

Play's the thing!

First games teach the important link between baby's actions and what people do next

What is the practice?

The very best baby games and early learning opportunities include ones in which the child's behavior always results in an interesting social response.

- ⦿ Arrange baby's play area and play times so that his actions will cause the people he interacts with to do interesting things.
- ⦿ For babies and young children with disabilities, be sure to allow plenty of time for them to realize that their actions are causing an interesting response.



*What fun! Every time I say "Buh, buh, buh,"
Daddy blows silly, noisy bubbles!*



See it happen

"Peek-A-Boo" (a well-loved game known by many other names, including "Peep-Eye") is wonderful for helping baby understand that her actions can bring about rewarding social interactions. Let baby see you hide your face. Help her touch your hands or pull away a covering to reveal your face as you smile and exclaim: "Peek-a-boo!" Then gently move her hands to cover and reveal her own face and continue the game.

How do we do it?

- ⦿ Focus on one action that the child begins by himself or herself, or with a little assistance. (Examples might be a leg kick, a hand wave, a particular vocalization, etc.)
- ⦿ Make sure an interesting social reward occurs immediately after the child's action. (For example, each leg kick might be followed by mommy singing a verse of a children's song.)
- ⦿ WAIT for or encourage the child to repeat the action and immediately give the same reward each time.
- ⦿ WAIT, and repeat the "game" as planned, as often as the child repeats the focus action.

Is it working?

- ⦿ Does baby repeat the behavior again and again?
- ⦿ Does she recognize that there is a connection between HER action and the desirable response that follows?
- ⦿ Does she express delight (smiling, cooing, laughing, clapping, etc.) when the response occurs?

