

The Learning Child: Keys to Enhancing Learning

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Lesson Goals:

The goal of this program is to provide information about ways to create a responsive, stimulating, affirming and developmentally appropriate environment for young children (birth–3 years).

Six Important Things to Know:

- Every child grows at his or her own pace.
- A family is a child's first teacher and a child's home is the first classroom.
- Children learn by doing, playing, and listening.
- Early relationships are important to healthy child development.
- Children's emotional development impacts learning.
- Children are social.

The following interactive activity sheets provide an opportunity to identify key activities and games that are developmentally appropriate and support the physical, intellectual, social, and emotional development of young children. Following the activity, you will be able to discuss new and creative ways to provide a responsive and stimulating environment for the children in your care.

Recommended Resources:

Websites:

University of Nebraska–Lincoln Resources on the Learning Child: www.extension.unl.edu/child-youth

“Just In Time Parenting” a free, monthly parenting newsletter: www.extension.org/parenting; Enter Code: NE10JITP

Book:

Fun to Play Ready To Learn (EB2) is available at your local UNL Extension office. Based on the latest research on how young children learn and develop, this activity book is filled with fun and engaging activities designed to help children increase their sensory and motor skills. Featured games and activities will help develop children's social skills, improve coordination, increase their vocabulary, and learn problem solving skills.



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Early Childhood Games

Physical Play

Head and Shoulders

Head shoulders,
knees and toes,
knees and toes,
knees and toes.

Repeat

Eyes and ears and mouth and nose,
head, shoulders,
knees and toes,
knees and toes.

Social Play

Ring Around the Rosy

Ring around the rosy
A pocket full of posies,
Ashes, ashes we all fall down!

(Hold on to hands and go around in a circle and fall down together at the end.)

Repeat.

Intellectual Play

Five Little Monkeys

Five little monkeys jumping on the bed.
(Hold up one hand with five fingers and bounce up and down.)

One fell off and hurt his head.
(Hold up index finger, then hold head in hands.)

Called up the doctor, and the doctor said,
(Make a telephone button pushing motion, then hold "phone" to ear.)

"No more monkeys jumping on the bed."
(Repeat using four, three, two, one.)

Emotional Play

If You're Happy and You Know It

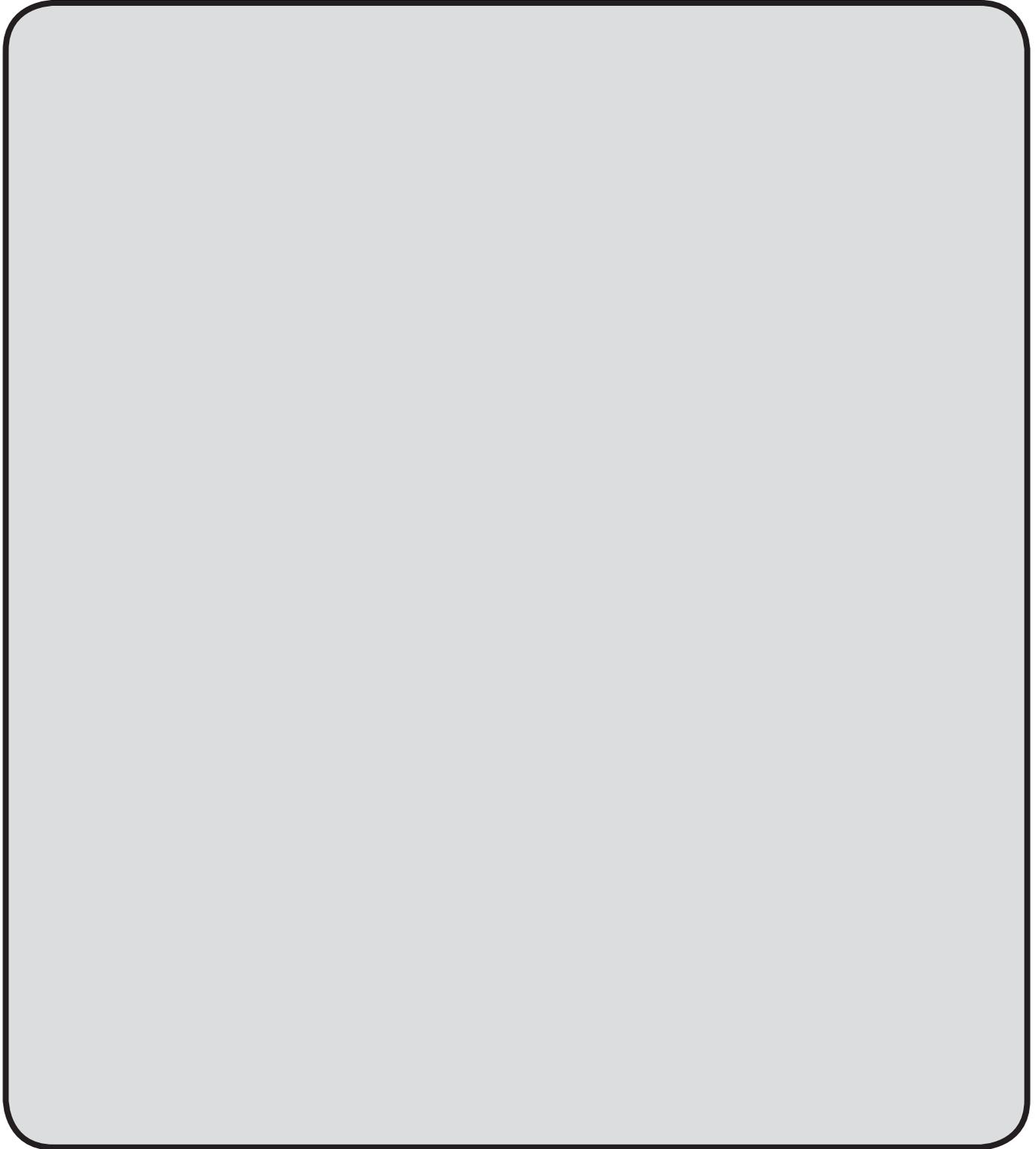
If you're happy and you know it,
clap your hands! (clap, clap)
If you're happy and you know it,
clap your hands! (clap, clap)
If you're happy and you know it,
and you really want to show it,
If you're happy and you know it,
Clap your hands! (clap, clap)

Repeat but substitute :

Mad – stomp your feet
Surprised – raise your eyebrows
Sad – wipe your eye
Agree – nod your head
Tired – stretch and yawn
Confused – turn around
Happy – shout "Hooray!"

Creative Play Activity

Work in groups of two to three people. Use the fruit flavored cereal provided to stimulate your creative thinking. Come up with a variety of games/activities that you can play with infants and toddlers using the cereal. Challenge your group to think of activities at different skill levels. Below, list the ideas that your group comes up with.



Age Appropriate Activities Using Fruit Flavored Cereal

Birth – 1 Month	12 – 18 Months
1 – 4 Months	18 – 24 Months
4 – 8 Months	24 – 36 Months
8 – 12 Months	All Ages