



Springtime Fun for Infants and Toddlers Through a CLASSTM Lens

Spring is a season full of fresh sights, sounds, and experiences making it the perfect time to spark curiosity and joy for infants and toddlers. As the weather warms and nature comes alive, even simple moments can become meaningful learning opportunities. These simple moments connect directly to key CLASS dimensions, including Infant Early Language Support, Facilitated Exploration, and Toddler Quality of Feedback and Language Modeling. Through warm, responsive interactions and intentional guidance, caregivers nurture secure relationships while enriching children’s language development and expanding early learning experiences.

Exploring Spring with Infants

Infants experience spring through their senses. Gentle, hands-on activities help them explore the season safely and comfortably.

- **Fresh Air Adventures:** Short walks or time outside allow infants to feel the breeze, notice sunlight, and hear birds chirping. Talk about

what you see, hear, and feel to support early language development. (Early Language Support)

- Nature Textures: Let infants explore safe, age-appropriate natural items like soft grass, flower petals, or smooth stones with close supervision. Offer one or two of these items at a time to avoid overstimulation. (Facilitated Exploration)
- Spring Colors: Introduce books, toys, and fabrics in bright spring colors like green, yellow, and pink. Name the colors consistently. (Early Language Support)
- Songs and Rhymes: Sing simple spring-themed songs about sunshine, flowers, and rain to support early language development. Watch how the infants respond and repeat the songs they enjoy. (Facilitated Exploration)

Exploring Spring with Toddlers

Toddlers are eager explorers, and spring provides endless opportunities for movement and discovery.

- Outdoor Play: Running, climbing, and chasing bubbles help toddlers build gross motor skills while enjoying the outdoors. Expand these activities by prompting thinking: *What happens when you run faster?* (Quality of Feedback)
- Nature Hunts: Go on simple walks to look for flowers, bugs, leaves, or birds. Naming what they see builds vocabulary. Add descriptive words: small bugs, yellow flower, green leaf. (Language Modeling)
- Spring Art: Use finger paints, sponges, or stamps to create flower art, sunshine pictures, or garden scenes. Focus feedback on effort and choices: *You mixed the yellow and blue paint that made green!* (Quality of Feedback)
- Water Play: On warmer days, splash tables, pouring cups, or watering plants add sensory fun. Narrate their actions: *You're watering the plant.* (Language Modeling)

Bringing Spring Indoors

When outdoor play is not possible, bring spring inside the classroom:

- Create a spring-themed sensory bin with fake grass, plastic flowers, and scoops. Expand language through describing the items. (Language Modeling)
- Read books about spring weather, baby animals, and growing plants. Try connecting the stories to real life experiences. (Quality of Feedback)
- Set up dramatic play with gardening tools, hats, and pretend flowers. Model conversations and introduce new words like watering can (Early Language Support and Language Modeling)

A Final Thought

Springtime is a wonderful reminder of growth, renewal, and discovery. By offering playful, developmentally appropriate experiences aligned with CLASS, teachers help infants and toddlers connect with the world around them while supporting meaningful interactions in the classroom.

Resource Spotlight



Now Available: LENA has officially launched Mini Courses! Visit <https://courses.lena.org/> to learn more.

Did you know?

VQB5 Quality Profiles Now Live!



The VQB5 Quality Profile website provides information about many sites, including publicly funded child care centers and family day homes along with privately funded sites that participate in VQB5.

Helpful hint: Use fall CLASS observation results to identify areas for growth and strengthen practices in preparation for the upcoming spring observations.

Click on the link below to learn more about the VQB5 Quality Profile.

[Home | Virginia Quality Birth to Five \(VQB5\)](#)

Upcoming Professional Development Opportunity

Save the Date! Creating Connections to Shining Stars (CCSS) 2026

Description:

Creating Connections to Shining Stars is a collaborative effort between Virginia's Part C, Early Intervention and Part B, Early Childhood Special Education programs. The conference will focus on promoting and supporting the implementation of evidence-based practices in inclusive settings for infants, toddlers, and young children, both with and without disabilities.

Date(s):

7/14/2026 - 7/16/2026

Location(s):

Hotel Roanoke

110 Shenandoah Ave NE, Roanoke, VA 24016

Join the Virginia Early Childhood Consultation

Webinar - Curiosity to Critical Thinking - How Facilitating Learning Grows into Deep Thinking

Virginia Early Childhood Consultation (VECC), which exists to support high quality teacher-child interactions and social-emotional early learning environments, is offering their free quarterly webinar to all Virginia infant and toddler educators on March 26 at 1 p.m. This webinar will focus on the CLASS dimensions Infant Facilitated Exploration (FE), and Toddler Facilitation of Learning and Development (FLD). Participants will learn how to support children's curiosity and critical thinking in daily practices. Live Spanish interpretation will be available. **Register** for From Curiosity to Critical Thinking – How Facilitating Learning Grows into Deep Thinking and contact vecc@virginia.edu for any questions.

va-itsnetwork.org

Child Development Resources

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