



## Introduction to Physical Development and Health Domain for Young Infants

### Domain Components

PH1. Gross Motor

PH2. Fine Motor

PH3. Health, Nutrition, and Safety

**Here are some important things to know about young infants and their physical development and health:**

- ❑ They kick their legs, move their arms about and rotate their heads from side to side.
- ❑ They gradually hold their heads erect and steady and lift their heads and shoulders but need you to provide support to their head until they develop strong steady head support.
- ❑ They follow a toy with their eyes as an adult slowly moves it. Later they will reach out and try to grasp the toy.
- ❑ They roll from side to side, then from back to side.
- ❑ They sit with support, then sit independently.
- ❑ They begin to crawl.
- ❑ They begin to hold their own bottle and feed themselves finger foods such as dry cereal.
- ❑ They need adequate and proper nutrition and sleep for healthy development.
- ❑ They are dependent on adults to protect them and keep them physically safe.

**Teacher Note:** *Although physical development will largely happen on its own, adults need to give infants space and opportunities, plus coaching and encouragement.*

***By knowing these special things about young infants, families and caregivers can better understand how to promote their physical development and insure their health and safety.***

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***This is what happens when families and other caregivers support the physical development and insure the health and safety of young infants:***

- They are developing locomotor skills.
- They are beginning to show stability and balance.
- They are developing fine motor strength, control and coordination which includes hand-eye coordination and grasping and manipulating objects.
- They are taking appropriate actions to meet their basic needs.
- They are developing self-help feeding skills.



## Connecting with Infants

### PH Activity: “Moving Together”

**Learning Goals:** PH1.1 Demonstrates locomotor skills  
PH1.2 Shows stability and balance

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**You will need:** An infant who has not yet learned to move around by herself  
Rocking chair  
CD player and CDs with fast and slow tunes

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#### Before you begin:

- Hold the infant in your lap or in your arms.

#### Try this:

- Rock the infant back and forth in the rocking chair.
- Provide head support as needed.
- Repeat this activity at intervals throughout the day.

#### Try this:

- Play music or sing while you gently dance around the room, holding the infant.
- Provide head support as needed.
- Try this with slow and fast tunes, moving to the rhythm of the music.

**Teacher Note:** *During this activity, the infant is learning the sensation of her body moving in different ways and at various rhythms. She is beginning to develop muscle strength, balance, and a sense of her body moving in space.*



## Connecting with Young Infants

### PH Activity: "Ring of Ribbons"

**Learning Goals:** PH2.1 Demonstrates fine motor skills  
PH2.3 Coordinates eye and hand movement

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**You will need:** Canning jar ring, plastic bracelet or a small hoop  
Ribbons of several colors and textures, about 8 inches long

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#### Before you begin:

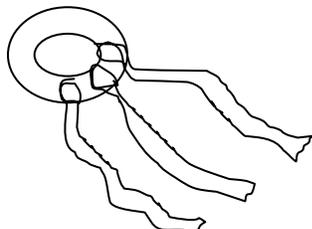
- Tie the ribbons securely to the ring or hoop so that each strand is a single length of ribbon tied to the ring at one end only.
  - Understand that this ring of ribbons is to be used by an adult and is not a toy for an infant to handle.
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#### Try this!

- Hold the infant on your lap.
  - Dangle the ribbons in front of the infant so he can see and reach them.
  - Move the ribbon lightly across the palm of the infant's hand.
  - Observe to see if the infant grasps the ribbon.
  - Continue the activity only as long as the infant remains interested.
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#### Try this variation of the activity!

- Lay your infant on her back, either in her crib or on a blanket on the floor.
- Hold the ribbon ring above the infant's head and slowly move it back and forth.
- Observe to see if the infant follows the ribbon ring with her eyes.





## Connecting with Young Infants

### PH Activity: "Holding up My Head"

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#### Learning Goal: PH1.1 Demonstrates locomotor skills

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**You will need:** Infant who is beginning to have his own head support and control  
Firm surface on which to place infant

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#### Before you begin:

- Realize that until the infant develops strong, steady head support, it is important that you always provide support to the infant's head.

#### Try this:

- Hold the infant in front of you so that he is facing out and can see what is going on in the room.
- Hold the infant in an upright position, looking over your shoulder. Provide head support as needed. Carry the infant around the room in this position as you show him interesting things seen from his position.

#### Try this at other times:

- Select an area that you can constantly supervise, staying as close to the infant as possible.
- Spread a blanket on a firm surface and lay the infant on her stomach on the blanket.
- Place a bright toy in front of the infant and talk with her about the toy.
- Observe her attempt to lift her head and shoulders.
- Provide encouragement by saying, "Look at this blue bunny. You're looking at the blue bunny."
- Observe the infant for signs that she is becoming tired or frustrated, stop the activity and move her to another position.

**Teacher Note:** *Place the infant in a variety of positions for short periods of time so she can practice holding up her head: on her stomach, being held in front of the caregiver facing out, swinging gently in a child swing, or riding in an infant stroller.*



## Connecting with Infants

### PH: “Textured Mats”

**Learning Goals:** PH1.1 Demonstrates locomotor skills  
PH2.1 Demonstrates fine-motor strength, control, and coordination

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**You will need:** Four identical-size pieces of carpet of different textures  
Carpet thread or duct tape  
An infant who is able to hold up his head

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#### Before you begin:

- Sew or tape together the four pieces of carpet to make a large square
- Select an area of the room you can supervise and lay out the textured mat.

#### Try this:

- Lay the infant on his tummy on the mat.
- Touch the infant’s hand to each section and describe how the mat feels. For example, say, “Luke, this section is soft.” “This part is rough.”
- Reposition the mat so that the infant can feel the different textures.
- Observe the infant to see his reaction to the different textures. He may not like some of the textures. Move the infant around as needed.
- Observe the infant to see if he begins to grasp the carpet.

#### Try this:

- Sew a quilt made of squares of cloth of varying textures and colors. Follow the same procedures as with the textured mat.
- Provide soft textured balls for the infant to hold.

#### Try this:

- Use mats that are available from school supply catalogs; mats that have different textures. Some also have different activities to promote cognitive development, fine motor skills and sensory awareness.



## Connecting with Infants

### PH Activity: "Tummy Time"

**Learning Goal: PH1.1 Demonstrates locomotor motor skills**  
**CD3.1 Uses reasoning and planning ahead to solve problems and reach goals**

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**You will need:** Infant who is beginning to lift her head  
You and a couple of toys  
Firm surface and a blanket

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#### **Before you begin:**

- Observe the infant to see if she is beginning to lift her head

#### **Try this:**

- Place a blanket on a firm surface.
- Lay the infant on her tummy.
- Get in front of the infant and face her so that she can see your face.
- Talk with the infant about what she is seeing.

#### **Try this variation of the activity:**

- Place a favorite toy in front of the infant within her reach.
- Describe what you are doing. Say, "This black and white giraffe is your favorite toy. It's right here in front of you."
- Encourage the infant to reach out and get the toy.

#### **Try this variation of the activity to encourage the infant to turn her head independently:**

- Place a favorite toy in front of the infant and encourage her to look at it.
- Move the toy to one side and encourage the infant to look for it.
- Move the toy to the other side and once again encourage her to look for it.



## Connecting with Young Infants

### PH Activity: “Can You Get It?”

**Learning Goals:** PH1.1 Demonstrates locomotor skills  
CD3.1 Develops strategies for solving problems

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**You will need:** Infant who is beginning to use her hands and elbows to slide her body forward or backward with abdomen on floor  
Favorite stuffed toy  
Blanket

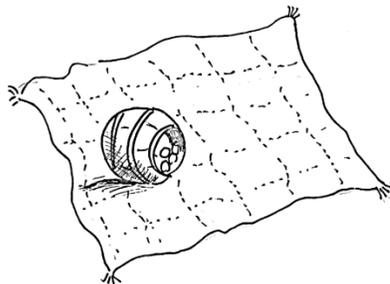
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#### Before you begin:

- Spread the blanket on the floor
  - Place the toy on the blanket just out of the reach of the infant. Based on your observation of the infant, decide how far away to place the toy.
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#### Try this!

- Lay the infant on her stomach on the blanket.
- Sit by the toy and show it to the infant.
- Move the toy and say, “*Kathleen, can you crawl over here and get your fuzzy ball?*”
- Continue to offer encouragement. Say, “*Keep trying. You’re almost there.*”
- Let your infant explore the toy once she has reached it.
- Move the toy a little further from the infant as she becomes more successful in reaching it.





## Connecting with Young Infants

### PH Activity: “Come and Get It!”

**Learning Goals:** PH1.1 Demonstrates locomotor skills  
PH1.2 Shows stability and balance  
CD3.1 Uses reasoning and planning ahead to solve problems and reach goals

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**You will need:** Infant who is beginning to crawl  
An area that you can constantly supervise  
Blanket  
Child’s favorite toy

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#### Before you begin:

- Spread the blanket out in the area you have selected.
- Place the toy near the edge of the blanket.

#### Try this:

- Lay the baby on his tummy on the blanket, on the opposite edge of the toy.
- Gain the baby’s attention by moving the toy and saying, “Carlos, crawl over here. Come and get the puppy.”
- Provide positive encouragement. Say, “Carlos, you are crawling. Keep crawling, you’re almost there.”
- Encourage the infant to explore the toy once he has reached it. Encourage the infant to touch the puppy and talk to him about how soft the puppy is.

#### Try this variation:

- Sit at the edge of the blanket.
- Encourage the infant to crawl to you.

**Teacher Note:** *Observe each child’s crawling abilities to help you decide how far away to place the toy.*