

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
- May walk a few steps without support

Activities and Strategies for Development



A Head Turner

- Sit with your baby on a comfortable blanket or 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 he watches, move the toy slowly to the right side. Repeat several times as your child moves his head from one side to the other. If he reaches for the toy, give it to him to hold.
- Talk to him and describe what you are doing! "Watch the clown, Nathaniel. It's moving to this side now."
- Turn him onto his stomach and try this again.

Special Needs Tip

If your baby is visually or hearing impaired, use a musical toy with lights. The lights and sounds will help capture his attention.

Tummy Exercises

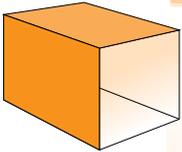


- Since safety requires that babies sleep on their backs, encourage your child to spend supervised time on her stomach for exercise. Here are a few ideas for "tummy time:"
 - Sit with your child on a comfortable blanket or mat on the floor so she can see you. Put a colorful toy in front of the baby's face as she lies on her tummy. Lift up the toy slightly so she will have to rise up to see it better. Encourage her to push up with her arms.
 - Lie down on your stomach facing your baby and lift your head and talk to her as you encourage her to push up.
 - Put a mirror in front of your baby while she is lying on her tummy. See if she will push up to see herself in the mirror!
 - Prop up your young baby on a "boppy" to support her head and chest.
 - Let your baby spend some "tummy time" on a mat outside in the sunshine where she can push up and see what's going on around her!
- Some children are uncomfortable on their tummies and might not want to stay in this position for long. Don't force it. Try again another time.



The Toy on the Hill

- Stack some firm cushions or pillows on a rug or carpet. (The cushions should be filled with solid foam or other firm substance so that your baby's face does not "sink" into them.)
- As your child watches, put a favorite toy at the top of the "hill." Sit next to the cushions and encourage her to crawl up to get the toy. Be prepared to help if she needs assistance and to catch her if she slides or rolls off the cushions.
- Show excitement when she 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 a child who is just learning to crawl. Instead of stacking the cushions, put the toy on the far side of one low cushion and encourage her to crawl over it to reach the toy.



A Trip Through the Tunnel

- Get a box large enough for your infant 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 if you wish.
- When your baby crawls over to one end, sit at the other end 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!
- You can also use a commercially-made fabric tunnel. Some are made with clear fabric or "windows" so you can see in and your child can see out!



Infants need to move! Once your child is crawling, “baby proof” an area in your home where she can crawl around without bumping into things.

Check the floors! Babies put *everything* in their mouths, so move things that are not safe for chewing!

Infants do not understand “no.” It is best to put unsafe things out of their reach. As they get older, they will learn what they can and cannot touch.

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.

Place your hands firmly against the soles of your 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 infant to “chase,” to practice crawling. Try this with a child who seems unsure about starting to crawl.

When they are ready, infants will pull up on *everything*! Move objects that will fall over if your child pulls up on them. Check furniture for sharp edges, too.

When your older infant is ready to walk with support, get a sturdy rolling toy he can hold onto and push from a standing position. A sturdy child-sized shopping cart and a sturdy doll stroller are two examples. Look for these at garage sales.

Find a place where your infant can play safely outside.

Talk to your child about everything she does. She will learn language while she’s moving too!



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Infants

Fine motor skills

Gain control of hands and fingers as they:

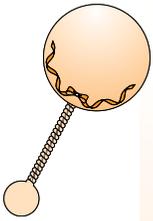
- Put fingers to mouth
- Bring a toy placed in their hand to their mouth
- Grasp an object, let go, and grasp again
- Transfer an object from one hand to the other
- Dump out objects from a container
- Reach out and feel an object

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

Hand to Mouth

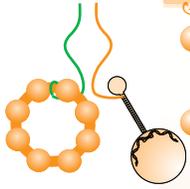


- Get a clean, soft and pliable infant rattle made of terry cloth or plastic.
- Lay your infant on his back on the bed or a soft floor mat.
- Lean over your baby and gently shake the rattle so she sees the rattle and hears the sound.
- Say in a soothing voice, “Can you hear the pretty sound? Can you reach it? Yes, reach for the rattle!”
- As your baby responds and raises her arms, place the rattle in the center of either of her hands.
- When she grasps the rattle, you can release it.
- Continue to make eye contact with your baby and say, “Can you shake the rattle? Shake, shake, and shake!”
- As she waves her arms with the rattle, she will aim the rattle toward her face to explore it with her mouth!
- Continue to talk with and respond to your baby as long as she wants to play with the rattle.
- If your infant turns her face away several times, she may be letting you know that she is over stimulated and needs a change of pace.

Dumping Allowed!



- Find a shoe box or other small lightweight container.
- Fill the box with cloth or vinyl soft blocks or rubber toys.
- Put it on the floor next to your infant.
- Observe to see if your baby turns over the box and dumps out the contents.
- If so, look into the empty box and say “All gone! Where are the toys?”
- As your infant picks up and touches the items he dumped, talk about each item.
- Say for example, “Here’s a red block,” or “Here’s the little pony.”
- Help your baby fill the box back up, because the fun is in the dumping!



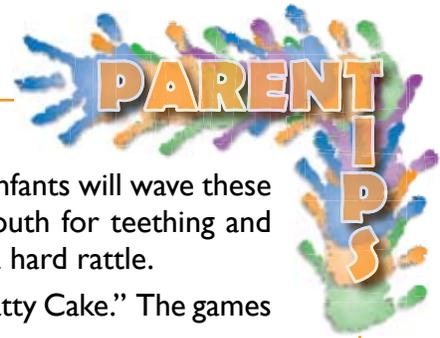
Busy Fingers

- Make your own “crib play gym” with colorful and interesting objects for your young infant. This is for babies who are not sitting up yet.
- Stretch a length of elastic across the crib where your baby will be able to see and reach it easily while lying on his back.
- Tightly knot the elastic on the slats on both sides of the crib.
- Use shower curtain hooks to hang soft, colorful items from the elastic, such as plastic linking chains, teething rings, and rattles.
- Lay your young infant on his back in the crib.
- Say to your baby, “Oh, look! Can you see the toys? See their bright colors! See how they jingle!”
- Encourage him to reach for the colorful objects.
- As he touches the toys, talk about how his hands and fingers are making the rattle shake, teething rings twirl, linking chains jiggle!
- For safety, always supervise this activity. Take the “play gym” down and put it back up when you are ready to play together again!



Let's Make Music!

- Make a drum from an empty oatmeal box with the top tightly sealed.
- Make “hand bells” by putting pennies inside an empty yogurt container with a plastic lid. Use “super glue” to put the lid on securely.
- Bring your home made “instruments” and sit across from your infant while she is playing on the floor.
- Call her name and say, “Let’s play music! Can you hear my drum?” (Make soft taps on the drum.)
- Encourage her to crawl toward you and the sound of the drum.
- Invite her to hit the drum to make a sound.
- Next, move to a different place on the floor and shake the “bells.” When you have your infant’s attention again, coax her to crawl to the new sound.
- Invite her to pick up the yogurt container and shake it to make a jingle.
- Say, “You are making music! You can hit the drum and shake the bells!”
- For safety, put the “bells” where your child can only use them when you are playing together.



Toys for your baby, such as rattles, should be soft and pliable. Infants will wave these hand-held toys around, drop them, and put them in their mouth for teething and tasting. Infants could easily hurt themselves (or others) with a hard rattle.

Enjoy hand and finger games with your baby like “Patty Cake, Patty Cake.” The games help infants focus on their hands and finger movements.

Give your baby a variety of toys to shake, bang, palm, grasp, dump and pass from one hand to another. Offering different toys will encourage your infant to use her hands and fingers in different ways. Remember, many plastic kitchen items like spoons, nesting cups and bowls, make a good substitute for store bought toys.

Infants who can crawl, reach, and grasp objects in their hands need the constant supervision of a caring adult. Watch your infant at all times to see what he is putting into his mouth.

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



Heads Up!

- Gently cradle your baby in the crook of your arm to prepare for feeding.
- Call his name quietly to get his attention and turn his face gently toward you.
- Hold up the bottle to his mouth or place the breast near his face.
- As your baby feeds, gently rub his cheek to create warm, loving contact as part of the feeding/nursing routine.
- Over time, watch as your infant turns his head toward the bottle or breast when he is ready for feeding and cuddle time.

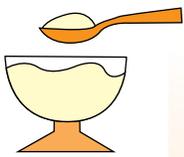


Slippery When Peeled

- At mealtime, secure your infant in a highchair with a clean tray.
- Place a bib around the baby's neck to catch all of the food that misses the mouth.
- Take an unpeeled softened banana and place it on the highchair tray.
- Invite her to touch the smooth peel. Say, "This is a banana. It is a good fruit."
- Hold it to her nose so that she can smell the mild scent.
- Say, "The sweet fruit is inside the peel. Let's pull back the banana peel and get some of the fruit."
- Show your infant how you take each side of the peel and pull it back.
- Pinch off a small piece of banana and place it on the tray.
- Encourage your baby to pick up the small piece and place it in her mouth to taste.
- Ask your child, "Do you like the sweet taste of banana?"
- If your child communicates that she likes the taste, pinch off several more small pieces for her to enjoy with her fingers.



Just a Spoonful



- To help your 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 or pudding.
- Put some of the sticky food in a small bowl.
- Show your baby a spoon designed for this age group.
- Dip your baby's spoon in the pudding and hand it to him.
- Take a spoonful of the pudding for yourself.
- Model how you raise the spoon to your mouth and place it inside, and then pull it out empty.
- Say, "Yum, this pudding tastes good. It went from my spoon into my mouth. Do you like the pudding? Look at how you are feeding yourself!"

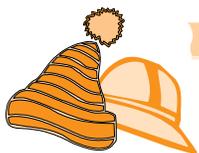
This little piggy!



Twinkle Toes

- As you undress your baby, gently lay him back on the crib or bed.
- Lift one of his legs gently, pull off his sock, and lightly tickle or blow on his foot and toes.
- Play "This little piggy went to market..." while you pull on each separate toe to tell the old nursery rhyme.
- Lift your baby's other leg and encourage him to pull off this sock so you can tickle these toes too!
- If he needs help, pull the sock halfway off and let him do the rest.

Note: The internet is a good resource for many nursery rhymes. Check www.nurseryrhymes4u.com for a list of common nursery rhymes and their lyrics.



Caps

- Collect three or four different infant-sized hats or caps, such as a sun hat with a floppy brim, a cold-weather cap, and a baseball cap.
- Get a small hand mirror.
- Sit on the floor next to your child and hold out one of the hats.
- Say, “Can you put on your sun hat? It’s a sunny day and the hat will keep the sun out of your eyes.”
- When your infant has raised the cap to her head, lift the mirror so she can see her reflection.
- Hold out the next cap and say for example, “Here’s a warm cap to cover your head and ears. Can you help put on this cap?”
- Let your child take off one cap and put on the other.
- Each time, show your infant her reflection in the mirror with the different cap.



As soon as your child is ready, allow him to help with eating, dressing, and hygiene. You can also modify these tasks so that babies with a physical disability can help. For example, use a training cup with handles that you place your baby’s fingers around, if he cannot grasp around a cup.

Whenever you feed, dress, bathe, and change your baby’s diaper, make eye contact and use simple words to talk about what you are doing. Say for example, “Mommy 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 in your infant.

Send your infant to school or family child care in clothing that slips on and off easily and allows easy diaper changing. Choose clothing that is easy to clean too.

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 parents to keep track of these items!

Fingers are best for infants to explore their first bite-sized foods! When they are ready for the transition, there are many specially designed eating utensils for infants, including spoons with easy grip handles and no-spill training cups with rubber grip bottoms. You can find these items at many stores selling baby products.



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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

Is It Safe?



SAFE!



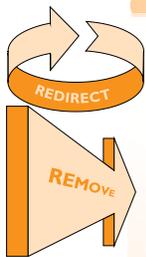
NOT SAFE

- Make it a habit to talk about safety even though your infant does not fully understand. Talk about things being “safe” or “not safe.” Here are a few examples:
 - When you see your child climb on a chair that is too big for him, talk about safety when you tell him “It is not safe to climb on that chair. Chairs are for sitting. You can climb on the cushions over here.”
 - When you take away a broken toy with a sharp edge, tell how sharp edges are “not safe.”
 - When you buckle your baby into her car seat, talk about “keeping you safe” as you do so. Tell her that you “buckle up for safety” too.
 - When you are out for a walk with your baby, talk about stopping at the corner to be sure it is safe to cross the street.

Stop for Safety! (for an older infant)



- When you see your infant approaching something dangerous, move quickly to stop her.
- Develop a signal, such as clapping at the same time you say “Alia, stop!” Clapping and saying her 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 close the cabinet on your finger,” as you move her away.
- Be prepared to repeat this every time she faces danger. The purpose of a signal such as clapping and saying “stop” is to teach the meaning of “stop!” Do not expect your 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.



Yucky Shoe! (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. If you see a less serious danger, *redirect* the baby’s attention to something else. For example, if he is pulling his dirty shoe toward his mouth, give him a clean rattle instead. You can say, “The shoe is yucky!” as you do so.
- If the danger is more serious you must physically *remove the child* from the situation. For example, if he is about to roll into the leg on a table and bump his head, you will need to move him away. He will not be able to stop himself without your help. You can say, “Let’s move over here so you do not bump your head.”
- Sometimes you will need to *remove the danger* itself. If he 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 parent to watch very carefully to avoid accidents. Babies can move very quickly and haven’t learned how to make the connection between words and actions. You will have to physically *Redirect or Remove!*



Lie down on the floor and look around the rooms where your infant spends a good deal of time. You may be surprised to see what the rooms look like to her. Do you need to rearrange some things for safety purposes?

Children learn by watching adults. Model good safety habits.

Think like an infant! Your favorite home decorations and furniture pieces may be too attractive for your baby to resist. Consider “child-proofing” the areas where you and your baby spend the most time.

Watch your baby to see what additional “child-proofing” safety measures you should take. See what things he “gets into” that need to be removed for safety purposes. When he is older you can begin to teach him what he can play with and what to leave alone. While he’s an infant, though, he will not understand these directions.

If you have Internet access, look for a “home safety checklist” through your search engine for ways to ensure safety in your home. One website is kidshealth.org/parent/firstaid_safe/home/household_checklist.html. Computers with Internet capability are available at the public library.

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

Personal relationships
with adults

Activities and Strategies for Development

Mutual Admiration



- Place your baby in your lap facing you with your arms firmly underneath him for support.
- Lean over and gently lift your infant closer to you—face to face.
- If your baby is beginning to pull up using his legs, lift him slowly while holding his hands.
- Each time you move the baby toward you, make eye contact and smile widely.
- Use a gentle voice and say for example, “Hello, Wynton! How is my baby today?”
- When your baby smiles, smile back and continue to talk to him.
- If your infant is beginning to coo or make soft blowing sounds, repeat the sounds he makes.
- Take turns listening to your infant’s sounds and then imitating them as though you are talking to each other.
- This activity of smiling and cooing together will strengthen your infant’s feelings of a secure attachment to you!

Crawl To Daddy!



- For creeping and crawling babies, place your baby on the floor.
- Move to another part of the floor behind the baby.
- Call your 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 her to crawl toward you.
- When she reaches you, pick her up and give her a big hug!
- Say, “You found Daddy! You are such a big girl to crawl to Daddy!”

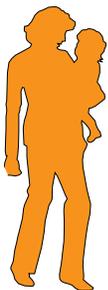
Special Needs Tip

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



Where Did She Go?

- Place an infant on the floor with a few toys that he can explore.
- 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 move 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 your baby while out of view for a few moments and then stop.
- Wait until he looks up and around as if searching for you.
- Say, “I’m nearby, and I will be back soon,” but do not go back to the baby.
- Unless your baby gets frightened, wait a bit longer and then walk back where he can see you in plain sight
- As you practice this activity, your infant will learn to feel more comfortable when you are out of sight because he can hear your voice and knows that you will come back.



Making New Friends

- Hold your baby when you go someplace with people she doesn’t know well.
- As you smile and say hello to a new friend or relative, encourage your infant to wave to the person. You want your child to know that the person she is about to meet is a friend.
- Hold your hand up and wave, and then wave your baby’s hand.
- Say for example, “Hi, Uncle Richard, we came to see you while you’re visiting at Grandma’s house. This is my baby Addison. Addison, can you wave ‘hi’ to Uncle Richard?”
- After the visit say goodbye and wave again.
- The next time you see Uncle Richard remind your infant that you met him at Grandma’s as you smile and wave.
- Use a similar approach when someone new comes to visit your home.



Building a strong bond and secure attachment between your infant and yourself (and his other primary caregivers) is one of the most important goals of infancy. Your baby will develop trust, love, and security when you respond to his needs consistently and lovingly.

Did you know that you will change your baby's diaper over 5,000 times (roughly 6 times a day until he is 30 months old)? That is why everyday routines such as feeding, dressing, and diaper changing provide such a great opportunity to give your infant one-on-one personal attention!

The more you talk to your baby (or sign and gesture to a baby with hearing impairments), the more she will learn and the better the two of you will bond. Listen to and imitate your baby's sounds. Sing to your baby and enjoy finger plays and nursery rhymes with them, such as "Peek-a-Boo," "Patty Cake, Patty Cake," and "This Little Piggy."

Have a "goodbye routine" with your infant even if she seems not to notice when you leave. Over time, this routine will help her feel more secure because she will know that you will not disappear without warning.

"Stranger anxiety," or reacting negatively to someone unfamiliar, is normal and a sign that your child has formed a strong and positive attachment to you. Be patient—it will take time for your baby to become comfortable with a visiting relative, friend, babysitter, or a new teacher.

Comfort your crying baby as soon as possible. Pick him up, rock him, and use words to express what your baby may be feeling. For example, "You felt sad when Mommy changed your diaper and put you on the rug. I had to wash my hands. Now I can give you your bottle."

Note: The internet is a good resource for many nursery rhymes. Check www.nurseryrhymes4u.com for a list of common nursery rhymes and their lyrics.



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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 child is crying or laughing

Personal relationships
with peers

Activities and Strategies for Development

Bubbles with Baby



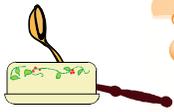
- Invite an older child to do something fun with your infant. Try letting the older child blow bubbles outside, for example.
- Sit the baby in a position where she can see the older child blowing bubbles for her.
- Encourage the older child to talk to the baby as she reaches for the bubbles. Crawling babies may try to “chase” and catch the bubbles. Watch as the infant and older child enjoy the activity together.
- Join in the laughter and excitement.

Note: Make inexpensive bubbles by adding a small amount of water to dishwashing soap. Let the older child dip a fly swatter in a pan of the soap and water. Wave the fly swatter to make lots of tiny bubbles!

Playing Peek-a-Boo



- Sit on a mat or rug with your child and another baby 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 Mommy?” 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!”
- Take turns saying the children’s names as you play peek-a-boo with them. The game should call the babies’ attention to each other.
- Have a few extra small scarves so the babies can take one and play peek-a-boo with it. Supervise carefully and put the scarves away when the game is over.
- A variation on this is to have an older child play the peek-a-boo game with your baby.



Baby Drums

- When another child is in your home, set out a few pots and pans, all turned upside down. Set out wooden or plastic spoons too.
- Show the children how to tap the “drums” with a spoon. When one of the babies shows interest, give him a spoon and watch for the other child to join him.
- Describe what each is doing. For example, “Look at Riley tapping the pot with his spoon. Kordie is tapping the pie pan with hers.” This will help them notice each other.
- Turn on a children’s music CD or tape and see if the children are interested to play their drums some more. Encourage them to move and clap to the music. Continue to describe what they are doing.



Face to Face

- When another young child is in your home, place a plastic swimming ring on a blanket outside. Find one that is large enough for two infants to sit in the middle or use a small plastic empty swimming pool. Put a blanket on the bottom to keep it from getting too hot.
- Put a few toys in the ring or pool with the children 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 ring or pool indoors so it does not get damaged by the weather.

Note: If outdoor space is limited at your home, try this activity indoors with the children and toys on a bath mat surrounded by firm pillows.



Look at a board book of babies' faces with your child 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.

When another child has come over to "play" with your child, let them sit in front of a large wall mirror. The infants will enjoy playing in front of the mirror where they can see themselves and each other.

Do not expect infants to share. When your child wants the same toy as another child, 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.

When children come to visit in your home, greet them by name when they arrive and say goodbye when they leave. Encourage your child to wave "hi" and "bye" to her friends.



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Infants

Self-awareness

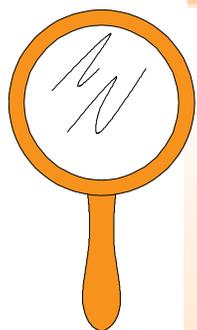
Show beginning sense of self as they:

- 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:

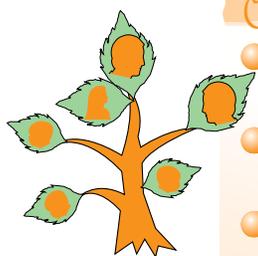
- Respond in a positive way, such as smiling, when they succeed at a task
- Respond in a positive way, such as smiling, when familiar adults show approval

Activities and Strategies for Development



Baby Face

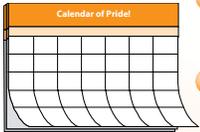
- Place an unbreakable mirror where your baby can see his face as you change his diapers.
- When you lay the baby down, ask “Where is Roman? Do you see Roman?” Point to the baby in the mirror.
- As you change his diaper, continue to talk about him. “I see Roman’s eyes. Look, Roman’s mouth is smiling.” Point to the baby in the mirror again and ask, “Can you point to Roman 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.”
- Place an unbreakable mirror in another place in your home where your baby can see himself easily. Hang it at floor level.



Our Family Tree

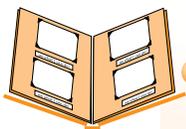
- Draw a tree trunk with branches on a piece of poster board. Don’t worry about how “artistic” it looks—your baby won’t know!
- Tape photographs of your baby and members of your family on the branches. Include pets and people who are familiar to your baby.
- Attach the photos of your child to the lower branches and the others to the higher ones to make “Our Family Tree.”
- Hang the tree close to the floor on a door, wall, or the refrigerator. Hang it where your child will see it often.
- Point to the photos and say the names. See if your child can point to any of them.

A Calendar of Pride



- Hang a calendar somewhere convenient and easy to see so you will remember to use it! Choose one with large daily squares.
- When your infant achieves a new skill or does something “special,” write it in the square on the date it happened. A few examples might be:
 - Joelly rolled over today!
 - Reese got up on her hands and knees!
 - Carlos pulled up in the crib!
 - Dorinda tried green beans!
 - Quincy took a step holding Grandma’s hand!
- This is an easy way to keep track of the highlights of your baby’s first year. When the year is over, put the calendar in a place where you keep “memories.” You and your baby will enjoy looking back at this in years to come!

Baby’s Brag Book



- Take photographs of your child as he learns new skills and put them in a photo album.
- Put a label under each picture with a brief description of what he is doing and the date. The descriptions can be similar to the examples in the activity above (**A Calendar of Pride**) with the date added.
- Look through the photos with your baby from time to time and share your pride in all that he is learning to do!
- This activity goes hand in hand with the one above. The “Calendar” gives you a written record that is easy to keep up with on a regular basis. The “Brag Book” is something you and your baby can share now and in the future—it adds pictures to the story of your baby’s first year. As they say, “A picture is worth a thousand words!”



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 to feel good about who they are and who they can become.

Celebrate your infant’s new skills. When you write on the calendar or take a photograph in the above activities, be sure to let your 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 your baby when he *tries* to do things. “Aidan, you tried to put the ball in the bucket. Can you try again?” Infants need to try many times before learning a new skill. When you see your child getting frustrated with a task, break it down into smaller steps so he can be successful one step at a time. The process of trying is *as important* as succeeding at a task.

Encourage your infant to “stretch” his abilities. When he has learned a skill, encourage him 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

Shiny, Jingle Mobile



- Make an inexpensive and unique mobile to hang above your infant's diaper-changing table or another place where your baby can see it easily but not reach it.
- Collect a bunch of old, discarded keys.
- Soak the 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.
- Thread a piece of string 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 near where your infant will lay for diaper changing and can see the mobile easily.
- As you lay your infant on her back, 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 your infant uses her eyes to follow the shiny, swinging keys.

Crazy Quilt



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

Special Needs Tip

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



Fill it Up!

- Get a small plastic bucket and three or four small toys.
- Sit with your infant on the floor.
- Take one of the toys and put it in the bucket.
- Hand the baby another toy and say, “Nikki, can you put it in? Can you fill the bucket?”
- Take turns filling up the bucket with the toys.
- When the last toy goes in, turn the bucket over and dump the toys out.
- Say, “All gone!” as you show your baby the empty bucket.
- Let her practice repeating these simple actions that show cause and effect.



Shake and Sniff

- Get three small containers with plastic lids such as yogurt containers or round potato chip cans.
- Clean the cans and lids thoroughly.
- Put different materials in each can to make a sound when shaken, for example, paper clips, stones, and pennies.
- Put a different scent from your kitchen on three cotton balls and place one in each can, for example, oil of peppermint, lemon extract, and cinnamon.
- When filled, put the lid on and seal the can with glue or tape. Punch two small holes in the lid to allow scent to come through.
- Sit with your infant on the floor and invite her to reach and pick up one of the cans and explore it with her eyes, ears and nose.
- Say for example, “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?”



Choose toys or find safe household items that give your infant the chance to use many senses at one time. The multi-sensory cans, for example, invite the baby to hear sounds, see color, smell scents, and use his motor skills to shake the can and cause the sound. The more senses your child uses in a learning activity, the more likely he is to process the information.

Use simple songs, games, and toys that encourage your infant to repeat actions such as clapping. Repetition through play strengthens brain cell connections and learning.

Infants see colors (red, blue, and green) first. These colors in your infant's room will draw their attention and excite them. Darker colors will be more calming.

Add new toys or homemade alternatives to increase your infant's curiosity to explore them. For example, a large empty box that your mobile infant can crawl in and out of will occupy him for a long time!

Do not put too many toys out at once or your infant may become over-stimulated. Some novelty is good but children also want to see the familiar and the favorites!

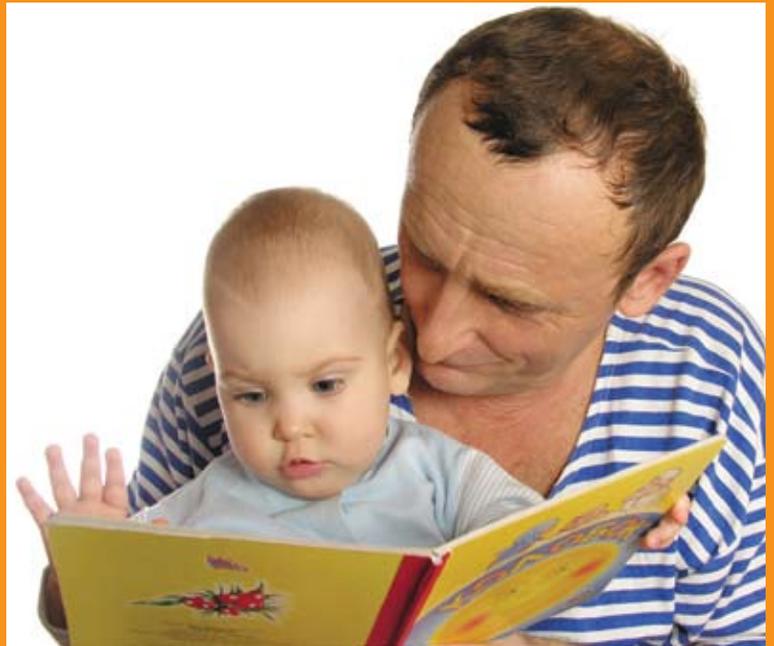


Infants

Language & Literacy Development

Standards:

- Understands spoken words (receptive language)
- Expresses thoughts with sounds, words, and 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?”

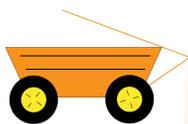
Understands spoken words
(receptive language)

Activities and Strategies for Development



Puppet Play

- Get a friendly looking hand puppet that has eyes and a mouth.
- You can also make a simple puppet by drawing a face on a clean white sock or use a stuffed animal as a puppet.
- Sit on the floor in front of your baby.
- Put the puppet on your hand or hold up the stuffed animal.
- Call your infant's name to get his attention.
- Say, for example, "Cooper, look who came to see you!"
- Make the puppet dance around and make a silly voice.
- Have the puppet talk to your baby, "Hi, Cooper, can you wave hello? Can you give me a hug? I'm going to tickle your tummy, Grrrhhh!"
- If your infant smiles and reaches, continue to play using the puppet to talk with your baby.



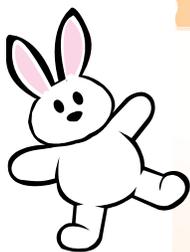
Neighborhood Welcome Wagon

- Put your older infant (and toddler too) in a stroller or small wagon with high sides.
- Push the stroller or pull the wagon slowly down the street or around the neighborhood.
- Stop each time you come to another baby and parent.
- Say to the baby and adult, "Hello, we're going for a ride in our wagon. Bye-bye!"
- Tell your infant to wave "bye-bye" to the other baby!



Music to Follow Along

- Put on one of your baby's favorite CDs that uses music to encourage listening and following along.
- Choose recordings with "follow along songs" for infants such as *Baby Songs* and *Play Along Baby Songs* by Hap Palmer.
- As your infant hears the familiar music, she is likely to respond with movement, rocking or bouncing.
- When the song includes some action, like clap your hands or pat your tummy, do these actions yourself and encourage your baby to follow along.
- If she needs help, clap her hands together for her, or take her hand and pat her tummy or head. On the other hand, your baby may prefer just to watch you for a while before she joins in.
- A simple variation is to sing in a high, soft voice to your infant, making up a line or two about some actions, such as "This is the way we clap our hands; clap, clap, clap." (eat our food, wash our hands).



Find the Baby Book

- Make your own little book that invites baby 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 pages together loosely 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. Tie a double or triple knot so it does not come off.
- 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, use your baby's own picture or put a small flat mirror under the clear contact paper on a page, instead of a picture of baby.
- When you ask your infant to "Find the baby," she will be looking at her own reflection!



Talk to your infant throughout the day about what you are doing and he is seeing. This helps him connect meaning to the words he hears frequently. For example, “Let’s take off your sleeper so you can have a nice bath. The water feels warm. Look at the bubbles on your sponge!”

Your baby is learning language as she listens to you. She will imitate the sounds she hears in her home and 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 your infant simple one-step directions or requests. Use gestures to add meaning. For example, point to a pop up toy and say, “Pop up! Can you make it pop up?”

If your baby has frequent ear infections, this can interfere with his ability to hear clearly and discriminate sounds. Be sure to communicate with your health care professional and your baby’s teacher if you have any concerns about your 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.

To make books more interesting for infants, safely secure materials such as cotton balls, sandpaper, crinkly paper, etc. to pictures so babies can experience different textures.



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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

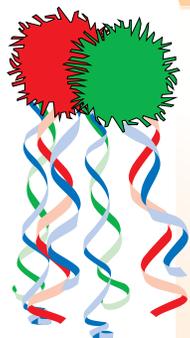
Begin to express self freely and creatively, using sounds as they:

- 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

Pompoms and Streamers



- Dangle a colorful object in front of your 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 your baby while he is lying on a mat or sitting in an infant seat. See if he reaches for it. This is his 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, Ricardo. 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.

Can You Reach It?



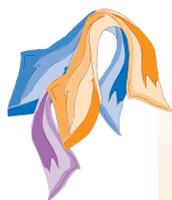
- Place two toys in front of your baby while she is sitting or lying on a mat or carpet. Choose toys you know she enjoys. Place the toys where she will have to reach to pick them up.
- Watch and see which toy she chooses.
- Name the toy for the baby. “Sadie, you are pointing at the monkey. Do you want 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.”

Playing Ping Pong



- Play a game of verbal “Ping Pong” as you change your baby’s diapers, feed him, and rock him.
- When your 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 your 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.

Simply Scarves



- Put small, colorful scarves or fabric scraps in a basket. Sheer fabric, like chiffon, works well.
- Sit with your child and place the basket where he can reach or crawl over to it. Let him take the scarves from the basket to explore.
- Talk to him as he explores and encourage any sounds he makes. “You picked a scarf with polka dots on it, Vincente.”
- Play some quiet music with this activity and sway and wave the scarves.
- Put the basket of scarves out of your child’s reach when you are finished.

Enjoying Music



- Find 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, 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 your child and watch her move! Clap to the beat and encourage her to join in.
- When you find music she responds to, play it often so she will become familiar with it. Play it in the car.
- Sing along with the music and listen to hear if your baby tries to “sing” too.

Silly Songs



- Singing is a way children learn words and the rhythm of language. Have fun singing to your infant 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 your infant is enjoying it!
- Encourage your baby to try the motions and “sing” along with you.

Note: The internet is a good resource for many nursery rhymes. Check www.nurseryrhymes4u.com for a list of common nursery rhymes and their lyrics.



Repeat your baby's early sounds to encourage him to continue “talking” with you. Repeat his “oohs,” “aahs,” and other cooing and babbling sounds. (See **Playing Ping Pong** above.) This kind of “baby talk” supports early language development. When your child begins to say words, however, say the words correctly instead of repeating them the way he does.

When you see your infant point to something she wants, name the object and encourage her to make gestures or sounds. For example, say, “You are pointing at the ball, Andra. Do you want the ball?” The baby's facial expressions and body language will tell you if you have “guessed” right.

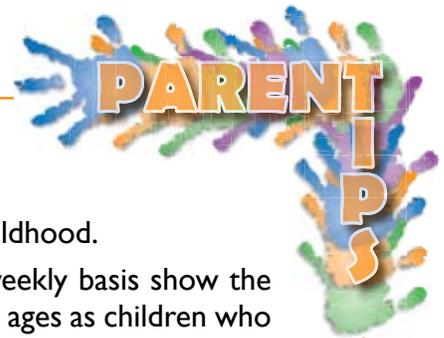
Talk, talk, talk! Surround your baby with meaningful language. Describe what he is doing, toys he is playing with, what he sees, and what he hears. This helps him learn new words.

Sing while you are driving in the car. Your infant will enjoy it and begin to learn the sounds and rhythm of language.

When your child shows fear, anger, happiness, or other feelings, talk about how he feels. “Timmy, I see you are angry because Rae took away your toy.”

Use a finger or small hand puppet to encourage your baby to make sounds. Have the puppet talk and respond to her sounds.

Let your baby play with an old telephone or cell phone. Remove any wires or cords that might be dangerous.



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 Stories

- Use a hand puppet to tell your baby a short story. A puppet helps get her attention.
- Sit somewhere comfortable—on the floor or with the baby in your lap.
- You can tell a real story or make one up. Keep it simple and short.
- For example, let “Moo, the Cow” talk to your infant. Moo could say, “Hi, Caitlin, 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. 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!”
- Let your baby play with the puppet.

Note: Make a simple hand puppet by drawing a face on a sock or paper bag.

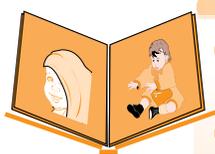


A Special Place

- Have a special place in your home where you keep books for your baby. Find a place that is quiet and cozy.
- Put some books where your baby can reach them easily and others out of his reach for you to read to him. Choose board, cloth, plastic, and other sturdy books with large pictures of children, animals, and familiar objects.
- Find time to sit with your baby in your lap and “read” every day. Be prepared to read a book over again if your baby stays interested. Use this time to snuggle with your baby and enjoy looking at the pictures in a book. Make this a special time for the two of you.

Special Needs Tip

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



Family Faces

- Babies are attracted to faces. Take photos of your baby's face and the faces of family members and pets.
- Put the "face photos" in a small photo album, one photo per page. Be sure to find an album with pages that are easy to turn.
- Look through the album with your baby. Point to each picture and name the person or pet. Let your child try to help turn the pages.
- Point to the eyes, nose, and mouth on the faces and name those also.



Making Books with Baby

- Homemade books can be just as appealing to your infants as books you buy.
- Look through toy and office 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 inches by eight inches. Glue one picture on each cardboard "page." Cover the pages with clear contact paper.
- Punch two holes near the top and bottom of 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! Another way to attach the pages together is to tie a shoe lace loosely through the holes. Make a double or triple knot to keep the shoe lace from coming undone.
- Make books with different themes such as animals, toys, and "things that go" such as cars, trucks, airplanes, and trains. Make a cover for each book.
- Look through the books with your baby and name each object. See if she can point to the pictures and try to turn the pages.
- Put the books where your baby can reach them.

This Book is About . . .



- Choose a book that your baby enjoys.
- Find toys that match things in the book. If the book shows pictures of animals, for example, gather some plastic animals. If you like to read *Goodnight Moon* by Margaret Wise Brown, gather a few items from the book such as a mitten and a kitten, or a bear and a chair. As you look through the book with your child, show him the real objects.
- When you finish looking through the book, let him play with some of the real objects.



It's never too early to begin reading to your infant. Read to her every day while she sits in your lap. Focus on the pictures rather than the words and point to the pictures and name the objects. Use a pleasant voice to let your child know you enjoy reading with her. Stop reading when she loses interest.

Look for books in the children's section of your public library.

Use puppets to *tell* stories to your child instead of reading a book sometimes.

Have lots of books available for your child to "read." Select sturdy books with large, colorful pictures. Choose topics that are interesting to your infant. Look for books with rhyming words. Include books about people of different cultures and abilities.

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

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

Sing rhyming finger plays and songs with your child. Some all-time favorites include "The Itsy, Bitsy Spider," "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star," and "If You're Happy and You Know It . . ."

Infants

Cognitive Development

Standards:

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





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Infants

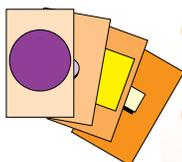
Foundations for math

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

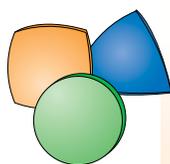
Activities and Strategies for Development

“Touch and Feel” Shape Book



- Cut brightly colored cardboard or poster board into six pieces, about five inches 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 your child 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.

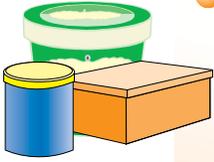
Puffy Shapes



- Get some colorful washable fabric and batting (the material used to stuff pillows) to make puffy shapes.
- Cut the fabric to make two circles, two squares, and two triangles, each about six inches wide. Sew each pair of shapes together, inside out, leaving enough room to fill it. Turn the material right side out and stuff it with the batting. Sew the edges together.
- Let your child explore the puffy shapes while you change diapers. Describe each shape as he plays!

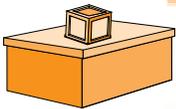


Shapes and Sizes



- Give your infant 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 boxes
 - plastic food storage containers
 - cartons from yogurt, sour cream, and cottage cheese
- Offer a few containers at a time and watch your infant open and close them, stack them, and try to put one inside the other. Talk about the shapes and sizes as she plays!

Getting in Shape



- Make shape boxes for your infant 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 or construction paper if you choose.
- Give your child a few square blocks and show him how to drop the blocks through the hole into the box. Then show him how to open the box, dump the blocks, and start again.
- At first, give your child blocks that are the same size and fit in the hole. When your child needs a challenge, give him different size blocks and let him discover which ones fit.
- Follow the same procedure using a tennis ball instead of a block to make a circle shape box.

Note: Your infant 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. Look for books in the children's section of the public library.

Cut colorful sponges into circles, squares, and triangles for your infant to play with in the bathtub.

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

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 your child develop small muscle skills.

Have blocks of different sizes and colors. Soft, 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 your baby to experiment and explore.

Look for children's books, puzzles, floor gyms, and blocks at garage sales.



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Infants

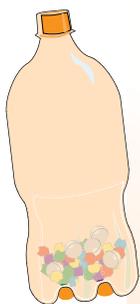
Foundations for science

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 It Up, Baby!



- Make “shakers” for your infant to explore.
- Get 16 ounce, clear plastic drink bottles and remove all labels. Choose bottles easy for your baby to hold. Put a different kind of colorful object inside each one:
 - 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 or “super” glue to fasten the lid securely.
- Show your infant how to shake the bottles to hear different sounds and watch the objects move. Show him how to roll the bottles on the ground and see and hear what happens. If your baby is crawling, he can push the bottles and “chase” them.

“Touch and Feel” Blocks



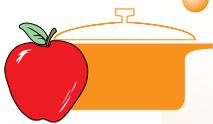
- You will need an empty tissue box shaped like a cube.
- Glue a different kind of fabric on each side of the box. Choose fabrics with different textures such as:
 - corduroy
 - terry cloth (from an old towel or wash cloth)
 - furry fabric
 - cotton fabric (from an old tee shirt)
 - fleece (from an old baby blanket)
 - textured wallpaper
- Your infant will feel the different textures as she plays with this block! Use words like “smooth,” “bumpy,” “furry,” and “soft” to describe the different materials.

Note: Ask fabric and wallpaper stores if they have samples or “leftovers” you can have.



Awesome Outdoors

- Take your infant outdoors to explore the natural world.
- Go for a walk and look for a variety of “nature’s wonders” such as bird feathers, leaves, grass, pine cones, shells, and flowers. With your help, let your infant look at, touch, and smell them as you talk about each one. No tasting, please!
- Hang a birdfeeder with birdseed outside. Sit on a blanket with your baby and watch and listen for the birds to come for a snack and fly away. 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 your infant crawl on grass and feel it with his hands, legs, and feet. Talk about the soft, green grass beneath him.



What Smells So Good?

- When you cook, call your baby’s attention to the yummy smells and tastes. For example, make applesauce using these steps:
 - Cut five or six large apples in slices and put them in a slow cooker or a saucepan.
 - Add water, covering about one fourth of the apples. Add cinnamon if you wish. Set the slow cooker on high and cook for 3 to 4 hours. Put the slow cooker in a safe place where your baby cannot reach it. If you are cooking on the stove, cover the saucepan and simmer until the apples are soft enough for your baby.
 - Start in the morning so you can enjoy the smell all day and have applesauce for an afternoon snack. Cool before serving.
 - Let your older infant try to eat the applesauce with a spoon.



Give your infant opportunities to *safely* see, listen, smell, touch and taste new things. Supervise her carefully as she explores.

Talk, talk, talk about everything your baby sees, hears, touches, tastes, and smells.

Infants learn by exploring with their senses. Provide your baby with a variety of materials and watch to see what attracts his attention. Let his interests guide you in selecting materials and activities.

Collect 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 your infant learn the names of what she sees and hears.



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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

Reading with Daddy



- 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.
- Another cute story is *The Daddy Mountain* by Jules Feiffer. It 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 your infant on your lap.
- Say, "Can Daddy read a book with Lana?"
- Hold your baby so she can easily see the pictures as you read.
- Point out the baby and the daddy on each page.
- Say to the infant, "See the baby. See the Daddy. He is singing to his baby. Look, the Daddy is dancing with his baby."
- Read for as long as your baby is attentive.
- Whatever activity you enjoy doing with your baby, she will enjoy it too!

Baby in the Family



- Make a simple family photo book that your baby can touch! Look for an inexpensive small photo album at a dollar store.
- Find three or four pictures of you or other family members caring for your baby, feeding him, walking him in the stroller, and bathing him. Put them in the album.
- As your baby looks at and touches the plastic-protected photos, say for example, "Look at baby Trey. See your big smile. You feel happy. Grandma Estelle is giving you a bath. Look at your yellow ducky!"

Just Like Home



- Use these strategies to help your baby feel more comfortable with her teacher when you drop her off at the center:
 - In addition to the diapers, bottles, food, and extra clothing you pack, include a stuffed animal or favorite blanket from home.
 - Bring in pictures of family and pets that teachers can display and talk about during the day with your infant.
 - Have a goodbye routine—a hug or kiss—that will let your infant know you are going to leave.
 - Whenever possible, spend a little extra time playing with your infant until she is settled. If your schedule permits, drop in for feeding and cuddling before your baby's naptime.
 - Let the teacher hold and distract an older infant reluctant to leave you. The teacher will help your baby become comfortable while you are away.



You and other family members are the most significant people in your infant's world. If he is in a center or family child care home, his teachers will offer the next most important relationships. All relationships should communicate trust and mutual respect.

Call your relatives by their "family name," so your baby can hear and learn these names even before they understand how family members are related. Say for example, "Here comes Nana," "Let's go visit Auntie Netta," "Blow Grannie-Annie a kiss," or "Give Big Papa the truck."

It is normal for babies to have a fear of unfamiliar people. Keep your infant close to you and let her make eye contact and then physical contact when she is comfortable.

Names are important and convey a person's special identity. Children's names often have a special meaning to the family. Call your baby by his name often. Use his name to describe his belongings, for example, "This is Byron's blue blanket."