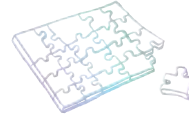


**Early learning games are a fun way to help babies with a developmental age of 2 to 8 months realize the relationship between their behavior and its effect on people.**

The early childhood practice defined in this brochure is based on findings described in practice-based research syntheses conducted at the Research and Training Center on Early Childhood Development by Carl J. Dunst and Melanie D. Hutto: Dunst, C. J. (2003). **Social-emotional consequences of response-contingent learning opportunities.** *Bridges*, 1(4) and Hutto, M. D. (2003). **Latency to learn in contingency studies of young children with disabilities or developmental delays.** *Bridges*, 1(5). To read or download the complete research syntheses and/or user-friendly, illustrated, research summaries, *Bottomlines 1(4) and 1(5)*, visit [www.researchtopractice.info](http://www.researchtopractice.info). Printed copies are also available to order from Winterberry Press online at [www.wbpress.com](http://www.wbpress.com) or at the mailing address printed below. All opinions expressed are those of the Research and Training Center on Early Childhood Development and do not necessarily reflect the views of the U. S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs, Research to Practice Division, funder of the work of the RTC (H324K010005).



#### **Evidence-Based Practice Guides**

Additional practice guides are available from the RTC for this and other important early childhood topics.

Related materials also are available as part of *Solutions* evidence-based tool kits.

Please see descriptions of these resources and information for ordering under “Products” at

[www.researchtopractice.info](http://www.researchtopractice.info)

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*Cornerpiece*

## **Play's the Thing!**

*Baby's first games teach the important connection between baby's actions and what people do next*

**An  
Evidence-Based  
Early Childhood  
Practice**

# Play's the Thing!

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



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

## What is the practice?

- 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**.

## 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.



Baby pays rapt attention, waiting to see how Mommy will respond to her action.

## Take a look!

"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.



## 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?