

FAMILY LITERACY GUIDE

BABY FACES

ABOUT THE BOOK

Baby Faces

Margaret Miller, author

In this very popular board book, author/photographer Margaret Miller presents photos of eight babies whose expressions range from joy to distress. Parents will warm to the lovable infants in both their good and not-so-good moods; and infants and toddlers, who are fascinated by the faces of other babies will claim the book as a favorite. Children from multiple racial and ethnic backgrounds are featured in the photographs. The one-word exclamations that accompany the photographs give parents ample opportunity to supply the words and language to describe the baby faces, making the book ideal for families from all language backgrounds. Large cardboard pages make the book easy to prop up at the edge of cribs where it can be viewed by newborns who see objects best that are about 12 inches from their faces. The sturdy pages are ideal for toddlers who are learning to turn pages and are easy for parents to hold with a child on the lap.

The Language/Literacy Connection

THE AMAZING DEVELOPING BRAIN

Recent research has revealed that babies are born with about 100 billion brain cells and, in the first three years of life, produce trillions of brain cell connections, many more than the child can possibly use. The brain's growth spurt continues until about age ten when some connections are eliminated. What determines which connections are kept and which are eliminated? Repeated experiences. Actions and experiences that are repeated again and again form permanent brain pathways. Connections that are never or seldom used are eliminated. Regular daily parent-child interactions nourish the developing brain and aid in the formation of permanent brain cell connections. Simple, inexpensive, pleasurable activities like singing, repeating nursery rhymes, story

telling and playing games help children's brains form permanent pathways for language and literacy skills.

THINKING ABOUT THE BRAIN

Brain development is a complex interplay between the genes babies are born with and their experiences after birth. Early experiences have a decisive impact on the development of babies' brains, and on the nature and extent of their capacities when they are adults. Early interventions directly affect the way the brain is wired.

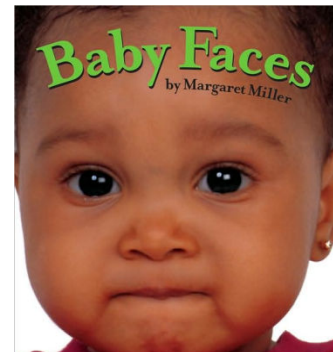
Shore, Rima (1997) Rethinking the Brain, New York: Families and Work Institute



BABY FACES

Learning Objectives

Students will listen and speak for social interaction.
Students will use oral language for effective communication with a variety of people. They will use the social communications of others to enrich their understanding of people.



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Early Childhood Education – Infant/Toddler Level

Auditory Comprehension

1. Glances momentarily at a person who talks to him or her
2. Looks at objects or people the caregiver calls attention to

Expressive Communication

Vocalizes when talked to, moving arms and legs during vocalizations

DURING YOUR VISIT:

With the parent holding the infant, sit nearby and look at and comment on the photographs in the book. Say: I like this book because it makes me think of the many moods that babies have. And, many babies like this book too, because babies like to look at pictures of other babies. Select one of the photos and comment on it. Say: I just love the picture of this baby. It reminds me of my daughter (son, little brother, cousin, friend's baby) when she was that age. Her hair curled just like this baby's hair. Ask: Which is your favorite from among these pictures and what is it about the photo that you like?

Accept the parent's answer and expand on it. If, for example, the parent indicates a smiling baby ask: What is it about that picture that you like? How is this baby's smile like (child's name)'s smile? What makes (child's name) laugh?

Turn to the photograph of the crying baby and say: This photo reminds me of the other side of what babies can be like. I remember days when my daughter (son, brother, child I babysat, etc.) cried like this. What do you do when (child's name) is crabby or fussy?

Whatever the parent's response, say: That sounds like a good way to help (child's name) gain control of his/her feelings. OR – If it was not a good idea, say: Have you ever tried ? That sometimes helps babies gain control.

Help the parent show the photos to the infant. One or two pages will probably be enough for a very young infant. If the infant gazes at a photo, point out that behavior to the parent. Give the infant as much time as he/she needs before moving to another photo. Talk to the infant about the photo. Coo and ahh and say things like: Look at that sad baby. That baby's crying. I bet she wants her Mommy.

Show the parent the accordion book model and the instructions for making an accordion book (directions on Parenting Page). Place the book-making material on the work surface. Work with the parent to make the book. Take turns holding the baby so that the parent can participate in the activity.

BEFORE YOUR VISIT

GATHER:

- six pictures of babies (from magazines)
- three 6x6 squares of cardboard
- glue
- scissors
- clear contact paper
- packing tape

PREPARE LESSON PROPS:

- Follow directions on the parent education page to make an accordion baby face book to use as a model.
- Review nursery rhymes and lullabies that are familiar to you and/or the family.

Early Childhood Education – Preschool/School Age Levels

An Accordion Book of Likes and Dislikes

DURING THE VISIT: With the parent and child sitting together, look at the *Baby Faces* book. Involve the child and parent in a conversation about expressing feelings. Ask questions about the feelings expressed by the babies pictured in the book. Do you think this baby feels happy or sad? How can you tell? What do you think made the baby feel that way? What makes you feel happy (sad, angry, disappointed, worried)? Babies cry or laugh or make a face to let other people know how they feel. How do you express your feelings?

Accept the child and parent's answers and expand on them.

Say: "People express their feelings in many different ways. Some write about strong emotions they feel and about what makes them feel that way. They may keep diaries, or journals of trips they have made. School age children may write journals at school. These are ways to write about feelings or special events. Today we are going to make an accordion book as a way to record our feelings. Things that make you feel happy can be recorded on one side and things that make you feel sad, or angry or worried can be recorded on the other side."

Show your model. Place the supplies on the workspace.

PRESCHOOLERS

Ask the child what things he/she especially likes. Say: "What makes you happy? Pets, favorite toys, eating an ice cream cone?" With the parent and child, look through magazines for pictures of those things. Then ask about things that make the child feel sad (or worried, angry) and look for pictures that illustrate those feelings. Glue "happy" pictures on one side of the book and "sad" pictures on the other side. Ask the child to "write" about each picture. Cover with contact paper and fold accordion-style.

SCHOOL-AGE CHILDREN

Ask the child to make the accordion book with his/her parent's help. Then ask the child to write about his/her feelings of happiness, sadness, anger, etc. Ask: "What feelings are important to you? What makes you feel that way? What was a time or place that you remember when you felt that way?" When the child finishes writing, say: "If you wish, you can draw or find pictures that illustrate your writing."

Auditory Comprehension

- Makes inferences

Expressive Communication

- Completes analogies
- Responds to why questions by giving a reason

Before the Visit

Gather needed materials:

- Magazine pictures of interest to child
- 6x6 squares of cardboard
- Clear contact paper
- Clear packing tape
- Scissors and glue

Prepare props:

Before the visit, follow the directions on the parenting education page to make a model accordion book of likes and dislikes.

Parenting Education Activity

Parents' playful interaction with children influences children's developing brain, their self concept and their capacity for future learning. As facilitators of play and as play partners, parents are central to the healthy growth of children in infancy and beyond. Word games, books and stories are especially beneficial to young children whose brains are still making brain cell connections

DIRECTIONS FOR ACCORDION BOOK

- *Cut three cardboard squares 6 inches by 6 inches each.*
- *Cut 6 baby pictures from magazines.*
- *Glue one picture on the front and back of each cardboard square.*
- *Cover the pictures with clear contact paper to make the pages safe for mouthing.*
- *Trim contact paper around the edges and round off sharp corners.*
- *Line the squares up on a flat surface with about ¼ inch between each square.*
- *Tape the pages together with packing tape.*
- *Fold accordion style.*

I Can Do That Too

IMITATION GAMES

- Children are careful observers of their parents and imitate the actions and words they see and hear. Simple games like pat-a-cake and bye-bye help babies and toddlers figure out that words describe actions- what Mom and Dad do with their hands is connected to the lyrics they hear. Preschoolers enjoy circle games such as ring-around-the-rosy. They like playing with their parents and siblings and will even happily teach the game to a teddy bear partner. School-agers benefit from challenging word games like I spy.
- Ask parents to name games they know that use language like singing, chanting or asking questions. Make a list and play a few of the games with the parent and child.

TALKING WITH BABY

Language researchers Betty Hart and Todd Risley say that the more language young children hear, the more language they are able to speak. It is never too early to talk with babies. Describe how you are preparing the evening meal. Talk about your day's activities. Read aloud the evening paper. Babies may not understand what is being said, but they are hearing the sounds and rhythm of language.

Word Games for School-Age Children

Rhyming: Choose a word like "cat" and take turns supplying rhyming words. The person with the last word is the winner.

Letter Party: Pick a letter like "B". Then say: "I'm going to a party and I'm taking a banana. Will you come too?" The next player responds: "Yes, and I'm taking a (fill in with another B word)." Play until you run out of words.

Classifications: Say: "This is the cupboard where I keep my (clothes, vegetables, garden tools, etc.). Do these shoes belong in my cupboard?" Take turns asking and answering questions.

I-Spy: Give clues about an object in the room. When the child guesses the object, reverse roles.

Interactive Literacy Between Parents and their Children

Songs, Poems, and Nursery Rhymes

Children are never too young or too old to listen to and join in singing songs and saying rhymes. Besides being fun, the repeated lyrics forge brain cell connections and acquaint young children with the rhythm and sounds of their language. Language research shows that early knowledge of nursery rhymes contributes to later success in reading.

Nursery Rhymes and Babies

Get into a comfortable cuddle with your baby and sing or say a few songs, poems, or nursery rhymes. Rhymes you remember from your own childhood are great because as you recite them you pass along the culture of your family. Here are a few traditional nursery rhymes from different cultures that your baby may enjoy.

Around the Village

traditional European

Go round and round the village,
Go round and round the village,
Go round and round the village,
As we have done before.

Un Bonita Para Comer

traditional Spanish

Una boquita para comer,
Una naricita para oler,
Dos oídos para oír,
Y la cabecita para dormir.

Language Games with Humor

Tongue twisters add spark to language games for school-age children. Can your school-age child slide these words around his/her tongue?

1. Sheep shouldn't sleep in a shack. Sheep should sleep in a shed.
2. Eight great gray geese grazing gaily in Greece.
3. Three tree toads tied together tried to trot to town.
4. Pop keeps a lollipop shop and the lollipop shop keeps pop.

Colita De Rana

Sans, sana,
Colita de rana.
Si no sanas,
hoy sanarás mañana.

Luna, Lunera

Luna, lunera,
casabelera,
cinco pollitos
y una temera.

Dos elefantes

En la rama un alto pino
Se columpiaban dos elefantes.
Y apostaban entre ellos
Cuál de los dos volaría antes.

An Elephant Song for Preschoolers

As you sing this enchanting elephant song, bend over slightly, clasp your hands together to form a trunk and swing your arms from side to side. Wonder with your child just how many elephants can play on a spider web. And what will it sound like if they all come crashing down?

Un elefante

Un elefante se balanceaba
Sobre la tela de una araña;
Como veía que resistía,
Fue a llamar a otro elefante.
Dos elefantes se balanceaban
Sobre la tela de una araña; Como
veían que resistían, Fueron a llamar a
otro elefante.
Tres elefantes ...

One Elephant

One elephant went out to play,
Out on a spider's web one day,
She had such enormous fun
That she called for another elephant to come.
Two elephants went out to play,
Out on a spider's web one day,
They had such enormous fun
That they called for another elephant to come.
Three elephants ...