

Infants

Physical Development

Standards:

- **Gross motor skills**
- **Fine motor skills**
- **Self-help skills**
- **Health and safety skills**





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Infants

Gross motor skills

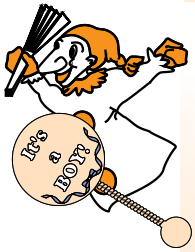
Gain control of head and body as they:

- Turn head from one side to the other
- Roll over
- Lift head and chest when lying on stomach
- Sit up

Demonstrate beginning coordination and balance, often with support as they:

- Reach for an object
- Grab toes and pull toward face
- Scoot on stomach
- Crawl
- Pull up to a standing position
- Walk with support
- Walk a few steps without support

Activities and Strategies for Development



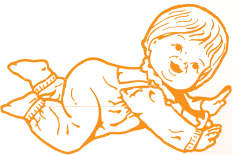
Side to Side

- Sit with an infant on a comfortable mat on the floor. Lay him on his back and put a toy that makes noise on the floor to the left side of his head.
- Shake the toy and see if the child turns his head toward it.
- As the baby watches, move the toy slowly to the right side. Repeat several times as the child moves his head from one side to the other. If he reaches for the toy, give it to him to hold.
- Talk to the child and describe what you are doing! "Watch the clown Nathaniel. It's moving to this side now."
- Turn the baby onto his stomach and try this again.

Special Needs Tip

If the baby has a visual or hearing impairment, use a musical toy with lights. The lights and sounds will help capture the baby's attention.

Tummy Time



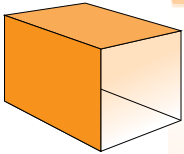
- Since safety requires that infants sleep on their backs, encourage them to spend supervised time on their stomachs for exercise. Here are a few ideas for "tummy time:"
 - Sit with one or two infants on a comfortable mat on the floor so they can see you. Put a colorful toy in front of their faces as they lie on their tummies. Lift up the toy slightly so they will have to rise up to see it better. Encourage them to push up with their arms.
 - Lie down on your stomach, facing the babies, and lift your head and talk to them as you encourage them to push up.
 - Try putting the infants on their tummies in front of a mirror. See if they will push up to see the babies in the mirror!
 - Prop up young babies on a "boppy" to support their head and chest.
 - Have the infants spend some "tummy time" on a mat outside in the sunshine where they can push up and see what's going on around them!
- Some children are uncomfortable on their tummies and might not want to stay in this position for long. Do not force it. Try again another time.

Up the Hill

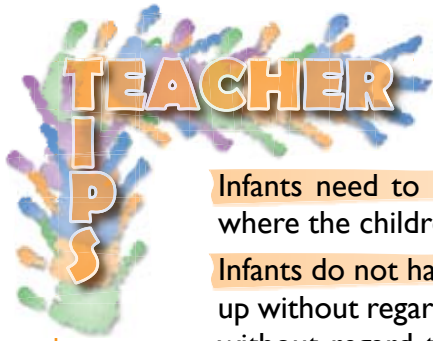


- Stack some firm cushions or pillows on a carpet or floor mat. (The cushions should be filled with solid foam or other firm substance so that a baby's face does not "sink" into them.) If you have a commercial soft play structure indoors, use that instead!
- As the children watch, put a popular toy at the top of the "hill." Sit next to the cushions and encourage the children to crawl up to get the toy. Be prepared to help anyone who needs assistance and to catch anyone who slides or rolls down.
- Show excitement when a child reaches the toy. Encourage her to crawl the rest of the way across the cushions, turn around and crawl back.
- Here's a variation for children who are just learning to crawl. Instead of stacking the cushions, put the toy on the far side of one low cushion and encourage the child to crawl over it to reach the toy.

Crawling in the Tunnel



- Get a box large enough for your infants to crawl through. Lay the box on its side, open both ends, and cut off the flaps or fold them firmly inside. Cover with attractive contact paper.
- When a baby crawls over to one end, sit at the other and encourage him to crawl to you. If he seems unsure about crawling inside, put a pull toy (with a string) inside and gradually pull the toy toward you. Talk to him as he's crawling to encourage him to keep going. Show excitement when he comes all the way through!
- Try crawling through the tunnel yourself to encourage the infants to follow!
- You can also use a commercially-made fabric tunnel. Some are made with clear fabric or "windows" so you can see in and the children can see out!



Infants need to move! Arrange your classroom so there are open spaces where the children can crawl without bumping into things.

Infants do not have a sense of height. They will crawl under furniture and sit up without regard to bumping their heads. They will also pull up on furniture without regard to what is above them. Choose and arrange furniture with this in mind.

Check the floors! Babies will put *anything* in their mouths, so pick up things that are not safe for chewing!

Infants do not understand “no.” Be sure unsafe things are out of their reach. As they get older, they will learn what they can and cannot touch.

Commercially-made soft play structures made of firm foam and covered with vinyl are very good for motor development. They come in different shapes and sizes and last a long time.

To help a child to sit up, put one or two “tubes” (the kind that are used in a swimming pool) around her.

Place your hands firmly against the soles of a baby’s feet so he can use them to push off for crawling.

To encourage crawling for a baby with a visual impairment, play a musical toy a short distance away. Encourage the baby to crawl to the sound.

To encourage crawling for a child with a hearing impairment, place a lighted toy a short distance away. Make gestures to encourage the baby to crawl to the light.

Roll a ball slowly for your infants to “chase” to practice crawling. Try this with a child who seems unsure about starting to crawl.

When your older infants are ready to walk with support, get some sturdy rolling toys for them to hold onto and push from a standing position. A sturdy child-sized shopping cart and a sturdy doll stroller are two examples.

When they are ready, infants will pull up on *everything*! Be sure the furniture in your classroom is sturdy enough to support the children. Check the furniture for sharp edges, too.

Have a place where your infants can play outside. Arrange outdoor time apart from the older children. For babies who are not crawling yet, put them on a mat or blanket with toys to explore.

Talk to the children about everything they do. They learn language while they’re moving, too!



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Infants

Fine motor skills

Gain control of hands and fingers
as they:

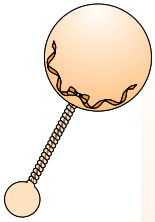
- Put fingers to mouth
- Bring a toy placed in their hand to their mouth
- Grasp an object, let go, and grasp again
- Transfer an object from one hand to the other
- Dump out objects from a container
- Reach out and feel an object

Begin to coordinate motions using eyes
and hands as they:

- Look at their fingers and hands
- Reach for an object and bring it to their mouth
- Hold a block in each hand and bang them together
- Crawl toward an object and pick it up
- Put a one-piece knob puzzle together

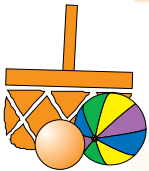
Activities and Strategies for Development

Shake, Rattle, and Roll



- Get a clean, soft, and flexible infant rattle made of terry cloth or plastic.
- Lay the infant on his back on a soft mat.
- Lean over the baby and gently shake the rattle so he sees the rattle and hears the sound.
- Say in a soothing voice, “Can you hear the pretty sound? Can you reach it? Yes, reach for the rattle!”
- As the baby responds and raises his arms, place the rattle in the center of either of his hands.
- When the infant grasps the rattle, you can let go.
- Continue to make eye contact with the baby and say, “Can you shake the rattle? Shake, shake, shake!”
- As the infant waves his arms, he will aim the rattle toward his face to explore it with his mouth too!
- Continue to talk with and respond to the baby as long as he wants to play with the rattle.

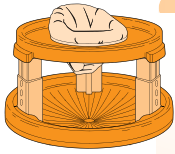
Having a Ball!



- Put out three balls of different sizes and textures along with a low basket or plastic tub.
- For example, use a large, smooth beach ball that the infant can roll or hold using her palms.
- Use another small, soft and spongy ball that the infant can grasp with one hand.
- Use another medium-sized ball that has a bumpy, textured surface that the infant can hold with both hands.
- Give the infant plenty of time to manipulate these balls with her fingers and hands.
- While the infant is watching, take one of the balls and toss it in the basket you have placed next to the infant.
- Observe to see if the infant follows your example and tosses one of the balls into the basket.

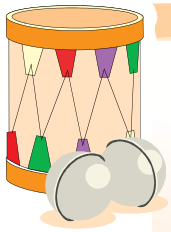
Special Needs Tip

For a child who does not sit independently, prop him in a supported sitting position to play with the balls. The different textures are excellent for tactile stimulation.



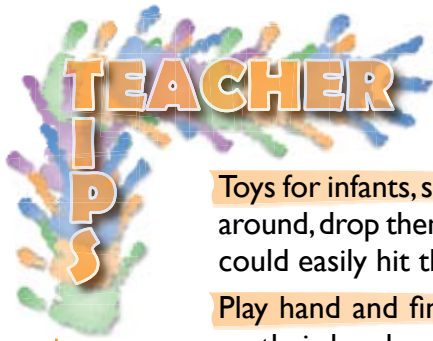
Finger Play

- Seat the infant in a “play saucer” that has a variety of built-in, multi-sensory toys for fine motor activities, such as spinning a tube to make colorful beads twirl around or pounding a pop-up toy.
- For mobile infants, place rattles, “busy boxes,” or stacking rings on a mat and encourage the infant to crawl to the toys and explore them with fingers and hands.
- Say to the infant, “Oh, look! Can you make the beads spin? Yes, you are spinning the tube with your hand. Do you see the beads moving? Can you hear their sound?”
- As the infant plays with various toys, talk with her about how her hands and fingers are making the different actions happen.



Crawl to the Sound

- Find a small hand drum or oatmeal box and a hand rattle with bells.
- Bring the instruments and sit down near an infant who is playing on a floor mat.
- Call the baby’s name and say, “Let’s play music! Can you hear my drum?” (Make soft taps on the drum.)
- Encourage the infant to crawl toward you and the sound.
- Invite him to hit the drum or oatmeal box to create a sound.
- Next, move your position on the mat and shake the bells.
- When you have the infant’s attention, coax him to crawl to the new sound.
- Invite him to pick up the hand rattle with bells and shake it.
- Say, “You are making music! You can hit the drum and shake the bells!”



Toys for infants, such as rattles, should be soft and pliable. They will wave them around, drop them, and put them in their mouth for teething and tasting. Infants could easily hit themselves (or others) in the face with a hard rattle.

Play hand and finger games like “Patty Cake, Patty Cake” that focus infants on their hand and finger movements. These games will help strengthen small muscles and coordination.

Select a variety of toys for infants to shake, bang, palm, grasp, dump, and pass between hands. Offering infants different toys will encourage them to use their hands and fingers in different ways.

Infants will place everything in their mouths as a way to explore, so extra care must be taken to ensure a safe, healthy, and hazard-free environment.

Infants with visual impairments can be included in activities that encourage them to use their other senses, such as hearing different sounds, feeling different textures, and using their hands and fingers. Similarly, babies with hearing impairments can be included in activities that encourage them to look at visual cues and use their sense of touch.



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Infants

Self-help skills

Begin to help with feeding as they:

- Move head toward bottle or breast for feeding
- Put hand on bottle
- Hold own bottle
- Feed self some finger foods
- Hold a spoon and try to feed self
- Start to drink from a training cup

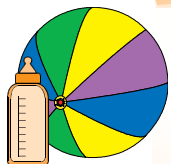
Begin to help with dressing as they:

- Pull off socks
- Raise arms to assist with sleeves
- Put on hat or cap
- Help take off jacket

Begin to help with personal hygiene as they:

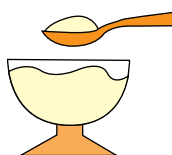
- Cry to communicate wet or soiled diaper

Activities and Strategies for Development



Cool Hands, Warm Milk

- Sit in a comfortable chair or rocker with an infant on your lap, tucked into the fold of your arm.
- Make sure the infant's hands are not pressed against her sides and she is free to move about.
- Hold a bright object, such as a ball, close to the infant's face to get her attention.
- Encourage her to lift her hands and reach for the ball.
- Let the baby grasp her fingers around the ball for a moment.
- Now, hold up the gently warmed bottle of formula. Smaller, short bottles are easier for babies to hold.
- Encourage the baby to reach for and grasp the warm bottle as you place it into her mouth.
- Say to the baby, "Are you hungry? Now it is time to eat. Here is your bottle. You can hold it too."
- As the baby holds on to the bottle and enjoys feeding, say, "I can feel the warm milk in my cool hands. Can you feel the warm milk too?"



More Pudding Please

- To help an infant feel successful with his first attempts at self-feeding with a spoon, use foods that will coat the spoon such as yogurt, thick applesauce, cottage cheese, or vanilla pudding.
- Fasten the infant securely in a high chair with a clean tray.
- Put some of the sticky food in a small bowl. Say, "We have a pudding snack today. Would you like to taste some pudding on the spoon?"
- Show the infant a plastic spoon.
- Dip the infant's spoon in the pudding and hand it to him.
- Encourage him to put the spoon in his mouth and taste.
- Say, "That pudding looks good. It went from your spoon to your mouth. Does the pudding taste smooth and sweet in your mouth? Look at how you are feeding yourself!"

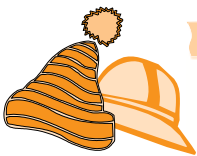


Goody Two Shoes

- After naptime, take the infant's shoes and hold them up in front of her.
- Talk about the color and type of shoe. For example, "Trina wore her yellow sandals with Big Bird."
- Encourage the baby to hold up one foot while you put a shoe on her foot. Say, "Yes, we put one shoe on one foot. Are we done? Where is the other shoe?"
- Let the infant pick up the other shoe and give it to you. Ask, "Where does this shoe go?"
- The infant should raise her other foot to show that the shoe goes there.
- Thank her for helping to put on her two shoes.

Special Needs Tip

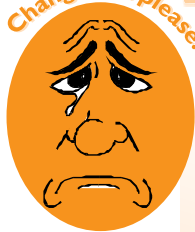
If the child cannot lift her feet, the teacher can do it for her and say, "Here's Trina's foot. Let's put your shoe on."



Hats for All Seasons

- Collect three or four different child-sized hats or caps such as a sun hat with a floppy brim, a cold-weather cap, and a rain hat that is slick to repel water.
- Get a small hand mirror.
- Sit on the floor next to a child and hold out one of the hats.
- Ask the infant, "Where does this hat go on our body? Can you show me? Yes, we wear hats on our head!"
- Say, "It's a sunny day and this hat will keep the sun out of your eyes. Look in the mirror at the sun hat on your head."
- Hold out the next hat and say for example, "Here's a warm hat to cover your head and ears. Can you put on this hat?"
- Let the infant take off one hat and put on the other.
- Each time, show the infant her reflection in the mirror with the different hat.

Change me, please!

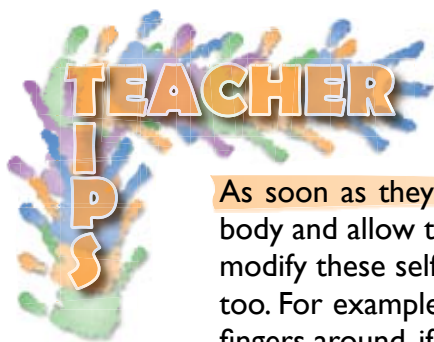


Change Me, Please!

- Observe each infant's facial expressions or cries of discomfort that let you know she needs a diaper change.
- Pick her up quickly and take her to the changing area.
- Follow all health guidelines for diaper changing.
- As you change the diaper, make eye contact and say for example, "You let Miss Maggie know that you had a dirty diaper. You made your face go like this (wrinkle your nose and make a frown), and you cried. Miss Maggie will help you get dry and clean again."
- Clean the changing area and dispose of the dirty diaper and other cleaning materials according to the health guidelines.

Special Needs Tip

This is a good time to move the legs of a child with weak or tight muscles. Talk with the parent or the child's physical therapist about how to do this.



As soon as they are ready, give your infants some control over their own body and allow them to help with eating, dressing, and hygiene. You can also modify these self-help tasks so that infants with a physical disability can help too. For example, use a training cup with handles that you place the infant's fingers around, if he cannot grasp around a cup.

Whenever you feed, dress, and change a baby's diaper, make eye contact and use simple words to talk about what you are doing. Say for example, "I will change your diaper, because it is wet. This wipe will feel good on your skin and clean you off. Now you are dry and ready to play!"

Encouraging very young children in "self-help" means extra messes and extra time. However, the clean up and patience required will pay off in positive skills and a sense of accomplishment for the infant.

Encourage parents to send their infant in clothing that slips on and off easily and is easy to clean.

Babies love to take off their own socks, booties, and hats. Once they learn how to do this, it becomes a game and a challenge for teachers to keep track of these items!

Fingers are best for infants to explore their first bite-sized foods! When they are ready to transition, especially when they see older infants eating, offer them a spoon and encourage any attempts to use it.



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Infants

Health and safety skills

Respond to verbal or physical signal of danger as they:

- Move away from potential danger with assistance, when given a verbal command. For example, a child backs away from a stove, with an adult's help, when told "hot!"

Activities and Strategies for Development

Safety Talk



SAFE!



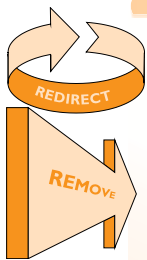
NOT SAFE

- Make it a habit to talk about safety even though your infants do not fully understand. Talk about things being “safe” or “not safe.” Here are a few examples:
 - When you see a child climb on a chair, talk about safety when you tell him “It is not safe to climb on a chair. Chairs are for sitting. You can climb on the climbing mats.”
 - When you take away a broken toy with a sharp edge, tell how sharp edges are “not safe.”
 - When you practice a fire drill, talk about getting everyone out of the building to “keep us safe.”
 - When you buckle babies into an infant seat, talk about “keeping you safe” as you do so.

Signal to Stop! (for an older infant)



- When you see an infant approaching something dangerous, move quickly in the child’s direction to stop her.
- Develop a signal such as clapping at the same time you say “Alia, stop!” Clapping and saying the child’s name should help get her attention and get her to pause to give you a moment to reach her.
- Pick her up and remove her quickly, but calmly, from the danger. Tell her in simple terms what the danger was. For example, say “It will hurt if you put your finger in the gate,” as you move her away.
- Be prepared to repeat this every time an infant faces danger. The purpose of a signal such as clapping and saying “stop” is to teach the meaning of “stop!” But do not expect an infant to stop without your help or to avoid the same danger in the near future. This takes repeated practice and careful supervision on your part.



Redirect or Remove! (for a younger infant)

- The youngest babies will not understand “stop” even if you clap and call their name.
- For these babies, try redirecting or removing the child or the danger. For a less serious danger, *redirect* the baby’s attention to something else. For example, if the baby is pulling his dirty shoe toward his mouth, give him a clean rattle instead. You can say “The shoe is dirty!” as you do so.
- If the danger is more serious you must physically *remove the child* from the situation. For example, if the baby is about to roll on top of another baby, pick him up and move him away. He will not be able to stop himself without your help. You can say “Let’s move over here so you don’t bump heads.”
- Sometimes you will need to *remove the danger* itself. If an infant is about to put a small object in his mouth, for example, you would take the object away immediately. A young baby will not be able to respond to your words if you tell him to stop. Replace the dangerous object with something safe. “Here’s a soft bunny to hold.”
- Any of the above situations require a teacher to watch very carefully to avoid accidents. Babies can move very quickly and have not learned how to make the connection between words and actions. You will have to physically “Redirect or Remove!”



Check licensing standards to be sure your classroom meets all safety requirements.

Children learn by watching adults. Model good safety habits.

Get on the floor and look around your room from the “point of view” of your babies. You may be surprised to see what the room looks like to them. Do you need to rearrange some things to make your room appealing and safe at the same time?

Watch the babies in your group to see what additional safety measures you should take. See what things they “get into” that need to be moved or limited for safety purposes.

Strike a balance between having *enough* toys out for the children to learn and play, but not *so many* that the room is cluttered. Crowded spaces can cause accidents.

Infants

Emotional and Social Development

Standards:

- Personal relationships with adults
- Personal relationships with peers
- Self-awareness





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Infants

Personal relationships with adults

Show attachment toward significant adults as they:

- Coo and smile at a familiar adult
- Look toward a familiar face or voice
- Reach out for a familiar person
- Kick legs excitedly when playing with someone familiar
- Look to a significant adult for help
- Crawl toward a significant adult

React differently toward familiar and unfamiliar adults as they:

- Stop crying when a familiar adult picks them up
- Cry when held by a stranger
- Cling to a familiar adult in the presence of unfamiliar people
- Resist going to an unfamiliar person
- Look around for reassurance that a familiar adult is nearby

Activities and Strategies for Development

A Familiar Face



- Place an infant in your lap facing you. Hold him firmly in your arms.
- Lean over and gently lift the infant closer so you are face to face.
- If the baby is beginning to pull up using his legs, lift him slowly holding his hands.
- Each time you move the baby toward you, make eye contact.
- Use a gentle voice and say for example, “Hello, Paulo! It is Miss Vicky. Can you see my eyes looking at you? Do you see my lips smiling at you? I am so happy to see you today!”
- Give the baby plenty of time to look closely at your face as you talk to him.
- If the baby reaches up to your face, hair or glasses, give a big smile and say, “Yes, it is Miss Vicky! You can see my eyes, and I can see you!”
- This works best with a familiar teacher. For a child who is new to your classroom, wait until he is familiar with you before getting up close.

Come To Me!



- For creeping and crawling infants, place the infant on the floor.
- Move to another part of the floor behind the infant.
- Call the infant’s name.
- When she turns her body around to see you, hold your arms open wide.
- Say with an eager expression, “Come to me!”
- Use your voice and facial expression to encourage the infant to crawl toward you.
- When she reaches you, pick her up and give her a big hug!

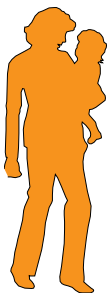
Special Needs Tip

For a child who cannot crawl to you, sit her in your lap side ways and say her name. When she turns to look at your face, make eye contact and give her a hug!



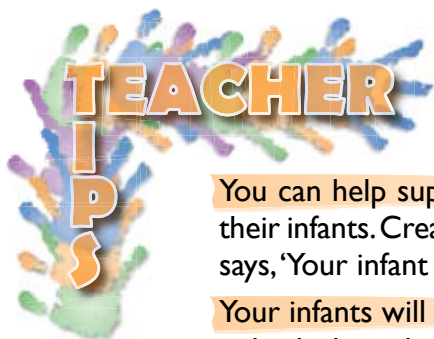
In Plain Sight

- Place an infant on the floor with a few toys that he can explore with his senses.
- Sit on the floor next to him and play with him for a few moments.
- For example, as he shakes the rattle say, “Listen to the rattle! You are making sounds as you shake and shake. Look at the pretty beads inside the rattle. They are moving all around!”
- Move out of the baby’s line of sight, but continue to talk to him, saying for example, “I’ll be right back while you play with the rattle.”
- Continue to talk to the baby while out of view for a few moments and then stop.
- Wait until the infant looks up and around as if searching for you.
- Say, “I’m nearby and will be back soon,” but do not go back to the baby.
- If the baby is not distressed, wait a bit longer and then walk back where the infant can see you in plain sight.
- As you practice this activity, the infant will learn that a familiar adult will come back even if they move out of view.



Howdy, Neighbor!

- Hold an infant on your hip and walk her to the building’s front office, kitchen, or someplace where the adults may be less familiar than the teacher.
- You can also use this strategy when a visitor comes to the classroom.
- As you say hello to an adult, encourage the child to wave.
- Hold your hand up and wave, and then wave the infant’s hand.
- Say for example, “Mr. Richard, we came to see what you are cooking today.”
- After a short conversation, say goodbye.
- Wave your hand again and encourage the infant to wave again too.
- Return to the classroom and say, “We went to visit Mr. Richard. When you see him you can wave hello and goodbye!”



You can help support the strong bond or attachment between parents and their infants. Create a “homelike,” welcoming, and reassuring environment that says, ‘Your infant will be well cared for here.’

Your infants will develop trust, love, and security when you respond to their individual needs consistently and lovingly.

Infants grow and develop more rapidly in the first year of life than at any other stage. However, no two infants are alike. They develop at their own pace and teachers must be able to plan for these differences throughout the day.

Use everyday routines such as feeding, dressing, and diaper changing to give each infant one-on-one personal attention. Talk and sing to each baby and enjoy finger plays and nursery rhymes with them.

Encourage your parents to have a “goodbye routine” with their infant, even if the baby seems not to notice when the parent leaves. Over time, this routine will help the infant feel more secure. They will learn that their parents will not disappear without warning.

“Stranger anxiety,” or reacting negatively to someone unfamiliar, is normal and actually a sign that an infant has formed a strong and positive attachment to more familiar adults. Be patient—it will take time for an infant to become comfortable with a new adult.

Comfort crying infants as soon as possible. Pick them up, rock them, and use words to express what the baby may be feeling. For example, “You feel sad because Mommy has to leave for work. Mommy will come back soon. Let’s go find a toy to play with.” Children who are comforted quickly develop trust that their needs will be met. Eventually, they cry less than children who must wait longer for attention.



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Infants

Personal relationships with peers

Show awareness of other children
as they:

- Smile and laugh in response to another child
- Look and reach toward another child
- Show excitement upon seeing other children
- Touch another child
- Play next to another child

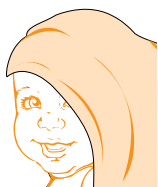
Show awareness of feelings displayed
by other children as they:

- Cry or laugh when another children is crying or laughing

Personal relationships
with peers

Activities and Strategies for Development

Peek-a-Boo, Where are You?



- Sit on a mat or carpet with two or three infants facing each other.
- Play peek-a-boo starting with you. Hold a small scarf or cloth in front of your face and say “Where is Ms. Ruthie?” Take the scarf down and say “Here I am. Peek-a-boo!”
- Take turns playing peek-a-boo with each baby. Hold the scarf in front of one of the baby’s faces and say “Where is Elena?” Take the scarf down and say “Here she is. Peek-a-boo!”
- Repeat with each baby, saying each of their names in turn. The game should call the babies’ attention to each other.
- Have a few extra small scarves for infants who want to take one and play peek-a-boo with it. Supervise carefully and put the scarves away when the game is over.

Let’s Make Music



- On a mat or carpet, set out a few simple musical instruments appropriate for infants. Look for maracas (or other shakers), tambourines, bells, and drums that are the right size and safe for infants to play.
- Sit on the mat and play one of the instruments.
- As children crawl over to you, help them choose instruments and try to play them.
- Each time another child joins the group, say the child’s name to help the children become aware of each other. “Here comes Riley to help us play music together.”
- Once the children are familiar with the instruments, set them out at other times when the infants can crawl over and play with them.



Hat Trick

- Sit on a mat or carpet with two or three infants. Have a silly hat for yourself and smaller hats for the infants.
- Put on your hat, laugh, and make a funny face to try to get one of the babies to laugh.
- When one baby begins to laugh, let her put a hat on her head if she wants to. Say “Look, Delilah is wearing a silly hat. How funny! Do you want a hat, Basil?” When Basil reaches for a hat, give him one. Some children may want to put the hat on and then take it off quickly. Others may want to hold it instead of putting it on their head, or just watch.
- Encourage laughter and continue to talk about what each child is doing. Help them notice each other.



Friendship Pool

- Outdoors, set out a small **empty** plastic swimming pool. Place a blanket on the bottom to keep it from getting too hot.
- Put a few toys in the pool between two infants who are facing each other. Be sure there are enough for each child to have toys of their own.
- Watch them play with the toys and watch each other.
- Describe what each child is doing to help them become aware of each other.
- Store the pool indoors so it does not get hot or damaged by the weather.



Find large pictures of infants' faces. Look for them in magazines, catalogs, and newspaper ads. Laminate and hang them where your children can see them. Choose pictures of children from a variety of cultures with different facial expressions.

Look at a board book of babies' faces with the children such as *Baby Faces* by DK Publishing or *Peek a Boo* or *Smile!* by Roberta Grobel Intrater. Name and describe the feelings shown by the babies in the book.

If you have a large unbreakable mirror in your room, put a mat or carpet in front of it. The infants will enjoy playing in front of the mirror where they can see themselves and each other.

Infants are easy to redirect. If you see a child getting frustrated, offer him something else to do that you know he will enjoy.

Do not expect infants to share. Have several of the same type of toy to avoid conflicts. If one child wants to play with the same toy as another, offer one of them a similar toy instead.

Infants play by themselves or next to one another rather than playing "together." Talk about what each is doing so they will become aware of each other.

Greet each child by name when they arrive and say goodbye when they leave. Encourage the other children to wave "hi" and "bye" to each other.



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Infants

Self-awareness

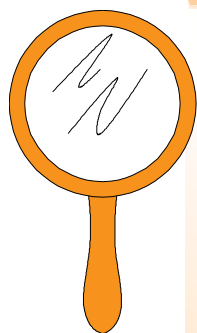
Show beginning sense of self as they:

- Use sounds, facial expressions, body movements, and gestures to tell what they want or don't want
- Make sounds when a familiar person calls their name
- Point to themselves in a mirror or photograph

Show beginning awareness of their abilities as they:

- Respond in a positive way, such as smiling, when they succeed at a task
- Respond in a positive way, such as smiling, when familiar adults show approval

Activities and Strategies for Development

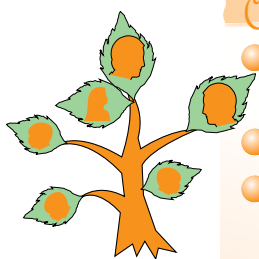


The Baby in the Mirror

- Place an unbreakable mirror where the babies can see their faces as you change diapers. You can also hand a baby a small unbreakable hand mirror to hold.
- When you lay the baby down, ask “Where is Kyra? Do you see Kyra?” Point to the baby in the mirror.
- As you change her diaper, continue to talk about her. “I see Kyra’s pretty eyes. Look, Kyra’s mouth is smiling.”
- Point to the baby in the mirror again and ask, “Can you point to Kyra in the mirror?” Older babies may be able to point but younger ones will just enjoy seeing themselves and begin to recognize “the baby in the mirror.”
- Hang unbreakable mirrors in other places in your room where the children can see themselves easily. Hang them at floor level.

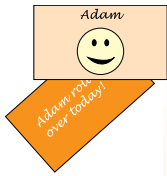
Language Tip

Learn how to say “eyes,” “nose,” and “mouth” in the home language of the children so you can use these words.



Our Class Family Tree

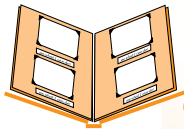
- Ask parents to bring in a recent photograph of their baby that shows the baby’s face clearly. (Or take your own photos of the children.)
- Collect photos of the teachers in your class too.
- Cut leaf shapes from green construction paper and tape a photo to each one. Laminate or cover with clear contact paper.
- Cut a tree trunk and branches from brown butcher paper.
- Use tape or “sticky tack” to hang the tree on the wall close to the floor. Hang it where the children will see it often.
- Attach the photos of the children to the lower branches and the teachers’ to the higher ones to make “Our Class Family Tree.”
- Point to the photos and say each child’s name. Ask the children to point to their own.



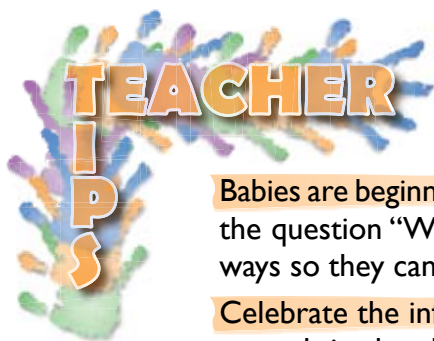
We Are Proud of You!

- Get a supply of self-sticking name tags. Stamp or draw a smiley face on each one. Write each child's name on several.
- When an infant achieves a new skill or does something "special," write it on a name tag and stick it on the back of the baby's shirt. Look for things parents would be proud to know such as:
 - Adam rolled over today!
 - Reese got up on her hands and knees!
 - Carlos pulled up in the crib!
 - Dorinda tried green beans!
 - Eric took a step holding Ms. Michele's hand!
- Many teachers give parents a daily written "report" telling them about their child's day. This includes information about diaper changes, eating and sleeping patterns, and other routines. Parents look forward to getting this feedback every day. The purpose of the name tags is different. The goal is to call special attention to new behaviors and encourage a sense of pride for parent and child.
- When parents pick up their child on days when one of these special events occur, be sure to show them the tag on their baby's back!

Look What We Can Do!



- Get a photo album with at least two pages for each child in your class. You will also need narrow labels (similar to those used on file folders). Write each child's name on two or three pages in the album.
- Throughout the year, take photographs of the children as they learn new skills and put them in the album.
- Put a label under each picture with a brief description of what the child is doing and the date. The descriptions can be similar to the examples in the activity above (**We Are Proud of You!**) with the date added.
- Show the children their photos and put the album where parents and visitors can look through it.
- The album will serve as an informal record of the skills your infants have learned throughout the year. You can share the album with next year's teachers or remove the pages and give them to parents at the end of the year!
- A variation of this activity is to make a separate photo album for each child in your class.



Babies are beginning to learn that they are separate from adults and to explore the question “Who am I?” They need adults to respond to them in positive ways so they can feel good about who they are and who they can become.

Celebrate the infants’ new skills. When you write name tags or take a photograph in the above activities, be sure to let the baby know she has done something special! Let her hear the excitement in your voice when you say “You crawled to get the stuffed turtle, Maria Elena!”

Infants look to adults for approval and reassurance. Smiles, claps, and words of support help them feel positive about their accomplishments.

Encourage the infants for *trying* to do things. “Aidan, you tried to put the ball in the bucket. Can you try again?” Infants need to try many times before mastering a new skill. When you see them getting frustrated with a task, break it down into smaller steps so they can be successful one step at a time.

Help parents understand that the process of trying is *as important* as succeeding at a task.

Encourage your infants to “stretch” their abilities. When they have mastered a skill, encourage them to try something a little more difficult.



Infants

Approaches to Learning

Standards:

- Learning approaches for development and school success





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Infants

Learning approaches for development and school success

*Begin to show curiosity by exploring
with the senses as they:*

- Watch interesting objects
- Turn head toward sounds
- Look at own hands and feet
- Explore a new object
- Feel different textures
- Try new sensory experiences
- Explore while playing
- Experiment with objects

Repeat actions as they:

- Continue to use, shake, or bat objects for a purpose
- Continue to kick objects for a purpose
- Entertain themselves with objects for a short period

Activities and Strategies for Development

Key Mobile



- Collect a bunch of old discarded keys.
- Soak keys in a solution of water and ammonia until they are shiny.
- Dry the keys thoroughly.
- Cut different lengths of white string or clear thread.
- Insert pieces of string or thread through the hole in the top of each key. Tie a secure knot.
- Tie the other end of each string to the bottom of a coat hanger.
- Arrange the strings so they hang in different lengths. Tape them in place so they do not slide together.
- Hang the shiny key mobile from the ceiling or under a high cabinet above the changing table. Hang it where the children can see, but not reach it.
- As you place the infant on the changing table, gently brush the mobile to make the shiny keys jingle.
- Say, "Look at the shiny keys. Do you see how they move? Listen to the sound they make."
- Observe to see if the infant uses her eyes to following the shiny, swinging keys.

Magic Carpet



- Get several large fabric scraps from the fabric store to create a 2x3 ft. carpet.
- Look for fake fur, corduroy, satin, flannel, chenille, and other fabrics with comfortable textures.
- Cut scraps into large squares and sew them together or use fabric tape on the back to attach the pieces.
- Lay the infant on the carpet on his stomach so that he can see the fabric pattern and feel the texture on his fingers, hands, arms and toes.
- After a few moments, lift the baby and move him to a different square so he can see patterns and feel different sensations, including bumpy, slick, smooth, and furry!
- If the infant is creeping, encourage him to move to another texture on his own and to rub it with his hands and fingers.

Special Needs Tip

Infants with vision impairments will benefit from this activity also. The varied textures will stimulate sensory awareness as the baby feels the different fabrics.



Dump and Fill

- Get a small plastic bucket and three or four beanbags.
- Check beanbags to make sure the seams are tight.
- Place the infant on the floor on his bottom.
- Take one of the beanbags and put it in the bucket.
- Hand the baby another beanbag. Say, "Can you put it in? Can you fill the bucket?"
- Take turns filling up the bucket with the beanbags.
- When the last beanbag goes in, turn the bucket over and dump the beanbags out.
- Say, "All gone!" as you show the baby the empty bucket.
- Let the infant practice repeating these simple actions, which illustrate cause and effect.

Special Needs Tip

For a child who is unable to sit without support, use firm pillows or a "boppy" to hold him in a sitting position.



Multi-sensory Cans

- Get three small containers with plastic lids such as yogurt cartons or round potato chip cans.
- Clean the cans and lids thoroughly.
- Cover the sides of the cans with contact paper, one can in red, one in blue, and the last in green.
- Put different materials in each can to make a sound when shaken. Try paper clips, stones, and pennies.
- Put a different scent on three cotton balls and place one in each can. Try oil of peppermint, lemon extract, or cinnamon.
- When filled, put the lid on and seal the can with glue or tape. Punch two small holes in the top to release the scent.
- Sit with the infant on the carpet and invite her to pick up one of the cans and explore it with her eyes, ears, and nose.
- Say, "You picked up the bright red can! Can you shake it? Listen to the sound! What else is special about the can? Can you put it to your nose? What do you smell? Does it smell like brother's candy?"



Use commercial or teacher-made toys that encourage the use of many senses at one time. An example is **Multi-Sensory Cans**. The more senses a child uses in a learning activity, the more likely he is to process the information.

Provide simple songs, games and toys that encourage an infant to repeat actions. Repetition strengthens brain cell connections and learning.

Infants see primary colors (red, blue, green) first. These colors draw their attention and excite them, while darker colors are more calming.

Adding new toys to the classroom will increase infants' curiosity to explore them. However, do not put too many toys out at once or the infant may become over-stimulated.

Brain development in young children is dependent on nutrition, a safe and caring environment, and frequent stimulation of the senses.

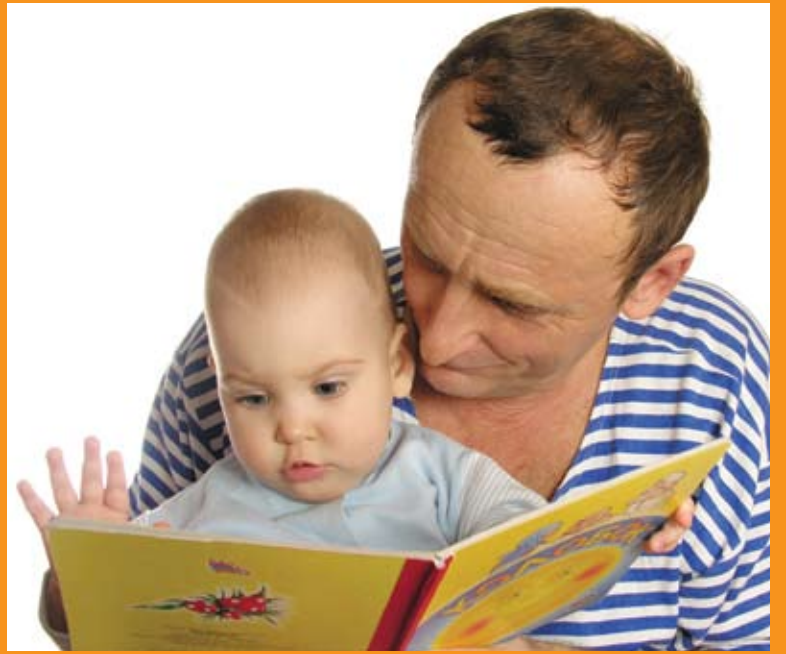


Infants

Language & Literacy Development

Standards:

- Understands spoken words (receptive language)
- Expresses thoughts with sounds, words, gestures (expressive language)
- Foundations for reading





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Infants

Understands spoken words (receptive language)

Respond to frequently spoken words
as they:

- Turn head toward a familiar voice
- Smile when their name is called
- Use actions to show understanding of words such as reaching for a bottle if asked “Are you hungry?” or waving when an adult says “Bye-bye.”

Follow simple directions and requests
as they:

- Respond to a simple one-step command, such as “Open wide for some yummy peas” or “Stop!” when approaching danger
- Respond to indirect requests such as crawling to get a book on the floor if asked, “Would you like to read a book with me?”
- Hand someone an object that is asked for, such as “May I see your teddy bear?”

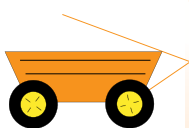
Understands spoken words
(receptive language)

Activities and Strategies for Development



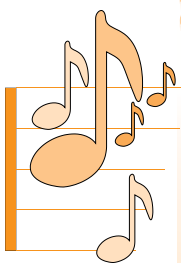
Talking Hand

- Find a friendly looking hand puppet that has eyes and a mouth.
- Sit on the floor in front of the baby.
- Put the puppet on your hand.
- Call the infant's name to get his attention.
- Say, for example, "Cooper, look who came to see you!"
- Make the puppet move around and change your voice, pretending to be the puppet.
- Have the puppet talk to the baby, "Hi, Cooper, can you wave hello? Can you give me a hug?"
- If the infant smiles and reaches, continue to play using the puppet, calling the baby's name often.



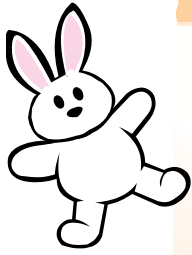
Welcome Wagon

- Put two older infants in a small wagon with high sides.
- Pull the wagon slowly around the classroom.
- Each time you come to another teacher or a parent, stop the wagon.
- Say to the adult, "Hello, Mr. Danny, we're going for a ride in our wagon. Bye-bye!"
- Tell the children in the wagon to wave "bye-bye" to Mr. Danny!



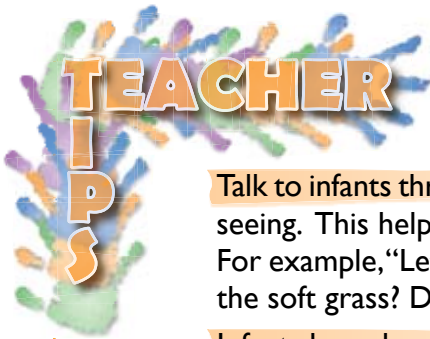
Rocking to the Music

- Put on one of the children's favorite CDs.
- Choose a recording with "follow along songs" such as *Baby Songs* and *Play Along Baby Songs* by Hap Palmer.
- As the infants hear the music, they are likely to respond with movement, rocking, or bouncing.
- When the song includes some action, like clap or pat your tummy, model how to respond to the words.
- Encourage the infants to participate in the movements. Help them clap their hands together if they are interested. Other infants may prefer just to watch.



Pat the Bunny

- Make your own little book that invites the infant to do simple actions like pat the bunny, find the baby, kiss the kitty, and blow the bubbles.
- Draw or find a picture of a bunny, a baby, a kitten, and a tub full of bubbles.
- Glue each picture to a small square of cardboard.
- Put clear contact paper over each board page.
- Punch holes in the corner of each page and attach with a metal ring. Find a ring that does not easily snap open, to avoid pinched fingers. You can also tie the pages together loosely with ribbon.
- Open the first page with the picture of the bunny. Say, “See the bunny? Can you pat the bunny?” Repeat for each picture with a different direction to follow.
- As a fun variation, put a small flat mirror under the clear contact paper on the page for the baby.
- When you ask the infant to “Find the baby,” she will be looking at her own reflection!



Talk to infants throughout the day about what you are doing and what they are seeing. This helps them connect meaning to the words they hear frequently. For example, “Let’s put on your jacket. It’s time to play outside.” “Can you feel the soft grass? Does it tickle your toes?”

Infants learn language as they listen to you. They will imitate the sounds they hear in their home and the school setting. Younger babies practice imitating those sounds by cooing and making vowel sounds (ooh, ah). Older infants distinguish sounds as words and make consonant sounds (bah, bah) that soon will become first words!

Give infants simple one-step directions or requests. Use gestures to add meaning. For example, point to the ball and say, “Can you bring that ball to me?”

Frequent ear infections can interfere with children’s ability to hear and discriminate sounds. Be sure to communicate with parents if there are concerns about an infant’s hearing and response to sounds and spoken words.

New research on the brain tells us that there are critical periods, or “windows of opportunity,” when developing certain skills are easiest. For example, the years from infancy through age 10 are when the brain is most receptive to learning a second language. If your child hears one language at home and another at school, he will be able to learn simple words or directions in his home language and in the second language.



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Infants

Expresses thoughts with sounds, words, and gestures (expressive language)

Use motions and gestures to begin to communicate nonverbally as they:

- Use physical signals to send a message such as reaching for something or raising arms to be lifted
- Use facial expressions to send a message

Use sounds to communicate as they:

- Use different cries when hungry or tired
- Babble
- Repeat sounds such as “da-da” and “ma-ma”
- Make sounds while pointing at something
- May say a few “words” family members can understand

Use sounds in social situations as they:

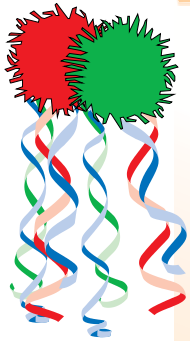
- Make sounds back and forth with an adult
- Make happy or unhappy sounds in response to another person’s actions

Begin to express self freely and creatively, using sounds as they:

- Repeat sounds that please them
- Make sounds and motions to music

Expresses thoughts with sounds, words, and gestures (expressive language)

Activities and Strategies for Development



Reach for It!

- Dangle a colorful object in front of a baby to see if he will reach for it. Choose one with bright colors like red, blue, and green. Here are two ideas for colorful objects that are easy to make:
 - Remove the label from an empty clear, plastic water bottle. Put red, blue, and green pompoms, beads, or buttons inside and seal the lid with hot glue.
 - Punch three holes around the edge of an empty tube from paper towels or toilet paper. Tie a red ribbon in one hole, a green one in the second, and a blue in the third to make “streamers.”
- Shake the pom-pom bottle or wave the streamers in front of a baby who is lying on a mat or sitting in an infant seat. See if he reaches for it. This is baby’s way to “tell” you that he finds it interesting. Let him touch or hold it to explore on his own.
- Talk to him as he reaches and explores. “Look at the pretty pompoms, Lucas. See how they move when I shake the bottle. Do you want to hold it?” Respond to any sounds the baby makes. Repeat his sounds and continue to describe what he is doing.

Reach and Teach



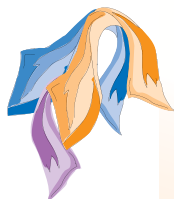
- Place two toys in front of each baby who is sitting or lying on a mat or carpet. Choose toys you know the babies enjoy. Place the toys where they will have to reach to pick them up.
- Watch and see which toy each baby chooses.
- Name the toy for the baby. “Sophie, you are pointing at the monkey. Do you want the monkey?” Move it closer to her if she needs help.
- If the baby makes sounds when she points or picks up the toy, continue to talk about it. “Yes, that’s the monkey. It has a long tail. Monkeys make a funny sound – hee, hee, hee.”

Ping Pong



- Play a game of verbal “Ping Pong” as you follow your daily routines, such as changing diapers, feeding, and rocking.
- When a baby makes a sound, imitate it and see if he will make another sound back. Repeat it again and see how many times you can make sounds back and forth.
- The “ping pong” game is likely to last longer when the baby makes the first sound. But if you have a quiet baby, try a sound you think he can make and see if he will join in the “ping pong” game.

Basket of Scarves



- Put small, colorful scarves or fabric scraps in a basket. Sheer fabric, like chiffon, works well.
- Sit on a mat or carpet with a few children and place the basket where they can reach or crawl over to it. Let them take the scarves from the basket to explore.
- Talk to them as they explore and encourage any sounds they make. “Your scarf has polka dots on it, Veronica. Mallory picked a pretty red one.”
- Play some quiet music with this activity and sway and wave the scarves.
- Put the basket of scarves out of the children’s reach when you are finished.
- A variation of this activity is to punch holes in small paper plates and tie lengths of ribbon through the holes. Choose ribbon with different textures. Hand one to each infant and encourage them to explore the textures of the ribbons and wave the plates to the music.



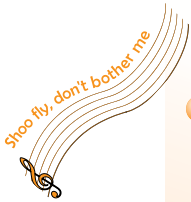
For Your Musical Pleasure

- Find a variety of children's music tapes or CDs. Music with a strong beat appeals to babies.
- Look for music such as *Kids in Motion* and other selections by Greg and Steve, songs by Ella Jenkins, the Laurie Berkner Band, Hap Palmer and the Putumayo Kids series, which presents songs from different cultures sung in different languages.
- Play the music for the children and watch them move! Clap to the beat and encourage them to join in.
- When you find music the babies respond to, play it often so they will become familiar with it.
- Sing along with the music and listen to hear if the babies try to "sing" too.

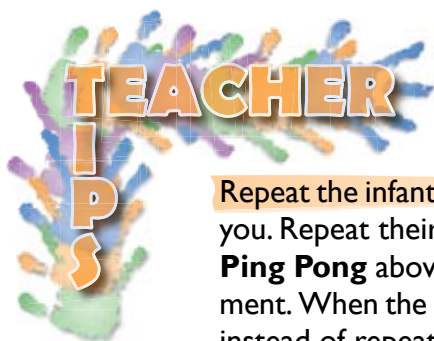
Cultural Tip

Ask parents to bring in children's music from their home culture.

Sing a Silly Song



- Singing is a way children learn words and the rhythm of language. Have fun singing to the infants and add hand motions when you can. Make up your own songs! Infants do not care whether you have a "good voice," so enjoy yourself!
- The same simple songs and finger plays have been popular for many, many years. Songs such as "The Itsy, Bitsy Spider," "The Wheels on the Bus," and "Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star" are a few.
- "Shoo fly" is another cute one. Here are the words and motions to one verse:
 - *Shoo fly, don't bother me* (Wave one hand as if swatting away a fly)
 - *Shoo fly, don't bother me* (Repeat hand motion)
 - *Shoo fly, don't bother me* (Repeat motion again)
 - *For I belong to somebody* (Put arms across chest to hug yourself)
 - Repeat if the infants are enjoying it!
- Encourage the infants to try the motions and "sing" along with you.



Repeat the infants' early sounds to encourage them to continue "talking" with you. Repeat their "oohs," "aahs," and other cooing and babbling sounds. (See **Ping Pong** above.) This kind of "baby talk" supports early language development. When the children begin to say words, however, say the words correctly instead of repeating them the way the baby does.

When you see your infants point to something they want, name the object and encourage them to make gestures or sounds. For example, say, "You are pointing at the ball, Annie. Do you want the ball?" The babies' facial expressions and body language will tell you if you have "guessed" right.

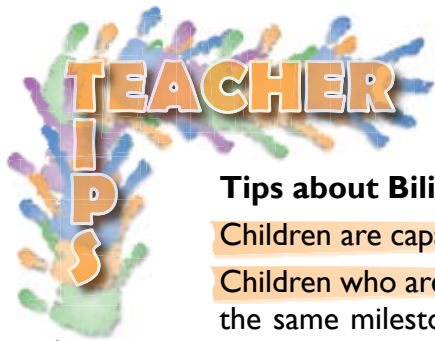
Talk, talk, talk! Surround your infants with meaningful language. Describe what they are doing, toys they are playing with, what they see, and what they hear. This helps them learn new words.

Talk with the children one at a time as much as possible. Get down on their level or pick them up and talk face-to-face. Talk to them during diapering, feeding, and other daily routines. Describe what you are doing and listen for them to "talk" back to you.

When the children show fear, anger, happiness, or other feelings, talk about how they feel. "Tommy, I can see you are angry because Roxanne took away your toy."

Use finger or hand puppets to encourage the infants to make sounds. Have the puppet talk to the baby and respond to her sounds.

Ask parents to donate telephones or cell phones that are no longer being used. Remove any wires or cords that might be dangerous. Put them where the children can reach them easily.



Tips about Bilingual Development

Children are capable of learning two or more languages in childhood.

Children who are exposed to two languages on a daily or weekly basis show the same milestones in language development at roughly the same ages as children who are exposed to one language.

Sometimes bilingual children know fewer words in one or both languages in comparison to children who learn one language. This is because their memory must store words in two languages rather than one.

Bilingual children learn words in each language from different people in different situations. For example, they may learn some words from parents at home and others from teachers at school. Therefore, they may know certain words in one language, but not in the other.

Mixing languages in sentences is natural and normal for bilingual children. This is because they may know some words in one language, but not the other. They may “borrow” words from one language to complete a sentence in the other. This tends to disappear by the time they enter elementary school.

Knowing the language of children’s parents and grandparents is important to their cultural identity.



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Infants

Foundations for reading

Begin to attend to stories as they:

- Smile when sitting in an adult's lap while a story is read to them
- Look at an adult who is telling a story with puppets

Explore books as objects as they:

- Look at the cover of a book
- Watch as another child or adult reads a picture book
- Explore a book by chewing on it
- Reach for a familiar book
- Open and close a book
- Try to turn the pages of a book

Become aware of pictures as they:

- Look at large, colorful pictures
- Begin to point to pictures in a cardboard, cloth, or vinyl book

Activities and Strategies for Development



Puppet Storyteller

- Use a hand puppet to tell the infants a short story. A puppet helps get the babies' attention.
- Sit where the children can see and hear you easily.
- You can tell a real story or make one up. Keep it simple and short.
- For example, let "Moo, the Cow" talk to the children. Moo could say, "Hi, my name is Moo. I am a cow and I live on a farm. I like to eat grass and make milk for you to drink. Let's see who is here today. Here's Callie. Hi, Callie. Here's Randall. Hi, Randall." When Moo finishes saying "hi" to the babies, she could say, "I hope you can come see me at the farm sometime. You could see my friends Horace the Horse and Penny the Pig too. I better get back to the farm now. Bye, bye!"
- Show the babies how to wave "bye, bye" to Moo.

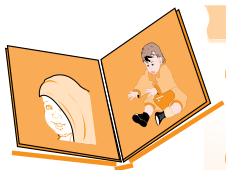


Books and Books

- Have two areas in your classroom where you keep books. One should be a basket or a low shelf where the infants can see the books and crawling babies can reach them. The other should be a box or closet for storing more books to be put on the shelf at a later time and other books for adults to read to the infants.
- The low shelf should be in a quiet, cozy area with a rug.
- Put a few books on the shelf at a time. Choose board, cloth, plastic, and other sturdy books with large pictures of children, animals, and familiar objects.
- Put an adult-sized chair in the area so you can hold a child in your lap to read.
- Change the books from time to time.

Special Needs Tip

Books with large pictures are good for infants, especially children with visual impairments.



Baby Faces

- Ask parents to give you a photograph of their child's face to be used in a class book. Or take photos of your own!
- Get a small photo album and put one child's photo on each page. Be sure to find an album with pages that are easy to turn.
- Put the album on a carpeted area and look through it with the infants. Point to their photos and say the name of each child. Let a child try to help turn the pages.
- Point to the eyes, nose, and mouth on the faces and name them also.
- Put the album with other books the babies can look at on their own.



Homemade Books

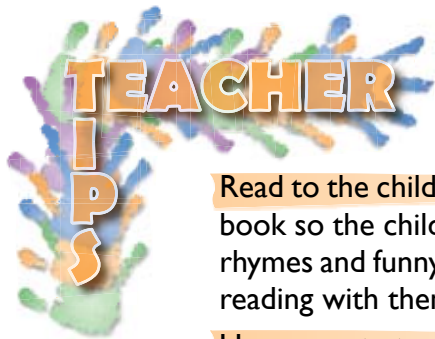
- Homemade books can be just as appealing to your infants as books you buy.
- Look through toy and school supply catalogs, colorful newspaper ads, and junk mail to find large pictures of familiar objects.
- Cut out the pictures and glue them onto pieces of cardboard five by eight inches. Glue one picture on each cardboard "page." Laminate or cover the pages with clear contact paper.
- Punch holes on the left side of each page and attach them together with round key rings. Look for key rings where you can slide the cards onto the ring. Avoid rings that easily snap open to avoid pinched fingers! Tie the pages together loosely with ribbon or a shoe lace if you do not have key rings.
- Make books with different themes such as animals, toys, and vehicles. Make a cover for each book with a picture and the book title.
- Look through the books with the infants and name each object. See if the infants can point to the pictures and try to turn the pages.
- A variation of this activity is to ask parents to bring in an empty food container of something their child likes to eat at home. Cut out the labels and make a book following the directions above. The babies will point to the familiar labels.
- Put the books on the book shelf for the babies to enjoy!

Dino
the
Dinosaur



Make it “Come Alive”

- Read to your infants every day. Choose books with animals, people, and real objects they will recognize.
- Find toys that match the objects in the book. If the book shows pictures of animals for example, gather plastic animals. If the book tells a story, gather toys that match the story.
- As you look through the book with the children, show them the real objects. When you finish looking through the book, let the infants hold the real objects.
- Put the books in a book basket or on a shelf where the infants can look at them on their own.



TEACHER

Read to the children daily. Read to a child in your lap, when possible. Hold the book so the children can see the pictures easily. With your voice, emphasize rhymes and funny words. Use a pleasant voice so the children know you enjoy reading with them. Stop reading when the children lose interest.

Use puppets to *tell stories* to the children instead of reading a book sometimes.

Have lots of books available for the children to “read.” Select sturdy books with large, colorful pictures. Look for books with rhyming words. Include books about people of different cultures and abilities.

When you find books that appeal to your infants, be prepared to read them over and over.

Model the joy of reading by sharing books that you enjoy.

Sing rhyming finger plays and songs with the children.

Encourage parents to read to their children every day. Make a sign for your parent board to remind them.

Infants

Cognitive Development

Standards:

- Foundations for math
- Foundations for science
- Foundations for social studies





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Infants

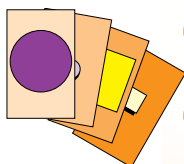
Foundations for math

Explore objects with different shapes and sizes as they:

- Look at colorful shapes around them such as objects hanging from a mobile or toys on a blanket
- Look at different size objects around them
- Swipe at hanging objects
- Play with objects of different shapes and sizes

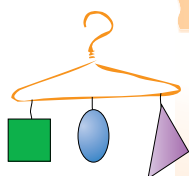
Activities and Strategies for Development

A “Feely” Shape Book



- Cut brightly colored cardboard or poster board into six pieces, each measuring about five by eight inches, to make pages for a book.
- Draw a large circle on the first card, a small circle on the second, a large square on the third, a small square on the fourth, a large triangle on the fifth, and a small triangle on the sixth.
- Cut the same size shapes from scraps of textured material such as sandpaper, furry fabric, corduroy, or terry cloth. Use the same material for the circles, a different one for the squares, and another for the triangles.
- Glue one shape on each page.
- Punch a hole at the top and bottom of the left side of each page.
- Attach the cards together by loosely tying a shoe lace through each set of holes. Make a double or triple knot.
- Help the children look through the book and feel each shape. Talk about the “big” and “little” circles, squares, and triangles, and how each one feels when you touch it.
- A variation of this activity is to cut large fabric shapes from textured material and put them in a paper bag. Let each infant pull out a shape or let one infant explore the whole bag!

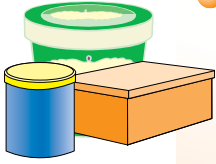
Dangling Shapes



- Make a shape mobile to hang above your changing area.
- Cut a circle, square, and triangle from different color sponges. Poke a hole through each shape and thread a piece of string through it.
- Tie the strings to a plastic or wire hanger. Hang the mobile above your changing area so the infants can see the shapes while you are changing diapers.
- Tap the mobile to make the shapes move, and talk about the shapes when the infants are looking at them.

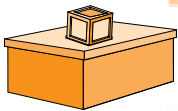


The Shape and Size of Things



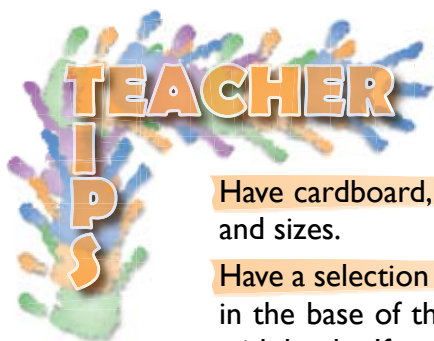
- Give the infants boxes and containers of different shapes and sizes to explore. Containers with loosely fitting lids are especially fun. Some examples include:
 - different size shoe boxes
 - baby wipe containers, rectangular and round
 - cardboard jewelry boxes
 - oatmeal cartons
 - plastic food storage containers
 - cartons from yogurt, sour cream, and cottage cheese
 - margarine tubs
- Provide a few containers at a time and watch the infants open and close them, stack them, and try to put one inside the other. Talk about the shapes and sizes as they play!

Shape Boxes



- Make shape boxes for your infants to begin to explore shape and size.
- Trace around a square wooden or cloth block on the lid of a shoe box. Cut out the shape with a sharp knife or blade. Cover the shoe box and lid with contact paper to make it more attractive.
- Give your infants a few square blocks and show them how to drop the blocks through the hole into the box. Then show them how to open the box, dump the blocks, and start again.
- At first, give the children blocks that are the same size and fit in the hole. When your children need a challenge, give them different size blocks and let them discover which ones fit.
- Follow the same procedure using a tennis ball instead of a block to make a circle shape box.

Note: The infants may just enjoy opening the box, putting the blocks in, and dumping them out. That's a good activity too!



Have cardboard, plastic, and cloth picture books that show different shapes and sizes.

Have a selection of puzzles with a few large pieces that have their own space in the base of the puzzle. These are called “inset puzzles.” Choose puzzles with knobs. If necessary, glue corks or empty thread spools on each piece to help children develop their small muscle skills.

Look for a floor gym with colorful shapes that hang down for the infants to look and swipe at.

Have blocks of different sizes and colors. Soft velour or cloth blocks are good for infants.

Make your own “hollow” blocks by covering shoe boxes and other cartons with construction or contact paper.

The infancy stage is a time for exploration. Do not try to “teach” shapes, sizes, colors, or numbers. Instead, provide plenty of hands-on experiences for babies to experiment and explore.



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Infants

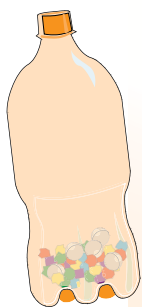
Foundations for science

Actively explore the environment
as they:

- Use their sight, hearing, touch, taste, and smell to discover and examine objects
- Experiment with different objects to see how they “work,” such as shaking a rattle to hear the sound or kicking toys on a floor gym to make them move

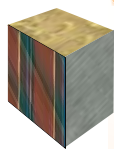
Activities and Strategies for Development

Shake, Rattle, and Roll



- Make “shakers” for the infants to explore.
- Gather several 16-ounce clear, plastic drink bottles and remove all labels. Choose bottles that are easy for the infants to hold. Put a different kind of colorful object inside each one such as:
 - bells
 - feathers
 - pompoms
 - beads
 - pebbles or gravel (the type used in a fish bowl)
 - water with beads
 - water with food coloring and small objects
 - water with vegetable oil, food coloring, and small objects (the oil and water will separate and the colors change)
- Use hot glue to fasten the lid securely.
- Show the infants how to shake the bottles to hear different sounds or watch the objects move. Show them how to roll the bottles on the ground and see and hear what happens. Crawling infants can push the bottles and “chase” them.

Texture Blocks



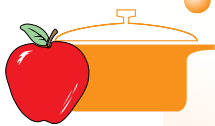
- Collect empty tissue boxes shaped like cubes.
- Cover each side of the boxes with a different textured material such as:
 - corduroy
 - terry cloth (from an old towel or wash cloth)
 - furry fabric
 - cotton fabric (from an old T-shirt)
 - fleece (from an old baby blanket)
 - textured wallpaper
- The infants will feel the different textures as they play with the blocks! Use words like “smooth,” “bumpy,” “furry,” and “soft” to describe the different materials.
- Discard and make new ones if the infants explore these with their mouths!

Note: Ask fabric and wallpaper stores to donate samples or “leftovers.”



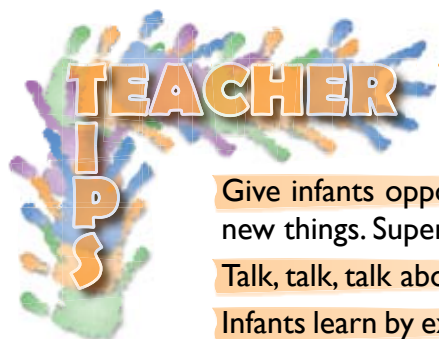
Nature's Wonders

- Take the infants outdoors to explore the natural world.
 - Examine a variety of “nature’s wonders” such as bird feathers, leaves, grass, pine cones, shells, and flowers. With your help, let the infants look at, touch, and smell as you talk about each item. No tasting, please!
 - Hang a birdfeeder with birdseed outside. Sit on a blanket with the infants, while you watch and listen for the birds to come for a snack. Watch for squirrels too.
 - Blow bubbles and watch the wind blow them up high. Use words like “floating,” “wind,” “high,” “low,” and “pop” to describe what is happening.
 - Tie streamers to a tree branch and watch them blow in the breeze.
 - Let the infants crawl on the grass and feel it with their hands, legs, and feet. Talk about the soft, green grass beneath them.



Applesauce

- Plan safe, simple cooking activities in your classroom so your infants can enjoy nutritious food and use their senses of smell and taste. For example, make applesauce:
 - Ask a parent to bring in a crock pot or slow cooker.
 - Ahead of time, peel and cut apples in slices, one apple for every two infants in your class. Put them in the cooker.
 - Add water to cover about one fourth of the apples. Add cinnamon if you wish. Set on high and cook for 3 to 4 hours. Put the crock pot in a safe place where the infants can see, but not reach it.
 - Start in the morning so you can enjoy the smell all day and have applesauce for an afternoon snack. Cool before serving.
 - Let the older infants try to eat the applesauce with a spoon.



Give infants opportunities to safely look at, listen to, smell, touch, and taste new things. Supervise them carefully as they explore.

Talk, talk, talk about everything the children see, hear, touch, taste, and smell.

Infants learn by exploring with their senses. Teachers should provide a variety of materials and watch to see what attracts the infants' attention. Let their interests guide you in selecting materials and activities.

Have board, cloth, and plastic books with large pictures and few words. Include books with realistic and colorful pictures and photographs.

Young children are curious about living creatures. They enjoy watching "bugs" and other creatures such as ants, snails, caterpillars, worms, butterflies, birds, and squirrels. Help them learn the names of what they see and hear

Have safe plants, such as vegetable plants, in your classroom. *(Be sure the plants are not harmful if eaten or cause rashes if touched.)*



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Infants

Foundations for social studies

Begin to recognize significant family and personal relationships as they:

- Smile when a family member picks them up
- Show discomfort with strangers
- Show pleasure when family members play with them
- Display comfort with regular caregivers

Activities and Strategies for Development



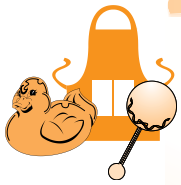
Daddies and Babies

- Select a book that shows an infant with her father such as *Baby Dance* by Ann Taylor. This is a board book in which an African-American father croons to his baby daughter and dances while holding her. *The Daddy Mountain* by Jules Feiffer is a cute story that tells about a little girl's step-by-step account of climbing all the way up on top of her daddy's head.
- Sit with an infant on your lap.
- Hold the baby up so she can easily see the pictures as you read.
- Point out the baby and the daddy on each page.
- Talk about the pictures. Say to the infant, "See the baby. Daddy is singing to the baby. Daddy is dancing with his baby."
- Send a note home or post a note on the parent board to remind fathers and grandfathers to read picture books to their babies.
- Invite dads and grandpas to read to the children in the classroom! (Moms and grandmas too!)



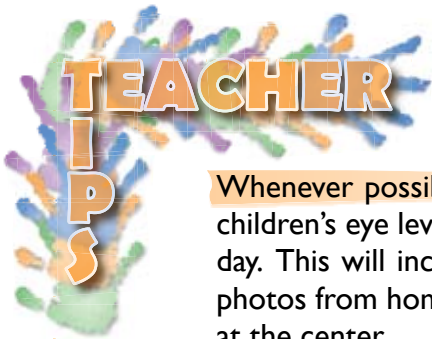
Baby, Oh Baby

- Look through baby and family magazines and cut out pictures of adults caring for a baby. Select pictures such as an adult holding a baby, reading to a baby, or bathing a baby. Laminate the pictures or cover them with clear contact paper.
- Be sure to select multicultural pictures that represent babies and adults of many races and cultures as well as those with disabilities.
- Hang the pictures in a row on the wall at the infants' eye level when they are sitting or crawling. Place the pictures near a non-breakable wall mirror, if available.
- Throughout the day, as older babies crawl to look at the pictures or when you sit with the younger infants on your lap, talk about the babies and their families in the pictures.
- Say for example, "Look at the baby smiling. She is happy. Her grandma is giving her a bath." "See, the big brother is holding the bottle for the baby."



Transition Apron

- Use a full-body apron with multiple pockets in the front, such as those worn by salespeople at a hardware store.
- Fill each pocket with a rattle, teething toy, squeeze ball, bottle of bubbles, or rubber animal.
- Use this apron prop to help a reluctant infant say goodbye to his parent.
- While the parent is still holding the baby, encourage the parent to say good-bye with a hug, kiss, or wave — whatever is the ritual.
- Greet the infant and show him your apron with many pockets.
- Say, “I have a special toy in my pocket. Come with me so we can see the surprise together!”
- Take the infant in your arms, say goodbye quickly to the parent and move to a chair where you can sit with the infant.
- Pull a toy out of one of the pockets (one you think will especially interest the baby).
- Say, “Here’s a new toy to play with. Look, you can squeeze this ball. Oh, what happened when you squeezed it? It made a sound!”
- Stay with the infant until he seems settled into the transition from home to center.



Whenever possible, display photos of the children and their families at the children’s eye level so that you can talk with the child about them during the day. This will increase the infant’s sense of security. If parents cannot bring photos from home, ask permission to take a photo of them with their infant at the center.

Get to know the significant adults in the child’s family. This may include grandparents and other relatives. Be sensitive to the fact that many families will be blended families, with stepparents and stepbrothers and stepsisters.

As a teacher, you are one of the most significant adults in the life of the infant. He will learn to trust you and feel comfortable with you if you provide him with consistent, warm, and nurturing care.

Learn the names of siblings and pets so you can talk with the child about them during the day.

Help infants and parents reduce the stress during transitions from home to the center. Give them a warm welcome and use different strategies to ease the infant into the classroom.