



**Communication/
Language**

Exploring Words

- Option 1** (OO) A young infant participates in a book sharing about people families and animal families.
- Option 2** (OO) An infant participates in a book sharing with opportunities to help turn the pages and communicate about pictures of families.
- Option 3** (OO) An older infant participates in a book sharing with opportunities to help manage the book and communicate about pictures of families.



Cognitive

Exploring Objects

- Option 1** (OO) A young infant looks at two dolls wrapped in bold, contrasting colors.
- Option 2** (OO) An infant participates in a tummy time that offers two similar dolls wrapped in different bold colors.
- Option 3** (OO) An older infant engages in open-ended play with large beads of two different colors.



Self-Regulation

Focusing and Remembering

- Option 1** (OO) A young infant is encouraged to persist in reaching for a desired toy.
- Option 2** (OO) An older infant is encouraged to persist in scooting, crawling, or walking to get a desired toy.



Social-Emotional

Interacting with Others

- Option 1** (OO) An infant participates in responsive interactions with a caregiver while looking in a large mirror.
- Option 2** (IG) Older infants together look at and make facial expressions and hand motions in a large mirror.



Physical/Health

Using Our Hands

- Option 1** (OO) An infant participates in a nursery rhyme with simple hand motions.
- Option 2** (IG) Infants participate together in a nursery rhyme with hand motions.

(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 about different ways to carry a baby.



Key Concepts

Book
Baby
Carry



Materials Needed

Carry Me (Babies Everywhere) by Star Bright Books



Also Promotes

Social-Emotional

Looking Ahead: The Communication/Language activity plan in Block 19 uses pictures taken in your room. Please take pictures of current infants and caregivers in your room for use in Block 19. Be sure to follow your center's procedures for securing consent.

Be Prepared: The book offers many photographs that will appeal to an infant. The last two pages, with names of countries and small photos, will be of limited interest to most young babies and can be omitted in your book sharing.

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. Point to pictures you describe.]

ACT: I have a book for us to read together! Here is a baby. The baby is riding on the back of its parent.

Our book is about ways to carry a baby. Our book shows pictures of babies being carried in different ways.



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

- *Use your own words to describe pictures. Example: "This baby is riding on the back of its dad. The baby is in a pack."*
- *Acknowledge what the infant seems to be looking at. Example: "You are looking at the baby being carried in a beautiful sling. Here is the sling."*
- *Describe and respond to gestures and/or vocalizations. Example: You are cooing, Adrian. I think you like this picture of the mommy and baby.*
- *Vary the pitch and tempo of your voice.]*

RECAP: [*Describe what happened during the book sharing. Example: "We read a book about ways to carry a baby. Our book had many pictures of babies being carried by their parents. You smiled and made happy noises when you looked at the pictures!"*]

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 pages and communicate about different ways to carry a baby.



Key Concepts

Book
Baby
Carry



Materials Needed

Carry Me (Babies Everywhere) by Star Bright Books



Also Promotes

Social-Emotional
Physical/Health

Be Prepared: The book offers many photographs that will appeal to an infant. The last two pages, with names of countries and small photos, will be of limited interest to most young babies and can be omitted in your book sharing.

Invite an infant to sit with you to read a book. Introduce the book by pointing to and describing the picture on the cover. Example: “Here is a baby and a parent. The baby is being carried on the back of the parent. Our book is about different ways to carry a baby.” There are people babies and animal babies in our book! Our book is about families.” Use the following strategies to engage the infant in the book:



- Invite the infant to help you turn pages of the book. It is okay if the infant skips some pictures.
- Point to and describe the pictures in your own words. Example: “Look at this baby. The baby is being carried in front of the dad.”
- Describe what the infant is looking at. Example: “You are looking at the baby being carried on the side of its mom. This mom and baby are in a field with farm animals.” These mommies are carrying their babies.”
- Spend more time describing pictures that seem to be of particular interest to the infant. Example: “You are touching the sling that holds the baby. The mom is carrying the baby in a sling. The baby is smiling.”
- Describe and respond to gestures and/or vocalizations. Example: “You are saying ‘bababababa.’ You like this picture in our book!”
- Help the infant connect book information to his/her knowledge and experiences. Example: “I have seen your mom carry you this way!”
- Use your voice to add interest and enjoyment to the book reading.
- Recognize infant’s participation in the book reading. Example: “We had fun reading a book together, Zoe. You looked at pictures of different ways to carry a baby. You helped me turn the pages of our book. 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 with opportunities to help manage the book and communicate about different ways to carry a baby.



Key Concepts

Book
Carry
Picture



Materials Needed

Carry Me (Babies Everywhere) by Star Bright Books



Also Promotes

Social-Emotional
Physical/Health

Be Prepared: The book offers many photographs that will appeal to an infant. The last two pages, with names of countries and small photos, may be of limited interest to the baby in your activity and can be omitted in your book sharing.

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 and turn the 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 cues as to how quickly or slowly to turn the pages.



Point to and describe the picture on the book cover. Example: "Our book is about different ways to carry a baby. There are a lot of pictures in our book."

- Point to and briefly describe images and actions in pictures in your own words. Example: "Here is a baby. Here is a dad. The baby is being carried on the dad's back. The baby is in a pack."
- Invite the infant to point to items you name. Example: "Where is the baby in this picture?"
- Offer more information about pictures that seem to be of particular interest to the infant. Example: "You are pointing to the hat on the baby's head. The hat is keeping the baby warm. The mom is wearing a coat. I think it is cold outside."
- Describe and respond to gestures and/or vocalizations. Example: "You are pointing to the baby who is touching the dad's neck."
- Help the infant connect book information to his/her experiences and understandings. Example: "Your dad carries you this way, too!"
- Recognize the infant's participation in the book sharing. Example: "You helped me hold our book, Matthew. You pointed to the babies. You said 'dadadada' when you looked at the pictures with dads. You turned the pages to see what was next. We had fun reading this book together."



What to Look For—Options 1–3

This book is likely to be of strong interest to most infants. The pictures of babies and parents will be appealing and the different ways of carrying a baby will be both familiar and unfamiliar. Follow the infant's lead for what you look at and the pace of the book sharing. It is not necessary to look at each picture in the book. An older infant may point or turn to a particular page in the book. You may wish to return to a picture of special interest to an infant. If the infant begins to lose interest during the book sharing, you may wish to give one gentle attempt to interest the infant before ending the activity. Example: "Let's look at the baby on the next page! How do you think the baby will be carried?" Following the infant's lead will help ensure the book sharing is a positive experience.

More Scaffolding Tips—Options 1–3

Extra support ■ Consistently draw attention to babies shown in pictures. Babies are likely to be of keen interest to your infant. ■ Have another object available for the infant to mouth or chew instead of the book. ■ The infant may like to hold a baby doll or a toy animal related to the book.

Enrichment ■ An older infant may enjoy looking at a picture of his/her own parent or family after the story.



Interest Area

Materials Needed: photo albums or laminated photos of infants with their families

Provide opportunities for infants to explore photos of themselves with their parent(s) or family. Place the photos in a location that is accessible to infants, such as a special book area or laminated photos affixed low on a wall. Talk with infants about what they see in the photos. Point to particular people or objects. Respond to gestures and vocalizations.



Family Child Care

Materials Needed: *Carry Me (Babies Everywhere)* by Star Bright Books; props for children to engage in family-related play, such as a dollhouse with people figures

Share this book with all the children in your care. Talk about the ways the babies are being carried. Encourage children to talk about ways they are carried (or were carried as a younger child or how a younger sibling is carried). After the book sharing, invite toddlers and older children to play with the dollhouse. Toddlers and older children may enjoy trying different ways to carry a baby doll. Infants may like to hold and manipulate a baby doll during the activity.



Birth–12 Months

Option 1 One-to-One



Skill and Goal

Object inquiry skills

A young infant looks at two dolls wrapped in bold, contrasting colors.



Key Concepts

Look
Doll



Materials Needed

- 2 dolls (see Be Prepared)
- 1 red square of fabric (see Be Prepared)
- 1 blue square of fabric (see Be Prepared)



Also Promotes

Communication/Language
Physical/Health
Optional Reading:



Optional Reading

- Look Look!* by Peter Linenthal
- Black on White* by Tana Hoban

Be Prepared: The brief activity described below is for infants who are 6–12 weeks of age. It also may be of interest to a somewhat older infant. It is important for the two dolls to be of similar shape and size so the infant is more likely to focus on the color. The red and blue squares of fabric should be solid, bold colors, and large enough to wrap around the doll as a blanket. Wrap the red fabric around one doll and the blue fabric around the other doll. The activity plan calls these “red doll” and “blue doll.” There is an opportunity to use the dolls and red and blue fabric again in Block 21, Cognitive, Option 1.

Provide an opportunity for the young infant to gaze at two dolls during a friendly social interaction with you. Hold the infant in your arms and hold the red doll about 8–10 inches from the infant. Hold the doll steady for a moment, and then gently tip the doll left and right. Encourage the infant to look at the toy by talking about the doll. Acknowledge any reactions the infant may have to the doll. Example: “You are looking at the doll’s hair.”



After a minute or less, gently move the doll out of the infant’s sight. Describe what happened. Example: “We looked at a doll together. The doll had a red blanket. I put away the doll. Now we are looking at each other!” Give the infant a short break from intently looking.

Next, show the blue doll. Offer a brief introduction. Example: “Here is another doll. We can look at this doll now.” Again, hold the doll steady for a moment, and then gently tip the doll left and right. Comment on the infant’s reaction. Example: “You are looking at the doll’s face. You are watching the doll’s face move.” Gently take the doll out of the infant’s sight. Describe what happened. Example: “We looked at another doll. Our dolls each had a different color of blanket.”

Repeat this short activity regularly with young infants, using other toys of high-contrast color.

What to Look For—Option 1

Young children develop an awareness of color differences early in life that can be used to strengthen an infant’s vision. Looking at a strong, bold color requires considerable effort for an infant. Coordinated eye movement, color perception, and depth perception develop in the first few months of life. A strength of the current activity is the use of one solid, bold color at a time

**Option 1 continued**

in similarly-shaped toys. Early experiences with contrasting bold colors can support visual perception, which is an important aspect of cognitive development. It is not appropriate to teach specific colors at this early age. But an infant begins to learn there are words for color when you intentionally describe the solid color of an object. Your talking about color is a stronger learning experience for the infant than simply offering colorful items for an infant to explore on his/her own.

 **More Scaffolding Tips—Option 1**

Extra support ■ Give the doll to the infant to hold if he/she reaches for it. ■ Bring the activity to a close if the infant turns away, begins to stiffen his/her body, or fuss.

Enrichment ■ If the infant remains interested and alert after looking at the second doll, hold the two dolls together so the infant can see the contrasting colors. ■ Slowly move the red doll in an arch from one side to the other. This can foster an infant's skill in visual tracking.



Birth–12 Months

Option 2 One-to-One



Skill and Goal

Object inquiry skills

An infant participates in a tummy time that offers two similar dolls wrapped in different bold colors.



Key Concepts

Doll
Different
Colors



Materials Needed

2 dolls (see Be Prepared)
1 red square of fabric (see Be Prepared)
1 blue square of fabric (see Be Prepared)



Also Promotes

Physical/Health



Optional Reading

My Colors Mis Colores by
Rebecca Emberley

Be Prepared: This activity is for infants about 4–6 months of age. Secure two dolls that are the same size and shape. Wrap each in a different solid, bold color of fabric (red and blue) so the infant can focus on color differences. The activity plan calls these “red doll” and “blue doll.” Multi-colored fabric should not be used for this activity. Red, yellow, and blue are distinct colors that help infants perceive color differences. Colors that are similar, such as red and orange or pink and lavender, are too close in tone for infants to discern. There is an opportunity to use the dolls and red and blue fabric again in Block 21, Cognitive, Option 1.

BEGIN: *[Arrange two dolls very close together at the center of the mat where an infant can easily see them. Lay the infant down on his/her tummy and sit very close so he/she can see and hear you. Invite the infant to look at the dolls by saying his/her name and drawing attention to the solid colors of each.]*



ACT: We have dolls to play with. The dolls are wrapped in blankets that are different colors.

Would you like to get one of the dolls?

[Point to the dolls if the infant has not noticed them. Move a doll gently from side to side to draw attention to it.]

Encourage the infant to reach for a doll. Move a doll closer to the infant if necessary. If the infant does not grasp a doll, bring a doll close to the infant’s hands. Describe your action. Example: “Braxton, you reached for the red doll. I am moving the red doll closer to you so you can touch it.”

Describe the infant’s actions with a doll. Example: “Braxton, you are holding the red doll with both hands.” The infant may look, touch, or manipulate a doll. The infant may roll over while clutching a doll and continue exploration. If the infant loses grasp of a doll or moves away from a doll, make sure a doll is close enough to the infant for looking at or holding.

Watch for an opportunity to bring the second doll to the infant’s attention. Example: “I am putting our other doll close to you. This doll is wrapped in a different color of blanket. The blanket is blue.”

**Option 2 continued**

Continue to describe the infant's actions with a doll(s). Point to a specific doll you describe.
Example: "Here is the red doll. Here is the blue doll. You are holding the red doll."

RECAP: [Describe the infant's actions with the two dolls. Example: "You looked at the red doll and the blue doll. You held the blue doll. Now we are finished with the dolls."]

👁️ What to Look For—Option 2

This activity extends Option 1 for an older infant by offering two dolls at the same time and encouraging the infant to play with one or both dolls. Look for opportunities to point out the bold color differences without teaching specific colors. Vision researchers report that an infant's sensitivity to color improves within the first few months. At about four months of age, infants generally begin to perceive differences between red, yellow, blue, and green. Many infants show a preference for red. The typical color preference of infants at four months is (in order, strongest preference first): red, yellow, blue, green.

📊 More Scaffolding Tips—Option 2

Extra support ■ If the infant becomes discontent in the tummy time position, move him/her to your lap. A more comfortable position may help the infant focus on the dolls. ■ Bring the activity to a close if the infant becomes fussy or begins to look away.

Enrichment ■ This activity can be repeated with other materials, such as two rings of similar size and texture that are in different bold colors.



Birth–12 Months

Option 3 One-to-One



Skill and Goal Object inquiry skills

An older infant engages in open-ended play with large beads of two different colors.



Key Concepts Different

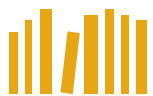


Materials Needed

- 5 large, red snap-lock beads (see Be Prepared)
- 5 large, yellow snap-lock beads (see Be Prepared)
- Container



Also Promotes Physical/Health



Optional Reading

- My Colors Mis Colores* by Rebecca Emberley
- The Artist Who Painted a Blue Horse* by Eric Carle
- Baby's First Book of Birds and Colors* by Phyllis Limbacher Tildes

Be Prepared: This activity is for a mobile infant. Secure infant snap-lock beads that are the same shape and size in two different bold colors (five red, five yellow). The colors represent most infants' preferred colors at an early age. Put the 10 beads in the container. A clear container is best. The activity does not involve putting together or taking apart the beads.

Invite a mobile infant to play a game with colors. Sit on the floor facing the infant and place the container of infant snap-lock beads between you. Point out that the beads are different colors. Invite the infant to take the beads out of the container.

You may wish to demonstrate taking two beads out of the container, one at a time. Say the color of a bead as you remove it from the container. Example: "I am taking a yellow bead out of our bowl." Encourage the infant to take out the other beads.

After some or all beads are removed from the container, encourage the infant to play with the beads as he/she wishes. The infant might make small piles of beads or return them to the container. Describe the infant's actions. Point out color differences. Conclude the activity by describing what the infant did with the yellow and red beads.



👁️ What to Look For—Option 3

Manipulating beads that are the same except for color is an informal way to strengthen awareness of color differences. The use of red and yellow represents infants' early color preferences, as noted above. The infant is not expected to learn specific colors or color names, but your naming colors can support the infant's emerging skill in color discrimination. Sorting the beads by color is not an expected part of the activity, although you may see a color preference or organization in the infant's play. Avoid teaching the infant to sort the beads. The infant may remove beads one by one from the container or simply dump all beads onto the floor. Positively describe the infant's approach.

📊 More Scaffolding Tips—Option 3

Extra support ■ It is not necessary for all beads to be removed from the container in order for the infant to play with the beads. The infant might begin playing with 3–4 beads removed from the container and then remove several other beads as he/she elaborates on his/her play.

Option 3 continued

Enrichment ■ Emphasize the word “out” when an infant takes beads out of the container. Emphasize the word “in” if the infant puts beads in the container. ■ Share one or more of the Optional Reading books after play with the beads.

 Interest Area

Materials Needed: red and blue toys, yellow and green toys, books about colors (such as *The Artist Who Painted a Blue Horse* by Eric Carle), small sand pails in red, yellow, and blue

Suspend a new and colorful mobile where infants can see it closely when they are being held.

Arrange red and blue toys in areas easily seen by infants. Place red toys within reach of the infants.

On low surfaces, place containers with red and blue toys. Infants will enjoy finding them and dumping them out. On another day, collect groups of yellow and green toys for infants to find.

Display books about colors. Comment on different-colored clothing. Provide small sand pails in red, yellow, and blue for mobile infants to fill and carry.

 Family Child Care

Materials Needed: two colors of paint; infant snap-lock beads; colored tickets; color-focused books, such as *Mouse Paint* by Ellen Stoll Walsh, *The Artist Who Painted a Blue Horse* by Eric Carle, *Baby's First Book of Birds and Colors* by Phyllis Limbacher Tildes.

In addition to the activity options for infants, the color-awareness skills of older children in your setting can be supported in creative ways. Preschool-age children may enjoy painting with two colors or playing a game of *I Spy* with color names. Older children may enjoy finding hidden snap-lock beads. Hide the snap-lock beads outdoors. Give each child a colored ticket for finding the beads. Example: “You have a blue ticket. Try to collect blue beads. Leave other beads in place for children to find.” Children will enjoy the popular books listed above.



Birth–12 Months

Option 1 One-to-One



Skill and Goal Executive function

A young infant is encouraged to persist in reaching for a desired toy.



Key Concepts

Reach
Play



Materials Needed

Toy (see Be Prepared)



Also Promotes

Communication/Language
Physical/Health

Be Prepared: This activity is for an infant who can grasp a small toy. Select an age-appropriate toy that will have strong appeal to the infant, can be grasped with one hand, and might be partly explored in the infant's mouth. You are likely to use different toys for different infants.

BEGIN: [*Lay a nonmobile infant on his/her tummy. If the infant can sit independently or with support, place him/her next to you. Be sure the infant can see your face and hear your voice. Offer big smiles and a comforting voice.*]



ACT: [*Place the toy about 12 inches from the infant or within achievable reach. Do not put the toy in the infant's hand. If the infant does not move toward the toy after several moments, animate the toy by moving it gently to draw attention.*]

Look at our toy! You can reach for the toy. You can play with the toy.

[*Describe the infant's initial actions. Example: "Xander, you are holding your head up and reaching for the car. This is a big job for you!"*]

[*If the infant shows signs of frustration in reaching the toy, offer reassurance with encouraging words and a pat on his/her back. You may move the car closer to the infant so it is easier to reach.*]

[*When the infant reaches the car, enthusiastically acknowledge his/her efforts with your words and gestures. Example: "You reached for the car. You got the car!" Encourage the infant to hold and manipulate the car. Describe the infant's persistence and actions as he/she explores the toy. Examples: "You are poking your finger in the holes of the car." "You are listening to the sound of the turning wheels."*]

[*Acknowledge the infant's vocalizations and/or facial expressions. Example: "You are smiling at the car."*]

[*Stay focused with the infant for as long as he/she wishes to explore the toy. It is not necessary to coax the infant to continue the activity.*]

RECAP: [*Smile and make eye contact with the infant as you offer a brief summary of the infant's actions. Example: "You reached for the car. You looked at the different colors. You listened to the sounds. You had fun playing with the car!"*]



Birth–12 Months

Option 2 One-to-One



Skill and Goal

Executive function

An older infant is encouraged to persist in scooting, crawling, or walking to get a desired toy.



Key Concepts

Get



Materials Needed

Toy (see Be Prepared)



Also Promotes

Communication/Language
Physical/Health

Be Prepared: Select an age-appropriate toy that will have strong appeal to the infant. You are likely to use different toys for different infants.

Sit or kneel several feet from a mobile infant. Softly call the infant's name, display the toy, and slowly move the toy from side to side or draw attention to a feature of the toy. Example: spin a wheel on a truck. Invite the infant to come to you to get the toy.



Recognize the infant's progress in moving toward you. Examples: "I see you are coming to get this colorful car! You are almost here!" "You are working hard to get here!" Hold the toy out for the infant to grasp. Do not hand the toy to the infant. After getting the toy, the infant may shift his/her position to sitting or may want to sit on your lap to explore the toy.

Encourage the infant to hold and manipulate the toy. Support the infant's exploration by talking and maintaining your focus on his/her play. Describe the infant's actions. Example: "You crawled to me and got the car! You are smiling. You are touching the wheels on the car." Join in the infant's play if the infant shows interest, such as looking frequently at you and/or holding out the toy to you. Recognize the infant's vocalizations and/or actions with the toy. Example: "You are smiling! You are driving the car on the ground!"

Transition out of the activity when the infant begins to show signs of disinterest. Acknowledge the infant's persistence. Example: "You crawled to me to get the toy car! We sat together and played with the car. You liked the rattling sound of the wheels!"

👁️ What to Look For—Options 1–2

Your major role in both activity options is to provide a level of distance between the infant and the desired toy that is both challenging and achievable. Too little distance (challenge) runs against the goal of promoting persistence. Too much challenge may lead to disinterest and/or frustration. Look carefully at the infant's initial reactions and efforts to determine whether an appropriate level of challenge has been offered. It is easy to make adjustments by slightly moving the toy. Present the activity as a fun game and talk with the infant in a friendly, reassuring manner. Infants are most comfortable persisting and exploring when they feel safe and reassured by a responsive caregiver.

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

Extra support ■ An infant's practice in persistence is more helpful when the infant is alert and not distracted by other things in the room. Remove other toys from the area where the activity is offered.

Enrichment ■ In Option 1, if an infant remains interested but seems tired of the toy he/she reached, offer a different toy for the infant to reach for and explore. Select a toy that offers a different shape or texture than the first toy the infant explored.

**Interest Area**

Materials Needed: assortment of age-appropriate toy cars and/or trucks

Arrange toy vehicles on a rug or mat in the play area. During floor time, invite one or several infants to play with the toys. Demonstrate “driving” a car back and forth. Encourage the infants to reach for the toy to hold and explore. Sit on the floor with the infants so you can easily talk with them about discoveries and persistence.

**Family Child Care**

Materials Needed: assortment of toy cars and/or trucks appropriate for different age groups, assortment of blocks

Children of all ages enjoy playing with cars and blocks. Arrange the blocks in the center of the room and invite children to play with the blocks and cars. Ensure that each infant and toddler has an age-appropriate car to play with. Older children may enjoy building structures for the cars. Younger children may focus on either building or driving the toy cars. Infants and toddlers will benefit from observing the actions of their older peers. Some infants may enjoy having one or two soft blocks to use during the activity.



Birth–12 Months

Option 1 One-to-One



Skill and Goal

Social interaction skills

An infant participates in responsive interactions with a caregiver while looking in a large mirror.



Key Concepts

Mirror
See
You
Me



Materials Needed

Large mirror



Also Promotes

Communication/Language

BEGIN: [*Invite an infant to join you in looking in a big mirror. Sit in front of the mirror with the infant securely in your lap or sitting close to you facing the mirror. Encourage the infant to look in the mirror with you. Example: “Hello, Julian! I am happy to see you. I see you in the mirror! Do you see me? I am smiling at you!” Acknowledge the infant’s reactions. Examples: “You are smiling, Alyssa! You are smiling at me!”*]

If the infant seems uninterested or uncomfortable, pleasantly end the activity and try engaging him/her in front of a mirror at a later time.]

ACT: [*Use the following strategies to support a responsive set of interactions with the infant:*

- *Point to the infant’s reflection, and then your own, in the mirror. Example: “This is you, Julian. This is me.”*
- *Describe the infant’s facial expressions, vocalizations, and/or actions. Examples: “You are looking at me with big eyes, Alyssa!” “You are waving your arms and talking to me, Julian. I hear you! ‘Ba-ba-ba, da-da-da.’”*
- *Draw attention to your actions. Examples: “I have big eyes, too! I am looking at you with big eyes.” “I am waving at you, Peter. My hand is waving hello to you!”*
- *Imitate the infant’s facial expressions and/or vocalizations while you look in the mirror.*
- *Act on what the infant seems to be looking at in the mirror. Example: If the infant is gazing at your face in the mirror and seems to be interested in your facial expressions, respond with a new face.*
- *Offer a facial expression, such as an exaggerated happy face or silly face or surprised face with mouth wide open. Name the feeling.*
- *Encourage the infant to copy your facial expression or actions, or to smile back at you.*
- *Pause frequently so the infant has an opportunity to respond or contribute.]*

RECAP: [*Offer a brief description of what happened during the activity. Example: “We looked in the mirror! I smiled at you. Then you smiled at me! You laughed when I made silly faces in the mirror. We had fun together.”*]



Birth–12 Months

Option 2 Informal Gathering



Skill and Goal

Social interaction skills

Older infants together look at and make facial expressions and hand motions in a large mirror.



Key Concepts

Mirror



Materials Needed

Large mirror



Also Promotes

Communication/Language
Cognitive

Invite two infants to sit side by side to look at themselves in the mirror. Sit next to the infants, off mirror, so you can talk with them about their actions and what they see. Support the infants' interactions with the following strategies:

- Help the infants orient to the mirror and setting by identifying the reflections in the mirror. Example: "Where is Julian in our mirror? Please wave your hand, Julian! We can see Julian raising her hand in the mirror. Where is Sam in our mirror? Please wave your hand, Sam! Now we can see Sam waving his hand in the mirror!"
- Describe each infant's actions in the mirror. Examples: "Javier is patting his legs. Pat, pat, pat, Javier!" "Cora, you are watching Javier pat his knees in the mirror."
- Encourage the infants to copy each other's actions. Example: "Cora is making a silly face. Samantha, do you want to make a silly face?"

Conclude the activity when one of the infants loses interest. Describe what happened during the time in front of the mirror.

What to Look For—Options 1–2

The activities build on infants' natural interest in closely watching faces of others. Infants will likely delight in looking at the images in the mirror. Although older infants may be developing an awareness that the image in the mirror is their own, many infants will not recognize their own image but will enjoy looking at the image of the baby reflected back at them. Some infants will enjoy imitating your expressions (Option 1) or the actions of a peer (Option 2).

Look for opportunities to support a give-and-take exchange in both activity options without directing the actions. Your guidance with infants' actions in Option 2 is valuable because infants cannot be expected to independently know how to take turns. If an infant prefers to watch only, describe your actions (or the actions of the other infant in Option 2) and positively conclude the activity. Avoid an entertainment approach where the infant watches you talk or make facial expressions. Promoting responsive interactions is the objective.

More Scaffolding Tips—Options 1–2

Extra support ■ In Option 1, periodically turn toward the infant and encourage him/her to look at you to help the infant connect the mirror images to the two of you.

Enrichment ■ Introduce a toy in Option 2 that infants can pass to one another while they look in the mirror.



Interest Area

Materials Needed: large mirror

Share a song with simple hand motions with the infants while they watch their reflections as part of participating in the song. One possibility is the “Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star” rhyme and corresponding hand actions in this block’s Physical/Health activity options. Many infants will not recognize their own reflections in the mirror, but will enjoy looking at all the baby faces reflected back at them!



Family Child Care

Materials Needed: assortment of books with photos of facial expressions, several nonbreakable mirrors of different sizes throughout the room (such as a full-length mirror in the dress up area, a mirror affixed low on a wall for infants and young toddlers, and hand-held mirrors in a basket)

All children in your care can enjoy exploring mirrors. Older children can use a mirror to observe themselves dressing up and playing different roles. Older toddlers may enjoy having mirrors they can hold and carry as they play. Infants can look at themselves in a large mirror affixed to the wall. Invite older toddlers and children to make different faces and play copycat or imitation games in the mirrors.



Birth–12 Months

Option 1 One-to-One



Skill and Goal

Fine motor development

An infant participates in a nursery rhyme with simple hand motions.



Key Concepts

Listen
Watch
Move



Materials Needed

None



Also Promotes

Communication/Language

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

BEGIN: [Sit facing an infant who is sitting alone or with support. Talk with the infant to establish connection. Explain that you would like to sing some songs.]

ACT: [Look and smile at the infant while you sing “Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star.” Move your hands and arms to the music in a calm manner. Do not use the accompanying hand motions.]

Describe the infant’s reactions. Example: “You listened to me sing about a star. You are smiling. I think you like the song.”

Repeat “Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star,” this time with the accompanying hand motions.

Describe the infant’s reactions.

Explain that you would like to sing the song again and move the infant’s hands with the song. Repeat the song and gently move the infant’s body unless there are signals from the infant that he/she does not want to participate in this way. See adjacent suggested hand motions and Extra Support scaffolding tips.

Smile and acknowledge any kind of infant participation. Examples: “You watched your little hands move to the music.” “You kicked your legs while we sang the song.”]

RECAP: I sang a song and we moved our hands to the music.

[Describe the infant’s participation. Example: “You liked the song about the star! I saw you kicking your feet and smiling.”]

Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star Suggested Caregiver Motions



Twinkle, twinkle, little star,
[open and close both hands]

How I wonder what you are.

Up above the world so high,
[reach up with both hands]

Like a diamond in the sky.
[make a diamond shape by bringing index fingers and thumbs together]

Twinkle, twinkle, little star,
[open and close both hands]

How I wonder what you are.

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

The activity plan gradually increases the role and complexity of movements with “Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star” by beginning with your general movements, shifting to your more specific movements, and then gently moving the infant’s hands. The song will be familiar to most infants and is part of other ELM activity plans. See the Extra Support scaffolding tips for adapting to infant responses.

The coordination of movements with the song is a central focus of the current activity. Hearing you sing and feeling the movements may be a new experience for some infants. Most infants will enjoy the sensation of moving to the song and may add their own motions, such as kicking. Infants are not expected to imitate your actions, although it is fine if they attempt to do so. Some infants may appear quite serious as they watch you sing.

📈 More Scaffolding Tips—Option 1

Extra support ■ If the infant does not enjoy the touch and movement, repeat the song making the motions yourself. ■ If the infant appears uneasy, lessen the degree of motion. You also might begin a song without moving the infant’s hands and then add hand movements with the infant partway through a song. ■ Adjust the tempo of a song if there are signs the infant would enjoy a slower or faster pace. ■ Exaggerate the words.

Enrichment ■ Move the infant’s feet instead of his/her hands.



Birth–12 Months

Option 2 Informal Gathering



Skill and Goal

Fine motor development

Infants participate together in a nursery rhyme with hand motions.



Key Concepts

Reach
Hands
Up



Materials Needed

None



Also Promotes

Communication/Language

Be Prepared: Be familiar with the tune of “Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star.” This informal gathering adapts the Option 1 activity. The nursery rhyme and hand motions are the same as Option 1. Infants generally have a different experience with music and movements when participating with other infants. See Option 1 for lyrics and suggested hand motions.

Sit on the floor facing several infants who can sit independently or with support. Nonmobile infants will enjoy the songs from secure positions that are next to you.

Say each child’s name to welcome the infants. Example: “I am happy to see (child’s name), (child’s name), and (child’s name). We are all here together. Let’s sing and have fun.”

Explain that you want to share a song about a star. Stars are way up in the sky. Invite infants to reach with their hands, up to the sky. Sing the song “Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star” with hand motions. Encourage the older infants to imitate hand motions. Example: “Let’s all make a star with our fingers.” Demonstrate opening and closing hands.

👁️ What to Look For—Option 2

You may see early mobile and mobile infants moving their hands as you sing and demonstrate the actions. Holding hands up and/or moving fingers may represent infants’ current skill in imitating your hand motions. Infants may prefer to watch and listen. Infants’ language skills are strengthened by listening to familiar songs. Infants may understand some words they cannot say. The experience supports memory and receptive language. Some mobile infants may begin to say or sing a few words.

📈 More Scaffolding Tips—Option 2

Extra support ■ Help an infant do some hand motions if he/she reaches to you.

Enrichment ■ Slightly vary the tempo.



Interest Area

Materials Needed: *Nursery Rhymes* by Roger Priddy (available as a board book with flaps and also with a sing-along CD) **or** *My First Mother Goose Nursery Rhymes* by Lisa McCue **or, if available** *Clap Your Hands* by Kay Widdowson

Hold a nonmobile infant on your lap, sing familiar songs, and clap the infant's hands together if the infant seems to enjoy it. Sit on the floor with infants as they play. Some of the children may enjoy a repeat of the Option 1 (or 2) activity. Share a nursery rhyme book with one or several infants. Infants will enjoy hearing you read or sing one or more rhymes. Draw attention to how you are moving your hands.

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Family Child Care

Materials Needed: *Miss Mary Mack* by Mary Ann Hoberman

For older children in your setting, consider reading *Miss Mary Mack*, a book based on a hand-clapping rhyme adapted by Mary Ann Hoberman. Children will enjoy the repetition and rhyme as you read the book. The large size is good for reading to a group of children. Older children also may enjoy talking about times when people clap, such as sporting or musical events.