



Language Activity 9: Identifying Objects from Their Description

Primary Goal

Practicing listening skills.

Secondary Goal

Developing concentration.

Material

Work mat.

Work tray.

Two different objects of the same color. Choose objects with which the infant is already familiar, such as a ball and a block.

Repertoire of “I See” or “I Spy” songs.

Presentation

- This activity appeals particularly to the interests and abilities of infants 9–12 months old.
- In advance, place the objects on the work tray and get the work mat.
- Place the work mat in front of the infant and put the tray beside the work mat.
- Sit facing the infant with the work mat between you.
- Make sure you have the infant’s attention.
- Remove one object from the tray and place it on the work mat. Put the tray and other object aside for the moment.
- Sing or say a verse describing the object. Pause for effect with each description. For example, say, “I spy with my little eye something that is ... round ... and bouncy ... and I can roll it. What is it?” Then reach out and pick up the ball, stroke it, roll it a bit, and turn it this way and that in your hands.



- Invite the infant to take the object. Give the infant ample time to examine it.
- Ask the infant to place the object back on the work mat.
- Pick up the object and place it on the tray.
- Remove the second object from the tray and place the object on the work mat.
- Now sing or say a verse describing this object. Pause for effect with each description. For example, say, “I spy with my little eye something that is ... square ... and hard ... and I can build a tower with it. What is it?” Reach out and pick up the block, stroke it, tap it on the floor, and turn it this way and that in your hands.
- Invite the infant to take the object. Give the infant ample time to examine it.
- When the infant has finished examining the object, place both objects on the work mat.
- Sing or say a verse describing one of the objects, then ask the infant to pick up that object. Do not correct or cajole. If the infant picks up the wrong object, simply thank the infant, put the object aside, and continue. For example, say, “Thank you for the ball. It’s round and bouncy. Now I spy with my little eye something that is ... square ... and hard ... and I can build a tower with it. Can you hand it to me?”
- After this repetition, allow the infant to examine the objects uninterrupted. As soon as the infant starts focusing on the objects, quietly move aside and let the infant explore on her/his own.
- When the infant has finished the activity, place the objects on the work tray, then take the infant with you while you return the work mat and materials to their proper places. This completes the activity.
- Make sure that the materials presented stay available — on a very low shelf, for example — for the infant to access when she/he wishes.

Extension 1

- As the infant acquires experience and skill, increase the number of familiar objects presented to five or six.

Extension 2

- As the infant acquires experience and skill, choose objects not familiar to the infant.