Physical Development

Infants

Standards:

• Gross motor skills
• Fine motor skills
• Self-help skills
• Health and safety skills
In Plain Sight

Place an infant on the floor with a few toys that he can explore with his senses.
Sit on the floor next to him and play with him for a few moments.
For example, as he shakes the rattle say, “Listen to the rattle! You are making sounds as you shake and shake. Look at the pretty beads inside the rattle. They are moving all around!”
Move out of the baby’s line of sight, but continue to talk to him, saying for example, “I’ll be right back while you play with the rattle.”
Continue to talk to the baby while out of view for a few moments and then stop.
Wait until the infant looks up and around as if searching for you.
Say, “I’m nearby and will be back soon,” but do not go back to the baby.
If the baby is not distressed, wait a bit longer and then walk back where the infant can see you in plain sight.
As you practice this activity, the infant will learn that a familiar adult will come back even if they move out of view.

Howdy, Neighbor!

Hold an infant on your hip and walk her to the building’s front office, kitchen, or someplace where the adults may be less familiar than the teacher.
You can also use this strategy when a visitor comes to the classroom.
As you say hello to an adult, encourage the child to wave.
Hold your hand up and wave, and then wave the infant’s hand.
Say for example, “Mr. Richard, we came to see what you are cooking today.”
After a short conversation, say goodbye.
Wave your hand again and encourage the infant to wave again too.
Return to the classroom and say, “We went to visit Mr. Richard. When you see him you can wave hello and goodbye!”
The Shape and Size of Things

- Give the infants boxes and containers of different shapes and sizes to explore. Containers with loosely fitting lids are especially fun. Some examples include:
  - different size shoe boxes
  - baby wipe containers, rectangular and round
  - cardboard jewelry boxes
  - oatmeal cartons
  - plastic food storage containers
  - cartons from yogurt, sour cream, and cottage cheese
  - margarine tubs
- Provide a few containers at a time and watch the infants open and close them, stack them, and try to put one inside the other. Talk about the shapes and sizes as they play!

Shape Boxes

- Make shape boxes for your infants to begin to explore shape and size.
- Trace around a square wooden or cloth block on the lid of a shoe box. Cut out the shape with a sharp knife or blade. Cover the shoe box and lid with contact paper to make it more attractive.
- Give your infants a few square blocks and show them how to drop the blocks through the hole into the box. Then show them how to open to box, dump the blocks, and start again.
- At first, give the children blocks that are the same size and fit in the hole. When your children need a challenge, give them different size blocks and let them discover which ones fit.
- Follow the same procedure using a tennis ball instead of a block to make a circle shape box.

Note: The infants may just enjoy opening the box, putting the blocks in, and dumping them out. That’s a good activity too!
**Texture Blocks**

- Collect empty tissue boxes shaped like cubes.
- Cover each side of the boxes with a different textured material such as:
  - corduroy
  - terry cloth (from an old towel or wash cloth)
  - furry fabric
  - cotton fabric (from an old T-shirt)
  - fleece (from an old baby blanket)
  - textured wallpaper

- The infants will feel the different textures as they play with the blocks! Use words like “smooth,” “bumpy,” “furry,” and “soft” to describe the different materials.
- Discard and make new ones if the infants explore these with their mouths!

*Note: Ask fabric and wallpaper stores to donate samples or “leftovers.”*

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**Shake, Rattle, and Roll**

- Make “shakers” for the infants to explore.
- Gather several 16-ounce clear, plastic drink bottles and remove all labels. Choose bottles that are easy for the infants to hold. Put a different kind of colorful object inside each one such as:
  - bells
  - feathers
  - pom poms
  - beads
  - pebbles or gravel (the type used in a fish bowl)
  - water with beads
  - water with food coloring and small objects
  - water with vegetable oil, food coloring, and small objects (the oil and water will separate and the colors change)

- Use hot glue to fasten the lid securely.
- Show the infants how to shake the bottles to hear different sounds or watch the objects move. Show them how to roll the bottles on the ground and see and hear what happens. Crawling infants can push the bottles and “chase” them.