

*Especially for parents of infants!* 

# Baby's First Games

 *Rhymes and Sound Awareness*

Familiar and made-up lap games introduce infants to the exciting world of playful interactions with others.

## What is the practice?

First games help a baby learn to play with others. They also teach little ones how to get another person to do fun and interesting things.

## What does the practice look like?

Lap games are back-and-forth, your-turn/my-turn play between an infant and a parent. Lap games are silly sayings and short rhymes. The adult does something and the child does something. The parent and child go back-and-forth playing the game.



## How do you do the practice?

Here are some lap games that are sure to delight your young child. Search the Web using the term **parent infant lap games** to find more fun games for babies. The games in this practice guide get infants excited about playing and interacting with their parents. It is best to play games that include words and movements that especially interest your child.

### **Peek-a-Boo (also known as Peep Eye)**

Most babies like peek-a-boo. Cover something (adult's face, baby's face, a favorite toy) and say, "Where is \_\_\_\_? What should we do?" Then uncover the person or thing and say, "Peek-a-boo! Peek-a-boo! I see you!" The game is often first played by hiding your own face with your hands. It can progress to covering your child's face with a small cloth or towel. You will be doing all or most of the game when first playing Peek-a-Boo. Try repeating the movement and words a few times. Then wait until your child does something to tell you to do it again. It won't take long for him to start removing a cloth from his face. Seeing you will likely get him to smile and vocalize to you.

### **So Big**

Gently stretch your infant's arms above his head while saying, "How big is (child's name)? He is so, so, sooo big. Someone's gonna get you. Here comes a pig." The game ends with you saying, "Oink, oink" and kissing your child's tummy or neck. Infants will sometimes lift their arms to try to start or continue the game. Babies who can sit up on their own often stretch their hands and arms over their heads. Whenever your child tries to start the game, respond by playing the game. Keep the fun going!

### **Ride a Little Pony**

Infants who can sit up with or without support delight in playing this game. Let your child sit on your knees facing you. Gently bounce him up and down. Say: "Ride a little pony down to town. Better be careful, so you don't fall down." As you say "don't fall down," pretend to let your child fall. Open your legs and let him slide down between them. Infants who enjoy this game will try to bounce when on the adult's knees to start or continue the fun.

## How do you know the practice worked?

- Does your child try to start or continue a game?
- Does your child smile or laugh when playing a game?
- Does your child vocalize to express delight?

# Take a look at more of babies' first games ...

## Peek-a-Boo to You!

Andy, 3 months old, and his father have found a fun way to play Peek-a-Boo. When Andy wakes up after sleeping, Dad hides behind Andy's favorite blanket and calls to his son. "Where's Andy? Where's Andy?" Hearing his father's voice, Andy starts cooing and wiggling with excitement. As soon as Andy "calls" back, Dad pops his head from behind the blanket and says, "Peek-a-boo! I see you!" Dad hides again and the game begins. Andy looks to the right and then to the left to see where his dad will appear next.



## Heigh-Ho!

Five-month-old Cindy and her dad play many different rough-and-tumble games. She has learned to make sounds to tell her dad to "let the games begin!" Cindy especially likes "riding" on her dad's leg. Her father puts her in a sitting position on his foot facing him while holding her hands. He bounces her up-and-down while saying, "Ride a horse. Ride a horse. Cindy goes around. Not too fast, not too fast or Cindy falls down." He pretends to have her "crash." She looks at her dad and makes all kinds of sounds to get him to play the game again.

## Mommy's Pratfalls

Robert is 10 months old. He isn't able to stretch his arms above his head because of some physical difficulties. But this does not stop his mother from playing lap games with him. She takes what Robert can do and turns it into a fun game. With Robert lying on his back, she gently pushes his feet so his knees bend toward his chest. Mom says, "Robert is so strong. What a big frown! He is so strong. He pushes me down." She then pretends to fall over. He gets more and more bright-eyed each time the game is played. Robert has started to laugh out loud as he pushes his feet to see his mother's antics!

