

Especially for practitioners working with young children! 

# Everyday Infant Fingerplays

*Sound Awareness*

Baby games that combine simple, rhyming phrases and interesting movements help infants become familiar with the meanings of sounds and words.

## What is the practice?

Simple, repetitious fingerplays introduce infants to the world of rhymes. Use these delightful games to provide infants opportunities to listen, hear, and master the sounds in words.

## What does the practice look like?

Fingerplays include short rhyming phrases together with movements of the hands or arms to mimic the fingerplay "story." The best infant fingerplays are ones that are short and repetitious and are about things that are likely to capture the child's interests.



## How do you do the practice?

Here are some fingerplays that will surely delight your young child. Search the Internet using the term **infant fingerplays** for more ideas. Select ones that you think your child will especially like. Experiment with two or three fingerplays until you find one that excites your little one.

### **Baby's Eyes**

Blue-eyed babies (*Point to your eye*)  
Brown-eyed, too. (*Point to your other eye*)  
Pat-a-cake, pat-a-cake (*Clap your hands*)  
I see you. (*Cover your eyes and uncover*)

### **Fe Fi Fo Fum**

Fe fi fo fum (*Touch each finger with thumb—one finger per syllable*)  
See my fingers (*Hold up four fingers*)  
See my thumb (*Hold up thumb*)  
Fe fi fo fum (*Touch each finger with thumb again*)  
Good-bye fingers (*Close fingers toward palm*)  
Good-bye thumb (*Close thumb under fingers*)

### **Baby's Fingers**

These are Baby's fingers. (*Touch the baby's fingers*)  
These are Baby's toes. (*Touch the baby's toes*)  
This is Baby's tummy button. (*Touch the baby's stomach*)  
Round and round it goes! (*Gently circle belly button*)

### **Beehive**

Here is the beehive, where are the bees?  
(*Clench your fist*)  
Hidden away where nobody sees. (*Pretend to look inside your fist*)  
Open it up and out they fly. (*Open fist and bring out fingers quickly one by one*)  
One, two, three, four, five, buzzzz. (*Tickle your child's neck while saying "buzz"*)

## How do you know the practice worked?

- Does the child look and listen intently?
- Does she get excited during the fingerplay?
- Does the child try to do any of the fingerplay movements?

## Take a look at more infant fingerplays

### "I See You!"

Six-month-old Sophia looks like she is going to be a really good listener. Each and every time her home visitor does her favorite fingerplay, Sophia becomes bright-eyed, giggles, laughs, and hangs onto every word out of her mouth. *Baby's Eyes* is a fingerplay that Sophia's mom has changed to make it her special rhyme. While reciting the nursery rhyme, she first points to Sophia's right eye, then her left eye, helps her clap her hands together, and then covers her face with a towel and says "I see you" when Sophia removes the cloth from her face. The baby has started putting the cloth on her own face to get her mom to repeat the game.



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### "What's the Buzz?"

Nine-month-old Christopher and his caregiver, Melina, are taking a break at the end of the day and having fun playing together. Melina knows that Chris especially likes hearing *Beehive*. She shows him a stuffed animal of a bee, which is her way of saying it's time for the fingerplay. Chris lets her know he wants to play by getting excited and trying to make a buzzing sound. Melina responds by reciting the words to the fingerplay and making all the hand movements. She finishes by having the stuffed bee nibble on Chris' neck while she repeatedly says, "Buzz, buzz, the bee is going to get you!"

### Signs + Tickle = FUN!

With help from Eli's early interventionist, his mother has found an interesting way of playing fingerplays with her 11-month-old son who is not able to hear. She uses sign language together with the words to fingerplays to help Eli make the connection between the signs, words, and movements. Eli especially likes *These Are Baby's Fingers*, since he gets to see the signs and have his body parts tickled while playing the game. He especially likes seeing the sign for *round and round* because it tells him he is about to have his tummy tickled. Eli has started to make attempts at using sign language to have his mother repeat the fingerplay.

