

Especially for practitioners working with infants!

Diaper-Changing Games

Sound Awareness

Changing a baby's diaper is sometimes not much fun for parents or other caregivers. Here is how you can turn this frequently occurring routine into a fun-filled learning activity.

What is the practice?

This practice involves using a routine daily activity to build a child's skill at listening and interacting with adults — important skills for communication. This is done by playing simple word-and-movement games as part of diaper changing. The games are best played when the child seems content to be lying on her back and having her diaper changed. It will not take long for the child to look forward to what you will do next and express it by vocalizing and showing excitement.

What does the practice look like?



Diapering games use diaper changing as a way to involve a child in sound and movement play, depending on her interest. It can be something as simple as describing what you are doing and responding to your child's vocalizations. Try turning diapering into a "sing-along."

How do you do the practice?

Here are some ideas you can try to make diaper changing time a fun activity. Encourage parents to use them while changing their baby's diaper.

- Make funny sounds to get the child's attention (e.g., "Phew!"). Try saying something like, "Did you smell that? What do you think?" Repeat any sounds the child makes. Be responsive to and encourage her to vocalize and get excited (but not too excited!).
- Describe what you are doing in a playful manner. "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 the infant's diaper, repeat phrases like "I'm gonna get you!" Move your face closer and closer to your child's face. Kiss her on the forehead while saying "[Child's name] gets a kiss!"
- Pay attention to what the child seems to like to do while having her diaper changed. Find ways to respond to the child's sounds and movements to make diaper changing fun.
- Encourage the child to vocalize as much as you can. You want to have a conversation (of sorts) with the child.

How do you know the practice worked?

- Does the child get excited or bright-eyed?
- Does the child anticipate being kissed or touched?
- Does the child vocalize as part of playing the game?

Take a look at more fun with diaper-changing games

Talking Match

The diaper-changing table in Grace's classroom has a favorite mobile hanging from the ceiling. The infants in her care get to play with it while being changed. Grace places 6-month-old Helen so that she can easily reach and swipe at the mobile during diaper changing. Grace interjects into Helen's play the different sounds that the mobile seems to make. She repeats these sounds many times during almost every diaper changing routine. The more Helen hears the sounds, the more she tries to repeat or say them. Playing with the mobile has turned into a fun-filled talking match!



"This Is Fun!"

Fourteen-month-old Keenan likes to have his diaper changed when 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 both for her and Keenan. 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-you!) Mom tickles Keenan's tummy at the end of each statement. Keenan has started smiling and vocalizing at his Mom to get her to play their diaper-changing game.

"I See You!"

Nine-month-old Sammy has some motor delays, but his early interventionist Evan noticed how excited Sammy gets when interacting with people. Evan helped Sammy's mother develop a quick, simple game that uses his love of face-to-face contact to help build his motor skills. Sammy's mother engages him in a simple game of Peek-a-Boo while changing his diaper. She places a small towel over his face and says repeatedly "Where is Sammy? Where is Sammy?" Sammy pulls off the towel—first with help, then on his own—and his mother says "Peek-a-Boo! I see you!" She repeats this three or four times while changing Sammy's diaper. The game ends by blowing raspberries on his tummy, which has Sammy laughing out loud.

