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SEPTEMBER TODDLERS

Links to Home: Shared Activities for Parents & Children

As a toddler, your child will begin to listen more intently and respond to familiar words by shouting, gesturing or reaching for objects. She will start to babble more, and these babbling sounds will evolve into a mix of real and made-up words and phrases.

Here is an activity to promote your child's language development by helping her identify family members:

- Gather some family photos or an album.
- Ask questions that can be answered by pointing or gesturing. "Where is Mommy?" or "Where are you?"
- Ask short open-ended questions about a photo. "What is Mommy doing?" or "What do you see?" Guide responses if needed.
- Ask yes/no or single-response questions about a photo. "Do you see Mommy?" or "Who is this?"





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OCTOBER TODDLERS

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A major development for toddlers is increased self-awareness and awareness of others. The Rouge Test is a simple, at-home way to indicate your toddler's level of self-awareness.

How to do the Rouge Test with your child:

- Place a dot of red lipstick or blush on your child's nose and place her in front of a mirror.
- Your child may look at her reflection and notice the red spot in the mirror.
- She may attempt to touch her nose and/or wipe the mark off, demonstrating self-awareness. Or, she may instead attempt to wipe the red mark off the "baby in the mirror," indicating that her sense of self is still developing.





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NOVEMBER TODDLERS

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You may have noticed that your toddler is becoming much more physically active. During the second year of life, movement is essential for developing strong muscles needed to master gross motor skills.

Here are some activities to promote your child's gross motor skills:

- Visit a playground with padded fixtures. Your child will explore the steps, slides and logs while she develops balance and climbing skills.
- Cover empty cereal or oatmeal boxes with brightly colored cloth or paper. Let your child explore stacking or rolling them across the floor. Try filling some of the boxes with macaroni or rice to change the sound and weight. Make sure the boxes are tightly sealed so they cannot be opened.
- Put a small wagon or toy shopping cart and a pile of blocks on the floor. Show your child how to fill the cart with blocks. She will enjoy pulling or pushing the blocks around the room.





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DECEMBER TODDLERS

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As toddlers continue to grow their vocabulary, it is important to read to them. Reading with your toddler builds stronger relationships, aids in language and listening skills, and enhances concentration and discipline.

Here is an activity to practice these skills with your child:

- Choose a short book with colorful pictures that will catch your toddler's attention.
- Name animals and objects in the book as your child is looking or pointing.
- Imitate the sounds your toddler makes while looking at a picture, such as "Woof. The dog says woof."
- Help your toddler turn pages, letting her move through the book at her own pace. Some children will want to flip through the book quickly and others will choose to point and stare at each page slowly.





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JANUARY TODDLERS

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Young toddlers may cry to express their needs, but as your child learns to express himself with language, he will rely less on crying. You can work with your toddler to help build the vocabulary he needs to communicate his wants and desires in words.

Here are some activities to promote your child's language development:

- Use surprise words like "oh" or "oops" with your child. Make sure he sees why you say these words. For example, if you drop a toy or feeding utensil, use a surprise word as you pick it up. "Oops, the toy dropped! I'll have to pick it up." See if your child will imitate your action and use the new words.
- When your child begins to speak, repeat his words, adding a word or two. For example, point to a toy car and ask your child what it is. When he responds "car" say, "Yes, that is a red car," or "Great! You found the bright red car."
- Gather a group of toy animals or pictures and sing "Old MacDonald." Hold up each animal as you say its name and sound. Encourage your child to sing along with you.





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FEBRUARY TODDLERS

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Activities using music and songs add fun and happiness to your child's day. Moving to music helps your child learn that she can use her muscles in different and fun ways. Songs help her practice words that she is just learning to say.

Here are some music activities to help promote your child's growing vocabulary and gross motor skills:

- Play a happy song for your child. Move to the music and see if she will copy your movements. Try waving your arms, nodding your head, swaying back and forth, stomping your feet and clapping your hands.
- Sing songs to your toddler about her name or the toy that she is holding. Use the melodies from favorite songs like "Mary Had a Little Lamb" or "Here We Go Round the Mulberry Bush," substituting words that relate to her and what she is doing.
- Bring out a box of dress-up clothes for your child to wear. Put on music and let her dance and sing while putting on different costumes. Add props such as toy instruments, jewelry, balls or hoops. This is a fun way to encourage movement and creativity.





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MARCH TODDLERS

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Art projects are creative and fun ways to develop your child's fine motor skills. Small-muscle activities, such as painting, help your child learn to control her hand and finger movements, while developing creativity and independence.

Here are some activities to promote your child's self-expression and fine motor skills:

- Give your child a cup of water and a variety of paintbrushes. Encourage her to paint with water on the sidewalk or other outdoor surface. Show her how to dip her hand in the water and make fingerprints.
- Cover a table with a large sheet of paper and give your child a box of crayons or markers. Show your child how to use the materials to make dots, lines and swirls on the paper. Let her take over and have fun. Talk about the colors and shapes while she is drawing.
- Provide your child with non-toxic finger paints, a large piece of paper and a smock. Show your child how to finger-paint and then let her create a masterpiece. Talk about how the paint feels and what colors and shapes are on the paper. Display the artwork for future conversations.





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APRIL TODDLERS

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As your toddler's vocabulary continues to develop, she will begin to describe the size of objects in more detail using words such as big and small.

Here are some activities to promote this skill with your child:

- Take a walk with your child to look at leaves. Talk about their size, shape and where you found them.
- As you are driving in the car, point to objects out the window, such as a tree, dog or school bus. Ask your child to describe the size of each item.
- Set up a bird feeder outside a window that your child can easily see. Let your child help fill it with birdseed. As the birds come to eat, talk about them. What color are they? Are they big or small? What are they doing?





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MAY TODDLERS

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Muscles only develop and grow strong when toddlers use them. Children have fun jumping, kicking and dancing as they develop their coordination and gross motor skills.

Here are some activities to promote these skills with your child:

- Show your child how you jump or dance. Encourage him to imitate you. Try reversing the game, so that you imitate your child.
- Visit a nearby park with your child. Tie a long string onto a sturdy toy and pull the toy across the grass for your child to chase. Be sure to let him catch the toy every few minutes to avoid frustration. Laugh, clap, have fun and talk about what you are doing.
- Take your child to an open area and let him practice kicking a ball. Turn it into a game by kicking the ball back to your child.





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JUNE TODDLERS

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Problem-solving is an essential life skill that is developed at a young age. Stimulating your child's curiosity will motivate her to find solutions to everyday puzzles.

Here are some problem-solving activities that you can do with your child:

- Hide a sound-making toy, such as a rattle, music box or bell, behind your back. Let your child listen to the sound of the toy for a few seconds, without seeing it. See if she will go around you to find the toy. Give the toy to your child to play with before hiding it again.
- As your child watches, drop a piece of cereal into a small plastic bottle. Dump the cereal back out into your hand. Put the cereal back in the bottle again and hand it to your child. Let her try to get the cereal out. If she becomes frustrated, help her turn her wrist to dump out the cereal.
- Give your child a set of three to five nesting blocks. Show her how to stack them on top of each other and how to fit them inside each other. Let your child play and explore. Talk about the blocks as she stacks them or tries to nest them.





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JULY TODDLERS

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A child's knowledge of numbers begins developing at a young age. Children listen carefully as they hear adults count and talk about the size and weight of items. Participating in number activities with your child will help develop his counting skills.

Here are some counting activities that you can do with your child:

- When you are dressing your child, count clothes, fingers and toes.
- Tell the story of Goldilocks and the Three Bears. As you tell the story, count each of the bears, bowls, chairs and beds mentioned. If you have the book, point to each item as you count.
- At snack time, give your child a small cup with about ten raisins or pieces of cereal. Count as your child eats each piece.





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AUGUST TODDLERS

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Your toddler may have begun to imitate the actions of those around him. For example, he may pick up a block and pretend to talk on the telephone. This type of imaginative play can help develop social skills, creativity and increased vocabulary.

Here are some imaginative play activities you can do with your child:

- Create a fun frog pond by placing pretend lily pads around a room. Cushions work well for this activity. Ask your child to act like a frog by leaping from one cushion to another.
- Give your child toy food and mixing bowls. Ask him to make you something yummy for dinner.
- Use a play telephone or hold your hand up to your ear and pretend to call your child. Start by “ringing” the phone. Have your child answer. Ask him about his toys, today’s weather or what your pet is doing. Say goodbye and hang up. Then say, “Who else can we call?” Your child may carry on an imaginary conversation with a family member or teddy bear.

