Guide for Observing and Individualizing

Birth–12 Months

<table>
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<th>Social-Emotional: Social Interaction Skills¹</th>
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<td>WHEN INTRODUCED: Block 1</td>
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BEHAVIORS TO OBSERVE

- Initiates² and/or responds³ to communication⁴ with a trusted caregiver
- Participates in back-and-forth exchanges⁵ with a trusted caregiver

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 (Social-Emotional) are cited in parentheses.

Initiates and/or responds to communication with a trusted caregiver during

- infant or caregiver arrival or departure
- familiar care routines and transitions, such as diaper changing (Block 13, Options 1 and 2), handwashing (Block 13, Option 2), and transition to another activity (Block 13, Option 2)
- activities that involve music or movement (Block 1, Option 3; Block 16, Option 2; Block 20, Options 1 and 2)
- guided play with a toy, such as a soft rattle (Block 4, Option 1), toy animal figures (Block 21, Option 2), puppet (Block 5, Option 1), and doll (Block 15, Option 1)
- a book sharing (Block 5, Option 2; Block 16, Option 1; Block 21, Option 1)

Participates in a back-and-forth exchange with a trusted caregiver during

- open-ended communication initiated by a caregiver (Block 2, Option 1)
- guided play with a toy, such as blocks (Block 2, Option 2), ball (Block 2, Option 3; Block 11, Option 2), nesting cups (Block 17, Option 3), and toy musical instrument (Block 8, Options 1 and 2)
EXAMPLES OF FOLLOW-UP LEARNING SUPPORTS

Reintroduce

Initiates and/or responds to communication with a trusted caregiver

- Promptly and enthusiastically acknowledge any infant communication toward you, such as gazing, smiling or vocalizing at you, or reaching toward you. (Your response may lead to a back-and-forth exchange with the infant.)
- Wave and say “hello” and “bye-bye” to the infant (and also the parent) during arrival and departure. Encourage the infant to wave to you.
- Repeat Block 1, Option 1 to encourage the infant to exchange sounds with you.
- Share a touch-and-feel book of interest to the infant. Invite the infant to feel different textures in the book. Describe and imitate the infant’s reactions (Block 5, Option 2).
- Describe your actions and the infant’s actions, including nonverbal communications, during care routines. See Block 13 activity options for suggestions.

Participates in a back-and-forth exchange with a trusted caregiver

- Repeat Block 2, Option 1 to promote a back-and-forth exchange of facial expressions, sounds, and/or actions.
- Repeat the Block 8, Option 1 or 2 activity involving a toy musical instrument to support a back-and-forth exchange.
- Repeat an activity that involves a toy of interest to the infant to support a back-and-forth exchange, such as Block 12, Options 1 and 2; and Block 17, Options 1–3.

Reinforce

Initiates and/or responds to communication with a trusted caregiver

- Offer a toy of interest to the infant to provide practice in initiating communication with you about the toy and/or responding to your descriptions of the toy and/or the infant’s interactions with the toy. Toy possibilities in ELM activity plans include toy animal figures (Block 21, Option 2), moving toy animals in muffin pans (Block 4, Option 3), a stacking ring toy (Block 12, Option 1), and baby doll (Block 15, Option 1), and nesting cups (Block 17, Options 1 and 2).
- Engage the infant in a book sharing that includes opportunities to initiate or respond to communications with you. Pictures of babies are of keen interest to most infants (Block 3, Option 1).
- Offer an activity that involves hand and arm actions, such as waving at a teddy bear (Block 6, Option 3) or hugging a baby doll (Block 16, Option 3). Include opportunities for the infant to use hands/arms to initiate communication with you as part of the activity.
- Sing a song in which you gently stop at key points to invite an infant response (Block 1, Option 3; Block 3, Option 3).
Participates in a back-and-forth exchange with a trusted caregiver

- Engage an infant in a game of *Peek-a-boo* to provide practice in a back-and-forth exchange. Imitate the vocalization and/or facial expression the infant may offer when you say “boo.”
- Invite an infant to join you in playing with a toy that supports back-and-forth activity, such as rolling a ball or pushing a car. Offer different types of toys, one at a time.
- Provide two puppets, one for you and one for the infant. Invite the infant to move his/her puppet as you move your puppet. Make and describe simple movements such as lifting, putting down, and side to side.

**EXAMPLES OF PORTFOLIO ENTRIES**

*Each day this past week Alejandro offered me a big smile when I joined the room in the morning. This is a new behavior. I always respond with a big smile and say his name. Now he coos or moves his legs or arms when I respond to him with a big smile and say his name. I will provide more opportunities for Alejandro to practice his social interaction skills.*

*Bridget likes me to “hide” my face and play *Peek-a-boo* with her. This is a good way for her to learn how to participate in a back-and-forth exchange with another person. I have been imitating the face and laugh she makes when I say “boo.” She laughs at me when I imitate her response to “boo.” This adds another exchange to our interaction. I will provide opportunities for Bridget to be the one who hides her face and says “boo.”*

**Endnotes**

2. An infant's initiation of communication with a caregiver may include: gazing at the caregiver, smiling at or vocalizing to the caregiver, and/or reaching toward the caregiver (not in response to something the caregiver does).
3. Responses to a caregiver communication may include: gazing at the caregiver, vocalizing, smiling, kicking legs, reaching toward the caregiver, waving arm(s), moving or bouncing body.
4. A caregiver's communication with an infant may include nonverbal messages, such as a smiling or patting an infant's back or arm, and/or words and other types of simple verbal utterances, such as “Da-da-da-do.”