

### Art, Music, and Movement: Shake It Up

Kids will engage

- Responding to sounds
- Creating sounds and music

Create a safe space for your infant and let them know that you are going to explore sounds and shakers. Shake the shakers near your infant so they can see and hear them. If your child can hold objects, offer them a shaker to use. Have a few shakers ready, as your child may want to hold one in each hand. Comment on your infant's reaction to the noise produced by the shaker. If your child can't hold items yet, describe the noise the shaker

makes when you move it and repeat the sounds they seem to enjoy (e.g., "Your eyes got really big when I shook the shaker"). If your child can hold items, describe how they are moving the shaker and the noise it produces (e.g., "You're holding one shaker in each hand; one shaker makes a very loud noise, and one makes a softer noise"). Your infant may enjoy mouthing the shaker, passing it back and forth between hands, shaking one in each hand, and repeating these actions to continue producing the same noises.

To create homemade shakers, use a variety of containers like plastic eggs, plastic spice jars, formula bottles, plastic baby food containers, travel shampoo containers, or water bottles. Fill each container with different items like fish tank gravel, pennies, sand, beads, rice, beans, screws, or nails.

### Communication, language and literacy: Rhyming Fun for Early Reading Skills

Rhyming, such as with words that have the same ending sounds like "clock" and "dock," is a key element in learning to read and sound out words.

Engaging in playful rhyming activities can boost your child's enjoyment and help them remember new vocabulary and rhyming sounds. To begin, tell your child that you will be saying and singing nursery rhymes. Some good rhymes to start with include "Hickory, Dickory, Dock," "Row, Row, Row Your Boat," "Baa, Baa Black Sheep," "Little Miss Muffet," "Rub-a-Dub-Dub," and "Jack and Jill."

As you recite the rhymes, emphasize the rhyming words: "Hickory, dickory, dock. The mouse ran up the clock." After each rhyme, point out the rhyming words: "Dock and clock; those words rhyme!" This helps children recognize the cadence or rhythm of the rhyme. Repeat each rhyme several times so your child can learn all the words and specifically hear the emphasized rhyming words. Children may ask you to repeat the entire rhyme, a few words from the rhyme, or just the rhyming words. Repetition is crucial for building familiarity, maintaining interest, and giving

Kids will engage

- Hearing words that rhyme
- Repeating rhyming words and nursery rhymes

children the chance to join in and spontaneously say the rhymes. Acknowledge both common rhyming words and nonsense rhyming words.

### **Early Math and Discovery: Exploring objects**

Kids will engage

- Looking at or handling one object and then another.
- Gathering three or more objects

If your infant can't yet grasp objects, hold an interesting toy over their face for them to watch. For infants who can sit with support but can't grasp objects, hold toys in each of your hands for them to observe. Give your child ample time

to look at one toy before shaking the toy in your other hand.

If your infant can grasp objects and sit, either with your support or independently, give them a toy to hold and explore. Younger infants might hold the toy with one hand, while older infants may transfer the toy from one hand to another. Introduce a new toy and watch your child's reaction (e.g., they might glance at the new toy but continue exploring the first one, or drop the first toy to grab the new one). Older infants will enjoy sitting on the floor with toys spread around them, reaching for and picking up two toys, one in each hand, exploring toys by looking at each one in turn, or placing toys in their mouth.

Older infants may start collecting toys and placing them in a pile. When children gather toys or objects like this, it indicates they can focus on more than one object at a time, marking a developmental milestone.

### **Myself and other: Observing and Responding to Your Infant's Emotions**

As you spend time with your infant, observe how they communicate different emotions—crying, tensing up, smiling, kicking their feet, babbling, laughing, or simply gazing contentedly. Older infants will start initiating physical contact by kissing, patting, hugging, hitting, or even biting. Your response to your child will depend on their needs, emotions, and developmental stage.

Kids will engage

- Expressing emotions with their face and /or body.
- Initiating physical contact with other people to express emotions.

When infants cry, they are usually expressing a need. Talk to your child and identify their emotions and needs (e.g., “You’re so sad right now. You have such a hungry tummy”). This helps your child learn to be comforted by your voice and physical contact. When infants smile, they show happiness and enjoyment of your company. Smile back, talk to, kiss, and gently touch your child to show that you enjoy their company too. As infants grow, their range of emotional expressions will expand (e.g., fear, anger, amusement). Pay attention to their cues, and continue

doing what amuses them, or switch to a different toy, position, or activity if they show signs of disinterest.

Older infants will begin initiating physical contact with you and others. Sometimes, this contact might not be pleasant; for example, if your child bites you out of anger or frustration, you might feel shocked. It's important to calmly say something like, "You're angry I took that away from you, but it's not safe to chew on." By responding this way, you acknowledge your infant's anger, name the emotion, and explain the reason behind it. This helps infants learn to manage their emotions in appropriate ways as they develop.

### **Physical Development and Healthy Habits: Activities for Infants: Enhancing Movement Awareness**

Kids will engage

- Stretching their leg muscles and kicking their feet.
- Cause and effect – moving their bodies and causing objects to move.

For non-mobile infants:

- While your infant is sitting up or lying down, place your palms on the bottoms of their feet. This will likely encourage your child to push against or kick your hands.
- Repeat this activity with your infant's feet up against a sturdy, padded piece of

furniture, like a couch. You can also dangle ribbons or a small blanket near their feet for them to kick. Infants will enjoy watching the ribbons move and feeling them against their feet as they kick. This helps increase their awareness of their bodies and how they can use them.

For mobile infants:

- Choose a space where your infant has room to move and offer some balls to kick. Be prepared for your child to possibly choose to throw the balls instead.
- Describe your infant's actions. For example, you might say, "You're kicking against my hands! Kick, kick!"
- Comment on how your child chooses to use the balls and join them in the same activity. Describe how your child is moving their body and the effect those movements have on the ball. For example, you might say, "You swung your leg back and kicked the ball. It rolled all the way under the window" or "You held the ball in both hands and threw it way up." These comments help increase your child's awareness of their bodies and the different ways they can use them.

### Art , Music and Movement : Musical Fun with Toddlers

Encourage your toddler to make music with their instrument in different ways. Copy your child's actions with your instrument and describe what you are doing to help boost their awareness and confidence in their ideas.

Kids will engage

- Moving their bodies in various ways.
- Initiating and copying movements.

Demonstrate another way to play the instrument (e.g., fast, slow, quietly) and explain what you are doing (e.g., “You’re tapping yours really fast; I’m going to try tapping mine slowly”). This helps children think about new and different ways to use their bodies and materials. After playing with the instrument for a while, invite your child to lead a parade around the room or another open space. Let your child be the leader and decide where to go.

Ideas for Homemade Instruments:

- Drums: Use recycled coffee cans, boxes with lids, oatmeal canisters, or small bowls or baskets. Children can bang on them with their hands or with kitchen utensils like wooden spoons or spatulas.
- Shakers: Put a few small items (e.g., beads, rocks) in a recycled plastic water or soda bottle and secure the cap.
- Chimes: Use metal bowls or pans that children can tap on with whisks, spoons, plastic forks, or plastic combs.
- Cymbals: Give children two metal lids or two metal pie tins to use as cymbals.

### Communication. Language and Literacy :Engaging with Your Infant Through Conversation and Play

Kids will engage

- Responding to your voice in a variety of ways
- Responding nonverbally to simple statements or requests

Place younger infants on their back on a blanket on the floor, a changing table, or a bed. Older infants who can sit independently can be placed on the floor or another suitable spot. If your infant is lying on their back, start by saying something like, “It feels good

to stretch out on your back and kick your legs!” Model conversation patterns by pausing between sentences, allowing your infant time to observe your facial expressions, process your words and voice inflections, and formulate a response. Your child may respond by making eye contact, smiling, or cooing.

Try moving to the opposite side from where your child is looking and call their name to see if they respond. Make a game out of it by moving to the other side and seeing if your child moves their head to find your voice.

Frequent opportunities to hear language (called receptive language) help infants begin to understand your words. Play a game by saying something like, “I’m going to touch your nose!” and then pause. If your infant doesn’t respond (by wrinkling or touching their nose), touch their nose and say, “I found your nose!” If your infant does touch their nose, it indicates understanding and readiness to continue playing (e.g., replace “nose” with “toes”).

### **Early Match and Discovery: Laundry Time Fun with Your Child**

Tell your child that you need help with the laundry today. Gather all the socks into one pile and say something like, “All of our socks are mixed up, and I need your help. Can you find which socks belong together?”

Kids will engage

- Matching socks based on color and other attributes
- Noticing similarities and differences

Let your child closely examine the socks and hold them up together. They might find matching socks, socks of the same color but different lengths, or socks of the same length but different colors. Your child might also just play with the socks. Describe what your child is doing while identifying the characteristics of the socks. For example, you could say, “You found two short white socks; that’s a match!” or “You found a short black sock and a long black sock; I wonder if you can find two black socks that are both short” or “You’re exploring the pile of socks. I see a red sock, a yellow sock, and a blue sock.” Pointing out the socks’ characteristics will help increase your child’s awareness and vocabulary for similarities and differences.

### **Other and I: Observing and Supporting Your Child's Play**

Kids will engage

- Returning to an object of interest
- Pointing to or showing something they played with

As you play with your children, notice which toys or objects they prefer and how they interact with them. This information will help you support your toddlers as they

develop the ability to form and hold images in their minds.

Highlight your toddler’s growing ability to remember the location of items. For example, when your child returns to a sippy cup, you could say, “You left your sippy cup on the couch before nap time. You remembered where it was!” Older toddlers may start to point to or show you things they played with, and eventually, they will be able to tell you about something they did shortly

after it happened. To support these developing skills, talk to your toddlers as they play, imitate their actions, and comment on what both of you are doing.

### **Physical Development and Healthy Habits: Interactive Movement Song**

Start the activity by singing a simple, familiar song or use a familiar tune and sing something like this to the tune of “Row, Row, Row Your Boat”:

March, march, march your feet as we sing this song.

March, march, march your feet as we sing this song.

March your feet as you sing.

Ask your child to show you (if nonverbal) or tell you (if verbal) another way to move. Give them time to think, decide, and demonstrate a movement, then copy and name their idea (e.g., “You’re wiggling your hips”). Continue the song from the beginning, changing the words to match the actions (e.g., “Wiggle, wiggle, wiggle your hips as we sing this song”) or simply copy your child’s movement. Try several ideas, ask your child for input, and suggest other ways to move. You can do this activity in one spot (e.g., marching in place) or move around an open space (e.g., marching in a circle).

Kids will engage

- Trying out different physical movements
- Making suggestions to others about how to move
- Copying the ideas of others.

Preschool

### **Art , Music and Movement :Creating a Favorite Songs Book**

Kids will engage

- Drawing
- Singing
- Writing

Share one of your favorite songs with your children or ask them to sing one of their favorite songs to you. Tell them you want to create a book that includes all their favorite songs. Have each child write down their favorite songs on separate

pieces of paper while you do the same. If they can't write all the words, help them, or let them write a single word to represent the song. Even young toddlers have favorite songs, so draw simple pictures to represent the songs they enjoy. For example, if they like "Itsy Bitsy Spider," draw a spider on the page.

Encourage them to decorate each song page to make it colorful. If they can't write the full title of the song, suggest drawing pictures or designs that help them remember the song. Once all the pages are decorated, punch holes in them and place them in a binder or simply put them in a

folder. You could even record your children singing and performing their songs and play it back later so they can sing along.

### **Communication, Language and Literacy: Guess the Drawing Game**

Tell the children that you're going to give them a clue, and they will have to guess what you're drawing. Draw one line of a letter at a time and ask the children to guess which letter it will be. Respond to their guesses with comments, following these steps to guess the letter "R":

Kids will engage

- Alphabetic Knowledge

1. Draw a straight vertical line and say, "This could be an L because L has a tall straight line, but I'm thinking of a different letter."
2. Next, draw the curved part at the top and say, "This looks like a P, doesn't it? But I'm not done making the letter I'm thinking of."
3. Finally, draw the bottom diagonal line and say, "I'll draw one more short line. Can you tell me what it is now?"

For younger children, use letters they are most familiar with, such as the letter their first or last name starts with. This game can also be adapted for any drawing, like a face or a bird. For older children, you can have them guess a whole word, watching you write one letter at a time, or you can reverse roles and have the child do the drawing while you guess.

### **Math , Science and technology: Measuring Fun with Yarn**

Kids will engage

- Measuring
- Comparing Sizes
- Cutting
- Numbers

Take a piece of yarn and stretch it out from the child's head to their toes. Cut the yarn and tape it to a wall, taping at the bottom to keep it straight. Label the yarn with the child's name to show them how tall they are.

Then, tell the children that they are going on a hunt around the house to find out how long or tall other things are. Let them choose the items they want to measure and make sure they have a standard measuring tool, such as a ruler, yardstick, or tape measure. Help them count the number of inches or feet of the objects they find.

Next, measure a piece of yarn the same length as the object and cut it. Tape it to the wall at the top and bottom next to the yarn that shows their height. Label the yarn with masking tape to indicate what object it represents.

When the children have finished measuring, make observations about their results, such as:

- “The \_\_\_\_ is the longest object you measured.”
- “The \_\_\_\_ is the shortest.”

Ask questions to prompt discussion, such as:

- How could we reorganize the pieces of yarn? (shortest to longest, longest to shortest)
- What was your favorite object to measure?

For younger children, skip the ruler and just ask them to find something big or small. For older children, have them write down the measurements of the objects they measure.

### **Others and I: Helping Children Express Their Feelings**

Everyone experiences ups and downs, including children. Helping them express their feelings can create a calmer household. Start by making a feelings cube. Tape pictures of people expressing different emotions (from family photos, magazine clippings, or images found online) to a small box.

Kids will engage

- Understanding and expressing feelings
- Reading

Next, read a book about feelings with your child. Here are some recommendations:

- *\*Miss Spider’s Tea Party\** by David Kirk
- *\*Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day\** by Judith Viorst
- *\*The Teacher from the Black Lagoon\** by Mike Thaler and Jared Lee
- *\*My Many Colored Days\** by Dr. Seuss
- *\*When Sophie Gets Angry\** by Molly Bang

After reading the story, review the events on each page and ask questions like:

- “Do you remember what happened on this page?”



- “Why do you think the character was feeling so \_\_\_\_?”
- “Do you like or dislike this story? Why?”

After discussing the story, introduce the feelings cube. Explain that they will roll the cube and mimic the expression it lands on. Take turns and exaggerate your facial expressions! Describe what you see using feeling words. For younger children, use simple words like “sad” or “happy.” For older children, introduce more complex vocabulary like “depressed” or “concerned.” Guide the conversation to discuss how to handle those emotions appropriately, such as talking about their feelings.

End the activity by singing “If You’re Happy and You Know It!” For older children, this can become a daily practice where they create a journal to write or draw their feelings for the day.

### **Physical Development and Healthy Habits: Sponge Throwing Game for Kids**

Kids will engage

- Throwing
- Eye-hand coordination

Have the children warm up their throwing arms with simple exercises like windmills and shoulder rolls. Give each child a sponge and set up a box a few feet away. Instruct the children to try throwing their sponge into the box. Then, place several more boxes around them or in a line and challenge the children to throw the sponge into each box. Provide various items for the children to throw, such as balls, small pillows, bean bags, or a rolled-up sock. Adjust the distance of the boxes to make the activity fun and appropriately challenging without causing frustration. Take turns throwing them into the boxes, showing excitement when a child succeeds and offering guiding comments or questions when they miss. For example, say, “Can you think of another way to throw your sponge?” or “Last time you got it in when you slowed down and took a breath before throwing.”

For younger children, use larger, open containers like laundry baskets and place them closer to the children. For older children, consider using alternative containers like laundry baskets or mixing bowls. You can also assign a number to each container and ask the children to write down the number each time they successfully throw into that basket.