sound. You touched the rattle with your finger."]*]



### 👁️ What to Look For—Option 1

Looking at an object and visually following its movements are important ways to explore something. In the current activity, it is helpful to point out through your actions and words that a simple movement with the toy, such as shaking a rattle, can produce a sound. Early awareness of a cause-effect connection is more powerful if the infant provides the movement, but infant manipulation of a toy should not be rushed. Provide an opportunity for the infant to grasp and move the toy, but refrain from physically putting the infant's hand(s) on the toy.

**Option 1 continued** More Scaffolding Tips—Option 1

**Extra support** ■ Repeat part of the activity at diapering time. Hold one hand on the infant and present a small rattle before diapering the infant.

**Enrichment** ■ If the infant enjoys manipulating the toy and seems aware of the result, provide another similar toy for the infant to explore, such as a rattle that is a slightly different shape.

## Birth–12 Months

### Option 2 One-to-One



#### Skill and Goal

##### Object inquiry skills

An older infant pushes on part of a toy and sees or hears an effect.



#### Key Concepts

Push



#### Materials Needed

Action toy (see Be Prepared)



#### Also Promotes

Physical/Health

Communication/Language

**Be Prepared:** This activity is for an infant who can sit independently or with support. Select a toy that quickly responds to something an infant does with it. Example: a toy telephone that makes a sound or lights up when its buttons are pushed.



Sit on the floor next to the infant and place the toy on the floor in front of the infant. Provide time for the infant to react to the toy. Encourage the infant to push buttons (or whatever is the appropriate part) on the toy, if necessary. As soon as the infant acts on the toy with a result, describe in simple words how the infant pushed part of the toy and then something happened. Example: “You pushed this button and the phone made a sound!” Emphasize the connection between the infant’s push and what happened with the toy. Some toys require an additional action, such as putting a phone receiver to an ear so the sounds can be easily heard.

Repeat the process if the infant remains interested. A more complex toy, such as different sounds associated with different buttons, provides additional things for the infant to explore. Provide guidance, if necessary.

The intent of the activity is to promote the infant’s beginning understanding of cause and effect. If you use a toy phone and the infant shows interest in using the phone for its intended purpose (talking), pretend you are talking to the infant on a pretend phone. Use the infant’s name and smile to encourage vocalizations. Say a few words and then wait for the infant to respond.

### What to Look For—Option 2

An infant may have experience with the toy you select. Your role in the activity is to help the infant strengthen his/her awareness of the cause-and-effect connections with the toy. A simple comment from you, as suggested in the activity plan, can be a valuable experience for an infant. There also may be an opportunity to strengthen motor development through play with the toy. Example: An infant may use his/her whole hand to push a button that responds better to a finger or two fingers. Demonstration may be helpful here.

### More Scaffolding Tips—Option 2

**Extra support** ■ Demonstrate how to push a button (or pertinent part of the toy) with your finger. ■ Offer an alternative sound-making toy if the toy you select is not of interest to the infant.

**Enrichment** ■ Support an infant’s continued play with the toy. Examples: pretend talking on a phone; occasionally push a button to cause something to happen.





## Birth–12 Months

### Option 3 One-to-One



#### Skill and Goal

##### Object inquiry skills

An older infant helps build a block tower and push it over.



#### Key Concepts

Push  
Fall down



#### Materials Needed

6 soft blocks



#### Also Promotes

Communication/Language  
Self-Regulation



#### Optional Reading

*All Fall Down* by Helen Oxenbury

Sit on the floor facing a mobile infant and invite him/her to play with soft blocks. Explain that we can stack our blocks and knock them down. Demonstrate and describe how to place one block on top of another. Encourage the infant to stack two blocks. If the infant's block falls, encourage him/her to try again. Provide a little bit of help so the infant can be successful.

If the infant has difficulty placing a block on top of one other block, create a platform with four blocks and invite the infant to put blocks on the top. Describe the infant's actions and offer encouragement.

Encourage the infant to push over the stack of blocks. Give a little clap and say "You made the blocks fall down." Repeat the stacking process if the infant remains interested.



### 👁️ What to Look For—Option 3

The action of pushing over the blocks is enjoyable and provides visible evidence of cause and effect. Look for opportunities to emphasize that the infant's push caused the blocks to fall down. The key words are push and fall down. This activity generally holds an infant's attention. Some infants may help you stack the blocks, and some infants may simply watch you create a tower. There are important benefits to both cognitive and motor development from helping build the tower, but readiness for this aspect of the activity will vary considerably. As suggested in an Enrichment tip, it is easy to add challenge to the tower-building part of the activity, whether the infant watches or contributes to the creation of a tower.

An infant may be eager to push over blocks before a tower is fully built. Causing blocks to tumble supports the cognitive focus of this activity. After several rounds of blocks being pushed over before a tower is complete, you may wish to help the infant with the self-regulation task of waiting until a tower is built. The waiting may be easier for an infant to manage if he/she contributes to the tower building and if you offer little progress reports, such as "One more block goes on" and "Now another block." You also may want to consider building a shorter tower.

**Option 3 continued** More Scaffolding Tips—Option 3

**Extra support** ■ Use larger blocks the infants can pick up with two hands. ■ Use three large blocks only for the first tower.

**Enrichment** ■ Add several more blocks to a repeated stacking process and emphasize the word “more.”  
■ Share the Optional Reading book, *All Fall Down*.

**Interest Area**

**Materials Needed:** sound-producing toys (such as rattles and bells), soft and rigid containers, push toys (such as large, lightweight vehicles), tote bag, different small items for tote bag and containers

Arrange different kinds of rattles and bells within easy reach of infants. Extend the exploration of cause (actions) and effects by providing toys that infants can use to fill, and then dump, from soft and rigid containers. Also provide toys for crawling that infants may push, such as large, lightweight vehicles. Place several different items into a tote and encourage older infants to take out the objects. Use a play mat to create a small incline. Encourage mobile infants to roll balls or cars down the incline.

**Family Child Care**

**Materials Needed:** soft blocks

Engage an older toddler or preschool-age child in helping an infant build a tower (Option 3). Urge the older helper to tell how he/she is building the tower, and to let the infant push over the tower.



## Birth–12 Months

### Option 1 One-to-One



#### Skill and Goal

##### Executive function

An infant watches a caregiver manipulate and hide a toy.



#### Key Concepts

Watch  
Find



#### Materials Needed

Small toy  
2 large nesting cups



#### Also Promotes

Cognitive  
Physical/Health

Invite an infant who can sit independently or with support to join you for a game of hiding a toy. Sit facing the infant. Introduce the small toy. Invite the infant to hold and explore the toy for a few moments. Then introduce one cup and place it face (opening) down in front of the infant.

Explain that you are going to hide the toy under the cup. Encourage the infant to watch what you do with the toy. With deliberate movements in view of the infant, place the toy under the cup with a portion of the toy showing for the infant to see. Invite the infant to find the toy. Show excitement if the infant reaches for or gazes at the toy.

Hide the toy again with the infant watching, this time completely placing the toy under the cup. Encourage the infant to watch and then find the hidden toy. If the infant does not reveal the toy, lift the cup with enthusiasm and show excitement over finding the toy.

If the infant remains interested, add the second cup to the activity. Place both cups in front of the infant. Explain that you are going to hide the toy under one of the cups. With deliberate actions, place the toy under the same cup as before. Hide the toy completely or leave a portion of the toy in view, depending on the infant's reactions to the hidden toy in the first round. Show excitement and enthusiasm as the toy is revealed. Example: "Wow! You looked under one cup. Then you looked under the other cup. You found the elephant!"

Offer several more exchanges if the infant remains interested. Acknowledge the infant's focus during the activity. Example: "You watched me hide the toy, Samantha. You looked under the cups. You found the toy! Thank you for playing with me."





## Birth–12 Months

### Option 2 One-to-One



#### Skill and Goal

##### Executive function

An older infant hides a toy under a cup for a caregiver to find.



#### Key Concepts

Watch  
Hide



#### Materials Needed

Small toy  
Two large nesting cups



#### Also Promotes

Cognitive  
Physical/Health

**Be Prepared:** This activity is for an infant who can sit independently and can readily grasp and manipulate a small object.



Invite the infant to join you to play a game of hiding a toy. Sit facing the infant with a smile. Introduce the toy. Encourage the infant to hold and move the toy. Introduce the two cups. Place both face (opening) down in front of the infant. Explain that you are going to hide the toy under one of the cups for the infant to find. Ask the infant if he/she is ready for you to hide the toy. Encourage the infant to watch your movements as you place the toy underneath one of the cups. Leave a portion of the toy in view. Invite the infant to find the toy. Example: “You watched me hide the toy. You found the toy!” Show excitement as the toy is revealed. Repeat the hiding and finding process, this time with the toy fully hidden.

Invite the infant to hide the toy under one of the cups. Watch the infant’s actions. After the toy is hidden, announce you are going to look for the toy. Talk about your search. Example: “I watched you hide the toy. I remember where you put the toy. The toy is under this cup!” Again, express enthusiasm over finding the toy.

Offer another round of the infant hiding the toy, if the infant seems interested. Conclude the activity by recognizing the infant’s focus during the activity. Example: “You watched me hide the toy. Then I watched you hide the toy. We remembered where the toy was hiding!”

### 👁️ What to Look For—Options 1–2

The activity options promote the importance of watching what happens to an object. Hiding the toy when the infant or you are not watching would defeat this purpose. The activities emphasize watching more than remembering, although the use of two cups adds an element of remembering to the activity. The infant’s role in placing the toy under a cup in Option 2 is a valuable way to strengthen awareness of why we watch what happens to something. Some infants in Option 2 may find it challenging to hide the toy independently and will likely welcome your verbal support and gestures for what to do.

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

**Extra support** ■ Adjust how much of the hidden toy is exposed (more, less, none), based on the infant’s approach to the activity.

**Enrichment** ■ If an infant readily identifies the hidden toy, or hides the toy for you to find, introduce a third cup to the activity.



### Interest Area

**Materials Needed:** several containers of different types and sizes, assortment of small toys

Extend Options 1 and/or 2 to infants in an informal gathering. Use containers other than the nesting cups used in the activity options. Use several different toys, hiding one at a time. Pay close attention to infants' reactions so you can determine how much of a toy to reveal when placing it under a container. Invite older infants to hide a toy (one each) for you to find. Emphasize the importance of watching. Younger infants will enjoy watching older infants hide and find a toy.



### Family Child Care

**Materials Needed:** see description

Children of all ages enjoy hiding and finding objects. School-age children may welcome opportunities to play a memory board game with a peer. Offer Option 2 to preschool-age children and older toddlers, with the additional practice of not looking when a toy is hidden. This emphasizes remembering skills and strengthens the development of object permanence.



## Birth–12 Months

### Option 1 Informal Gathering



#### Skill and Goal

##### Social interaction skills

Young infants play with toys close to one another.



#### Key Concepts

Play



#### Materials Needed

Several toys (see Be Prepared)



#### Also Promotes

Communication/Language  
Physical/Health

**Be Prepared:** This activity is for infants who are learning to reach and/or grasp. Select 2–4 toys that will be visually interesting to infants in this activity and appealing to touch or grasp. Your toy selection will probably vary across infants.

**BEGIN:** [*Gently place two infants on their tummies, facing one another. Arrange several toys between the infants, close enough for each infant to reach.*]

**ACT:** [*Encourage each infant to reach for and grasp a toy of interest. Move a toy(s) if an infant is having difficulty reaching it.*]

*Describe each infant's actions, including toy explorations and an infant paying attention to the other infant. Examples: "Manuel is playing with a rattle. He is moving the rattle." "Jasmine, you are watching Manuel. You are smiling!"*

*Move an infant to another activity if he/she shows discomfort or fussiness. Notice whether the remaining infant seems interested in relocating, too.]*

**RECAP:** [*Briefly describe highlights of the play, including any awareness of one another. Example: "Jasmine and Manuel, you played with fun toys. Manuel, you watched Jasmine play. You smiled at Jasmine."*]

## Birth–12 Months

### Option 2 Informal Gathering



#### Skill and Goal

##### Social interaction skills

Older infants play alongside each other using shared materials, with guided opportunities to notice what others are doing.



#### Key Concepts

Play  
Blocks



#### Materials Needed

Soft building blocks  
Basket or tub



#### Also Promotes

Communication/Language  
Physical/Health

**Be Prepared:** This activity is for infants who can sit independently and reach and grasp small items. Place most of the blocks in the basket. Arrange the remaining blocks in an interesting display on the floor.



Invite 2–4 infants to join you on the floor to play with blocks. Introduce the materials by pointing to and describing the display of blocks you created and by showing there are more blocks in the basket. Place the basket in a central location, near your block creation.

Invite the infants to play with the blocks.

Encourage each infant to play as he/she desires. This activity offers opportunities for parallel play, and is not intended to be a group effort. Offer prompts that support each infant's play.



As the infants play, encourage awareness of one another's actions without interrupting or directing the play. Example: "Our friend Abigail is dumping the blocks out of the basket. Look at all the blocks we can play with!"

Point out any instances of an infant paying attention to another infant's efforts. Example: "Abigail, you are watching Elias put his blocks in a line."

### What to Look For—Options 1–2

The activity options extend prior offerings of play opportunities designed to help an infant notice what another infant is doing. The structure of the two activity options sets the stage for an infant to notice a peer(s), which is an important early skill in getting along well with others. Whether an infant notices another infant is influenced by many factors a caregiver cannot manage without the risk of disrupting the play. The play itself can be beneficial without an infant noticing what another infant is doing.

Option 2 offers more potential challenge than the similar Option 2 in Block 24 by involving more than two infants. Although there should be a sufficient number of blocks to meet each infant's interests, the activity may provide early experiences in sharing materials. Draw attention to an infant who shows



interest in a peer(s) by watching or imitating another's actions with the materials. Interactions among infants are more important than how the blocks are used.

### More Scaffolding Tips—Options 1–2

**Extra support** ■ In Option 1, remember to position yourself so you can see the facial expressions of each infant. ■ If block sharing is an issue in Option 2, provide each infant with a set of blocks to play with.

**Enrichment** ■ Provide several people or animal figures with Option 2 if it seems an infant would like to put a different type of object on top of a block.



#### Interest Area

**Materials Needed:** assortment of blocks

Extend Option 2 by providing different types of blocks for infants to explore freely. Briefly describe what each infant is doing with the blocks. Point or gesture as part of communicating with infants. Recognize all forms of interaction with the blocks.



#### Family Child Care

**Materials Needed:** assortment of blocks arranged by age level, toy vehicles, animal and people figures

Toddlers and preschool-age children enjoy playing with blocks and typically appreciate the availability of materials that can enrich the play, including toys suggested here. Parallel play may be most prevalent with blocks at this age, but there may be opportunities to suggest joint constructions or theme-based play involving several older children.





## Birth–12 Months

### Option 1 One-to-One



#### Skill and Goal

##### Gross motor development

A young infant experiences gentle, guided movements of arms and legs.



#### Key Concepts

Moves

Up

Down



#### Materials Needed

None



#### Also Promotes

Communication/Language

Place a non-mobile infant on his/her back and sit on the floor facing the infant. Talk to the infant and use his/her name. Make eye contact, offer big smiles, and help the infant become comfortable. Hold the infant's feet in your hands and describe his/her feet or shoes. Slightly wiggle the infant's feet but do not tickle.

Tell the infant you are going to move his/her feet, legs, and arms. Do the following to help the infant strengthen awareness of his/her body. All movements are to be done gently and within a range that is completely comfortable to the infant.

- Playfully move the infant's legs while watching his/her reaction. Left leg up and down slowly. Repeat. Then right leg up and down slowly. Repeat. Sing or say the following with each leg movement: "(Infant's name)'s leg moves up. (Infant's name)'s leg moves down."
- If the infant remains interested, repeat the above with the infant's arms. Left arm up and down slowly. Repeat. Right arm up and down slowly. Repeat. Say or sing the following with each arm movement: "(Infant's name)'s arm moves up. (Infant's name)'s arm moves down."
- Hold the infant's feet in your hands and gently bend one knee into his/her body. Alternate bending the legs, as if the infant is pedaling a bicycle. With each movement, say or sing a variation of the phrase suggested above.
- Pause between the sets of movements to talk to the infant. Constantly gauge his/her reaction to the activity. If the infant is content, continue.

### What to Look For—Option 1

This activity provides the types of movements that eventually combine into a crawling motion. Movements that occur on one side of the body (lateral movements) and movements that involve opposite sides of the body (opposition) are necessary for the body and brain to coordinate crawling actions. Some infants will enjoy the movements the first time they are introduced, whereas others may prefer a more gradual introduction of the movements, such as offering the leg movements in one session and arm movements in a later session.

**Option 1 continued****More Scaffolding Tips—Option 1**

**Extra support** ■ Spread the movements across different periods of the day when the infant is fully alert. ■ In the first use of the movements with an infant, do not repeat a movement, as suggested in the plan.

**Enrichment** ■ Add a third set of movements: Gently lift the infant's right hand and left foot together. Repeat. Gently lift the infant's left hand and right foot together. Repeat. ■ For an infant who enjoys kicking, sit on the floor facing the infant. Hold a small beach ball in position for the infant to kick or push with his/her feet.



## Birth–12 Months

### Option 2 One-to-One



#### Skill and Goal

##### Gross motor development

An infant scoots or crawls to a set of toys and grasps one of the toys.



#### Key Concepts

Scoot  
Crawl



#### Materials Needed

Familiar toy



#### Also Promotes

Cognitive  
Communication/Language

**Be Prepared:** This activity is for an infant who is beginning to scoot or crawl. Place a familiar and desirable toy, such as a soft doll or animal, in the toy truck for the infant to grasp.

**BEGIN:** [*Sit on the floor next to the infant. Place the combined toys in a position the infant can easily reach by scooting or crawling. Point to and describe the toys you have arranged. Example: “There is our monkey in the little truck!”*]

**ACT:** [*Use hand gestures and words to encourage the infant to move toward the play materials. Example: “Do you want to get the monkey?”*]

*If the infant seems hesitant to move, place the toys closer to the infant or crawl toward the toys while urging the infant to follow.*

*Describe the infant’s efforts to move along the floor. Example: “Dylan, you are scooting on your tummy. You are going to get the monkey!”*

*Describe the infant’s actions with the toys. Example: “Dylan, you pulled the monkey out of the bus.”*

*Watch for a nonverbal signal that the infant is ready to stop the activity or wants to move to another area. Say repeatedly “all done,” or something similar, to indicate the play with the truck and toy is over. The infant may want to come closer to you for contact, such as a brief hug.]*

**RECAP:** [*Briefly describe the infant’s actions and interest in the toys. “Dylan, you had fun crawling over to the little truck. You took our monkey out of the bus. You gave the monkey a hug!”*]

### 👁️ What to Look For—Option 2

Infants generally develop their own way of crawling. Some infants may push themselves along the floor with their toes, whereas other infants may balance their weight on hands and knees. Infants who can crawl generally spend half their awake time involved in gross motor movements, and are likely to want to crawl to a different location soon after reaching the toys you arranged.

Infants are naturally curious and motivated to explore and touch. Play materials arranged in a novel way may be especially interesting to an infant. Choose play materials based on an infant’s interests and, in a follow-up offer of this activity, consider adding more materials or partially hiding some materials, as suggested in the Enrichment tip.

**Option 2 continued**

Remember that when you comment on the infant's accomplishment in reaching the toys, it is far more helpful to describe what the infant did than to simply say "good job."

**More Scaffolding Tips—Option 2**

**Extra support** ■ Sit near the toys and encourage the infant to crawl toward you. ■ Put the toy back in the truck and place it in a different reachable location so the infant can move toward it and remove it again.

**Enrichment** ■ Partially cover the familiar toy with a scarf.



## Birth–12 Months

### Option 3 Informal Gathering



#### Skill and Goal

##### Gross motor development

Older infants crawl while pretending to be an animal featured in a book.



#### Key Concepts

Move



#### Materials Needed

Big Book edition of *Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?* by Bill Martin Jr. and Eric Carle



#### Also Promotes

Communication/Language  
Social-Emotional



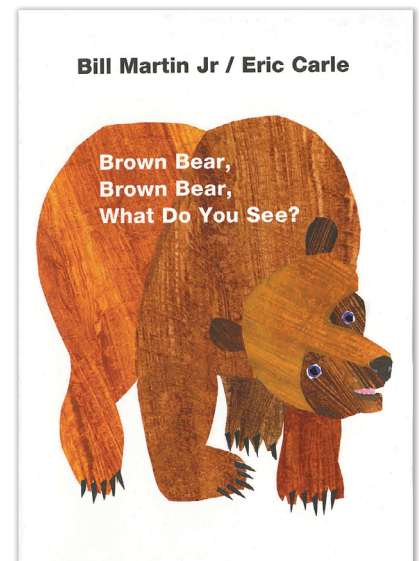
#### Optional Reading

*Polar Bear, Polar Bear, What Do You Hear?* by Bill Martin Jr. and Eric Carle

Invite mobile infants to join you in looking at a book. Share the book *Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?* by showing and describing pictures of animals that you anticipate will be of interest to the infants. Emphasize how the animals move. It is not necessary to read the book text or show all pages.

Invite infants to join you in pretending we are an animal shown in the book. Select a pictured four-legged animal that will be of interest to the infants, such as a baby lion or a baby bear. Encourage crawling around the room on all fours and pretending to be the animal. Use a simple, friendly make-believe invitation. Example: “Come on, baby bears! Let’s move around!”

Encourage the infants’ movements by enthusiastically describing how they are moving like the designated animal. After a few minutes of crawling, invite the infants to a rug or mat to look at pictures of animals. Example: “Please come with me, baby bears. Let’s look at a book.” Show and describe the picture of the animal the infants pretended to be and other animals of interest.



### 👁️ What to Look For—Option 3

Developing motor control for crawling requires tremendous effort that can be supported in a fun way in this activity. Infants will differ in their crawling skills. Crawling becomes automatic when crawling is well developed. Infants who are learning to walk are likely be interested in this activity because they often revert to crawling to get from one place to another. Developmentally, the pretend element of the activity may be challenging for many infants to embrace. Pretending to be an animal is intended to add fun to the activity, and not serve as a focused experience in imagining to be something else.

### 📊 More Scaffolding Tips—Option 3

**Extra support** ■ Offer the book-sharing segment in an area that is close to where the crawling is to occur.

**Enrichment** ■ Provide a variety of textures for the infants to crawl on, such as foam shapes intended for infants or mats with texture. ■ Rearrange pieces of infant climbing mats so there is an incline adjacent to a low surface.



### Interest Area

**Materials Needed:** play materials, balls, non-breakable pitcher

Familiar and novel materials support infants' explorations and locomotion. Consider materials used in prior ELM activity plans, such as a scarf in an O-ball®. Rotate play materials to create interest in crawling and exploring. Arrange familiar toys in novel ways for infants to discover. Example: put balls into a non-breakable pitcher. Place several toys on low surfaces where mobile infants can begin to practice pulling up to stand. Vary the play materials for infants who participate in tummy time each day.



### Family Child Care

**Materials Needed:** age-appropriate play materials, large sheets of paper, crayons, foam pool noodle

In addition to offering the activity options for infants, place play materials at different levels for toddlers and preschool-age children to find and explore. Attach paper to surfaces at different heights for coloring. Consider moving a sensory tub to the floor. Play an under-and-over game by placing a foam pool noodle (swim toy) at different heights, encouraging participation by asking "Can you go under the noodle?" and "Can you go over the noodle?"

This activity plan is informed by the following sources: Connell, G., Pirie, W., & McCarthy, C. (2016). *Move, play and learn with smart steps: Sequenced activities to build the body and the brain*. Minneapolis, MN: Free Spirit Publishing. ; California Department of Education/Child Development Division. (2012). *California infant/toddler curriculum framework*. Sacramento, CA: Author. ; Adolph, K. E., & Joh. A. S. (2007). Motor development: How infants get into the act. In A. Slater and M. Lewis. (Eds.), *Introduction to infant development* (2nd ed., pp.63-80). New York: Oxford University Press.