Emotional & Physical Stimulation for Children

*Adapted from WHO Management of Severe Malnutrition: A Manual for Physicians and Other Senior Health Workers 1999*

***For Children Who Cannot Easily Move:***

* Passive limb movements
* Splashing in a warm bath

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***At each play session and for all ages:***

* Teach local songs and finger and toe games.
* Have the child vocalise/repeat what he/she hears.
* Describe all activites.
* Teach action words with activities (e.g., say “bang bang” while beating a drum).
* Encourage next motor milestone while playing: bouncing, crawling, standing, walking.

| **AGE** | **TOY** | **TO MAKE** | **TO USE** |
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| **6+**  **months** | **Ring on a string**  string_toy | String together cotton reels and other small objects with holes. Tie the string in a ring, leaving a long piece of string hanging. | * Swing or suspend ring within child’s reach; encourage child to knock and grab it. * Place ring at a distance. Teach child to retrieve ring by dragging it. * Teach child to dangle ring. |
| **9+**  **months** | **In-and-out toy**  **in_out** | Useplastic or cardboard container and small objects that child can’t swallow. | * Let child explore objects and container. * Put objects in container and shake. * Teach child to take objects out of container one at a time while saying “out” and “give me.” * Teach child to turn container upside down to take objects out. * Turn container upside down and teach child to put objects on top of container * Cover objects with container and ask “Where are they?” Let child find them. |
| **9+**  **months** | **Blocks**  **blocks** | Use small wood blocks and sanded smooth. Decorate with carving or non-toxic paint if possible. | * Teach child to hold a block in each hand and bang them together. * Teach child to stack 2 blocks, then gradually increase the number. Knock them down while saying “down.” Make a game of stacking and knocking down the blocks. * Line up blocks; teach child to push them along while making train or car noises; teach older children words such as “stop,” “go,” “fast” and “slow.” * Teach child to sort blocks by size or by decoration. |
| **9+**  **months** | **Nesting toys**  **stacking_cups** | Cut off bottom of two containers of identical shape but different size. | * Place smaller container inside larger container. |
| **12+ months** | **Rattle**  **rattle** | Cut long strips of plastic from coloured plastic bottles. Place in small clear plastic bottle. If available, use non-toxic glue to secure the top on firmly . Do not use this toy if the child is at risk of choking on the rattle’s contents. | * Let child explore rattle. * Show child how to shake rattle while saying “shake shake.” * Teach child to beat rattle on a surface while saying “bang bang.” |
| **12+ months** | **Drum**  **drum** | Use a tin with a tight lid. | * Roll drum out of reach and encourage the child to go after it. |
| **18+ months** | **Posting Bottle**  **posting_bottle** | Use a large clear plastic bottle with a small neck and place objects like spools that child can’t swallow but can fit through the neck. Don’t seal lid. | * Put an object in bottle and shake it. * Teach child to turn bottle upside down and take object out while asking “Can you get it?” * Teach child to put object in bottle and take it out; try with several objects. |
| **18+ months** | **Pull-along toy**  **rollers** | * Make a hole in the centre of top and bottom of a round tin. Thread string (about 60 cm long) through the holes and tie the ends inside the tin. To make noise while pulling, put metal bottle tops inside of the tin and close lid. | * Pull the toy and show the child how to make it roll and make noise. |
| **18+ months** | **Doll**  **doll** | Cut out two doll shapes from a piece of cloth and sew the edges together, leaving a small opening. Turn doll inside out and stuff with scraps of materials. Stitch opening closed and draw or sew a face on doll. | * Teach the word “baby.” * Let child cuddle doll and sing to it. * Teach child his/her body parts and those of the doll. * Make a bed for doll with a box and cloth scraps; teach words “bed” and “sleep.” |
| **18+ months** | **Stacking bottle tops**  **stacking_lids** | Cut at least 3 same-sized round plastic bottles in half and stack tops. | * Let child play with 2 tops; teach child to stack them while saying, “I’m going to put one on top of the other.” Increase number of tops. * Older children can sort tops by colour and learn concepts such as high and low. |
| **18+ months** | **Mirror**  **mirror** | A tin lid with no sharp edges. If you can not smooth the edges of the tin lid, do not use this toy as it could harm the child. | * Let child look at his/her face and talk about the different things that he/she can see like “eyes”, “nose”, and “mouth”. |
| **18+ months** | **Puzzle**  **puzzle** | Draw a figure (e.g., a doll) in color on a square or rectangular piece of cardboard. Cut the figure into a few larger pieces. | * Show the child the puzzle pieces make a picture. Then take the puzzle apart and encourage the child to make the picture again. |
| **18+ months** | **Book**  **book** | Cut out 3 equal-sized rectangular pieces of cardboard. Glue or draw simple and familiar pictures on both sides of each piece. Make 2 holes on one side of each piece and thread string through. | * Go through book with child on your lap. * Have child turn pages, pat pictures and vocalise what he/she sees. * Let child point to a picture you name. * Let older children name pictures and talk about them. |