

# Communication

## Activities to Help Your Toddler Grow and Learn



Your toddler is beginning to enjoy language and words. She has many new words now and is beginning to put two words together for simple sentences. She looks at you when you are talking to her; she says “hi” and “bye,” and she points to things she wants. She also enjoys singing and will try to sing her favorite songs.

### Chatter Stretchers

Your toddler may use single words for requests, such as “juice” when he wants a drink. Help him stretch his sentence by saying it for him: “Would you like some juice? Say, ‘I want juice, please.’” Praise him when he attempts to make the sentence longer.

### What Happened Today?

When you get home from an outing, ask your toddler to tell someone else about what happened or what the two of you saw: “Tell Grandpa about the horse we saw.” Help her if you need to, but let her tell as much as she can.

### “Help Me” Game

Ask your toddler to help you by giving him simple directions, such as “Give Daddy his book,” “Can you get my shoe?” or “Could you bring me a diaper?” You may need to point with your finger to help him in the beginning. Be sure to say, “Thank you,” when he helps.

### Animal Sounds

Teach your toddler the sounds that animals make. Read books about baby animals, and play with your toddler by making the baby animal sounds. Later, pretend you are the animal’s parent and your toddler is the baby animal. Call each other with animal sounds. This game can be a lot of silly fun.

### Read, Read, Read

Find times to “read” throughout the day. You can point to pictures and words, and your child will begin to learn what words are about. At the grocery store, point to and read signs to your child. At a restaurant, let your child “read” a menu. At home, help her “read” magazines by looking at pictures together and talking about them.

### Treasure Box

Put together a treasure box of safe, everyday items that are interesting to explore and feel—plastic cups, a soft sock, a little ball, a hairbrush, a small shoe. When your child pulls something out of the box, say, “Look, you found a soft blue sock” or “That sponge is squishy.” Use new language for your child, and change items in the box every few days.

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



By now, your active toddler may be attempting to run. He can carry large items and toys and loves to push and pull big things such as boxes around on the floor. He's learning how to walk upstairs with one hand held by you and is getting better at walking down stairs. He may climb up into a chair to see and reach new things. Your watchful eye is important.

### Swinging

Take your child to a playground to swing. Be sure the swing is safe and has a seat belt. Show your child how to push her feet out when swinging forward. Push gently so you know she will hold on. Chant in rhythm while you push: "Up you go, and up you go!"

### Climbing the Stairs

Hold your child's hand while you climb up steps or a few stairs. Be patient; stairs are very high for little legs. Don't expect much luck with climbing down just yet. If you don't have any stairs in your house or yard, a playground may have places to practice, such as a small slide or a jungle gym platform.

### Balance Beam

With a strip of tape or with chalk, make a line on the floor or outside on the sidewalk. Show your child how to walk along the tape, placing one foot in front of the other. Encourage your child's new skill. Tell him, "You are learning how to balance!"

### Chasing

Your toddler is beginning to run now. In a grassy part of your yard or a safe park, play chase with your little one. Most toddlers love to be chased, and they love to be caught and hugged. Your child will love doing this over and over! It's good exercise.

### Wagon Pull

Give your child a small wagon or a box with a pull string for hauling toys around. Your child can load the wagon and unload at a different place. Maybe the teddy bear wants to ride!

### Playing Music

Your toddler will love making and moving to music. You can make a drum with an oatmeal container, large plastic containers, and wooden spoons or chopsticks. Join her for a little music making. Take turns making music and dancing and moving to different rhythms.

### Kickball

Give your child a medium-size ball (6 inches) and show him how to kick it. You can also make a ball from a wad of newspaper taped all around. See how far he can make it go. Kick it and chase it!

Notes:



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# Fine Motor

## Activities to Help Your Toddler Grow and Learn

Your toddler is becoming more skilled with hands and fingers. She can play with and use toys in many ways, including stacking, poking, pushing, and pulling. She is also gaining skill at holding and using crayons or washable markers. She knows to take apart pieces of a simple puzzle and may try to put the pieces back together.



### Tear It Up

After you each wash your hands, show your child how to tear lettuce or spinach leaves into a bowl. Help her tear small pieces just right to eat. Be sure to tell the family who made the salad. Your child also may like tearing strips of magazines or junk mail.

### Aim and Drop

Show your little one how to drop a clothespin, spool, or dry pasta (uncooked) into an empty milk jug or plastic container with a large opening. Play the game as long as your toddler enjoys it. Let him shake the container and enjoy the sound.

### Stacking Blocks

Let your little one play with small wooden cubes or blocks. Little plastic containers can be washed out and stacked, too. Show her how to stack one on top of another. Build a tower. Count aloud as you stack the blocks so that she begins to hear the sound of numbers. She'll love knocking down the tower.

### String a Snack

Give your toddler a small container of round cereal pieces and a piece of string with tape around the end to make it stiff. Show him how to string the cereal. He can wear his necklace or nibble on it!

### Place Mats

Make sure your toddler gets lots of chances to practice writing and drawing. You might keep paper and crayons or washable markers in the kitchen so you can keep an eye on her while getting dinner ready. Use drawings for placemats for the family. She will be so proud!

### Help Make a Snack

Let your toddler help make a snack. He can unscrew lids from containers such as applesauce once you get the lid loosened. He can help scoop and/or spread butter with a plastic knife. He can also help eat. Yummy!

Notes:



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# Problem Solving

## Activities to Help Your Toddler Grow and Learn



Your busy learner now recognizes pictures of animals and other pictures, such as pictures of family members. He enjoys a lot of new activities with your help, such as painting and playing with playdough. He is beginning to understand about things that are similar or that go together in some way. He is very curious about how things work.

### Copy Cat

On a large piece of paper, draw and scribble together with your toddler. Take turns. You scribble, and then let her scribble. You draw a line, and then let her draw a line. Let her take a turn, and then you copy her scribbles.

### Making Things Fit

Allow your child to play with puzzles or toys that fit together or inside each other. Plastic containers that nest are also fun. Use the word *fit* when you can: "That piece *fits* in the puzzle."

### Tool Play

Help your child play games or do tasks that use tools. For example, use a sponge to wipe off a chair. Use a strainer and a scoop to play in the sand. Use measuring cups and funnels to fill up containers in the bathtub. Be sure to use the correct names for these items. You'll be surprised at how fast your busy little one learns them.

### Match the Socks

When you fold laundry, set aside some of the socks, both large and small. Show your toddler one sock of a pair and let him find the other. Show him how to match the socks if he needs help. Ask him, "Whose big blue socks are these?" and "Where is the other one like this?"

### Nature Walk

Go on a neighborhood walk, collecting little things such as rocks and leaves in a small pail or plastic tub. At home, try to put things together into different groups. For example, help your child sort big and little rocks, rocks from leaves, or black rocks from white rocks. Your child will learn about grouping things.

### Matching Pictures

Cut out pictures of toys, food, and other familiar objects, and glue them on cards. Have your child try to match cards to actual objects in your home. Show your child a picture of a toothbrush. Ask him, "Where is a toothbrush like this?" Then show him a picture of a chair: "Can you find something like this?"

### Notes:



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# Personal-Social

## Activities to Help Your Toddler Grow and Learn



16-20 months

Your toddler is gaining more independence every day. She may show jealousy if others get attention, especially siblings. She is very interested in other children. She likes to do things by herself and may become a little bossy and resist your suggestions. Your good humor will go far in seeing you both through the coming months.

### Big Time Mealtime

When the family is at the table for meals, encourage your toddler to eat with his own utensils. He may need a booster seat to reach the table. He can begin to drink from a small plastic cup (just don't fill it to the top). Talk about what a big boy he is.

### Family Dancing

Show your toddler how to dance. Play music, and show her how to follow you or dance with you. Invite other family members to dance along. Pick up your toddler and dance with her. Praise your little one. Give her a hug.

### Storytime

This is a good time to make a routine of reading stories every night before bed. After getting ready for bed, cuddle up to enjoy a favorite book. It is especially good to read with the television turned off. Your child will hear the words and the expression in your voice. This also might be a special time for another member of the family to read with your toddler.

### Comfort Me

Your toddler is busy and often frustrated. He will need a lot of comfort and support to understand his feelings. He responds to what he's feeling right now and does not know that he will feel better in a little while. Give him words for how he is feeling: "You are sad that mom is leaving. I will be back after nap" or "It's really frustrating when you can't get that sock on." He will need your warm voice, a hug, and comfort.

### Helping Hands

Your child can begin to help in little ways. She can use a sponge to wipe up the table after dinner. She can put toys or socks in a basket. She will feel good about helping. Let her know you notice: "What a big helper!"

### Tickles and Kisses

While getting your toddler ready for bed, say goodnight with a little tickle or kiss to different parts of baby: "Goodnight, little nose [tickle]. Goodnight, little foot [tickle]. Goodnight, little ear [tickle]." Ask him what part needs a goodnight tickle or a goodnight kiss.

### Bear Bedtime

Let your child put a doll or stuffed animal to bed. She can help her bear brush his teeth. Read bear a story. Tuck bear in and kiss him goodnight.

### Notes:



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# 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:



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# 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:



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# Problem Solving

## Activities to Help Your Toddler Grow and Learn



20-24 months

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.

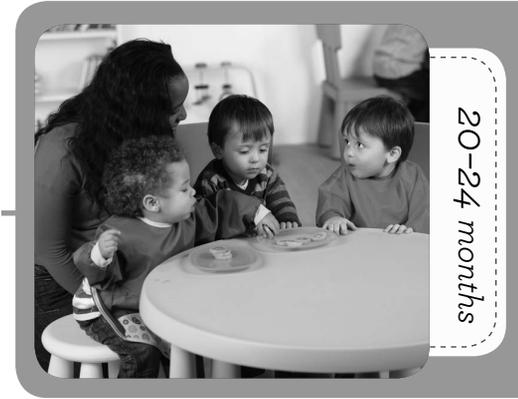
## Notes:



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# Personal-Social

## Activities to Help Your Toddler Grow and Learn



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:



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# Communication

## Activities to Help Your Toddler Grow and Learn



Your toddler enjoys being with you and is learning new words very quickly. She is using her language more often to let you know her wants, needs, and ideas. She can carry on a simple conversation and may talk to herself or pretend to have a conversation with a stuffed animal. She can follow simple directions and loves to read books. She likes to hear the same book read over and over!

### I Spy

You can play this in the car, on the bus, or on a walk. Say, "I spy with my little eye a green truck." Your child tries to find what you spied. Then it is his turn to spy something. Remember to spy things your child can see. You can also say, "I hear with my little ear..." Listen for sounds such as a motorcycle, a car horn, a bird singing, a dog barking, or a radio.

### Picture Album

Make a little album with pictures of your child and the people and pets he knows. Have your child talk about the pictures and name the people and pets. Ask your child, "Who's that? What are they doing?" Look at this book over and over. Help your child learn to say her first and last name.

### When You Were Little

Tell your child stories about when he was little: "When you were first born..." or "When you were a little baby..." Your child will love to hear these stories again and again.

### Dinner Report

At the end of a busy day, let everyone talk about his or her day. Ask your child to tell the family what she did during the day. Let her take her time. You might remind her if she forgets some events. Soon she will learn to tell what happened in the right order. Say, "Thanks for telling us about your day!"

### Washing a Baby

Let your child wash a baby doll in a plastic tub, or bring a baby doll into his bath. Name the doll's body parts as he washes the baby: "You're washing the baby's hands." Let your child know what a good job he is doing taking care of the baby.

### What's that Sound?

Turn off the television and other electronics, and listen with your child to sounds around your home. Listen to the refrigerator motor, wind chimes, a clock ticking, or people talking. Ask your child to tell you what she hears. Try this at night. Listen for the night sounds of crickets, frogs, or cars beeping. Whisper to each other about what you hear.

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# Gross Motor

## Activities to Help Your Toddler Grow and Learn



The word *active* still best describes your toddler. His muscles are getting stronger. He is more confident with his abilities. Let your toddler continue physical activities he enjoys, such as kicking balls, riding toys, climbing jungle gyms, swinging, running, jumping, and balancing.

### Can You Do This?

Stand on one foot. Ask your child, "Can you do this?" Even if your child stands only for 1 second, praise her. Pretend to be an airplane flying with your arms out across the room. Jump, crawl, gallop, and tiptoe around the house. Let your child be the leader and copy her. Play with the whole family.

### Jumping Frog Contest

Pretend you and your child are frogs or rabbits, and show your child how to jump with both feet together. Then jump over a chalk line, crack in the sidewalk, or small object. Make marks with chalk to measure how far he can jump with both feet together: "Wow, look how far the frog jumped that time!"

### Soccer Star

Use a medium-size ball (8–10 inches) to play soccer with your child. Set up a goal with two empty milk cartons or turn a large cardboard box on its side. Encourage your child to kick the ball through the cartons or into the box. Great goal!

### Playground Fun

Just about every day is a good day to spend time outside in the yard or on a playground. Encourage your child to run, swing, and climb up play structures and slide down slides. Join your child in these activities. Jump over cracks or sticks on the way to the playground. Help your child practice stepping up and down stairs or jumping down from short steps. Meet other children and parents. Have a great time!

### Basketball Hoops

Stand in front of your child and hold out your arms in a circle. You are the "hoop." Encourage your child to toss a soft ball into your "basket." You can also use a garbage can or laundry basket for a target. Celebrate when your child makes a basket!

### Horsing Around

Bounce your toddler on your knees or hold his hands and let him straddle and ride your foot. If you cross your legs, it is less tiring to bounce him. Stop bouncing and wait for him to bounce or ask for more. Ask your child, "More? Do you want to ride some more?"

### Stair-Stepping Solo

When you climb stairs, let your toddler hold on to only one of your fingers. You may have to slow down, but let her climb the stairs with little support or all by herself. Show her the stair rail and encourage her to hold it for support. When your child climbs all by herself, give her a big hug!

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# Fine Motor

## Activities to Help Your Toddler Grow and Learn



24-30 months

Your toddler's eyes and hands are working together well. He enjoys taking apart and putting together small things. He loves using any kind of writing or drawing tool. Provide scrap paper, washable crayons, or markers. You can also try puzzles, blocks, and other safe small toys. Talk and enjoy the time together. When writing or drawing, set up clear rules: "We draw *only on the paper*, and *only on the table*. I will help you remember."

### Flipping Pancakes

Trim the corners from a simple sponge to form a "pancake." Give your child a small frying pan and a spatula. Show him how to flip the pancake.

### Macaroni String

String a necklace out of dried pasta with big holes. Tube-shaped pasta, such as rigatoni, works really well. Your child can paint the pasta before or after stringing it. Make sure she has a string with a stiff tip, such as a shoelace. You can also tape the ends of a piece of yarn so that it is easy to string.

### Homemade Orange Juice

Make orange juice or lemonade with your toddler. Have him help squeeze the fruit using a handheld juicer. Show him how to twist the fruit back and forth to get the juice out. To make lemonade, you will need to add some sugar and water. Let him help you stir it all up. Cheers!

### Draw What I Draw

Have your child copy a line that you draw, up and down and side to side. You take a turn. Then your child takes a turn. Try zigzag patterns and spirals. Use a crayon and paper, a stick in the sand, markers on newspaper, or your fingers on a steamy bathroom mirror.

### Bath-Time Fun

At bath time, let your toddler play with things to squeeze, such as a sponge, a washcloth, or a squeeze toy. Squeezing really helps strengthen the muscles in her hands and fingers. Plus it makes bath time more fun!

### My Favorite Things

Your child can make a book about all of his favorite things. Clip or staple a few pieces of paper together for him. He can choose his favorite color. Let him show you what pictures to cut from magazines. He may even try cutting all by himself. Glue pictures on the pages. Your child can use markers or crayons to decorate pages. Stickers can be fun, too. You can write down what he says about each page. Let him "write" his own name. It may only be a mark, but that's a start!

### Sorting Objects

Find an egg carton or muffin pan. Put some common objects such as nuts, shells, or cotton balls into a plastic bowl. Let your toddler use a little spoon or tongs to pick up the objects and put them in different sections of the egg carton. Give her a little hug when she has success!

## Notes:



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# Problem Solving

## Activities to Help Your Toddler Grow and Learn



Doing things all by herself is very important for your toddler. Be patient and enjoy this time of growing independence, even though it may sometimes be frustrating. Give your child plenty of time and chances to figure out and do things by herself. Although make-believe is an important part of your toddler's growth, real and make-believe can be confusing. Help your child learn the difference especially if she sees something on television or in a movie.

### Paper Bag Matching Game

Gather two of several household objects. Use two paper bags with the same things in each bag. Pull one item out and ask your child to reach in and find one in his bag. Remind your child, "No peeking, just feeling!"

### Helping Around the House

Ask your toddler to help with the laundry. Sort by color or put similar things in one place. Let your child help you put all of the socks in one pile and all of the shirts in another. She can line up shoes and boots in the right place, and you can help her make sure they are in pairs.

### Snack-Time Roundup

Give your child a snack with many pieces, such as cut-up fruit, small crackers, or cereal loops. Make a line of four things and count them as you put them in front of him. Give him four pieces and see if he can make a line, too. You can help your toddler count the food pieces and then eat them up.

### Building with Boxes

Gather up several small- and medium-size boxes to use as building blocks. You can use shoe boxes, cereal boxes, clean milk cartons, and so forth. Encourage your child to build with the boxes. Make comments or ask questions: "You are making that so tall. Is that a house? Is it a wall?" Add toy cars or animals for more fun.

### Where Is It?

Using any object in your house, play a hiding game with your toddler. For example, hide a teddy bear under a pillow. Give your toddler clues to find the bear: "Where's bear? Can you find her? She's under something green" or "She is behind something soft." Give your toddler help as needed. Then let him hide things and give you some clues.

### Bring Me Something

Make a game of asking your child to bring you certain types of objects. Teach her about texture by asking her to bring soft or hard things. Help your child learn colors by asking for items of a certain shade. Talk about what she brings you: "Is your toy train hard or soft?"

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.

# Personal-Social

## Activities to Help Your Toddler Grow and Learn



Your toddler is still learning to do things for himself and wants very much to please adults. He enjoys feeding and dressing himself without your help. Toddlers love to imitate, so you can let him help around the house with simple tasks, such as wiping spills. Your extra support and patience will make life easier for both of you, especially if there's a new baby at home.

### Dapper Dresser

Taking off clothing is easy! Now have your toddler put on her own clothes. Start with loose shorts. Have her sit on the floor, put both legs in the shorts, stand up, and pull up the shorts. Tell your child, "Wow! You put those on all by yourself!" Let her look at herself in a mirror. Practice putting on a T-shirt, with her head first ("Boo!"), then one arm, and then the other arm. Say, "What an excellent dresser you are!"

### Playmates

Invite your child's friend over to play for a short time, or take your child to a relative's or friend's house where there is someone his age. Make sure there are enough toys to share easily. Later, let him tell you all about his play date.

### First Feelings

Help your child name feelings when they happen. You can help her understand feeling *worried* by telling her, "You look worried. Can you tell me about it?" If you know your child is frustrated, use the words: "I know you are really *frustrated*, but you can have a turn in a minute." When your child learns that feelings have names, she will be able to handle them more easily.

### Holding a Baby

Let your child hold a baby sibling or cousin. Help your child as he holds the baby so that he can sit steadily and use his arms to support the baby. Talk about how babies must be handled gently. Tell him what a good friend he is to the baby and how baby likes him.

### All by Myself

During a meal, let your little one feed herself using a fork, spoon, or other utensil. Mashed potatoes will be a little easier than peas, but soon she will master peas, too! Show her how to twist noodles with a fork. Have an extra napkin and sponge on hand!

### Big Little Parent

When your toddler plays with a doll or stuffed animal, give him a small plastic dish, a spoon, and a cup. He may also need a baby blanket and maybe a hairbrush and toothbrush. Now he can really take care of that baby bear!

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# Communication

## Activities to Help Your Child Grow and Learn



Your child can talk about many things and can follow simple directions. She will make mistakes with her grammar, such as saying “foots” instead of *feet*. Your child can tell you what’s happening. She is using longer sentences now. Talk about what happened during the day. Read to your child every day. She might even pretend to read favorite books by herself, using the words you have read to her.

### Reading Magazines

Talk about the pictures in magazines. Find pictures that your child will recognize, such as toothpaste, soap, diapers, pets, or cars. Point to the picture and ask, “What is this? Do we have this at home? What do we do with this?”

### Silly Me

Your child will have fun when you act silly. Pretend you don’t know what things really are. Point to the toothpaste and ask your child, “Is that the soap?” Let him tell you what it really is. Act surprised. Your child will enjoy “teaching” you the right name of things.

### Bandage Game

Make pretend bandages using tape or stickers. Ask your child, “Where is your cut?” See how many body parts your child can name. Give her some help for the tricky ones, “Oh, you hurt your wrist.” Put a bandage on each part. You can wash the bandage off during bath time. This game can also be played with a doll or stuffed animal.

### Let’s Put Things Away

Have your child help you put away things like food or folded laundry. Use words such as *up*, *down*, *over*, or *through*: “Please put the can *on* the shelf” or “Please put your socks *in* the drawer.” Thanks for the help! You can give silly directions, too: “Put the lemons *under* the chair.”

### What’s Going On?

Ask your child to tell you what is happening in a picture in a book or magazine: “What is the baby doing? What is the dog doing?” Then, listen carefully to your child’s interesting story.

### What’s Your Name?

Play this silly name game. When you greet your child, act as if you don’t know who he is. Say, “Hello, little boy. What’s your name?” When he tells you, greet him with happy surprise: “Oh, you’re my little boy! I’m so happy to see you!”

Notes:

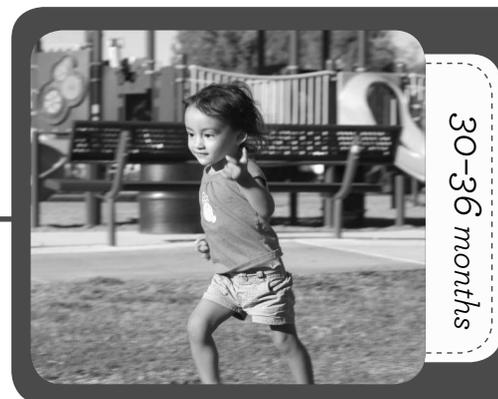


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# Gross Motor

## Activities to Help Your Child Grow and Learn

Your child is improving skills using his leg and arm muscles. He is working on making these muscles stronger, more flexible, and more coordinated. He can catch an 8-inch ball, jump about 2 feet, make sharp turns around a corner while running, and avoid obstacles in his path.



### Over the River

When playing outside, place a towel or piece of cloth about 2 feet wide on the grass. This is the "river." Have your child run and jump over the river without "getting wet." At first, you can fold the towel so that the river is not so wide. Then, you can make it bigger. Watch out for alligators!

### Balloon Kick

Let your child kick a balloon from one end of the room to the other. Lay a box on its side for a goal. See if she can kick the balloon into the box.

### Animal Walk

Show your child how to move like different animals. Can he waddle like a duck or walk on all fours like a dog? Encourage him to pretend to be these animals and make noises like them. Play along. Call the cat: "Here, kitty, kitty." Balance on one foot like a pink flamingo.

### Heel-to-Toe Walk

Show your child how to walk heel to toe along a line on the sidewalk or a short length of clothesline on the ground. She can stretch her arms to keep her balance. She can hold an umbrella and pretend she is walking a tightrope in a circus!

### Basketball

Place an empty laundry basket on the floor against a wall. Give your child a soft ball about 4 inches in size. Place a string or piece of tape on the floor for a throw line. Show your child how to throw overhand to get the ball in the basket. Start about 4 feet back from the basket. Move back as your child gets better.

### Chasing Bubbles

Go outside on a nice day to blow bubbles. Ask your child to clap his hands together and pop them. Blow some bubbles high so that your child needs to jump to pop them. Blow some far away so that your child will need to run to pop them. Clap big ones and then clap little ones. When you're done, go wash those soapy hands!

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# Fine Motor

## Activities to Help Your Child Grow and Learn



Your child is learning to hold pens, crayons, and markers with her thumb and two fingers just like adults do. She has learned to make scissors open and close and can make snips in paper when you hold it. She can use her two hands together with small toys, such as interlocking blocks or stringing beads. She can put together puzzles with five or more pieces.

### Yummy Puzzles

Cut off the front part of a cereal box. Now cut this into four or five puzzle pieces. Your child will have fun putting this simple puzzle together. He may need a little help at first.

### Little Writer

Show your child how to make lines and circles or even simple shapes. Circles and straight lines will be easiest for your child to copy. Your child may want to learn to write the first letter of her name. Keep it fun! It is okay if your child's marks don't look much like real letters. Encourage her attempts: "You're a good writer!"

### Tong Time

Give your child a pair of small kitchen tongs, children's chopsticks, or tweezers. See if he can move cotton balls or dry macaroni from one container into another. Then try something heavier such as walnuts, spools, or small stones.

### Junior Mechanic

Collect large bolts, matching nuts, and even washers. Your child will enjoy matching the bolt to the nut and twisting them together.

### Little Flicker

Make little balls of newspaper about the size of marbles and show your child how to "flick" a ball across a tabletop or space on the floor into an open box or at a target. Use thumb and index finger to "flick." See how far your child can flick the paper balls or hit the target. This game can bring lots of laughs!

### Bubbles!

Let your child use washable crayons or markers to draw bubbles on paper. Let him draw as many as he wants and color them in. Show him how to draw big bubbles and little bubbles, purple bubbles and green bubbles. Now that he has drawn so many bubbles, maybe it's time to blow some real bubbles!

Notes:



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# Problem Solving

## Activities to Help Your Child Grow and Learn



Your child can notice how things are the same and how they are different. He knows about colors, long and short, a little and a lot, and which one of your kitchen spoons is the biggest. With your help, he can put three things of different sizes in order from small to large. Pretend play is still very important and fun for both of you!

### What Is This?

After giving your child a bath, stand or seat your child in front of a mirror. With a towel, dry different parts of her body. While drying her hair, be silly and ask, "What is this stuff?" While drying her shoulder, ask, "What is this thing?" While drying ribs, ask, "What are these bony things?" Have fun being together while tickling, cuddling, and teaching the names of body parts.

### Making Trains

Line up four to five small cars or other objects in a row to make a "train." Make sure your child sees what you did. Now give your child some objects to line up and make a train. You can line up different things, such as blocks, spoons, or shells. Say, "Wow, look at your train. Where is it going?"

### Big and Little

Show your child two items of different sizes, such as shoes, cups, or spoons. Talk about the big one and the little one. Talk about the size of things in your house, at the park, or at the supermarket: "Wow. Look at that pumpkin. It's really big!" Add a medium-size item and try playing Big, Little, and One in the Middle.

### Tell Me Your Story

Give your child plain paper and a few washable crayons or markers for drawing. Ask her to tell you about what she drew. Write the story on your child's paper. Print her name. Tell her, "This is your story, and this is your name." Read the story to someone important.

### Reading the Neighborhood

Show your child signs in your neighborhood, such as a stop sign. Tell him what it means. Point out the railroad sign and tell him it's where the trains go. In a restaurant, show your child the different pictures on rest room doors, one for girls and one for boys. Look at the painted crosswalk on the street. Next time you go out, ask him to read signs with you.

### Silly Sounds

Play a silly copy game with your child in the car or on the bus. For example, tell her a silly phrase like, "Bee, zim, zop." See if your child can copy you. Let your child make up a silly phrase and copy her. Now make up a silly song to sing!

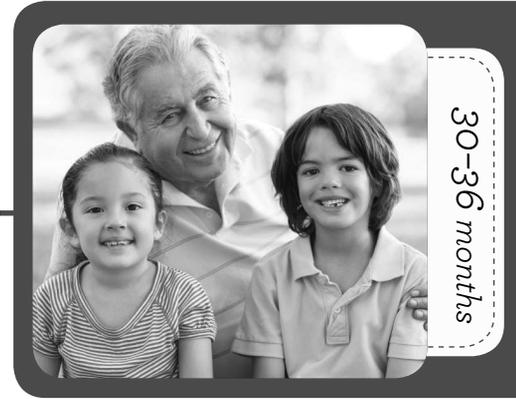
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# Personal-Social

## Activities to Help Your Child Grow and Learn



Your child is able to take care of some of her personal needs, but she still needs your hugs and support. With a little help, she can usually separate from you in familiar settings. She can obey simple rules. She enjoys simple games with other children and is proud of her accomplishments. She will respond with pride when you notice positive behavior, such as being helpful, following a rule, or doing something for herself.

### Cooking Helper

Let your child help with cooking by measuring, pouring, stirring, washing, and tearing greens. With your help and a plastic knife, he can even cut soft foods, such as bananas. These are real activities that help the family. Tell him, "Thank you for helping with our meal!" Ask him to tell the family what is in the salad. Yum!

### Super Picker-Upper

Show your child how to put trash in the trash can. If your child drops paper, ask her to pick it up and put it into the trash can. She may enjoy helping you put trash outside for the garbage truck to pick up. Show your child how important it is to keep the world clean. Talk about what would happen if people didn't pick up trash.

### Bathing Beauty

Your child will enjoy trying to wash himself in the bathtub. Show him how to use a washcloth and soap. Be sure to let your child know that he is doing a good job. Then, give your child a towel to dry himself: "Whose clean little boy is this?" Have fun!

### Naming Feelings

Help your child understand feelings by noticing them and naming them. Children need to learn that other people have feelings, too: "When you take the toy, it makes your sister sad." Don't be afraid to use big words: "I can tell you're *excited* because it's your birthday!"

### Super Driver

Make an obstacle course in your home or outside. Let your little driver push a cart or pull a wagon, steering around boxes, rocks, or over a hose. There's a big hug at the finish line!

### Look at You!

Start a dress-up bin for your child. Go through your closet and gather old clothes. Gather men's items as well. Old purses, wallets, hats, ties, shoes, belts, and necklaces are fun. Let your child dress up and look in the mirror. Be prepared to play for a while. Have your camera ready!

Notes:



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