



**Communication/  
Language**

**Exploring Sounds**

- Option 1** (OO) A young infant listens to a nursery rhyme and watches the corresponding movements of a toy spider.
- Option 2** (OO) An infant listens to a nursery rhyme and watches the corresponding movements of a toy spider, with opportunities to also manipulate a toy spider.
- Option 3** (IG) Older infants participate together in a nursery rhyme activity that involves opportunities to manipulate a toy spider as part of a song.



**Cognitive**

**Solving Problems**

- Option 1** (OO) A young infant participates in guided play with toys that come apart.
- Option 2** (OO) An older infant participates in guided play that includes opportunities to take apart arrangements of beanbags.
- Option 3** (OO) An older infant participates in guided play that includes opportunities to take apart a tower of stacker pieces.



**Self-Regulation**

**Focusing and Remembering**

- Option 1** (OO) A young infant is encouraged to persist in removing toys from a box.
- Option 2** (OO) An older infant is encouraged to persist in scooting, crawling, or walking to get a box of toys and to remove toys from the box.



**Social-Emotional**

**Interacting with Others**

- Option 1** (IG) Two infants engage in a similar play activity, with guided opportunities to notice what the other is doing.
- Option 2** (IG) Two older infants play alongside each other using shared materials, with guided opportunities to notice what the other is doing.



**Physical/Health**

**Moving Our Bodies**

- Option 1** (OO) An older infant moves on mats of two different textures.
- Option 2** (IG) Older infants adapt motor movements to different textures.

(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 listens to a nursery rhyme and watches the corresponding movements of a toy spider.



#### Key Concepts

Song  
Watch  
Listen



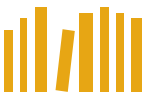
#### Materials Needed

Toy plush spider



#### Also Promotes

Cognitive  
Physical/Health



#### Optional Reading

*Sign and Sing Along: Itsy Bitsy Spider* by Annie Kubler

**Be Prepared:** Be familiar with the words, tune, and finger actions of the “Itsy Bitsy Spider” nursery rhyme. Consider how to use a toy spider instead of your fingers for the actions.

**BEGIN:** *[Place the infant on his/her back in a supported reclining position. Ensure the infant can clearly see you.]*

*Hold the spider about 12 inches from the infant.]*



**ACT:** This is a toy spider.

*[Pause for the infant to focus on the spider. Move the spider gently from side to side to attract the infant’s attention, if necessary.]*

Our toy spider is going to move when I sing a song. You can listen to the song and watch the spider move. Are you ready for our spider to move?

*[Make eye contact with the infant and sing “Itsy Bitsy Spider” slowly. Move the spider in ways that correspond with the words of the song. You may wish to use the following movements:*

- *tilt hand back and forth while moving spider up*
- *swoosh spider down and out*
- *tilt hand back and forth while moving spider up once again*

*Pause after one round of the song and describe the infant’s reactions, including gestures and/or vocalizations. Example: “You are reaching for our toy spider. Here, you can touch the spider! The spider is fuzzy.”*

*Repeat the song with movements 1–2 times if the infant remains engaged. After each round, talk about the infant’s reactions.]*

**RECAP:** *[Describe what happened. Example: “I sang a song about a spider. You watched the spider go up and then swoosh down! You are holding the toy spider from our song! You are feeling the spider’s fuzzy body.”]*

## Birth–12 Months

**Be Prepared:** Be familiar with the words, tune, and finger actions of the “Itsy Bitsy Spider” nursery rhyme. Consider how to use a toy spider instead of your fingers for the actions.

### Option 2 One-to-One



#### Skill and Goal

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

An infant listens to a nursery rhyme and watches the corresponding movements of a toy spider, with opportunities to also manipulate a toy spider.



#### Key Concepts

Song  
Listen  
Watch



#### Materials Needed

2 toy plush spiders



#### Also Promotes

Cognitive  
Physical/Health



#### Optional Reading

*Sign and Sing Along: Itsy Bitsy Spider* by Annie Kubler

Invite an infant to sit on your lap for a song. Place the infant in your lap facing to the side. Ensure the infant is secure in your arms and able to make some eye contact. Introduce a toy spider. Encourage the infant to hold and explore the spider for a few moments. Then introduce the second spider and explain that you are going to sing a song about the spiders. Example: “I have a spider, too! I am going to sing a song about our spiders. You can listen to me sing the words. We can move our spiders during the song! Are you ready?”



Sing one round of the “Itsy Bitsy Spider” slowly, moving your spider in simple ways that correspond with the words. See movement suggestions in Option 1. Describe the infant’s reactions, including gestures and/or vocalizations. Example: “You smiled and listened to our song. You watched my spider go up and then down. You waved your spider during our song!”

Offer another round of the song and movements if the infant remains engaged. Encourage the infant to move his/her spider as you sing.

Conclude the session by recognizing the infant’s participation. Example: “You helped with our spider song! You cooed while I sang the words of our song. You watched my spider go up and then down. You moved your spider all around!”

## Birth–12 Months

### Option 3 Informal Gathering



#### Skill and Goal

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

Older infants participate together in a nursery rhyme activity that involves opportunities to manipulate a toy spider as part of a song.



#### Key Concepts

Song  
Up  
Down



#### Materials Needed

Toy plush spiders—1 per infant and caregiver



#### Also Promotes

Cognitive  
Physical/Health



#### Optional Reading

*Sign and Sing Along: Itsy Bitsy Spider* by Annie Kubler

**Be Prepared:** This activity is for infants who can sit independently. Be familiar with the words and tune of the “Itsy Bitsy Spider” nursery rhyme. This activity option uses simple up and down movements of the toy spider as part of the song.

Invite 2–3 infants to join you for a song. Sit facing the infants and introduce the toy spider. Explain that our song is about a spider that goes up and down. With the spider in your hand, facing the infants, slowly move your arm up and then down.

Emphasize the words up and down.

Then sing one round of “Itsy Bitsy

Spider” slowly while moving your spider up and down in correspondence to the words. Describe and respond to gestures and/or vocalizations.

Give each infant a spider. Provide a brief time for the infants to touch and manipulate their toy spider. Then invite the infants to join you in moving their spider as you sing the rhyme. Emphasize up and down motions with the spider. After singing the rhyme with motions, describe the infants’ actions. Example (with a brief demonstration of each described action): “You raised your arms, James! Isabella rocked back and forth with our song! Jackson said ‘up!’”

Repeat the rhyme with actions if the infants remain interested. Conclude the session with a brief description of how each infant participated.

### 👁️ What to Look For—Options 1–3

Infants enjoy songs with finger or hand movements. Younger infants may coo, babble, or kick their legs. Older infants may join you in moving a toy spider up and down with their hand or arm. It is not appropriate to explicitly teach the up and down movements used in Option 3. Your informal demonstration is sufficient. Some infants in each option may prefer to watch and listen only. All forms of participation are valuable and important to recognize. What is important in each activity option is exposure to words, music, and movement, with opportunities to participate if interested. Infants cannot be expected to have a mental image or understanding of a spider, or the events and objects conveyed in the rhyme. But the activity can informally support their awareness of songs having a tune and words and sometimes actions that represent the words.





### More Scaffolding Tips—Options 1–3

**Extra support** ■ In Options 1 and 2, limit the number of movements with the toy spider if it appears the usual actions are too confusing for an infant to watch.

**Enrichment** ■ In Option 3, older infants who readily move their toy spider up and down might enjoy doing another action as part of the rhyme, such as using their fingers to pretend rain is coming down.  
■ Show and talk about pictures in the Optional Reading book with infants after the song and movement activity.



### Interest Area

**Materials Needed:** see below

Engage infants in familiar songs or rhymes during floor time. Offer rhymes and songs that emphasize up and down hand or arm actions. “Hickory Dickory Dock” is a possible addition to the “Itsy Bitsy Spider” offered in the activity options. Provide a rhyme-related toy for an infant to manipulate, such as a toy mouse for “Hickory Dickory Dock.” Infants generally enjoy repeating songs with actions.



### Family Child Care

**Materials Needed:** *Sign and Sing Along: Itsy Bitsy Spider* by Annie Kubler

Many children are familiar with the “Itsy Bitsy Spider” rhyme and finger play. Read the book with children in your care. Demonstrate each sign and invite older children to imitate the sign. At the conclusion of the book, return to the beginning and invite children to join you singing and signing some of the familiar words. Younger infants and toddlers will enjoy listening and watching. Infants may enjoy holding a plush toy spider during the activity.



## Birth–12 Months

### Option 1 One-to-One



#### Skill and Goal

##### Problem-solving Object inquiry skills

A young infant participates in guided play with toys that come apart.



#### Key Concepts

On  
Off



#### Materials Needed

Stacking cup  
Small ball (see Be Prepared)



#### Also Promotes

Communication/Language  
Physical/Health

**Be Prepared:** Secure a ball that is partially visible when placed inside the cup (see picture) and in a color that contrasts with the color of the cup.

During a tummy-time activity, place one stacking cup on the floor and invite the infant to look at it. Then hold the ball for the infant to see, and place it on the cup when the infant is looking. A portion of the ball should be visible. Name each toy as you point. Describe what you are doing.

Move the combined toys within reach of the infant. Invite the infant to touch the toys. Help the infant touch the toys if he/she reaches for them. Allow plenty of time for the infant to explore the toys. If the infant causes the ball to fall off the cup, enthusiastically explain what happened. Example: “The ball was on the cup. You touched the ball. The ball came off the cup!” If the infant does not touch the toys, or his/her action does not cause the ball to fall off the cup, tip the cup so the ball falls off. Explain what happened. Repeat the on and off actions as you describe each with short, clear phrases. Emphasize the words on and off. Pause after each so the infant has sufficient time to look at each arrangement (ball off the cup, ball on the cup).

Provide time and encouragement for the infant to play with the two toys if interested. Put the ball on the cup again so the infant has another opportunity to see the combined arrangement, and to maybe touch or manipulate the combined toys.

Describe the infant’s actions or what the infant is feeling with his/her fingers, hands, or mouth. Examples: “Ahh. Trina, you got the ball to your mouth.” “Umm. You feel the bumps with your tongue.” Repeat and expand on the infant’s vocalizations.





## Birth–12 Months

### Option 2 One-to-One



#### Skill and Goal

##### Problem-solving Object inquiry skills

An older infant participates in guided play that includes opportunities to take apart arrangements of beanbags.



#### Key Concepts

Apart  
Pile  
Line



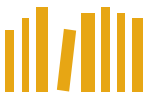
#### Materials Needed

6 sensory beanbags



#### Also Promotes

Communication/Language  
Physical/Health



#### Optional Reading

*First Words (Bright Baby)* by  
Roger Priddy

**BEGIN:** *[Invite an infant who can sit independently to play with the beanbags. Sit on the floor near the infant. Name and point to several beanbags. Example: “This is a beanbag. This is a beanbag. This is a beanbag. We have a lot of beanbags!”*

*Stack all of the beanbags, one on top of another. Describe what you are doing.]*

**EXPLAIN:** All our beanbags are in a pile. We have a pile of beanbags.

*[Point to the top of the pile.]*

**ASK:** Would you like to get a beanbag from our pile?

**ACT:** *[Pause for the infant to consider the pile. If the infant does not touch or start taking the pile apart, remove the top beanbag and then return it to the pile or put it on the floor. Encourage the infant to take a beanbag off the pile.*

*Describe the infant’s actions with simple, encouraging statements. Examples: “Xavier, you took a beanbag off our pile! Do you want to get another beanbag?” “Wow, you are taking apart our pile of beanbags. You pushed them to the floor!”*

*The sensory beanbags may prompt an infant to explore a beanbag he/she removed. The infant may shake the beanbag, mouth it, or feel it with his/her fingers or hands. Support the infant’s exploration of a beanbag by describing his/her actions. Wait a few moments before pointing to the stacked beanbags and encouraging the infant to remove one more beanbag.*

*At this age, infants may use both hands to remove the beanbag. Some infants may dismantle the beanbag stack and set each beanbag on the floor. Continue to describe the actions in an encouraging manner.]*

**EXPLAIN:** Our beanbags were in a pile. Now our beanbags are all on the floor! You took apart our pile of beanbags.

*[Emphasize the word apart. Point to the random arrangement of beanbags. Pause so the infant has time to look.]*

We can do something else with our beanbags. We can make a line with our beanbags.

**Option 2 continued**

*[Place the beanbags in a line in front of the infant. Describe your actions as you arrange the beanbags, from the infant's left to right. Example: "First, the bumpy red beanbag. Next is the green beanbag. I am putting the gold nubby beanbag in our line, then blue, and then pink. The shiny yellow beanbag is at the end of our line." Emphasize the word line.]*

**ACT:** We can take apart our line of beanbags. Would you like to help me take beanbags away from our line?

*[Encourage the infant to remove beanbags from the line. If the infant remains interested, he/she may be interested in your forming another pile or line of beanbags to take apart and/or in manipulating individual beanbags.]*

**RECAP:** *[Describe what happened. Example: "We had a pile of beanbags. You took the pile apart. You took each beanbag off the pile. Then our beanbags were on the floor. We made a line with our beanbags. Then we made another pile!"]*





## Birth–12 Months

### Option 3 One-to-One



#### Skill and Goal

##### Problem-solving Object inquiry skills

An older infant participates in guided play that includes opportunities to take apart a tower of stacker pieces.



#### Key Concepts

Apart  
Off



#### Materials Needed

Knob stacker toy



#### Also Promotes

Communication/Language  
Physical/Health

Invite an infant who can sit independently to play with the knob stacker toy with you. Sit on the floor facing the infant and put the stacking toy together as the infant watches. Use simple phrases to explain you are putting the toy pieces together.

Invite the infant to take apart the toy. Emphasize the word apart. In addition to your words, use a gesture with the top piece to communicate your invitation. If the infant seems uncertain about what to do, remove 1–2 pieces, one at a time, as the infant watches. Return each piece to the tower for the infant to remove.

Describe the infant’s actions in taking each piece off the tower. Emphasize the word off. Example: “Tamara, you are taking the little blue piece off the tower.” Encourage the infant to remove each individual piece rather than knocking the tower over.

Draw attention to the pieces of the tower on the floor and explain that the pieces used to be in a tower. Emphasize that the infant took apart the tower by moving the toy pieces from the tower to the floor. The infant may be interested in your creating another tower for him/her to take apart.



### 👁️ What to Look For—Options 1–3

The three activity options are designed to help an infant become aware of how objects can be changed by taking them apart. The options are geared to different levels of cognitive and motor skills. In each activity, look for opportunities to emphasize changes in the arrangement of toys. Generally, before infants can put together toys, they are interested in taking them apart.

The Option 1 activity may be brief and easily incorporated into a tummy time, as suggested. The ways in which the activity unfolds will depend partly on the infant’s ability to hold up his/her head for a sustained time and use his/her arms and hands while on his/her tummy. The activity can be beneficial if the infant watches only. Looking is a valuable way to explore.

Option 2 offers a more pronounced change in the arrangement of toys (beanbags) and opportunities for the infant to create the change. Watch the infant’s attention to the beanbags after they are removed from the pile (sitting randomly on the floor). Make another pile of beanbags for the infant to take apart if it seems the infant would prefer a repeat. Make a line of beanbags at a later point if time or infant interest is short.



In Option 3, if an infant knocks over the tower, simply put it back together and demonstrate taking off one piece. Kindly say to the infant, “Let’s try it a different way.” Point to the top piece and emphasize the word off. Some infants may be interested in putting the tower together. Arrange the stacking pieces in order by size. The largest stacking piece should be near the infant’s left hand, and the last piece of the tower should be on the infant’s right. Demonstrate how to set one on top of another, and give verbal guidance to the infant for stacking others.

The activity plans continue the practice of a caregiver using simple phrases to describe objects and actions. Gestures and facial expressions are central to communications because infants will not understand most of the words you use. Still, your use of language (with pauses) can strengthen an infant’s understanding that language is associated with objects and actions.

The activities offer good opportunities to observe an infant’s fine motor skills, particularly coordination of hands, fingers, and eye-hand. Examples of skills to observe: An infant may use two hands to manipulate items. An infant may pick up a small item with a pincer grasp (thumb and index finger), a skill that typically occurs between 8–12 months of age, or use a whole hand to grasp an item. You may see an infant use a pincer grasp or his/her whole hand to grasp the nesting pieces. At this age, infants may use either hand. A consistent preference for using one hand develops over the first two years.

### More Scaffolding Tips—Options 1–3

**Extra support** ■ In Option 1, align your actions with the cup and ball to when the infant is watching. You may wish to use words and slight movement of a toy to draw the infant’s attention, but it is not necessary to coax the infant to be engaged. Offer this brief activity at a different time if the infant is interested in something else. ■ In Option 2, use beanbags without sensory differences if you anticipate the sensory characteristics of beanbags will distract an infant from noticing how a pile of beanbags can be changed. ■ In Option 3, use 3–4 rather than the eight pieces of the stacking tower.

**Enrichment** ■ In Option 2, provide a clear container for the infant to put the beanbags into when taking apart the pile. The infant may enjoy dumping the container of beanbags onto the floor. Draw attention to the way the beanbags scatter on the floor. ■ In Option 3, point to and name the knob on several pieces. If an infant seems especially interested in details, show how the knobs help the pieces fit together.

 Interest Area

**Materials Needed:** books, pictures of people and animals, cups, small and large toys, baskets or containers, animal figures, muffin cups

Provide books with single images on each page. Infants enjoy looking at photos of people and animals.

Make arrangements with cups and toys for non-mobile infants to view and touch. Create simple and attractive arrangements of play materials to support infants in learning by looking.

Throughout the week, put items into baskets or containers for infants to remove. Example: Place a muffin pan where an infant can discover it. Put a soft animal figure or other small toy in each muffin cup. Also, place items inside a cloth container for infants to remove.

Provide materials for mobile infants to transfer from one container to another. Use both large and small play materials.

 Family Child Care

**Materials Needed:** toys in Options 2 and 3, *The Three Bears* by Byron Barton, story props—such as bowls

Older toddlers and preschool-age children may enjoy putting together, independently or with your help, the toys used in Options 2 and 3. Preschool-age children also may enjoy identifying the appropriate sizes of items, such as bowls, for the characters in *The Three Bears* as part of a book sharing.



## Birth–12 Months

### Option 1 One-to-One



#### Skill and Goal Executive function

A young infant is encouraged to persist in removing toys from a box.



#### Key Concepts

Look  
Reach  
Find



#### Materials Needed

Box with small toys (see Be Prepared)



#### Also Promotes

Communication/Language  
Physical/Health

**Be Prepared:** This activity is for an infant who can reach for and grasp small toys from a box. Place in a box five different small toys that will appeal to the infant. One possibility is Excellerations® Sensory Surprise Box with 5 Shapes.

**BEGIN:** *[Place next to you an infant who can sit independently or with support. Ensure the infant can clearly see you. Smile and make eye contact with the infant.]*

**EXPLAIN:** *[Hold up the box of toys.]*

There are toys in our box. Look at this neat toy!

*[Remove one toy from the box, show it to the infant, and return it to the box.]*

You can reach into our box. You can find some fun toys in our box.

**ACT:** *[Encourage the infant to remove toys from the box.]*

*Communicate excitement when the infant removes a toy. Describe the infant's actions and say the name of the toy. Example: "You found a ball! You reached into the box. You pulled a ball out of the box."*

*Recognize the infant's reactions to toys removed from the box. Example: "You are smiling! You are having fun finding toys in the box."]*

**RECAP:** *[Smile and make eye contact with the infant as you briefly describe what happened. Example: "You reached inside the box. You worked hard to take toys out of the box. You had fun playing with the ball."]*





## 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 box of toys and to remove toys from the box.



#### Key Concepts

Look  
Pull



#### Materials Needed

Box with small toys (see Be Prepared)



#### Also Promotes

Communication/Language  
Physical/Health

**Be Prepared:** This activity is for a mobile infant. Place in a box five different small toys that will appeal to the infant. One possibility is Excellerations® Sensory Surprise Box with 5 Shapes.

Sit or kneel several feet from a mobile infant. Softly call the infant's name and hold up the box of toys. Explain there are fun toys inside the box. Remove one toy from the box, say the name of the toy, and hold it steady for the infant to see. Return the toy to the box. Remind the infant there are other toys in the box.



Keep the box on the floor near you and within full view of the infant. Invite the infant to move toward you to get the box. Encourage the infant as he/she moves toward the box. Examples: "You are coming to get our box of toys!" "You are almost here!"

When the infant reaches the box, invite him/her to take the toys out of the box. Describe the infant's actions and say the names of toys removed from the box. Examples: "You are looking inside our box. You are smiling." "You pulled a red ball from our box."

Enthusiastically acknowledge the infant's persistence in reaching the box and taking toys from the box. Example: "You crawled to get the box of toys. You looked at all of the toys inside the box. You pulled out a ball and a ring to play with."

### 👁️ What to Look For—Options 1–2

Removing objects from containers is generally enjoyable to infants and is a part of other ELM activity plans. The current activity emphasizes persistence in removing items (Options 1 and 2) and in getting the box (Option 2).

Infants are likely to differ in how they approach the task of removing toys from the box. Some infants may prefer to remove only toys of interest. If this occurs, offer gentle encouragement to remove all toys from the box, but positively accept an infant's decision to leave some toys in the box. If an infant dumps the box of toys on the floor, encourage him/her to make a line or small group of the toys by moving each with his/her hand or arm. Name each toy the infant moves.

See the Extra Support tips for ways to encourage the infant to remove toys, especially if there are distractions from the task. In some circumstances, you



may wish to become a partner with the infant in looking at and maybe removing some toys. Examples: "Let's look in the box together. I see a ball! Do you want to reach in and get the ball?" "Look, I pulled this ball from our box. What would you like to pull from our box?"

### More Scaffolding Tips—Options 1–2

**Extra support** ■ If the infant seems initially reluctant to remove a toy from the box, pull one toy from the box and give it to the infant. Encourage the infant to remove others. ■ Place fewer toys in the box for the infant to remove. ■ Join the infant in looking inside the box together if you anticipate the infant is about to lose interest. Describe what you see in the box and encourage the infant to remove toys.

**Enrichment** ■ Invite the infant to place the toys back into the box.



#### Interest Area

**Materials Needed:** medium-sized, open cardboard box; assortment of familiar, small toys

Extend the activity options by placing several familiar toys in a cardboard box. During floor time, invite one or several infants to look into the box. Encourage the infants to reach inside and pull out toys of their choice. Describe the infants' actions as they explore the toys. Some infants may enjoy putting the toys back in the box. Talk with infants about their discoveries.



#### Family Child Care

**Materials Needed:** variety of toys in baskets, bins, or boxes

Invite older infants and toddlers to practice dumping and filling containers with a variety of toys. Older children can dump toys to play with and then return toys to the container when they are done. Describe children's actions and encourage children to look at what their peers are doing.



## Birth–12 Months

### Option 1 Informal Gathering



#### Skill and Goal

##### Social interaction skills

Two infants engage in a similar play activity, with guided opportunities to notice what the other is doing.



#### Key Concepts

Play  
Bed



#### Materials Needed

2 similar or identical dolls  
2 baskets (see Be Prepared)  
2 small blankets



#### Also Promotes

Communication/Language  
Physical/Health

**Be Prepared:** The size of the each basket should accommodate a baby doll, so the basket can serve as a pretend bed. Place a blanket in the bottom of a basket.

Invite two infants to play with the baby dolls. Give each infant a box with a blanket inside and a doll. Present the box with blanket and the doll separately, so the infant can put the doll in the basket if he/she wishes. Explain that the baskets are pretend beds and it is time for the doll babies to go to sleep. Give time for the infants to figure out what to do with the materials.

If appropriate, offer prompts that may help infants pursue the bedtime theme.  
Example:

“Jada, you are putting your baby in the basket. I think your baby is going to sleep! Would you like to cover your baby with the blanket?”

Positively acknowledge an infant’s attention to the other infant. Example:  
“Jada, you are watching Samuel put his baby in the basket. I think Samuel’s baby is going to sleep.” Conclude the play activity by briefly describing what each infant did.



## Birth–12 Months

### Option 2 Informal Gathering



#### Skill and Goal

##### Social interaction skills

Two older infants play alongside each other using shared materials, with guided opportunities to notice what the other is doing.



#### Key Concepts

Play  
People



#### Materials Needed

4–6 people figures  
3 boxes (shoe or tissue box size)  
Large fabric or felt pieces



#### Also Promotes

Communication/Language  
Physical/Health

**Be Prepared:** Arrange the play materials on the floor or on a low table. Create interest in the materials by placing 1–2 figures inside a box, on top of a box, and/or in a box turned on its side. Place the fabric/felt pieces over and under several of the people figures.

Invite two infants to play with the people figures. Introduce the materials and encourage each infant to play with items of interest as he/she wishes.

As the infants engage in parallel play, encourage awareness of what the other is doing. Example: “Neveah is putting all of her people in a box. See the box with the people inside? I wonder what the people are doing.” Also, acknowledge instances of one infant paying attention to the other infant. Example: “Neveah, you are watching Rodrigo play. He is putting a piece of felt over his people. Maybe you would like a piece of felt for your people, too!” Conclude the play period by describing what each infant did. Point to items you describe.

#### What to Look For—Options 1–2

Your main role in both activity options is to encourage infants to notice what the other is doing without distracting infants from exploring interesting materials in their own ways. This occurs best when you can recognize an infant’s attention to his/her peer. You may see an infant watching or imitating a peer’s actions with the materials. Paying attention to the actions of another infant may not occur naturally among some infants, especially when an infant’s own exploration of materials is of strong interest.

Most infants are new to pretend play and will likely appreciate hints from you on what to do with the materials. Use gestures and demonstrations to complement your words. Be careful to avoid prescribing what to do with the materials.

Option 1 gives each infant the same materials and introduces a bedtime theme but is not intended to describe how to play bedtime. Option 2 provides a set of materials for the two infants to share, but the play is not expected to be jointly pursued. In both options, the use of similar materials enhances the likelihood of noticing what a peer is doing.

#### More Scaffolding Tips—Options 1–2

**Extra support** ■ In Option 2, ensure each infant has access to some of the shared materials without deciding what an infant should play with.

**Enrichment** ■ Offer play-related accessories, such as bottles.





### Interest Area

**Materials Needed:** several strips of contact paper

Contact paper is a good material to use to promote infants' attention to others' play activities because it is a novel item. Provide different opportunities for infants to explore the stickiness of contact paper. Place paper on the floor (sticky side up) for young infants to touch during tummy time. Longer strips on the floor can be enjoyed by mobile infants by walking and crawling across the sticky surface. Contact paper on the wall can be discovered by sitting and mobile infants. Encourage infants to notice actions of one another as they explore the sticky paper.



### Family Child Care

**Materials Needed:** 2 dollhouses (or cardboard boxes in place of dollhouses); age-appropriate people figures; additional play materials, such as fabric/felt pieces, animal figures, or cars

Pretend play with people figures and houses can be enjoyed by children of all ages. Create two dollhouse play areas, one for older infants and toddlers, and one for preschool-age children. Adding new play materials to the doll houses over time can enhance children's play. Encourage and reinforce positive interactions between peers as they explore the play materials.



## Birth–12 Months

### Option 1 One-to-One



#### Skill and Goal

##### Gross motor development

An older infant moves on mats of two different textures.



#### Key Concepts

Crawl  
Soft  
Bumpy



#### Materials Needed

2 mats of different textures (see Be Prepared)  
Several small infant toys



#### Also Promotes

Cognitive  
Communication/Language



#### Optional Reading

*Tickle Peter Rabbit* by Beatrix Potter  
*Pat the Bunny* by Dorothy Kunhardt  
*First Words (Baby Touch and Feel)* by DK Publishing  
*On the Farm (Bright Baby Touch and Feel)* by Roger Priddy

**Be Prepared:** This activity is for an infant who can creep, crawl, or walk. Prepare a multi-surfaced play area by placing two different mats on the floor side by side. Put several toys near the edges and two toys in the center of each textured mat. Possibilities for two mats of different textures include: a braided rug; an infant play mat with waffle texture; a soft, bumpy infant bath mat; and a small area rug with unique textures.

**BEGIN:** *[Invite an infant to join you at the textured mats. Describe the play area, including toys. Example: "This soft mat is a fun place to play. I put a toy doggy here for my friends." Sit on the floor facing the infant.]*

**EXPLAIN:** Here is a place you may crawl. The mats feel different. This mat is bumpy and soft.

*[Point to each mat as you talk about it.]*

There are (names of toys) on the mats if you would like to get one.

**ACT:** *[Enthusiastically describe an infant's actions and the mat texture. Example: "Isaiah, you are crawling on the bumpy mat to reach the puppy dog."]*

*You may wish to manipulate a toy slightly to draw attention to it. Example: animate the toy dog. "Doggy is saying 'woof.' Please come play with me. 'Woof, woof!'"*

*If an infant does not crawl onto the mat, place your hand on one mat or rug, describe how it feels, and invite the infant to feel the texture. Example: "Our rug is smooth. It has wooly patches. Would you like to feel this rug with your hand?"*

*It is not necessary to coax an infant onto a mat. Acknowledge the infant's choice. Example: "I see you looking at the (name of toy). I think you do not want to crawl on the mat. That is okay."*

*An infant may change his/her crawling or creeping style while*





## **Option 1 continued**

*moving on the mats. An infant may enjoy sitting on the mats to play with a toy. Support the infant's interests and actions.*

*Acknowledge an infant's efforts to try something new.]*

**RECAP:** *[Offer a brief summary of the infant's actions during the activity. Example: "You crawled a long way on your hands and knees to get the doggy. You crawled on the tile floor and on the soft bumpy mat. You got up on your toes and hands on the mat."]*



## Birth–12 Months

### Option 2 Informal Gathering



#### Skill and Goal

##### Gross motor development

Older infants adapt motor movements to different textures.



#### Key Concepts

Crawl  
Walk  
Feel



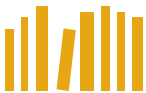
#### Materials Needed

4 textured mats/rugs (see Be Prepared)



#### Also Promotes

Cognitive  
Communication/Language



#### Optional Reading

*Tickle Peter Rabbit* by Beatrix Potter

*Pat the Bunny* by Dorothy Kunhardt

*First Words (Baby Touch and Feel)* by DK Publishing

*On the Farm (Bright Baby Touch and Feel)* by Roger Priddy

**Be Prepared:** Arrange different mats and rugs end to end to make a road for infants in an open area where walking infants will not encounter barriers. Mat possibilities include: a braided rug; an infant play mat with waffle texture; a soft, bumpy infant bathmat; and a small area rug with unique textures.

Invite walking infants to an informal gathering near the mats. Greet each infant by name. Show the mats and talk about how each mat feels different. Kneel at the beginning of the “texture road” and encourage infants to crawl to the opposite end. Describe textures the infants can feel with their hands. Next, encourage infants to walk over the textured mats or rugs. Offer an infant your hand for extra support. Describe the sensation of walking on each mat. Example: “Our feet go down into the soft mat.” On another day, fold over a play mat to create a double thickness. Encourage infants to crawl over the folded mat.

### 👁️ What to Look For—Options 1–2

Imagine walking without shoes on different surfaces, such as dry beach sand, tall grass, or a tiled floor. Without thinking, you would adapt your steps to accommodate the surface. Even with your eyes closed, you would be aware of differences between sand, grass, and tile because of your sensory perception. Sensory learning is central to all areas of infant development. Touch helps infants learn new ideas and concepts.

Most infants will be curious about the new play arrangement. Some infants may be very interested in being on the textured mats and naturally make accommodations to the mat. Example: On a soft mat you may see an infant balance weight on feet and hands, as if walking like a bear. Other infants may want to pursue their curiosity by observing. The toys provide a reason to get on and stay on a mat, although an infant may carry a toy off the mat. An Extra Support tip suggests that you move a desired toy to the edge of a mat for an infant who seems reluctant to get on a mat.

Several infants may want to get on the mats at the same time. Adjust the activity so you can talk with each infant, one at a time.

### 📊 More Scaffolding Tips—Options 1–2

**Extra support** ■ In Option 1, move a desired toy to the edge of the mat for an infant who seems reluctant to get on a mat ■ Offer one texture mat at a time. After several days, combine them in a multi-textured area. ■ Introduce small textured items for infants to feel with their hands and feet. ■ Crawl alongside a crawling infant or walk alongside a walking infant. Offer positive comments and friendly facial expressions.



**Enrichment** ■ Place an infant play mat on the grass outdoors with several toys on the grass. Encourage infants to crawl from the grass to the mat. ■ Vary the height of one texture mat by placing it over a rug or low cushion. ■ Use a textured mat for book-sharing time.



### Interest Area

**Materials Needed:** texture toys and items including bears and balls, basket, and books with textures

The sense of touch is key to infant learning. Provide similar toys with different textures to emphasize texture differences. An infant who holds a stacking ring and is then offered a cloth ring will sense a difference between the toys. Explain as the infant mouths or manipulates the toy, "Our ring is soft. Our other ring is smooth."

Display books with textures. Encourage infants to touch as you turn the pages and describe each picture. During play and care routines, highlight the feel of play materials, bibs, jackets, and other tactile objects the infants experience. Emphasize words that describe textures, such as bumpy, silky, smooth, soft, and fuzzy. Everyday experiences can provide infants opportunities to learn through senses.

Items that are ordinary to adults are new and interesting to infants. Combine play materials in new ways to create interesting experiences for infants. Example: Place texture bears and texture balls in a basket or bin.

A small brown house icon with a chimney, positioned to the left of the text "Family Child Care".

### Family Child Care

**Materials Needed:** texture mats, items of different textures, cloth bag, ribbon scraps, different kinds of paper, seeds, buttons, and leaves, heavy paper, glue, touch and feel books—*Tickle Peter Rabbit* by Beatrix Potter, *Pat the Bunny* by Dorothy Kunhardt, *First Words (Baby Touch and Feel)* by DK Publishing, *On the Farm (Bright Baby Touch and Feel)* by Roger Priddy

Toddlers may enjoy walking with bare feet on the texture mats. Use textured rugs to define play spaces for animal figures. Preschool-age children will be interested in identifying items by how they feel. Gather related items with different textures and place them in a cloth bag. Help children take turns reaching into the bag. Depending upon your location, a “fall feely bag” might contain: apple, leaf, pine cone, and acorn. Use items that are familiar to most children. Other bags could contain: a small book, tiny ball, toy car, and a marker. Older children will enjoy making feeling bags with play materials they select themselves.

A texture collage is a fun project for preschool-age and older children. Collect ribbon scraps, different kinds of paper, seeds, buttons, and leaves. Once you begin to gather collage items you will be surprised how many everyday items can be used! Provide heavy paper and glue in an area away from infants.

Create a special arrangement with touch and feel types of books, such as those listed in Materials Needed. You might consider putting the texture books on the sofa after rest time. Sit and look at pictures in the books. Encourage pointing and touching.