

“Play gives children a chance to practice what they are learning.”

*Mr. Rogers*

## Spotlight on Development

**Play** is how children learn. Why? Research shows four key factors of successful learning:

**Learning occurs best when children are:**

1. Mentally active (not passive)
2. Engaged (not distracted)
3. Socially interactive (with peers or adults)
4. Meaningful connections are made with their lives.

## What might my child do or say?

Review with Home Visitors the developmental stages of play:

Age	Play	Description
0 to 2 years	Solitary	Child plays alone. Example: A child can be in the same room but choose to play with blocks on their own.
2 to 2 ½ years	Spectator	The child observes other children playing.
2 ½ to 3 years	Parallel	The child plays alongside others but does not play with the same toys/activities.
3 to 4 years	Associate	Child starts to interact with others and you may begin to see cooperation (play the same games). Beginning to develop friendships and preferences for playing with some children.
4 to 6+ years	Cooperative	Plays together and interact with each other.

It is important for Home Visitors to know the developmental ages of play to help assess where the HIPPY child is developmentally.

## What can I do to help my child develop?

Encourage parents to setup play environments that will create interesting experiences. When possible connect learning (through play) to their daily lives. Ask parents what activities or interest they have coming up in the future. A trip to the beach, a trip to grandmothers (flying, a

car), a visit to a restaurant, a visit to the doctor's office, etc. Encourage parents to build on these events – **start planning play!**

To enhance play – Parents should help extend play by asking questions, adding props, joining in, etc. Home Visitors should ask parents to share specific items (props) they could add to enhance and extend their child's play.

*Example: Props for a "Bakery"*

**Initial Props could include:** aprons, cookie sheets, bowls, containers (for "pretend" flour and sugar), oven mitts, rolling pins, playdough, etc.

**Props added by parent after observing the child playing:** pencil and paper, calendar, cookie cutters, dry-erase board, open/close sign, receipt book, tongs, timer etc.

## **Activity 1: Language and Literacy – The Little Mouse, The Red Ripe Strawberry, and the Big Hungry Bear**

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### **What your child will learn from this activity:**

Why is a book walk important?

- Sparks interest
- Allows child to think and anticipate the story and make background connections.
- Sets a purpose for reading and children begin to predict what might happen.

As children make predictions, connections and set a purpose, comprehension of the story is increased.

Ask Home Visitors to think about how they choose a new magazine (or book). Do they:

- Look through the pages and the cover
- Read a few sections to see if it seems interesting (or look at pictures in a magazine to decide if you would like to purchase)
- See if it is the style of writing they like or if the pictures are interesting.
- Read the back to see if the plot holds your interest or if there is a project or recipe you want to try.

### **What to do:**

1. Summary of the book: The Little Mouse will do all he can to save his strawberry from the Big, Hungry Bear, even if it means sharing the strawberry with the reader. The reader plays a key role in this story! Little Mouse loves strawberries, but so does the bear. How will Little Mouse stop the bear from eating his freshly picked, red, ripe strawberry?

Ask Home Visitors to observe the facial expressions of the Little Mouse on each page. What does the expression convey? How does it help you as a reader “read” the story? Does your voice or inflection change?

Take away: Illustrations help a child to comprehend a story.

Instruct the parent to take a pen and number the pages 1-22. Numbering the pages will allow them to quickly turn to the instructed page. Note: The instruction for page numbers in the script work when the page # 1 is the picture of the Mouse and ladder.

6. If the child is unable to “phrase” their answer the child may turn back through the book and find their favorite part by **showing you**. The picture will help the child describe their favorite part.

7. The answers to these questions can vary and some children may not understand how to express their answers. Ask guiding questions (and model responses) to help the child understand how to respond. Repeat the questions as you reread throughout the week and child will begin responding(expressing).

Why do you think mouse was picking the strawberry? - To save it? or to eat it?

What was the mouse afraid of? – losing his strawberry, the bear eating his strawberry

8. The mouse pulling the strawberry may be hard for the child to understand by looking at the illustration. Allow the child to pull a leaf from a bush, pull grass up, etc. Connecting to the real world will help build understanding.

9. The parent sings the song and performs the **actions**. (Most parents are familiar with the tune *Wheel on the Bus* but if not, any tune sung with enthusiasm will work.)

10. Repeated the song and observing the actions will help the child become familiar and comfortable. Encourage the parent to sing several times over the week. How does the child do the 2nd time, the 5th time, etc.? *Pathways of learning are connecting.*

## Activity 2: Language and Literacy – Dramatic Play

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### What to do:

2. The child may be able to recognize a ladder, but not verbalize the word ladder. Children may make-up their own word for ladder – step-step. If the child does not respond verbally have the child show you the ladder. Remind parents we want to reinforce the correct vocabulary term - ladder.

4. If the child cannot verbalize what they like best, have the child point to the picture and show you what they like best. Parents can encourage language by asking prompting questions about the page.

# TH!NK

Remind Home Visitors “best practices” is to roleplay one of each of the TH!nk activities. Choose 2 Home Visitors and have them use guided discussion and roleplay to demonstrate delivery.

## Activity 3: Think and Explore: Me and My Shadow

### What your child will learn from this activity:

Introduce parents to [PBS PEEP Family Science](#) Apps.

### *Shadows – Peep*

[Shadows Week 1](#) (outside) and [Shadows Week 2](#) (inside)

### You will need:

How will you expect Home Visitors to roleplay this activity in the home? Be specific. If possible, roleplay in training using the sun and roleplay for a possible cloudy day. This will allow the Home Visitor to understand the activity and be prepared if the day of the Home Visit is cloudy.

### What to do:

1. Define **shadows** in child friendly terms. **Shadows** are made when an item blocks light. Show the child a **shadow**. Check for understanding and have the child show you a **shadow**. Understanding vocabulary = comprehension.

2. Shadows are longest in the early morning and in the late afternoon. The sun makes the longest shadows at the beginning and at the end of the day because at that time, the sun is lowest in the sky and aimed at the sides of the various things on the earth. When the sun is directly above you, there is little or no shadow. Use this information to guide the parent for the optimum time of day to complete the activity.



The photo was taken mid-morning. Discuss how shadows would be different at noon. Home Visitor's should be prepared for all Home Visit times of the day and cloudy rainy weather.

Special Note: The PEEP videos are excellent training for Home Visitor to see a similar activity being demonstrated.

9. The parent will take two pictures. One picture of the child (no shadow) and one picture of the child's shadow.

10. Fold a piece of paper in half. One side write the word **Yes** and one side write the word **No**.

<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
Arms	face
Legs	shirt color
Shoes (laces)	

## Activity 4: Think and Explore: Wall Shadows

### You will need:

Home Visitors should review the list of items and be specific to what will be used in each home. The materials are key to the success of the activity.

Hint: Use a HIPPIY Board book. The size and stability of the board book will make it easier for the child to hold.

### What to do:

1. **Set aside** - The towel or napkin is used to cover the spoon. These items will be used in 8. The instructions include all materials needed to conduct the activity. Gathering all materials

before beginning will help the activity flow. Stopping an activity to retrieve needed materials can be distracting to a child.

2. A flashlight can be used and may be better choice than a lamp.

**Note: The lamp or flashlight is key to the activity.** Home Visitors should roleplay this activity in the home using the parent's choice of items (what they will use for their light source).

- Parents may need help in positioning the light – example: bring it to edge of table or place in front of a wall.
- Parents need guidance on what wall to use. A clear wall (behind a door, under a window, etc.) is best.

## THINK

During staff development share and practice a few shadow puppets. Share the easiest and best shadow puppets with parents.

### Activity 5: Motor – Hitting and kicking the ball

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#### What your child will learn from this activity:

Intrinsic muscles are the small muscles in the hand. The intrinsic muscles are the muscles in the hand that define the arches of the hands, bending of the knuckles, and oppose the thumb. All of these muscles are important in handwriting (pencil grasp).

#### What to do:

1. Allow the child to “scrunch up” paper balls. This is building the small muscles in the hand.
2. Standing inside the circle anchors the child to a specific spot. When the child is asked to make a fist, we want to make sure the thumb is in front of the fingers – the thumb does not need to stick out/up. When the child is asked to punch the bag, their fist becomes tighter and we are strengthening those small (intrinsic) muscles.
- 3-4. The child is also strengthening shoulder muscles as they “punch” the bag. Alternating hands allows the child to use both sides of the brain.
5. You will lower the bag and allow the child to kick the bag. *The bag is almost touching the floor. Low enough to allow the child to kick the bag, but high enough to allow the parent to swing freely.*

Kicking requires balancing on one foot. If the child has trouble balancing, the activity could be completed from a chair or allow the child to hold onto a chair as they kick. Standing and kicking involves using both sides of the body as well as upper and lower extremities.

6. You are switching to a ball. A large paper ball will work for this activity. Remind parents to have all materials gathered before beginning the activity.

## TH!NK

Remind Home Visitors best practice is to roleplay one of each of the TH!nk activities.

## **Family Feedback**

This feedback will be reviewed when the lesson is picked up and should be reviewed each week to help parents know what to look for as they complete the activities throughout the week. It is important to have the Home Visitors review the questions during staff development. Have each Home Visitor write an answer to each question on a separate piece of paper. Have each one share their answers with the group.

**What did you see when your child did the kicking activity?**

**How did these activities make your child more aware of shadows?**

**How do you think the activities this week strengthened your child's thinking skills?**