

PRENATAL & FIRST YEAR - The Senses

THE FIRST YEAR THE SENSES

*Every time a child is born it brings
with it the hope that God is not yet
disappointed with man.*

—Rabindranath Tagore
Poet laureate of India and Montessorian

We know very little about what a baby really experiences during those nine months in the womb, what he senses, feels, intuitively, thinks about, and understands. But we do know that he responds to voices and to sounds and to music. So we offer the best by every day spending some quiet time talking to him, singing, and playing beautiful music.

Experts who study the acquisition of language tell us that the basis for learning one's mother tongue begins in the womb. In the study of the lives of great musicians it is often found that exposure to good music began in the womb.

Parents who learn songs to sing to



Babies' work is important from day one, they are learning all the time,

their babies during pregnancy find that these songs are very soothing to the infant after birth.

In 1995 I met with Mrs. Shinnichi Suzuki, of the Suzuki Method of Talent Education, in Matsumoto, Japan, to share ideas on environments for young children. For both Montessori and Suzuki the goal is to create a loving relationship between child and adult, to give the child the joy of accomplishment and developed talents, and, by meeting the needs of children, to help create a more peaceful society. We discussed the best way to help children and agreed that our work must begin before birth.

The skin, the first and most important sense organ, is complete after seven or eight weeks of pregnancy. The sense of

EUROPEAN MUSIC BOX

This beautiful wooden heirloom is from an age-old company in Poland. Each music box is hand-made and painted with softly colored whimsical drawings of stars, moons, angels, or scenes from nature. Each shipment is different but the music boxes are always beautiful. The most important element though is that the child can eventually operate it.



There is a wooden knob at the bottom which, when pulled, plays the melody. At first the adult will operate the music box but eventually the young child will be able to play the music whenever he or she desires as it hangs on the wall at child level. It is 4.5" in diameter. The most common melody is Brahms's Lullaby.

BT400 \$48.00

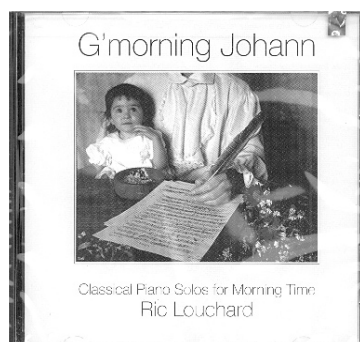
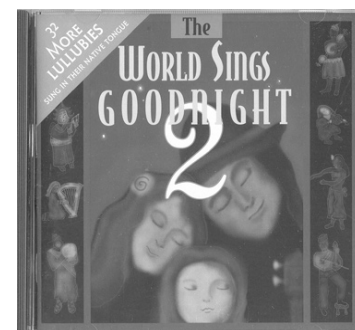
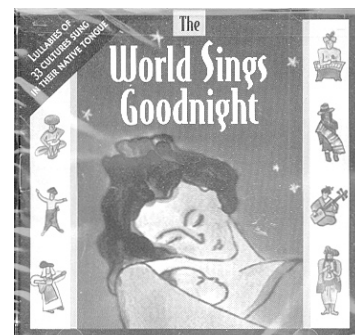
THE BRAIN: the prenatal months and the first year of life is the most important time to expose the developing brain to the sounds, music, rhythms, of the world.

THE WORLD SINGS GOODNIGHT

It is in these early days of life that the child begins to absorb the pitch, intonation, rhythm, all of the sounds of language and music. The love that people of the world feel for their children is expressed through these songs. On this CD the voices of mothers, fathers, grandmothers, and siblings bring a special richness to the lullabies of thirty-three countries including France, Japan, the USA, India, Italy, Senegal, Argentina, Egypt, Sweden, Canada, England, each sung in the native tongue.

This year we added World Sings Goodnight 2, containing music from 32 countries, including Lebanon, Nepal, Argentina, Hawaii, Iran, Brazil, Vietnam, USA (Cheyenne Indian), Bali, and others.

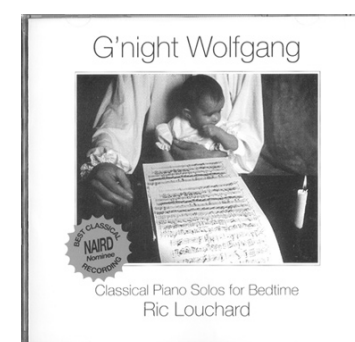
AA266 World Sings \$16.95
(*) AA290 World Sings 2 \$16.95



CLASSICAL PIANO FOR INFANTS

Our grandson wore out two of the G'Night CDs! A lovely introduction to the best of classical piano music for the child. The pieces are carefully selected to provide a charming introduction to a broad cross-section of world-famous music which has been favored by a wide audience over the years. They provide excellent preparation for a child's later study of music. The morning music is cheerful and invigorating, and the bedtime selections calming and peaceful.

AA276 G'Morning Johann CD \$16.95
AA286 G'Night Wolfgang CD \$16.95



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smell is ready to function by the second month of pregnancy. The sense of taste is active by the third month. The ear completes its structural development during the second to the fifth month of pregnancy.

It is possible that the fetus absorbs the particular characteristic rhythms of the mother's language. In a sense the fetus is already at work, learning language!

—Silvana Montanaro, M.D.

Psychiatrist, Montessori teacher trainer

MUSIC AND LANGUAGE

In the first days, months, and year of life the infant is especially interested in the sound of the human voice and in watching the face and lips of a

speaking person. It is not an accident that the focusing distance of the eyes of a newborn matches exactly the space between his face and that of the mother while nursing. Perhaps the best first communication experiences are provided while nursing the baby.

We can feed the child's intense interest in language and prepare for later spoken language, by speaking clearly, not using *baby talk*, by not raising our voice to an unnatural pitch often reserved for speaking to pets, and not oversimplifying language in the presence of the child.

We can tell funny and interesting stories of our lives, recite favorite poems, talk about what we are doing, "Now I am washing your feet, rubbing each toe to get it really clean" and enjoy ourselves

in this important communication. And we can listen: to music, to silence, and to each other.

An adult can engage in a conversation with even the youngest child in the following way: when the child makes a sound, imitate it—the pitch and the length of the sound: baby "maaaa ga" adult "maaaa ga," etc. One often gets an amazing response from the child the first time this happens, as if she is saying, "At last, someone understands and speaks my language!"

After several of these exchanges many children will purposefully begin to make sounds for you to imitate, and eventually will try to imitate the adult's sound. This is a very exciting first communication for both parties. It is not

BASIC SOUNDS FOR THE VERY YOUNG: BOOK AND CD

Research shows that the first year of life is the "window" for the child to process the sounds of the environment. So we recommend exposure to ALL of these CD's in the first year. Later the child will have a superior awareness of sound and music, an ability to understand people from all over the world, and to learn any language.



Each CD contains the same songs, such as *The More We Get Together*, and *Head, Shoulders, Knees & Toes*, and short everyday conversation segments such as colors and numbers and greetings, but each in a different tongue.

NOTE: If your family is English-speaking it is very important that you have the English version for the child to learn the songs and expressions in his own language to compare with the others. These are 32-page brightly colored hardcover books, with a CD enclosed. 8.5" x 11". Also wonderful for traveling adults!

(*) CB700	French	\$19.95
(*) CB701	Spanish	\$19.95
(*) CB702	German	\$19.95
(*) CB703	Italian	\$19.95
(*) CB704	Chinese	\$19.95
(*) CB705	Japanese	\$19.95
(*) CB706	English	\$19.95
(*) CB707	Hebrew	\$19.95
(*) CB708	Russian	\$19.95
(*) CB710	Teach Me Set/9	\$170.00

THE PERFECT MOBILE HANGER

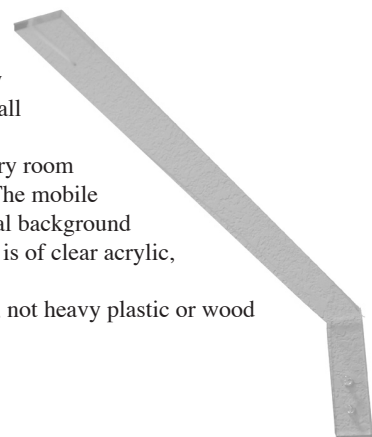
Since the optimum environment for the baby does not include cribs or playpens, we had to find another way to hang mobiles. This *perfect mobile hanger* works with all of the lighter mobiles on this and the following page.

We recommend having a hanger and mobile for every room in the house where the newborn is going to spend time. The mobile hanger is easy to mount on the wall and provides a neutral background which does not detract from the beauty of the mobiles. It is of clear acrylic, 1.5" wide, protruding 19" from the wall.

NOTE: this is for light, paper or card stock mobiles, not heavy plastic or wood which should be hung from the ceiling on a strong hook.

BA18

\$12.00



MOTHER AND BABY WHALE MOBILE (A favorite first black and white mobile)

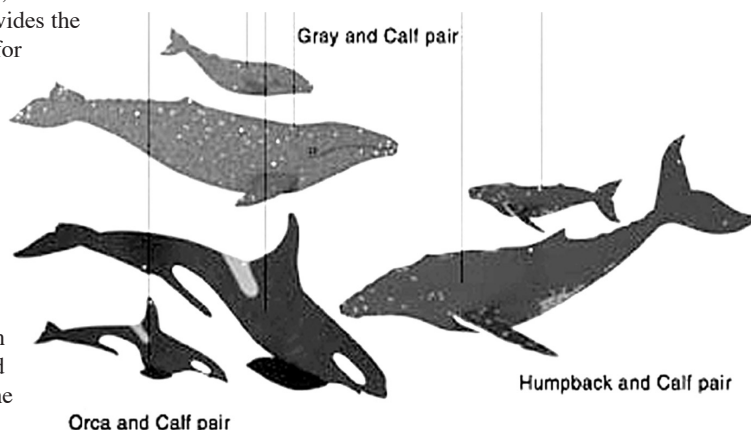
Black, white, and

gray contrast provides the best first images for the newborn focusing ability. This lovely mobile provides the clear contrast, and the introduction to the movement of whales through water, mother and baby pairs, and the shapes of whales. *Mother and Baby*

Whale Mobile contains six images, of three kinds of whales *Orca*, *Gray*, and *Humpback*. The largest pieces are 12.5" long. The mobile comes fully assembled, perfectly balanced and glued to stainless steel rods, and ready to hang. An information sheet is included with the common and scientific name and information on each species.

BA320

\$33.00



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baby talk; it is real communication.

For the first year, the activities of changing, nursing, bathing, picking up, holding, and dressing are the most important and impressionable times. Ask permission or tell the infant that you are going to pick him up when you are about to do so. If there is a choice, ask him if he is ready to be picked up, to get dressed, nurse, have a bath, even before picking him up. Children know when they are being asked a serious question or being given a choice. As you change or bathe an infant, rather than distracting him with a toy, look into his eyes, tell him what you are doing, ask questions, and give choices.

The value of this communication full of love and respect cannot be

overemphasized. It makes a baby want to talk to you, and the desire to communicate is the foundation for good language development.

Good language development also depends on the language the child hears going on around him in these early days, months, and years. Overhearing conversations between parents and other adults is as valuable as being spoken to.

A parent or older sibling who talks and sings to the infant is also teaching him language. It is truly amazing how much language a child takes in during the first three years of life, blossoming into the complete understanding of a total language in a way that an adult can never emulate.

It is never too early to look at books together and talk about them. Beautiful board books can be stood on edge for a baby who is not yet able to sit up to enjoy looking at them. They introduce a wide array of interesting subjects to children at the age when they want to see and hear—and talk—about everything.

CRYING IS COMMUNICATION

Cultures vary widely in their response to a crying infant—from a belief that crying strengthens the lungs; to absolute incredulity that anyone would let a baby cry for an instant. We recommend spending time and effort to learn what your child is saying with a cry. There is no recipe and each child is different.

CAUTION: Hang all visual mobiles in this section out of the reach of the infant and other children.

BLACK & WHITE PHOTO MOBILE

This new mobile is extremely versatile. Its first use is the important high-contrast black and white mobile for the newborn. In the beginning of life this is what the baby can focus on and enjoys looking at.

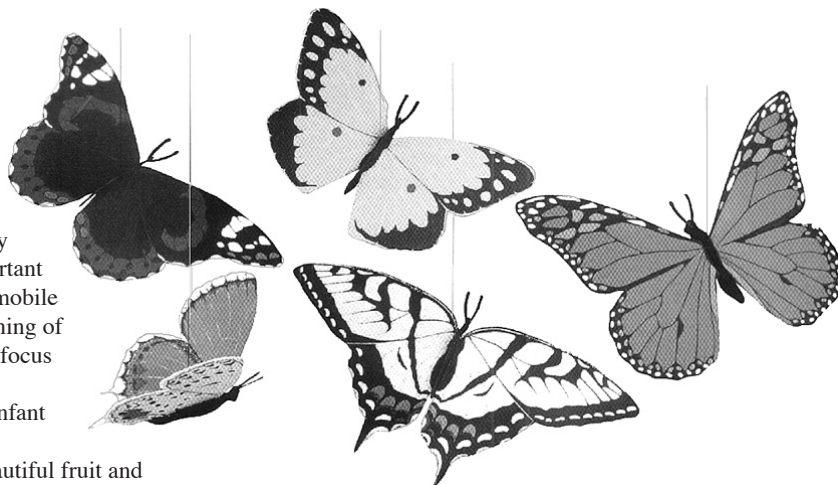
The slightly older infant will enjoy seeing other pictures, such as the beautiful fruit and vegetable cards on page 44 of *The Joyful Child*.

And the older child and adult will be able to use this mobile for hanging as many as 22 postcards from travels, or photographs of the family.

See the picture below for how to attach only three pictures in the beginning, so the baby can see clearly from underneath the mobile.

The stainless steel wire and clip mobile comes fully assembled, perfectly balanced and glued to stainless steel rods, and ready to hang. Each box contains six 5" x 7" black and white cards printed on heavy board with lovely, whimsical, artistic images.

BA600	Mobile (no cards)	\$12.00
BA605	Farm Animal Cards, set/6	\$12.95
BA606	Farm Animal Cards and Mobile	\$24.50
BA610	Sea Animal Cards, set/6	\$12.95
BA611	Sea Animal Cards and Mobile	\$24.50



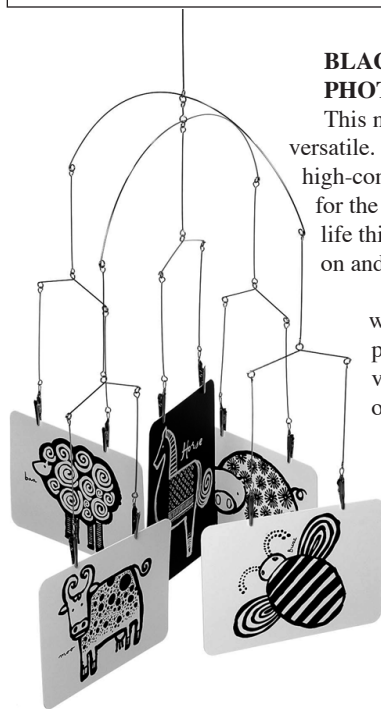
BUTTERFLY MOBILE

The *butterfly mobile* is probably the favorite gift for the newborn. Hung out-of-reach above the sleeping mattress, and the daytime play mat of the infant, the butterflies are large enough to engage visual study as they move on the air currents of the room.

The butterflies are painted on both sides so they are as attractive to the person looking from below as from above. *Butterfly Mobile* contains five beautiful 5" - 9" butterflies: monarch, orange sulphur, red admiral, Eastern tailed blue, and tiger swallowtail. Each is made of solid-core art board—even the edges hand-colored.

The mobile comes fully assembled, perfectly balanced and glued to stainless steel rods, and ready to hang.

BA060 **\$33.00**



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During a visit to a hospital nursery at the University of Rome during my Assistant to Infancy training, I watched a professor respond to the crying of infants in the following way: first she spoke gently and soothingly to the baby, reassuring him that someone was present. In many cases this was all that was necessary to comfort the child and to stop the crying. However, if this didn't work, the professor made eye contact or laid a hand gently on the child. Often this calmed the infant completely. If not, she checked to see if there was a physical discomfort, a wrinkle of the bedding, a wet diaper, the need to be in a different position. Solving this problem almost always reassured the child and eliminated his need to cry. Only very rarely was a

child actually in need of food.

I find this extremely interesting coming from a country with a major obesity problem. Perhaps if we tried harder to "comfort" our infants in other ways than to always provide food or pacifiers—which teaches them that the way to happiness lies in putting something in the mouth—we could help raise children who are more in touch with their needs.

It is common for an attentive parent to think that crying always means hunger or pain. But the baby could be worried, having bad memories, wet, cold, hot, afraid, lonely, or bored. There are many reasons for calling out for help.

An attentive parent who spends a lot of time watching and listening can learn, even in the early days, what each different

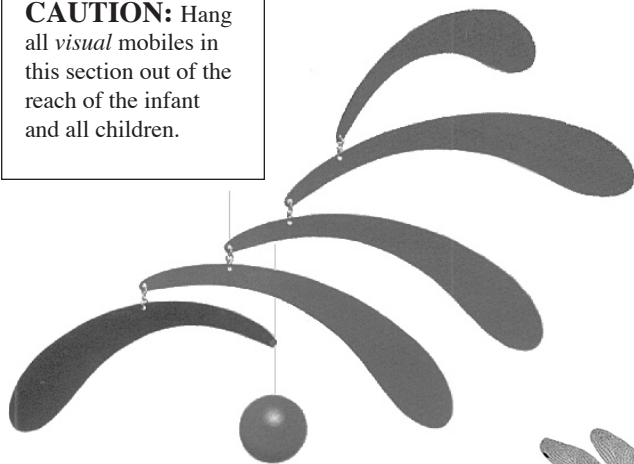
cry means. Everyone wants to be understood.

LOOKING AND PROCESSING

What does your child see in the home? In the first year it is good to have soft colors, and not too many objects visible. When a child is visually overstimulated she often closes her eyes and shuts out the world. It is better to inspire and invite the child to visually explore the environment by soft colors and limited objects than to overwhelm her.

When the child has taken in all the sights and sounds and sensorial impressions she wants during a particular time she knows, with inborn wisdom, that it is time to go to sleep to process it. Imagine what it is like to

CAUTION: Hang all *visual* mobiles in this section out of the reach of the infant and all children.



FLOWING RHYTHM MOBILE

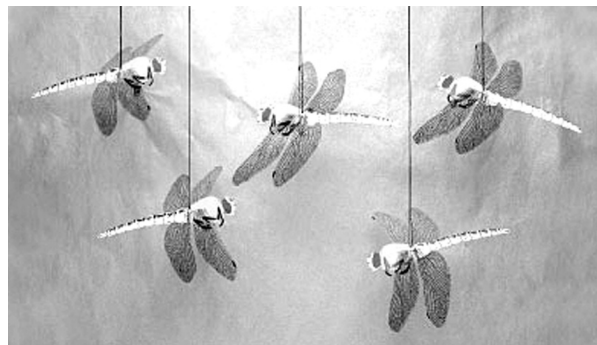
This mobile from Denmark—a work of art usually only found in museum stores—has been recommended for years by the Montessori Assistants to Infancy courses. It is still being made on the Danish island of Funen, where Hans Christian Andersen was born. This is a beautiful mobile for the whole family. Balance is the crucial factor both for movement and visual impact for the infant as the flat figures become three-dimensional moving through space. Made of fiberboard, the *flowing rhythm mobile* is painted bright colors, each piece 9" long. It comes assembled (except for the largest wing which needs to be attached with pliers. It comes this way so the mobile will fit in the box.) It is black on one side and pink, purple, yellow, light green and blue on the other.

BA081

\$46.00

DRAGONFLIES MOBILE

This is the most delicately colored mobile we have found. The bodies of the five dragonflies, with an 8" wingspan, are soft shades of blue and green, silk-screened on both sides of the solid-core



art board, even the edges hand-colored. The delicate black veins on the wings are printed on a clear material so the light shines through them—just like real dragonflies. This mobile of the *Green Darter Dragonfly* (Anax junius) is lovely for any age, anywhere. The mobile comes fully assembled, perfectly balanced and glued to stainless steel rods, ready to hang.

BA110

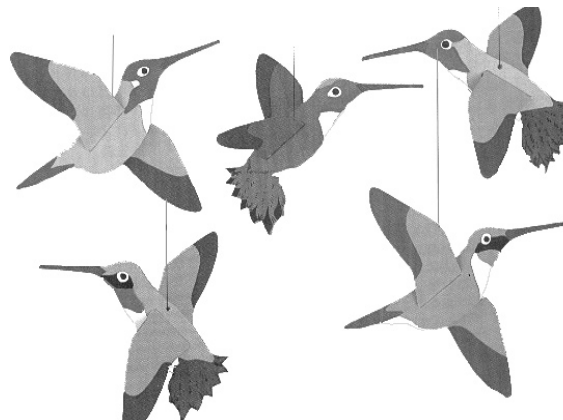
\$33.00

HUMMINGBIRD MOBILE

These sweet birds are small in size and intense in color—lavender, vermilion and violet on bodies of bright greens or red-brown! Just about life size (4.5"), but flying slowly enough to see. Made of solid-core art board, the edges hand-colored. The mobile comes fully assembled, perfectly balanced and glued to stainless steel rods, ready to hang.

BA220

\$33.00



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come from a warm, soft, relatively dark and quiet environment (a womb) into a completely new place full of lights, sounds, touch, all-unfamiliar except the voices of the family. It is very important to respect the child's wisdom as to how much to take in, when to go to sleep to rest and process, when to wake up and take in more.

At birth, a baby already knows how to regulate his sleep for optimum physical and mental health and for integrating new experiences. If we respect this intuitive knowledge after birth we are well along the path of preventing the problems of sleeping that often exhaust new parents and babies. If we keep in mind that sleeping is vital for many reasons and should not be interrupted, we will try, as

ancient cultures of the past have stated over and over, not to awaken a sleeping baby except in an emergency.

We must be careful not to train a child to be dependent on us to go to sleep. When a baby is always held till she goes to sleep a sleeping problem can develop. To avoid creating a dependence on the adult for such a natural activity as going to sleep, it is important to respect, from the first day of life onward, the child's ability to go to sleep on his own.

Position for sleep: It is well known now that the safest position for an infant for sleeping is on the back. However, it is important that, from the very first day, the child spends some time on her tummy in order to exercise the muscles of the neck and the arms and legs.

Again, observe the child to see what she is trying to learn to do.

A child is curious and in need of sensorial exploration from the very first days and wants to be with the family, not tucked away in a quiet room all day. To help make this possible, parents can use a special baby floor mat, or flat sleeping or playing mattress, a small futon or special rug, which can be moved to wherever in the home the family is spending time—kitchen, bedroom, living room, family room, etc.

In this way the child can be with the family, observe life, and doze off at any time sleep is needed. Then the infant can stay in touch with her unique natural rhythms of sleeping and being awake.

He can listen to conversation,

THREE HEAVIER, WOODEN CEILING MOBILES

WOODEN RAINBOW BIRD MOBILE

This beautiful, colorful mobile from Germany moves easily in the air currents of the room giving the infant lovely shapes, sizes, and colors to watch. The wing span of the largest wooden bird is 7" and the smallest is 4" There are five bird figures (red, orange, yellow, green, blue) hanging from a silver-colored rod that is 21" long. The silver rod hangs from a yellow sun that is not pictured in this illustration. The mobile comes strung and ready to hang from the ceiling.

BA410

\$59.00

HARMONY WINGS RAINBOW MOBILE

This mobile from Germany is a beautiful addition to any room of the house, and will delight the very young. It is made of light balsa wood so

that it swings gently in the breeze of the air currents of the room.

The colors of the wing shapes are in the colors of the rainbow, art that will be imprinted on the child. The largest wing is 13 inches in length and painted yellow, then orange, red, violet, blue, and green, and there is a 2" lighter green circle at the bottom to perfect the balance. The mobile comes strung and ready to hang from the ceiling.

BA050

\$39.00

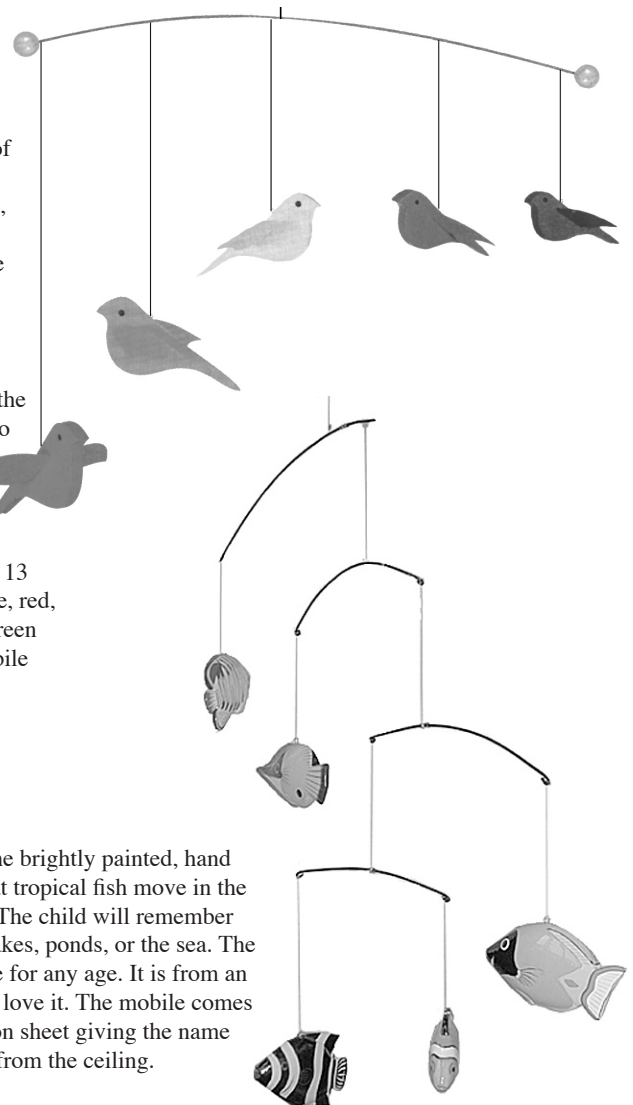
WOODEN TROPICAL FISH MOBILE

3-DIMENSIONAL, HAND-CARVED, HAND-PAINTED

This mobile from Bali, Indonesia is incredibly beautiful. The brightly painted, hand carved wooden figures move gracefully in the air in the same way that tropical fish move in the water—presenting a representation of the real world to the newborn. The child will remember these first impressions later when seeing an aquarium, or fish in the lakes, ponds, or the sea. The mobile is excellent for the infant and also for the classroom and home for any age. It is from an artistic tradition that is world-famous for this folk art. Obviously, we love it. The mobile comes completely assembled and balanced and ready to hang. An information sheet giving the name of each figure is included for the adult and older child. NOTE: Hang from the ceiling.

BA15

\$34.00



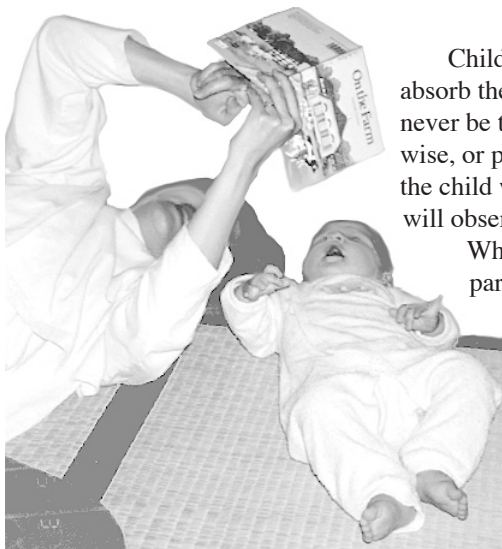
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laughter, and music, or peaceful silence. On these mats the child can also practice developmental skills such as exercising and stretching muscles, doing push-ups, reaching and pulling up—and still follow the natural rhythms of sleep, and wakefulness.

A great deal of mental work goes on during sleeping and dreaming. All daily experiences must be integrated and all personal 'programs' must be reviewed on the basis of the new information received during the day.

We should not look at newborn infants as small, helpless human beings, but as persons who are small in size, but with an immense mental capacity, and many physical abilities that cannot be witnessed unless the environment assists in the expression of life.

—Dr. Silvana Montanaro, MD



In Japan, mama reading to her infant. Books are important to the child at any age.

THE ABSORBENT MIND

Children in these early years literally absorb the life around them. An adult can never be too kind, too respectful and too wise, or pay too much attention to the sounds the child will hear, or the environment he will observe.

When children are not with their parents, attention must be paid in setting the highest standard of expectation for any other adults with whom children spend time.

The environment we create for our young children is the one they will tend to create for their children, and their grandchildren, on, and on and on . . .



WOODEN FIRST BOOKS

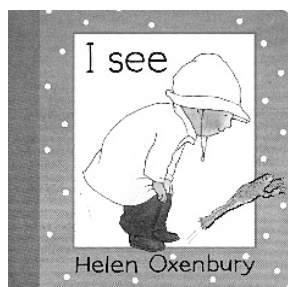
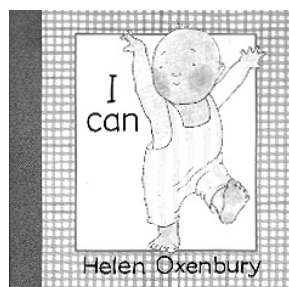
These may have been the tradition for babies even before paper was used. Each book is made of 4 pieces of wood joined by a red cord. On each side of each 4" x 4" wooden plaque is a colorful silk-screened image pleasing to the child and valuable in many ways. First of all the books can be stood on edge for the baby to look at as he explores the room visually in the first months. Later they will provide colorful real images for the adult to use for telling stories or making conversation as books are introduced. They are also the first experience for the child to learn to turn pages, and no harm can come to the books as they are made of wood. There are two subjects, vehicles and the farm. From Germany.

BB100 Vehicles

\$15.00

BB102 Farm

\$15.00

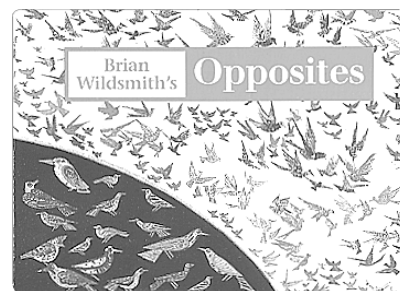


BRIAN WILDSMITH OPPOSITES

Those of you who have ordered from us for a long time know that we are all very pleased when the brilliant artist Brian Wildsmith comes out with another children's book! His art is appreciated by young and old alike. This is a board book of opposites, all demonstrated by whimsical and beautiful pictures of animals: high-low; down-up; open-closed; many-few; front-back; near-far; on-off; little-big; and asleep-awake. Heavy card stock, 5.5" x 4," full color.

BB200

\$5.00



SENSES BOARD BOOKS

Even in the first months board books provide a variety of colors, shapes, pictures. While the infant is spending daily time on his tummy, exercising crawling muscles, board books can be stood up nearby for him to look at and enjoy.

These lovely board books from a favorite children's book author and artist, Helen Oxenbury, show the child in a variety of situations that are fun to talk about. There are few words (one every other page, probably the first words your child will read!) so parents can just talk about the pictures to their child, naming things. Each book contains twelve two-page spreads on thick board, in full color. 5.5" x 5.5"

BB041 I Can **\$3.99**

BB042 I See **\$3.99**

BB043 I Touch **\$3.99**

BB044 I Hear **\$3.99**

BB045 Board Book Set/4 **\$15.75**

