



**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 and toys.
- 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 and toys.
- Option 3** (OO) An older infant participates in a book sharing that includes opportunities to help manage the book and communicate about pictures of babies and toys.



Cognitive

Exploring Objects

- Option 1** (OO) A young infant watches a toy fish manipulated by a caregiver.
- Option 2** (OO) An older infant explores three different types of balls.
- Option 3** (IG) Infants participate in guided exploration of a toy inchworm.



Self-Regulation

Focusing and Remembering

- Option 1** (OO) A young infant is encouraged to persist in exploring toys in a bucket.
- Option 2** (OO) An older infant is encouraged to persist in exploring toys in a bucket.



Social-Emotional

Interacting With Others

- Option 1** (OO) A young infant participates with a caregiver in responsive interactions focused on a baby doll.
- Option 2** (OO) An infant engages in pretend play with a caregiver using a baby doll and accessories.
- Option 3** (OO) An older infant engages with a caregiver in pretend play focused on bathing a baby doll.



Physical/Health

Moving Our Bodies

- Option 1** (OO) An infant practices early locomotion to reach a desired item.
- Option 2** (OO) An older infant practices moving a desirable box as part of early locomotion.

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



Birth–12 Months

Option 1 One-to-One



Skill and Goal Receptive language Expressive language

A young infant participates in a book sharing that emphasizes listening to the caregiver's voice and looking at pictures of babies and toys.



Key Concepts

Book
Look



Materials Needed

Eyes, Nose, Toes Peekaboo!
by DK Publishing



Also Promotes

Cognitive

BEGIN: [Sit with a 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 baby?

[Pause for and acknowledge the infant's response. Example: "You are looking at the baby, Oliver.

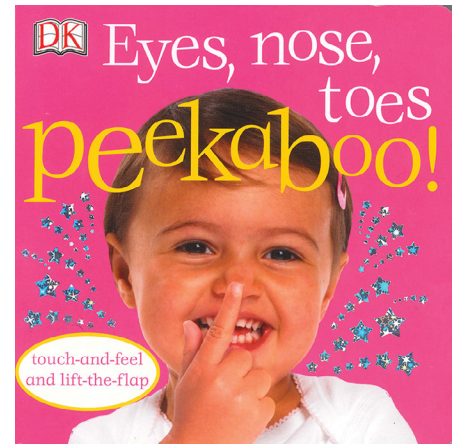
You are waving your arm! I think you are ready to read our book."]

There are pictures of babies and their toys in our book. The babies are playing Peekaboo! Let's open the book and see what we find!

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

- *Use your own words to describe pictures. Point to pictured items that you describe. Use short sentences and speak clearly. Emphasize peekaboo when you reveal a picture under a flap. Example: "The baby is playing peekaboo. Look at the baby's doll! What are we going to find under the flap? Peekaboo!"*
- *Spend more time on pictures that seem to be of particular interest to the infant. Example: "You are looking at the doll's eyes. The doll has sparkly eyes! The doll is wearing a red hat. Look, there is a heart on the doll's dress!"*
- *Describe and respond to gestures and/or vocalizations. Example: "You are cooing at the dinosaur, Braylen! You like dinosaurs!"*
- *Use your voice to add interest. Example: Say peekaboo with enthusiasm as you turn a flap.]*

RECAP: *[Describe what happened during the book sharing. Example: "We read a book together. Our book had pictures of babies. The babies were playing Peekaboo with their toys! You smiled and kicked your legs when we found the bunny's ears. This was a fun book to read together!"]*



Birth–12 Months

Option 2 One-to-One



Skill and Goal Receptive language Expressive language

An infant participates in a book sharing that includes opportunities to turn the book's pages and communicate about pictures of babies and toys.



Key Concepts

Book
Look
Touch



Materials Needed

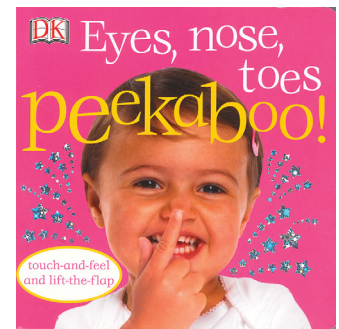
Eyes, Nose, Toes Peekaboo!
by DK Publishing



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 on the book's cover. Encourage the infant to look at the picture with you. Example: "See the picture of the baby? Our book is about babies playing *Peekaboo* with their toys. We can touch some of the pages and feel the babies' toys! Let's read the book and play *Peekaboo*!" Use the following strategies to engage the infant in the book:



- Invite the infant to help you turn the pages. Turn the pages as slowly or as quickly as the infant seems to prefer.
- Point to and name pictured objects. Example: "Look at this baby. This is the baby's ear. The baby is wondering where the bunny's ears are. Should we look under the flap and see? (*Lift the flap.*) Peekaboo! Here are the ears!"
- Invite the infant to touch textures under the flaps. Point to items you describe. Example: "Here is the teddy bear's nose. The nose is soft and squishy. Here, you can touch the teddy bear's nose! How does it feel?"
- Describe what the infant is looking at. Example: "You are looking at a dinosaur. The dinosaur has shiny red toes! Would you like to touch the dinosaur's shiny toes?"
- Spend more time talking about the pictures that seem to be of particular interest to the infant.
- Describe and respond to gestures and/or vocalizations. Example: "You are smiling and cooing at the baby. You like playing *Peekaboo* with the babies!"
- Help the infant connect book information to his/her own experiences. Examples: "You like to play *Peekaboo*! We play *Peekaboo* together when we change your diaper!" "You are touching the baby doll's eyes. The doll's eyes are blue. You have blue eyes, too! Where are your eyes? Let's find them!"
- Create anticipation as you slowly lift the flap, and then show enthusiasm as you say "peekaboo!" and reveal the picture underneath. Example: "Are you ready to play *Peekaboo*? What do you think we will see? You can help me lift the flap!"

Recognize the infant's participation in the book reading. Example: "We had fun reading this book together, Imani. We looked at pictures of babies. You smiled and kicked your legs when we played *Peekaboo* with the babies' toys! You had fun helping me lift the flaps. We found eyes, and ears, and toes! I think you liked this book."

Birth–12 Months

Option 3 One-to-One



Skill and Goal Receptive language Expressive language

An older infant participates in a book sharing that includes opportunities to help manage the book and communicate about pictures of babies and toys.



Key Concepts

Book
Look
Touch
Peekaboo



Materials Needed

Eyes, Nose, Toes Peekaboo!
by DK Publishing



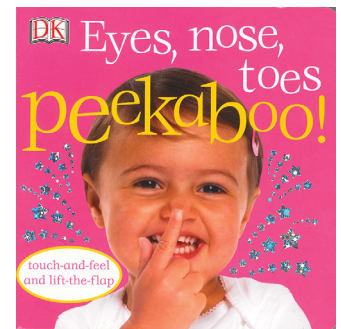
Also Promotes

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 hold the book, turn pages, and lift flaps.

Once the infant is comfortable and ready to share the book, point to the picture on the book cover.

Example: “Look at the picture of the baby. Our book is about babies playing Peekaboo with their toys! We will find the babies’ toys. We can touch the toys!” Use the following strategies to engage the infant in the book:



- Point to and label pictured objects. Example: “These are the baby’s toes. The baby wants to find the dinosaur’s toes. Should we lift the flap and find the dinosaur’s toes? Here, you can lift the flap. Peekaboo! Here are the dinosaur’s toes!”
- Invite the infant to point to objects that you name. Example: “The baby wants to find the bunny’s ears. The baby has ears, too. Where is the baby’s ear? You can point to the baby’s ear!”
- Spend more time talking about pictures that seem to be of particular interest to the infant. Example: “You are pointing to the bunny’s ears. The bunny’s ears are long and soft. You can touch the bunny’s ears. How do they feel?”
- Describe and respond to gestures and/or vocalizations. Example: “You said boo! You are playing *Peekaboo* with the babies. We found the baby doll’s eyes! Peekaboo!”
- Help the infant connect book information to his/her own experiences. Examples (with appropriate pointing): “The baby has eyes. You have eyes! Let’s find your eyes.” “The baby has a nose. You have a nose! Let’s find your nose. You can point to your nose!”
- Accentuate the word peekaboo and encourage the infant to say a version of the word with you, especially when a flap is lifted. Example: “Are you ready to lift the flap? You can say peekaboo with me! Here we go. Let’s see what we find!”
- Recognize the infant’s participation in the book reading. Example: “You helped me hold our book, Eric. You looked at the pictures of the babies. You lifted the flaps and helped me say peekaboo! You found the baby at the end of the book. You pointed to the baby’s eyes and ears. Then you found your eyes and ears!”



What to Look For—Options 1–3

Many infants will delight in the familiar game of *Peekaboo* when the flaps in the book are lifted. This book also provides opportunities to touch different textures underneath the flaps. An infant may want to repeat the *Peekaboo* game several times on the same page. At the end of the book, you may wish to return to specific pictures that appealed to the infant.

On occasion an older infant may be mostly interested in lifting flaps (not in hearing about pictures). A single focus on lifting flaps only can be especially challenging in Option 3, where the infant is invited to lift flaps. Instead of having a control issue with the infant about flap lifting, you may wish to consider offering two different experiences with the book. First, offer a peekaboo approach with the infant lifting flaps and you saying what's under the flap. Second, offer a session in which it is your turn to lift the flaps and pictures are discussed in relation to what is shown under a flap. It is fine to skip pages if infant interest or time is limited.

More Scaffolding Tips—Options 1–3

Extra support ■ Talk about and point to body parts on each page. This can support the infant's connections to familiar things and build useful vocabulary.

Enrichment ■ Invite an infant to play *Peekaboo* with you after the book sharing. The infant may want to cover his/her own eyes with his/her hands, or watch you cover yours. Encourage the infant to help you say peekaboo! Infants may feel more comfortable playing *Peekaboo* with you briefly covering only your eyes, leaving your face in view during the game.

Interest Area

Materials Needed: *Eyes, Nose, Toes Peekaboo!* by DK Publishing; several toys from the book, such as a baby doll, teddy bear, stuffed bunny, sheer or thin scarf

Most infants enjoy playing *Peekaboo*. Share the book with infants during floor time. Provide a doll or stuffed toy for each infant to touch and hold. Gently place the scarf over each toy and invite infants to help you say peekaboo as you remove the scarf. Provide anticipation, enthusiasm, and then excitement when the scarf is removed and the toy is revealed. Older infants may want to play *Peekaboo* with the scarf and their toy on their own. Infants may enjoy this game being repeated several times.

 Family Child Care

Materials Needed: sheer or thin scarves—1 per child

Peekaboo is a favorite game of many toddlers and preschool-age children. Children may be more comfortable hiding under the scarf (compared to hiding behind a solid item) because they are able to see through the sheer fabric. Also, a scarf helps infants and toddlers know that their trusted caregiver is still there! Invite older children to play the game with younger toddlers and infants. Older children will likely enjoy watching the delight of younger toddlers and infants as they remove their scarf and say peekaboo!



Birth–12 Months

Option 1 One-to-One



Skill and Goal

Object inquiry skills

A young infant watches a toy fish manipulated by a caregiver.



Key Concepts

Watch



Materials Needed

Soft, colorful fish toy

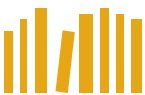


Also Promotes

Communication/Language

Physical/Health

Self-Regulation



Optional Reading

My Very First Book of Shapes
by Eric Carle

Place an infant who is not yet crawling in a comfortable, secure, reclining position across from you or on the floor. Show the toy fish to the infant when he/she is alert. Hold the toy about 12–15 inches from the infant's face. Softly say the infant's name and the name of the toy. Example: "Sarah, we have a toy fish. Our fish has pretty colors. You can watch our fish." Keep the toy still so the infant can focus his/her eyes. When the infant focuses visual attention on the little fish, slowly move it in a horizontal movement across his/her visual field. The infant may move his/her head and eyes in order to follow the toy. Describe the fish's movement and the infant's actions. Example: "Here is our toy fish. You are watching the fish with your eyes." Use a soft voice to acknowledge the infant's efforts. Example: "You are watching the toy fish move."



👁️ What to Look For—Option 1

This will be a brief yet important experience for the infant. Visually following a toy that moves in different directions requires effort. Allow ample time for the infant to focus on the toy fish before moving it. Repeating the activity will be satisfying for most young infants, but a brief break may be appropriate. Be sure to move the toy slowly and avoid quickly changing direction. Offer the toy to the infant if he/she reaches out to grasp it.

📊 More Scaffolding Tips—Option 1

Extra support ■ Pace the movement of the toy fish at a comfortable level for the infant. Example: If an infant maintains his/her gaze on the toy, hold the toy steady until the infant appears ready to watch it move.

Enrichment ■ Repeat the activity with a different type of appealing toy. Infants typically like a soft toy with a face. ■ Slowly move the toy from side to side at a higher or lower level. That is, slightly change the horizontal position of the toy but continue to move the toy back and forth (not up and down).



Birth–12 Months

Option 2 One-to-One



Skill and Goal

Object inquiry skills

An older infant explores three different types of balls.



Key Concepts

Look
Feel
Ball



Materials Needed

3 small balls with different textures
Basket or container



Also Promotes

Physical/Health
Communication/Language

Place the balls in a container. Invite an infant who can sit with support or independently to play with you and some balls. Place the container with balls in front of the infant. Sit across from the infant. Point to each of the balls in the container as you say something about the texture or shape of each. Example: “This ball has



little holes. This ball has bumpy things. This ball has things sticking out of it.” Pointing to characteristics of each ball (without picking up a ball) is important because the infant may not understand most of your words.

Provide time for the infant to look at the collection of balls. Then encourage the infant to pick up and feel a ball if he/she has not done so already. Describe the infant’s actions with a ball(s). Mention a characteristic of a ball if the characteristic seems to be of interest to the infant. Example: “You are feeling the bumps on the ball.” Bring the activity to a close when he/she no longer shows interest.

👁️ What to Look For—Option 2

There are likely to be differences across infants in how they participate in the activity. An infant may not focus on the shape or texture of a ball as intended in the activity description. Some infants may be interested in removing all of the balls, whereas others may focus on only one. Some infants may want to roll a ball, hand a ball to you, or move balls out of, and then back into, the container. An infant may use his/her mouth to explore a ball. Follow the infant’s lead in exploring the balls. Describe the infant’s actions and draw attention to characteristics of a ball without directing the exploration. If the infant hands a ball to you, thank the infant and then pass it back. Most infants will use two hands to hold and manipulate a ball.

📊 More Scaffolding Tips—Option 2

Extra support ■ Pick up and offer a ball to the infant if he/she does not pick up a ball.

Enrichment ■ Provide a ball with holes in it as an additional difference to explore.

Birth–12 Months

Option 3 Informal Gathering



Skill and Goal

Object inquiry skills

Infants participate in guided exploration of a toy inchworm.



Key Concepts

Feel
Hear
Look



Materials Needed

Lamaze® musical inchworm toy (or similar)—1 per infant and caregiver



Also Promotes

Communication/Language
Physical/Health

Be Prepared: Limit the number of participants to available toys. It is important for each infant to have a toy inchworm for this activity.

BEGIN: *[Invite several infants to sit with you on the floor. Give each infant a toy inchworm.]*

EXPLAIN: Here is a toy for us to play with. This toy is called an inchworm. An inchworm is an animal. Let's find out about our toy.



ACT: Our toy has eyes. Do you see the inchworm's eyes?
[Point to the toy's eyes.]

Do you see the eyes? We can touch the eyes of our toy.

[Encourage infants to touch or point to the eyes of the toy. Then encourage infants to point to their own eyes. Demonstrate by pointing to your own eyes.]

We have eyes, too! Let's all point to our eyes.

We look at things with our eyes. We are looking at each other. We are looking at our toy!

Our toy is soft. Would you like to feel our toy?

[Demonstrate touching the toy. Then demonstrate squeezing the toy with both of your hands.]

I am squeezing the toy. I am using both of my hands to squeeze the toy. You can squeeze your toy, too!

[Encourage infants to squeeze their toy. Then point to your ear as you draw attention to hearing the toy make a noise.]

Did you hear our toy make a noise? We heard a sound when we squeezed our toy!

[Describe infants' actions and reactions. Example: "Devon, your toy squeaked! You squeezed your toy and it made a noise!"]

Encourage repeated squeezing of the toy and talk about how squeezing can make the toy make a noise.

**Option 3 continued**

Then demonstrate squeezing the crinkle section of the toy. Draw attention to your action and the part of the toy that makes a crinkle noise. Example: “We can hear a quiet crinkle sound.”

Encourage repeated squeezing of the crinkle section and talk about how squeezing this part of the toy makes a crinkle noise.

Then gently shake the toy. Draw attention to the rattle sound when the toy is shaken.

If infants remain interested in the toy, invite them to move their toy on the floor. Make up a pretend destination or reason for moving the toy. Example: “Our toy is a little animal. Our toy wants to meet another toy! Let’s pretend our toys are moving on the floor to meet each other.”]

RECAP: *[Say and demonstrate each of the actions used with the toy during the session. Example: “We played with a fun toy. We felt our toy. We squeezed our toy. We shook our toy. We listened to our toy!”]*

👁️ What to Look For—Option 3

The toy used in this activity is pleasing for most infants to touch and manipulate. The size and shape are novel. The toy is soft and easy to hold. The sounds an infant can make with the toy are also appealing. Look for opportunities to draw attention to cause-effect connections when sounds are made with the toy. We squeeze the toy. The toy makes a sound. Also look for opportunities to point out the sections (bumps) of the toy. This feature of the toy is not explicitly addressed in the activity description, but infants may notice the colorful sections on their own. Emphasize how we can move our hands along the toy to feel its parts.

The word inchworm is introduced in the suggested opening segment of the activity, but infants are not expected to learn or say this word. The activity plan’s suggested talk with infants does not use the word after introducing it.

📊 More Scaffolding Tips—Option 3

Extra support ■ If an infant seems interested in (but uncertain about) how to feel or make a sound with the toy, offer a demonstration with the infant’s toy directly in front of the infant.

Enrichment ■ Draw attention to the different types of sounds by manipulating the toy to make each sound in a sequence: squeak, crinkle, rattle. Emphasize how the sounds can be made with the toy.



Interest Area

Materials needed: rattles, small balls with textures, stacking cups, loose stacking rings in a bowl, soft texture bears, books with textures (such as *Baby Touch and Feel* by DK Publishing), toys with holes (such as a whiffle ball), and books with holes (such as *Little Puppy Finger Puppet Book* by Chronical Books, LLC.)

Provide a small collection of rattles and small balls with texture for non-mobile infants to explore. On another day, provide stacking cups, loose stacking rings in a bowl, soft texture bears, and books with textures (such as *Baby Touch and Feel Puppies and Kittens* by DK Publishing). For mobile infants, arrange loose items to dump and fill in stacking cups. Also, offer a small grouping of toys with holes, such as a whiffle ball, and books with holes.



Family Child Care

Materials needed: balls of different sizes, basket or non-breakable container

The Option 2 activity may prompt toddlers and preschool-age children to also want to play with balls. Toddlers may be interested in rolling balls of different sizes. For preschool-age children, set up a target using a basket or non-breakable containers and encourage children to gently toss balls into a container.



Birth–12 Months

Option 1 One-to-One



Skill and Goal Executive function

A young infant is encouraged to persist in exploring toys in a bucket.



Key Concepts

Look
Reach
Touch



Materials Needed

3–5 different toys (see Be Prepared)
Small bucket or container



Also Promotes

Communication/Language
Physical/Health

Be Prepared: This activity is for an infant who can grasp a small item. Gather 3–5 different small toys, such as soft rattles or people figures. Select toys that are of interest to the infant and are clearly different from one another, such as in color, shape, and/or texture. Also, select toys that the infant involved in this activity can easily grasp with one hand. Keep in mind the infant is likely to explore items with his/her mouth. Place the toys in the bucket.

BEGIN: *[Place the infant on his/her back in a secure, comfortable, reclining position. Smile and make eye contact with the infant.]*

EXPLAIN: I have some fun toys!

[Display the bucket.]

This is a bucket. There are toys inside our bucket. Let's look inside and see what we find!

ACT: *[Tilt the bucket so the infant can see inside. Pause for the infant to look at toys in the bucket.]*

Encourage the infant to reach for and grasp a toy that is inside the bucket. If the infant does not grasp a toy, hold and briefly describe a toy and offer it to the infant to touch or hold. Example: "This is a rattle, Emma. The rattle is soft. I am touching the rattle. Would you like to touch or hold the rattle?"

If the infant does not touch or hold the toy, set it aside and encourage the infant to look again at toys in the bucket. If the infant does not grasp a toy while looking in the bucket or does not look in the bucket, again hold and briefly describe a toy and offer it to the infant to touch or hold.

Support the infant's approach to toys in the bucket. He/she may want to look at, touch, or grasp one item only, or all items. He/she may want to look at, but not touch, toys.

If the infant drops a toy he/she is holding, pick it up and offer it to the infant. If the infant does not want the toy, or drops it again, display a different toy in the bucket.

Describe the infant's actions throughout the activity. Examples: "You are looking into the bucket, Alejandro. You are smiling! You want to see what is in our bucket." "You are reaching into the bucket, Emma. Which toy are you going to pick?"



Option 1 continued

*Point and gesture frequently because the infant will not understand most of your words.
Remember the importance of your facial expressions.*

Respond to the infant's vocalizations.

*Gently end the activity when the infant shows signs of losing interest, such as looking elsewhere
(for more than a few seconds) or fussing.]*

RECAP: *[Smile, make eye contact, and briefly describe what happened. Example: "You had fun looking at toys in our bucket! You held some toys. You really liked moving the rattle!]*



Birth–12 Months

Option 2 One-to-One



Skill and Goal

Executive function

An older infant is encouraged to persist in exploring toys in a bucket.



Key Concepts

Look
Reach
Take out



Materials Needed

5–7 small toys (see Be Prepared)
Small bucket or container



Also Promotes

Communication/Language
Physical/Health

Be Prepared: This activity is for an infant who can sit independently or with support. Gather 5–7 different small toys, such as soft animal toys or toy vehicles. Select toys that are of interest to the infant and are clearly different from one another, such as in color, shape, and/or texture. Place the toys in the bucket.

Invite an infant to sit with you on the floor. Sit so the infant can see your face. Explain there are some toys in a bucket. We want to find out what toys are in the bucket. Place the bucket in front of the infant and encourage the infant to look inside. Provide time for the infant to look inside the bucket. Encourage the infant to reach for and take out a toy so we can find out what’s in the bucket. Say the name of a toy the infant removes from the bucket and provide time for the infant to explore the toy if he/she wishes. Then explain that we want to find out what other toys are in the bucket. Encourage the infant to take out another toy. Repeat this process, including saying the name of the toy and providing time for the infant to explore the toy, until all toys have been removed.

If an infant dumps all toys out of the container (which is an efficient way to find out what is inside!), invite him/her to point to or hold each toy, one at a time. Say the name the toy and then invite the infant to point to or hold another toy. Encourage the infant to point to or hold each of the toys, one at a time, as you say (or the infant says) its name. It is fine for you to point to each toy as you say its name, but only if the infant remains attentive visually. Do not impose the process of pointing to or holding and naming each toy if the infant has no interest in doing so.

Bring the activity to a close after each toy has been identified or the infant loses interest.

Periodically during the activity, enthusiastically acknowledge the infant’s persistence. Example: “You are working hard to find out what is in our bucket, James.” Also, provide periodic progress reports. Example: “We are almost done figuring out what is in our bucket!” Throughout the activity, describe the infant’s actions and respond to vocalizations.

👁️ What to Look For—Options 1–2

Infants will differ in how long they persist in attending to the toys. Attention spans can be very short at this young age. There may be competing interests or toys in the room that an infant may prefer to explore. A longer period of focus on the toys is more beneficial than no or minimal attention, of course, but this activity is not a test. It certainly is not necessary to look at or point to or hold each toy. Positively recognize the approach an infant brings to the activity.

A small icon of a staircase with three steps. **More Scaffolding Tips—Options 1–2**

Extra support ■ Remember this is a one-to-one activity. Appealing toys can be selected for a specific infant. The toys you include will likely vary across infants. ■ Increase or decrease the challenge of the activity by using more or fewer toys.

Enrichment ■ At the conclusion of Option 2, invite the infant to put all toys back into the bucket.

**Interest Area**

Materials Needed: several containers (such as baskets or small tubs), assortment of familiar small toys

Place the toys into the containers. You may wish to group toys in meaningful combinations.

Example: Animal figures in one tub or basket and toy cars in another. Invite several infants to explore the contents of the containers. Infants may dump the toys or reach to pull out a toy of their choice. Invite infants to place the toys back into the containers.

**Family Child Care**

Materials Needed: several shape-sorting toys of varying challenge levels

Options 1 and 2 for infants described activities that may be accomplished with shape-sorting toys for toddlers and preschool-age children. Ensure the sorter you select for toddlers is appropriately matched to their skill. Older children may enjoy a sorting toy with multiple shapes and sides.



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 a baby doll.



Key Concepts

Look
Doll



Materials Needed

Fabric baby doll
Infant pillow/cushion



Also Promotes

Communication/Language
Physical/Health

BEGIN: *[Place the infant on his/her back in a secure, comfortable, reclining position. Smile and begin talking with the infant.]*

ACT: *[Hold the doll about 12 inches from the infant. Move the doll slowly from side to side to attract the infant's attention.]*

Look, I have a baby doll for us to play with today! Our doll has eyes and a mouth. Maybe you would like to touch and hold the doll.

[Move the doll to the infant's middle to encourage him/her to touch, grasp, or hold the doll.]

Describe the infant's actions with the doll. Examples: "Your eyes got wide when you saw our baby doll. You are looking at the baby doll." "You reached for the baby doll as soon as you saw it, Leo! I moved it closer. Now you are holding the baby doll."

Continue interacting with the infant as he/she explores the doll. Respond to vocalizations and/or facial expressions. Wrap up the activity when the infant begins to show signs of disinterest.]

RECAP: *[Briefly describe highlights of the interaction. Example: "You liked touching the baby doll. You looked at the baby doll's eyes. You touched the baby doll's hair. Then you held the baby doll! Thank you for playing with me today!"]*



Birth–12 Months

Option 2 One-to-One



Skill and Goal

Social interaction skills

An infant engages in pretend play with a caregiver using a baby doll and accessories.



Key Concepts

Baby
Bottle
Blanket



Materials Needed

2 baby dolls
2 baby bottles
2 doll blankets
Doll bed (Enrichment tip)



Also Promotes

Communication/Language
Cognitive
Physical/Health

Invite an infant to join you to play with dolls. Introduce the dolls and give one to the infant to hold and explore. Talk with the infant about his/her actions with the doll. After several moments, introduce the bottle and blanket. Encourage the infant to be the “play leader” and explore the materials in his/her own way.



As the infant interacts with the doll and accessories, watch for opportunities to provide prompts that may extend the infant’s pretend play. Examples:

- “My baby is hungry. I am going to feed my baby a bottle. You are holding the baby bottle. Maybe your baby is hungry too. Do you want to feed your baby?”
- “You put the blanket over your baby. I think your baby is going night night. Let’s say ‘night night’ to your baby.”
- “You are holding and rocking your baby. Maybe your baby is going to sleep. Shhhh... let’s whisper so your baby can sleep.” (*This suggestion should be used in a playful manner. The infant is not expected to whisper or to be quiet.*)
- “You are touching the baby’s hair. The baby has brown hair. You have brown hair, too! Here is your brown hair. (*Touch infant’s hair.*) What else do you see on your baby doll?”

Pause at important times during the interactions so the infant has a clear opportunity to contribute.



Birth–12 Months

Option 3 One-to-One



Skill and Goal

Social interaction skills

An older infant engages with a caregiver in pretend play focused on bathing a baby doll.



Key Concepts

Baby
Bath
Wash



Materials Needed

2 water-safe baby dolls
2 washcloths
2 medium-size towels
Tub (see Be Prepared)
Towel or mat
Tear-free baby shampoo



Also Promotes

Communication/Language
Physical/Health
Cognitive

Be Prepared: The tub should be large enough for two dolls. Place about a half inch of warm water in the tub and add a few drops of tear-free baby shampoo to provide a small amount of bubbles. Arrange the tub and materials on the large towel or mat.

Invite an infant to join you to play with the baby dolls and accessories. Introduce the play materials and place one of the dolls in the tub to take a bath. The infant may imitate your actions with the second baby doll, or he/she may choose to explore the play materials in different ways. Look for opportunities to extend his/her actions with the materials. Examples:

- “You are looking at the bubbles and smiling, Josiah. Would you like to touch the bubbles? I will help you roll up your sleeve. Then you can put your hand in the water!”
- “I am washing my baby. Would you like to wash your baby in the water? Here is a cloth you can use to clean your baby.”
- “Ooh, look at the water dripping from your washcloth! Plip, plop goes the water. You like watching the water drip down.”
- “You are covering the baby with the washcloth. You are washing the baby! Your baby is getting very clean.”
- “My baby is all clean. I am going to dry my baby with a towel. Would you like to use a towel when your baby is done with the bath?”

Conclude the play by describing highlights of the infant’s participation.

👁️ What to Look For—Options 1–3

Each of these options promotes responsive caregiver-infant interactions with materials that encourage simple, familiar play themes. It is important for the infant to explore materials in his/her own way. The prompts are offered in the activity descriptions as possible ways to extend an infant’s play, not as ways to direct the infant’s use of materials. Watch the infant’s reaction to the play materials to determine how to proceed with the activity. In Options 2 and 3, some will explore all or most materials. Other infants may focus primarily on characteristics of the baby doll. Some infants may be especially interested in the accessories, such as the bottle in Option 2, or water dripping from the washcloth in Option 3. In Option 3, an infant might spend all of his/her time touching bubbles in the bathwater. Acknowledge and affirm all types of participation.



More Scaffolding Tips—Options 1–3

Extra support ■ In Option 2, some infants may place the toy bottle in their own mouth instead of using it to feed the doll. This indicates that the infant knows what the toy bottle represents, which is a real bottle that he/she may drink from regularly. Acknowledge this understanding and provide gentle redirection. Example: “You know this is a bottle, like the bottle you drink from! This bottle is a toy. You can use it to feed your baby! Can you give your baby the bottle?” ■ If an infant seems reluctant to get his/her hands wet in Option 3, offer a slightly damp washcloth (instead of the tub) for washing the doll. ■ If splashing becomes an infant’s focus in Option 3, gently redirect the infant to drying the doll with the towel and then move to another activity.

Enrichment ■ At the end of the activity in Option 1, wrap the baby doll in a blanket and explain that the baby is going to sleep. ■ Provide a toy doll bed so an infant might engage in routines for helping his/her doll go to sleep. ■ Provide several stacking cups in different sizes for the infants to use in Option 3. It may be helpful to demonstrate how the cups can be used to scoop and pour water over the babies.

Interest Area

Materials Needed: several baby dolls, 2 baby bottles, 2 doll blankets

Offer an interest area that supports infants in repeating or extending their actions in one of the activity options. Provide the baby dolls and accessories. Some infants may want to simply touch, hold, or rock the dolls. Others may use a bottle or blanket while playing with a doll, similar to the opportunities for play in Option 2. Describe each infant’s actions with the play materials.

Family Child Care

Materials Needed: several water-safe baby dolls, bath props (such as washcloths, towels, cups, rubber ducky toys), water table with two inches of warm water (for toddlers and older children), tub or basin with half inch of water (for mobile infants), tear-free baby shampoo—add several drops to the water table and tub/basin

Children of all ages enjoy water play. Bath time is a familiar experience that provides new opportunities to explore both pretend play and the sensory experience of a water table. Invite children to wash the baby dolls using the bath time materials. Several older toddlers and children can play together at the water table. You may wish to limit the tub/basin play to 1–2 mobile infants at a time. Supervision of the water is needed at all times. Younger infants may enjoy playing with a baby doll and a damp washcloth.



Birth–12 Months

Option 1 One-to-One



Skill and Goal

Gross motor development

An infant practices early locomotion to reach a desired item.



Key Concepts

Reach
Move



Materials Needed

2 toys



Also Promotes

Cognitive

Be Prepared: This activity is for an infant who seems ready, or is just beginning, to creep or crawl. Select one favorite toy and one appealing toy that is unfamiliar (or less familiar) to the infant. The toys are to serve as sources of motivation for the infant to creep or crawl.

BEGIN: [*Sit on the floor near the infant. The activity space should be free of toys and other objects. Place each toy slightly out of the infant's reach in different directions, but both in full view of the infant. Choose a distance that matches the infant's emerging ability to creep or crawl.*]



EXPLAIN: Here are special toys you can play with.

[*Point to or hold the toys, one at a time, as you describe each with enthusiasm. Example: "Malik, here is the (name of toy) you like to hold and shake. Our other toy is fun to play with. It can make a sound!"*]

ACT: [*Offer verbal support for the infant's interest in or emerging ability to move toward a toy. Examples: "Malik, you are on your tummy holding yourself up with your arms! You are getting so strong!" "Keep trying! You are ready to creep!"*]

Encourage the infant to move closer to the desired toy. Examples: "Alright! You are reaching so hard for the toy!" "Great! You are moving on your tummy!"

If the infant shows signs of frustration, move the toy slightly closer to the infant without eliminating the challenge of creeping or crawling.

After the infant reaches and explores the first desired toy, draw attention to the second toy by holding and/or manipulating it. Ask the infant if he/she would like to play with this toy now. Provide verbal support for the infant's movement toward the toy. It is not necessary for the infant to pursue the second toy.

Describe the infant's actions throughout the activity without interfering with his/her interests.]

**Option 1 continued**

RECAP: [*Describe what the infant did. Example: “You played with (name of toy). You turned over on your tummy and moved your body to get the (name of toy). Getting a toy can be a lot of work! You are getting stronger.”]*

👁️ What to Look For—Option 1

Infants often show a unique preference and method for early locomotion. An infant may move forward while on his/her tummy (creeping) or use both hands and both legs to push up and move his/her body (crawling). An infant may move one leg and drag the other leg when crawling. Some infants begin early locomotion by going backwards.

It is not necessary to teach or correct an infant’s approach to creeping or crawling. Provide time and space for an infant to explore how to move his/her body. The exploration is likely to be beneficial for both cognitive and motor development. Example: In a creeping position with tummy and torso on the floor, reaching forward with one hand helps develop strength and flexibility in the torso and, at the same time, can support the infant’s problem-solving idea of how to get ahold of a desired item.

Although the activity plan uses a toy as an incentive for an infant to move, interacting with you may be the primary interest of some infants. Being with you may be more interesting to an infant than a toy. Support this interest by encouraging the infant to come closer to you. Example: “Maybe you would like to talk with me. You’re almost next to me!” Also, an infant may look to you for assistance in securing the toy. Acknowledge the infant’s bid for your help and offer assurances that he/she can get the toy on his/her own. It may be appropriate to move a toy closer to the infant, as suggested in the activity plan, but avoid simply handing a toy to the infant.

Wellness issues, such as teething, may affect an infant’s interest in getting ahold of a toy. Offer the activity on another day if an infant expresses a need for extra comfort or prefers quiet play to more expansive activity.

📈 More Scaffolding Tips—Option 1

Extra support ■ Sit next to the desired toy to provide the infant with an additional incentive (you!) for creeping or crawling. Make eye contact and smile. ■ Place your hand on the floor, midway between the infant and the desired toy, so the infant can touch your hand, if he/she wishes, while moving toward the toy. Example: “Can you reach my hand? You’re getting close to the toy!” ■ Offer a different toy(s) if your selection(s) seems to be of limited or no interest.

Enrichment ■ Involve several infants in the activity if they have similar large motor abilities and are ready for play. ■ Offer additional reaching challenge by placing one of the toys on a slightly elevated surface, such as a large foam wedge, a low step, or large block. You may wish to use two different elevated surfaces in two different locations, one for each toy.



Birth–12 Months

Option 2 One-to-One



Skill and Goal

Gross motor development

An older infant practices moving a desirable box as part of early locomotion.



Key Concepts

Push
Carry



Materials Needed

2 small storage boxes (see Be Prepared)



Also Promotes

Cognitive

Be Prepared: Secure two small clear storage boxes and decorate their interiors with stickers, colorful crinkled paper, and/or other light paper items that will be exciting to the infant. Make one of the boxes heavier by placing in it some common items from your room, such as small blocks. Use clear tape to firmly affix the tops of the boxes.

Provide the lighter box to an infant who is crawling or walking. Encourage a crawling infant to push the box along the carpet as he/she crawls to a destination of your choice. The infant may put weight on the box with one or both arms as he/she crawls. Invite a walking infant to carry the lighter box to the destination you choose. After an infant reaches the destination, encourage him/her to return the box to the starting point or use the heavier box for the return. Acknowledge the infant's efforts. Examples: "You are pushing the box in front of you. You are making the box slide!" "Wow, you are carrying a big box!"



After moving the box several times, the infant may wish to play with the box along with several other toys. Place toys, such as small blocks or soft animals, near the box for the infant to explore with the box. An infant may use the box as a platform for playing with a toy(s), or tap on the box as if it is a drum, or push the box with one or more other toys on top of it.

👁️ What to Look For—Option 2

Most infants will have fun pushing a box along the carpet as they crawl. The box may move alongside the infant or in front of the infant. An infant might push the box forward by putting his/her hands on the top and using legs to move forward. Infants who can walk often resort to crawling for some locomotion tasks. Anticipate that an infant with walking skills may opt to crawl with the box. There is not one preferred way to move the box, and it is not necessary or appropriate to teach an infant how to move a box.

📈 More Scaffolding Tips—Option 2

Extra support ■ Offer a gesture of pushing the box when you invite a crawling infant to move the box. ■ Walk to the destination when you describe it. You may wish to position yourself at the destination after the infant begins crawling or walking with the box.

**Option 2 continued**

Enrichment ■ For a walking infant, place the box on the floor for the infant to pick up (rather than hand the box to the infant for his/her journey). ■ An infant with established walking skills may want to try carrying both boxes (one in each hand or the two boxes stacked in front of him/her).

**Interest Area**

Materials Needed: barrier, such as a low shelf, cloth books, board books, toys

Arrange cloth books and board books with some favorite toys in spaces infants can access. Change the toys during the week so there are familiar items along with 1–2 novel items. For mobile infants, put a low barrier in the play space with toys on either side. Infants who readily creep or crawl may go around the barrier to reach toys.

**Family Child Care**

Make up action lyrics related to the motor development of specific children in your setting. Sing your lyrics to the tune of "Here We Go 'Round the Mulberry Bush." You can learn the tune by searching for an online source. Below are some suggestions for motor actions of different ages of children:

- Kicking feet: We see Winne kicking her feet, kicking her feet, kicking her feet. We see Winne kicking her feet, so early in the morning.
- Reaching for toys: "This is the way Angel gets a toy, Angel gets a toy . . ."
- Crawling on hands and knees: "This is the way Kevin crawls, Kevin crawls . . ."
- Walking unsupported: "We see Diego walking alone, walking alone . . ."
- Hopping on one foot: "I see my friends hopping on one foot, hopping on one foot . . ."