



Birth–12 Months

Physical/Health: Fine Motor Development¹

WHEN INTRODUCED: Block 2

BEHAVIORS TO OBSERVE

- Reaching
- Grasping
- Manipulating

EXAMPLES OF OBSERVATION OPPORTUNITIES

Behaviors may be observed during a care routine, such as a mealtime or a diaper change; playtime; or during a guided activity, including a book sharing. Pertinent ELM activities (Physical/Health) are cited in parentheses.

Reaching

- Uses primarily one hand to reach for an item, such as the following:
 - a cup or piece of food during mealtime
 - a ring while on back or tummy (Block 2, Option 1) or sitting (Block 2, Option 2)
 - a cylinder-shaped toy (Block 2, Option 3) or blocks or snap beads (Block 5, Options 2 and 3) while sitting
 - a rattle or bell (Block 6, Options 1 and 2), small toy (Block 8, Options 1 and 2), a ball (Block 22, Option 1), or sock rattle (Block 14, Option 1)
- Uses two hands to reach for an item, such as a rattle (Block 10, Option 1)
- Reaches for a toy that is suspended over the infant (Block 5, Option 1), including a mobile or appealing toy hanging above the infant during a diaper change or a playtime with an infant gym/mobile
- Reaches as part of demonstrated hand moves, including reaching up during a rhyme (Block 18, Options 1 and 2) or reaching up, down, and to the side (Block 12, Option 1)
- Reaches across the midline, including reaching to catch a toy (Block 12, Option 3)
- Brings both hands together to clap (Block 20, Option 3)



Grasping

- Uses primarily one hand to hold an item, such as a bell or rattle (Block 4, Option 1; Block 6, Options 1 and 2)
- Uses two hands to hold an item, such as a bottle or cup (mealtime) or toy bear or ball (Block 10, Options 2 and 3)
- Uses primarily one hand to grasp, hold, and let go of an item, such as a small toy (Block 8, Options 1 and 2) or ring while sitting (Block 2, Option 2)
- Uses one or two hands to hold and bring an item to the mouth, such as food at mealtime
- Grasps and holds an item in each hand, such as blocks (Block 5, Option 2) or snap beads (Block 5, Option 3)

Manipulating

- Shakes a bell or rattle (Blocks 4 and 6)
- Uses two hands to play a musical toy (Block 16, Option 1), such as shaking a rattle or bell (Block 4, Option 3; Block 20, Option 2)
- Taps two toys together at the midline (Block 12, Option 2)
- Uses thumb and finger to explore a toy with holes (Block 14, Options 2 and 3) or turn pages of a book (Block 16, Option 2)
- Does more than one type of hand motion with rhymes (Block 18, Options 1 and 2)
- Intentionally lets go of a small item (Block 5, Option 3; Block 8, Options 2 and 3)



EXAMPLES OF FOLLOW-UP LEARNING SUPPORTS

Reintroduce

Reaching

- Offer Block 2 to support experiences in reaching while on back or tummy (Option 1) or sitting with or without support (Options 2 and 3).
- Place a favorite toy or instrument on a tray, or hold a toy or instrument near the infant's chest and midline. Gently shake the toy or instrument to engage the infant's attention. Offer soft, encouraging words to promote reaching for the toy or instrument at the midline.
- Clap hands in a pronounced way while singing songs to promote interest in bringing hands together at the midline.

Grasping

- Repeat Block 2, Option 2 with a toy of interest to an infant. Offer Block 2, Option 3 to an infant who can sit independently.
- Offer toys of varying shapes and sizes to promote an infant's grasp of an item. Describe an infant's changes in hand movements in order to get a better grip on a toy.
- Offer Block 10, Options 2 and 3 to help an infant develop skill in holding an object with two hands.

Manipulating

- Choose an appropriate activity from Block 4 to promote skill in shaking a musical instrument.
- Repeat Block 14, Option 2 or 3 to provide practice in placing a finger into a ball.
- Repeat Block 18, Option 1 or 2 to provide experiences with intentional hand movements.
- Support experience in letting go of an item by engaging an infant in a game of "give and take." Offer a toy and then place your open hand near the infant's hand that is holding the toy. Invite the infant to give you the toy. If the infant wishes to continue holding the toy, offer a second toy that the infant may take with his/her other hand or with the currently occupied hand by dropping the current toy.



Reinforce

Reaching

- Attach a colorful toy to a number of links. Place an infant on his/her back and dangle the links and toy near the infant's chest. Speak in a soft and friendly tone to encourage the infant to swipe at and reach for the toy. Add or remove links in response to the infant's ease or difficulty in swiping at and/or reaching the toy.
- Place an appealing toy within appropriate proximity to an infant to provide practice in reaching. When an infant is on his/her back, place the toy toward the middle of the infant's chest to promote reaching toward the midline. Place a tray of several toys in front of a sitting infant to support practice in reaching.
- For an older infant, place toys that can be used together on a small shelf in an arrangement that promotes reaching across the midline. Encourage the infant to pull up to a standing position to see what is on top of the small shelf. Invite the infant to move the toys for a purpose. Examples:
 - Place a doll on one side of the shelf and a bottle toward the other side. Encourage the infant to give the baby the bottle.
 - Place a parent-sized stuffed animal on one side of the shelf and a baby-sized stuffed animal toward the other side. Encourage the infant to put the baby back with the parent.

Grasping

- Offer toys of various shapes, sizes, and textures for an infant to reach and grasp. Encourage an infant to adjust his/her grip on the toy.

Manipulating

- Provide small toys and a plastic container in an interest area for an infant to practice letting go of objects. If an infant likes balls, he/she might enjoy dropping a ball into a bucket. Draw attention to the sound of the toy when it goes into the plastic container.
- Place shakers or bells in an interest area. Invite 1–2 infants to shake the instruments with you.
- Offer an infant a toy that makes a sound when tapped against another toy. Demonstrate tapping the two toys together. Invite the infant to tap the toys. Show enthusiasm for the infant's efforts. Sing an upbeat song while the infant taps the toys together.
- Sing fun songs with hand motions, and invite an infant to imitate your motions. Make up your own songs and hand motions.



EXAMPLES OF PORTFOLIO ENTRIES

Reaching is an important motor skill that we actively promote in our program. In three different observations of Carlos's progress with reaching, he reached for toys that were placed near him. Carlos was in different situations (on back, on tummy) in two of the observations. We are continuing to provide Carlos with different opportunities to practice his reaching.

Imani uses reaching and grasping as a way to independently explore toys in the classroom and during activities with staff members. In two observations of Imani's reaching, she used one hand for grasping and shaking toys. In a third observation, Imani used two hands to manipulate a toy. We will continue to provide a variety of opportunities for Imani to reach, grasp, and manipulate play materials. We will include opportunities for Imani to use both hands to grasp and play with a toy.

Endnotes

- 1 The categories and behaviors to observe are informed by the following sources: Adolph, K E., & Berger, S. E. (2011). Physical and motor development. In M. H. Bornstein & M. E. Lamb (Eds.), *Developmental science: Advanced textbook, 6th ed.* (pp. 241–302). New York: Psychology Press; Bricker, D., Capt, B., & Pretti-Frontczak, K. (2002). *Assessment, evaluation, and programming system for infants and children, 2nd ed., Vol. 2: Test, birth to three years and three to six years.* Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co.; Folio, M. R., & Fewell, R. R. (2002) Peabody motor development chart. Austin, TX: Pro-Ed, Inc.