



**Communication/
Language**

Exploring Words

Option 1 (OO) A young infant looks at and communicates with a caregiver about pictures of infants and adults in your room.

Option 2 (OO) An older infant holds, looks at, and communicates with a caregiver about pictures of infants and adults in your room.



Cognitive

Exploring Objects

Option 1 (OO) A young infant participates in guided exploration of a rattle.

Option 2 (OO) An infant explores features of a toy and a related book.

Option 3 (OO) An older infant participates in guided play with a toy dump truck.



Self-Regulation

Paying Attention

Option 1 (OO) A young infant practices focusing on an object manipulated by a caregiver.

Option 2 (OO) An older infant practices focusing on objects as part of open-ended play with a caregiver.



Social-Emotional

Exploring Feelings

Option 1 (OO) A young infant participates in a book sharing focused on happy and sad facial expressions.

Option 2 (OO) An older infant participates in a book sharing that emphasizes happy and sad situations.



Physical/Health

Moving Our Bodies

Option 1 (OO) A mobile infant participates in guided movements of legs and arms.

Option 2 (OO) An older infant participates in repetitive bouncing movements while listening to a rhyme.

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



Birth–12 Months

Option 1 One-to-One



Skill and Goal

Receptive language
Expressive language

A young infant looks at and communicates with a caregiver about pictures of infants and adults in your room.



Key Concepts

Look
Pictures



Materials Needed

Action pictures from your room (see Be Prepared)



Also Promotes

Social-Emotional

Be Prepared: As previewed in Block 18, the current activity plan uses pictures of current infants and caregivers engaged in activities in your room. You may wish to affix each picture to a loose piece of card stock that is laminated. This arrangement enables infants to hold and look at a single picture, and individual pictures can be displayed on a wall. Other possibilities include assembling the laminated pages of pictures into a book or using a sturdy photo album that older infants can manage.

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 pictures while also securely holding the infant.*]

EXPLAIN: We can look at some pictures of people in our room. There are pictures of babies and pictures of adults in our room.

ACT: [*Hold each picture, or the book of pictures, about 12 inches from the infant.*

Describe each picture. Point to aspects you describe. Example: "Look at this baby! This is your friend, Brianna. Brianna is smiling! She is holding a doll baby!"

Spend more time on pictures that seem to be of particular interest to the infant. Example: "This is a picture of you! This is Samuel! You are looking at a book with Miss Jessica. Miss Jessica is reading your favorite book about the animals."

Acknowledge gestures and/or vocalizations. Example: "You made a happy sound, Simran! I think you like this picture of your friends playing outside."

Gently end the activity when the infant loses interest or you exhaust available pictures.]

RECAP: [*Describe what happened. Example: "We looked at pictures of people in our room. You smiled when you saw a picture of Miss Jenny. Look, here is Miss Jenny right across our room!"*]



Birth–12 Months

Option 2 One-to-One



Skill and Goal

Receptive language
Expressive language

An older infant holds, looks at, and communicates with a caregiver about pictures of infants and adults in your room.



Key Concepts

Look
Pictures



Materials Needed

Action pictures from your room (see Be Prepared in Option1)



Also Promotes

Social-Emotional

Invite an infant to sit with you to look at pictures of people in our room. The infant may wish to sit on your lap, next to you, or stand close to you. Invite the infant to hold the individual pictures or manage the book pages as you talk about each picture.

Explain that the pictures show people we know. Point to and describe infants and caregivers shown in a picture. Describe what they are doing. Example: “Look at this baby. This is your friend, Christian. Christian is playing with a ball.”

Spend more time on pictures that seem to be of particular interest to the infant. “You are touching Isabella’s eyes in this picture. You have eyes, too! Where are your eyes?”

Invite the infant to point to objects or people that you name.

Ask what is happening in a picture you anticipate will be familiar to the infant. Example: “This is a picture of you! What are you doing?” Acknowledge and expand upon any utterance. Example: “Juice. You are drinking juice in this picture. It is snack time.”

Help the infant connect pictured actions to his/her own experiences. Example: “Jeremiah is crawling in this picture! He is crawling to get his favorite toy. You used to crawl. Then you learned to walk! Now you walk to get your favorite toys!”

Conclude the activity when the infant loses interest or there are no more pictures to look at. Recognize the infant’s participation and interests in the picture sharing.

What to Look For—Options 1–2

The activity options promote vocabulary awareness with pictures that will be of interest to many infants. Younger infants may not show awareness of some people shown in the pictures, especially other infants. Avoid letting the picture-sharing activity become a test of who the infant knows! Also, some infants may not be included in your photo collection due to picture consent provisions. Focus on what people are doing in the pictures, especially routine or common activities that may be familiar to infants. Infants cannot be expected to remember a particular event. Infants often see and experience your room differently than adults.

More Scaffolding Tips—Options 1–2

Extra support ■ Return to pictures that seemed to be of interest to the infant. Describe again what is in the picture. Remember to point to people or features you emphasize.

Enrichment ■ Walk around the room with the infant after the picture sharing. Point to and describe some of the settings that were featured in the pictures.



Interest Area

Materials Needed: action pictures from your room

Place the collection of pictures in an accessible part of your room. If the pictures are laminated on individual card stock, display the pictures on a wall where infants can easily see them. Talk with infants about what is shown in the pictures. Infants will enjoy repeated descriptions of pictures of familiar people and activities.



Family Child Care

Materials Needed: action pictures from your setting (see below)

Expand the collection of pictures of infants to include all children in your setting with appropriate consents, and encourage older children to describe for others what is happening in a picture. Focus on pictures of children engaged in familiar activities in your setting. Older children also may welcome an opportunity to show and talk with a family member about a picture(s) at drop-off or pickup time.



Birth–12 Months

Option 1 One-to-One



Skill and Goal

Object inquiry skills

A young infant participates in guided exploration of a rattle.



Key Concepts

Look
Reach



Materials Needed

Soft knit rattle



Also Promotes

Physical/Health
Communication/Language



Optional Reading

Baby Touch and Feel First Words by DK Publishing

BEGIN: [Place a nonmobile infant on his/her back. Sit close to the infant so he/she can easily see and hear you. Greet the infant by name.]

Hold the soft rattle steady about 10 inches from the infant. Encourage the infant to look at the rattle.]

ACT: [Pause and then describe the infant's response(s) to the rattle. Example: "You are looking at our rattle."]

- Move the rattle slowly from side to side. Describe any visual awareness or tracking. Example: "You are watching our rattle move from one side to the other."
- Shake the rattle slightly. Draw attention to its sound. Example: "Do you hear the rattle sound?"
- If the infant reaches toward the rattle, move the rattle closer to the infant's hand and encourage reaching. The infant may be able to grasp the rattle when it is nearer and unmoving. Acknowledge the infant's efforts. Example: "Alright! You reached for the rattle."
- If the infant gets ahold of the rattle, describe his/her exploration. Example: "You are using your hands to feel the rattle. Your eyes are looking at the rattle.]"

RECAP: [Describe the infant's actions during the activity. "Ashley, you worked hard to look at the rattle. You followed the rattle with your eyes. You kicked your legs when you saw the rattle.]"

What to Look For—Option 1

An infant's eyes begin working together during the first few months of life, and eye-hand coordination starts to develop after the infant can visually track a moving object. Watch closely to determine whether the rattle is an appropriate distance from the infant's eyes. It may be appropriate to move the rattle closer. Your intentional focus on the rattle, along with your descriptions and questions, support the infant's exploration of the rattle. A young infant will not understand most of your words, of course, but offering pauses during your comments is a good way to allow the infant to respond nonverbally, especially with body movement and looking. Over time, an infant who experiences pauses as part of interactions with a trusted caregiver can come to understand that a pause is part of back-and-forth exchanges.

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

Extra support ■ If the infant drops the rattle, retrieve it and hold it close to his/her hand. “Here is the rattle. You can get ahold of it again.”

Enrichment ■ For an infant who is reaching and grasping the rattle, offer a rattle with a different shape.
■ Encourage the infant to shake the rattle. ■ Repeat the activity with the same infant during the coming week and note any changes in his/her visual tracking and eye-hand coordination.

Birth–12 Months

Option 2 One-to-One



Skill and Goal Object inquiry skills

An infant explores features of a toy and a related book.



Key Concepts

Car
Book



Materials Needed

Toy car (see Be Prepared)
Baby Touch and Feel Beep! by DK Publishing
Basket (see Be Prepared)



Also Promotes

Communication/Language
Physical/Health

Be Prepared: This activity is for an infant who can crawl. Place the toy car and the book into the basket or other small bin. If the infant has a strong interest in another type of toy for which you also have a related book available, use the toy and a related book of greater interest and not the toy car. Pairing the toy with a related book is an important feature of the activity.

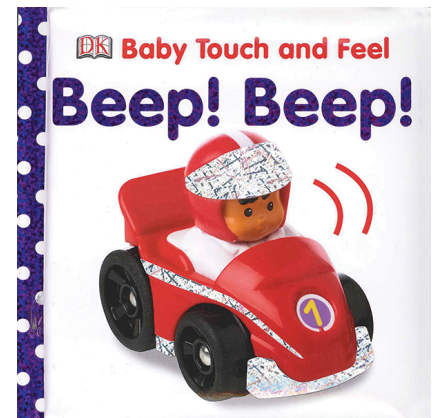
Sit on the floor facing the infant and encourage him/her to look into the basket. Describe the contents of the basket and encourage the infant to remove the car and the book.

Follow the infant's lead during the activity. There is not a prescribed approach to exploring items in the basket. Give ample time for exploration. Maintain your focus and communication on the infant's interest. Example: Focus on the car if the infant is mostly interested in the car.

Describe and point to features of the item(s) the infant explores. Examples: Describe how a wheel moves on the car. Look at and describe whatever part of the book the infant looks at. Do this while the infant is holding or manipulating the item. Avoid taking an item from the infant's hands in order to describe it.

If the infant leaves one of the two items in the basket, point to and name the item and invite the infant to pick it up. Do this when it seems the infant is done exploring the item he/she takes from the basket or if you anticipate the infant has forgotten about the second item. Offer a connection between the toy and the related book if the infant remains interested. Example: (while pointing) "You have the toy car in your hand. Here is a picture of a car in our book." It is not necessary to look at all pictures in the book.

Remain close to the child throughout the activity.



What to Look For—Option 2

This activity puts together two familiar items in a novel way. An infant is likely to enjoy the toy and the pictures of a toy car. It is cognitively helpful for the infant to link the toy and a picture(s) of a similar item. Your description of an item, while the infant is exploring it, can reinforce the infant's exploration. Pointing to and naming parts of an item can help the infant understand there are words for objects and actions. Be careful that your description does not become direction. Each infant will have his/her distinctive approach to exploring the related items in the basket.

Option 2 continued More Scaffolding Tips—Option 2

Extra support ■ If the infant does not pick up the remaining item in the basket in response to your suggestion, you may wish to pick it up and describe it while the infant continues to play with the other item. Example: If the infant plays with the toy and leaves the book in the basket, pick up the book and talk about 1–2 of its pages while the infant continues to play with the toy car. ■ Hold the infant on your lap for his/her exploration of the toy and related book. ■ Use the infant’s name throughout the activity. Example: “Levi, you are sitting on my lap holding the blue car.”

Enrichment ■ Put a piece of colored tape on the floor to represent a road. Some infants may be interested in placing the car on the line. Encourage the infant to “make the car go” on the taped line.



Birth–12 Months

Option 3 One-to-One



Skill and Goal

Object inquiry skills

An older infant participates in guided play with a toy dump truck.



Key Concepts

Truck
In
Out



Materials Needed

Toy dump truck (see Be Prepared)
Small toys (see Be Prepared)
Basket



Also Promotes

Physical/Health
Communication/Language



Optional Reading

I Am a Dump Truck by Josephine Page

Be Prepared: Secure a toy dump truck with a dump box that can be tipped. Select a variety of up to 10 toys that individually fit into the dump box, such as stacking rings, animal figures, small blocks, nesting cups. Place the toys in a basket or other type of container.

Sit on the floor facing a mobile infant and invite him/her to play with the toy dump truck.

Place one toy in the dump box and move the truck closer to the infant. Name and describe the truck and toy inside.

Demonstrate how the dump box tips, causing the toy to fall out. Put the toy back in the truck and “drive” it to the infant as you describe your actions.

Example: “I put our toy back in the truck. Our truck is carrying a big ring. Our dump truck is driving to you.”

Pause so the infant has time to look at the toys and think about what he/she might do. Then describe the infant’s actions. Several features of the dump truck and toys may be of particular interest to the infant:

- rolling or pushing the truck
- turning the wheels with fingers or hands
- tipping and lowering the dump box
- loading toys into the dump box, maybe more than one toy at a time

Follow the infant’s lead with the items and promote exploration by describing the infant’s actions. Emphasize the concepts of in and out, and name each item that is placed in the truck. Example: “Tina, you are putting things in our dump truck. I see a little cup, a big stacking ring, a toy dog, and a rattle.”

Offer a simple description with hand gestures regarding a problem the infant may encounter, such as toys falling out of the truck, or the truck encountering a barrier. Example: The infant will have a problem to solve if he/she tries to put all of the toys in the truck bed. Define the problem rather than immediately offering a solution. Example: “The truck is full. Things are falling out. Let’s think about what to do.” Pause for the infant to consider. If necessary, offer one suggestion, such as leaving some toys on the rug for a second load. Provide just enough help for the infant to accomplish one part of his/her task.

Close the activity when the infant gives a signal he/she is finished.



Option 3 continued What to Look For—Option 3

This activity supports development in communication/language, cognitive, and fine motor areas. Look for opportunities to support each of these areas in relation to the infant's current skills. Exploration of objects becomes more complex as infants develop. Infants often understand terms and concepts they cannot express with words. Example: An infant may gesture or move his/her body to communicate an idea about how the dump box moves. Generally, infants will communicate with non-verbal signals, including facial expressions. A valuable role for you is to offer words in simple language combined with gestures. Examples: "Tina, I see you are putting kitty in the dump truck." "Kitty goes in the truck." "Tina, you are giving kitty a ride."

 More Scaffolding Tips—Option 3

Extra support ■ If the infant wants to tip toys from the dump box, but does not want to load the truck, assume the role of truck loader who describes the item and truck-loading actions. This arrangement can support positive, reciprocal interactions with the infant during play.

Enrichment ■ Point to pictures in the book *I Am a Dump Truck* to draw attention to the wheels and dump box. ■ Read the text of the book and talk with the infant about pictures, especially picture connections to the toy truck the infant is playing with. ■ Leave the materials out during the day so the infant can repeat or extend his/her exploration.



Interest Area

Materials Needed: see below

The vehicle theme of Options 2 and 3 can be extended with other toys with wheels that infants can explore. Option 3 can be extended with several containers and additional toys that can fit inside a container. Infants also benefit from playtime with items, such as the following: cloth and board books; small food containers; play materials that move or make sound when touched; bottles with water and soap to shake for making bubbles; bottles with dry materials that make a sound when shaken; pop-up boxes that open with buttons and knobs.

 Family Child Care

Materials Needed: containers, freeze toys, bag, ice, cornstarch, water

Identify play materials that will create interest for infants and toddlers. Toddlers will enjoy opening containers with toys hidden inside. Freeze toys in a quart container and encourage toddlers and preschool-age children to remove the toys. Ask questions to foster communication of ideas, and describe changes the children observe. Also, toddlers and preschool-age children may enjoy exploring the texture of cornstarch and water with their hands. Put the mixture into shallow tubs or a sensory table.



Birth–12 Months

Option 1 One-to-One



Skill and Goal Concentration

A young infant practices focusing on an object manipulated by a caregiver.



Key Concepts

Watch
Touch



Materials Needed

Soft block



Also Promotes

Cognitive
Physical/Health

Be Prepared: Select a block that has a bold color or texture that will appeal to the infant.

BEGIN: [*Hold the infant in your arms with his/her head well supported in the bend of your arm. Make sure the infant can clearly see you.*

Hold the block about 12 inches from the infant and begin moving it slightly from side to side.]

ACT: Do you see our block?

[Pause for and acknowledge the infant's response. Example: "You are watching the block, Ximena. The block is moving back and forth."

Slowly move the block a little farther from side to side while keeping it within the infant's line of vision. Describe the infant's response. Example: "You are moving your eyes. You are watching the block move."

Slowly move the block toward the infant's middle and hold it steady so the infant can touch it. Encourage the infant to touch or grasp the block. If the infant is not able to grasp the item, hold it near the infant's hands so he/she can touch it. Continue to describe the infant's actions and respond to vocalizations. Example: "I hear you talking! You are cooing. I think you like touching the block.]"

RECAP: [*Smile and make eye contact as you describe what happened. Example: "We played with a red block today. You watched the block move back and forth. You touched the block. It felt soft."*]



Birth–12 Months

Option 2 One-to-One



Skill and Goal

Concentration

An older infant practices focusing on objects as part of open-ended play with a caregiver.



Key Concepts

Look
Watch
Stack



Materials Needed

5 soft stackable blocks



Also Promotes

Cognitive
Physical/Health
Social-Emotional

This activity is for an infant who can sit independently or with support. Invite an infant to join you on the floor to play with blocks. Sit across from the infant. Place two blocks in front of you and put the remaining blocks next to your side or behind you.

Place the blocks in several different arrangements, such as putting the blocks next to each other, or stacking the blocks. Describe what is happening with the blocks and acknowledge the infant's attention to the blocks. Example: "You are looking at our blocks. Our blocks are making a little tower."

Hand the two blocks to the infant and invite him/her to play with the blocks. Describe what the infant does with the blocks. After a period of exploring the two blocks, offer the infant 1–3 more blocks. The infant may incorporate the additional blocks into his/her current uses of two blocks or create a different arrangement. An older infant may want to stack the blocks. Assist if the infant asks for help. He/she may ask for help by looking at you, or reaching toward you, or handing a block to you.

Continue to acknowledge the infant's actions and reactions. Example: "You laughed when the blocks fell down!" Conclude the activity when the infant begins to lose interest. Emphasize how the infant looked at and played with the blocks. Example: "We had fun playing with the blocks, William! You watched me put the blocks in different ways. Then you played with the blocks. You made a big tower and knocked it over!"

👁️ What to Look For—Options 1–2

Blocks are a good material to use for helping infants strengthen their skills in paying attention. They provide many open-ended play opportunities and are often a favorite of infants and older children. The length of a session will vary considerably across infants. Infants may show disinterest in customary ways, such as looking away, fussing, squirming, or crawling/walking away. The ways in which an infant provides attention also will vary, especially in Option 1 where an infant's gaze may be the primary or only way of giving attention. Positively recognize any and all forms of remaining engaged with the blocks.



More Scaffolding Tips—Options 1–2

Extra support ■ In Option 1, have a second type of block readily available to offer if the block you offer generates no visual interest. ■ In Option 2, stackable blocks are often preferred because an infant may find it challenging to stack or build with soft blocks. You may wish to have soft blocks available in Option 2 if you anticipate an infant will want to hold and explore with his/her mouth.

Enrichment ■ In Option 2, offer a larger assortment of blocks for the infant to play with. ■ In Option 2, copy a block arrangement created by the infant.

Interest Area

Materials Needed: assortment of soft blocks

Provide an assortment of blocks for infants to play with during floor time. Begin stacking or lining up some of the blocks to engage one or several nearby infants. Describe your actions with the blocks to encourage infants to notice your arrangement. Older infants may enjoy knocking down a tower of several blocks. Give each young infant a block to touch and hold.

Family Child Care

Materials Needed: soft ball in a bold color

Invite older children to gather in a circle and pass the ball around the circle. Hold an infant on your lap as you sit in the circle with the children. Encourage the infant to watch the ball as it is passed around the circle. Show enthusiasm when it is the infant's turn to hold and then pass the ball. Older children may enjoy music playing as they pass the ball.





Birth–12 Months

Option 1 One-to-One



Skill and Goal

Awareness of emotions

A young infant participates in a book sharing focused on happy and sad facial expressions.



Key Concepts

Baby
Happy
Sad



Materials Needed

Baby Happy Baby Sad by
Leslie Patricelli



Also Promotes

Social-Emotional

BEGIN: [Sit with the 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.]

Smile and begin talking with the infant. Example: “Hi, Christian! I am happy to see you today. Would you like to look at some pictures with me?”

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

ACT: I have a book for us to read together! Do you see the baby? The baby is smiling. I think the baby is happy!

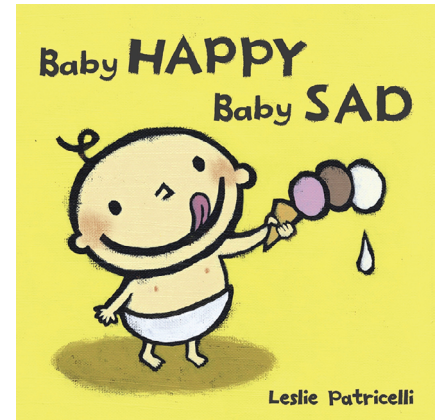
[Describe pictures in your own words. Emphasize the illustrated baby’s facial expression. Point to features you talk about, especially facial expression and the object related to the facial expression. Example: “The baby is hugging a kitty. The baby is making a happy face!”

Describe the infant’s reactions to pictures. Example: “You are reaching for the picture of the baby with the red balloon. I think you like the red balloon!”

Use your voice to add interest, such as a lower or softer voice when describing a sad face and a higher-pitched, slightly faster tempo when you describe a happy face.

Look at and talk about as many pictures as the infant seems interested in. It is not necessary to look at all pages.]

RECAP: [Offer a brief description of what happened during the book sharing. Example: “We looked at pictures of a baby. Sometimes the baby was happy. Sometimes the baby was sad. You looked at the picture of the red balloon for a long time, Aliyah. Thank you for looking at the book with me.”]





Birth–12 Months

Option 2 One-to-One



Skill and Goal

Social interaction skills

An older infant participates in a book sharing that emphasizes happy and sad situations.



Key Concepts

Baby
Happy
Sad



Materials Needed

Baby Happy Baby Sad by
Leslie Patricelli



Also Promotes

Communication/Language

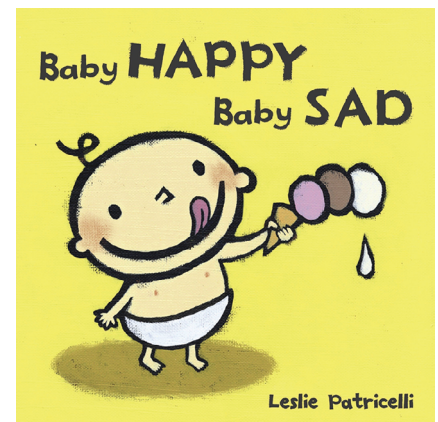
Invite an infant to read a book with you. The infant may wish to sit next to you or on your lap. Explain that our book shows things that are happy and things that are sad.

Describe the images on each page in your own words. Emphasize the baby's happy or sad face and the reason for a happy or sad face. Point to the baby's face and other items shown on the page related to the happy or sad face. Examples: "Here is a red balloon. The baby's face has a big smile. The baby is happy to have a balloon." "The baby's face is sad. The baby lost the red balloon. Here is the balloon flying away." "The ice cream cone fell down. The baby is sad because the ice cream cone fell. The baby does not have the ice cream cone."

Pause on each page for the infant to respond to the pictures. Acknowledge the infant's vocalizations and/or gestures. Spend more time on pages that seem to be of greater interest to the infant. It is not necessary to describe each page.

If appropriate, help an older infant connect sad and/or happy feelings to his/her own experiences. Example: "The baby fell down on the ground. The baby got hurt. The baby feels sad. Sometimes you fall down."

Conclude the activity by emphasizing that sometimes the baby in our book was happy, and sometimes the baby was sad.



👁️ What to Look For—Options 1–2

Both activity options promote awareness of happy and sad emotions. Infants cannot be expected to have an understanding of how they and others feel, but very early in life children become aware of happy and sad feelings as expressed through facial expressions and sounds, such as laughing or crying.

This board book connects key words to two basic emotions. It also emphasizes how the same object can bring a feeling of happiness and a feeling of sadness. Examples: happy to have a red balloon, sad about losing the balloon; happy to have an ice cream cone, sad about losing the ice cream cone. Use pointing and gestures generously to describe what is happening on a page. The line drawings of facial expressions may especially need your pointing and description.



Option 1, designed for a young infant, focuses on facial expressions illustrated in the book. Option 2, designed for an older infant, emphasizes reasons for feeling happy or sad. These distinctions are reflected in the learning goals. It is fine if an infant in Option 2 shows more interest in the facial expressions than in the situations related to feeling happy or sad. Infants will approach the book with different interests and awareness of emotions.

More Scaffolding Tips—Options 1–2

Extra support ■ Remember to pause frequently for the infant so the infant has time to make sense of what is shown on a page and potentially respond.

Enrichment ■ In addition to using your voice to express happy and sad feelings, offer happy and sad facial expressions.

Interest Area

Materials Needed: several books with pictures of baby faces

Provide frequent opportunities for infants to look at pictures of baby faces. Talk with infants about the facial expressions of pictured babies, particularly happy and sad. Make exaggerated facial expressions of happy and sad. Invite older infants to imitate you.

Family Child Care

Materials Needed: assortment of books with pictures of baby faces

As a complement to Options 1 and 2 for infants, invite older children to make happy and sad faces. Invite younger children to guess which faces are sad and which are happy. Invite older children to tell a reason why someone might feel happy or sad.



Birth–12 Months

Option 1 One-to-One



Skill and Goal

Gross motor development

A mobile infant participates in guided movements of legs and arms.



Key Concepts

Ride
Tall



Materials Needed

None



Also Promotes

Communication/Language
Self-Regulation

Place a mobile infant on his/her back when alert and ready for play. Explain that we are going to take a pretend ride on a bike to find out how tall we are.

Gently and slowly move the infant’s legs in a bicycling motion. Make up a simple rhyme about riding that includes the infant’s name. Example: “James is riding his bike. James is peddling hard. James is nearing the end of his hike. James is done riding his bike!” Pause at the end of the bicycling movements so the infant can rest.

If the infant remains engaged, explain that we are going to find out how tall (infant’s name) is. Hold the infant’s two hands and gently raise the infant’s arms above his/her head. Say “(infant’s name) is so tall!” when you raise the arms. Enthusiastically emphasize “so tall!” Put the arms back at the infant’s side and again raise them gently while saying “(infant’s name) is so tall!”

At the end of the activity you may wish to offer ELM’s Self-Regulation activity focused on calming down. The most recent practice in calming down is offered in Block 17.



Birth–12 Months

Option 2 One-to-One



Skill and Goal

Gross motor development

An older infant participates in repetitive bouncing movements while listening to a rhyme.



Key Concepts

Bounce



Materials Needed

None



Also Promotes

Communication/Language
Self-Regulation

Invite a mobile infant 10 months or older to go riding on a pretend horse. The pretend horse is your knee/leg. Place the infant on your knee(s) facing you while you securely hold onto both of the infant's hands. Gently bounce the infant up and down while saying a rhyme of your creation. Example: "Ride a horse, ride a horse. (infant's name) is riding a horse. Not too fast. Not too slow. (infant's name) is riding a horse." Put your rhyme to music, if you wish.

Carefully monitor the infant's reactions to make sure your riding speed is not distressing. Immediately stop movements if the infant shows any signs of discomfort or negative reaction.

Describe the infant's actions. Example: "You are bouncing on my leg! We are pretending my leg is a horse!" The infant may wish to repeat the activity. Be mindful of overstimulating the infant. At the conclusion of one or two rounds, support the infant in calming down. The most recent practice in calming down is offered in Block 17.

👁️ What to Look For—Options 1–2

Infants generally enjoy the repetitive physical movements offered in these two activity options. Option 1 can help strengthen leg muscles and arm reach. Option 2 can help an older infant coordinate his/her body during bouncing. The repetitive nature of the actions is important to the infant's ability to adjust to and anticipate the movements. Especially important is your attention to the infant's reactions, as described in the activity plans. Avoid tickling or other actions that might heighten an already stimulating activity. Gentle movement is essential. Both activity options are commonly called lap games due to their location in a caregiver's lap.

📊 More Scaffolding Tips—Options 1–2

Extra support ■ Carefully monitor the infant's reactions so you can determine whether a slower pace (Options 1 and 2) or shorter arm reach (Option 1) would be appropriate. ■ In Option 2, use a pretend pony instead of a pretend horse if you anticipate the infant is more familiar with a pony.

Enrichment ■ If you offer a lap game again, use a phrase, such as "we will do it again," to help an infant build awareness of the concept of again.

Option 2 is informed by the following source: Center for Early Literacy Learning (2010). Infant lap games [Online Forum]. Orelena Hawks Puckett Institute. Retrieved from: http://earlyliteracylearning.org/cellpract_pract/infant/i_group/sound_aware_grp.pdf



Interest Area

Materials Needed: musical mobile, rattles, or other sound makers

Continue the activity options' emphasis on physical movement by providing rattles and other sound-making toys that infants can use with repetitive actions. Infants who are beginning to creep will enjoy touching a toy that makes a sound, such as a ball with a chime inside. Include a musical mobile if there are infants who would enjoy watching an object move and make sounds.



Family Child Care

Be Prepared: Be familiar with the lyrics and tune of "Shake Your Sillies Out" by the Wiggles. Online sources are available.

In addition to the activity options for infants, provide guided physical movement opportunities for older children in your setting. Teach the lyrics and tune of the song "Shake Your Sillies Out." Encourage children to sing along and do movements of interest, including shaking, nodding, clapping, jumping.