Physical Development

Infants

Standards:

• Gross motor skills
• Fine motor skills
• Self-help skills
• Health and safety skills
Activities and Strategies for Development

Key Mobile
- Collect a bunch of old discarded keys.
- Soak keys in a solution of water and ammonia until they are shiny.
- Dry the keys thoroughly.
- Cut different lengths of white string or clear thread.
- Insert pieces of string or thread through the hole in the top of each key. Tie a secure knot.
- Tie the other end of each string to the bottom of a coat hanger.
- Arrange the strings so they hang in different lengths. Tape them in place so they do not slide together.
- Hang the shiny key mobile from the ceiling or under a high cabinet above the changing table. Hang it where the children can see, but not reach it.
- As you place the infant on the changing table, gently brush the mobile to make the shiny keys jingle.
- Say, “Look at the shiny keys. Do you see how they move? Listen to the sound they make.”
- Observe to see if the infant uses her eyes to following the shiny, swinging keys.

Special Needs Tip
Infants with vision impairments will benefit from this activity also. The varied textures will stimulate sensory awareness as the baby feels the different fabrics.

Magic Carpet
- Get several large fabric scraps from the fabric store to create a 2x3 ft. carpet.
- Look for fake fur, corduroy, satin, flannel, chenille, and other fabrics with comfortable textures.
- Cut scraps into large squares and sew them together or use fabric tape on the back to attach the pieces.
- Lay the infant on the carpet on his stomach so that he can see the fabric pattern and feel the texture on his fingers, hands, arms, and toes.
- After a few moments, lift the baby and move him to a different square so he can see patterns and feel different sensations, including bumpy, slick, smooth, and furry!
- If the infant is creeping, encourage him to move to another texture on his own and to rub it with his hands and fingers.
Dump and Fill

- Get a small plastic bucket and three or four beanbags.
- Check beanbags to make sure the seams are tight.
- Place the infant on the floor on his bottom.
- Take one of the beanbags and put it in the bucket.
- Hand the baby another beanbag. Say, “Can you put it in? Can you fill the bucket?”
- Take turns filling up the bucket with the beanbags.
- When the last beanbag goes in, turn the bucket over and dump the beanbags out.
- Say, “All gone!” as you show the baby the empty bucket.
- Let the infant practice repeating these simple actions, which illustrate cause and effect.

Special Needs Tip

*For a child who is unable to sit without support, use firm pillows or a “boppy” to hold him in a sitting position.*

Multi-sensory Cans

- Get three small containers with plastic lids such as yogurt cartons or round potato chip cans.
- Clean the cans and lids thoroughly.
- Cover the sides of the cans with contact paper, one can in red, one in blue, and the last in green.
- Put different materials in each can to make a sound when shaken. Try paper clips, stones, and pennies.
- Put a different scent on three cotton balls and place one in each can. Try oil of peppermint, lemon extract, or cinnamon.
- When filled, put the lid on and seal the can with glue or tape. Punch two small holes in the top to release the scent.
- Sit with the infant on the carpet and invite her to pick up one of the cans and explore it with her eyes, ears, and nose.
- Say, “You picked up the bright red can! Can you shake it? Listen to the sound! What else is special about the can? Can you put it to your nose? What do you smell? Does it smell like brother’s candy?”