



**Communication/
Language**

Exploring Sounds

- Option 1** (OO) A young infant participates in a caregiver-led nursery rhyme with hand movements.
- Option 2** (IG) Older infants participate together in a caregiver-led nursery rhyme with hand movements.



Cognitive

Exploring Objects

- Option 1** (IG) Infants engage in guided play with cups and small toys.
- Option 2** (OO) An older infant engages in open-ended play with toys initially lined up on the edge of a table.



Self-Regulation

Paying Attention

- Option 1** (OO) A young infant practices focusing on a caregiver's hand-clapping actions.
- Option 2** (OO) An older infant practices focusing on a caregiver's hand-clapping actions with the opportunity to also clap hands.



Social-Emotional

Interacting with Others

- Option 1** (OO) A young infant participates in responsive interactions with a caregiver during a story of a mama bear and baby bear.
- Option 2** (OO) An infant participates in nurturing interactions with a caregiver during a song.
- Option 3** (OO) An older infant participates in nurturing interactions with a caregiver while playing with a baby doll.



Physical/Health

Using Our Hands

- Option 1** (IG) Infants practice coordinating the use of their hands to play with toy musical instruments.
- Option 2** (OO) An older infant practices turning pages of a board 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

A young infant participates in a caregiver-led nursery rhyme with hand movements.



Key Concepts

Song

Listen

Watch



Materials Needed

None



Also Promotes

Cognitive

Physical/Health



Optional Reading

Sign and Sing Along: Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star by Annie Kubler

Be Prepared: Be familiar with the lyrics and tune of “Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star.”

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

I have a song to share with you! It is fun to sing a song!

[Pause for and acknowledge the infant’s response. Example: “You are smiling. I think you want to hear our song.”]

EXPLAIN: Our song is about a star. I am going to move my hands like they are a star in the song! You can listen to the song and watch my hands. Are you ready for our song?

ACT: *[Maintain eye contact with the infant and sing “Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star” slowly. Move your hands in pronounced, simple ways that correspond with the words of the song. Open and close your fingers rhythmically to represent twinkling stars. Raise your hands and gently wave them back and forth when you sing “up above the world so high.”]*

After one round of the song, describe the infant’s reactions. Example: “You watched my hands pretend to be twinkling stars! Look, now my hands are up high! The stars are twinkling high in the sky.”

Repeat the song and movements if the infant remains engaged. Encourage the infant to do a simple hand or arm action(s), such as move his/her hands and/or raise his/her arms.]

RECAP: *[Describe what happened during the activity. Example: “I sang a song about a star. You watched my hands pretend to be twinkling stars. Then you moved your hand! This is a fun song to share together!”]*

Birth–12 Months

Be Prepared: Be familiar with the lyrics and tune of “Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star.”

Option 2 Informal Gathering



Skill and Goal

Receptive language

Expressive language

Awareness of differences in sounds

Older infants participate together in a caregiver-led nursery rhyme with hand movements.



Key Concepts

Song

Star



Materials Needed

None



Also Promotes

Cognitive

Physical/Health



Optional Reading

Sign and Sing Along: Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star by Annie Kubler

Invite 2–3 infants to join you for a song. Sit facing infants and introduce the song. Example: “Our song is about a star. The star is twinkling. We can pretend our hands are twinkling stars. (*Open and close hands several times.*) Some of us may know this song!”

Sing one round of the song slowly with corresponding hand actions. Smile and maintain eye contact with the infants throughout. Acknowledge infants’ reactions to the song and motions.

Invite infants to help you with another round of the song. Example: “Let’s all pretend to have twinkling stars! We can open and close our hands like this.” (*Demonstrate.*) Repeat the song slowly, encouraging infants to imitate your motions of opening and closing your hands. Some infants may imitate you by raising their hands during the song. Others may focus on the act of opening and closing their hands.

Describe and respond to gestures and/or vocalizations. Examples: “Noah, you are pretending your hands are twinkling stars! You are opening and closing your hands.” “Victoria, you said ‘star!’ Our song is about a twinkling star!”

What to Look For—Options 1–2

Infants enjoy familiar songs, especially when offered with enthusiastic facial expressions. Some older infants may imitate some of your hand movements or begin to move up their arms when you sing and demonstrate “above.” Watch for and acknowledge small hand or arm movements that seem related to the song. Younger infants especially cannot be expected to make a “twinkle” action with their fingers, although they are likely to enjoy watching you do so. Infants may vocalize with cooing, babbling, and later saying one of the rhyme’s words. Others may listen to your voice and watch your movements. Positively recognize different forms of participation.

More Scaffolding Tips—Options 1–2

Extra support ■ Invite an infant to read a *Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star* book with you before or after offering the rhyme. ■ Sing the song with few or no hand movements if it appears too challenging for an infant to focus on your actions. ■ A younger infant may enjoy being held in your arms and gently swaying as you sing the song or say its lyrics.

Enrichment ■ Emphasize “up” as you sing and move your hands. ■ Offer additional movements with the song, using signs suggested in the Optional Reading book.



Interest Area

Materials Needed: several caged bells

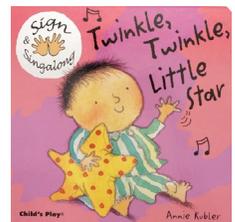
Provide bells for infants to manipulate during a follow-up offering of the activity plan's song and other nursery rhymes. Show and describe how to make a sound with a bell. Point to your ear as you describe "listen," "hear," or "sound." Infants may want to repeat songs. Older infants may be interested in making different bell sounds at different tempos.



Family Child Care

Materials Needed: *Sign and Sing Along: Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star* by Annie Kubler

Share the book with a mixed-age gathering of children as a complement to the activity options for infants. Encourage toddlers and older children to try the signs described in the book. Younger infants and toddlers will enjoy listening and watching as you share the book. Infants may enjoy holding a caged bell or rattle during the activity.





Birth–12 Months

Option 1 Informal Gathering



Skill and Goal

Object inquiry skills

Infants engage in guided play with cups and small toys.



Key Concepts

Big
Little
In
Out



Materials Needed

Non-breakable cups—1 per infant and caregiver
Small toys—1 per infant and caregiver (see Be Prepared)



Also Promotes

Physical/Health
Communication/Language



Optional Reading

Baby Touch and Feel First Words by DK Publishing

Be Prepared: This activity is for mobile infants. Select small toys or other play items that will fit fully inside the cups to be used in the activity. If possible, use cups that are larger than infants typically use in your setting. Place extra materials in a bag or basket for infants who join the gathering after you begin.

Invite several infants to join you on the floor. Give each infant one cup and one small toy. Present the two items separately so the infant can have the experience of putting the toy in the cup. Name each item when you offer it to an infant. Emphasize the toy is little and the cup is big. Explain that we can do different things with our little toys and big cups.

Demonstrate placing one toy into your cup and taking it out again. Emphasize the words in and out. Encourage each infant to put a toy into his/her cup.

Example: “Angel, you have a little animal and a big yellow cup. Would you like to put the animal in your cup?” After a toy is inside a cup, draw attention to its new and partially hidden location. Example: Use a slightly dramatic tone as you ask “Where did it go?” Peek into the cup and say “There it is!”



Demonstrate placing a cup over a toy (so the cup opening is on the floor) and then removing the cup. Depending on the transparency of the cup, the toy may be partially hidden. Use a slightly dramatic tone again to ask “Where did my little toy go?” and then announce “Here it is! My toy is under my big cup!” when you remove the cup. Encourage infants to put their cup over their toy and then remove it. Describe their actions.



Help infants exchange toys, if this seems to be of interest, and repeat the actions. There also may be interest in exchanging cups if they are different colors or sizes.

👁️ What to Look For—Option 1

The activity option offers opportunities for infants to use familiar items in interesting ways. Remember that your facial expressions and hand gestures are central to effective communications. Infants will not understand many of your words. Offer demonstrations slowly and in full view of infants so they can

**Option 1 continued**

easily follow along. Watch their gaze to ensure your words and actions are aligned with their attention. Although the activity is intended as guided play, there may be things infants want to do with a cup and toy that differ from the suggested actions. Be flexible about and supportive of their approaches to object inquiry.

More Scaffolding Tips—Option 1

Extra support ■ Pause when you ask “Where did it go?” so an infant can point to or verbalize the location of your toy and/or an infant’s toy. Infants enjoy and benefit from showing a “hidden” item.

Enrichment ■ Move your cup 6–12 inches on the floor (without lifting it) while a toy is under it. Describe that you are moving the cup. When it reaches its new nearby location, use hand gestures and words to ask infants if the little toy is still under the cup. ■ If infants exchange toys, invite them to place their toy in another infant’s cup.



Birth–12 Months

Option 2 One-to-One



Skill and Goal

Object Inquiry skills
Problem-solving

An older infant engages in open-ended play with toys initially lined up on the edge of a table.



Key Concepts

Drop
Carry



Materials Needed

5–6 small toys (see Be Prepared)



Also Promotes

Physical/Health

Be Prepared: This activity is for an infant who can sit or stand without support. Select toys you anticipate the infant would like to look at and manipulate, such as chubby vehicles and farm animals. The toys do not need to represent a theme. Line up the toys on the edge of a table the infant can easily stand at. Use a lower table if the infant will sit at a table.

Invite an infant to join you in playing with some toys. Sit or kneel next to the infant. Name and describe each toy, one at a time. Pay close attention to the infant's gaze so you can emphasize what seems to be the focus of the infant's attention.

Give time for the infant to think about using the toys in ways he/she wishes. The infant may initiate an activity of dropping the toys to the floor. Helping and watching the toys fall to the floor is meaningful and appropriate at this age. Encourage the infant to pick up the toys and return them to the table. The infant also may initiate an activity of carrying one or more toys to a different place in the room. Carrying toys from one place to another, sometimes without an obvious purpose, is also meaningful and appropriate at this age. There are important considerations for the infant regarding how to carry toys (one or two hands?), how many can be moved at one time, and what to do with the toy(s) at the new location.

Become a partner in the infant's activity if it seems the infant would like you to join him/her. Another option is to stay close and offer comments that let the infant know you are tuned in. Whatever approach you pursue, describe the infant's actions with the toys. Examples: "Sean, you are dropping the toys on the floor one by one." "Sammy, you're using both of your hands to carry a truck and a car to another table. Moving things is a big job!" Repeat and expand upon the infant's vocalizations.

What to Look For—Option 2

Infants may differ in the amount of time they devote to solving the initial problem of what to do with the toys lined up on the edge of a table. For some infants, the toy placement is an instant invitation to knock the toys to the floor. This is a developmentally appropriate activity, as noted in the activity description. For other infants, the toys may be seen as transport opportunities. Carrying objects from one place to another is a fun activity for many infants and can pose some challenges, as noted in the activity description. Look for opportunities to describe the infant's efforts without directing the play.

Option 2 continued More Scaffolding Tips—Option 2

Extra support ■ An infant who is relatively new to standing may need your occasional support. It may work best to start the activity with the infant sitting at a table if he/she is willing.

Enrichment ■ Provide toys of different sizes so the infant can practice adapting his/her reach and grasp to accommodate the shape and size of the toys. ■ Cover one of the toys with a washcloth and observe the infant's reaction when he/she removes it.

 Interest Area

Materials needed: scarf, stacking cups, muffin pan and six small toys, *Baby Faces Peekaboo!* by DK Publishing, and *Where's Spot?* by Eric Hill

Create simple yet interesting arrangements of playthings on the floor for non-mobile infants to see, such as a small scarf inside a stacking cup. Build a tower with 2–3 stacking cups. Encourage early mobile infants to touch the tower and watch it fall apart.

Provide a muffin pan and six small toys for older infants to use for in and out actions. The suggested books are enjoyable for infants at this age. Supervised use of books with flaps or movable tabs is important because infants do not understand that if a book flap is ripped off, a peek-a-boo type book loses its special appeal.

 Family Child Care

Materials needed: craft sticks, paint, glue, paper plate, items to paint with (such as corks, berry baskets, cups, and small blocks)

The activity options in this block promote infants' use of familiar toys in interesting ways. Provide complementary opportunities for older children in your setting. Toddlers enjoy using dot painters to make marks on a paper plate. Preschool-age and school-age children may enjoy painting craft sticks and arranging them in a pleasing order when dry. Children can create a design and attach it to cardboard with school glue. Preschool-age and older children will be pleased to experiment with paint and a variety of items for printing, such as corks, berry baskets, cups, and small blocks.



Birth–12 Months

Option 1 One-to-One



Skill and Goal Concentration

A young infant practices focusing on a caregiver's hand-clapping actions.



Key Concepts Hands



Materials Needed None



Also Promotes Communication/Language Physical/Health

Be Prepared: Be familiar with the words and tune of “Clap, Clap, Clap Your Hands.”

BEGIN: *[Place the infant on his/her back. Ensure the infant can clearly see you. Smile and make eye contact with the infant.]*

EXPLAIN: These are my hands.

[Wave hands gently in front of the infant. Then gently touch the infant's hands.]

These are your hands!

I am going to move my hands and sing a song!

ACT: *[Begin clapping softly and singing the first verse of “Clap, Clap, Clap Your Hands.” Exaggerate the clapping motion of your hands while maintaining a soft clapping sound.]*

Describe the infant's reactions, especially visual attention to your actions. Example: “You are looking at my hands! You watched me clap my hands together. Would you like me to sing more?”

If the infant remains engaged, sing a second verse of the song using the following words and actions: “Pat, pat, pat your knees. Pat your knees, together.”

Exaggerate the patting motion while maintaining a soft patting sound. Describe the infant's responses.]

RECAP: *[Smile and make eye contact with the infant as you describe what happened. Example: “You watched me clap my hands. You smiled and kicked your feet. We had fun together.”]*



Birth–12 Months

Be Prepared: Be familiar with the words and tune of “Clap, Clap, Clap Your Hands.”

Option 2 One-to-One



Skill and Goal Concentration

An older infant practices focusing on a caregiver’s hand-clapping actions with the opportunity to also clap hands.



Key Concepts

Watch
Hands



Materials Needed

None



Also Promotes

Communication/Language
Physical/Health

Invite an infant who can sit independently or with support to join you in doing fun things with our hands. Sit facing the infant with a smile. Point to and name your hands and then demonstrate several gentle claps. Example: “These are my hands. I am going to clap my hands during a song, like this.” Ensure the infant is ready for the activity by watching for eye contact or the infant’s gaze at your clapping hands. Acknowledge the infant’s attention.

Sing the first verse of the song, “Clap, Clap, Clap Your Hands,” while softly clapping your hands. Invite the infant to also clap his/her hands. After one verse of the song and clapping, describe the infant’s responses. Example: “You watched me clap my hands. You clapped your hands too! You kicked your legs. Would you like me to sing more?”

If the infant remains interested, sing a second verse of the song using the following words and actions: “Pat, pat, pat your knees. Pat your knees together.”

Conclude the activity by recognizing the infant’s focus during the activity. Example: “You watched me clap my hands. You smiled and clapped your hands, too! It was fun to clap together!”

What to Look For—Options 1–2

The suggestion that you clap softly is intended to avoid startling or overstimulating the infant. But watch the infant’s reactions carefully to determine whether a slightly louder clapping action might be enjoyed by the infant or help sustain the infant’s attention. The length and type of participation will vary across infants. Some infants will lose interest much sooner than others. It is not necessary or appropriate to coax an infant to pay attention. Focusing on hands (the activity goal) does not mean the infant should clap in a particular way in Option 2. Most young infants are discovering their own hands and older infants typically want to explore clapping their hands together.

More Scaffolding Tips—Options 1–2

Extra support ■ Offer a slower, quieter approach to the clapping and the song if you anticipate an infant may become overly excited during the activity. Also, you may wish to end the activity with a verse about “resting” hands by placing them in your lap.

Enrichment ■ Vary the speed of the song and corresponding hand movements.



Interest Area

Materials Needed: none

Invite one or several infants to participate in clapping activities. Clap your hands to different rhymes or simple songs. Encourage older infants to clap their hands with you. Young infants may enjoy watching or having you gently clap their hands during the activities.



Family Child Care

Materials Needed: none

Offer songs and finger plays to older toddlers and preschool-age children. Possibilities include "The Itsy-Bitsy Spider" and "If You're Happy and You Know It." Older children may enjoy leading others. Ensure infants are in a position to observe their peers.



Birth–12 Months

Option 1 One-to-One



Skill and Goal

Social interaction skills

A young infant participates in responsive interactions with a caregiver during a story of a mama bear and baby bear.



Key Concepts

Book
Bear
Love



Materials Needed

I Love You to the Moon and Back by Tim Warnes



Also Promotes

Communication/Language

BEGIN: [Sit with the young infant securely and comfortably 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.

Smile and talk with the infant about his/her most recent activity. Example: "Hello, Asha! You woke up and had your bottle. Now we can look at a book together."

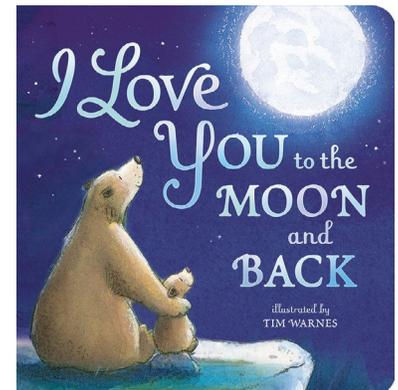


ACT: [Hold the book about 12 inches from the infant and point to the picture on the cover.]

I have a book for us to read together! Here is a picture of a mama bear and a baby bear.

[Pause for and acknowledge the infant's responses.

Approach the book sharing as a conversation between you and the infant about pictures in the book. The infant's contributions to the conversation may be mostly non-verbal, especially facial expressions. Describe the infant's reactions. Use your own words to describe pictures. Point to what you describe because the infant is unlikely to understand most words you use. Point to the mother and baby on each page. Emphasize how much the mama bear loves her baby as they do special things together.



Pause frequently so the infant can begin to understand some of the rhythm of a conversation. Vary your voice to add interest.

Near the end of the book, you may wish to gently snuggle the infant as you read the corresponding words.]

RECAP: [Offer a brief description of what happened during the activity. Example: "We talked about pictures of a mama bear and her baby bear. The mama bear loved her baby very much! The mama snuggled her baby close. Then I snuggled you close, Asha! You smiled when I snuggled you close. We like to spend time together. Thank you for sharing time with me."]



Birth–12 Months

Option 2 One-to-One



Skill and Goal

Social interaction skills

An infant participates in nurturing interactions with a caregiver during a song.



Key Concepts

Song
Love



Materials Needed

None



Also Promotes

Communication/Language

Be Prepared: Become familiar with the words and tune of “Skidamarink.” Of the many hand motions included in the song, the activity described below uses only the actions for the phrase “I love you!”

Invite an infant who can sit independently or with support to join you for a special song. Sit across from the infant. Smile and make eye contact with the infant as you softly sing the words of the song. When you do motions for the phrase “I love you,” gently tap the infant’s nose when you sing the word “you.”

Acknowledge and describe the infant’s reactions to the song. Example: “You are smiling and leaning your body close to mine. I think you like hearing this special song. Would you like me to sing it again?” If the infant seems to be enjoying the one-to-one time with you, you may sing the song a second time. Offer a gentle hug at the conclusion of the activity.



Birth–12 Months

Option 3 One-to-One



Skill and Goal

Social interaction skills

An older infant participates in nurturing interactions with a caregiver while playing with a baby doll.



Key Concepts

Play
Doll
Like



Materials Needed

Baby doll



Also Promotes

Communication/Language
Physical/Health

Invite an infant to join you to play with a baby doll. Hug the doll and then give it to the infant. Suggest the infant hug the doll, too. Example: “Here is a baby doll for you to play with. Our baby doll likes hugs! Would you like to hug the doll baby?”

Describe the infant’s actions with the doll, especially actions related to nurturance. Examples: “You are smiling at the baby, Sophie. People like smiles!” “You are holding the baby doll gently. People like gentle touches.”

Offer to participate in nurturing actions shown by the infant. Examples: “You are hugging the baby, Noah. Would you like me to give you a hug?” “The doll baby is sitting on your lap. Would you like to sit on my lap?”

Acknowledge any signs of wanting to connect with you. Example: “Thank you for the hug, Sophia! I like your hugs.”

What to Look For—Options 1–3

Be attentive to an infant’s interest in holding your hand, climbing on your lap, getting a big smile from you, or moving closer to you. Also be sensitive to differences across infants in the amount of preferred physical contact with you. One infant may enjoy being hugged and held often, whereas another infant may prefer a light touch on the shoulder, a pat on the back, or your words only.

More Scaffolding Tips—Options 1–3

Extra support ■ Smile and use the infant’s name frequently.

Enrichment ■ Provide a teddy bear or other soft toy animal for the infant to hold in Option 1.



Interest Area

Materials Needed: several baby dolls, doll accessories (such as bottles and blankets), assortment of stuffed animals

Provide opportunities for infants to play with baby dolls and soft toy animals. Encourage caring behaviors as the infants interact with the dolls and animals. Sit near the infants so you can carefully watch for and respond to their requests for attention or closeness. Work hard to avoid other distractions so you can respond warmly and positively when an infant approaches you for interaction. Example: brings a toy to show you.



Family Child Care

Materials Needed: none

Children of all ages will enjoy the song and actions offered in Option 2. Encourage older children to sing and do the motions with you. Toddlers may enjoy singing some of the repeated phrases as well as the motions for the words "I love you." Infants will enjoy listening to and watching their peers.



Birth–12 Months

Option 1 Informal Gathering



Skill and Goal

Fine motor development

Infants practice coordinating the use of their hands to play with toy musical instruments.



Key Concepts

Hands



Materials Needed

Infant-size pianos and drums—1 per infant



Also Promotes

Communication/Language
Cognitive

Sit close to several infants who can sit with or without support. Say the name of each instrument as you point to or hold it. Explain that we can make sounds with our toys.

Demonstrate how to use two hands to make a sound with each item, one toy at a time. Emphasize that you are using both hands. Hold up both hands as you describe them. Example: “These are my hands. I am using both of my hands to tap our drum. Tap, tap, tap. The drum is making a sound.”

Use both of your hands to offer one instrument to each infant. Offer an instrument in a way that encourages the infant to use both hands to take the instrument from you. Refrain from simply putting a toy in front of an infant. Then encourage each infant to use both of his/her hands to make a sound with the instrument.

Describe each infant’s actions with a toy. Point out that the toy makes a sound when we gently hit our hand or a finger on part of the toy. Help infants trade toys if interested and encourage continued use of both hands to make sounds. Conclude the activity by reminding infants that we used our hands to make sounds.

What to Look For—Option 1

Larger toy instruments are recommended for this activity because they promote the use of both hands for holding or moving, including taking the toy from you as suggested in the activity plan. The sound-making toys will be of interest to most infants. Using both hands to make a sound may be novel for some infants. Offer your initial demonstration of using both hands with a toy when infants are focused on you. Consider offering another demonstration if an infant uses one hand exclusively. It is not necessary to use both hands to make a sound with an instrument, of course, and infants will differ in their readiness to coordinate the use of both hands. Look for opportunities to emphasize the cause-effect nature of playing with the instrument. Example: “Wow, Samantha. You used your hands to push keys on our piano. And the piano made a sound!” Acknowledge each infant’s approach to the instruments.

**Option 1 continued** A small icon of a scaffolding structure consisting of three vertical posts and two horizontal beams.**More Scaffolding Tips—Option 1**

Extra support ■ Make sure an instrument is close to an infant. Some infants may prefer to sit with the toy piano on his/her lap.

Enrichment ■ Alternate the use of your hands in tapping the drum or piano keys. First one hand (or finger), then the other hand (or finger). The intent is to demonstrate an alternative to tapping the instrument with both hands at the same time. ■ Make up a simple song to accompany each infant's sound-making efforts. Example: To the tune of "Mary Had a Little Lamb," sing "Arianna is tapping her drum, tapping her drum, tapping her drum. Ariana is tapping her drum, all morning long."



Birth–12 Months

Option 2 One-to-One



Skill and Goal

Fine motor development

An older infant practices turning pages of a board book.



Key Concepts

Book

Turn

Page



Materials Needed

Board book of interest to infant (see Be Prepared)



Also Promotes

Communication/Language

Social-Emotional

Cognitive



Optional Reading

Noisy Farm by Tiger Tales

Puppies and Kittens (Baby Touch and Feel) by DK Publishing

I Am a Dump Truck by Happy Books

Beep! Beep! (Baby Touch and Feel) by DK Publishing

Revised: 6/30/2023

Be Prepared: This activity is for an older infant who shows beginning interest in and ability to turn the pages of a book, such as using his/her thumb and index (pointer) finger to pick up small items or poking an index finger into a toy or book that has holes. The activity described below offers focused support in learning how to turn the pages of a board book. It is an in-depth complement to ELM's book sharing activity plans for infants, which consistently suggest inviting an older infant to help turn the pages of a book.

Identify a book of interest to the infant from this activity's Optional Reading list or your classroom's library. The examples of engagement strategies offered in this activity plan are from *Noisy Farm* by Tiger Tales.

BEGIN: [*Sit next to an infant and invite him/her to look at the book with you.*]

EXPLAIN: We can look at this book together.

[*Point to and describe key features of the book's cover. Example: "Our book is about farm animals. Here is a cow. Cows are animals. Cows live on farms. Look at the cow's big ears. Here is the cow's mouth. The cow says "moo."*]

We need to turn the page of our book to find out what else happens. I am going to turn the page of our book to see what happens next.

ACT: [*Slowly demonstrate turning the first page, lifting with your index finger as you describe your action.*]

I used my finger to turn a page of our book. You have a finger, too. Where is your finger?

[*Encourage the infant to hold up his/her finger.*]

Read part or all of the text on the page. Point to and describe any illustrations on the page that correspond to the text. Example: "Here is a lamb. Look at the picture of a lamb jumping!"

I used my finger to point to the lion shown in our book. You can use your finger to point to something in our book.

[*Invite the infant to point to an image on a page. Example: "There is another animal on this page. Would you please point to the other animal?" Emphasize that the infant used his/her finger to point. Example: "You used your finger to point. You pointed to a picture of a horse."*]

We need to turn a page of our book so we can find out what happens. Would you please turn a page for us?

**Option 2 continued**

[Encourage the infant to use his/her index finger to lift the page. Describe the infant's action in turning a page. Continue this pattern of reading the book, inviting the infant to turn pages, and describing how we use our finger to turn a page.]

RECAP: We shared a book together. You turned the pages of the book so we could find out what happens next in our book. Thank you for helping us look at our book!

[Encourage the infant to gently return the book to its customary location. Emphasize that carrying the book with both hands and gently putting it in its location are part of taking good care of our books.]

👁️ What to Look For—Option 2

Regular reminders of when to turn a page are helpful prompts. Describing how we use our finger to turn a page can also be helpful. Infants benefit from hearing important words used repeatedly. The point in which you offer these reminders in the session may change as the infant becomes more familiar with the process. The first several times the infant is invited to turn a page, it may be useful to describe how we use a finger. After several instances of turning a page, the description of finger use can be offered after the infant turns a page. Watch the infant's page-turning attempts to determine when your mention of using a finger can be offered after (vs. before) the infant's page turn. Note the activity description also recommends offering a periodic reminder of why we turn a page.

📈 More Scaffolding Tips—Option 2

Extra support ■ If appropriate, consider using a book with tabs that make it easier to turn a page.

■ Provide just enough assistance for the infant to be successful in turning a page. ■ If necessary, explain that we turn pages gently. We do not turn pages real fast. We are gentle with our books.

Enrichment ■ If appropriate, consider using a book with regular book paper (not a board book).

■ Instead of placing the book between you and the infant, invite the child to put the book in his/her lap. Maintain close proximity so you can easily offer guidance and comments.



Interest Area

Materials Needed: texture mat, touch-and-feel texture books (such as *Beep! Beep!* by DK Publishing, *Puppies and Kittens* by DK Publishing, and *Noisy Farm* by Tiger Tales), shape sorter, pop-up boxes, an Oball® toy

Non-mobile infants enjoy feeling textures with their fingers. Place the texture mat in an area free of other toys. Some infants may like to roll over the mat. Young infants will also enjoy looking at picture books arranged on the floor. Sit close to a non-mobile infant to turn pages and describe pictures.

Items that early mobile infants can put into containers, and then dump out, can foster fine motor skills. Display books in novel places for infants to discover. Sit with 1–2 infants at a time to look at picture books with textures. The books suggested above have texture and pictures that will interest most infants. Example: *Noisy Farm* has buttons that activate animal sounds. Some infants may activate the sound buttons in *Noisy Farm* with one finger. Younger infants can press the button using their whole hand.

In selecting play materials for a week, consider toys that foster the fine motor skills of mobile infants who are exploring the use of thumb and index finger together. Possibilities include a shape sorter, pop-up boxes, and the Oball® toy.



Family Child Care

Materials Needed: paper, stapler, shoelaces, cardboard, maze puzzles, thin marker, sound makers, and musical instruments that promote use of both hands

In addition to offering the activity options for infants, offer ways to promote the fine motor skills of older children in your setting. Encourage preschool-age children to draw in a homemade blank book. (Fold three sheets of copy paper in half and staple at the fold. Make the blank books ahead of time and give one to each preschool child.) Show children how to open their book and press their hand along the fold to create pages that will open easily.

Lacing cards also fosters the fine motor skills of preschool-age and older children. Homemade lacing materials can be made with shoelaces and cardboard. Older children may enjoy solving maze puzzles while practicing a pencil grip on a thin marker.

For an informal gathering with a mixed-age group, give each child sound makers for each hand or instruments that require both hands, such as a tambourine. Ask older children to help you sing familiar songs. Encourage all children to use the instruments to make pleasing sounds together.