

Especially for parents of infants! 

Baby's First Games

 *Rhymes and Sound Awareness*

Familiar and made-up lap games introduce infants to the exciting world of playful interactions with others.

What is the practice?

First games help a baby learn to play with others. They also teach little ones how to get another person to do fun and interesting things.

What does the practice look like?

Lap games are back-and-forth, your-turn/my-turn play between an infant and a parent. Lap games are silly sayings and short rhymes. The adult does something and the child does something. The parent and child go back-and-forth playing the game.



How do you do the practice?

Here are some lap games that are sure to delight your young child. Search the Web using the term **parent infant lap games** to find more fun games for babies. The games in this practice guide get infants excited about playing and interacting with their parents. It is best to play games that include words and movements that especially interest your child.

Peek-a-Boo (also known as Peep Eye)

Most babies like peek-a-boo. Cover something (adult's face, baby's face, a favorite toy) and say, "Where is ____? What should we do?" Then uncover the person or thing and say, "Peek-a-boo! Peek-a-boo! I see you!" The game is often first played by hiding your own face with your hands. It can progress to covering your child's face with a small cloth or towel. You will be doing all or most of the game when first playing Peek-a-Boo. Try repeating the movement and words a few times. Then wait until your child does something to tell you to do it again. It won't take long for him to start removing a cloth from his face. Seeing you will likely get him to smile and vocalize to you.

So Big

Gently stretch your infant's arms above his head while saying, "How big is (child's name)? He is so, so, sooo big. Someone's gonna get you. Here comes a pig." The game ends with you saying, "Oink, oink" and kissing your child's tummy or neck. Infants will sometimes lift their arms to try to start or continue the game. Babies who can sit up on their own often stretch their hands and arms over their heads. Whenever your child tries to start the game, respond by playing the game. Keep the fun going!

Ride a Little Pony

Infants who can sit up with or without support delight in playing this game. Let your child sit on your knees facing you. Gently bounce him up and down. Say: "Ride a little pony down to town. Better be careful, so you don't fall down." As you say "don't fall down," pretend to let your child fall. Open your legs and let him slide down between them. Infants who enjoy this game will try to bounce when on the adult's knees to start or continue the fun.

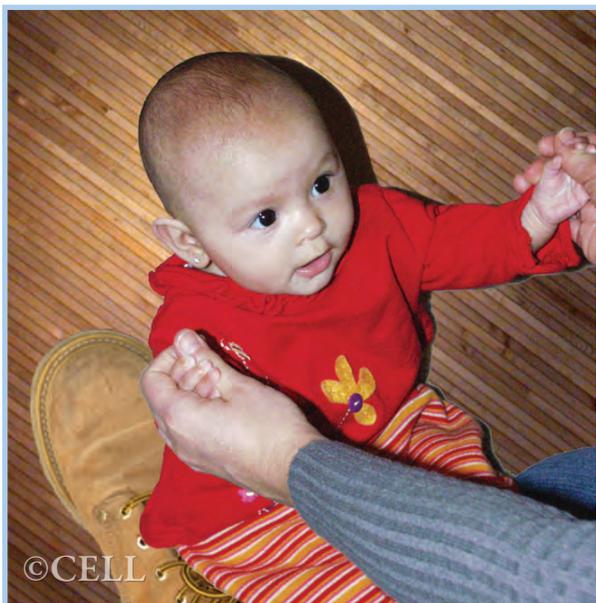
How do you know the practice worked?

- Does your child try to start or continue a game?
- Does your child smile or laugh when playing a game?
- Does your child vocalize to express delight?

Take a look at more of babies' first games ...

Peek-a-Boo to You!

Andy, 3 months old, and his father have found a fun way to play Peek-a-Boo. When Andy wakes up after sleeping, Dad hides behind Andy's favorite blanket and calls to his son. "Where's Andy? Where's Andy?" Hearing his father's voice, Andy starts cooing and wiggling with excitement. As soon as Andy "calls" back, Dad pops his head from behind the blanket and says, "Peek-a-boo! I see you!" Dad hides again and the game begins. Andy looks to the right and then to the left to see where his dad will appear next.



Heigh-Ho!

Five-month-old Cindy and her dad play many different rough-and-tumble games. She has learned to make sounds to tell her dad to "let the games begin!" Cindy especially likes "riding" on her dad's leg. Her father puts her in a sitting position on his foot facing him while holding her hands. He bounces her up-and-down while saying, "Ride a horse. Ride a horse. Cindy goes around. Not too fast, not too fast or Cindy falls down." He pretends to have her "crash." She looks at her dad and makes all kinds of sounds to get him to play the game again.

Mommy's Pratfalls

Robert is 10 months old. He isn't able to stretch his arms above his head because of some physical difficulties. But this does not stop his mother from playing lap games with him. She takes what Robert can do and turns it into a fun game. With Robert lying on his back, she gently pushes his feet so his knees bend toward his chest. Mom says, "Robert is so strong. What a big frown! He is so strong. He pushes me down." She then pretends to fall over. He gets more and more bright-eyed each time the game is played. Robert has started to laugh out loud as he pushes his feet to see his mother's antics!



Especially for parents of infants!

Sure Winner Lap Games

Rhymes and Sound Awareness

Parent–infant lap games are a joy to babies. The lap games in this practice guide are often the first ones a baby plays. They will help your child vocalize and “talk” to you more and more.

What is the practice?

Lap games like *Peek-a-Boo*, *So Big*, and *I’m Gonna Get You* help infants learn about give-and-take during parent/child play. They are also a lot of fun! The more times your child plays the games, the more she will try to be part of the activity. The more she tries, the more likely she will squeal and make gleeful sounds.



What does the practice look like?

Lap games are a fun way to encourage a child to watch, listen, and learn to play with others. Lap games are your-turn/my-turn activities. At first, you will do most of the work. When your child becomes more familiar with a game, she will try to begin or do part of a game. Encourage your child to start or continue a game. This will help her learn she can get someone to play with her.

How do you do the practice?

Here are several simple but powerful lap games. They will give you an idea about how to make your baby a “star player.” You can find many other lap games by searching the Web using *infant lap games*.

- Wait until your child is alert and well-rested. This will make the games more fun. Most infants like to lie on their backs or face-up on their parent’s lap while playing these games.
- Three lap games most infants enjoy are *Peek-a-Boo*, *So Big*, and *I’m Gonna Get You*. There are no right or wrong ways to play such games. The important thing about lap games is the give-and-take and back-and-forth play between you and your child.
- **Peek-a-Boo.** Cover your infant’s eyes with a cloth. Remove it, and say “Peek-a-boo, I see you.” Repeat the game when your child seems to enjoy it.
- **So Big.** Gently stretch your child’s arms above her head while saying “so big.” Kiss or blow raspberries on your child’s tummy after her arms are stretched out.
- **I’m Gonna Get You.** Say “I’m gonna get you.” Repeat the phrase three or four times. Move closer to your infant’s face and finally kiss or tickle her neck.
- Play lap games as often as your child seems to enjoy them. This will help your child learn how a game is played. Encourage her to do part of the movements of the game. This can be something like lifting her hands above her head while playing **So Big**. Any time your child vocalizes or makes any sounds, repeat them and make them part of the game.

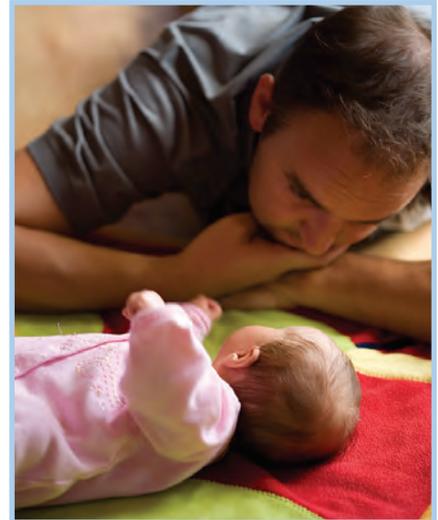
How do you know the practice worked?

- Does your child try to start or do some part of the game?
- Does your child squeal, make sounds, or laugh as each game ends?
- Does your child seem to recognize how the game is played?

Take a look at more infant lap games

Let's Play "So Big!"

Three-month-old Madison and her father have developed a unique way of playing **So Big**. She starts the game by raising her arms above her head and "hollering" to get her dad's attention. Dad then says, "Daddy sees Madison who is so, so big!" He tickles her under her arms. Madison squeals with delight and starts the game again. She and her dad repeat the game many times. Dad changes what he does by raising Madison's arms above her head and blowing raspberries on her tummy.



Hey, This Is Fun!

Daniel, 10 months old, loves it when his mother plays **I'm Gonna Get You**. Mom starts the game by holding her hands out in front of her and closing and opening them. She says, "I'm gonna get Danny, I'm gonna get Danny." She moves her hands closer and closer to her son's stomach. She finishes by gently grabbing Daniel around his tummy and rocking him back and forth. Daniel gets her to "do it again" by looking at his mother and babbling happily.

What a Kick!

Eli, 9 months old, isn't able to use his arms and hands very well. But his mother has found a fun way to play **Peek-a-Boo** with him. Eli loves to kick and does so often! His mother attaches a ribbon to a small towel. She ties the other end to Eli's ankle with a Velcro band. Mom gently bends Eli's legs while placing the cloth over his face. She asks "Where is Eli? Where is Eli?" Eli kicks off the towel. His mother exclaims, "Peek-a-boo! I see you!" Eli now bends his knees on his own to tell his mom he wants to play the game again.



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Made-Up Infant Lap Games

Rhymes and Sound Awareness

Made-up lap games can be just as much fun as tried-and-tested games. Here is an example of a game played by a parent whose infant has just learned to reach for things. It will give you some ideas about lap games you can make up and play with your own child.

What is the practice?

Lap games give infants opportunities to have adults repeat or start a game a child really likes or enjoys. These simple but very important activities help infants learn the your-turn/my-turn nature of adult-child interaction.

What does the practice look like?

Infants around 2 to 3 months of age become especially good at reaching for toys, food, and people. Infants are fascinated with what happens when they touch or swipe at something. Parents can use their baby's interest in reaching and turn it into a game. This will make the baby want to reach even more. Getting your child to do something he enjoys can be a fun learning activity.

How do you do the practice?

Here is how one father used made-up lap games with his daughter. See how she learned a fun way to play with her dad.

- The father saw that his daughter was especially interested in reaching for and touching his mouth.
- The first thing the father did was kiss his daughter's hands whenever she touched his mouth.
- The father changed the game by pretending to "nibble" on his daughter's fingers. This made the little girl squeal with delight. He said "munch, munch" every time his daughter reached toward his mouth.
- Finally, the father "made up" a rhyme to make the game even more fun. He said, "Daddy's getting hungry. He better eat some lunch. Can he eat (baby's name)'s fingers? Munch, munch, munch!" At the end of the rhyme he pretended that he was eating his daughter's fingers. The little girl hardly ever got tired of playing this game!



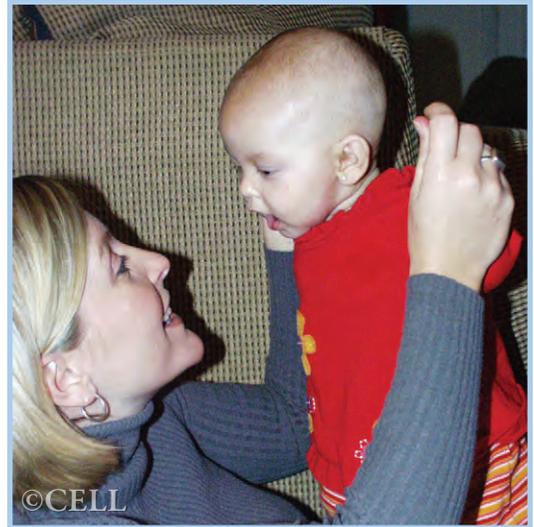
How do you know the practice worked?

- Does your child try to get you to play a game again?
- Does your child vocalize as part of playing a game?
- Does your child get excited during special parts of a game (e.g., by getting bright-eyed)?

Take a look at more made-up games ...

Kiss my nose!

Three-month-old Brianna especially enjoys a nursery rhyme her mother has made up. Here is how Mom gets her daughter to play the game. Mom says, "Brianna has 10 fingers. Brianna has 10 toes. Brianna has a big smile. Brianna has a tiny nose!" She touches her daughter's fingers, toes, and mouth and finally kisses the baby on the nose while saying the rhyme. Mom sometimes plays the game by holding Brianna's fingers and feet up in the air while she recites the rhyme. She waits for Brianna to smile and vocalize before kissing her on the nose.



Pull-up partners

Aisha, a 4-month-old, can't sit by herself without falling over. But she still loves to be in a sitting position! Her mother plays a game with Aisha that thrills her daughter. Mom places Aisha on her back. She holds out her hands for Aisha to grab onto and pull to a sitting position. Mom says, "Aisha's so strong. What can she do? Pull up, pull up. To see me and you!" Mom asks, "Do you want to play again?" She waits for Aisha to reach out toward her. Aisha squeals with delight while she reaches for her mom. The game continues!

Shake, Rattle, and Roll!

Luci has been home for five months after spending the first part of her life in the hospital. Mom and Dad spent a lot of time at the hospital with her. They would stroke and massage her arms and legs while she was in the hospital crib. After coming home, her parents noticed that Luci still likes to be touched whenever she is held. Mom turned the baby's interests into a simple but powerful game. Any time Luci moves an arm or leg Mom tickles and rubs her while saying "Luci's moving. Mommy knows. She likes to be touched. So here we go!" Luci has figured out to "shake, rattle, and roll." Mom massages and rubs the body part Luci moves. Mom tickles Luci after finishing her rhyme. Luci smiles and squeals with glee.



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Diaper Ch-Ch-Changes

Rhymes and Sound Awareness

Changing a baby's diapers isn't much fun! Why not make this routine a fun-filled activity to help your child learn communication skills?

What is the practice?

To add fun and learning to diaper changes, try playing simple word-and-movement games. These games are best played when your child is content while lying on her back and having her diaper changed. It won't take long for your child to enjoy these everyday moments. She will look forward to seeing what interesting and exciting things you are going to do next!



What does the practice look like?

Diaper-changing games are simple interactions you do to draw your baby into sound-and-movement play. It can be something as simple as describing what you are doing. Or responding to your child's vocalizations. You can even turn diaper-changing time into a sing-along.

How do you do the practice?

Try out some of these ideas to make diapering a fun early literacy activity for your baby:

- Make silly sounds to get your child's attention (*Shoo-whee! Phew!*). Try saying something like, "Do you smell that? What do you think?" Repeat any sounds your child makes. Encourage her to vocalize and get excited (but not too excited!).
- Describe what you are doing with a playful, sing-song rhyme. "Baby's got a dirty diaper. What should we *do*? Clean it up, clean it up, for Mommy and you!"
- Touch games often work well. As you are changing your infant's diaper, repeat sayings like "I'm gonna get you!" Move your face closer and closer to your child's face. Kiss her on the forehead or nose and say, "(Child's name) gets a kiss!"
- Pay attention to what your baby seems to like to do while having her diaper changed. Respond to your child's sounds and movements to make it a fun moment.
- Encourage your child to vocalize as much as you can. Make it a back-and-forth "chit-chat" with your child!

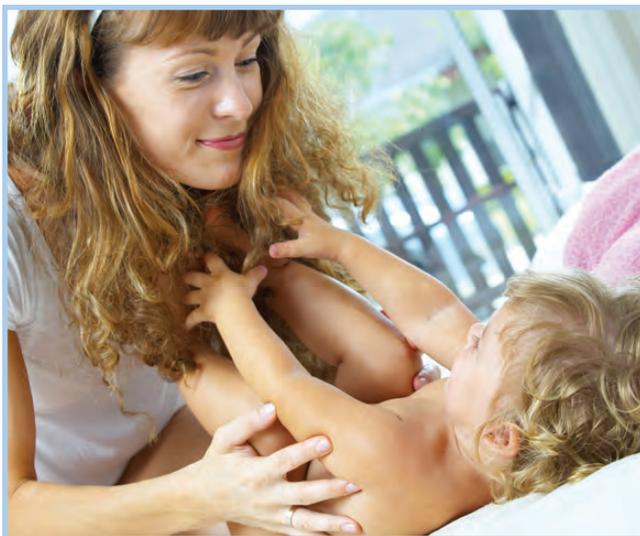
How do you know the practice worked?

- Does your child get excited and bright-eyed?
- Does your child look forward to being kissed or touched?
- Does your child vocalize as part of playing a game?

Take a look at more fun during diapering

Mobile Sounds

A colorful mobile hangs from the ceiling over 5-month-old Michelle's changing table. She gets to play with it while her diaper is being changed. Her father places Michelle so she can easily reach for, swipe at, and play with the dangling animal figures. As Michelle plays, Dad makes funny animal noises. Dad repeats these sounds again and again while changing her diaper. The more Michelle hears the sounds, the more she tries to repeat or say them. Playing with the mobile has turned diapering into a fun-filled "talking" match!



Change Game

Keenan especially likes to have his diaper changed. He waits eagerly while his mother leans over him so that he can look at her face. Mom invented a "Poopy Diaper Game" that makes this not-so-fun activity a bit more enjoyable. The game includes a made-up song ("Diaper change. Diaper change. Keenan needs a diaper change. Off with the old; on with the new. Keenan no longer smells pee-yoo!") while tickling Keenan's tummy at the end of each statement. Keenan has started wiggling and cooing at his mom to get her to play the diaper-changing game again.

Diaper Peek-a-Boo

Michael is 9 months old. He has some motor delays. But he loves playing with his mom! Michael's mother plays a game of peek-a-boo with Michael while changing his diaper. She places a small, light towel over his face and asks, "Where is Michael? Where is Michael?" Michael has learned, with the help of his mom, to pull off the towel so that she will say, "Peek-a-boo! I see you!" Mom repeats this three or four times while changing Michael's diaper. She ends the game by blowing raspberries on his tummy. The delighted baby always laughs out loud!



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Fingerplays and Rhymes for Little Ones

 Rhymes and Sound Awareness

Rhymes and fingerplays are fun ways for infants to learn new sounds and words. Fingerplays and nursery rhymes that infants enjoy can help babies learn to talk.

What is the practice?

Fingerplays and nursery rhymes give babies many opportunities to hear sounds and be part of fun and enjoyable activities. This handout includes ideas for ways to encourage your baby to learn sounds and take part in telling stories.

What does the practice look like?

Long before infants talk, they use gestures and movements to tell us what they want and what makes them happy. Fingerplays and nursery rhymes are enjoyable ways to pair sounds and words with movements. Even made-up fingerplays will get your child to play the game. You can find many different fingerplays searching the Web.



How do you do the practice?

Fingerplays and action rhymes are simple and direct. Find gestures and ways of moving your baby enjoys. Recite nursery rhymes or fingerplays that fit those movements and gestures.

- Start by identifying the movements and gestures your baby makes when touched. Does she like to be tickled? Will she let you pat her hands together like clapping? Does she like having “raspberries” blown on her tummy?
- Be sure your child is in a comfortable position. Lying on her back is often best when first using fingerplays and nursery rhymes with infants. If your child can sit up, that position works well, too.
- Fingerplays and nursery rhymes that involve body parts are easy and fun to do. Play *Pat-a-Cake* by gently patting your child’s palms together and saying the nursery rhyme. *This Little Piggy* is a fun game for infants. Your child will get to see and feel you touch their toes while hearing the silly rhyme. A baby’s first fingerplays and nursery rhymes should be short and repetitive.

How do you know the practice worked?

- Does your child try to make any movements when she hears the nursery rhyme?
- Does your child try to get you to play the game again?
- Does she make sounds more often while hearing the rhymes?

Take a look at more fingerplays and nursery rhymes

Tickled by Jack and Jill

Malik, 5 months old, loves to be tickled when playing games with his mother. Mom lets tickling be the climax of nursery rhymes she sings to Malik. One of Malik's favorites is *Jack and Jill*. As soon as Malik hears the nursery rhyme, he smiles and coos to his mother. Mom uses her fingers like little feet walking from Malik's toes up his legs and across his chest. Then she tickles Malik's neck and says, "And Jill came tumbling after!" She moves her fingers quickly down to the baby's toes again. "Should we do it again?" Malik wiggles all over to tell his mother yes!



Raspberry Pat-a-Cake!

Will, 4 months old, has "happy hands!" He reaches out and touches everything in view. His father has turned reaching into a game of *Pat-a-Cake* with Will. Dad holds his hands out for Will to grab as he reaches toward him. Dad begins the game by saying "Pat-a-cake, pat-a-cake," while gently patting Will's hands together. When saying "roll it," Dad wraps his hands around Will's hands. When saying "pat it," he takes Will's hands and pats them on his son's tummy. Then he says, "Put it in the oven for Will and me." At the end of the nursery rhyme he blows "raspberries" on Will's tummy. Will loves the game! Now he tries to start games of *Pat-a-Cake* by grabbing anyone's hands and bouncing them!

This Little Piggy

Low vision doesn't stop Mandy from enjoying fingerplays. Eight-month-old Mandy's favorite game is *This Little Piggy*. Her mother only has to mention the game and Mandy starts kicking to say she's ready to play. Mom has turned this nursery rhyme into a special game for Mandy. She grabs and wiggles each of Mandy's toes as she recites the rhyme. When saying, "Wee, wee, wee! All the way home," she tickles the bottoms of Mandy's feet. Mandy kicks and chuckles, and the game begins again!



Especially for parents of infants!

More Infant Nursery Rhymes

Rhymes and Sound Awareness

Nursery rhymes are enjoyed by infants at even a very early age. Rhyming poems like those in this handout are sure to encourage your baby to listen, make sounds, and have fun!

What is the practice?

Nursery rhymes that include the same sounds along with adult hand movements are highly entertaining to young children! Rhymes provide your child opportunities to listen and begin to notice when sounds are similar and different.

What does the practice look like?

Infant nursery rhymes are short, silly poems that introduce infants to the world of sounds and speech. Nursery rhymes are both entertaining and such fun. Your child will want to take an active part in getting you to say them again. Your baby will make hand movements, sounds, and try to repeat words that he hears.



How do you do the practice?

Here are a few nursery rhymes that your child will find fun and enjoyable. Pick a nursery rhyme that you think will catch your child's interest. Then settle into a position facing your child. It's time for fun!

Bumble Bee, Bumble Bee

Bumble bee, bumble bee. (Move your index finger in circles and "make it fly" toward your child.)
Straight from the farm.

Bumble bee, bumble bee. (Repeat the index finger movements.)

Flies under your arm. (Tickle the child under the arm while making a bee sound.)

Little Fishes

Little fishes in a brook. (Make hands move like fish.)

Baby caught them with a hook. (Pretend to hook a fish on a fishing rod.)

Fry them, fry them in a pan. (Pretend to hold a frying pan.)

Eat the fish as fast as you can. (Pretend to eat the "fish.")

Rock-a-Bye, Baby

Rock-a-bye, Baby, on a tree top. (Cradle the baby in your arms.)

When the wind blows, the cradle will rock. (Rock the baby back and forth.)

When the bough breaks, the cradle will fall. (Gently put the baby on a sofa or bed.)

And down will come baby, cradle and all. (Tickle or kiss the child after placing him down.)

How do you know the practice worked?

- Does your child pay attention to the different hand movements?
- Does your child listen for the "punch line" in the nursery rhyme?
- Does your child squeal and get excited when hearing the nursery rhyme?

Take a look at more infant nursery rhymes

Tickled by Buzzing Bee

Chloe, 7 months old, is sitting on the floor facing her father. He asks his daughter if she wants to play “Bumble Bee.” Chloe immediately starts moving her hands and fingers in a back-and-forth motion. “Bumble Bee” is a nursery-rhyme game her father has played with Chloe many times. Dad says the rhyme while using his index fingers to flutter about like a bee. While reciting the last part of the rhyme, he tickles Chloe under her arms while saying “Bzzzz!” Chloe smiles and laughs. Dad says, “It’s Chloe’s turn.” Chloe tries to make bee movements and sounds as her dad says the nursery rhyme. She tries to tickle her dad while saying something that sounds like a bee sound. They play the back-and-forth, your turn/my turn game over and over.



Little Fishes

Seven-month-old Ethan is waiting in his baby seat while his mom makes him some lunch. Big sister Sophie entertains her baby brother with the game “Little Fishes.” “Does Ethan want to hear ‘Little Fishes’?” she asks. Ethan smiles and starts slapping his tray. Sophie begins the nursery rhyme by putting her hands around Ethan’s hands. She makes a back-and-forth motion like a fish swimming. She says, “Ethan caught them with a hook,” and pretends to catch a fish. Ethan tries to imitate her. She says the last verse of the rhyme. She and Ethan pretend to eat the fish with their hands up to their mouths and making “eating” sounds.

Accessible Fun

One-year-old Amanda has limited mobility. She has difficulties making the kinds of movements that are part of nursery rhymes. Amanda’s mom has learned to say “Not to worry!” She uses stuffed animals that recite nursery rhymes when they are touched or squeezed. Mom shows Amanda one of the animals. It is one that Amanda has learned to make work so she can hear the nursery rhyme. As the nursery rhyme is playing, Mom makes the movements that go with the nursery rhyme for Amanda. Mom waits for Amanda to “tell” her she wants to hear the nursery rhyme again. She makes sounds and tries to reach for the stuffed animal to have Mom do it again.



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More Infant Fingerplays

Rhymes and Sound Awareness

Baby games combine simple, rhyming phrases with interesting movements. They help infants become familiar with the meanings of sounds and words.

What is the practice?

Simple, repetitive fingerplays introduce infants to the world of rhymes. These delightful games will provide your child opportunities to listen, hear, and learn the sounds in words.

What does the practice look like?

Fingerplays include short rhyming phrases together with movements of the hands or arms to tell the fingerplay "story." The best infant fingerplays are ones that are short and repetitive. They are about things that likely will spark your child's interest.



How do you do the practice?

Here are some fingerplays that will surely delight your child. Search the Web using the term "**infant fingerplays**" for more ideas. Select ones that you think your child will especially like. Try out two or three fingerplays until you find one that really excites your little one.

Baby's Eyes

Blue-eyed babies. (Point to your eye.)
Brown-eyed, too. (Point to your other eye.)
Pat-a-cake, pat-a-cake. (Clap your hands.)
I see you. (Cover your eyes and uncover.)

Fe Fi Fo Fum

Fe fi fo fum. (Touch each finger with thumb—one finger per syllable.)
See my fingers. (Hold up four fingers.)
See my thumb. (Hold up thumb.)
Fe fi fo fum. (Touch each finger with thumb again.)
Good-bye fingers. (Close fingers toward palm.)
Good-bye thumb. (Close thumb under fingers.)

Baby's Fingers

These are Baby's fingers. (Touch the baby's fingers.)
These are Baby's toes. (Touch the baby's toes.)
This is Baby's tummy button. (Touch the baby's stomach.)
Round and round it goes! (Gently circle belly button.)

Beehive

Here is the beehive, where are the bees?
(Clench your fist.)
Hidden away where nobody sees.
(Pretend to look inside your fist.)
Open it up and out they fly. (Open fist and bring out fingers quickly one by one.)
One, two, three, four, five, buzzz. (Tickle your child's neck while saying "buzz.")

How do you know the practice worked?

- Does your child look and listen closely?
- Does she get excited during the finger-play?
- Does your child try to do any of the fingerplay movements?

Take a look at babies enjoying fingerplays

Adding to the Fun of “Baby’s Eyes”

It looks like seven-month-old Sophia is going to be a very good listener. Every time her mother does her favorite fingerplay, she becomes bright-eyed, giggles, and laughs. She hangs onto every word her mom says. *Baby’s Eyes* is the fingerplay that Sophia’s mom has changed to make it her special rhyme. While reciting the nursery rhyme, she first points to Sophia’s right eye, then her left eye. She helps her clap her hands together and then covers her face with a cloth. She says, “I see you!” when Sophia removes the cloth from her face. Sophia has started putting the cloth on her own face to get her mom to repeat the game.



“Inch Worm” in the Tub

Christopher, big brother Todd, and their mother are having fun playing at bath time. Mom knows that 11-month-old Chris likes hearing *Inch Worm* (below). She asks Todd to show her a plastic squeeze toy of a worm. This is her way of saying it’s time for the fingerplay. Chris lets her know he wants to play by getting excited and trying to make a squeaking sound. His mother responds by reciting the words to the fingerplay and making all the hand movements.

Inch worm, inch worm, inching along. (Bend index finger and move it up and down.)

Inch worm, inch worm, singing a song. (Cup hand by ear like listening.)

Inch worm, inch worm, before the day ends. (Put hands in circle over head, then drop arms flat to sides.)

Inch worm, inch worm, will you be my friend? (Put hands out, palm up.)

She finishes by letting Todd make the toy worm “nibble” on Chris’ neck. She also says, “Kiss, kiss, the inch worm kisses Chris!”

These Are Baby’s Fingers

Eli’s mother has found a fun way of playing fingerplays with her 9-month-old son who is deaf. She uses sign language together with the words while doing fingerplays. This helps Eli make the connection between the signs, words, and movements. Eli especially likes “*These Are Baby’s Fingers*.” He gets to see the signs and have his body parts tickled while playing the game. He especially likes seeing the sign for round and round. This tells him he is about to have his tummy tickled. Eli tries to use sign language to have his mother repeat the fingerplay.



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Prime Time Nursery Rhymes

Rhymes and Sound Awareness

Here are some nursery rhymes that are likely to be especially fun and entertaining for your child. They are one way that infants learn about sounds, words, and simple stories.

What is the practice?

Nursery rhymes are simple, repetitive poems you can say or sing to your young child. They can be especially fun and enjoyable parent-child activities. Rhyming games help infants pay attention to sounds. They provide opportunities for your child to “ask for more” and to become familiar with sounds and words.



What does the practice look like?

The best nursery rhymes are ones that include some type of movement or some type of touching. Your child will learn how different sounds, words, and things go together as part of a nursery rhyme. Imagine a parent reciting the words to “Baby’s Name.” While being tickled and touched, the baby listens to every sound and watches every movement. You can just see why nursery rhymes are so much fun!

How do you do the practice?

Nursery rhymes are not only fun and enjoyable; they have an important purpose. These parent-infant games help your child be an active partner in listening to, doing, and saying the nursery rhyme. Try different rhymes to find ones that your child especially enjoys.

Dancing Fingers

Fingers are up, (*Wiggle fingers, pointing up.*)
Fingers are down. (*Wiggle fingers, pointing down.*)
Fingers are dancing, (*Make fingers appear to dance.*)
All over town. (*Run dancing fingers on the child’s tummy.*)

Blow, Wind, Blow

See the trees move (*Move your arm back and forth.*)
To and fro.
See the trees move
Blow wind, blow. (*Gently blow on child’s tummy or face.*)

Make Baby Smile

I can make baby smile. (*Gently touch the child’s mouth.*)
By tickling her toes, (*Tickle the child’s feet.*)
I can make baby smile (*Gently touch the child’s mouth.*)
By kissing her on the nose! (*Kiss the child on his or her nose.*)

Baby’s Name

What is your name? (*Point to the child.*)
I just want to know. (*Point to yourself.*)
Your name is _____. (*Say the infant’s name.*)
Hello, hello, hello! (*Wave to the child.*)

Blow Me A Kiss

Tell me you love me, (*Cross your heart.*)
And blow me a kiss. (*Blow the child a kiss.*)
Aim good and straight (*Gently place the
child’s hand on his or her mouth.*)
So you don’t miss. (*Pretend to catch
the kiss.*)

How do you know the practice worked?

- Does your child try to make any of the nursery rhyme movements?
- Does your child show signs that she knows what is about to happen?
- Does your child make sounds while playing the games?

Take a look at more fun with nursery rhymes

Do It Again!

Three-month-old Charlene is lying stretched-out on her back on her mother's legs looking up at her. Mom starts what has become a familiar game between her and her daughter. She says, "Can you smile for me? I can make Charlene smile by tickling her toes. I can make Charlene smile by kissing her nose!" Charlene has learned to lift her leg to have her toes tickled. She starts to blink her eyes, knowing her mom is about to kiss her nose. Mom asks, "Do you want to play again?" Charlene squeals and gets excited to tell her mom to "do it again!"



Meal Time Sing-Along



Nine-month-old Jilly is sitting in her highchair while her mother fixes her something to eat. Mom and Jilly have turned this everyday routine into a kind of sing-along. Mom starts by saying, "It's time to eat (pointing to her mouth while making the sign for eat). Let's get ready. It's time to eat! (pointing to Jilly's mouth while making the sign for eat). You'll feel so happy (while smiling to Jilly)." Jilly tries to continue the game by putting her hand up to her mouth. Her mother repeats the made-up nursery rhyme. Jilly touches her mother's mouth and then her own. The more they play, the more excited Jilly gets. She clearly shows delight in playing the game.

Dancing Fingers

Seven-month-old Josué is barely able to lift his hands or arms because of a rare muscular condition. His mother has figured out how to entertain her son with nursery rhymes. She plays "Dancing Fingers" with him. She holds Josué's arms up and uses her fingers to move his fingers. He shows he enjoys this game by looking at his mother's face. He even tries to get his mother to continue the game by making sounds and by getting excited. His mother has noticed that Josué is trying as hard as he can to move his fingers on his own. Mom repeats the nursery rhyme whenever he does this.

