

## **Baby Story Time Overview**

*For ages 0-12 months*

What we want to achieve in baby story time is a simple introduction to the literacy skills. As we know, literacy skills go hand in hand with baby's emotional and physical development, so it's good to incorporate those skills as well.

### **Key Developmental Aspects:**

- Babies under cannot see pastel colors as well, black and white is ideal for 3 months and under. Using bright bold colors is best for 3-12 months.
- Illustrations should be bold and clear. Tiny pictures are harder for babies to decode.
- Once babies are walking this program becomes developmentally too easy and they might want to try a toddler story time.
- Babies will put things in their mouth, just be prepared to wash or launder items you put out, don't put out anything unsafe.
- Babies will crawl around and make noise, encourage this. Tell parents this is ok.
- I ask parents ahead of time if their baby gets upset and they can't hear my voice anymore, that it's ok to take a break and step out of the room.
- If a large number of babies get fussy, it's ok to stop early. Or change to very low key activities like singing songs or lullabies, or just putting on a quiet CD and letting them play.

### **Components of Baby Story Time**

The following table is my outline for the program. When doing story time I like to provide the words so caregivers can follow along. You can write the words on big pieces of tag board, or just print them out in a large font on 8.5 x 11 paper, put them in a clear protective sleeve, and use sticky Velcro on the back so they stick to your felt board. I also print the songs/rhymes out for parents so they can take them home and practice.

I recommend doing the same rhymes for up to 4 weeks so parents and baby can really get familiar with them. It feels weird to do the same thing over and over but not only is it easier to plan, but it's best for the baby. Or, you can focus your attention on a different aspect of learning each week and change some of the rhymes. For example focus on bonding/touch rhymes one week and action rhymes the next. Regardless, always go slow, and always repeat your rhymes 2-3 times.

Order baby story time content however you like, but try to incorporate intervals where the babies can sit and simply listen and aren't being overloaded with sensory input.

Baby story time shouldn't last more than about 25-30 minutes, but babies and caregivers may wish to stay longer and play and chat, so make sure your room is available for about an hour. This is an excellent time for new parents to meet other parents. This is an excellent time for new parents to meet other parents.

<b>Welcome Rhyme:</b>	Choose 1 – Opening and closing rhymes help focus the group. At this age, it’s more about helping you create some structure for the program.
<b>Rhymes for rhythm</b>	Choose 2 or more. Associating words with rhythm helps children with phonological awareness (hearing the smaller parts in words). With babies, simply encouraging this by bouncing the baby in time with the rhythm is enough. The Grand Old Duke of York is always a favorite.
<b>Books:</b>	<p>Choose 1-2, but use them at different times in the program. There are different ways to use books depending on the size of your group. The point is to encourage reading at home and create a fun environment related to books. Reading a portion of a story is fine.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read one page from a picture book or big book to each baby as you walk around the room</li> <li>• Use a big book on an easel and use an extra animated voice, pointing to the illustrations and going slowly</li> <li>• Show a favorite book and explain to parents why this book is good for sharing with their babies</li> <li>• Give each parent a book and have them read with their child.</li> </ul>
<b>Activity:</b>	Use bubbles, scarves, baby safe instruments, toys – something fun for the baby to explore and try out. One of my favorites is egg shakers with an upbeat song--Just let the babies shake! (Or lick the eggs). Songs that use props are a great option for this.
<b>Flannel Board Song:</b>	This is time for the baby to be passive, just watching, time to chill out and just listen – important not to over stimulate babies. Good time to explain how babies will be learning best when you sing to them, but caregivers can encourage a love of music by playing CDs for them at home and in the car.
<b>Action Song</b>	Choose 1-2 - Explain that action songs are good for developing coordination. At this age, caregivers help by moving baby’s arms/legs for them.
<b>Rhymes for bonding:</b>	Choose 1-2 - Touching your child as you talk to them increases bonding, and baby’s trust of the caregiver. You can tell parents these are perfect rhymes to do right after changing diapers, taking a bath, or getting dressed.
<b>Songs/Rhymes for Eye tracking:</b>	Choose 1 - Little babies are learning to use their eyes. Associating words or songs with a puppet, or other visual aid helps promote the wiring of the brain.
<b>Dance:</b>	Any song that gets the caregivers up dancing with baby will work well. This also promotes phonological awareness.
<b>Last words for the day:</b>	Introduce families to the props you’ve chosen that you haven’t already discussed and invite them to play with them some more. Point parents to handouts, book displays, etc.
<b>Closing Song:</b>	Choose 1 – A lullaby is a nice way to end baby story time.