

ARKANSAS IMAGINATION LIBRARY
Building the Reading Brain
Birth–5 Teacher Guide & Family Literacy Activities



Every Arkansas Imagination Library book is an opportunity to build the reading brain. This guide provides developmentally appropriate, play-based learning experiences aligned with the Arkansas Early Learning Standards to strengthen language, literacy, and school readiness through meaningful interactions with books.

Rainbow Colors Peekaboo! By DK

Delivery Month: August

Group 1 • Birth - 12 Months

Arkansas Infant/Toddler Early Learning Standards

SE1.1 Develops secure relationships with caregivers.

LD1.1 Attends and responds to language.

EL1.1 Shows interest in books, pictures, and songs.

CD1.1 Demonstrates curiosity and exploration.

PD1.1 Uses developing motor skills to explore.

Science of Reading Foundations

- Serve-and-return interactions
- oral language exposure
- shared attention
- vocabulary development
- nursery rhymes, songs, repetition
- responsive communication

Learning Goals

- Strengthen attachment
- Build receptive language
- support sensory exploration
- encourage attention to books
- communication.

Start with the book:

Reading to an infant group:

Create a cozy environment where non-mobile infants can lean against you, another adult, or a soft surface in the room, and where infants who can sit can do so securely. Position the book where it is at an infant's eye level. Read in an animated voice, asking questions and discussing the images on the page as you go along. Allow each child to touch the book or even help by lifting the flaps.

Reading to an individual infant:

Gather the infant in your lap and allow them to explore the book by grabbing, turning pages, and lifting the flaps. Position the book where it is at an infant's eye level. Read in an animated voice, asking questions and discussing the images on the page as you go along. Stay on the page for as long as the infant is interested, turning the page when the baby gives you an indication that they want to move on to the next page

Activities to extend learning

Activity Title	Materials Needed	Instructions	Domains of Development/ Learning Standard	Why
Color Recognition Circle	Scarves or fabric in bright colors	Gather your infant in a comfortable lap space. Show one bright color at a time using scarves or soft fabric. Name the color repeatedly in a sing-song voice: "Red, red, red! Do you see the red?" Gently wave the scarf to encourage visual tracking. Pause and wait for your infant to respond with sounds, smiles, or reaching movements.	Physical Development (fine) Language and Emergent Literacy	This builds vocabulary and strengthens your connection through shared attention.
Mirror Reflection Play	Unbreakable Mirror	Position your infant where they can see themselves in a safe, unbreakable mirror. Make exaggerated facial expressions and sounds. Point to your face, then theirs, saying "That's you!"	Social Emotional	This supports language development and helps infants begin to understand themselves as separate people.

		That's your face!" Repeat simple sounds like "ba-ba" or "ma-ma."		
Picture Pointing and Naming	Board Book: Rainbow Colors Peekaboo or Colorful image cards	Open the board book slowly. Point to each colorful picture and name it clearly: "Look! A rainbow! Red, yellow, blue!" Use your finger to guide your infant's eyes across the page. Pause on each image and make sounds related to the picture. Repeat the same words throughout the reading to build vocabulary.	Language and Emergent Literacy	Action supports building vocabulary through repetition.
Texture and Touch Experience	Board Book: Rainbow Colors Peekaboo and/or colorful objects of many textures	As you read, let your infant touch safe textures on each page or nearby materials. Say the color name while they feel the texture: "Soft red fabric. Can you feel it?" Use repeated words, gestures, songs, and object labeling. Encourage shared attention and communication through caregiver interaction.	Physical Development (fine) Cognitive Development	This connects words to sensations and keeps your infant engaged through multiple senses.
Color-Themed Bouncing Song	Optional brightly colored cards or objects to refer to during singing	Bounce your infant gently on your lap while singing to a simple tune like "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star." Sing: "Red, red, red so bright, bouncing up into the light!" Change the color with each verse. Match your bouncing rhythm to the song.	Physical Development (gross) Language and Emergent Literacy	This combines language, rhythm, and physical connection.
Scarf Dancing and Clapping	Colorful scarves	Hold a colorful scarf and wave it gently while making rhythmic sounds or clapping. Encourage your infant to reach for the scarf or move their arms. Sing simple fingerplays like "If You're Happy	Physical Development (gross) Language and Emergent Literacy	This builds motor skills and rhythm awareness.

		and You Know It," clapping your infant's hands gently during the clapping parts.		
Rainbow Color Basket	Basket/box/area, colorful items from around the room	Fill a basket with safe, colorful objects: soft balls, scarves, rattles, and fabric squares in different colors. Let your infant explore each item. Name the colors as they touch: "You found the yellow rattle! Yellow, yellow, yellow." Encourage reaching, grasping, and mouthing (if age-appropriate and items are safe).	Physical Development (fine) Cognitive Development	This builds vocabulary awareness while allowing the child to grow cognitively as they explore colors within their surroundings.

Teacher Reflection and Review

What captured infants' attention? Which interactions supported language development and attachment? How did infants respond to sensory experiences?

Differentiation

Follow infant cues and developmental levels. Provide visual, auditory, tactile, and movement-based supports. Adapt interactions to individual needs.

https://app.briskteaching.com/student_podcast/4ijfl6pfe

Sensory Supports for Different Infant Needs

For Infants Who Prefer Gentle, Quiet Sensory Input

Use soft, muted colors or pastels instead of bright colors. Speak in a calm, quiet voice. Move scarves and objects slowly and gently. Use light touch on skin rather than firm pressure. Offer one color or object at a time instead of many. Provide longer pauses between activities. Use soft music or quiet singing. Limit the number of people or sounds in the environment.

For Infants Who Prefer More Stimulation and Movement

Use bright, bold colors. Use a more animated, expressive voice with a varied tone. Move scarves and objects quickly and playfully. Offer bouncing, rocking, or swaying movements. Introduce multiple colors and objects together. Use clapping, singing, or music with rhythm. Encourage reaching and grabbing. Offer more frequent changes between activities.

For Infants with Limited Mobility or Motor Skills

Position the infant comfortably where they can see and reach objects without strain. Bring colored objects closer to the infant's face or hands. Use lightweight scarves and soft toys that are easy to hold. Offer hand-over-hand support for reaching or touching. Use mirrors positioned at eye level. Provide verbal descriptions of colors and movements. Celebrate small movements like eye tracking or finger movements.

For Infants Who Are Sensitive to Textures

Offer one texture at a time. Start with the softest materials (like silk scarves). Let the infant explore at their own pace without pressure to touch. Describe textures as you show them: "This is soft and smooth." Respect if the infant does not want to touch something. Offer visual exploration (looking) without requiring touch. Use gloves or your hand as a barrier if needed. Gradually introduce new textures over time.

For Infants Who Are Overstimulated Easily

Reduce background noise and visual clutter. Use one color at a time instead of a rainbow of colors. Dim bright lights if possible. Offer shorter activity sessions (5–10 minutes). Provide quiet breaks between activities. Use a calm, soft voice. Minimize the number of people present. Offer a safe space to retreat if needed. Watch for signs of stress (crying, turning away) and pause activities.

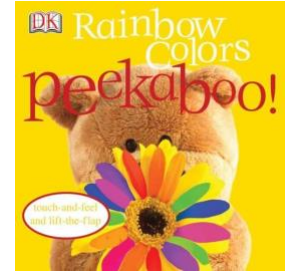
For Infants with Visual Differences or Preferences

Use high-contrast colors (like black and white) if bright colors are hard to see. Position objects within the infant's visual field. Move objects slowly and deliberately. Use sound cues along with visual cues: "Listen to the rattle! Now look at the red rattle!" Describe colors and objects in detail. Use tactile exploration (touch and texture) as the main way to explore. Offer objects at different distances to find the infant's preferred viewing distance.



Family Connection

August 2026



Reading to your Child: Birth -12 months:

Reading is a "serve and return" interaction. This back-and-forth process is fundamental to brain wiring, especially in the earliest years. Serve-and-return interactions help parents create a safe, secure environment for infants and help infants recognize they're being cared for and understood.

- Help your baby to explore the book. Let your baby turn the pages, grab, or even chew on it.
- Read with joy and excitement. Use different voices for different characters.
- Stay on a page for as long as your baby is interested. Turn the page or stop reading when your baby looks away or seems tired or bored.
- Ask questions your child can answer by pointing. You can say, "Where's the doggie?" or "Where's the happy baby?" or "Who says meow?"

Extend the book by trying these activities:			
Play-Based Activity Title	Materials Needed	Instructions	Why?
Color Sorting with Household Items	Colorful Materials from around your house	Gather safe household items in different colors: plastic cups, soft toys, blankets, and food containers. Sort items by color together. Place all red items in one pile, blue items in another. Say the color names repeatedly as you sort. Let your infant help by reaching and moving items.	This builds color recognition and sorting skills using materials already in your home.
Rainbow Scarf Hunt	Colorful fabric squares or scarves	Hide colorful scarves around a safe play space (under pillows, in baskets, behind furniture). Encourage your infant to find them with your help. As you	This reinforces color vocabulary through playful exploration.

		discover each scarf, name the color together: "We found the red scarf! Red!" Repeat this activity weekly, changing hiding spots.	
Color Matching Game	Colorful pairs of objects from around the house	Collect pairs of colorful items (two red socks, two blue blankets, two yellow toys). Show your infant one item and ask, "Can you find the other red one?" Help them match the pairs. Celebrate each match with enthusiasm.	This develops visual discrimination and matching skills.
Add the following activities to your daily routine:			
Daily Routine Activity	Instruction	Helpful Tips	
Singing Color Songs at Mealtime	During meals, sing simple color songs about the food: "Red, red apple, crunch, crunch, crunch!" or "Yellow banana, soft and sweet!" Point to the food's color and let your infant touch it (if safe).	Make mealtime colorful with a variety of vegetables and fruits.	This connects colors to everyday experiences and builds vocabulary naturally.
Bedtime Color Routine	Before sleep, show your infant one colorful object or picture. Sing a gentle lullaby while holding it: "Sleepy colors, soft and bright, tucking you in for the night." Use the same song and object each night so your infant learns to expect this calming routine.	Place colorful items/pictures close to the place you conduct your bedtime routine. This month's book, <i>Rainbow Colors Peekaboo</i> , can be used for this activity.	This builds security and language through repetition.

Assessment for Parents

Observe eye contact, visual tracking, engagement, vocalizations, reaching, smiling, and responses to shared reading.

Use this checklist to observe and record your infant's responses during sensory, music, and literacy activities. Mark what you notice during play-based activities at home.

Language and Vocalization

- ☐ Makes sounds in response to your voice or singing
- ☐ Babbles or coos during activities
- ☐ Attempts to imitate sounds you make
- ☐ Responds to their name
- ☐ Makes new sounds or babbles not heard before

Eye Contact and Visual Tracking

- ☐ Makes eye contact with you during activities
- ☐ Follows colorful objects with their eyes
- ☐ Looks at pictures when you point
- ☐ Tracks movement across their visual field
- ☐ Focuses on your face during singing or talking

Engagement and Attention

- ☐ Stays interested in the activity for 5+ minutes
- ☐ Looks at you for encouragement or response
- ☐ Smiles or shows joy during activities
- ☐ Reaches toward objects or materials
- ☐ Shows excitement through body movements

Sensory Responses

- ☐ Touches or grasps offered textures
- ☐ Reacts to different colors (looks longer, reaches)
- ☐ Responds to music or rhythmic sounds
- ☐ Explores objects by mouthing (if age-appropriate)
- ☐ Shows preference for certain textures or colors

Motor Skills and Movement

- ☐ Reaches for objects or scarves
- ☐ Grasps items placed in their hand
- ☐ Moves arms or legs to music
- ☐ Bounces or sways when held during songs
- ☐ Rolls or shifts position to see better

Attachment and Responsiveness

- ☐ Seeks comfort from you during activities
- ☐ Responds positively to your voice
- ☐ Shows distress when you leave and happiness when you return
- ☐ Calms down when you hold or comfort them
- ☐ Initiates interaction by reaching or vocalizing

Family Connection activity:

Rainbow Scarf Hunt	Colorful fabric squares or scarves	Hide colorful scarves around a safe play space (under pillows, in baskets, behind furniture). Encourage your infant to find them with your help. As you discover each scarf, name the color together: "We found the red scarf! Red!" Repeat this activity weekly, changing hiding spots.	This reinforces color vocabulary through playful exploration.
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Prepare several squares of fabric, enough for each family to have a set. Please prepare one each of red, blue, yellow, and green. Due to limited space, have the parent place their infant on their lap. Have the parent place the fabric pieces behind their back. Demonstrate bringing on a color at a time. Name the color, talk about the color, and name other things that are the same color. Allow the infant to grasp the fabric and move on to the next color when they show signs of boredom or disinterest.

Explain the alternative scarf-hunt activity found on the family connection sheet.

References

Arkansas Child Development and Early Learning Standards: Birth through 60 Months. (2016). Arkansas Department of Education and Arkansas Head Start State Collaboration Office. https://dese.ade.arkansas.gov/Files/AR-Early-Learning-Standards-2016-1_20230505102527.pdf

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Reading tips | Arkansas Imagination Library. (n.d.). Retrieved July 23, 2026, from <https://arkansasimaginationlibrary.org/reading-tips/>