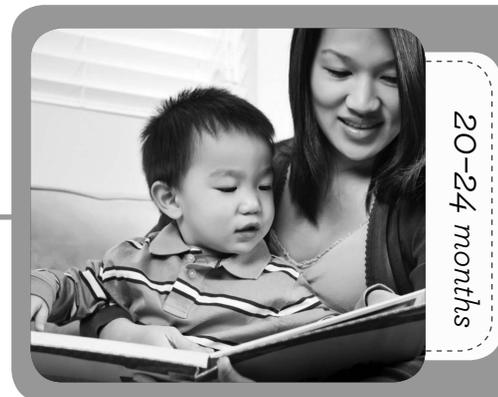


# Communication

## Activities to Help Your Toddler Grow and Learn



Your toddler is learning language very quickly and will imitate words he hears, good or bad. He is using different types of words and putting them together in short phrases. Most of his words are understandable. He may be starting to sing simple songs. He may also be testing the power of words by using the strong words “no” and “mine.”

### Sock Puppet

Put your hand in a clean sock and make it talk: “Hi, my name is José. I am visiting you. What is your name?” Your child might say something or want to touch the puppet. Keep the conversation going. Let the puppet give your toddler a kiss!

### Construction Time

Collect materials to make a pretend airport, street, or neighborhood. Masking tape can be the runway or the road. Oatmeal containers can be tunnels. Cereal boxes can be buildings. Cardboard can make a ramp for cars to go *up* and *down*. Toy cars can go *through* the tunnel, *under* the bridge, or *beside* a building. Use these new words while your child builds and plays.

### Fun with Books

Find large picture books and/or magazines to look at with your child. Point to pictures and talk about what you see. Ask her, “Where’s the doggie?” and have her point to a picture. Let your child “read” to someone else, such as Grandpa. If your child is beginning to learn about using the toilet, this is a good time to put a small basket of picture books in the bathroom to “read.”

### Field Trips

Your toddler will enjoy going to new places, even to a new store. This is a great time to learn new words. Talk to him about what you are seeing: “Look, that fruit is called a *mango*. Look at that big refrigerator. Put your hand on the door—it’s very *cold*.”

### Sing Together

Your child will love learning simple songs such as “Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star.” Teach your child simple songs you remember from childhood. Enjoy singing together. Later, ask your child to sing for someone else in the family.

### Car Talk

Teach your child words about the car as you get in or out during the day. Talk about what you’re doing: “Let’s *open* the car door and get inside. I’m going to *buckle* your car seat. Daddy’s going to *close and lock* the door. See the *lights* go out? Do you hear the *motor*? Let’s go!” Soon your little rider will know all about the car.

Notes:



**Don’t Forget!** Activities should be supervised at all times by an adult. Any material, food or toy given, to a young child should be reviewed for safety.

# Gross Motor

## Activities to Help Your Toddler Grow and Learn



Your toddler is busy and fast! She is running and learning to kick and jump. Her leg muscles are getting stronger, and she can walk up and down stairs holding on to your hand or a railing. She really enjoys moving her body and learning new skills. She also likes to climb, so be watchful!

### Froggie Jump

Hold your child's hands and help him jump off a low step. Then let him try it by himself. Once he can do this, show your child how to jump over something, such as a small milk carton. Encourage your child: "Wow! You can jump just like a frog."

### Bowling Adventure

Show your child how to roll a medium-size ball toward pins to knock them down. Balls can be made from wads of newspaper taped all around. Empty milk cartons or plastic soda bottles can be used for pins. When your child gets tired of bowling, you can play kickball.

### Balancing Practice

Assist your child by holding her hand, then ask her to stand on one foot. Now ask her to stand on the other foot. See if she can stand without holding your hand. Count how many seconds she can balance. Keep practicing!

### Let's Go for a Ride

Give your child a riding toy without pedals. It will help him control the movement of the toy and strengthen his legs. Later he will enjoy riding a tricycle with pedals.

### Dance to the Music

Play different kinds of music that you and your child enjoy: salsa, hip-hop, country, classical, jazz. Dance and move to the music with your child. Sometimes pick her up so she can feel you move. Mostly, let her dance and move by herself. She may enjoy dancing with scarves or ribbons. Shakers and bells make it great fun!

### Trip to the Playground

Find a playground in your neighborhood and have some fun! Run, swing, and climb. As you walk to the playground, practice stepping up or down street curbs or stones holding your child's hand. If there are stairs or ladders, encourage him to walk or climb up. Hold on to the railing!

### Red Light, Green Light

When you are in a safe open space, teach your child this game. Hold her hand and say, "Green light," to begin the run. Say, "Red light," to stop quickly, then "Green light" again. When she knows the game, she can run toward you by herself while you say, "Green light! Red light!" Your open arms are the finish line.

Notes:



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# Fine Motor

## Activities to Help Your Toddler Grow and Learn

Your busy toddler enjoys activities that build small muscles. He can stack and build with small toys. He is learning how to hold a crayon with his thumb and fingers and how to scribble circles and lines. He is becoming more skilled at stringing beads and doing other activities using two hands.



### Stack It Up

Your child will have fun stacking small things and knocking them down. Use blocks, paper or plastic cups, small boxes, or anything stackable. Count how many things your child can stack. See how high she can go!

### String Fling

String beads, macaroni, or large cereal. Help your child practice using two hands at one time. A shoelace or string with some tape on the end will work well for stringing. Make a necklace for someone special!

### My Family Book

Make a small picture album for your toddler. Include pictures of family members, friends, and pets. Look through the album and talk about each person. Have him turn pages and tell you about the pictures. Have him share his special book with visitors.

### Beginning Puzzles

Show your toddler how to put beginning puzzles together. You can make a puzzle by cutting the front of a cereal box into two or three wide strips. Help her aim and place the piece in the right place if she needs help. Praise her for trying: "Good for you! You can do it!"

### Letters and Shopping Lists

When you make your shopping list or write a letter, have paper and a pen or crayon for your child to write along with you. Say, "I'm writing a letter to Grandma. You can write one, too." Send the letters in the mail. Grandma may write back!

### Make Fruit Salad

Let your child use a Popsicle stick or a plastic picnic knife to help you cut bits of fruit, such as banana or peaches. He can help scoop yogurt, sprinkle in raisins, and stir everything together. Don't forget to tell the family who made the salad.

### Snack-Time Helper

Your child will enjoy making her own snack. She can help twist open lids on jars; open containers; spread cream cheese, hummus, butter, jam, or jelly; scoop out applesauce; and more. The more she can do herself (with your support), the faster she will learn and the more skilled she will become.

### Notes:



**Don't Forget!** Activities should be supervised at all times by an adult. Any material, food, or toy given to a young child should be reviewed for safety. Always watch your toddler during mealtimes.

# Problem Solving

## Activities to Help Your Toddler Grow and Learn



Your toddler is curious about body parts and what they do. She understands more about how things go together, such as where items belong. She knows that a picture of a cat stands for a real cat, and she is learning what objects are used for. Her busy mind is trying to make sense of what she sees and experiences.

### Scoop and Pour

Let your child practice pouring and filling. Provide recycled materials, such as clean milk cartons, yogurt cups, detergent scoops, and plastic bottles for playing in the sand or water. She could play with these in the tub. Put uncooked rice or popcorn in a large tray or box with scoops and containers. Talk about what your child is doing, and use new words such as *empty*, *full*, *pouring*, and *scooping*.

### Household Helper

For pretend play, make a box with household tools, such as paintbrushes, a small shovel, a small broom, or a dry sponge. Your child can pretend to wipe the table, paint a wall, dig in the garden, or sweep the floor. Talk about all the work getting done: "Wow, that floor is looking good."

### I Can Do, Can You?

During bath time or lap time with your child, play a follow-the-leader game. Say, "My eyes blink. Show me how your eyes blink. My nose can sniff. Can your nose sniff? I can clap my hands. Can you clap, too?" Do something silly!

### The Doctor Is In

Tell your toddler a doll or stuffed animal is sick. Make a doctor's office by folding a sheet on the floor or on a low table for the examination. Make bandages with tape and tissue. If the doll's arm is hurt, you can make a sling made out of a napkin or handkerchief. The doll will need lots of comfort, so encourage lots of hugs.

### Topsy Turvy

Turn a cup or a box of cereal upside down during breakfast. See if your child notices and turns it back the right way. Try this at other times of the day. For example, hold the book upside down when reading to your child and see what happens. Have fun with this silly game.

### Train Tracks

While your child is watching, draw two long horizontal lines about 4 inches apart on a large sheet of paper. Then, show your child how to draw vertical lines from one to the other. Encourage him to make a lot of these vertical lines. The design will look like a train track. Bring out the trains or cars to play on the train track.

## Notes:



**Don't Forget!** Activities should be supervised at all times by an adult. Any material, food, or toy given to a young child should be reviewed for safety. Always watch your toddler during bath time.

# Personal-Social

## Activities to Help Your Toddler Grow and Learn



20-24 months

Your toddler is becoming very independent. He will want to do everything by himself, even if he isn't quite able. He wants things now and quickly becomes frustrated if that doesn't happen. He enjoys playing close to other children but is not really able to share just yet. He likes to initiate simple household tasks and can put some of his toys away with help from you.

### Baby Bear Beds

Make a bed for your child's doll or a stuffed animal using a shoebox. A small piece of cloth or a dishtowel makes a blanket or a pillow. Your child can help her baby go to bed at night. She can read a story and tuck him into his new bed. Don't forget a kiss!

### Play Dates

Your child needs your help playing with others but enjoys being with other children. Stay close by when he is with other children. Have a lot of the same kinds of toys to help the children cooperate. Several trucks, cars, and dolls are easier to share than one of each kind. Let him know when he plays well with another child: "You gave the car to Jamie—you shared."

### Dress-Up Time

Make a bag or box with simple dress-up clothing, such as hats, shoes, a purse, and other special clothes that are easy to wear. Your child may need some help but will have a lot of fun pretending. Don't forget to let her look in the mirror: "Look at that big girl all dressed up. Is that Mia?"

### Playing House

Make simple playhouse furniture for your child. Turn a box over and draw burners to make a stove. Place a plastic tub or dishpan on another low box or table for "washing dishes." Add a doll, stuffed animal, plastic plates, cups, a dish towel, and some safe cooking utensils. Your child can "cook" at his stove while you cook dinner. Follow your child's lead. Talk and have fun!

### Picnic Outing

Find a place to have a picnic with your child. The park or playground is fun, but your child will have fun even if the picnic is inside your home. Let your child help prepare some simple food and drinks for the picnic. Maybe the stuffed animals would like to join you. Let your child practice feeding herself.

### Washing Hands

Help your child learn all of the steps in washing hands. You can do this before or after meals, before bedtime, and after going potty. Stay close by while he learns to stand on a stool, turn on the water, wash hands with soap, and rinse and dry hands with a towel. Singing a song makes it fun: "This is the way we wash our hands, wash our hands, wash our hands. This is the way we wash our hands, before we eat our food."

### Notes:



**Don't Forget!** Activities should be supervised at all times by an adult. Any material, food, or toy given to a young child should be reviewed for safety. Always watch your toddler during mealtime.