



**Communication/
Language**

Exploring Words

- Option 1** (OO) A young infant participates in a book sharing focused on pictures of young children and their family members.
- Option 2** (OO) An infant participates in a book sharing with opportunities to help turn pages and communicate about young children doing things with their families.
- Option 3** (OO) An older infant participates in a book sharing with opportunities to help manage the book and communicate about babies doing things with their families.



Cognitive

Solving Problems

- Option 1** (OO) A young infant is offered a choice of one of two toys to touch, hold, or manipulate.
- Option 2** (OO) An older infant is offered a choice of one of two toys to use in open-ended play.



Self-Regulation

Focusing and Remembering

- Option 1** (OO) A young infant is encouraged to persist in watching a caregiver manipulate a nylon scrunchie and a cup.
- Option 2** (OO) An older infant is encouraged to persist in pulling a scrunchie from a cup.



Social-Emotional

Interacting with Others

- Option 1** (OO) A young infant participates with a caregiver in responsive interactions focused on pictures of farm animals.
- Option 2** (OO) An older infant engages with a caregiver in play using farm animal figures.



Physical/Health

Using Our Hands

- Option 1** (OO) A young infant adjusts to gentle movement in a caregiver's arms while listening to calm music.
- Option 2** (IG) Infants participate in songs with hand motions led by a caregiver.
- Option 3** (IG) Older infants listen to music with the opportunity to move an object to a song.

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



Birth–12 Months

Option 1 One-to-One



Skill and Goal

Receptive language
Expressive language

A young infant participates in a book sharing focused on pictures of young children and their family members.



Key Concepts

Book
More



Materials Needed

"More More More," Said the Baby by Vera B. Williams



Also Promotes

Social-Emotional

BEGIN: [Sit with the young infant reclined in your lap. Support the infant's head in the bend of your arm so you can use your hands to hold the book and turn the pages while also securely holding the infant.]

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

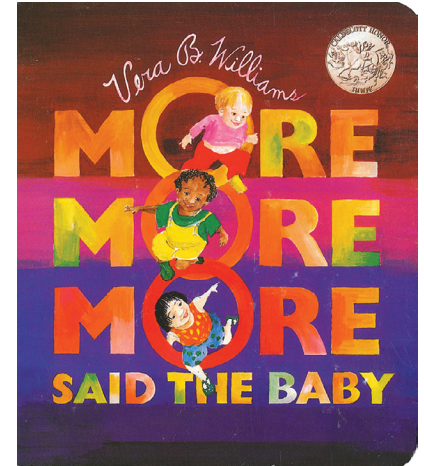
ACT: Here are pictures of babies. The babies are smiling. They are moving their bodies. I think the babies are having fun!

Our book tells us what some babies do with people in their families.

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

- Use your own words to describe people, objects, and actions shown on the page. Point to what you describe. Example: "This is a grandma. The grandma is hugging the baby. The grandma loves the baby."
- Vary the pitch and tempo of your voice to add interest. Emphasize repetitive phrases, such as "more, more, more" and "right in the middle."
- Respond to gestures and/or vocalizations.
- If the infant's interest or time is limited, focus on a section of the book, such as little guy, little pumpkin, or little bird. This is preferable to omitting pages.]

RECAP: [Describe what happened. Example: "The babies in our book said 'more, more, more!' You cooed when we looked at the picture of the baby hugging his grandma. 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 pages and communicate about young children doing things with their families.



Key Concepts

Book
More



Materials Needed

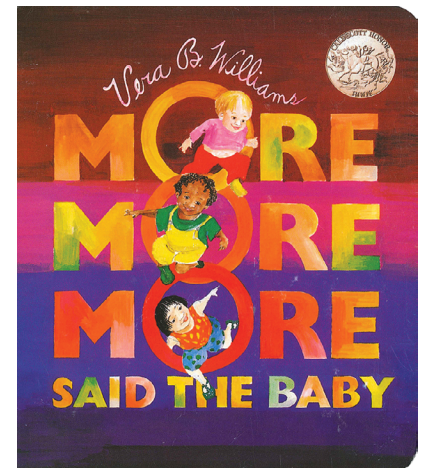
"More More More," Said the Baby by Vera B. Williams



Also Promotes

Social-Emotional
Physical/Health

Invite an infant to sit next to you or on your lap to read a book. Introduce the book by pointing to the cover and encouraging the infant to look at the picture with you. Example: "Look at the babies! The babies are smiling! Our book tells us about babies doing fun things with their families." Use the following strategies to engage the infant in the book:



- Invite the infant to help you turn the pages.
- Describe pictures in your own words. Point enthusiastically to what you describe. Some pictures may be challenging to figure out without your explicit help. Example: "Here is the grandma. Here is the baby on the grandma's lap. The grandma is tasting the baby's toes! The baby is laughing. The baby likes this game!"
- Describe and respond to gestures or vocalizations. Example: "You are pointing to your tummy. The daddy is kissing his baby's tummy! This is the baby's tummy. This is your tummy!"
- Help the infant connect book information to his/her own experiences. Example: "The baby is playing with his daddy. You play with your daddy!"
- Emphasize the repetitive words and phrases with a slower, lower, or higher voice. Examples: more, more, more; right in the middle; right on either side; right on the ends. Use a quieter voice for the section on little bird because the baby is tired and ready for bed.
- If time or infant interest is limited, focus on a section of the book rather than omitting pages. The sections are: little guy, little pumpkin, and little bird.
- Recognize the infant's participation in the book sharing. Example: "We had fun reading this book together, Nora. We looked at the pictures of the babies with their families. You pointed to the picture of the baby going to sleep. 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 babies doing things with their families.



Key Concepts

Book
More



Materials Needed

"More More More," Said the Baby by Vera B. Williams

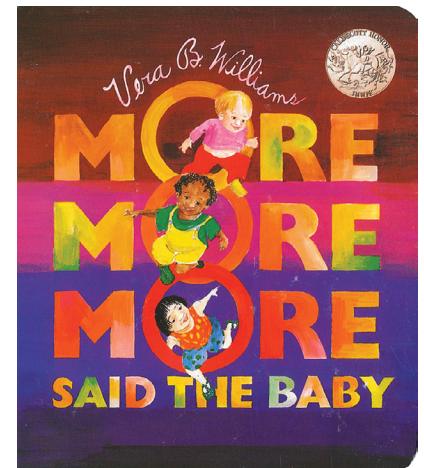


Also Promotes

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 the pages. A standing infant may want to use one hand to help turn the pages.

Once the infant is comfortable, point to and describe the picture on the book cover. Example: "Look at the babies. The babies are smiling and having fun! Our book is about babies doing things with people in their families." Use the following strategies to engage the infant in the book:



- Use your own words to describe people, objects, and actions in the pictures. Point frequently to what you describe.
- Help the infant connect book information to his/her own experiences. Example: "You are looking at the baby hugging his grandma. You have a grandma, too!"
- Spend more time talking about pictures that seem to be of particular interest to the infant.
- Describe and respond to gestures and/or vocalizations. Example: "You said 'more!' All of the babies in our book say 'more, more, more!' You are helping me read our book!"
- Emphasize the repeated words 'more, more, more!' Explain that the babies in our book say "more" because they want to do a fun thing again. Some infants may repeat a version of the word 'more' with you.
- Vary the tone and tempo of your voice with the repeated phrases "right in the middle," "right on either side," and "right on the ends." Use a quieter voice for the little bird section because it involves a sleepy character and bedtime.
- Recognize the infant's participation in the book reading. Example: "You helped me hold our book, Jayce. You pointed to the running baby. You helped me say 'more!' You turned the pages to see what was next! We had fun reading this book together."



What to Look For—Options 1–3

Many infants will connect with this book’s familiar theme of playing with a loved one. Infants will likely enjoy looking at the rich colors of the illustrations. Some of the pictures may be challenging to decipher without your guidance. Help infants to understand what is happening in the pictures by describing the actions of the babies and their family members. Infants will show interest in the pictures by gazing, pointing, touching, or using their hands to bat at or tap the pictures. Infants may also express interest in the book by cooing, babbling, and/or saying a word or part of a word.

The book is longer than what some infants can be expected to pursue. Focus on one or two of the book’s three sections. Each section has a tidy storyline. You can return to another section at a later time if an infant remains interested in the book.

More Scaffolding Tips—Options 1–3

Extra support ■ Remember the importance of your gestures and facial expressions in communicating with an infant.

Enrichment ■ Talk with an older infant about fun things in your room that infants like to do again (more, more, more).

Interest Area

Materials Needed: *“More More More,” Said the Baby* by Vera B. Williams

Be Prepared: Learn the American Sign Language sign for “more.”

Young infants may enjoy learning the ASL sign for the word more. Sign “more” each time you say the word while reading the book. This sign can be used throughout the day, such as when you ask an infant if he/she would like more of something. Many infants will quickly learn and use this simple sign. Consistently acknowledge an infant’s use of the “more” sign. Example: “I see your hands. You are saying ‘more!’ You are telling me you want ‘more’ milk!”

Family Child Care

Materials Needed: *“More More More,” Said the Baby* by Vera B. Williams

This book will be of interest to older children in your setting. Encourage older children to recite some of the book’s repetitive phrases with you. Some older infants may imitate a version of the words “more, more, more!” Talk with children about specific parts of the colorful illustrations. Invite children to tell about things they like to do again and again (more, more, more) with their loved ones.



Birth–12 Months

Option 1 One-to-One



Skill and Goal

Problem-solving

A young infant is offered a choice of one of two toys to touch, hold, or manipulate.



Key Concepts

Doll



Materials Needed

2 dolls (see Be Prepared)



Also Promotes

Communication/Language



Optional Reading

Baby Faces by DK Publishing

Be Prepared: Select two similar types of toys that are different in appearance. Dolls are suggested because infants generally like toys with simple faces. Make sure there is at least one striking difference between the two dolls. You may wish to use the dolls and red and blue pieces of fabric (serving as blankets) offered in Block 18, Cognitive, Options 1 and 2.

Place a nonmobile infant on his/her tummy or back on the floor. Sit facing the infant so he/she can clearly see you and hear your voice. Use the infant's name, your smiles, and talk to help the infant feel comfortable.

Place the two toys about 12 inches from the infant at the same time. Gently move the two dolls from side to side to draw attention to each. Communicate enthusiasm for the dolls. Describe the infant's reaction to the two toys.

If the infant looks at one doll more than the other, move the visually favored doll toward the infant so he/she can touch it or hold it. Lightly touch the infant's hand with the doll if he/she does not reach for or grasp it. Encourage the infant to touch or hold the doll. Place the other doll to your side.

If the infant does not look at one doll more than the other doll, or reach for a doll, put one doll temporarily aside and move the remaining doll gently from side to side. Then place this doll aside and move the other doll gently from side to side in front of the infant. If the infant reaches for a doll when you are moving it, give it to the infant to hold and explore. If the infant does not reach for a doll when you move each, show the two dolls together again. Watch carefully to see if the infant looks at one doll more than the other or reaches toward one of the dolls.

Move the doll that seems to be favored (or a doll of your choice if there does not seem to be a favored doll) toward the infant. It is important for the infant to have access to a doll to touch, hold, or play with. Describe the doll and the infant's actions with the doll. Provide both dolls if the infant shows interest in both.



Birth–12 Months

Option 2 One-to-One



Skill and Goal Problem-solving

An older infant is offered a choice of one of two toys to use in open-ended play.



Key Concepts

Choose
Play



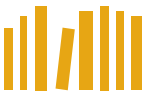
Materials Needed

2 similar toys (see Be Prepared)



Also Promotes

Communication/Language
Physical/Health



Optional Reading

Baby Touch and Feel. Things That Go by DK Publishing

Be Prepared: Select two similar types of toys that are different in a major way. Some possibilities include two chunky vehicles, such as a truck and a car, or two different balls, such as bubble ball and a ball with holes. The activity description assumes a truck and a car (two chunky vehicles) are offered. The learning goal is not supported if two different types of toys, such as a vehicle and a ball, are used.

Sit on the floor next to a mobile infant. Use the infant’s name when you show two different toys. Example: “Hello, Ellie. Here is a car. Here is a truck. Would you like to play with the car or the truck? You can choose the car or the truck.” Point and use hand gestures so the infant has clear communication from you about the choice.

If the infant does not promptly reach for a toy, give some attention to the toy choices by gently moving and describing each. Example: “Our toy truck has eyes! Our car has a smooth top.” Then put the two toys in the same location on the floor in front of the infant. Do not place one toy closer to the infant. Again, point and use your words to ask which toy the infant would like to play with. If the infant continues to show no toy preference, remove the two toys from the play space and offer a different set of toy possibilities to the infant, without directly asking the infant to make a choice. Example: “I think you are not interested in these toys. I will put them away. Let’s find something else you would like to play with.”

If the infant reaches for or grasps one of the two toys you present, emphasize the decision and put away the toy not selected. Example: “You picked the little car. The car is fun to play with. I will put away the truck.”

Support the infant’s play with the toy. Example: Create a pretend road or a ramp for a toy vehicle. A ramp can be easily made using any rigid material with its end lifted up slightly. Create a target for a ball by putting a basket on its side. Describe the infant’s play explorations.



What to Look For—Options 1–2

It is unusual for an infant to be offered two choices of similar toys. Typically an infant is offered one toy or a collection of toys. The opportunity to choose from two toy possibilities can support the infant’s attention to characteristics of each toy. Showing two similar types of toys heightens the cognitive benefits

of looking at two objects presented together. Making the favored toy available is an appropriate form of caregiver responsiveness to the infant's interests.

Look carefully at the infant's reactions to the two toys. In a younger infant (Option 1), you may see a slight change in the infant's gaze or facial expressions. Infants often increase movements of their legs and arms when presented with interesting toys. Some infants may focus more on you than on the toys. If the infant seems mostly interested in your face, smile and talk with the infant. It is fine to put the toys aside if the infant wants to interact with you more than he/she wants to look at the toys.

With an older infant (Option 2), you are likely to see the infant touch or grasp the toy. The infant may want to touch or manipulate each toy as part of decision-making. This exploration is appropriate to support, as indicated in an Extra Support tip. Eventually the infant should be encouraged to select one toy, and the toy not selected should be set aside (see Extra Support tip). Later, if the infant wishes to also play with the toy not selected, make it available with enthusiasm.

More Scaffolding Tips—Options 1–2

Extra support ■ Remember that pointing adds clarity to choices offered verbally. Infants cannot be expected to understand many words others say. ■ In Option 2, provide time for an infant to explore each toy before asking him/her to make a choice. ■ Instead of removing the toy not selected in Option 2 from the play area, consider placing it next to a familiar soft toy animal, such as a cloth bear, for the toy animal to play with. Example: "You can play with the truck. Our bear can hold the car."

Enrichment ■ If you repeat Option 2 with an infant who readily selected a toy the first time, offer three, rather than two, toy choices.

Interest Area

Materials needed: similar sets of toys as described below

During play interactions and care routines, offer infants a choice when possible, such as placing two wobble toys on the floor at playtime and providing two soft toys side by side. Example: a little bear and a bigger bear. Place similar items together in pairs, such as two matching rattles. Provide a bin or container the infant may use with the toys. Putting things in and dumping them out is a cognitively beneficial activity that also promotes motor skills. Show a mobile infant two books and encourage him/her to pick one to share with you.

 Family Child Care

Materials needed: materials used during play times, as described below

There are numerous times during the day for encouraging choice-making among toddlers and preschool-age children. During play periods, sit on the floor and tune in to play interactions. Verbalize choices for toddlers. Offer a slight pause between choices and emphasize the word “or.” Examples: “You could wear the vest or the firefighter coat.” “Would you like me to read this book about a kitten or this book about ponies?” “Let’s build something together with our blocks. Would you like to build a zoo, or a farm, or something else?”

Preschool-age and older children are beginning to notice more detail in the environment. Seeing how things are alike and different is interesting to children at this age. Intentionally offer choices that provide opportunities for expanding awareness. Examples: “Would you like the pale yellow paint, or the gold paint?” “Do you want a long block or a short block?”



Birth–12 Months

Option 1 One-to-One



Skill and Goal Executive function

A young infant is encouraged to persist in watching a caregiver manipulate a nylon scrunchie and a cup.



Key Concepts

Watch
Inside



Materials Needed

1 nylon bath scrunchie
1 plastic cup



Also Promotes

Physical/Health
Self-Regulation

Be Prepared: This activity is for a nonmobile infant. The scrunchie should fit fully inside the cup. The fit does not need to be firm.

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

EXPLAIN: [*Introduce the scrunchie by holding it in front of the infant's chest.*]

Look what I have! This is a scrunchie.

ASK: Would you like to watch me move our scrunchie?

ACT: [*Slowly move the scrunchie from one side to the other. Then introduce the cup and hold it at the infant's midline so he/she can easily see it. While the infant is watching, put the bath scrunchie into the cup. Describe your action. Hold the cup with the scrunchie inside in front of the infant, so the infant can see what happened to the scrunchie. Then use several fingers to remove the scrunchie from the cup and move it around in front of the infant. Conclude by putting the scrunchie in the open palm of one hand and the cup in the open palm of your other hand. Put both hands (with items) within reach of the infant. Encourage the infant to touch or hold whatever seems to attract his/her visual attention. Encourage the infant to play with the items, if interested.*]

RECAP: [*Smile and make eye contact with the infant as you offer a brief summary of the activity. Example: "You watched our scrunchie move around and go inside a cup. I took the scrunchie out of the cup. You had fun touching the scrunchie."*]





Birth–12 Months

Option 2 One-to-One



Skill and Goal

Executive function

An older infant is encouraged to persist in pulling a scrunchie from a cup.



Key Concepts

Squeeze

Pull



Materials Needed

1 nylon bath scrunchie

1 plastic cup (see Be Prepared)



Also Promotes

Physical/Health

Self-Regulation

Be Prepared: This activity is for an infant who can sit independently. Select a cup size that will provide a firm fit for the scrunchie when the scrunchie is put inside the cup. If the fit is too loose, it may not be challenging for the infant to remove the scrunchie from the cup.

Invite an infant to sit next to you or across from you for a game. Hold the bath scrunchie in the open palm of your hand in front of the infant and encourage the infant to touch it or hold it. Provide time for the infant to manipulate the scrunchie. Demonstrate squeezing the scrunchie or moving it between your thumb and index (pointer) finger. Encourage the infant to squeeze the scrunchie with his/her hand or fingers.

Put the cup in front of the infant. Show that the cup is empty. Invite the infant to put his/her hand in the empty cup when you explain it is empty. Then put the scrunchie in the cup.

Push the scrunchie to the bottom of the cup so the fit is tight. Then invite the infant to take the scrunchie out of the cup. Use gestures when you offer the invitation to remove the scrunchie.

Describe the infant's actions. Example: "You are pulling on the scrunchie." Recognize the infant's persistence. Example: "You are working hard to get the scrunchie out of the cup!"

If the task seems frustrating to the infant, offer to help pull on the scrunchie, but wait for the infant to look at you, stop pulling on the scrunchie, or somehow indicate your help would be appropriate. It is important for the infant to remain in charge of the task of removing the scrunchie independently or with you. If you help, emphasize you are doing the pulling together. One approach is for you to pull a little, and then the infant pull a little. Avoid pulling out the scrunchie while the infant watches. Leave the final pull to the infant.

Conclude the activity by emphasizing the infant's efforts. Examples: "You worked hard to pull the scrunchie out of the cup, Jacob." "We worked hard together to get the scrunchie out of the cup!" The infant may want to repeat the activity.





What to Look For—Options 1–2

A bath scrunchie is a novel play material and its combination with the cup is likely to be appealing in both activity options. Infants are generally interested in taking things apart and many will enjoy the task of removing the scrunchie from the cup in Option 2. The brief Option 1 activity is designed to strengthen an infant's control of visual attention. Placing the scrunchie inside the cup is not intended to be a hiding game. Watch the infant's gaze carefully so you know when to make the items more fully accessible (visually) to the infant.

Infants may respond differently to the Option 2 task of removing the scrunchie from the cup. Fine motor skills are key to this activity. Look carefully to determine when your assistance should be offered. Some infants may become frustrated sooner than others. Others may persist until they are able to independently remove the scrunchie. Expressing interest in the infant's actions will help foster their persistence. Ensure the activity is fun and enjoyable for the infants, with each infant in Option 2 experiencing success.

More Scaffolding Tips—Options 1–2

Extra support ■ If you anticipate an infant may have difficulty removing the scrunchie from the cup in Option 2, drop (versus push) the scrunchie in the cup so the fit is loose. ■ Try the activity at a different time of the day if the infant is not initially receptive.

Enrichment ■ In a repeat of the Option 2 game, invite an infant to put the scrunchie in the cup. Some infants may enjoy placing the scrunchie into, and then pulling it out, of the cup several times. ■ Option 2 could be offered at the same time to several infants, with each infant having his/her own materials. Ensure the gathering does not become competitive.



Interest Area

Materials Needed: several bath scrunchies and similar-sized foam balls in a basket, several stacking cups in assorted sizes

Place the stacking cups near the basket of scrunchies and foam balls. During floor time, invite one or several infants to explore the new materials. Some infants may enjoy dumping out the contents of the basket. Others may reach in and pull out one toy at a time. Help interested infants push a toy into a cup for them to remove.



Family Child Care

Materials Needed: several bath scrunchies

Provide these new play items to enhance focus and persistence in familiar play areas. Place the bath scrunchies in different parts of the play environment, such as the water table (with a small amount of soap), the kitchen area, and the art area for painting. The scrunchies can also be used in place of soft balls during a variety of activities. In addition to the two activity options, infants can be supported in holding and exploring a scrunchie during play.



Birth–12 Months

Option 1 One-to-One



Skill and Goal

Social interaction skills

A young infant participates with a caregiver in responsive interactions focused on pictures of farm animals.



Key Concepts

Animals
Farm
Touch



Materials Needed

Baby Touch and Feel: Farm
by DK Publishing



Also Promotes

Communication/Language

BEGIN: [*Sit with the young infant reclined in your lap for talking about pictures in a book. Support the infant's head in the bend of your arm so your hands can manage the book while also securely holding the infant.*]

Smile and begin talking with the infant. Example: "Hi, Caleb! You woke up and had your bottle. Let's talk about some pictures of animals now."

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

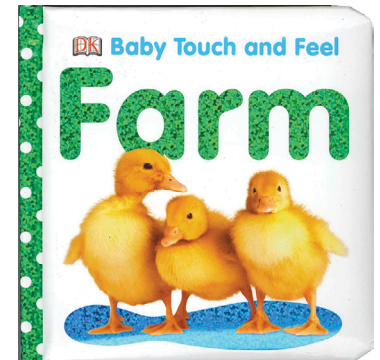
Look at the ducklings on the cover of our book. The ducklings live on a farm.

[Pause for the infant to respond to your attention. Acknowledge the response. Example: "You are looking at me and smiling, Deja. I can hear you talking! You are saying 'Ba-ba-ba.'"]

ACT: [*Use the following strategies to promote interactions with the infant:*

- *Use your own words to describe some aspect of a picture. It is not necessary to look at each picture.*
- *Consistently pause after you say something, just as you would in a conversation.*
- *Recognize the infant's nonverbal communications. Example: "You are batting at the picture of a sheepdog. This dog has soft fur. Would you like to touch the dog's soft fur?"*
- *Maintain eye contact throughout and remember the importance of your facial expressions.*
- *Encourage the infant to touch pictures that seem to be of interest. Demonstrate touching the picture when you invite the infant to touch a picture. Then move the page within easy reach of the infant's hand, but don't move the infant's hand onto the picture. Example: "You are looking at the brown cow, Caleb. The brown cow has soft fur, see? Would you like to touch the cow's soft fur?"*

RECAP: [*Briefly describe the exchange. Example: "We talked about pictures of farm animals. We looked at the picture of the sheepdog for a long time, Deja. We had fun looking at the picture of the yellow chick!"*]





Birth–12 Months

Option 2 One-to-One



Skill and Goal

Social interaction skills

An older infant engages with a caregiver in play using farm animal figures.



Key Concepts

Farm animals
Play



Materials Needed

3–5 farm animal figures
(see Be Prepared)
Basket (see Be Prepared)



Also Promotes

Communication/Language
Physical/Health

Be Prepared: This activity is for an infant who can sit independently or with support. Use fewer or more animal figures if you anticipate the suggested 3–5 figures might be too many or too few for the infant. A possible source of farm animal figures is the Fisher-Price® Little People Farm Animal Friends. Place the animal figures in the basket.

Invite an infant to join you to play with farm animals. Sit across from the infant. Introduce the basket and invite the infant to look at what is inside the basket. Use the following to promote responsive play interactions with the infant:

- Support the infant as the leader of the play, including use of the play materials in his/her own way.
- Describe the infant’s actions with animal figures. Examples: “You dumped the animals out of the basket! You are laughing, Kiara!” “You are holding up the pig. You are showing me the pink pig.”
- Pause after you offer a comment, as you would in a conversation.
- Remember that your gestures and facial expressions are important ways to communicate with the infant. The infant will not understand many of your words.
- Watch closely for bids for your attention and respond promptly. Example: “You are giving me the yellow duck. I will play with the duck. The duck is going to jump around!”



👁️ What to Look For—Options 1–2

Your main task in each of these activity options is to watch the infant’s responses to a picture (Option 1) or play material (Option 2) to determine how best to support the infant’s interests. Observing carefully is essential to engaging in responsive interactions. Your interactions with the infant are the content of each activity. The pictures and materials are tools to facilitate interactions. The activities are not intended to teach about farm animals, although it is certainly appropriate to use an animal-like behavior, such as a pig’s oink oink, to promote a playful exchange.

Look for natural places to pause in your talk. This gives space for the infant to contribute to the exchange. It also promotes a back-and-forth pattern that is common in responsive interactions. The infant’s responses are likely to be nonverbal. Pause even if the infant does not respond.

 More Scaffolding Tips—Options 1–2

Extra support ■ In Option 1, offer the infant a farm animal toy to hold while looking at pictures. ■ In the opening segment of Option 2, take an animal figure from the basket to manipulate and talk about if the infant does not pursue any of the toys initially.

Enrichment ■ Infants in Option 2 who are mostly interested in putting the animals in the basket and then taking them out may enjoy doing the same with a muffin pan. Invite the infant to place an animal figure in each cup of the muffin pan.

 Interest Area

Materials Needed: several books about farm animals, age-appropriate farm animal toys and figures, several baskets

Be Prepared: Create an area for infants to explore farm animals. Place the books close to baskets of animal toys and figures.

Provide opportunities for infants to look at pictures of farm animals in the books and to explore the farm animal toys and figures. Some infants may want to explore the animals' characteristics, whereas others may delight in dumping and filling. Talk with infants about their actions with the toys. Recognize all forms of interaction with the books and animals.

 Family Child Care

Materials Needed: two toy barns (cardboard boxes can be used in place of a barn if needed), farm animal figures appropriate for toddlers and preschool-age children, related play materials—such as fabric/felt pieces, people figures, tractors/trucks, or blocks

Consider creating two farm animal play areas, one for older infants and toddlers, and one for preschool-age children.

Pretend play with animal figures on a farm can be enjoyed by children of all ages. Provide frequent opportunities for children to engage in the open-ended play with animal and people figures. Adding new and interesting materials, such as fabric, can enhance children's play.



Birth–12 Months

Option 1 One-to-One



Skill and Goal Fine motor development

A young infant adjusts to gentle movement in a caregiver's arms while listening to calm music.



Key Concepts

Move
Calm



Materials Needed

The Rock-A-Bye Collection Vol 1 by J. Aaron Brown (audio CD)



Also Promotes

Self-Regulation
Cognitive

Be Prepared: This activity is for a nonmobile infant. Select one calm song from the recommended CD. Place the CD into the player so it is ready when an infant is alert and ready for some movement with you.

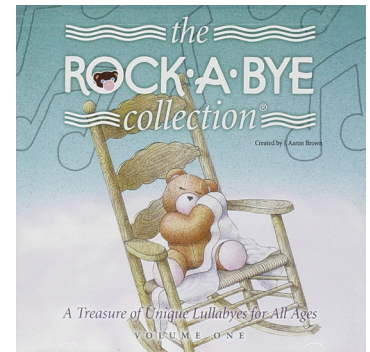
BEGIN: [*Pick up a nonmobile infant and greet him/her by name. Hold the infant securely in a comfortable position. Turn on the music at a medium-low volume.*]

EXPLAIN: We will move together to some calm music. I will hold you and we will move to the music.

ACT: [*Stand in one place with the infant securely in your arms and begin to shift your weight from one foot to the other in time with the music. Continue moving if the infant is content with your movements. Add extra steps and slow turns in rhythm with the music.*

Maintain good support for the infant's back, neck, and head as you move gently to the music. Continue to monitor the infant's reactions, especially muscle tension. Stop and adjust the way you are holding the infant if the infant begins to fuss or resist the movement by holding his/her body in a tense manner. End the activity if adjusting the infant's position is not satisfactory to the infant or you notice signs of distress. Describe the infant's reaction and your response. Example: "Joshua, I don't think you want to move to music. Let's figure out what will make you feel happier."]

RECAP: We heard some nice music. You could feel how I was moving you with our music.



👁️ What to Look For—Option 1

Generally young infants enjoy smooth movements, such as walking and rhythmic side-to-side steps. Pay careful attention to the infant's adjustment to moving while being held in your arms, as described in the activity plan. Your secure positions for holding an infant will differ across infants and will change with a specific infant as the infant develops greater strength.

**Option 1 continued**

The experience of being carried in the arms of an adult (versus an infant carrier) is important in the infant's development of balance and upper body strength. Although you are providing physical support, the infant must engage the muscles of his/her torso and neck to keep the head erect. Adjusting to the gentle side-to-side movement is a developmental challenge for an infant similar to that of being carried upright. Also, the environment will look different for an infant from the vantage point of being held.

More Scaffolding Tips—Option 1

Extra support ■ As an alternative to carrying the infant, sit on the floor or in a chair with a nonmobile infant and sway to lullaby music.

Enrichment ■ As an infant develops greater strength, allow the infant to support his/her body by holding him/her facing out away from you.



Birth–12 Months

Option 2 Informal Gathering



Skill and Goal

Fine motor development

Infants participate in songs with hand motions led by a caregiver.



Key Concepts

Sing
Hands
Move



Materials Needed

None



Also Promotes

Self-Regulation
Cognitive

Be Prepared: This activity is for infants who can sit independently or with support. Be familiar with the words, tune, and hand motions of two popular children’s songs, such as “Wheels on the Bus” and “Itsy, Bitsy Spider.” Sources are available online.

Sit on the floor with several infants for singing and hand movements. Explain that you are going to sing and move your hands. Sing a familiar song with corresponding hand motions. At the conclusion of the song, describe each infant’s reaction. Example: “James, you watched me move my hands! You moved your hands, too!” Then repeat the song with hand actions or sing a second song with hand motions unless infants have lost interest. Encourage infants to move their hands, too. If the gathering includes an infant(s) who can stand without support, consider encouraging the infant(s) to stand for the second song and actions. An infant(s) who stands may bounce or move around a bit.

👁️ What to Look For—Option 2

The activity promotes an infant’s motor skills related to balance and strength while in a sitting position. Some infants will imitate the hand or finger movements of a finger play, and others will enjoy watching you. Some infants may move their hands in random ways, and others may raise both arms. It is not necessary or appropriate to teach specific actions or to coax infants to move their hands or fingers. An infant who is just beginning to sit may lift one or both of his/her hands from the floor in order to move them during the song. Mobile infants may have the strength and balance to lift their arms while sitting and remain balanced. Moving hands or raising arms both represent adapting to a movement while remaining upright.

📊 More Scaffolding Tips—Option 2

Extra support ■ Move closer to an infant and place your hand on his/her shoulder or back to provide physical support. A gentle touch can be reassuring to an infant. ■ Place furnishings close to an infant to use as support while standing.

Enrichment ■ Copy and describe an infant’s movements. Example: “Santiago is bending his knees and bouncing. I am going to bend my knees and bounce too.”



Birth–12 Months

Option 3 Informal Gathering



Skill and Goal Fine motor development

Older infants listen to music with the opportunity to move an object to a song.



Key Concepts

Move
Music
Arm



Materials Needed

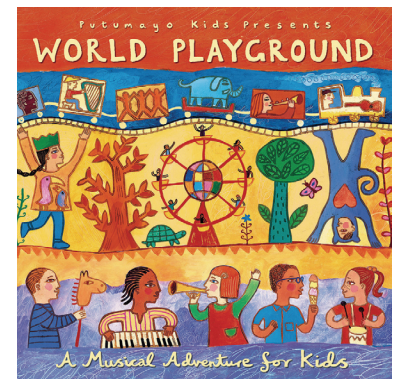
World Playground by Putumayo Kids (Audio CD)
Objects to move—1 per infant and caregiver (see Be Prepared)



Also Promotes

Self-Regulation
Cognitive

Be Prepared: This activity is for infants who can sit or stand independently. Objects to move might include a shaker, bell, or scarf. Select two songs from the CD, one lively and one slower.



Invite mobile infants to join you to move our arms to music. Explain that each of us can hold something to move. Give each infant an object to hold before you start the recorded music. Play the livelier selection of music first. Kneel close to the infants and move your arm to the music by making side-to-side motions with one of the objects. Encourage infants to move their arms to the music. At the conclusion of the song, describe infants' actions. Then play the slower song and encourage infants to move their arm/object to the music. Demonstrate moving your arm gently back and forth with an object. If an infant(s) in your gathering can stand and remain balanced, consider inviting the infant(s) to stand and move an object with the slower song.

👁️ What to Look For—Option 3

Watch infants' movements so you can pace your arm movements to match their efforts. Repeated experiences are important to learning and infants may be more active with arm movements in the second music selection. Some infants may prefer to watch only, perhaps sitting close to you with or without an object to move. An infant who stands may remain in one spot to move an item or may move around on his/her feet. Enthusiastically acknowledge all types of participation.

📈 More Scaffolding Tips—Option 3

Extra support ■ Exaggerate your arm movements with the object you are holding. ■ Help an infant who is new to standing to move from sitting to standing or the reverse. ■ Demonstrate a way to move each of the different available objects, such as a scarf or bell, if infants seem interested in movement but unclear about what to do.

Enrichment ■ Move your arm in different patterns, such as in a circle, up and down, or side to side. Follow the music's tempo.



Interest Area

Materials Needed: *Row, Row, Row Your Boat* by Annie Kubler, *Clap Hands* by Helen Oxenbury, *Everywhere Babies* by Susan Meyers, *Ten Tiny Toes* by Caroline Jayne Church, and sound makers

Display the suggested books. Sit with 1–2 infants to look at and talk about the pictures. Describe how each infant is moving. Provide easy access to sound makers so infants can extend Option 3 by making their own music with movements.



Family Child Care

Use care routines as opportunities to sing and move with young nonmobile infants. Infants will enjoy being part of an informal gathering with older children that includes singing and recorded music for movement. Invite toddlers to sit on the floor to sing “Row, Row Your Boat.” Encourage toddlers to lean forward and back as you sing. Encourage preschool-age and older children to raise their arms one at a time while moving to music. Lead older children in a *Simon Says* type of game with movements that involve crossing one hand to the opposite knee and shoulder.