

Grab and Release

Primary Objectives

7a. Uses fingers and hands

Why It's Important

Infants are just beginning to develop their fine-motor skills. While grasping is a reflex that most infants are born with, releasing is a skill that must be learned.

Materials

Small toys that are safe for infants

What You Do

1. Place the toys on the floor within your child's reach in a safe, low-traffic area (ideally in front of mirrors, next to a firm pillow, or on a rug).
2. Encourage your child to pick up a toy by modeling the acts of picking up and releasing.
3. Describe what you see your child doing. *You picked up the blue rattle and now you are shaking it. Shake, shake, shake.*
4. Encourage him to practice releasing by drawing his attention to another toy. You may also need to help him open his hand. Describe what you are doing. *I am opening your hand. Now you are letting go. Now you can get the rattle.*
5. You may also want to sing "Open, Shut Them" during this experience.
6. Play patiently with your child until he is able to release the toy on his own. Continue to encourage him and model the motions, if necessary.
7. When you see your child release the toy, acknowledge his efforts. *You opened your hand and your toy fell out! Can you open your hand again?*
8. Gently open his hand and continue with the activity for as long as he is interested. Be attentive to cues that tell you he is ready for something different, such as looking away, crying, or changing positions.