

## **CCEI670: Bright Beginnings: Age Appropriate Activities for Infants and Toddlers Handout**

### **Welcome to CCEI670**

In this course, you will examine the importance of age-appropriate, developmentally appropriate, and individually appropriate activities for infants and toddlers. Emphasis is placed on the main developmental domains: physical, cognitive, social-emotional, and language development.

### **Objectives:**

By taking notes on the handout and successfully answering assessment questions, participants will meet the following objectives as a result of taking this course:

- Identify and define major domains and stages of early childhood development
- Identify activities that promote specific skills in each development domain
- List guidelines for promoting positive interactions with young children
- Differentiate between appropriate activities for infants and appropriate activities for toddlers
- Identify important considerations when planning and arranging the learning environment

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## Stages of Infant and Toddler Development

### Physical Development

What are reflexes?

*Gross motor skills:*

*Fine motor skills:*

### Cognitive Development

What are cognitive skills?

### Social-Emotional Development

*Attachments:*

*Stranger anxiety:*

*Intentional communication:*

*Sense of self:*

Do toddlers engage in **cooperative play**?

### Language Development

How many words does a typical two-year-old have in their vocabulary?

## **Activities for Infant Development**

Identify and define four ways to promote positive interactions:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

## **Daily Routines**

In what ways can daily routines provide teaching opportunities?

## **Physical Development Activities for Infants**

Describe some useful activities:

## **Cognitive Development Activities for Infants**

Describe some useful activities:

## **Language Development Activities for Infants**

Describe some useful activities:

## **Social-Emotional Development Activities for Infants**

Describe some useful activities:

## **Activities for Toddler Development**

### **Physical Development Activities for Toddlers**

Describe some useful activities:

### **Cognitive Development Activities for Toddlers**

What is the driving force behind cognitive development in young children?

Describe some useful activities:

### **Language Development Activities for Toddlers**

Describe some useful activities:

### **Social-Emotional Development Activities for Toddlers**

Describe some useful activities:

## **The Learning Environment**

### **Indoor Environment**

Identify and describe the three factors to consider when planning the indoor environment:

1.

2.

3.

Why should you consider the *child's perspective* when planning the environment?

What four things should you keep in mind regarding the *child's perspective*?

1.

2.

3.

4.

### **Outdoor Environment**

What is the most important thing to consider about the outdoor environment?

## **CCEI670: Bright Beginnings: Age Appropriate Activities for Infants and Toddlers Try This! Activities**

### **Try This!**

#### **Encouraging Gross Motor Development in Young Infants**

Provide lots of tummy time with interesting toys. Place a toy on one side of the infant and periodically move it to the other side of the infant. The infant will need to turn from one side to the other to see the object. The activity works best with a toy that is attractive to infants. They prefer objects with high color contrasts, such as black against white.

Placing babies in wide, open space also supports gross motor development. In an open space, infants will be more encouraged to develop muscles by stretching, rolling over, reaching, and crawling.

### **Try This!**

#### **Promoting Fine Motor Development in Young Infants**

Offer a squeaky toy to the infant. Show how it makes a noise when it is squeezed. Squeezing develops small muscle groups in the fingers that will eventually be used to grasp and manipulate small objects. Remember to promote language development by discussing the activity and describing the sound using simple language.

Encouraging a young infant to grasp a finger, a rattle, or other safe objects will promote the development of fine motor skills.

### **Try This!**

#### **Promoting Fine Motor Skills in Older Infants**

Hide dry cereal or small, round crackers under a clear plastic cup while the infant watches. Then, encourage the child to find the cracker and eat it. A second and then a third cup can be added to make the game more complex. Praise and encouragement should be given to the baby each time the cracker is found.

### **Try This!**

#### **Hide and Seek**

Hide and seek encourages cognitive development through problem-solving. As a variation, teachers can "hide" an infant's toy in an obvious place and encourage the child to find it.

## Try This!

### "May I Have This Dance?"

Dancing supports **emotional development** in young infants. Dancing activities are great for social-emotional as well as physical and cognitive development. Most toddlers love to dance, but you should also introduce infants to the joys of music and movement.

There are a few things to remember when dancing with an infant:

- Choose some simple, happy music, or simply sing or hum.
- Ask the infant, "*May I have this dance?*"
- Hold the baby close with one hand supporting their head and back. Gently rock and sway back and forth to the music.
- When the dance is over, thank the baby and give a big hug.

## Try This!

### Follow the Leader

["Follow the Leader"](#) is a fun way to test toddlers' physical skills. Jumping up and down, standing on one foot, and turning around in circles promote balance and coordination, not to mention good exercise. As a bonus, this game develops listening skills, too!

["Simon Says"](#) is another good game, with the focus being on following the movements rather than eliminating children who make a mistake. That rule can be added to the game for older children.

## Try This!

### Art Projects

Art projects are great for developing fine motor skills. Many art activities require using small muscle groups in the hands for grasping and manipulating objects and coordination between hands and eyes. Using crayons, painting with fingers or brushes, or drawing on the sidewalk or blacktop with large colored chalk is fun and beneficial.

**Collages** are another artistic, fun way to support fine motor development. Toddlers can tear pictures from magazines or use items such as yarn, leaves, cotton, or construction paper and paste them on paper. They should be allowed to use small, blunt-nosed scissors to practice cutting skills if they are ready. And be careful with small materials that could present choking hazards.

## Try This!

### Fingerplays and Action Poems

**Fingerplays** and **action poems** help develop fine motor skills. The teacher should lead the toddlers through repetition of the words and motions. You can find hundreds of fingerplays and action poems in books or with an Internet search. These activities promote physical as well as speaking and social skills.

["I'm a Little Teapot"](#) is a classic example of a developmentally appropriate action poem for toddlers.

I'm a little teapot, short and stout.  
Here is my handle, (*put a hand on your hip*)  
Here is my spout. (*raise the other hand in the air*)  
When I get all steamed up,  
Hear me shout.  
Tip me over and pour me out. (*bend over as if pouring tea out of a pot*)

## Try This!

### Mystery Box Activity

Use a shoe box or other cardboard box that can be closed. Cut a hole in the box just large enough for a child to reach inside. Place an object or a variety of objects inside. When children reach inside, they should:

1. Describe the textures, shapes, and any other characteristics they can feel.
2. Try to guess what object(s) they are touching.

Suggested objects: sandpaper, cotton balls, a moist washcloth, crayons, toys, blocks, puzzle pieces, drinking straws, a small stuffed animal, and coins. Any object is fine as long it has **NO sharp edges or points!**

Sensory activities are great for expanding vocabulary and speaking skills. Remember to talk while you play with toddlers so they can learn new descriptive words.