

## The Project Approach to Learning at

**RisingOaks**  
Early Learning

| Lincoln Road

**Project Name:** Element of Surprise

**Age Group:** Infant (11-17 months)

**Project Start Date:** September 28, 2022

**Project End Date:** December 19, 2022



**RisingOaks**  
Early Learning

**Growing minds through play**

## Background

The infant Educators Celine Burley, Shannon Swanson, Melody Brubacher and Jessica Lau RECE's started the project on September 28, 2022 and ended December 19, 2022. The children's ages ranged from 11-17 months.

## Phase 1: Beginning the Project

The children have been finding creative things to hide themselves behind. They have been observed hiding their faces behind their hands, coming out from behind the door, looking out from inside the tunnel and through the hole of a puzzle to peek through. The children have been engaged in experiences, such as, hiding under a table that was covered with a blanket. Nina found a way to turn a Pringles can and scarves activity into a form of peekaboo as she looked through the lid at Melody.



The educators decided to turn this interest into a project. They planned a web based on what they believe the children want to know about the element of surprise.

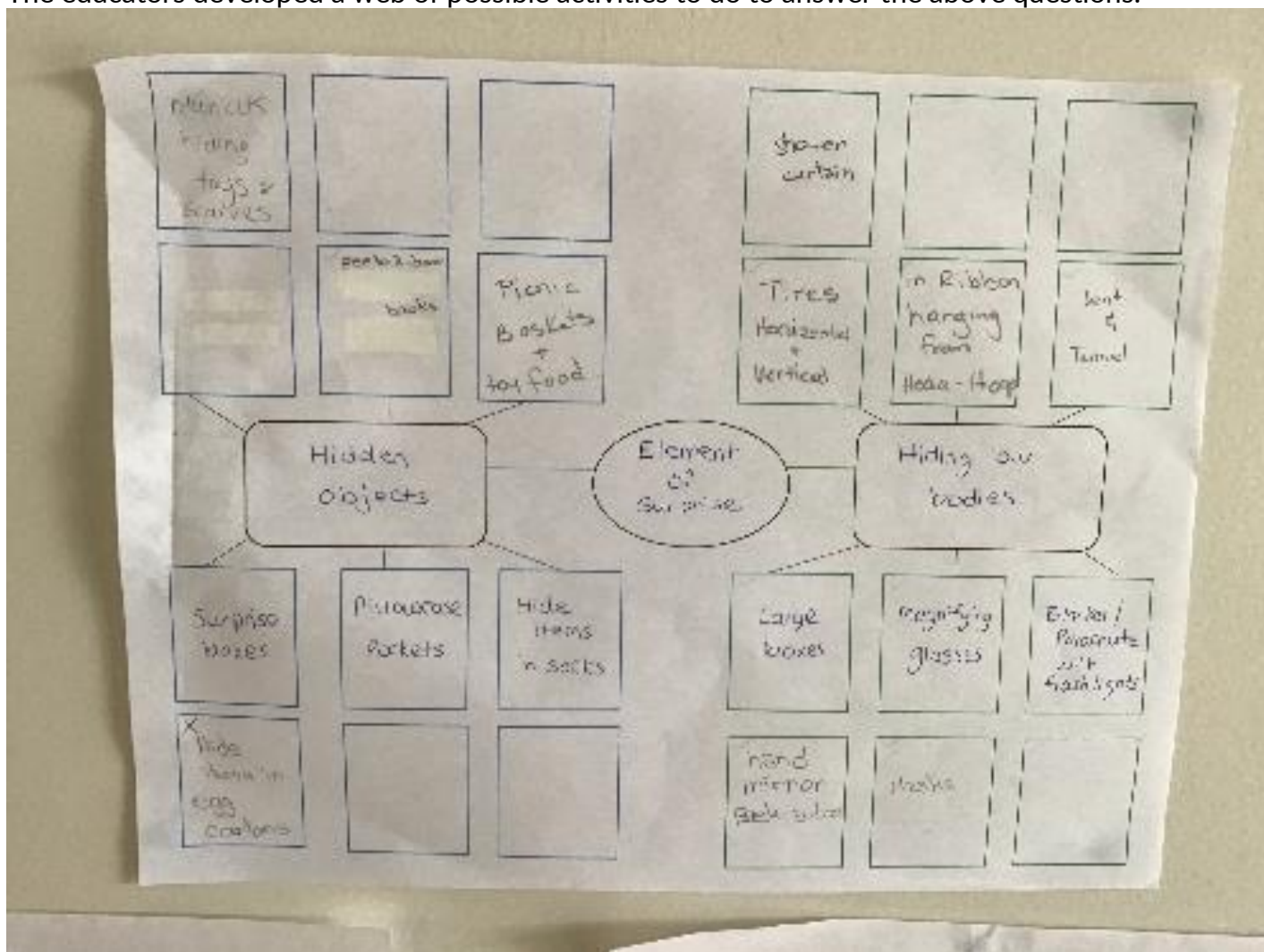
### What We Know:

- When we come out from behind something, we get a reaction.
- When objects are underneath something, they are still there.

### What We Want to Know:

- What can we hide our bodies under, behind or in?
- What can we hide things in, under, behind or between?

The educators developed a web of possible activities to do to answer the above questions.



During our project, our Conestoga College student, Marziya, used the children's interest in this project to do an experience. She made up the song below to sing to the children as they hid under various scarves to hide and peek at each other.

Where Is Nina? Where Is Nina?  
Where is she? Where is she?  
What has she been doing? What has she been doing?  
Hiding from me. Hiding from me.

Also, throughout the project, the infants learned some new words to say and some new vocabulary were introduced: hi, ribbons, where is..., boo, peek, peekaboo I see you, hop, mirror, magnifying glasses, tunnel, bunny, tent, and roar.

## Phase 2: Developing the Project

As part of our project on, “element of surprise,” Melody brought in two large boxes for the children to explore and hide their bodies in. Nina was the first one to check them out, by going inside when she saw Shannon peeking down from the top of the box. She also peeked out the flap at her peers and Melody. Melody went in the box with Nina and then Finley H. joined in. Finley K. looked at Nina and Melody peeking out of the box and he smiled. Finley H. lifted the flaps from the outside to peek at Melody and Nina on the inside. Shannon lifted Charlie up to look down into the box and put her in the box with Melody. Finley H. peeked through the window at them and reached her hand in to them. Melody tickled Finley’s hand, which turned into a fun game. Finley liked to close and open the window repeatedly, and laugh. Finley went into the box with Melody. Melody looked out at Abby and Abby smiled at her, and opened and closed the door.

Later on, when no one was using the box, Rosie began to explore it with lots of smiles. She went into it and peeked out at Finley H. and Abby, and stuck her arm out the window. Nina peeked in at her. Rosie tried to close the door but her hand kept getting in the way. Melody would close the door and Rosie would use her muscles to push it back open. She loved doing this repeatedly. Then Finley H would close the door for Rosie to open it. Peekaboo! I see you! What a fun way to interact with one another and use our large motor skills to go in and out of the box.





As part of the project, Jessica prepared a mirror peekaboo activity for the children. At the beginning of the activity, the children were curious about the mirrors.

Jessica held a mirror, covered her face, and said, "Where's Charlie?" Then Jessica pulled the mirror down, and said, "Peekaboo." After seeing Jessica doing that, the children started to play peekaboo with the mirrors. Charlie liked to mimic playing peekaboo with Jessica at the same time. She would also hold a mirror in each hand to play peekaboo, switching back and forth from left side to right side.

Nina liked to hold the big mirror pebble toy to play peekaboo. She also liked to look at herself in the big mirror pebble, while hiding behind it. Rosie liked to peek at herself when holding a mirror. She would look at herself for a while before pulling the mirror down. Rosie explored peekaboo with the mirror different ways, such as, pulled it up above her head, pulling on either side of her face, or down below her chin to peek out.

Finley H. liked to use different kinds of mirrors to play peekaboo. Colin liked to say, "Hi," while playing peekaboo. When he used the mirror to cover his face, he saw his own reflection in the mirror, and kept saying, "hi," to himself. Finley K. liked to use two mirrors to hide his face and then pulled both mirrors to the sides at once so that he could peek out in the middle. Abby said, "da," every time when pulling the mirror down. Sadie would play peekaboo towards Abby. At the end of the activity, the children expanded with different materials to hide their face, such as basket or storybook. The children had so much fun in this activity while learning cause and effect and started recognizing their own reflection. What a great element of surprise activity.



As part of the element of surprise project Celine set out links under a blanket and had two boxes with scarves inside for the children to find them. Rosie was waiting while Celine set up (watching very intently). Once it was ready, she found the wooden box and moved it in different directions before she found a hole. Rosie stuck her hand inside to pull out a scarf. She finished her exploring scarves by finding the other box and pulling them out. Finley H. was quick to come over to the felt box. She reached inside and pulled out the scarf. She also pulled off the blanket to find links underneath. Rosie and Nina started to pick up and move the links to get them apart. Nina, Rosie and Charlie started to put the links over their faces and pull them down to peek at each other. This became a game, as the girls would wait for each other to hide and then peek. Colin came over to explore as he found the felt box and enjoyed pulling out the scarves. Finley K. was picking up and moving the links around. When Celine showed Finley K. the felt box, he quickly stuck his hand inside to pull out scarves one at a time. During this activity, the children used their fine motor skills to pull out the scarves. The children also engaged in a social interaction as they played peekaboo with one another.



As part of our project, Melody brought out magnifying glasses for the children to explore. Finley H. liked to take them out of the bucket and put them back in. Colin went right to putting one over his face to peek at his peers. Soon Charlie, Nina, and Finley H. were putting them up to their eyes.

Melody held a magnifying glass away from Finley H's face so she could see a neat view. Melody held her hand out in front of Nina's magnifying glass so Nina could see Melody's hand look big. Nina looked at the floor through one too. Nina and Colin shared their magnifying glasses to peek at each other. Abby observed for a bit before she explored her magnifying glass.

Marziya (our ECE student) held a magnifying glass up to Colin and Abby to play peekaboo with them as she worked on bonding with them in a fun way. This made them smile. Abby liked to share the magnifying glasses back and forth with Marziya. She also learned that one of the magnifying glasses opened like a lid. What fun it was to see the science of magnifying glasses at work. They were able to look at people and objects in a unique way as the educators engaged and labeled body parts and things in the magnifying glasses.



Today Nina and her family brought in a tent and tunnel to explore for our Element of Surprise project. Colin spotted the tunnel still tied up on the floor. He crawled into the middle and sat in it, showing the enclosure schema. Shannon then set both items up and Finley H, Charlie and Nina crawled right into the tent to hide and peek out the open doorway and screened windows.

Melody suggested that we put the flap on the door down so they could use it as another peekaboo opportunity. Rosie lifted the door flap to peek in at Finley H. and Charlie, which made the three girls squeal and smile. Rosie and Charlie peeked out the screen window at Shannon. Abby spotted Charlie at the window and played peekaboo with her. Charlie would lean up against the screen and Abby would poke her nose or watch as Charlie would peek out, and they both smiled and giggled. Rosie and Charlie gave kisses through the screen and made surprised faces at each other.

As for the tunnel, at first Abby and Finley K, just peeked through one end to see Shannon on the other side. Abby played peekaboo by sliding the tunnel back and forth. Finley H. and Charlie crawled right through the whole tunnel. Shannon then climbed into the tunnel half way and reached her arms towards Abby. Abby gained the confidence to crawled through, all the way to the other side. Nina played peekaboo peeking through the tunnel, above, and to the side of it. She crawled through the tunnel and would lean to the side and peek out the end at Shannon and Melody. Then she sat back upright in the tunnel to hide. What a great gross motor, cause and effect and social activity to explore for our project. Thank you to Nina and her family for this fun experience today.





For the Element of Surprise project and the interest of hiding in tires, Shannon placed the tires outside in two ways. As she was setting the tires up Shannon would flip the tires repeatedly to get water out. Charlie and Nina would watch and giggle, as the water would splash out. She stacked some two or three tires high and placed four tires on their sides between the gazebo and wooden bench like a tunnel.

Shannon then placed a long piece of wood through the tires for the infants to crawl across. Charlie and Nina signed help so they could be lifted up into the stacks of tires. Once inside they smiled and played peekaboo with Melody and Shannon. Nina would lean her head forward to hide and then look up to see Shannon say, "boo." Charlie used her gross motor skills to climb out of the stacked tires (two tires high) with a little assistance from Shannon. Then she started to climb into a single tire on her own. Nina spotted the tire tunnel while she was standing in the stacked tires. Shannon asked, "Nina do you want to try the tunnel?" Nina replied, "Try." Nina was lifted out and crawled over to peek through the opening of the tire tunnel, at Shannon. She then crawled through to get to Shannon.

Melody brought Hannah over to peek through. Shannon would bounce up and down to play peekaboo with Hannah as she smiled and would lean in to spot Shannon. What fun tires can be to practice gross motor skills and our interest of peekaboo!

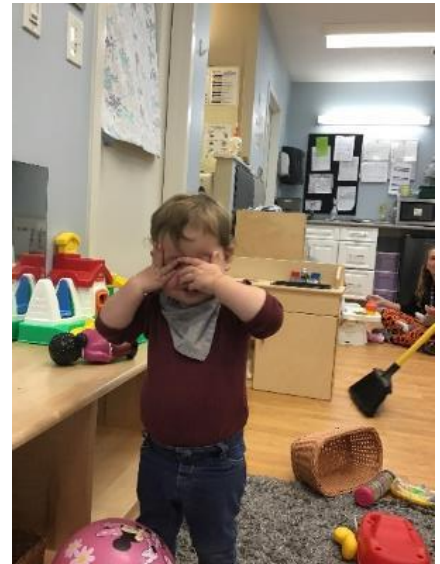


As part of the project, Jessica was playing animal masks peekaboo with the children today. At the beginning of the activity, Jessica put an animal mask on her face and then pulled down the mask and said, "peekaboo." Rosie mimicked what Jessica did, by putting the mask up to cover her face. She put on the elephant mask and touched different masks. Sadie kept touching the nose of the rabbit mask. Finley K was looking at the lion mask. He observed the mask by rotating the mask in his hands and he was pulling the lion's whiskers. He also liked to touch the hair on the zebra's mask and the nose of the koala mask.



Melody put on a mask and Colin touched the mask that was on Melody's head. Nina touched the mask and covered her eyes with her hands, showing we were playing peekaboo. Jessica put on the bunny mask, said "bunny" to Nina and Nina tried to say "bunny." Then Shannon asked Nina "what does a bunny do? Does a bunny hop?" and Nina said, "hop."

Jessica put a mask on Charlie's head and she pulled it down with a big smile. Hannah was so interested in the monkey mask. She was not a fan when Melody put on the lion mask, as she only wanted the monkey mask. Finley H liked the masks. She would let Jessica put on different animal masks on her and she kept passing different masks to Jessica too. Jessica put on a lion mask and said, "roar" to Finley H. Then Jessica put the lion mask on Finley H's head and she said, "roar" back to Jessica. What a fun peekaboo activity.



Charlie, Finley and Abby brought in some peekaboo books with surprises to share with the class for our "element of surprise" project. Shannon read Charlie's book called "Peekaboo Sun." The children liked the pull up, push down, and spin tabs to see the animals pop out. When they popped up they would giggle and sign more. They wanted it read over and over!

Melody read Finley H's book called, "Where's the T- Rex?" Finley opened the felt flaps to uncover the dinosaurs. Then the children saw themselves in the mirror at the end. "Peekaboo". The children smiled at their reflection.

Celine read Abby's books "Peekaboo Love" and "Pop up Peekaboo Pumpkin." The children leaned in and pointed to the pictures. Nina and Abby liked looking at themselves in the mirror at the end of the book too.



To go along with our Element of surprise project Shannon made a ribbon ring (a hula hoop with ribbon tied and hanging all around it), to hang.

Charlie walked right into the middle of all the ribbons. The educators asked the other children, “where is Charlie?” Nina came over to investigate and spotted Charlie. This made Charlie smile. Finley liked to feel the different textures of the ribbons and explore cause and effect as he shook or pulled the ribbons while watching the ring and ribbons move. Charlie would use both hands to pull apart the ribbons and peek through them at her different educators and friends. Nina joined Charlie in the middle to peek out to play peekaboo with everyone as well. Charlie also liked to walk in and out of the ribbons as they fell all around her. Colin needed some encouragement to go into the ribbon ring, so Melody laid inside and Colin went crawling in to find her. When he got close he leaned his head down to look at her, like, I found you. Shannon went into the ribbon ring with Charlie’s permission. Colin pulled apart the ribbons to say, “hi.” Colin crawled in and out to keep exploring. Sadie started by feeling the texture of the ribbons while sitting with Melody. Charlie peeked out at Sadie and Melody, making Sadie smile and Melody laugh. Sadie got silly as she moved the ribbon back and forth from one side of her face to the other, as she giggled. It was like she was playing peekaboo around the one ribbon.

We then took it outside to explore some more. The toddlers all had a turn and once they were done, Charlie and Nina came back for more peekaboo with each other and Shannon. Charlie walked out with a black ribbon stuck to her hood. Rowan came outside and had a turn to explore the ribbons. Shannon would peek through the ribbons at him or say, “boo!” when he spotted her. Rowan would smile as he saw her through the spaces between the ribbons. He also felt and moved the ribbons by shaking them. Rowan finally crawled through the ribbons with a big smile at Shannon. The infants liked exploring sensory peekaboo, through textures and touch.



To go along with our Element of surprise project, Erin (Charlie's mom) brought in a shower curtain and rod for the infants to explore, as it is one of Charlie's favourite peekaboo places at home while having a bath. Shannon cut the curtain in half so there were three places the children could peek through (the middle, the right side or the left side). Shannon placed the shower curtain outside between the gazebo bars. Nina and Charlie liked to walk back and forth through the shower curtains. Sadie and Charlie liked to watch as the wind blew the shower curtain in the air. Charlie did peekaboo at her friends from around the curtain through the gazebo bars and circular cut out. Sadie would pull the curtain back and forth to hide and peek at Shannon. The curtain was then brought inside where Rosie, Nina and Charlie would pull the curtain open and closed to peek and run through it. Charlie would peek through all three peek spots. With assistance Hannah stood and could pull the curtain closed to hide. Shannon would say "boo", and Hannah would smile. Hannah figured out how the curtain opened and closed on her own. Finley would push the curtain over and smile when Shannon saw him and said, "boo." Shannon would close the curtain so Finley could do it again. Rowan opened and closed it on his own peeking with a big smile, as he would peek all around the curtains. Abby cleverly laid down on her tummy and peeked under the shower curtain. When Shannon peeked back Abby would lift the curtain and crawl through. The infants also explored social interactions as they would peek through the shower curtains to see their friends on the other side. What a great peekaboo, social and gross motor activity to explore with your friends Charlie. Thank you Erin for bringing it in.





### Phase 3: Concluding the Project

To end our Element of Surprise project we combined the hiding of objects with the hiding of ourselves. The parents helped by providing Christmas stockings, which we hid flashlights in and placed under the parachute. Celine and Melody then lifted the parachute up and down. Rowan, Antonio and Abby explored crawling on top of the parachute (hearing a crinkling sound) and under the parachute. Melody and Celine hid under the parachute. Abby noticed Melody through the mesh circle in the middle of the parachute. Melody popped out and said, "Boo," which made Abby laugh. Rowan and Abby then hid under the parachute with Melody and crawled out to be found. Sadie and Rosie tried placing their hands into the stockings to pull out the flashlights. With a little assistance and encouragement, they both did it!

Each infant got a flashlight to explore. They shone them on the walls, ceiling, floors and their faces. Melody and Celine pointed out the lights as they shone on the ceiling and floor. Rosie, Abby and Sadie watched the lights shining in different places. Sadie discovered that when you set the flashlight upright with the light down, it disappears. Rowan experimented with this concept later on too. Sadie quickly would pick it up or tip the flashlight to find the hiding light. Abby and Sadie started to play peekaboo on their own by lifting the parachute in front of their faces or pulling it in front of themselves from both sides. Sadie tried two other sized flashlights to see if she could hide the light with them too and it worked! What a great hiding experience to end such an infant geared project.



## Teacher Reflections

It was so amazing to watch the children's interest in our element of surprise project flourish and how it kept going over the past few months was something I have not seen. These infants started out strong with their love for peekaboo and it was as if the fire and excitement never stopped. When the children had an activity brought out for them they would be so engaged in whatever they were doing and had such a long attention span. The children would even finish their activity and then go off and play peekaboo with toys, educators or their peers. The activities brought out all different learning as well as the children taught us new ways to use an item. We would be doing a totally unrelated activity and all of a sudden, a child would put it up to their face to hide and surprise us. This was such a fun experience that I am so glad I was able to be a part of!

Celine Burley RECE

Through the project, the elements of surprise, I found out that the children liked peekaboo so much. The children could turn everything into peekaboo play. I realized peekaboo not only could help children develop their motor skills (both fine and gross motors) but also increase their social interaction with others (educators and peers). By planning and doing activities, that the children are interested in, it could encourage the children to say and learn more words. The activity that I liked the most was the curtain peekaboo because it was one of the activities that engaged with the family and the children had so much joy with the curtain. The children would peek through the middle of the curtains, or they would lay down on the floor to peek through at the bottom of the curtain. The children had so much fun and smiles throughout the project while developing their skills in many aspects.

Jessica Lau RECE

This was such a fun project and we were all so excited to have such great parent participation for this one (ex. Adding things for us to use like the shower curtain, books, tent, tunnel, etc.). The children did so many interesting things with the materials we provided. I loved watching how some of the children warmed up to the masks to feel comfortable (to wear them on their own) to peek at their peers. I enjoyed the children's excitement to interact with us and the other children in the ribbon ring and tents. I am sure their love of the element of surprise will continue in the New Year and I look forward to see them learn and grow some more through it.

Melody Brubacher RECE

Our Element of Surprise project was a big hit as it was an interest for every infant in our room. It also had good parent participation. This is why it was the most exciting project for me to plan. Even if I planned activities like containers in the snow, or present blocks the infants showed their peekaboo interest by hiding behind the container lids and present blocks. Our parents brought the peekaboo interest from home to our centre sharing one child form of peekaboo with their friends. What a great way to encourage social interaction. We had peekaboo books, a tent, tunnel, and my favourite a shower curtain, which I would never think of. I feel we could continue with the peekaboo activities even after this project. Thank you so much to our group of infants, their strong peekaboo interest, and their parents for keeping my spark for planning activities alive. What a great learning experience I had with all the babies. I never knew how many objects and activities could be used to play peekaboo.

Shannon Swanson RECE