

Especially for practitioners working with young children! 

Infant Lap Games

Sound Awareness

What is the practice?

Both familiar and made-up lap games introduce infants to the wonderful world of playful interaction with others. These games develop a child's emerging understanding of how to play with and get someone to do something fun and interesting.

What does the practice look like?

Lap games involve back-and-forth, your-turn/my-turn play between an infant and a caregiver that includes silly sayings and short nursery rhymes. The adult does something, the child does something, and the adult continues or repeats the game.



How do you do the practice?

Here are some "tried-and-tested" lap games that are sure to delight any child. Search the Web using **parent infant lap games** to find more of baby's first games. The games included in this practice guide are ones that get infants excited about playing and interacting with their parents. It is best to play games that include words and movements that especially interest a particular child.

Peek-a-Boo (aka Peep Eye)

Peek-a-Boo simply involves covering something (adult's face, baby's face, a favorite toy) and saying, "Where is ____? What should we do?" and then uncovering the person or thing and saying, "Peek-a-boo. Peek-a-boo. I see you!" The game is often first played by hiding your face with your hands and progresses to covering the 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 and wait until the child "does something" to tell you to do it again. It won't take long for him to start removing a cloth placed over his face. Seeing you will likely get him to smile and vocalize to you.

So Big

So-Big involves gently stretching the 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 the child's tummy or neck. Infants lying on their backs will sometimes lift their arms up in the air to try to start or continue to play the game. Sitters often stretch their hands and arms over their heads. Anytime the child tries to start or do part of the game, respond by "filling in" the parts of the game to keep it going.

Ride a Little Pony

Infants who have head control and can sit up with or without support delight in playing this game. Hold the child in a sitting position on your knees, facing you. While gently bouncing 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 have the child fall by opening your legs and letting him slide down between them. Infants who especially like this game will try to bounce when placed on the adult's knees to get the game started.

How do you know the practice worked?

- Does the child bounce to start or continue the game?
- Does the child smile or laugh when he falls?
- Does he child vocalize to communicate delight?

Take a look at fun infant lap games

Peek-a-Boo Delight

With the help of his home visitor, 5-month-old Andrew and his mom have found a fun way to play Peek-a-Boo. Every time Andrew wakes up after sleeping, his mother hides behind the back of his crib and says, "Where is Andy? Where is Andy?" As his home visitor predicted, the sound of his mother's voice starts Andrew cooing and getting excited. As soon as Andrew "calls" to his mother, she pops her head over the side of the crib and says, "Peek-a-boo. I see you!" She hides again and the game starts over. Andrew looks to the right and then to the left to see where his mother will appear next.

Image not available



Easy Rider

Ten-month-old Cindy and her caregiver, Phillip, play many different kinds of rough-and-tumble games when she wakes up from her afternoon nap. She has learned to make sounds to tell Phillip to "let the games begin." Cindy especially likes "riding" on Phillip's leg. Phillip puts her in a sitting position on his foot facing him while holding onto both of 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" while pretending to have her "crash." She looks at Phillip and makes all kinds of sounds to get him to play the game again.

Inventive Lap Games

Eleven-month-old Robert isn't able to stretch his arms out above his head because of some physical difficulties, but this does not stop his mother from playing lap games with him that she and Robert's early interventionist invented. They have figured out how to take what Robert can do and turn it into a fun game. With Robert lying on his back, Mom gently pushes his feet so his knees bend toward his chest while saying, "Robert is so strong. What a big frown. He is so strong. He pushes me down" while she pretends to fall over. He gets more and more bright-eyed each time the game is played and has started to laugh out loud just as he pushes his feet to see his mother fall over!

