

## 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?

