

6w

Infant and Toddler Activities: *Young Infants, Mobile Infants, and Toddlers*

Because infants change and grow so quickly, curriculum must adjust to their developmental level. For this reason, activities are designed as prototypes for young infants, mobile infants, and toddlers. Rather than talking about standards for infants and toddlers, most states use the term *early learning guidelines (ELG)* to describe what infants and toddlers should know and be able to do (National Infant and Toddler Child Care Initiative [NITCCI], 2006). The format for the Infant and Toddler Activities is different than it is for older children. Goals are organized by developmental domains rather than academic areas.

ACTIVITY GOALS

Although states have varying numbers of early learning guidelines, the most common ones for infants and toddlers are social and emotional development; language and communication development; cognitive development and general knowledge; physical development and motor skills; and approaches to play and learning (Petersen, Jones, & McGinley, 2008). These early learning designations were used to group activities by goal.

The targeted age group for each activity is designated: young infants (birth to 9 months), mobile infants (8 to 18 months), and toddlers (16 to 36 months). These overlapping age guidelines emphasize the fluidity of early development. If infants or toddlers are in the younger range or their disability affects a particular area, use activities from a lower age range. If they are in the older range or activities seem too easy, move into the activities



Courtesy of Penny Low Deiner

for older children, in Resource Chapters 1 through 5. If an activity is appropriate for a broader age range, the designation includes that information. A birth to 18-month designation would include children from birth to 18 months. All activity areas begin with activities for young infants, then activities for mobile infants, and finally activities for toddlers.

Infant and Toddler Activities

..... **SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT: INDIVIDUAL, BIRTH TO 9 MONTHS**

6-31w Find the Fist

GOALS: Social and emotional development; physical development and motor skills

MATERIALS: None

PROCEDURE: When the infant is fussy, gently guide his hand to his mouth to see whether he needs help finding it. Encourage him to suck on it. Talk in a calming voice and allow the infant to enjoy the sucking sounds he is making.

Verbally support what is happening, “Sometimes this makes you feel better.” Help infants keep the hand available. Give an infant verbal support for finding his hand and sucking before helping him.

INTEGRATION: Infants suck for the sheer pleasure of it. Helping an infant find his hand does not set him up for years of thumb sucking. Infants suck as a way of “organizing” themselves. Many adults want infants to suck on pacifiers rather than hands or fingers. There is no reason why infants cannot do both. It is important that infants can use their hands because these are always available whereas pacifiers may not be. A hand is under an infant’s control; use of a pacifier is dependent upon an adult.

..... SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT: INDIVIDUAL, BIRTH TO 9 MONTHS

6-32w Mirror

GOALS: Social and emotional development; physical development and motor skills; cognitive development and general knowledge

MATERIALS: Unbreakable mirror (about 12 inches) or large, mounted mirror

PROCEDURE: Hold an infant in front of a mirror so she can see herself. Talk about what she sees in the mirror: "Look, there's Amber! I see you!" Tap her image in the mirror to focus her attention. Say, "Look, this is you. Don't you look gorgeous?" Point to and name the infant's facial features as she looks in the mirror. Play games in the mirror to see whether she will imitate you; open and close your mouth, pat your head, tug your ear, and make silly faces!

Then, place the infant on a blanket on the floor and put her down on her tummy directly in front of the mirror. Encourage her to hold her head up to see herself. Support her in balancing her weight on one arm and reaching toward the mirror with the other.

INTEGRATION: Children enjoy looking in the mirror and focusing on what they look like. They are trying to establish the concept of self as different from others. Looking at mirrors and having them reach toward toys that are slightly too far away helps them learn about themselves and strengthens the muscles they will need to roll over, sit up, and crawl.

..... SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT: INDIVIDUAL, 8 TO 18 MONTHS

6-33w Gelatin Cubes

GOALS: Social and emotional development; physical development and motor skills

MATERIALS: Four envelopes of unflavored gelatin, three packages (3 oz. each) of flavored gelatin, 4 cups boiling water, 13 × 9 inch baking pan

TO MAKE: In large bowl, combine unflavored gelatin and flavored gelatin; add boiling water and stir until gelatin is completely dissolved. Pour into large, shallow baking pan (e.g., 13 × 9 inch pan) and chill until firm. Cut into squares to serve. Makes about 100 one-inch squares.

PROCEDURE: Give the infant several cubes of the gelatin and encourage him to eat them using his fingers. Feed the infant the gelatin using a spoon as well as allowing him to self-feed. As infants gain proficiency, make different-sized cubes and encourage the infant to use a spoon to try to cut the gelatin, as well as feed himself.

INTEGRATION: This provides an interesting texture for infants and another opportunity for self-feeding. It has a consistency thick enough that infants can learn to control it with a spoon and thin enough that it is challenging finger food.

..... SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT: SMALL GROUP, 16 TO 36 MONTHS

6-34w Cleaning House

GOALS: Social and emotional development; language and communication development; physical development and motor skills

MATERIALS: Toy vacuum cleaner, broom, dust cloth, sponge, dustpan

PROCEDURE: Let toddlers "vacuum" the floor or rug. Encourage them to work together with the broom and dustpan. Talk about cleaning and how everyone is helping to get the room clean. Make vacuum sounds. Use different actions (such as several pushes and pulls, a long push, a twist around a corner) and encourage children to imitate. Make a path with tape or paper for children to follow around a room. Demonstrate how different cleaning tools work and help children use the materials.

INTEGRATION: Children often enjoy imitating the work of adults. Because you do not really care how effectively the children are cleaning, you can concentrate on the process. Talk about the health and safety aspects of cleaning.

..... LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT: INDIVIDUAL, BIRTH TO 9 MONTHS

6-35w Black and White Books

GOALS: Language and communication development; cognitive development and general knowledge

MATERIALS: Book of simple black-and-white designs, such as T. Hoban *White on Black* (New York: Greenwillow Books, 1993) or *Black on White* (New York: Greenwillow Books, 2007) or plastic sleeves, white poster board, black marker

TO MAKE: Cut poster board into six pieces $8\frac{1}{2} \times 11$ size. On page 1, using the marker, make a bull's-eye in the center, and draw three thick concentric circles around the bull's-eye; on page 2, using a ruler, divide the poster board into 1-inch squares, and color alternating squares black; on page 3, using a ruler, divide the poster board into 1-inch stripes, and color alternating stripes black; on page 4, using a ruler, divide the poster board into 1-inch diagonals, and color alternating diagonals black; on page 5, draw a smiley face with the wide side of the marker; on page 6, draw a distorted face (mouth where eye should be) or caricature of a face. Place each poster board page in a sleeve protector, and place them in a three-ring binder to make a book.

PROCEDURE: Sit in a comfortable place such as a rocking chair with the infant on your lap. Hold the book so the infant can see it (about 8 inches from his face) and watch to see whether he focuses on the bull's-eye. If not, tap it lightly to draw attention, and say, "Look, that's a bull's-eye." Then turn the pages and point out the salient characteristics of each picture. Initially, use only the first picture, and then talk more about each picture.

INTEGRATION: The focus of this activity is on the experience of enjoying a pleasant, cozy reading experience with a young infant rather than the content of the “book.” Use more of the pictures as infants show interest. These can be laminated also and attached near the changing table.

..... LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT: INDIVIDUAL, 16 TO 36 MONTHS

6-36w My Book

GOALS: Language and communication development; physical development and motor skills; social and emotional development

MATERIALS: Plastic sleeves, magazines, markers, construction paper, paste, yarn, rings, paper scraps, 3-hole binder

PROCEDURE: Cut construction paper to fit inside the plastic sleeve $8\frac{1}{2} \times 11$ inches. Encourage the children to draw or paste on the paper, and then help them put their product inside the sleeve. Write their name on one piece of paper and put that in a sleeve for the beginning of the book. Toddlers can make as many or as few pages as they wish. Put each page in a separate sleeve. Fasten them together with small rings or put them in a three-ring binder. Support toddlers in marking or gluing objects on the construction paper. You may have to put the pages into the plastic sleeves and help make the book while the toddler observes. Encourage toddlers to make additional pages. Help them decorate both sides of the paper or put the pages in back to back. They might have a theme for the book, such as color, and they could have a different color of paper on each page and paste pictures of that color on the paper. When the book is completed, talk about each page.

INTEGRATION: Children can enjoy looking at these books and talking about them. Encourage parents to make books with pictures of family members or of special events.

..... LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT: INDIVIDUAL OR SMALL GROUP, 16 TO 36 MONTHS

6-37w House

GOALS: Language and communication development; cognitive development and general knowledge

MATERIALS: Large doll, dollhouse, doll furniture, *or* build a house with blocks

PROCEDURE: Sit down with the toddler and encourage exploration of the dollhouse. Stimulate conversation with the toddler and talk about what is happening. Talk about activities in the house as the toddler plays. Talk about concepts like open and close, up and down, in and out. Introduce new vocabulary while encouraging creativity. Lay the doll on the bed. Say, “She’s tired. Go to sleep.” Seat the doll at the table. Say, “Time to eat! He’s hungry.” Encourage the toddlers to imitate your actions and words. Ask a toddler what a particular “person” is doing in the house. Give directions, such as, “The boy looks sleepy. Can you put him to bed?”

INTEGRATION: Choose dolls and dollhouse accessories that are too large to choke on. The home is a familiar setting for most toddlers, and they enjoy working through routines. As toddlers become familiar with the experience, encourage children to play together.

..... LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT: INDIVIDUAL, 16 TO 36 MONTHS

6-38w Books

GOALS: Language and communication development; cognitive development and general knowledge

MATERIALS: Toddler’s picture book such as F. Watt, *Trucks* (Tulsa, OK: E. D. C. Publishing, 2003)

PROCEDURE: Place the toddler on your lap. Look at one page at a time. Name the picture. Encourage the toddler to touch or pat the picture. Ask the toddler to repeat some of the easy words. Then let the toddler explore the book while sitting on your lap or close by. Comment on the picture the toddler is looking at; for example, say, “Look at the truck. What color is that? Is that truck red? How many wheels does it have? Let’s count them.” If her interest continues, talk about the major details of the picture, pointing out colors and familiar objects. When she loses interest, stop.

With two pictures visible, ask the toddler to show you a particular truck. If she points to the wrong picture, say, “Here’s the red one. That one is blue.” Place the toddler’s hand on each picture as you name it. Later, move on to having the toddler name the picture you point to. Look for chances to use the words in the book in your later verbal interactions with toddlers. For example, say, “There’s a truck. We saw one like that in our book.”

INTEGRATION: Children enjoy books at an early age, especially those they can touch and feel. Increase the complexity of the book as toddlers get older and have more experience with books and ask a few other toddlers to join the reading group.

..... LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT: INDIVIDUAL OR SMALL GROUP, 16 TO 36 MONTHS

6-39w Food

GOALS: Language and communication development; physical development and motor skills; cognitive development and general knowledge

MATERIALS: Laminated pictures of foods, tub with lid (slotted), plastic food: fruits and vegetables

PROCEDURE: Start by taking the lid off the tub and letting toddlers put the plastic food in and take it out of the tub. Then put the lid on the tub and encourage toddlers to explore the tub. Demonstrate how to put laminated picture food into the slot. Talk to them about the food they are putting into the tub, especially foods that are most familiar to them. As they become more proficient, add more laminated

food pictures and ask toddlers to find a certain food you name: “Can you find the grapes?” Ask them to name the picture they choose to place in the tub. Have toddlers name foods at snack and mealtime. When possible, give them a choice of foods to eat.

INTEGRATION: Food is a familiar and relevant concept to children. Using pictures is more difficult than using the food itself or a three-dimensional representation. Be sure the foods you use are representative of the food the children eat.

..... LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT: INDIVIDUAL, 16 TO 36 MONTHS

6-40w Feed the Face

GOALS: Language and communication development; physical development and motor skills

MATERIALS: Shoebox, paper, markers, tape or glue, lids from baby food jars or small blocks

PROCEDURE: Cover a sturdy shoebox with paper and draw a clown face on the front. (Be sure it is not a scary one.) Decorate the face. Then cut an opening for the mouth. (Laminating the face or putting clear contact paper over it increases its durability.) If toddlers are younger or have difficulty, increase the size of the hole. Demonstrate how the jar lids or blocks fit into the clown’s mouth, and encourage toddlers to try. Ask them to point to facial parts that you name and then to their own corresponding facial part. Talk about how hungry the clown is today and count the number of lids the clown “eats.” Have children decide what the clown’s favorite foods are.

INTEGRATION: This is a fun way to practice eye–hand coordination, with the opportunity for a lot of language input.

..... LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT: INDIVIDUAL OR SMALL GROUP, 16 TO 36 MONTHS

6-41w Hats Off

GOALS: Language and communication development; physical development and motor skills

MATERIALS: A hat for each child (ask families to send one in), large mirror

PROCEDURE: Show the children your hat. Say, “This is my hat. Now it’s off. I’m going to put it on.” Put it on. Then tell the toddlers to put their hats on and then take them off. Do this several times. Be dramatic! Have the child stand in front of a mirror and put on and take off the hat on request. This can be used as a simple “Simon Says” game by just putting the hat on and off: “Simon says put your hat on.” (Hats go on.) “Take it off.” (Hats should stay on.) Have children put the hat on another body part, for example, the hand, foot, or knee.

INTEGRATION: This activity involves both following directions and understanding the concepts *on* and *off*. Be sure to reinforce these concepts by telling children that they are “on the cot” or that they just jumped “off the bench.” Use other

prepositions to position the hat such as *in front of*, *behind*, *beside*, *above*, *below*, and so on.

..... LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT: SMALL GROUP, 16 TO 36 MONTHS

6-42w Telephone

GOALS: Language and communication development; social and emotional development

MATERIALS: Two telephones

PROCEDURE: Make phone noise: “Ring, ring.” Pick up the phone, hold it to your ear, and say, “Hello, oh, it’s for ...” Hand the phone to the toddler and encourage conversation. Praise any sounds or words made. Help her explore the telephone. With a second telephone, call the toddler, asking simple questions: “Hi, how are you today?” “What are you doing today?” “Did you eat breakfast?” “What did you have?” Allow the toddler time to respond to each question. Say “Good-bye” and that you will call again, before the child loses interest.

INTEGRATION: Encourage two or three children to talk on the pretend telephones with some help from you. Children enjoy telephones and may have had experience with them. Have a variety of telephones for children to use.

..... COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT: INDIVIDUAL, BIRTH TO 9 MONTHS

6-43w Mousie

GOALS: Cognitive development and general knowledge; social and emotional development

MATERIALS: None

PROCEDURE: Using two fingers of your hand, start at one of the infant’s extremities and slowly walk your two fingers up the limb saying slowly, “Mousie, Mousie, Mousie.” As you get closer to the trunk (belly button area), say quickly, “Mousie, Mousie,” and give the infant a gentle tickle. You can make the anticipatory time shorter by saying fewer “Mousies” or make the anticipatory time longer by increasing the number of “Mousies” you say or by going back down the limb and up again before saying the quick “Mousie, Mousie.”

INTEGRATION: Learning to anticipate what is going to predictably happen is an important cognitive skill. Holding the tension of anticipation until the event happens supports social and emotional development. For variation use the infant’s name instead of “Mousie.”

..... COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT: INDIVIDUAL, 8 TO 18 MONTHS

6-44w Noisy Rollers

GOALS: Cognitive development and general knowledge; physical development and motor skills

MATERIALS: Toys that makes noise when rolled or pulled

PROCEDURE: Encourage reaching for and grasping the toy. Then roll the toy, and give it back to the infant. Encourage the infant to imitate your actions and explore the toy in various ways. Encourage him to shake it or roll it to see whether he can discover the relationship between his behavior and what the toy does. Add pull and/or push toys. Encourage the child to try different toys to listen for different sounds. Help the child notice the different sounds, based on how quickly or slowly he moves the toy as well as the noises made by the toys themselves.

INTEGRATION: Activities in this category support a variety of motor and cognitive skills and can be used at many different levels. For visual stimulation, be sure the rollers are clear plastic so infants can see objects move.

..... **COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT: INDIVIDUAL, 8 TO 18 MONTHS**

6-45w Suction-Cup Toys

GOALS: Cognitive development and general knowledge; physical development and motor skills

MATERIALS: Toys with suction cups

PROCEDURE: Place the suction cup toy on a highchair or other smooth surface where the infant can easily reach it. Encourage infants to hit it to watch the movement and listen to the sound it makes. Slowly move the top of the toy in different directions so infants can follow its movement visually. Gently guide the infant's arms from the shoulder to help the child either reach and grasp the toy or bat at it. Move the toy in a pattern and see whether the infant can repeat your pattern.

INTEGRATION: Toys such as these provide feedback to the infant. Once they learn the underlying principle, they can use this toy independently.

..... **COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT: INDIVIDUAL, 16 TO 36 MONTHS**

6-46w Nesting Toys

GOALS: Cognitive development and general knowledge; physical development and motor skills

MATERIALS: Stacking and nesting cups

PROCEDURE: Offer the cups nested together to the toddler. Let toddlers play with and discover what they can do with these objects. If the toddler does not pull them out of the nested position, show him how to do so. At another time, let the toddler play and experiment by dumping and filling the cups with water, sand, cornmeal, and so on. Then take out every other cup and encourage toddlers to build a tower and knock it down. Encourage toddlers to nest the containers. Begin by offering a small number of loosely fitting cups. (If the set has five cups, take out the second and fourth ones.) Give prompts as needed. (Pointing, say, "Put this cup in.") Gradually increase the difficulty by offering more

cups. Talk about size, using first only the largest and smallest cups. Say, "Give me the big one." Gradually offer more choices.

INTEGRATION: Nesting toys that are cubes are easier for young toddlers, as they do not roll away, yet circular ones are easier to nest. Provide both.

..... **SENSORY MOTOR DEVELOPMENT: INDIVIDUAL, BIRTH TO 9 MONTHS**

6-47w Teether

GOALS: Physical development and motor skills; cognitive development and general knowledge

MATERIALS: Teether

PROCEDURE: Encourage infants to reach, grasp, and mouth the teether. Say, "This is a foot (if teether is foot-shaped). Do those toes taste good?" Touch the infant's foot, toes, and say, "Here's your foot. I have your toes!" If the infant has problems, gently guide the infant's arm from the shoulder area to help grasp the teether. Talk to infants; tell them about your actions as well as theirs. Encourage them to explore the teether in other ways, such as banging, shaking, and dropping. Support the infant's simple imitation skills.

INTEGRATION: This activity uses a natural form of exploration (teething) to interest the infant and then expands on this.

..... **SENSORY MOTOR SKILLS: SMALL GROUP, 8 TO 18 MONTHS**

6-48w Crawling Obstacle Course

GOALS: Physical development and motor skills; cognitive development and general knowledge

MATERIALS: Materials for an obstacle course: tape, boxes, barrels, boards, chairs, hula hoops

PROCEDURE: Have the children participate in various types of creeping and crawling activities. Play music to set the pace and help children keep a rhythm. Have children practice these:

Turtle crawl—crawl on hands and knees with a small blanket on top of the child (the blanket looks like a shell), talk to children about turtles and the purpose of the shell.

Texture crawl—crawl on a path of different textures (carpet squares, welcome mats, bubble packing, etc.) and talk about how the different textures feel.

Snake crawl—slither with stomach on floor, using only arms to pull.

Obstacle course—crawl through a course made of boxes, chairs, barrels, boards, and so on.

Tape trail—crawl or creep around the room following a tape trail.

At the beginning, make the distance short and accept any kind of on-the-floor locomotion. As children become more skillful, encourage them to think about the different crawling experiences and what each feels like. Discuss with children when crawling might be a useful way to move. Have children participate in thinking up variations.

INTEGRATION: Creeping and crawling are skills some toddlers have mastered, so variations add interest. Using variations allows all children to practice and encourages children to explore a variety of forms of mobility. Add music to help toddlers develop a pace.

..... **SENSORY MOTOR DEVELOPMENT:** **INDIVIDUAL, 8 TO 36 MONTHS**

6-49w Yarn Balls

GOALS: Physical development and motor skills; social and emotional development

MATERIALS: Yarn ball or other textured, soft ball

PROCEDURE: Let children feel and touch the ball. Roll the ball on children's arms, legs, and stomach. Name their body parts as you touch them. Encourage toddlers to move the ball with their arms or legs and to explore the ball. Hold it so they can grasp it. Encourage children to transfer it from one hand to the other. Take turns giving and receiving the ball with the child. Toss the ball into a container and retrieve it. Encourage toddlers to do the same. Use a sturdy cardboard tube and encourage children to move the ball along the floor by pushing it with the tube. This activity encourages tool usage skills.

INTEGRATION: Yarn balls are extremely forgiving, easy to hold, easy to make, and washable, and they don't break objects when they stray.

..... **SENSORY MOTOR DEVELOPMENT:** **INDIVIDUAL, 8 TO 36 MONTHS**

6-50w Inflatable Animals

GOALS: Physical development and motor skills; language and communication development

MATERIALS: Plastic rabbit or other plastic inflatable animal

PROCEDURE: Offer the toy to children slightly beyond their reach. Say, "Get the bunny." Allow children to explore the toy with hands and mouth. (Be sure to wash it if children put the toy in their mouths.) If a child does not respond to the toy, call the child's name and touch the child's hand with the toy to catch her attention or gently squeeze it to make a sound. Move the toy out of the child's line of vision and squeeze the toy again. Say, "Where's the bunny?" and watch to see whether the child turns her head. Encourage imitation by squeezing the bunny and then saying, "Now you do it." Talk about some of the bunny's body parts such as ears, eyes, and tail. Say, "I'm touching the bunny's ears. Can you touch the bunny's ears?"

INTEGRATION: Children sometimes need stimulation to encourage them to explore their environment.

..... **SENSORY MOTOR DEVELOPMENT:** **INDIVIDUAL, 8 TO 36 MONTHS**

6-51w Rolling Balls

GOALS: Physical development and motor skills; social and emotional development

MATERIALS: Beach ball

PROCEDURE: While sitting on the floor, roll the ball toward the toddler. Encourage toddlers to get the ball and examine it. Initially, take some of the air out of the ball so it is easier to grab. Hold the ball in the child's line of vision. Say, "Get the ball." If the toddler does not reach for the ball on his own, put the ball in his hands. Encourage the infant or toddler to creep or crawl toward the ball. Provide smaller balls and toys of other textures for rolling. The child can experiment with rolling objects of different weights and sizes.

INTEGRATION: Children need firsthand experience to discover that balls roll but cubes do not.

..... **SENSORY MOTOR DEVELOPMENT:** **INDIVIDUAL OR SMALL GROUP, 16 TO 36 MONTHS**

6-52w Blocks

GOALS: Physical development and motor skills; cognitive development and general knowledge

MATERIALS: Large cardboard blocks

PROCEDURE: Sit on the floor with the toddler and begin stacking blocks. Give the toddler a block and encourage him to join you. Let him knock down the blocks you have stacked. Then encourage him to put one block on top of another. Encourage any attempts, whether they are successful or not. Let toddlers do most of the building. Provide other materials to extend their block play, such as cars, trains, or toy people. Begin to build simple structures such as roads and so on. Roads can be built easily by laying blocks side by side and "driving" a car over them. Say, "Look! I made a road!"

INTEGRATION: Blocks have the potential for building mathematical and creative problem-solving skills for young children.

..... **SENSORY MOTOR DEVELOPMENT:** **INDIVIDUAL, 16 TO 36**

6-53w Puzzles

GOALS: Physical development and motor skills; cognitive development and general knowledge

MATERIALS: Wooden puzzle (3 to 12 pieces)

PROCEDURE: Start with easy shape-matching activities, such as shape sorters or form boards with circles, squares,

and triangles. Cover one side of the puzzle so the child has fewer spaces from which to choose. Encourage the toddlers to remove and replace puzzle pieces. Verbally label pieces as toddlers use them; encourage toddlers to say the name of each piece. Hide puzzle pieces in oatmeal, cornmeal, or another medium. Have toddlers find the puzzle piece and put it in the correct place. Hide puzzle pieces around the room while the toddler watches. As she finds each piece, have her put it in the puzzle. Provide a variety of whole-piece puzzles, and then add puzzles with more pieces.

INTEGRATION: Working with sturdy wooden puzzles is a good early learning experience for toddlers. Puzzles provide children with feedback about their movements, yet are forgiving of their lack of precision.

..... **SENSORY MOTOR DEVELOPMENT:** INDIVIDUAL, 16 TO 36 MONTHS

6-54w Whole-Piece Knobbed Puzzles

GOALS: Physical development and motor skills; cognitive development and general knowledge

MATERIALS: Whole-piece knobbed wooden puzzles

PROCEDURE: Have puzzles available for toddlers to manipulate and experiment with on their own. If toddlers are not familiar with this type of puzzle, remove a piece by lifting the knob. Encourage the toddler to pick up the puzzle pieces. If he does not try to imitate, help him. Place the child's fingers on the knob and help lift the puzzle piece. Place all but one of the pieces in the puzzle. Then, ask the toddler to place the final piece. Offer help as needed. Add puzzles with more pieces. When toddlers can identify the puzzle pieces, ask them to replace the piece you name.

INTEGRATION: This is the first step in helping toddlers work with puzzles. The knobs help with emerging small motor skills and provide variety in practicing these skills.

..... **APPROACHES TO LEARNING:** INDIVIDUAL OR SMALL GROUP, 8 TO 36 MONTHS

6-55w "Doing It" Songs

GOALS: Approaches to learning and play; language and communication development

MATERIALS: None

PROCEDURE: Talk to mobile infants and toddlers about what they do during the day. Tell them that you are going to make up a song about what they do. Encourage them to decide on motions to go with the words. If this is taking a long time, suggest appropriate movements to go with the verse. Try to get several related concepts. Ask them what they do in the morning or what they do when they get up. (Have a sequence that will work in your mind before you start, and only do as many verses as there is interest.) Sing to the tune of "Here We Go Round the Mulberry Bush."

This is the way we wash our hands, wash our hands, wash our hands.

This is the way we wash our hand so early in the morning.

Morning	
Get out of bed	Wash our hands
Brush our teeth	Comb our hair
Put on our clothes	Eat our breakfast
Come to school	
Substitute an activity theme such as cleaning house	
Sweep the floors	Vacuum the rugs
Make our beds	Wipe the table

Another variation is to ask mobile infants what they like to do and incorporate their name into the song.

This is the way Claudia plays with the ball, plays with the ball, plays with the ball.

This is the way Claudia plays with the ball, and plays with all her friends.

To promote healthy eating, you can sing "Doing It" songs as Jesse peels her banana, eats peas, and consumes other healthy foods.

INTEGRATION: Mobile infants begin to sing by "tagging on," that is, at the end of the songs they copy what they hear sung. They just lag a bit. Hearing more complex language and music develops more sophisticated language skills. Music uses many senses simultaneously; it makes mobile infants' brains "light up" in many different areas. These growing neural networks become the foundation of learning in many areas such as math and language. Whether or not children participate accurately is not as relevant as whether they participate actively and with purpose. Ensure that you include the music and words that reflect the culture of the children in the class.

..... **APPROACHES TO LEARNING:** INDIVIDUAL AND SMALL GROUP, 8 TO 36 MONTHS

6-56w Scribbling

GOALS: Approaches to play and learning; language and communication development; physical development and motor skills

MATERIALS: Thick chalk, white paper, tape, sponge, water

PROCEDURE: Tape paper to the table and let toddlers experiment with different colors of chalk and their effect on the paper. On another day, wet the paper with a sponge and let them use the chalk again. Talk with them about the differences. Let toddlers use both wet and dry paper. Encourage toddlers to compare the effects of the chalk on wet and dry paper from a sensory motor perspective as well as a visual perspective.

INTEGRATION: Mobile infants and toddlers are learning to use tools to draw. They need to be exposed to and

experiment with a variety of tools, learn their characteristics, and decide what they want to use based on their purpose.

• • • • • **APPROACHES TO LEARNING:** SMALL GROUP, 16 TO 36 MONTHS

6-57w Dress Up

GOALS: Approaches to play and learning; physical development and motor skills; cognitive development and general knowledge

MATERIALS: Hats, shoes, shirts, blouses, skirts, dresses, pants, jackets, scarves, ties

PROCEDURE: Encourage toddlers to dress up in the clothing. Talk with them about where they are going and what role they are playing. Focus on the self-help aspect of the play, and encourage toddlers to put on and take off the clothing. Be sure clothing is large enough to go on easily and short enough so they do not trip. As toddlers become more competent, encourage them to play together with complementary roles. Talk with toddlers about where they might be going in different “outfits.” Support their initial attempts at pretend play.

INTEGRATION: This is a fun way to teach adaptive skills and to help toddlers think about the relationship between what they are wearing and what they will be doing. Encourage their independence and the risks they take in what they choose to wear.

• • • • • **APPROACHES TO LEARNING:** SMALL GROUP, 16 TO 36 MONTHS

6-58w Print It

GOALS: Approaches to play and learning; physical development and motor skills

MATERIALS: Fingerpaint, washable table, fingerpaint paper

PROCEDURE: Put fingerpaint directly on the table and let toddlers fingerpaint (one color or two at most). You may have to model this behavior by showing them how to get started. Encourage them to experiment. When they are finished, ask whether they want to print their painting. If so, put the paper over the painting and smooth your hand over the paper to print the painting.

INTEGRATION: Fingerpainting is a messy activity. It requires aprons for toddlers and a pan of soapy water or ready access to a bathroom for hand washing. Fingerpaint paper is expensive. While toddlers are experimenting, using the table as a surface works well. Encourage them to be creative and explore what might be a new medium in their own way.

• • • • • **APPROACHES TO LEARNING:** SMALL GROUP, 16 TO 36 MONTHS

6-59w Stamps and Stickers

GOALS: Approaches to play and learning; physical development and motor skills; language and communication development

MATERIALS: Paper, stickers, stamps and ink, markers

PROCEDURE: Show the toddlers how to remove the stickers from the backing and make them stick to the paper. If stickers have a theme, take advantage of it to talk to toddlers. Give toddlers stamps and ink and show them how to make the stamp make a mark on the paper. Then encourage them to use the markers as part of the process.

INTEGRATION: Include different kinds of stickers, and stamps and talk about their purposes. Discuss the differences in the mediums they are using.

• • • • • **APPROACHES TO LEARNING:** INDIVIDUAL OR SMALL GROUP, 16 TO 36 MONTHS

6-60w Dog Walking

GOALS: Approaches to play and learning; social and emotional development; physical development and motor skills

MATERIALS: String, stuffed animals

PROCEDURE: Use the string to make a leash for the dogs (or other stuffed animals). Have one animal for each toddler. Talk about taking the dog for a walk and have toddlers walk around the room or outside, pulling the animal with the string. Talk about why we walk dogs and what you see on the walk. Make the walk a little longer and make more detailed observations. See whether the toddlers will pretend with you. Talk with them about pets and ask whether they have any. Discuss with them their feelings about their pets and the responsibilities for caregiving.

INTEGRATION: Do not forget to take off the leashes when you bring the dogs home. If you take an outside walk, be sure the animals are washable, and expect to wash them.

EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES

National Infant and Toddler Child Care Initiative of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the Child Care Bureau. Three modules are available: *Infant/Toddler: Curriculum and Individualization*, *Relationships: The heart of development and learning*, and *Infant/toddler development, screening, and assessment*. These are all in a PDF format. nitcci.nccic.acf.hhs.gov/resources/it_curriculum_module.pdf; nitcci.nccic.acf.hhs.gov/resources/relationships_module.pdf; nitcci.nccic.acf.hhs.gov/resources/it_development_module.pdf

KidsHealth from Nemours has many resources for parents and educators who work with infant and toddlers. It is possible to search by topic or search for infants and toddlers. There are different sites for parents and educators. <http://kidshealth.org/>

Sensory Processing Disorder provides ideas and examples of fine motor activities for infants, toddlers, and preschool children as well as information about sensory processing disorders <http://www.sensory-processing-disorder.com/infant-fine-motor-activities.html>