More or Less

Add or remove balls one at a time while describing the change, connecting your baby's experience with the words more and less.

Helps Your Child Grow

Emergent Mathematical Thinking

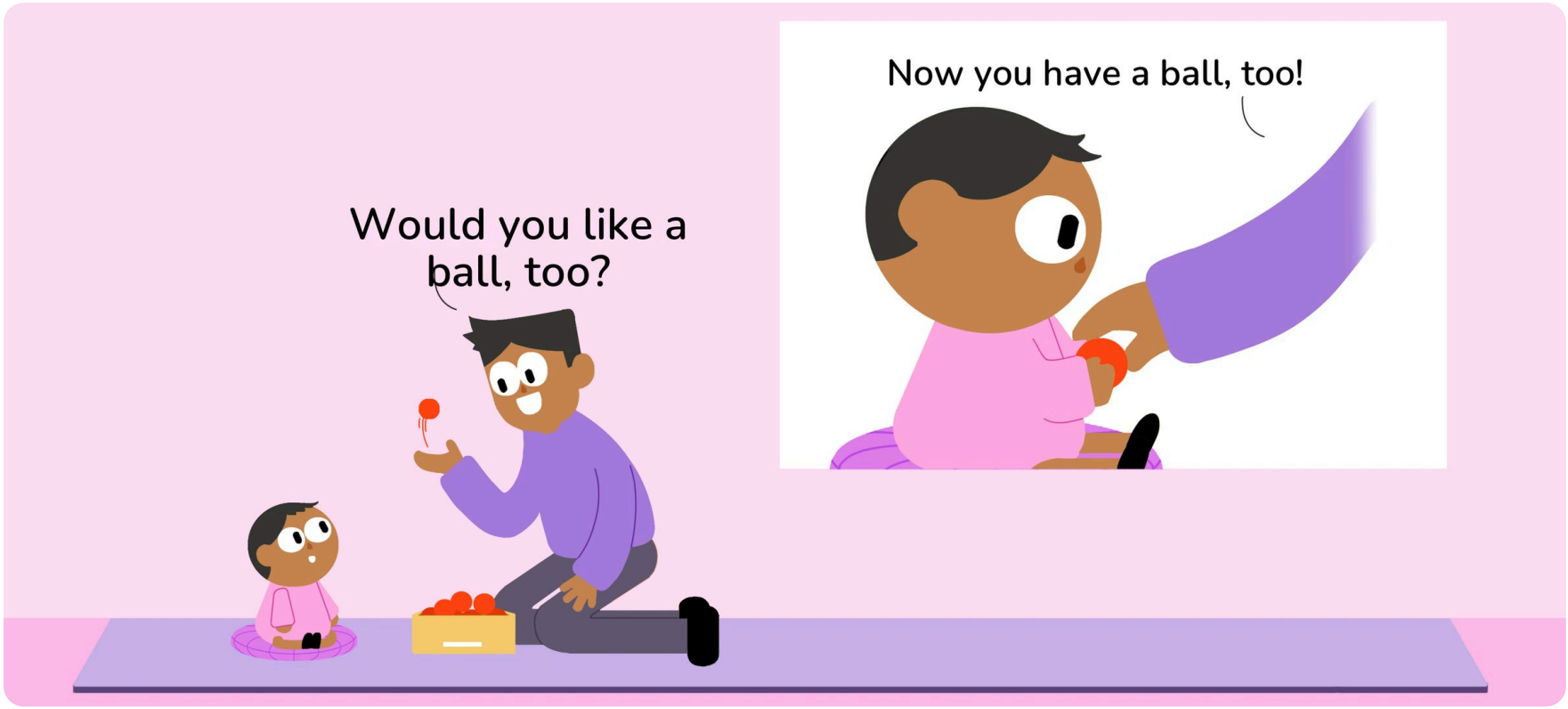
Adding and removing balls from your baby's hands gives them a concrete experience of a quantity becoming more or less.

Attending and Understanding

Hearing "more" and "less" while the quantity visibly changes helps your baby connect the words with the experience.

What You'll Need

1. Several small balls
2. a box



Here Is One Ball

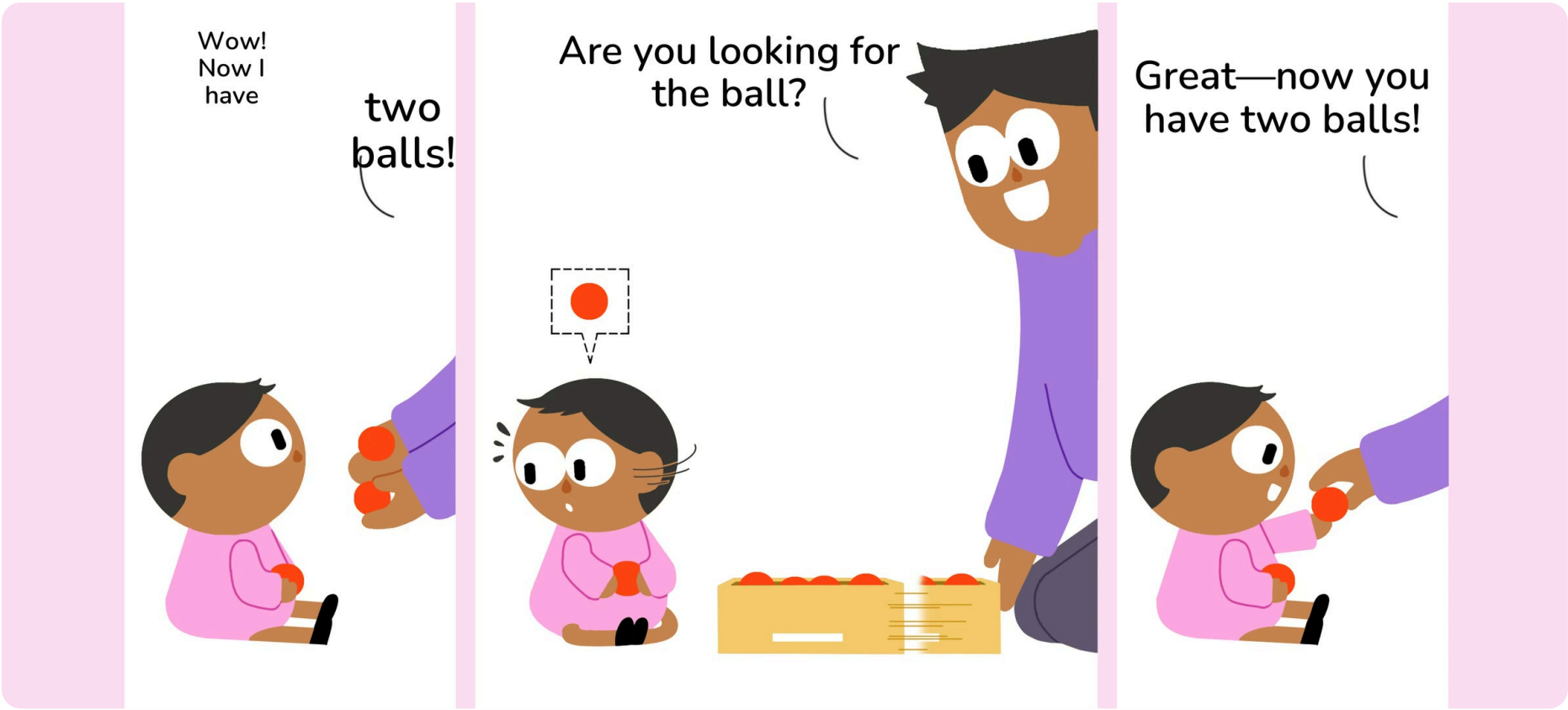
Shake or gently toss one ball to catch your baby's attention, then hand it over. After they have explored it, offer a second ball and let them notice what changes when they are holding more.

Observations

- ◯ Picks up a ball and explores it by tapping or tossing it
- ◯ Looks toward you as you introduce the ball

Tips

- Move slowly enough for your baby to watch and follow what you do.
- Looking steadily at the balls, reaching, wiggling, or babbling can all show that your baby is interested in playing with them.
- If your baby plays briefly and tosses a ball away, pick it up and offer it again: "The ball is back!" This keeps the interaction going.
- Give your baby enough time to become interested in the balls before introducing "more" and "less." Follow their motivation.



Add One More

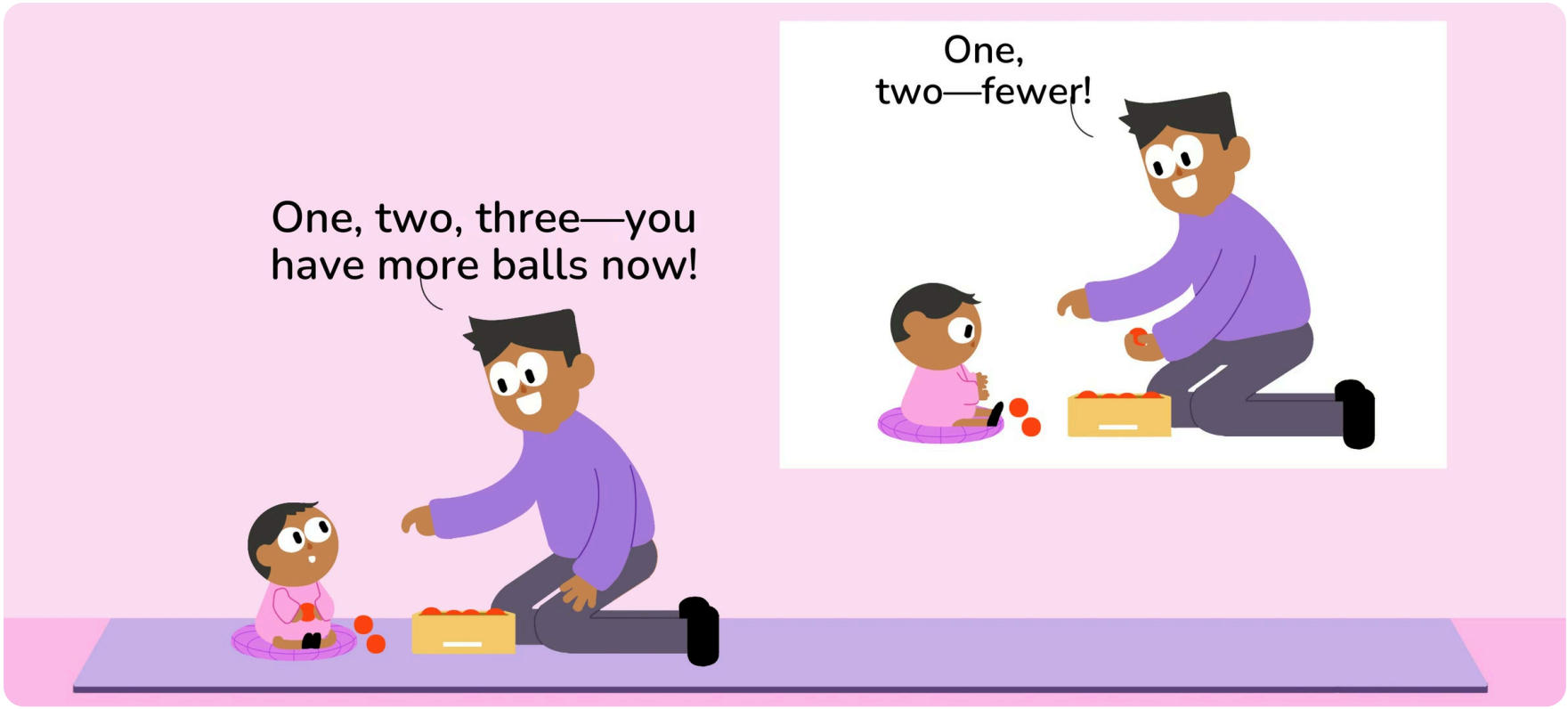
Show another ball with an excited voice. If your baby looks around for one too, search together. Once they have an additional ball, pause and see how their play changes while you describe the quantity: “Now you have more - two balls.”

Observations

- ◯ Notices that you are holding more balls and reaches toward you
- ◯ Holds one ball in each hand

Tips

- If your baby does not look for the missing ball, show both balls again, then help them take one.
- Put each change into words. This helps your baby connect what they see with language about how many there are.
- Your baby’s #PMP-FiM is still developing, so dropping a ball is expected. Offer it again until they are holding one in each hand.



More, Then Less

Repeat the earlier turns, adding one ball at a time to your baby's hands. Then return balls to the box one at a time so the amount becomes smaller. Each time, say whether there are more or fewer balls, connecting the changing quantity with the words.

Observations

- ◯ Looks at the balls after hearing you say "more"
- ◯ Reaches for another ball when they want more

Tips

- Even without knowing the number words one, two, and three, your baby can notice the difference between one object and several.
- If your baby wants to keep holding the balls, let them experience "more" first. Later, put the balls back one at a time and name how the quantity becomes "less."
- Each time your baby gets another ball, count all the balls from one again. A longer count helps them experience the growing quantity.