

# Welcome to the Infant Room!



## Interlake Child Care and Learning Center

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Since 1982

***Interlake Child Care & Learning Center creates an inclusive and vibrant community with families and young children. Interlake's loving environment and anti-bias, culturally relevant curriculum inspires children to grow into competent, confident and compassionate citizens of the world.***

### FOREWORD

In an effort to make your experience and the experience of your child as fulfilling and successful as possible, we have compiled some important information about the routines, goals and practices in the Infant Room. We feel the sense of community at Interlake is one of the unique strengths we offer, providing the children with a feeling of belonging in a comfortable and safe environment. To that end, we encourage families to ask questions, spend time in the classroom with their child and become acquainted with teachers and families in the Interlake community. *We have an Open Door policy for families to observe and participate in our program.* Children are more confident and independent when their families and caregivers are also confident and well informed.

We are available to answer your questions during classroom hours or in a conference if more extended discussion is required. Please let us know how we can help you! Please let us know how we can help bring your family values and culture into our school. We strive to create a partnership with you to help your child put our mission into practice.

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## Infant Room Schedule

An infant's first year of life is full of change, and so the schedule of activity changes quite a bit throughout the year. It seems that younger infants usually nap in the morning while older ones want to play, engage, and learn about their environment. Children eat and/or have a bottle, then when the young ones are alert and ready to explore, the older infants are getting sleepy...

Please let us know the routine and caregiving strategies you use with your baby at home. Some babies' schedules fluctuate a bit at school, depending on the dynamics of other children, curriculum, indoor and outdoor environments and the weather. Family information helps teachers tune in to the infants and follow their cues. Teachers work closely with families and infants to follow the natural routines of the child and the wants of the parents and guardians. Babies are fed on demand. They nap when their bodies are tired. Thus, activity is planned flexibly. Our aim is to offer outdoor classroom exploration to all infants at least twice a day, once in the morning and once in the afternoon.

Any given day in the infant room could look like the schedule laid out below with a number of variations depending on weather, curriculum, and dynamics of the children present on any day.

### Daily routine

- 7:30 Drop off
- 7:30-8:45 Free choice/ small group/ circle time/ diapering
- 9:00-9:35 Breakfast or teacher led activity for younger babies who aren't eating
- 9:35-10:00 Getting children ready to transition outside/ diapering
- 10:00-11:45 Outside exploration/ art porch activities/ inside free choice/ diapering
- 12:00-12:35 Lunch/ free choice or teacher led activity for younger babies
- 12:35-2:30 Nap for older children/ art or small group for awake children/ diapering
- 2:30-3:30 Outside exploration or free choice inside
- 3:30-4:00 PM Snack/ diapering
- 4:00-6:00 Outside exploration/ sensory activity on art porch/ small group or free choice inside/ diapering

## Morning Drop-Off

Having a smooth drop-off is an important start to your child's day – and yours!

The classroom and morning teacher are ready for your child at 7:30 am. The doors will be locked until this time. Always check in with the teacher before leaving for the day. We are more than happy to help comfort your baby when you are leaving, don't hesitate to ask for a hand when you are ready to go.

The most important way to start the day is to wash yours and your child's hands as soon as you arrive at the school. Your child must be signed in per Washington State licensing requirements. This is done on the iPads through the Brightwheel app or by scanning the QR codes around the center. Each approved pickup has their own specific code to sign children in and out. *You must use the code assigned to you so we are aware of who has signed your child into the center and out at the end of each day.* After you drop your child off, please message letting the infant teachers know the last time your child ate, slept, and had a diaper change. This helps teachers to be able to anticipate their needs.

**\*\*If your child is not drinking bottles and is typically napping once a day parents/guardians only need to fill out when their diaper was last changed\*\***

### Labelling Bottles

Bottles must be marked with your baby's **first and last** name, the number of ounces, whether the bottle is formula, breast milk, or a mixture of both and the date. Sharpies and tape are available on the teacher shelf should you need to label them after you've gotten to school. Please place a piece of tape on the bottle and use a sharpie to write your child's full name, the date, the number of ounces on each bottle, and contents. Please leave a space for us to write the time at which we start the feeding. Licensing requires that unconsumed portions of bottles be discarded after one hour to prevent bacterial growth. Your child's bottle and anything left in it, will be placed in a basket labelled "dead bottles" or in their bottle bags, for families to pick up at the end of the day. Any bottles that are left at school overnight will be marked with tape and labelled dead but left in the fridge to be picked up the next day either at drop off or pick up, as licensing states we cannot offer any bottle left overnight. As we cannot offer the bottle that was left, please be sure to bring the same amount of bottles as you typically would.

### Baby Baskets

In the closet, just to the left of the door as you enter from the preschool room, you will find a labeled bin for your child's extra clothes, shoes, diapers and anything else you think we will need throughout the day. In the diaper area you will find a container with your child's name to hold diapers and any from home diaper cream. If you'd like us to use any diaper cream, whether from home or school supplies, we ask that you fill out a medication form giving us permission to do so BEFORE leaving the medication in your child's basket.

### Tips for Successful Separations

- *Talk with your infant ahead of time* - Though your infant may not be verbalizing, they are certainly listening. Using the names of teachers and the other infants in the classroom will help your infant become familiar with their classroom.

- *Establish relationships with teachers* - Your baby looks to you for security; if you are comfortable with us, your baby will pick up on it; likewise they will pick up on if you are anxious.
- *Establish a routine at drop-off* - Such as a kiss and a hug, or a book and a song. When routines are consistent, your baby knows what to expect. Over time, this will help ease their transition into the classroom.
- *Always say goodbye* - Though goodbyes can be hard in the moment, they are crucial to building a healthy routine with your child. Goodbye lets your child know you're leaving, it develops trust and communication, and it shows your baby that you are confident that they will be safe and happy at school.
- *Communicate with teachers about what you think your baby might need* - Did they sleep well last night? Was morning feeding hearty, or just a quick snack? Any clues you have that may help us better understand your infant's cues will help us to be the most effective caregivers for your child. Please let the teachers in the room know and/or send a message on brightwheel with any relevant information.

Feel free to send messages through Brightwheel during the day. Most infants transition comfortably into their environment gradually throughout the morning; some start their morning quietly enjoying independent play, while others may need more one-on-one support. Regardless of their drop off temperament, your child's teachers are there to support them. For some families, starting child care seems harder for the parents/guardians than for the infants. We are here for you, too! If you find yourself at work and you can't put your mind at ease, please don't hesitate to message through Brightwheel. This allows all Infant teachers to see your message on iPads used in class. In a quiet moment, someone will message you back as soon as possible.

## Pick-Up Time

- Please, always check in with a teacher when picking up your baby.
- Sign out using your specific check in/out code on Brightwheel
- Gather your infant's go-home items. Double check the bag to ensure that you have everything your baby needs, including bottles. Also check your infant's bin for anything you might want to take home or if there are items that need replenishing.
- Check the diaper chart if you want diapering information. Teachers will record diapers on the chart hung on a clipboard in the diaper area. Diapers are also recorded in Brightwheel with notes pertaining to loose BM, blow outs, or diaper cream applied.
- Check your family pocket. These are located on the wall just to the left of the door as you enter from the preschool room. Parents/guardians, teachers and the office communicate by putting letters, notes or reports in these cubbies. They are labeled with your baby's name.
- Interlake closes at 6:00 and it's time for our teachers to start their closing duties. If you find that it takes time to pick up your child (i.e. your baby wants to nurse, you want to play or read a story with your baby or you want to check in with your child's teachers) please factor the time into your routine so the teacher can finish closing duties, lock up and leave on time. Thank you!

## **Baskets & Shelf Space**

Each baby has their own closet space. As you walk in from the preschool room the closet will be on your left. Baby belongings go in the first closet. Your baby will have a clearly marked bin for their belongings. Please include 2-5 extra full outfits (tops and bottoms), a familiar lovie and a pacifier if your baby uses one. Parents/guardians can leave bulk amounts of diapers in children's bins if they wish, as well as extra water cups, bibs, beanies, shoes, and socks. Blankets are only allowed for infants over 1 year old; families can provide infant sleep sacks if they wish. We cannot swaddle children's arms per licensing; if your sleep sack is one meant to swaddle, teachers will wrap the swaddle under your child's arms during nap so they have free range of movement. All sleep sacks and clothes need to be taken home by families at the end of the week and washed. Please label **all** of your child's belongings that you bring to school with their name. You can expect to find your baby's soiled or wet clothes in their bin at the end of the day. We play hard, so if you have clothes you want to keep clean, please keep them at home.

## **Diapering**

Diapering is another opportunity to build trust with your baby. Teachers use diaper changing time to play one-on-one with the sweet babies they are caring for. Diapers are changed at 2 hour intervals unless babies show cues that their diapers are full, they are ready for a nap, they woke from a nap, or our noses detect a need.

Families supply diapers. We will gladly use whichever type of diaper you are comfortable with, whether that is disposable, cloth, or G-diapers. Please remember to restock your child's supply regularly. Wet and soiled cloth/G-diapers will be stored in a plastic lined bag from home in their diaper cubbie. As per licensing (WAC 110-300-0221), we cannot wash or clean soiled cloth diapers on site.

Diapers and diaper cream are stored in a plastic bag in a basket in the diaper changing area. The bags will all be clearly marked with first names as will the diaper cream. Thank you for helping us stay organized. If your baby has a diaper rash, we will apply our Desitin ointment as long as the medication form has been completed (see section on Medications); if you prefer another diaper cream, please document this on the necessary paperwork (see section on Medications) and keep a supply in the diaper cream basket. Teachers will mark on Brightwheel when diaper cream has been applied.

Teachers and babies wash their hands before and after each diaper change. The changing table is thoroughly cleaned and sanitized after each diaper change. You are always welcome to change your child's diaper at our diaper area. Please follow our diaper changing procedures, posted above the changing table, and feel free to check in with your child's teachers if you have any questions.

## **Feeding**

Babies in the infant room are fed on demand. Feeding time is not only a wonderful opportunity for relationship-building, but it provides sensory experience, self-help skills development, as well as large and small motor development.

Once your baby is introduced to solids at home, infant teachers will coordinate with you to check off offered food on the infant eaters form. (It is recommended but not required, that families introduce all food items to their baby at home first, just in case there is an adverse reaction to specific foods). This tells us they have had a particular food introduced to their diet at home. Interlake supplies organic baby food, including fruits and vegetables in jars as well as rice and oat cereal. When infants are eating solid food, we provide the cooked food from the same wholesome and delicious menu as the toddlers and preschoolers. The menu is posted weekly in the classroom and on our website.

As infants begin eating baby food and early solid foods, they are placed in buckle chairs to eat. During this time they are given opportunities to explore the use of bowls and spoons as well the textures of different foods. When it is developmentally appropriate (approximately 10-12 months), infants are introduced to the table in chairs for meals. This practice helps them become prepared for family style dining in the Toddler Room, as they begin to focus on self-serving (with teacher support).

Let teachers know routines, schedules and playful games your baby may have at home around feeding times. Also, feel free to share any difficulties you or your baby may be having around feedings and let us know about any eating plan you'd like us to follow.

Please be sure and tell a teacher if you think your child is teething or stressed about anything. Any information you have will help us understand your baby's cues. When families and teachers work together, good things tend to happen.

## **Toothbrushing**

Our infants who are eating solids or purees participate in tooth-brushing before breakfast or lunch and often before both. Each infant has a labeled center-provided age appropriate toothbrush that is replaced every 3 months or sooner if needed. Teachers help the child brush their teeth without toothpaste. Toothbrushes are then placed back on their labeled toothbrush hook. This process continues through toddler and preschool.

\*\*Due to Covid toothbrushing is not currently required in the classroom. We will be introducing it sometime in the future.

## **Napping**

To lower the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS), Washington Administrative Code (WAC 110-300-0291) requires that infants under one year old be laid on their back to sleep. At Interlake, all infants are placed on their backs to sleep. For safety reasons, there are no exceptions to this policy. If babies roll over on their own, teachers let them be and do not wake or roll them back onto their backs. When infants are showing signs of being tired, we lay them down to sleep.

When infants are developmentally ready, we place them down for a nap on a nap mat. This way they have time to get used to this method of napping before they transition to the Toddler room. Some babies go right to sleep and there are others for whom falling asleep is no easy feat. Teachers will hold, rock, stroke, pat, sing to and otherwise comfort those that need extra comfort at nap time. Please let teachers know if you have any specific

guidelines you'd like us to follow (to the best of our ability per licensing and WAC guidelines) that may help your baby sleep well. Children are placed in sleep sacks provided by the family. We are not allowed to use weighted sleep sacks per guidance from our public health nurse.

## **Curriculum & Room Set Up**

Do teachers seem a bit chatty in the classroom? They ought to. Teachers strive to use language as much as they can around the babies. The language your baby hears now is supporting a foundation for further learning.

American Sign Language (ASL) is a wonderful way to communicate with babies! We strive to use it often in our room. Very young children often use ASL before they can speak. Using simple signs can help infants communicate their needs. We use simple signs in the classroom and look forward to sharing these signs with you to use at home.

Our curriculum provides opportunities for infants to feel successful in their development and also entice them to reach further. Teachers factor in both the developmental needs and the interests of the infants when planning curriculum. Teachers are responsible for planning bi-weekly curriculum during their individual and team planning times. Some examples you may see include: sensory with water, cornstarch, or sticky paper, instruments, puppets, and stories.

Teachers are mindful when setting up the room. We want the classroom to look welcoming and warm, enticing and relevant for younger and older infants. Be sure and share activities and ideas from home for teachers to implement to further support their development at school. Bi-weekly curriculum plans are posted above the teacher shelf in the classroom. Songs, rhymes, finger plays and books are a big part of the curriculum; be sure to let us know of any favorite songs or rhymes you may sing at home. We also strongly encourage families to bring in books, music or any related curriculum your child enjoys. Your family's culture is just as important at school as it is at home! Teachers plan an emergent curriculum, which is child centered, age appropriate and based on interests exhibited by the children and their families in the classroom. For this reason, planned curriculum may be supplemented or replaced by something that the children find more engaging.

## **Waddler Program**

As the infants grow and are ready for a more dynamic curriculum and environment, but are not yet ready to be toddlers, they join our 'Waddler Program'. This program is for infants who are at least one year old, are transitioned predominantly to one nap a day, and usually have begun walking.

These children are offered a more structured and advanced curriculum in the Infant Room, including group times that focus on self-help skills and safety practices. Their days naturally become more scheduled and teachers follow this schedule with relevant experiences to build on where children are developmentally. For example, large group time with finger plays, stories and/or songs will follow a period of free play or snack. Nap time could be followed by outside time or a large motor activity - dancing or yoga anyone? This structure establishes itself naturally when teachers work intentionally guiding the flow of the classroom. So, what took place last fall could be very different from what happens this fall, depending upon the ages and developmental needs of each particular group of infants. While still providing an environment that serves very young children, we are able to meet the needs of much older infants. Because there are only 8 children in the infant room, younger babies are able to do their own thing, joining in or not.

One aspect of the Waddler Program includes some time visiting in the Toddler Room with an Infant Teacher. The Waddlers spend a little time with their old friends who have already transitioned to the Toddler Room and explore a more advanced environment (including sensory, circle time, and toddler play yards). An infant teacher teams with a toddler teacher to observe, plan and implement this program.

## **Goals & Opportunities**

It is the goals and opportunities set up that create our curriculum. The goals we strive for in the infant room may seem simple, but each step they master lays the foundation for further development. There are many stages of development in the first year of life; room set-up is key in providing opportunities to reach goals on so many levels.

We work on 6 major goals in the infant room, each having various objectives these include:

- Supporting the babies in learning about themselves. Objectives for this focus are: to feel valued and attached to others, to feel competent and proud about what they can do, and to assert their independence.
- Supporting the babies in learning about their feelings. Objectives include: communicating a broad range of emotions through gestures, sounds, and eventually words, and expressing their feelings in appropriate ways.
- Supporting the babies in learning about others. The objectives for this goal include: developing trusting relationships with nurturing adults, showing interest in peers, demonstrating caring and cooperation, and trying out roles and relationships through imitation and pretend play.
- Supporting their learning about communicating. These objectives include: expressing needs and thoughts without using words, identifying with a home language, responding to both verbal and non-verbal commands, and communicating through language.
- Supporting their development in moving and doing. Objectives include: developing gross and fine motor skills, coordinating hand and eye movements, and developing self help skills.
- And last (but not least) is to help them acquire critical thinking and problem solving skills. Objectives for this goal include: gaining an understanding of basic concepts and relationships, applying knowledge to new situations, and developing strategies for solving problems.

It is the teacher's job to provide opportunities for infants to achieve these goals; it is the infant's job to choose for themselves what they'd like to focus on.

## **Child Observations & Assessments**

Teachers keep ongoing assessments of each child's developmental progress which enables us to plan programs to meet the individual developmental needs of each child. Teachers collect and analyze data from formal and anecdotal (informal) observations and conversations with parents/guardians, and other teachers and staff.

Our curriculum is geared to support individual children's development and interests. Conducting observations and completing the assessment tools ensures that the curriculum is appropriate for each child. Our program uses The Ages and Stages Questionnaire and The Teaching Strategies Gold Developmental Assessment in each classroom. Observations are done on a monthly basis and assessments are done every quarter. This research-based assessment tool kit aids teachers in gathering data relevant to physical, cognitive, social, emotional, and language development, as well as special abilities and interests of infants, toddlers and preschoolers.

During family/teacher conferences, parents/guardians share information about their child and together, teachers and families collaborate on developing curriculum and providing practice for building specific skills. The completed Family Conference form (Teaching Strategies Gold Developmental Assessment) is signed by the parent/guardian and the child's teacher at the end of the conference. The family takes a copy of the reports with them and the signed copy remains in the child's file. We also use the Ages and Stages Questionnaires to be both completed by the parents/guardians and the teachers for comparison. Assessment portfolios and other sensitive child and family information, is confidential and stored in each child's file in a locked cabinet. Families can access and review the assessment tool upon request.

## **Children's Portfolio Books**

Each infant is given a Portfolio Book when they start at Interlake, in which observations, photos and children's work will be stored and which follow each child through their time at Interlake. The child will receive their completed Portfolio on their Happy Last Day, or at the Graduation Celebration. Each piece of work is labeled with your child's name and the date it was completed. These books are stored in the art cabinet across from the diapering area. Please feel free to take a look with your child's at any time. It is fun to look back on these as your child grows into an adult!

## **Outside Time**

Our aim is to go outside at least 2 times a day, once in the morning and once in the afternoon, unless the weather is severe. In cases of extreme weather, outside time is limited or removed from the routine for the day. If your baby is well enough to be at school, we feel your baby is well enough to spend time outside. Please have weather-appropriate clothes available for your infant on a daily basis, including sun hats and jackets.

Typically, infants will spend their outside times on the art porch or in the play yard rolling balls down the ramp, exploring the outside toys, climbing on the small play structure, popping bubbles, coloring with various different mediums or simply blissing out in the sun. Usually the alternate outside time is spent on a buggy/stroller ride through our beautiful neighborhood, a walk around the Rose Garden at the Zoo, or perhaps we'll head on down to Green Lake to watch the ducks. We do go outside in the cooler weather as well, and rain sprinkles don't keep us indoors. The Infant team will give parents/guardians a permission slip allowing children to go on longer walks farther away from school. Parents/guardians will be given at least 24 hour written notice for a walk that is less than a mile and no longer than an hour from school; they will receive at least a week notice about

walks that are further than previously stated. These notices are typically through Brightwheel messaging or the bi-weekly email sent to families.

Infants 6 months and older wear sunscreen when they go outside during the months of May through September. The Center does supply sunscreen (Banana Boat Kids SPF 50) or you may supply your own. If your child will be wearing sunscreen, please be sure to fill out the appropriate medication form. Teachers apply sunscreen approximately 20 minutes before children head outside.

## Family Participation

One of the ways we build the Interlake community is family participation. Families are asked to volunteer 15-20 hours per year. Families help in a variety of ways, including gardening, painting, sewing mat covers, repairing books, and participating on one of our committees (Facilities, Fundraising & Staff Appreciation, Communications & Community Engagement, Finances & Business Planning, and Board of Directors). Parents/guardians can attend work parties, participate in classroom activities (reading stories, playing a musical instrument), or become board members!

## Medication & Accident Logs

With proper authorization, we can administer prescribed, over-the-counter, or homeopathic medication. Please ask an admin for a medication authorization form. **WE CANNOT ADMINISTER MEDICATION WITHOUT THIS SHEET, COMPLETED WITH A PARENT/GUARDIAN'S SIGNATURE, STOP DATE, AND EXPIRATION DATE.** Please be as detailed as possible when filling out the medication form. For over-the-counter and homeopathic medication, the dosage listed for your child's age must be on the package, or we will need the doctor's complete and specific instructions and dosage. Any time we administer medications, it is recorded into Brightwheel. If you need to bring in medication, please email admin and ask for a copy of the medication form to complete.

- **Prescription Medication**

- Must be accompanied with a medication authorization form that has the medical need and the possible side effects of the medication.
- Must be labelled with:
  - child's first and last name on prescription
  - The date the prescription was filled
  - Name and contact information of the prescribing health professional
  - The expiration date, dosage amount, length of time to give the medication, and frequency (can **not** be "as needed")
  - Instructions for administration and storage

- **Non Prescription Oral Medication**

- Must be in the original packaging
- Medication container needs to be labelled with child's first and last name
- Needs to be accompanied with a medication authorization form that has:
  - Expiration date
  - Medical need
  - Dosage

- Age
  - Length of time to be given
  - Frequency (can **not** be “as needed”)
- \*\*Teacher must follow the instructions on the label **or** parent/guardian must provide a medical professional’s note
- **Other Non Prescription Medication**
  - Teachers must have a written authorization from a parent/guardian **and** a health care provider with prescriptive authority prior to administering medication if the item does not have:
    - Age
    - Expiration date
    - Dosage amount
    - Length of time to give
  - Examples:
    - Vitamins
    - Herbal Supplements
    - Fluoride supplements
    - Homeopathic or naturopathic medication
    - Teething gel or tablets (amber bead necklaces are prohibited as per WAC 110-300-0215)

Parents/guardians will need to fill out the Individual Child Health Care Plan for children with allergies, asthma, or other ongoing health concerns, including the need for any rescue medications or breathing treatments (albuterol). Parents/guardians must train staff to administer medications for asthma and rescue breathing or emergency medicine.

Refrigerated medications are stored on a labeled shelf in the Infant Room refrigerator. Non-refrigerated medications are stored in a medication box in the latched closet marked with the first aid symbol, out of the reach of children.

## Illness & Injury

If your child has an accident during the day (bumps, scratches, etc.) the time, place and nature of the accident are recorded, as well as the treatment and the name of the teacher who witnessed the accident and cared for your child. You will receive the original of this accident report; a copy will be placed in your child’s file in our office. Due to the nature of emerging social skill building, teachers don’t reveal the identity of the child who hurts another child. We may consult the family of the child who hurts another, so that we understand more about the child and how we can help them develop better coping skills.

Serious injuries or illness will be reported to the parents/guardians immediately. If your child vomits, has two or more incidents of diarrhea, or has a fever of 100.4 degrees or more, a teacher will call a parent/guardian to arrange for the child to be picked up as soon as possible. We ask that you pick up your child within an hour of receiving our call. A child must be fever free (without fever reducer) and have no incidents of sickness related vomiting or diarrhea (we realize that children may vomit from crying or coughing which is an exception to the rule) in the last 24 hours before being accepted into group care. Please have alternative childcare arrangements in place for your child.

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\*\*For our full exclusion policy please refer to the Family Handbook

Virginia Mason Medical Center provides the Tender Loving Care (TLC) program for children who are mildly ill and one year or older. The telephone number is (206) 583-6521

## **Songs, Stories, & Rhymes**

Teachers spend much of their time singing in the infant room. We read books, tell stories that go with finger plays and recite silly rhymes. All these things help babies learn language and later help with reading. Playing music is one of the ways we comfort, amuse and expose babies to various cultures. When we sing songs or play music from a baby's home life, we create opportunities for infants to feel connected to school. Please be sure and share any songs your baby enjoys from home! You may also ask to look at Interlake's Infant Songbook kept in the infant room. Here is a sample of our favorite songs, finger plays, and books:

- My first baby signs (asl)
- 5 Little Ducks
- Our friends came to school today
- Baby signs for Mealtime (asl)
- Twinkle Twinkle
- My Aunt Came Back
- You are My Sunshine
- Head, Shoulders, Knees, and Toes
- Guess How Much I Love You
- Teddy bear, teddy bear turn around
- Itsy Bitsy Spider
- Down by the Bay

...and many, many more!