



**Communication/  
Language**

**Exploring Words**

- Option 1** (OO) A young infant participates in a book sharing that emphasizes pictures of baby fingers and toes.
- Option 2** (OO) An infant participates in a book sharing with opportunities to help turn the book's pages and communicate about pictures of baby fingers and toes.
- Option 3** (OO) An older infant participates in a book sharing with opportunities to help manage the book and communicate about pictures of baby fingers and toes.



**Cognitive**

**Solving Problems**

- Option 1** (OO) An infant participates in taking apart a stacking rings toy.
- Option 2** (OO) An older infant participates in taking apart a stacking rings toy and placing the rings in a clear container.



**Self-Regulation**

**Getting Calm**

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



**Social-Emotional**

**Interacting with Others**

- Option 1** (OO) A young infant participates with a caregiver in responsive interactions focused on nesting cups.
- Option 2** (OO) An infant participates in responsive interactions with a caregiver while playing with nesting cups.
- Option 3** (OO) An older infant participates in back-and-forth exchanges with a caregiver while playing with nesting cups.



**Physical/Health**

**Moving Our Bodies**

- Option 1** (IG) Young infants participate in guided play focused on pre-crawling skills.
- Option 2** (OO) An infant practices crawling in a special crawling zone that includes an opportunity to crawl under a small bridge.
- Option 3** (IG) Older infants practice crawling as part of pretending to be little kittens.

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

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## Birth–12 Months

### Option 1 One-to-One



#### Skill and Goal

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

A young infant participates in a book sharing that emphasizes pictures of baby fingers and toes.



#### Key Concepts

Book  
Fingers  
Toes



#### Materials Needed

*Ten Little Fingers and Ten Little Toes* by Mem Fox



#### Also Promotes

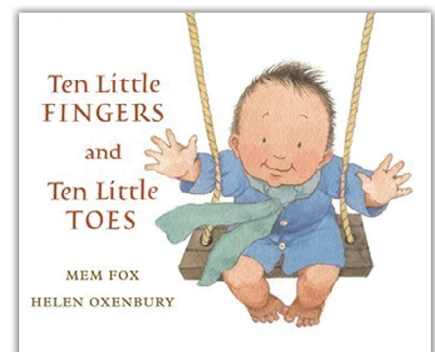
Cognitive  
Social-Emotional

**BEGIN:** [*Sit with the young infant reclined in your lap. Support the infant's head in the bend of your arm. This will allow for your hands to hold the book and turn the pages while also securely holding the infant.*]

*Hold the book about 12 inches from the infant and point to the picture on the cover. Point to hands, fingers, feet, and toes when you name each.*]

**EXPLAIN:** I have a book for us to read together! Here is a picture of a baby.

This is a happy baby. The baby is smiling. Here are the baby's hands. The baby has lots of fingers! Here are the baby's feet. See the baby's toes? Here are the toes!



Our book has pictures of baby fingers and baby toes. Let's open the book and look at the pictures of babies!

**ACT:** [*Use the following strategies to engage the infant in the book:*

- *Use your own words to describe pictures. Point to parts of pictures that you describe. Example: "The babies are swinging. The babies are smiling big. They look happy! You smile big when you swing!"*
- *Spend more time talking about pictures that seem to be of particular interest to the infant. Example: "Look at the baby's chickens! One, two, three chickens. Here are fingers and toes." (Point to each.)*
- *Describe and respond to gestures and/or vocalizations. Example: "You are kicking your legs and looking at the pictures of the babies swinging."*
- *Use your voice to add interest. The infant may enjoy variation in your voice, such as an occasional slightly higher pitch and slower tempo.]*

**RECAP:** [*Describe what happened during the book sharing. Example: "We looked at pictures of different babies. You kicked your legs when you looked at the pictures of the babies swinging! We pointed to fingers and toes. Thank you for sharing this book with me!"*]

## Birth–12 Months

### Option 2 One-to-One



#### Skill and Goal

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

An infant participates in a book sharing with opportunities to help turn the book's pages and communicate about pictures of baby fingers and toes.



#### Key Concepts

Book  
Fingers  
Toes



#### Materials Needed

*Ten Little Fingers and Ten Little Toes* by Mem Fox



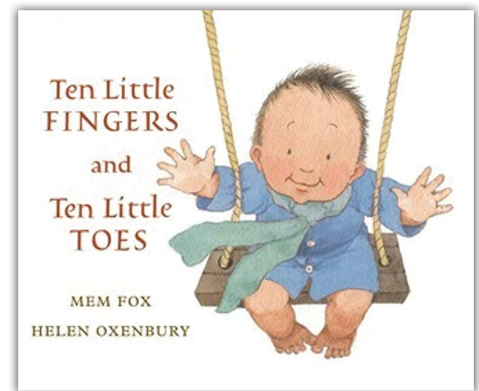
#### Also Promotes

Cognitive  
Social-Emotional  
Physical/Health

Invite an infant to sit on your lap to read a book. Introduce the book by pointing to the cover and parts of the cover picture you name. Example: "Do you see the baby? The baby is smiling! Here are the baby's fingers. Here are the baby's toes! Our book shows pictures of baby fingers and baby toes!"

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

- Invite the infant to help you turn pages of the book.
- Use your own words to describe pictures. Spend more time on pictures that seem to be of particular interest to the infant. Example: "You are looking at the babies laughing in their beds. The babies are having fun together. Can you find the babies' toes? Let's point to them!"
- Describe and respond to gestures and/or vocalizations. Example: "You are touching your toes! You are looking at pictures of the babies' toes. You found your toes! You have toes just like the babies in our book."
- Help the infant connect book information to his/her experiences and understandings. Example: "This picture shows many fingers! We have fingers. Where are your fingers? Do your fingers look like the fingers shown in our book? Where are my fingers?"
- Use your voice to add interest. Emphasize the repeated phrase "ten little fingers and ten little toes."
- Recognize the infant's participation in the book sharing. Example: "We had fun reading this book together, Elijah. You looked at the pictures of the babies. We pointed to the babies' fingers and toes. You found your toes! You have fingers and toes just like the babies in our book."



## Birth–12 Months

### Option 3 One-to-One



#### Skill and Goal

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

An older infant participates in a book sharing with opportunities to help manage the book and communicate about pictures of baby fingers and toes.



#### Key Concepts

Book  
Fingers  
Toes



#### Materials Needed

*Ten Little Fingers and Ten Little Toes* by Mem Fox



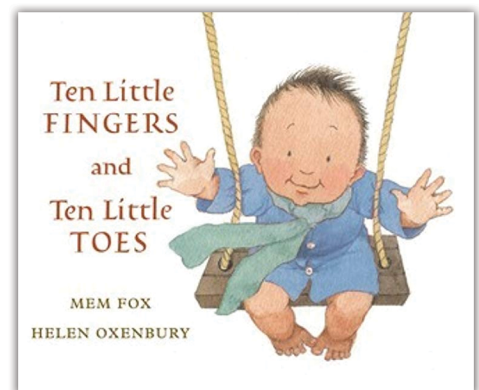
#### Also Promotes

Cognitive  
Social-Emotional  
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. Introduce the book and invite the infant to help you hold the book and turn its pages. A standing infant may want to use one hand to help turn the pages.

Once the infant is comfortable and ready to read, point to the picture on the book cover and to parts of the picture you describe. Example: “Do you see the smiling baby? Look at the baby’s hands. The baby has ten little fingers! Look at the baby’s feet. The baby has ten little toes! Our book is about baby fingers and baby toes.” Use the following strategies to share the book:

- Invite the infant to help you hold the book and turn its pages. You may wish to keep all the pages in your right hand except for the page to be turned. This will help the infant to turn one page at a time. Follow the infant’s preferences for how quickly or slowly to turn the pages. The infant may turn pages forward and backward, and return to a favorite page several times.



- Use your own words to describe pictures. Spend more time on pictures that seem to be of particular interest to the infant. Example: “This baby lives on ice. Look at the penguin! This baby lives in a tent. Do you see the chickens? Both of these babies have fingers and toes!”
- Invite the infant to point to objects that you name. Example: “Look at the baby swinging! I see little toes. Where are the baby’s toes?”
- Describe and respond to gestures and/or vocalizations. Example: “You said ‘kiss!’ The mommy is kissing her little baby on his nose.”
- Help the infant connect book information to his/her experiences and understandings. Example: “The baby is looking at his fingers. Here are the baby’s fingers. Where are your fingers? You have fingers just like the baby in our book!”
- Show enjoyment as you read the rhythmic, rhyming, repetitive text. Emphasize the repeated phrase “ten little fingers and ten little toes.”
- Recognize the infant’s participation in the book reading. Example: “You helped hold our book, Abigail. You turned the pages to look at the pictures. You said ‘kiss’ when you looked at the picture of the mommy giving her baby a kiss. You pointed to the baby’s toes. Then you found your toes! Thank you for sharing this book with me!”



### What to Look For—Options 1–3

The focus on fingers and toes in this book will appeal to many infants, especially infants who are becoming familiar with their own fingers and toes. The larger size and thick, chunky pages of this book make it especially helpful for an infant's developing skills in how to handle a book (Options 2 and 3). You may wish to connect the book's focus on fingers to the infant's use of his/her finger in turning a book's pages. If appropriate, incorporate some of the information and suggested experiences offered in Block 16, Physical/Health, Option 2.

### More Scaffolding Tips—Options 1–3

**Extra support** ■ Infants may enjoy holding a baby doll with exposed fingers and toes during or after the book sharing. Point to the fingers and toes in the pictures, and help the infant find the same parts on the baby doll.

**Enrichment** ■ After the book sharing, remove the infant's shoes and socks and help him/her explore his/her own toes.



#### Interest Area

**Materials Needed:** *Ten Little Fingers and Ten Little Toes* by Mem Fox

Share the book along with finger plays (such as "Where is Thumbkin") and games that involve toes (such as *This Little Piggy*). Remember to touch the infant gently and to avoid tickling or pulling on fingers or toes. Some infants may enjoy repeating finger plays and games.



#### Family Child Care

**Materials Needed:** books with illustrated finger plays (optional)

Children of all ages enjoy finger plays. Encourage toddlers and older children to demonstrate the actions of simple, familiar finger plays. Infants will enjoy being held and observing the actions of their older peers.



## Birth–12 Months

### Option 1 One-to-One



#### Skill and Goal Problem-solving

An infant participates in taking apart a stacking rings toy.



#### Key Concepts

Rings  
Off



#### Materials Needed

Stacking rings toy



#### Also Promotes

Physical/Health

**Be Prepared:** This activity is for an infant who can sit independently or with support. Begin the activity with a stacking rings toy that is fully assembled (all rings on the spool).

Invite the infant to join you in playing with a stacking rings toy. Place the fully-assembled toy close enough for the infant to see. Point to the stack of rings and use a cheerful tone of voice to describe them. Example: “Ellie, these are our stacking rings. There are lots of pretty colors.” Pause to let the infant look.

Take one ring off the spool and show it to the infant. If the ring has little beads inside, shake it softly. Hold the ring steady so the infant can focus his/her eyes on the object. Remove the next ring and hold it for the infant to see. Continue to take rings off the spool slowly. Show each ring to the infant as long as he/she shows interest. Each time you remove a ring, point to and tell how the toy looks different.

Support different forms of participation in the activity, including the following:

- The infant may mostly or exclusively watch you take apart the toy. Provide opportunities for the infant to look at the rings you remove. Draw attention to how the toy changes each time a ring is removed.
- The infant may opt to touch or manipulate a ring(s). If the infant reaches for the ring, move it toward his/her hand. Some infants may grasp the ring. Other infants may swipe at the ring without grasping it. If an infant cannot grasp the ring, move the ring so he/she can feel the ring’s surface.
- The infant may help you remove rings from the spool, or work independently to remove rings. An infant who is familiar with a stacking rings toy may start removing rings as soon as you present the toy. Other infants may benefit from your invitations to remove a ring and your demonstrating how to take a ring off the spool.

Describe the infant’s actions. Example: “Angel, you took the ring off with two hands.” Draw attention to characteristics of a ring, such as color or texture, while following the infant’s pace and interest.

The infant may welcome a brief break from looking at your actions or removing rings. Both tasks can be tiring for an infant. End the activity if the infant turns away, looks away, or gets fussy.



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

Watch the infant's gaze and hand/arm movements to determine how he/she may wish to participate. Infants will differ in their approach to the activity, as described in the activity plan. Some may focus more on the rings than on how the toy is changing each time a ring is removed. There are cognitive benefits in the coordination of hands and eyes if the infant manipulates or helps remove a ring. An infant may use two hands to remove a ring. There is not a preferred method for this activity. An infant may want to keep holding a ring. Holding or manipulating a ring is not necessary for an infant to benefit from the activity. Watching is a valuable form of participation and a good way to explore an object.

If the infant grasps a ring, talk about and point to the ring's color and texture, including whether it has a rippled surface. Infants at this age are beginning to distinguish bold colors. It is common for parents and other caregivers to talk about colors, even though most infants learn colors and color names at about 24-36 months of age.

Look carefully at whether the toy seems to be at a proper distance from the infant. Typically, very young infants can visually focus at about 12 inches. Decide how much distance is best for the infant by observing the infant's reaction to the colorful toy. An older infant may prefer the ring placed up to 20 inches out.

Avoid beginning the activity with rings that need to be placed on the spool. This distracts from, and potentially confuses, the goal of helping the infant see how an item can be taken apart. Assembling a stacking rings toy is far more advanced than taking apart the toy.

**📈 More Scaffolding Tips—Option 1**

**Extra support** ■ Move the stacking rings toy closer to the infant if he/she does not initially seem to visually focus on the toy. ■ Pause after removing each ring so there is time for the infant to look at the ring and what is happening to the toy. ■ If the infant removes a ring but seems reluctant to remove another, point to the next ring to be removed and ask if he/she wants take it off.

**Enrichment** ■ Acknowledge an infant's accomplishment in removing a ring. Example: "Wow, Angel! The ring was on the toy, and you got it off." ■ If an infant wants to play some more, put the rings back on the spool and support the infant in removing the rings independently.



## Birth–12 Months

### Option 2 One-to-One



#### Skill and Goal

##### Problem-solving

An older infant participates in taking apart a stacking rings toy and placing the rings in a clear container.



#### Key Concepts

Off  
Into  
More



#### Materials Needed

1 stacking rings toy  
1 clear, round container



#### Also Promotes

Physical/Health

**BEGIN:** *[Invite an infant to play a game with the stacking rings. Sit on the floor facing the infant and present the toy with the rings stacked on the spool. Place the clear container near the infant. Point to the rings and to the container (bowl) when you describe each.]*

**EXPLAIN:** We can play a game by taking the rings off the spool. Then we put the rings into a bowl.

*[Emphasize by repeating “rings off” and “into a bowl.”]*

**ASK:** Would you like to take off the first ring?

*[Point to the top ring.]*

**ACT:** *[Describe the infant’s actions as he/she removes the ring.*

*Encourage the infant to drop the first ring into the bowl.*

*Act as the announcer in the game. Example: “Diego, you took one ring off and put it in the bowl! You did it all by yourself.”*

*Add your own fun twist to make the activity appealing for the infant. Example: Clap and say “ta-da” each time the infant drops a ring into the container.]*

Are you ready to get more rings?

*[Emphasize more.*

*Point to and describe the next ring.]*

Next is the orange ring!

*[Continue to encourage the two-step activity. If the infant removes most or all of the rings, emphasize the differences between the (empty) spool and the many rings in the bowl.*

*Give the bowl to the infant and encourage him/her to dump the rings onto the floor. The infant can observe the random arrangement of the rings on the floor, which looks different from the rings stacked in order by size.*

*Emphasize the infant’s action changed the arrangement of rings. Example: “Makayla, your rings were stacked up inside the bowl. Now they are in different places on the floor.”]*





**Option 2 continued**

**RECAP:** [*Briefly describe the infant's actions with the rings and bowl, including his/her reaction to taking the stacking rings toy apart. Example: "You took the rings off the spool. Then you put the rings in the bowl. Now the rings are spread out on the floor! You changed how things look!"*]

 **What to Look For—Option 2**

Two collections are taken apart in this activity. One is the set of rings on a spool. The other is the set of rings in the clear container. This offers two opportunities for the infant to see results of his/her actions. Emphasize each change but avoid a strong teaching approach. Infants can learn a lot by acting on items and seeing for themselves how items can change.

It is all right to use the color names in describing rings, but do not attempt to teach color. Infants do not learn color names at this age, but they are able to detect color differences.

Some infants will notice how the rings in the clear bowl are arranged in order, from small to large. However, putting the toy back together requires awareness of subtle differences in size and an understanding of how to order objects from small to large. Also, the spool is wider at the bottom. At this age, most infants will not have achieved this understanding.

 **More Scaffolding Tips—Option 2**

**Extra support** ■ Hold the container and move it closer to the infant as he/she begins to remove rings. ■ Point to the container as it fills and comment on the number of rings. Example: "There are lots of rings in our bowl." At the same time, point to and comment on how the spool is getting empty.

**Enrichment** ■ Stack the rings on the floor in order by size and encourage the infant to knock them over. ■ If an infant remains interested in the activity, stack the rings back onto the spool so the infant may repeat the game. ■ If an infant shows interest in putting the toy together, give him/her the rings one at a time, starting with the largest. Most infants need explicit support for putting together a stacking rings toy.

**Interest Area**

**Materials Needed:** stacking rings toy, infant gym, nesting cups, empty tissue box

Place one large and one small ring on the floor in front of an infant at tummy time. Arrange the rings so an infant who is reaching can grasp them. Suspend two rings from the infant gym so a nonmobile infant can see the rings move and can swipe at them.

Create a simple arrangement of rings on a surface that early mobile infants can discover. Set up a stack of nesting cups an infant can tip over. Provide an empty tissue box so an infant can put the stacking rings inside and easily remove them.

 Family Child Care

**Materials Needed:** infant snap-link beads, nonbreakable clear container, large peg puzzles, magnetic builders, or other manipulative construction sets

Infants' work in taking apart a toy can be extended to older children in your setting. The suggested materials can be taken apart by toddlers and preschool-age children. Put together several lengths of infant snap-link beads. Provide a nonbreakable clear container for the beads.

Provide large peg puzzles for toddlers. Some toddlers will simply remove the puzzle pieces. Some toddlers will begin to put a peg puzzle together.

Preschool-age and older children will enjoy constructing with magnetic builders or other manipulative construction sets at a table.





## Birth–12 Months

**Be Prepared:** This activity is for infants who are not mobile.

### Option 1 One-to-One



#### Skill and Goal Self-control

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



#### Key Concepts Calm



#### Materials Needed 1 caged bell



#### Also Promotes Communication/Language Physical/Health

**BEGIN:** [*Hold the infant with his/her head well supported in the bend of your arm. Smile, make eye contact, and hold up the bell for the infant to see and touch.*]

I have a new toy. Would you like to play with it?

[*Pause and acknowledge the infant's response. Example: "You are looking at the toy. I will move the bell closer so you can touch it."*]

**ACT:** [*Hold the bell so the infant can easily reach it. The infant may show interest by watching, making arm movements in the direction of the bell, and/or reaching out and grasping it. If the infant appears to be enjoying the bell, support the infant in exploring the bell's shape, feel, and/or sound.*]

*Watch the infant's reactions closely to determine whether the infant might like you to move or shake the bell or the infant prefers to hold or manipulate the bell. Gently take away the bell if the infant seems disinterested or distressed at any time.*



*Describe your actions with the bell and the infant's actions and reactions. Example: "You are smiling so big when you move the bell back and forth! You are listening to the sound the bell makes when it moves."*

*After several minutes of the infant exploring the bell, put it away and tell the infant it is time for us to calm down. Example: "We are putting the bell away. All done. We can calm down now." Reposition the infant to provide a clear signal that play time with the bell is over. Hold the infant and provide comfort, such as patting on the back, quietly singing a familiar song, or offering soft-voice reminders that it is time to rest.]*

**RECAP:** [*Smile and make eye contact as you describe time with the bell. Example: "We had fun with a bell! You told me with your big smile that you liked to hold the bell and listen to the sounds it makes. Then we put the bell away. I held you while you got calm again."*]



## Birth–12 Months

### Option 2 One-to-One



#### Skill and Goal

##### Self-control

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



#### Key Concepts

Ring  
Calm



#### Materials Needed

2 caged bells



#### Also Promotes

Communication/Language  
Physical/Health  
Cognitive

**Be Prepared:** This activity is for infants who can sit independently or with support.



Invite an infant to sit across from you on the floor to play with a bell. Introduce the bell and invite the infant to touch and hold the bell. Describe what the infant does with the bell. Encourage the infant to ring the bell. Then invite the infant to ring his/her bell while you ring your bell and sing a song. Sing the following song with an enthusiastic voice. Smile widely while you ring your bell. Encourage the infant to ring his/her bell, too. (Tune: “Row, Row, Row, Your Boat”)

**Ring, ring, ring your bell,  
Ring it up and down.  
Ring it loud, ring it soft,  
Ring it to the ground.**

Sing the song and ring your bell a second time if the infant seems to enjoy the activity. Encourage the infant to ring his/her bell, too.

After one or two rounds of the song, describe the infant’s reaction to the bell. Example: “You had fun ringing a bell, Sydney. You smiled and rang your bell while I sang a song. I rang my bell, too!”

Then softly announce that ringing the bell is done. We are putting away our bells. Encourage the infant to sit and rest with you. The infant may want to sit near you or on your lap. Provide quiet time for the infant to become calm. The infant may benefit from your patting his/her back and/or quietly humming a favorite song.

Conclude the session by acknowledging the infant’s efforts to become calm. Example: “We put away our bells. You are sitting next to me. We are getting calm.”

### 👁️ What to Look For—Options 1–2

Some infants will focus on holding the bell and examining its shape and feel with their hands and mouth. Others may enjoy waving the bell around and listening to the sounds. And some infants may prefer to watch you move and ring the bell. Each of these possibilities can be mildly stimulating for the infant and set the stage for practicing how to calm down. Watch the infant closely to make sure the bell ringing is appropriately stimulating. Some infants do not like a loud bell sound but respond positively to a soft bell sound. You can add



or decrease stimulation through your motions with the bell, such as moving your hand only versus your arm, and through softer or louder rings and song.

### More Scaffolding Tips—Options 1–2

**Extra support** ■ Use your knowledge of an infant to determine whether a quieter, slower approach to the bell would be appropriately stimulating. ■ To calm down, a younger infant may appreciate your holding him/her in your arms and gently swaying.

**Enrichment** ■ Use your bell to imitate the infant's bell actions. ■ Make large, exaggerated movements with the second bell and encourage the infant to copy you. Acknowledge the infant's efforts. Example: "I am ringing my bell up high. You are ringing your bell up high! We are ringing the bells together."



#### Interest Area

**Materials Needed:** caged bells, blanket or mat, soft music

Place the bells on a blanket or mat on the floor for interested infants to explore. Play soft music and invite infants to play with the bells while they listen to the music. Mobile infants may crawl or walk to the interest area. Younger infants may indicate interest by watching, vocalizing, or reaching toward the bells. Provide support for each interested infant to participate. After the activity, encourage infants to sit quietly with you and become calm before moving to another activity.



#### Family Child Care

**Materials Needed:** variety of age-appropriate musical instruments (including caged bells), soft music

Children of all ages enjoy making music with toy instruments. Give each child an instrument to play while listening to soft music. Alternatively, you may wish to sing a variety of songs with the children, such as the bell song in Option 2. Infants will enjoy holding their own bell to shake and ring. Before moving to the next activity, invite children to put down their instruments and sit quietly for a few moments. You may wish to softly recite a simple, familiar rhyme.



## Birth–12 Months

■ **Be Prepared:** Select two nesting cups of contrasting colors.

### Option 1 One-to-One



#### Skill and Goal

##### Social interaction skills

A young infant participates with a caregiver in responsive interactions focused on nesting cups.



#### Key Concepts

Cups



#### Materials Needed

2 nesting cups (see Be Prepared)



#### Also Promotes

Communication/Language  
Physical/Health  
Cognitive

**BEGIN:** *[Place the infant on his/her tummy in front of you.*

*Sit on the floor very close to the infant so he/she can see your face and hear your voice.*

*Engage the infant with a big smile, eye contact, and a verbal welcome. Example: "Hello, Jacob! I am happy to see you today! Would you like to play with me?" Acknowledge the infant's reaction. Example: "I can hear you cooing, Sofia. You are talking to me. I think you would like to play!"*

**ACT:** *[Place the two cups about 12 inches from the infant with cup openings facing up.]*



Here are two cups we can play with! Maybe you would like to touch the cups.

*[Pause for the infant's response to the cups. If the infant does not reach for or touch a cup, move one of the cups closer to the infant. If the infant looks at but does not touch or grasp a cup, slowly show and describe some ways to play with the cups. Examples:*

- *Tap the cups gently together to make a soft noise.*
- *Place one cup inside the other cup. Then separate the cups by lifting the cup on top or turning over the nested cups so a cup falls out.*

*After showing and describing some things to do with the cups, move the cups closer to the infant and wait for a reaction.*

*Describe what the infant does and what you do. Examples: "You are holding the blue cup, Joshua. You are feeling the cup with your mouth." "I am tapping the two cups together. Tap, tap, tap. Do you hear the tapping sound?"*

*Encourage the infant to pursue things that seem to be of interest. Examples: "You are looking at the cups and smiling. Would you like to hold a cup? Here, I will help you." "Your eyes got big when I tapped the two cups together. Would you like me to do it again?"*

*Offer brief pauses so the infant can respond and contribute. Respond to vocalizations by repeating and expanding the utterance.]*

**BLOCK**  
**17**

# Interacting with Others *(continued)*



## ***Option 1 continued***

**RECAP:** *[Offer a brief description of the interaction. Example: "Thank you for playing with me, Sofia. You held the blue cup. You listened to the sound of the cups tapping together. You smiled at me and I smiled at you! We had fun together!"]*

## Birth–12 Months

**Be Prepared:** This activity is for an infant who can sit independently or with support. Select four nesting cups of different contrasting colors.

### Option 2 One-to-One



#### Skill and Goal

##### Social interaction skills

An infant participates in responsive interactions with a caregiver while playing with nesting cups.



#### Key Concepts

Cups



#### Materials Needed

4 nesting cups (see Be Prepared)



#### Also Promotes

Communication/Language  
Physical/Health

Invite an infant to sit on the floor with you to play with nesting cups. Sit across from one another. Place two cups in front of the infant and two cups in front of you. Each of the two sets of cups (yours and the infant's), should include one cup with its opening facing up and the other cup with its opening facing down. This arrangement emphasizes some key characteristics of the cups.



Wait for the infant to take the first action(s) with a cup(s). If the infant does not touch or reach for a cup after a moment, move

one of the cups closer to the infant and encourage him to touch or hold it. If the infant continues to leave the cups alone, use your cups to show and describe one or several ways to play with the cups. Examples: Tapping the cups together to make a soft noise or putting one cup inside the other cup and then lifting and turning over the nested cups so one cup falls out. Pause for the infant to act with his/her cups.

If the infant continues to watch but not act with his/her cups, invite the infant to help you with one of your previously demonstrated actions with your cups. Examples: You and the infant could tap cups together (each one of you holding a cup) or you could put a cup inside a larger cup held by the infant and then encourage the infant to turn over the nested cups so the smaller cup falls to the floor.

The infant is likely to play with the cups you present to him/her. Support the infant's play in the following ways:

- Describe the infant's actions.
- Use your cups to mimic what the infant does. Draw attention to how you are doing what the infant is doing.
- Offer one or both of your cups to the infant. This could be an exchange for one or both of the infant's cups or the infant might like to play with all four cups.

Conclude the activity with a brief description of what happened. Emphasize interactions between you and the infant. Example: "We had fun playing with the cups today, Xavier! You tapped your cups together. Then I tapped my cups together! You laughed when I did what you did. Thank you for playing with me!"





## Birth–12 Months

**Be Prepared:** This activity is for an infant who can sit independently. Put the largest four nesting cups together.

### Option 3 One-to-One



#### Skill and Goal

##### Social interaction skills

An older infant participates in back-and-forth exchanges with a caregiver while playing with nesting cups.



#### Key Concepts

Cups  
Stack



#### Materials Needed

4 nesting cups (see Be Prepared)



#### Also Promotes

Communication/Language  
Physical/Health  
Self-Regulation

Invite the infant to sit across from you in an open floor space to play with nesting cups. Place the nested cups between you, with opening facing up. Initiate taking turns removing cups, one at a time, from the set of nested cups. First pick up the cup on top and place it on the floor with its opening down (opening is on the floor). Describe what you are doing. Next, invite the infant to do what you just did: pick up the next cup on the top of the nested cups and place it on the floor with its opening down. (It is okay if the infant does not put the opening face down; you can make this adjustment later.) Then you repeat this action with the third cup. Invite the infant to turn over the remaining fourth cup, so its opening is on the floor.



Next, invite the infant to work with you in stacking the four cups. Initiate this action by putting the largest cup in front of the infant (remaining face down) and then handing the infant the next largest cup to put on top of the largest cup. Offer verbal support to the infant, if needed, on where to put the cup. Avoid taking over the task. Continue this process until the smallest of the four cups is on the top of the stack. Then invite the infant to knock over the stack of cups. Offer an enthusiastic response. Example: “Wow, you knocked down the cups, Damien! We stacked the cups. Now the cups are on the floor!”

The infant is likely to want to repeat the stacking process and especially the knocking-over action. Conclude the session by emphasizing the shared actions. Example: “This was fun! We worked together to take apart the cups. Then we worked together to stack the cups. Then you knocked down our stack of cups! We both laughed! Thank you for playing with me!”

### 👁️ What to Look For—Options 1–3

The activity options continue the practice of using a toy to facilitate positive interactions between you and the infant. Look more at an infant’s facial expressions than at his/her actions with a cup. What matters most in each activity is the interpersonal connection between you and the infant, not whether a cup is being used in a particular way. The back-and-forth exchanges suggested in Option 3 may not be fully realized (or realized at all) in some



situations. Infants cannot be expected to understand the concept of taking turns, but many will enjoy a supportive pattern of interactions with a caregiver.

Nesting cups are a favorite of infants and offer many different possibilities for manipulation. Infants are not expected to nest or stack the cups independently, but older infants will enjoy doing so with caregiver guidance as suggested in the Option 3 plan.

### More Scaffolding Tips—Options 1–3

**Extra support** ■ In Option 1, hold the infant in your lap if it is too challenging for the infant to explore the cups while on his/her tummy. ■ In Option 3, if an infant becomes overly excited about knocking over the stack, demonstrate and describe gentle touches with the cups and use three rather than four cups if stacking is repeated.

**Enrichment** ■ In Option 1, add two people figures to the play after the infant has explored the cups. There are many ways the people figures could be explored by the infant, such as putting a figure in a cup or putting a figure on top of a cup with its opening on the floor.



#### Interest Area

**Materials Needed:** assortment of cups (including some nesting cups), assortment of small toys (such as balls or animals)

**Be Prepared:** Create an interesting arrangement of cups and toys for infants to discover. Example: Place some toys in cups, and place other toys on top of cups turned upside down.

Cups can be enjoyable, open-ended materials for infants to explore. Encourage infants to explore the cups and toys in their own ways. Some infants will enjoy placing toys in and out of the cups. Others may enjoy tapping two cups together. Describe infants' actions.



#### Family Child Care

**Materials Needed:** assortment of cups (including some nesting cups), assortment of small toys (such as balls or animals), sensory or water table

Children of all ages enjoy playing with nesting cups. While an infant engages in one of the suggested activity options, an older child and a toddler could work together to nest and stack a set of cups. Young children will often place small toys in cups and then remove them. Cups can be placed in a sensory or water table to encourage scooping and pouring.



## Birth–12 Months

### Option 1 Informal Gathering



#### Skill and Goal

##### Gross motor development

Young infants participate in guided play focused on pre-crawling skills.



#### Key Concepts

Reach  
Roll over



#### Materials Needed

2 soft rattles



#### Also Promotes

Cognitive  
Communication/Language

**Be Prepared:** This activity is for two nonmobile infants. Tailor the activity to provide practice time for whatever motor skill each infant is learning. Some infants may be reaching for a toy, pushing up their head and chest, or rolling over. Some infants may be scooting forward, whereas others may be pulling their legs under their body to a balanced hands-and-knees position.

Place two nonmobile infants on a firm mat, or padded floor, when they are alert for play. Put the infants on their backs near one another. Devote some time to helping the infants get comfortable in the setting. Use your voice and big smiles to create interest in looking at you. The infants may respond to you with sounds, looking, or movement. Describe what the infants are doing.

Then shake two soft rattles, one at a time. Place one rattle near each infant. Put the rattle within an infant’s range of sight to encourage head turning, reaching, or rolling over. Encourage the infants to hold or touch a rattle. Talk with each infant.

Communicate enthusiasm for each infant’s efforts or accomplishments. Remember the importance of your tone of voice, facial expressions, and gestures. After 1–2 minutes, reposition an infant if he/she has not turned over or moved. If an infant is uncomfortable, help by moving closer and/or picking up the infant.

The infants may begin to vocalize as they move their legs and arms. The infants may be happy to see one another. Positively acknowledge the infants’ vocalizations, smiles, and nonverbal reactions. Example: “Devon, you turned your head when Isabel cooed. You heard Isabel make a sound.”



### 👁️ What to Look For—Option 1

Infants spend time focused on an emerging physical skill until it is achieved. This play session provides a rattle, and your support, as tools for helping an infant learn skills that lead to crawling. Young infants are learning to control body movements in the months before they begin to crawl. Playing on the floor helps the infant develop strength that sets the stage for rolling over. Nonmobile infants will be interested in interacting with you and looking at your face as you smile and talk. Watch the ways the infants react to your encouragement. As you talk to the infants, pause for their reactions.

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

**Extra support** ■ Stay very close to the infants. Move, if necessary, so an infant can see your face. ■ A rattle may get out of an infant’s range of reach if the infant rolls over or scoots. Keep the rattle within range as an incentive for practicing an emerging motor skill.

**Enrichment** ■ If an infant who remains on his/her back seems happy and content and interested in some tummy time, use two hands to roll him/her over. Encourage the infant to lift his/her head and chest. Avoid putting the infant in a crawling position, such as putting the infant’s knees under his/her body.



## Birth–12 Months

### Option 2 One-to-One



#### Skill and Goal

##### Gross motor development

An infant practices crawling in a special crawling zone that includes an opportunity to crawl under a small bridge.



#### Key Concepts

Crawl  
Under



#### Materials Needed

Small table  
Activity mat  
Plush toy animal



#### Also Promotes

Cognitive  
Communication/Language

**Be Prepared:** This activity is for an infant who can crawl. Set up a fun crawling zone by placing activity mats in an open area along with a small table that serves as a fully open bridge to crawl under. Select a table that an infant can safely be under, including the possibility of sitting upright while under the table. Do not cover any of the sides of the table.

**BEGIN:** [*Greet and place the infant in an independent sitting position so he/she can move into a crawling position when ready. You also may place an infant on his/her tummy, but do not position legs and arms in a crawling position. It is important for the infant to figure out how to move into a crawling position.*]

**ACT:** [*Point to and enthusiastically describe the area where the infant can have fun crawling. Use gestures to supplement your words. Sit or kneel by the small table. Point to and describe the table as a bridge the infant might want to crawl under. Use the plush animal to demonstrate going under the bridge. Example: "Puppy is going under our bridge. Look, our puppy went in one side and came out on the other side." Repeat the demonstration.*]

*Encourage the infant to crawl around the space. Describe the infant's actions. Draw attention to the bridge, if appropriate, but do not overemphasize its use. See Extra Support ideas for helping an infant manage the bridge. Move about the space if it seems the infant would like to crawl toward you.]*

**RECAP:** [*Offer a brief summary of the infant's actions during the activity. Example: "You had fun crawling in a special place. We made a bridge with a table. You went under the bridge. Doggy went under the bridge, too!"*]

### What to Look For—Option 2

Be attentive to whether it appears the infant would like you to be a coach near his/her side versus a desired destination of crawling across a mat or under the bridge. You might serve in both roles with the same infant during the same session, moving from coach to desired destination as the infant becomes more comfortable with the space and activity.

Some infants will be curious about the bridge without crawling under the table. Other infants may eagerly crawl under the table, maybe again and again. See the Extra Support tips for ways to reassure and tangibly support infants who show both interest in and reluctance to crawl under the bridge.

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

**Extra support** ■ If the infant is reluctant to move under the table, demonstrate how to put your head under the table and encourage the infant to also see what it looks like under the table. ■ As the infant watches, roll a ball under the bridge. ■ The infant may prefer that you crawl alongside (not under the table) as he/she goes under the bridge. ■ Encourage the infant to crawl alongside the bridge (not under the table) if he/she is not interested in going through the tunnel. ■ Give verbal support to an infant who is under the table. Establish eye contact and encourage him/her to crawl out independently.

**Enrichment** ■ Create a longer bridge by putting two tables together. ■ Add a sensory element by attaching a few ribbons to the edge of the table that will touch the infants as they pass under the bridge. ■ Emphasize the words “under” and “through.” Example: “Sidney is crawling under the table. She is going through!” ■ In part of the crawling zone, stack several mats together to create a small bump and slightly higher flooring.



## Birth–12 Months

### Option 3 Informal Gathering



#### Skill and Goal

##### Gross motor development

Older infants practice crawling as part of pretending to be little kittens.



#### Key Concepts

Crawl  
Kitten



#### Materials Needed

*Baby Touch and Feel: Puppies and Kittens* by DK Publishing  
Small balls (see Be Prepared)



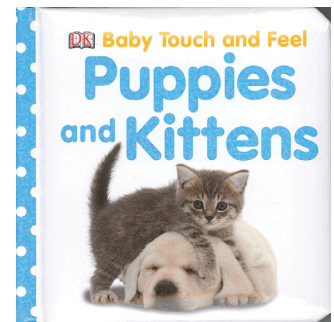
#### Also Promotes

Cognitive  
Communication/Language  
Self-Regulation

**Be Prepared:** This activity is for infants who are able to walk or can readily crawl. Having the infants chase small balls (while pretending to be kittens) is one of the suggested ways you can promote crawling in this activity. Use small balls that infants can easily hold with one hand.

Invite infants to join you in pretending to be kittens. Sing a familiar song with hand actions to welcome infants to the gathering. Song possibilities include “Mister Sun,” “Itsy-Bitsy Spider,” or “Little Fishy.” Remember, hearing your voice is more satisfying to infants than recorded music.

After a welcoming song with hand actions, move closer to the infants and open the *Puppies and Kittens* book. Point to and name one or more of the six pictures of kittens. Use your own words to describe pictures you highlight. Ask the infants what sound a kitten makes. Some infants may make a kitten or catlike sound. Mimic any kitten or catlike sounds made by infants, or offer your own if no sounds are made by an infant.



Explain to the infants that we can have fun by pretending to be kittens. We can pretend we are kittens by crawling on the floor. Engage infants in one or more of the following options:

- Lead infants in crawling 5–10 feet in a particular direction and then crawling back to the gathering area. Create a reason for the outing, such as pretending to look for mother cat. Suggest the kittens pretend to sleep or take a nap on the floor after crawling so far.
- Pretend to be a cat and encourage the infants (pretending to be kittens) to chase you as you all crawl.
- Kittens like to chase little balls. Gently roll small balls for the infants (as they pretend to be kittens) to follow in a crawling position.

You may wish to repeat the activity or offer a second crawling option if infants remain interested in crawling. Conclude the session by encouraging infants to make a kitten noise, such as a meow. Some infants may enjoy looking at the book again as they calm down with your support.



### 👁️ What to Look For—Option 3

Infants who can walk are likely to enjoy returning to a crawling position as part of pretend fun. Even after learning to walk, some infants prefer to crawl in some situations, especially if crawling is a more reliable or secure form of locomotion than walking. Focusing on where to go as a pretend kitten

**Option 3 continued**

requires mental energies that might be easier to expend when not concentrating on a relatively new skill of walking.

Use of the book at the beginning of the activity is intended to introduce the kitten theme. Monitor infants' attention to the book so you can decide whether to offer the book again after crawling time, or during a later point in the day or week with individual infants. The crawling activity will be stimulating for infants and many will welcome a calming down opportunity after working hard to crawl. The book can be a useful tool in helping infants to rest. Some may wish to sit close to you or on your lap.

Infants cannot be expected to know what it means to pretend to be someone or something else. Still, your use of the word in this activity and in other contexts can promote vocabulary awareness over time.

## More Scaffolding Tips—Option 3

**Extra support** ■ If an infant(s) shows interest in one or more pictures of puppies in the book, acknowledge the interest and describe the puppy. If infants show more interest in puppies than kittens, adapt the activity to focus on puppies, including puppy-like sounds and the crawling segment. ■ Crawl alongside an infant who seems interested in but hesitant to crawl.

**Enrichment** ■ Instead of serving as the pretend cat that kittens chase (second crawling suggestion), invite one of the infants to pretend to be a cat that other infants (kittens) chase by crawling.



## Interest Area

**Materials Needed:** texture bears, long paper, texture activity quilts, soft toys

Arrange a play space for nonmobile infants near a window where they can watch shadows and changes in the light. Provide items with various textures for infants to feel with their hands, such as the texture bears.

Crinkle a long paper and then straighten it out on the floor for a novel crawling surface. The sound of crawling over the paper will interest early mobile infants.

Crinkling the paper will prevent walking infants from slipping. Use textured activity quilts and soft toys to create interesting zones for mobile infants to explore independently.



## Family Child Care

Toddlers, preschool-age, and older children may enjoy rolling on a mat or carpet. Guide the children so one child at a time can roll across the mat. Encourage children to roll as straight as they can. Some children will enjoy rolling over to a plush toy and giving it a squeeze. Example: "Roll over and get a hug from doggy." You may wish to sing the song "Five in the Bed" and emphasize the refrain of "roll over, roll over."