

Tune in to Kids



Tune in to Kids



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Tune in to Kids was originally developed by the University of Nevada Cooperative Extension. We would like to thank Mr. Dan Weigel especially, who gave us permission to translate this wonderful material.

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This document is also available in French.

Acknowledgments

The First Nations of Quebec and Labrador Health and Social Services Commission is pleased to present you with the **Tune in to Kids** materials that were designed to help parents and educators provide developmentally enriching stimulation to the children aged 0-6.

This project is a complimentary tool to be used with the “**My life throughout the seasons**” Communication Agenda. It aims to support and increase parenting skills by providing simple and easy activity sheets for families in our communities.

The FNQLHSSC wishes to thank everyone that has worked directly or indirectly on this project.

Finally, we would like to thank Health Canada’s First Nations Health and Inuit Branch for their financial support. Without their help, we could not have made these wonderful materials available to our families and educators.

Prayer to a newborn

May your eyes see the beauty of Mother Earth.

*May your ears hear the music of life
and the sounds of laughter.*

*May your mouth always speak the truth,
presented with a kind heart.*

May your heart always be full of joy.

*May your hands one day grasp the hands
of your own grandchildren.*

May your arms always welcome friends and family.

May your feet always walk a straight path.

*And if your feet should ever stray from this path,
may the Creator always lead you home.*

ByCarolyn Gould
American Metis



Information for early childhood teachers

Many parents want to help their children learn but don't always know how. As an early childhood teacher, you are oftentimes the first one, and sometimes the only one, that parents look to for ideas and advice.

Tune in to Kids extends the quality learning environment of your program into the homes of the families you serve. The materials will help families provide fun and healthy learning environments for their children. The fun, easy-to-do activities are just right for busy parents, taking only five minutes a week. Of course, you can use the ideas in your program too.

The activities are an excellent way to expand on the learning you already provide and will be especially helpful to the children and families you serve. Because parents will find the information helpful, an important link is established between you and the parents of the children in your care.

What is Tune in to Kids

Tune in to Kids is information that helps parents and early childhood teachers provide fun and healthy learning activities for the children.

Tune in to Kids is built around 90 easy learn at home activity sheets, packed with nearly 180 age-paced learning activities. Prepared especially for parents with young children, the simple activities cover:

- Language
- Creative play
- Language play
- Discovery and thinking games
- Physical development
- Music
- Art
- And self-discovery



The activity sheets are divided into three age groupings:

- In Tune with Babies for children ages 0-1
- In Tune with Toddlers for children ages 1-3
- In Tune with Kids for children ages 3-6

How to use the materials

The activity sheets can be distributed in any manner suitable to your needs, such as:

- Give an activity sheet to parents when they pick up their children.
- Send an activity sheet home with children.
- Send with your newsletter.
- Place them in racks or on bulletin boards for parents to pick up.
- Use them at parent education meetings.
- Or, adapt them culturally for your class.

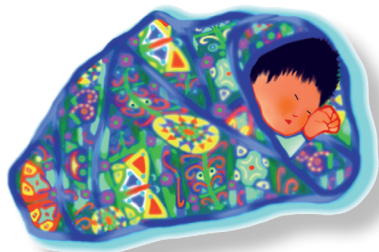
What happens when you use the materials

When parents or educators offer exciting and nurturing settings for children, they:

- Learn faster
- Enjoy learning
- Feel better about themselves
- Feel closer to their parents/educators
- And do better in school

We hope that you will find them useful.





Tune in to Babies

0-1 Month

Searching for Sounds (Listening)

Shake a rattle first on one side of the baby's head, then on the other. Begin by shaking it slowly – then a little faster. After a while, your baby will realize that the sound he hears comes from outside of himself. He will search with his eyes and turn his head to find the thing that is making the sound. Try it with a small bell. Better yet, use your own voice.

Look at Me (Seeing)

Let baby follow your face. While your baby is on his back, move your face slowly from side to side. As you move from left to right, baby will follow you with his eyes and turn his head.

At first your baby will look at you just for a second, but after a while he will follow you with his eyes for a longer time. Try other objects, such as a flashlight covered with red or yellow cellophane, a brightly colored block, or a ball. Black and white objects often catch an infant's attention. Name the object or person as it appears.

Rock-a-boo (Listening)

When your newborn is awake and has been fed and changed, move your face in and out of his range of vision. This is easily done while you are rocking him or sitting in a soft chair. Say, "Hi there, sweetheart!" as you rock into his line of vision. This game is more "peek" than "boo" with your newborn. He has a visual memory of about two-and-a-half seconds, and the best distance between your faces is eight to twelve inches.

More on next page...



0-1 Month (con't)

Hold on Tight (Feeling)

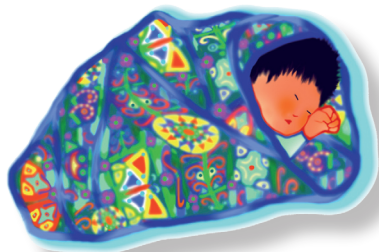
Your newborn has a strong grip and likes to hold on to things for short periods. Place your own finger in the palm of your baby's hand. Your baby will tighten his fingers around it. There's nothing quite as special as the feel of your baby. Talk, look, and play with him as part of your daily routines, such as diapering, feeding, and bathing.

Kicking Practice (Exercise)

Place your baby on a firm mat (a crib mattress or playpen mat is fine) without any corners. Give your baby a few minutes to kick his feet and move his arms. Gently place your hands against his feet and let him push against your hands. Gently push his feet toward his stomach and let him push back.

Swaddling (Quiet)

Your newborn has been sleeping in very tight quarters for the past few months. He may enjoy being swaddled in a baby blanket to help him quiet. A soft lullaby is a nice added touch.



Tune in to Babies

1-2 Months

Making Faces (Seeing)

Is there another object in the world with as much expression as a human face? Your baby is fascinated by the faces you make at him. Slowly stick out your tongue – He will try to imitate you. Make other faces and see if he can copy them. Some are easier than others.

Bright Eyes (Seeing)

Your baby loves to look at faces, patterns and moving objects. On the sides of a paper sack, paste pictures of faces cut from a magazine, bright shelving paper, or wrapping paper with different colors and patterns. Let baby look at the pictures while slowly turning the sack. You can also tie pictures to the side of the crib so he can look at other times. Make sure the strings stay tied and are not too long (6 inches). We don't want him to get tangled in it. Change the pictures often. He usually likes to see something new rather than something he has seen before, unless it's YOU, of course.

Talking for Him to See (Listening)

Hold your baby close so he can see your face and lips. Talk happily to him. Then pause and listen for him to make baby sounds. If he does, repeat his sounds. Let your face and voice show him you like it when he makes a sound... because these little sounds are the bits and pieces from which he will later make words.

More on next page...



1-2 Months (con't)

Baby Painting (Feeling)

While he is undressed, stroke your baby's chest, back, arms, and legs gently with a paint brush, a feather, an inexpensive feather duster, or a cotton ball. He will enjoy the sensation.

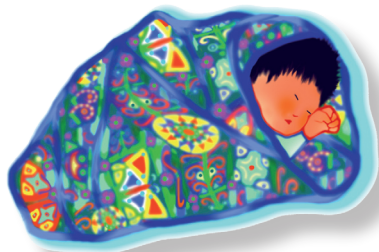
Tickle his foot as you say, "I'm tickling your foot." Tickle his arm as you say, "I'm tickling your arm." Some babies prefer a light touch while others prefer a little more firm touch.

Things are Looking Up (Exercise)

Put baby on his tummy on a soft blanket on the floor. Get down on the floor with him and place a bright toy in front of him as you call his name. This helps him to lift his head and exercise his neck, back and arm muscles.

Chest Rest (Quiet)

Let baby rest on your chest. Your rhythmic breathing and voice vibrations are soothing and comforting for him. You'll both enjoy the closeness. Talk to him softly while doing this.



Tune in to Babies

2-3 Months

Squeak Goes the Toy (Exercise)

Put a squeak toy in your baby's hand. See how he holds it and moves it about. The accidental squeak will help him become aware of what his hand is doing. Make sure the toy is at least 1 ½ inches wide so your baby can't choke on it!

Near and Far (Seeing)

When your baby is awake and alert, take a favorite doll or stuffed toy and move it close to him and then far away – a distance ranging from four or five inches to two or three feet away. As the object gets closer, he may try to reach for it. He is developing coordination. Do this slowly so he has time to reach it.

Famous Baby (Listening)

Your baby can have a conversation with himself. Tape your baby's sounds and play them back to him. Watch how he reacts. Tape record your voice and play it back as well. See how he responds when your voice comes from the tape instead of your mouth. The tape also provides a priceless record of your baby's first sounds and words.

More on next page...



2-3 Months (con't)

Just for the Feel of it (Feeling)

Rub your baby's arms and legs with different textures—leather, fur, flannel, wool, satin, velvet, or terry cloth. Or make yourself a pair of feelie gloves. Use an odd glove and stitch a different fabric around each finger. Let him grab each of the fingers. Or make a feelie stick by gluing (non-toxic) some textured fabric on an old-fashioned wooden clothespin or wooden dowel about the same size. Feelie sticks are ideal for developing grasping skills.

Up and Down (Exercise)

Sing songs to your baby that have up and down actions in them. As you move him up, down and around, he will see his world from different places. Start gently and slowly to make sure he is not scared. Moving him up and down too hard may cause injury. Here is a simple song.

Here we go up, up, up (*lift baby up*).

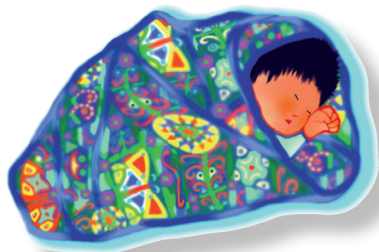
Here we go down, down, down (*put baby down*).

Here we go front and back (*turn baby around*).

Here we go round and round (*hold baby and spin around*).

Rustling Radio (Quiet)

Play a quiet radio or wind up music box when you place baby in his crib. Quiet music helps to soothe your baby.



Tune in to Babies

3-4 Months

The Sound Sleuth (Listening)

With baby on his stomach, ring a bell in front of him that makes a pleasant tinkling sound while he is watching. Sound the bell again on the side just out of his line of sight. See if he will search for the bell with his eyes. He may try to turn his head to the sound. Try this game again with a rattle, a squeak toy, or better yet, your own voice.

Floating Bubbles (Seeing)

Your baby will enjoy watching bubbles floating through the air. Blow bubbles and point to each one. Say, "See the pretty bubble." He will squeal with delight as he watches the bubbles float.

Buzzing Bees (Listening)

To encourage more babbling, try singing this simple tune with your baby. Keep eye contact as you sing.

Ba Ba Ba Bumble Bee
First you say Ba to me
Then I say Ba to you
Ba Ba Ba Bumble Bee

Give him a chance to respond with his own "b" sound.

More on next page...



3-4 Months (con't)

Head Shoulders Knees and Toes (Listening)

Help develop your baby's growing self-concept. Quiet play or bath times work great. Name and touch his body parts as you touch or wash them. Try this fun song (to the tune of "London Bridge is Falling Down").

Head and shoulders, knees and toes, knees and toes, knees and toes,
Head and shoulders, knees and toes, eyes and ears, and mouth and nose!

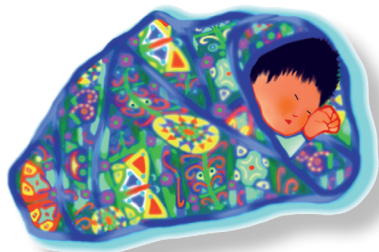
Of course he won't remember all the parts yet, but he will love it when you touch him.

Baby Bird (Exercise)

As you lie on a floor or bed, gently lift your baby up and down. Hold your hands under his armpits or around his chest or midriff. Fly him forward, backward, and side to side. Gently dip his head, then his feet, moving him in all directions, slowly and gently, so that he is in a comfortable flight pattern. You can play this game as soon as he can hold his head up. Be careful not to shake him too roughly.

The Carriage Walk (Quiet)

Weather permitting, take your baby for a stroller or carriage ride. The steady movement will help him fall asleep.



Tune in to Babies

4-5 Months

Within My Reach (Exercise)

If your baby has learned to move by squirming or crawling, place a toy just out of his reach. He will discover that he has to both wiggle and reach to get the toy. Be careful not to frustrate him. If he doesn't reach the toy within a few seconds, put it within his reach or help him move to get it.

Decisions, Decisions (Thinking)

Give your baby one squeak toy. Then offer another toy. See if he reaches with his empty hand or drops the first toy. Watch to see if he will look at the hand that is doing the squeaking. When he gets a little older he will learn to squeak both toys at the same time.

Peek-a-boo (Language)

Play peek-a-boo games. Try placing your hands over your eyes, then over his eyes. Place a blanket over your head and come out with "boo." Lightly cover a part of his face with a baby blanket. Talk to him so he hears your voice as his eyes are covered. Pull the blanket away saying, "peek-a-boo." He will enjoy all the different games. Be careful not to leave the blanket over his face too long.

More on next page...



4-5 Months (con't)

Smelly Games (Discovery)

Even newborns have fully developed senses of smell. Let him try a variety of smells- perfume or aftershave lotion, vanilla, cinnamon, nutmeg, mint, onion. Placing a small amount on a cotton ball and letting him smell it works great.

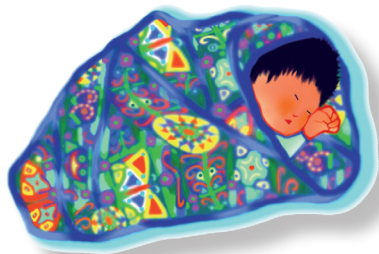
Roly Poly Practice (Exercise)

To help your baby experience the feeling of rolling over, lay him along one side of a blanket or quilt. Gently raise the quilt to help him roll over. Reward the effort with hugs and smiles.

Watch those arms and legs so they don't get stuck under him.

Tick Tock Clock (Quiet)

Let a clock tick near baby. The rhythmic ticking gives him an awareness of rhythm and may help to soothe him.



Tune in to Babies

5-6 Months

Pull-up Sit-ups (Exercise)

Let's practice sitting up. Place baby on his back on a soft blanket on the floor. Place your fingers in his grasp. Enclose his fingers with your hand and pull him to a sitting position. You also can lay him on your lap with his head at your knees. Help him sit up by pulling your fingers and bracing his feet against your stomach. Watch to make sure his head doesn't flop back too much.

Look Ma, Two Hands (Thinking)

Hand your baby a toy that he can grab in one hand. Then show him how to move the toy to the other hand. Soon he will learn to move the toy from one hand to the other.

Touch Me, Touch You (Language)

This game helps your baby realize that he is like you. Put your baby on a bed or a soft carpet, and kneel above him. Lower your face to his and say "face" while you touch his face. Then put his hands on your face. Add features – "nose," "mouth," "eyes," and so on. Add "hair" if he has some.

More on next page...



5-6 Months (con't)

See Your Reflection (Discovery)

Place a mirror where baby can easily see himself. Touch his nose and say, "nose." Help him touch his nose. Add other features. Make faces for him to see. He may try to touch the baby in the mirror. Show him what happens. Soon he'll begin to know himself – and it's great for developing his self-confidence.

Galloping (Exercise)

Galloping around the room is a wonderful way to burn off energy and experience rhythm. "Pop! Goes the Weasel" is an ideal galloping song. Lift him up quickly when you sing "Pop!"

Baby will love the fun.

Round and round the cobbler's bench, the monkey chased the weasel
The monkey thought 'twas all in fun, Pop! goes the weasel.
A penny for a spool of thread, a penny for a needle
That's the way the money goes, Pop! goes the weasel.

Rub-a-Baby (Quiet)

When you feel that your baby is getting tired, but can't quite settle down, hold him against your shoulder, and rub or pat him gently and rhythmically. He will relax along with you. Some babies like to have their bodies rubbed softly. Try singing lullabies at the same time.



Tune in to Babies

6-7 Months

Choices Choices (Thinking)

Hand your baby a third toy when he has a toy in each hand. At first, he will try to grab the third toy with his hands full. But with lots of practice, he will learn how to put one toy down before he grabs for a new one.

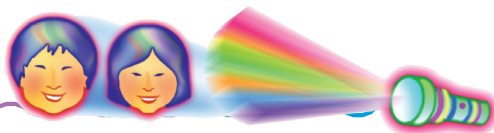
Hide and Seek Toy (Thinking)

Show baby a special toy. Partially hide it under a blanket. He will learn to pull at the part of the toy he sees. Clap with enthusiasm. Place a small toy in the palm of your hand. Let him see it – just for a moment – and then close your hand. Encourage him to find it. Soon he will learn that objects do not disappear forever when they are out of sight.

Water Balloons (Discovery)

Fill up a small balloon with $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of water. Tie a knot in the balloon. Show your baby how it changes shape as you squeeze and wiggle it. Now for the fun – let him experiment. He'll soon discover it will bounce when you drop it and wiggle when you roll it. Be with him at all times. A broken balloon can be very dangerous if your baby puts it in his mouth.

More on next page...



6-7 Months (con't)

Knee Rides (Language)

Knee rides are a good way for your baby to get a good bounce. Have him sitting on your lap, facing you. Hold him under his arms and move forward until you are sitting on the edge of the chair. Lift your heels so your baby gets a good bounce while you recite some bouncing rhymes like:

Humpty Dumpty

*Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall,
Humpty Dumpty had a great fa-a-a-ll. All the king's horses and all the
king's men
Couldn't put Humpty together again.*

Jack 'n Jill

*Jack 'n Jill went UP the hill
To fetch a pail of water
Jack fell DOWN
And broke his crown
And Jill came tumbling after.*

Or use songs in your own language that you can bounce your child to. Be sure to bounce gently. His muscles still need to get stronger. Bouncing him too hard can cause injuries. (Quickly lower knees to floor on "fall", then bounce him again.)

Let's Have a Ball (Exercise)

Give baby several small rubber balls to play with and pick up (but large enough that he can't swallow them.) Now that he is developing the ability to use his thumb independently, he needs opportunities to practice. If baby can sit by himself, roll a ball back and forth. A beach ball makes for great fun.

Whispering (Quiet)

Whispering to baby can sometimes help quiet him. As you find new ways to communicate with your baby, feelings of closeness are fostered.



Tune in to Babies

7-8 Months

Baby-Peek, Baby-Boo (Thinking)

Take your baby's hands and place them in front of his eyes saying, "Where's baby?" As you take his hands away, say, "Peek-a-boo – there's baby". Soon he will learn to cover his own eyes. Join the excitement he shows when you say peek-a-boo.

Pot and Lid Fun or Homemade Drum (Thinking)

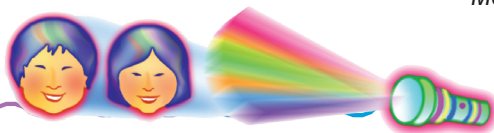
A game for those times you don't mind a little noise. Give your baby his own old pot and lid or make a homemade drum with an empty ice cream container.

Show him how to bang them together to make noise. Turn the pot or ice cream container over to make a drum and give him the lid or wooden spoons for drumsticks. You can soften the sound by padding the ends of the wooden spoons with electrical tape or bandages.

Baby Boo Magic (Language)

If you haven't started yet, now is a good age to begin reading with your baby. Choose baby books with simple, colorful pictures and sturdy pages (he will chew on the pages). Sit him comfortably on your lap. As you turn the pages, name the picture and talk about it. "Look at the doggie – see the doggie. Ooh – touch the doggie." Stop reading before he gets squirmy. He's not ready for you to read long stories. Just naming pictures and actions is best at this age.

More on next page...



7-8 Months (con't)

Ooshy Squishy (Discovery)

If your baby is drinking juices, take a bit of his fruit juice and add some unflavored gelatin and let it set to make jello. Put some of his jello in a plastic bag and close the top. Let him squeeze it, and see what happens when it is pushed, poked, prodded and banged. Make sure the plastic doesn't get into his mouth.

Tug of War (Exercise)

Have a tug of war with baby. Give him one end of a scarf; pull gently on the other end. Let him "win" sometimes. He will enjoy this playful lesson in turn taking.

Swaying (Quiet)

Babies love to sway back and forth while being held tightly in Mommy or Daddy's arms. Sing to baby while you're swaying.



Tune in to Babies

8-9 Months

Feed the Bowl (Thinking)

Give your baby several fist-sized balls and a plastic bowl. Show him how to drop the balls into the bowl. Turn your hand over, spread your fingers wide, and drop the ball. Let him try. After a while he will learn how to reach in and get the balls. (Do not leave the balls where he can get them when you're not there, he could choke on them. This activity needs to be supervised.)

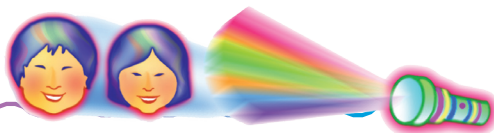
Follow the Leader (Thinking)

This is an age when your baby loves to imitate. Play follow the leader with him, using simple gestures, facial expressions, or hand play. Tap the table, open and close your fist, wave, blow a kiss, or lead an orchestra! Always talk about the things you are doing.

Talk to the Animals (Language)

Now is the time to introduce your baby to all kinds of animals and their sounds. Read simple baby books with colorful pictures of animals. As you read, say, "This is a wolf. The wolf says ahouuu. Can you say ahouuu? This is a cow. The cow says moo. Can you say moo? This is a cat. The cat says meow. Can you say meow?" You can sing songs such as "Old McDonald Had a Farm" and "Three Little Pigs" or sing songs in your native language that have animals in them.

More on next page...



8-9 Months (con't)

Mat Play (Discovery)

When your baby is in his highchair, put a toy on a cloth place mat just out of his reach. He will have to pull the mat in order to get the toy. You may have to show him how to play the game first. When he gets the toy say, "Good for you – you did it by yourself!"

Over-Under-Through (Exercise)

Play some crawling games if your baby is crawling securely. Take all the cushions from your couch and chairs, heap them in a pile on the floor and give him a chance to do some beginning mountain climbing. Encourage him to crawl through a tunnel of two cushions. Set up some cushion "stairs" so he can begin to learn to climb stairs properly. Finally, play wheelbarrow. Pick up his legs, a few inches from the ground, and encourage him to walk on his hands. This is tough so be patient.

Window Watching (Quiet)

Hold your baby in the window in the evening. Looking out at the darkness can have a calming effect.



Tune in to Babies

9-10 Months

Give him a Hand (Exercise)

Play clapping games with your baby. Play pat-a-cake or one of your native rhyme games. Ex:

Pat-a-cake, pat-a-cake Baker's man
Bake me a cake as fast as you can
Roll it, and knead it, and mark it with a "B"
And put it in the oven for Baby and me.

Clap his hands together if he needs help. Also, clap his hands together and then hide them under a blanket. He will love watching his hands go away and come back.

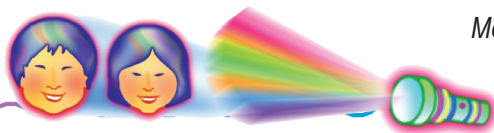
The Nesting Game (Thinking)

Your baby learns about size as he plays with different objects. A set of old measuring cups works great for showing how different sizes can fit together. Show him how a smaller one fits inside a larger one. Let him begin with two – then add more sizes!

Repeat After Me (Language)

Imitate him by repeating his sounds. Sounds most likely to occur at this stage are: la, ba, be, ah, da, ha, he, ma, ka, pa. He loves to communicate and will find a special joy in having you listen to what he has to "say." Change roles and say a simple word, such as "water." See if he will repeat the word, which may sound like "wawa." Say, "Great!" and hug him – don't worry that the sounds have to be a specific word. Eventually he'll say it properly.

More on next page...



9-10 Months (con't)

Feelie Box (Discovery)

Give baby a box of “feelie” objects. A good starting collection might include a piece of fabric, a playing card, a large rubber sink stopper, a block, a medium size rock, and a sponge. Include rough and smooth, soft and hard materials. As he empties and fills his feelie box, he learns different textures. (Only use objects that are larger than baby’s fist so he can’t choke on them. This activity needs your supervision at all times.)

Come Get Me (Exercise)

Get down on your baby’s level on the floor. Say to him “Come and get me,” and when he does, say “Oooh – you GOT me! Let’s do it again.” Partially hide behind a chair so he has to crawl to get you. When another person is there, send him to get that person. As he is watching, hide behind a chair and call to him. See if he can find you.

Sleep Waltz (Quiet)

Dance with your baby to quiet music before putting him to sleep. He has to spend much of his day exploring by himself on the floor. He needs some close cuddling before he falls asleep.



Tune in to Babies

10-11 Months

Where's the Duck (Thinking)

Hide a favorite toy under a blanket while your baby is watching. Say, "Where did duckie go? Can you find it?" Let him lift up the blanket and find his toy. He is just learning that objects are still there even though they are covered up. The surprise in this game is what makes it fun.

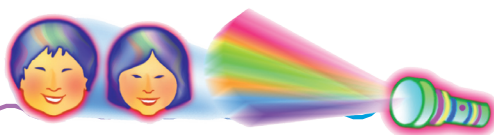
Kitchen Blocks (Thinking)

Give your baby empty food containers to use as building blocks and watch the fun. Cardboard boxes, plastic tubs, egg cartons, paper towel rolls, and plastic jars make fun blocks to build with, sort out, and knock over. See his imagination. Store his kitchen blocks in his own cupboard. He can get them out and entertain himself while you are busy cooking.

Crumple (Discovery)

Rub your baby's hand across an old newspaper and say, "Smooth." Crumple the paper, saying, "Listen." Give him some paper to crumple. Show him how to tear pieces of the paper into shreds. Remember that he may also want to find out what the paper tastes like. Crumpling activities need your supervision. Also, keep your important papers and magazines out of his reach.

More on next page...



10-11 Months (con't)

Ping Pong Play (Discovery)

Ping pong balls make great bath toys. Show baby how they pop up after you push them under water. Let him try! You can also play this game using a dishpan filled with water. Place the pan on the floor, patio or lawn and watch him try to submerge the balls. Keep an eye on this activity at all times. Even a small amount of water can be dangerous to a small child who falls face first into the container.

Let's Have a Ball (Exercise)

Roll a ball to baby and encourage him to roll it back. Teach him to crawl to get things by rolling the ball away from, to the left, and then to the right of him. Say, "Look at the ball. Get the ball." He will try to get the ball by crawling after it.

Follow the Flashlight (Quiet)

Darken the room and turn on a flashlight. Move the light slowly around the room. Your baby will attempt to follow the light as it moves. Then, after a while, he may drop off to sleep.



Tune in to Babies

11-12 Months

A Fetching Problem (Thinking)

Put a favorite toy inside a paper bag or box. See if baby can get it out. As he struggles, he will increase his understanding of inside and outside. Try hiding it under or behind things.

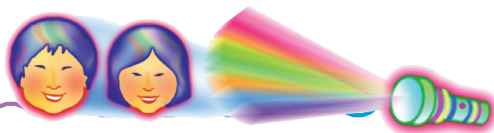
Puzzle Play (Thinking)

You can make a first puzzle for your baby. Give him several small balls (no smaller than his fist) and an egg carton or muffin pan. See if he can fit the balls into the holes. Say, "Good for you! You put the ball in." Give him a clap. What else can he fit into the holes? (Don't leave balls or other small objects where he can get them when you're not there. He could choke on them. This activity needs your supervision.)

Puppet Play (Language)

Baby can play with very simple hand puppets. Old socks make great puppets. Decorate an old sock with non-toxic markers and put on baby's hand. Make a puppet for yourself too. Have your puppet carry on a conversation with his puppet. He may experiment and put it on his foot!

More on next page...



11-12 Months (con't)

An Artist is Born (Discovery)

When your baby is sitting up at a table or high chair, use a bit of yogurt, pudding, oatmeal, ketchup, a squirt of whipped cream, a glob of jello, or a thin layer of flour on the tray and let him “fingerpaint” with the goop. Let him feel the texture, and spread it about. A little messy – but you can’t beat the fun.

One Step at a Time (Exercise)

Babies have their own timetable for walking. No two begin at the same time, or in the same way. Help him practice. Set up some chairs so he can move from one to another. Put a toy on each chair so he will want to move toward it. Give him a box to push or let him hold on to one side of a hula hoop. But remember, he will begin walking when his time is right.

Goodnight (Quiet)

Put some music on before your baby falls asleep. Turn down the volume as he closes his eyes.



Tune in to Toddlers

12-16 Months
Creative Play

Painting With Shaving Cream

Finger painting is great for your toddler. Most toddlers love to finger paint with shaving cream. A soft, billowy, good smelling mound of shaving cream is almost irresistible and it is easy to clean up.

Let him paint right on the table top. If you want to limit the mess, let him paint in an old cookie sheet. Add a few drops of food coloring to the shaving cream to create pretty pastels.

Make sure to rinse his hands afterwards to avoid skin irritation. Also, pay attention so he doesn't rub the shaving cream in his eyes.

Teddy Bear, Teddy Bear

Your toddler probably has a favorite stuffed animal or doll – maybe a teddy bear. Teach your toddler new skills by having him help you teach his teddy bear. For example: teddy might help your child learn to drink from a cup. Talk to the teddy bear and to your child, “Paul, would you like to drink from the cup?” “Teddy, would you like to drink from the cup?” Pretend to give teddy a drink.

There are many things that you can do with teddy and your child together. Rock teddy in your arms. Give teddy a kiss. Hold teddy high in the air. Tickle teddy on the tummy. Ask teddy to wave “bye-bye”.





Tune in to Toddlers

12-16 Months

Language Play

The Name That Body Part Game

Play this game when your child is starting to name the parts of his body. Touch your ears, saying to the child, "I am touching my ears. Can you touch your ears?"

Give your toddler time and ask the question again if needed. If he is keeping up, use words that he doesn't usually hear, such as elbows, chin, ankles, back, etc. Have him say the words too.

If your child touches a new part of his body, name that part as you copy him.

Animal Sounds

Toddlers enjoy making animal sounds. Gather some toy animals. Show your toddler an animal and tell him the sound that it makes. Ask him to copy you and make the animal sound, too. After you have looked at three or four animals and made their sounds, match the toy to a picture of the same animal. Show your child a picture and ask him to find the matching toy and make its sound.

Add all kinds of animal sounds. Make sure you do your child's favorites. Read a book of animal pictures and animal noises. You also might sing a song like "Old McDonald".





Tune in to Toddlers

12-16 Months

Outdoor & Water Play

Washing Fun

Water and young children are made for one another. Fill a bucket or large pan with water. Give your toddler a washcloth or small sponge, plastic plates and bowls, old silverware and anything else that he can pretend to wash.

Washing rocks can be great outdoor fun. See how many rocks change color and texture when washed. Try washing outdoor tables and chairs.

As you wash, sing to the tune of "Here We Go Round The Mulberry Bush."

This is the way we wash the chairs, wash the chairs, wash the chairs.
This is the way we wash the chairs, so early in the morning.

Sand Play

Sand play is great for your toddler. Give him old plastic bowls, pitchers, and spoons. As he plays, he learns to pour and measure. Some teachers feel that playing with sand and water helps a child learn math later. Let your toddler play with damp and wet sand, as well as dry sand.





Tune in to Toddlers

12-16 Months Physical Play

Choo, Choo

Spread a large beach towel on the floor. Sit your toddler on the towel. Use the towel to pull him very slowly across the floor. Pretend with him that he is travelling in a train. Make a “choo, choo” sound. If you pretend you’re in a car, make a car sound. If it’s an airplane, make an airplane sound. Toddlers enjoy making the sounds.

Cereal Fun

Seat your toddler in his high chair. Drop a piece of dry cereal into a small-mouthed bottle or cup. He won’t be able to reach inside to get the cereal. He will have to tip the bottle. Once your child figures this out, he’ll be able to put the cereal into the bottle and get it out again. This game challenges his physical skills and thinking. Of course he can eat the cereal, too.





Tune in to Toddlers

12-16 Months

Thinking Games

Hide 'n' Seek

Toddlers love this game. When your child isn't looking, hide yourself and call out, "I'm hiding...come and find me!" Leave part of you sticking out and visible. He will learn to follow your voice. What a thrill when he finds you. Take turns hiding and seeking. Say, "Where's (toddler's name), where could he be? THERE he is!" and give him a hug. Even when he is obvious, search in a few extra places, saying, "I wonder where (toddler's name) is? Not behind the tree, not under the chair, not lost in the woods..." When it is your turn to hide, be obvious about where you are, and say, "What a good job, you FOUND me; aren't you a bright boy!"

Can You Do This?

Holding your toddler in your arms, stand in front of a large mirror and say, "Look at the pretty boy." Make faces in the mirror while your child watches. He will copy you. Hold up his arm and say, "See the baby's arm?" Do this with different parts of his body. Kiss your toddler. Kiss your reflection. Blink your eyes. Play peek-a-boo in the mirror.





Tune in to Toddlers

16-20 Months
Creative Play

My First Picture

Scribbling is great for toddlers. It helps develop the skills needed later for your child to draw, paint, and print letters. Give him large pieces of paper to scribble on. Paper grocery sacks work great. Let him use one thing at a time: a felt pen, a pencil, a water crayon, a crayon, or a piece of chalk. Always use non-toxic materials because they often end up in mouths. Have plenty of paper. He will gain better control and after a while, straight lines, circles, and triangles will appear.

His first marks are made by swinging his arms back and forth, or up and down. He may jab and poke at the paper. Try drawing short lines and see if he will do the same.

Paper Block Puppets

Take several paper grocery sacks and lots of newspaper. Ask your toddler to help you crumple the newspaper. Stuff it into the paper sacks. When all the sacks are full, close them tightly with tape or string. Try drawing faces on the sacks to turn them into big puppets.

These sacks also have become lightweight blocks that are easy for him to move around. Show him some things to do with the paper sack puppets.

- Stack the blocks
- Put them in a circle
- Lay them side by side
- Throw one back and forth





Tune in to Toddlers

16-20 Months

Language Play

Homemade Books

It's easy to make your own books for toddlers. Here are a couple of ideas.

Take a photo album. Cut out pictures from old magazines. Put pictures under the plastic pages. It is easy to change the pictures. You might make a collection of pictures all of one type of thing, such as dogs or cars. A "baby" book with many pictures of babies is very popular with two year olds who are proud that they are no longer babies.

Buy a small three-ring binder. Glue magazine pictures on both sides of a piece of construction paper. Then cover both sides of the pages with clear contact paper. Punch holes with a hole puncher. Put several pages like this in the binder. You can change the pages as often as you like to keep interest high. It gives toddlers a very sturdy book which they can carry around and handle freely. Try to find a very small ring binder. Toddlers like this.

The Name Game

Toddlers love learning new words. You can help by playing the Name Game. Start by showing your toddler an object. Say, "This is a ball." Have them try to repeat the word. Start with simple objects your toddler knows, such as spoon, coat, or hat. Add new words as your toddler gets the hang of it. Take turns by having your toddler show you an object and you name it. Most toddlers have a vocabulary of around 50 words. The Name Game is great to play when out walking, driving, or waiting somewhere.





Tune in to Toddlers

16-20 Months

Outdoor & Water Play

Watch the Rain

Take a large plastic bottle. Poke holes in the bottom. Go outside with your toddler. Talk about the grass, the flowers and other plants. Fill the plastic bottle with water from the hose. Tell him where to sprinkle the water. Ask him to sprinkle the grass, the sidewalk, or the flowers. Name everything he sprinkles – it helps build his vocabulary.

You can try this while he is in the bathtub. Take a slotted spoon or colander. Have him pour the water over it. See how it “rains.” Let him hold the spoon or colander while you pour the “rain” over it. Keep playing the game, taking turns pouring the water.

Washing the Car

Let your toddler help when it's time to wash the car. Gather buckets of soapy water, sponges, and a hose with a spray. Have him help you sud, scrub, and rinse off the car. He feels important when he helps with real chores, and he loves playing in suds. When you've finished the car, you can help him wash his wagon or other toys. Watch out because you might get washed, too!





Tune in to Toddlers

16-20 Months Physical Play

Your Very Own Obstacle Course

Set up an obstacle course where your toddler can climb, crawl, and cruise. Get down on the floor and show him where to go. Go under tables, behind chairs, and out doors. Climb over cushions or up and down stairs. Say “under,” “behind,” “over,” and so forth as you go. Play follow the leader. Take turns leading. Make sure the obstacle course is safe, and he can’t get hurt.

The Tearing Game

Toddlers really enjoy tearing things.

Collect old magazines, newspapers, wrapping paper and foil. Each feels and sounds different. Show your child how to tear the paper. Have him drop it into a box. Or, have him wad it into a ball and throw it in the box. Show him how to do this. If he cannot make the ball, do it for him.

Since toddlers do like to put things in their mouths, keep a close watch. This is a good game to play in the kitchen where you can watch him closely. Also, you may want to keep a pile of “tearable” old magazines and newspapers just for him.





Tune in to Toddlers

16-20 Months Thinking Games

The Toy Transfer Game

Place two large boxes on different sides of a room. Fill one box with small toys. Give your child a small basket or bucket with a handle. Show him how to put the toys from the full box into the basket. Have him carry the toys across the room and dump them into the empty box. He may have to make more than one trip. When it is empty, say, "All gone!"

Play the game again. Try using the words "out", "in", "empty", and "full." This game seems simple, but there is lots of learning going on.

Butter Tub Hide 'n Seek

Get a used butter tub. Hide a toy inside, such as a large wooden bead or little wooden people. Put the lid on the tub. Let your toddler shake the tub. Can he guess what is inside? Let him take the lid off to see. It may be difficult at first, but toddlers like to take the plastic lids off tubs. Say "you found it" when he finds the toy.





Tune in to Toddlers

20-24 Months
Creative Play

Paper Towel Pictures

Give your toddler sheets of white paper towels and washable felt-tipped markers (wide point). Let him make marks on the paper towels with the markers. This is a good spur of the moment activity and is enjoyable for young children. The lines will widen and blur.

Watch this activity closely so he does not put marker caps in his mouth or suck on the markers.

Easy Milk Carton Blocks

Collect milk cartons of various sizes and wash them out thoroughly. Cut off the top point and fold down the top flaps to square off the box. Tape the edges. Cover the whole thing with pretty contact paper and the blocks will be surprisingly sturdy. In no time you will have a large collection of inexpensive and very satisfying blocks. Because they are so light, your toddler will not be hurt by a block that somehow becomes airborne.

For sturdier milk carton blocks, take two milk cartons of the same size, cut off the pointed ends, stuff one with newspaper and jam it inside of the other carton. Tape around the edge where they join with a strong tape.





Tune in to Toddlers

20-24 Months Language Play

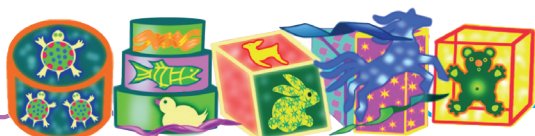
The “What’s That” Game

This game helps build language skills. Point to an object and ask, “What’s that?” See if your toddler can name the object. Soon he’ll be asking you. Toddlers seem to find great enjoyment in this activity. Once he gets the idea that certain sounds stand for particular objects, he seems to be on an endless quest to learn more words.

My First Reading Game

Cut simple pictures out of catalogs and magazines. Paste the pictures onto cards. Show a picture to your toddler and talk to him about it. Talk about the color, the shape, how it is used, etc. Give the card to your toddler and name the object, for example, “moccasin.” Ask your toddler to give you the “moccasin” picture. Once he understands, add another picture card with a different picture. Then, when you ask him for a picture, he will have to choose between two.

Learning new words doesn’t always come easy. Be patient. Try only a few pictures at a time.





Tune in to Toddlers

20-24 Months

Outdoor & Water Play

Sponge Play

What a great invention the sponge is! A package of inexpensive sponges will find many uses for toddlers.

Sponges suck up water. Squeeze them out and they float. He can make them into little rafts and give rides to little wooden people, plastic animals, etc. he can blow them to make them move. Just get him started and see all the fun ideas he can come up with.

Going on a Treasure Hunt

Many children love to hunt for things. Hide several toys outside such as dolls, toy cars, balls, or blocks. Don't make them too hard to find.

Give your toddler a small bucket. Let him hunt for the hidden toys and put them in the bucket. When he finds one, say "Good for you. What did you find?"





Tune in to Toddlers

20-24 Months Physical Play

This Is the Way

With this game you can help your toddler practice his physical skills. Sing these verses to the tune of “Here We Go ‘Round the Mulberry Bush.” Do the actions as the words direct.

“This is the way we clap our hands, clap our hands, clap our hands.
This is the way we clap our hands, So early in the morning.”

You can substitute many other actions: jump up and down, we swing our arms, stamp our feet, click our tongues, throw a kiss, or we jump around. Let him make suggestions.

The Purse Game

Toddlers love to fill and empty containers and carry things around. Purses are perfect for this game. Lunch boxes, a brief case, shopping bags and other such containers with handles work great, too. Opening and closing these containers is a good challenge for toddlers. It’s a good idea to have a box of “purse junk” available to put in purses. Otherwise, toddlers will find other things such as crayons and puzzle pieces. Old keys, wallets, check books, junk mail, combs, and empty lipstick containers appeal to children because they are used by adults. Try hiding a surprise in the purse and have him find it.





Tune in to Toddlers

20-24 Months

Thinking Games

In the Bag

This game develops thinking skills. Your child hears the word, then finds the object.

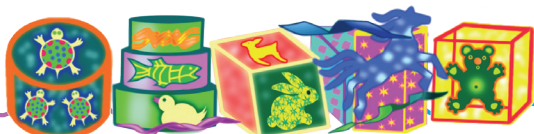
Get a large shopping bag or grocery sack. Ask your toddler to bring you things to put into the sack. Ask for one object at a time, letting your child put each one into the sack. Use objects that your toddler can bring to you on his own, such as a favorite toy, silverware, a blanket, a towel or a toothbrush. If this seems too difficult for your toddler, start with one object and slowly graduate to two and three.

Do What I Do

Play a game of imitation with your toddler.

Make different movements and have your child copy you: wave your hands, wiggle your fingers, stomp your feet, pretend to be asleep. Let him do something while you imitate him. At first, you may have to offer ideas. Suggest easy movements like waving bye-bye or clapping hands.

Try this game with jobs around the house and yard, like raking leaves, dusting, or sweeping.





Tune in to Toddlers

24-28 Months
Creative Play

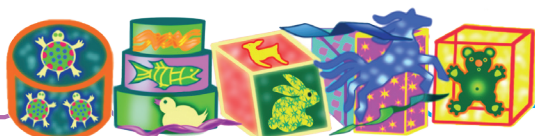
Crayon Rubbings

Don't throw away those bits and pieces of crayons. Peel the paper off the used crayons. Have your toddler place a piece of paper over an interesting texture – a leaf, string, pavement, carpet, printed plaques, a piece of wood, tree bark, carved stones, or sidewalks. He can rub the sides of the crayons over the paper. The design should come out on the paper. You can go on a “rubbings” walk to collect an assortment of interesting textures.

Another idea for old crayons is to make “crayon chubbies”. Put the pieces in the bottom of a muffin tin and heat them just enough so the pieces melt together. Then cool them to form crayon muffins that are great for small hands.

Make-Believe House

Young children love make-believe. Make an easy tent or a playhouse for your child. Drape a sheet over a card table or the backs of two or more chairs to make a simple tent. Pretend that the tent is a cave, an airplane, a train, a spaceship or a house. Take a pillow, blanket and stuffed toy inside your make-believe house.





Tune in to Toddlers

24-28 Months

Language Play

All About Me Book

Take photographs of your toddler throughout the day. Paste the photographs on heavy paper, punch holes in each sheet of paper and put into a 3-ring binder or old photo album. Look at the pictures with your toddler and talk about the different things that he does during the day: getting dressed, eating, playing, going outside, taking a bath. As you go through the day, show your toddler the picture that relates to each activity. You will soon see your child looking at the book himself and getting much pleasure from it.

“Would You Please” Game

Start this game with the words “*Would you please,*” and then ask your toddler to perform a task. For example: “*Would you please give me your teddy bear?*” Once your child can understand what you have asked, continue to make each direction a little harder. But toddlers can only remember two or three directions at a time. You will see the wheels turning in his head as he thinks about what he has to do.

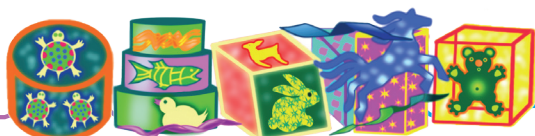
Here are a few other “Would you please?” questions.

Would you please bring me my hat?

Would you please go to Daddy’s room and bring me my shoes?

Would you please go to the bathroom and bring me some soap?

Would you please open the drawer and give me a spoon?





Tune in to Toddlers

24-28 Months

Outdoor & Water Play

Magnifying Fun

This is a great activity for outdoor fun. First, get a magnifying glass – plastic if you have one.

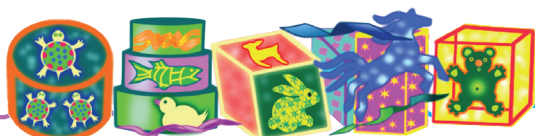
Go outside with your toddler and sit on a blanket in the grass. Give a blade of grass to him. Show him how to look at it through the magnifying glass. Talk about how much bigger it looks. Walk around the yard and see what you can find. Look at a leaf and under a leaf. Examine a flower or the bark of a tree. Get on the ground and see if you can find any crawling things. Your child will probably want to carry the magnifying glass around all the time.

You also can help your child look at his body with the magnifying glass. Fingernails, skin, or something with a Band-Aid on it are fascinating.

Squeeze Bottles

Save empty plastic squeeze bottles. Empty dish detergent, catsup, glue, and shampoo bottles work well. Especially good are clear plastic bottles. This allows children to see what's going on inside the bottle.

Fill the bottle partly with water. Add food coloring. Toddlers enjoy holding bottles upside down and watching the water dribble out. You can add some liquid soap. Children enjoy watching the bubbles come out when they squeeze the bottle under water.





Tune in to Toddlers

24-28 Months
Physical Play

Boat Rowing

Sit on the floor facing your toddler. Spread his knees slightly apart and place your legs over his. Grab his hands and gently begin to pull back and forth. Lean forward until his back touches the floor, then bring him back up.

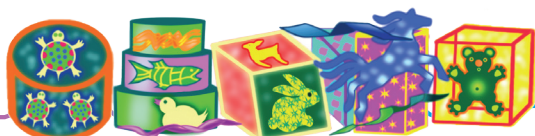
Sing while you play this game:

Row, row, row your boat,
Gently down the stream.
Merrily, merrily, merrily, merrily,
Life is but a dream.

Jar Play

Gather together plastic jars with lids small enough for little hands to remove. Put a colorful and interesting toy in each jar. Close the lids. Give your toddler one jar at a time for him to remove the lid and get the toy.

Your child will want to play this game over and over. Twisting lids off jars is not always an easy thing for youngsters to do.





Tune in to Toddlers

24-28 Months

Thinking Games

Personal Puzzles

Give your toddler a large sheet of construction paper or other sturdy paper. Give him a crayon to draw with. Cover the art work with clear contact paper. Cut the picture into two or three puzzle pieces. Give him the puzzle and help him put it together. Some children may get upset having their artwork cut. To show him how it works, you may want to draw a simple picture and make a puzzle out of it.

The more puzzles your child puts together, the more problems he is able to solve. Start with simple puzzles and progress to more complex ones as he gets older. For fun, make puzzles out of sandwiches and slices of cheese.

What's That Sound?

Talk about all the sounds you hear in your daily life. Have your child close his eyes. Make sounds for your child such as a fire engine, musical instruments, or animals. Ask your child to tell you what the sound is.

Go for a walk and have him listen for dogs barking, birds chirping, or the neighbor's TV or radio playing.





Tune in to Toddlers

28-32 Months
Creative Play

Butterfly Ink Blots

This is a simple art game that is easy for your two year old and will give him a feeling of accomplishment. Have him put small dabs of tempera paint on a piece of white paper. The paper should be fairly sturdy. Fold the paper in half. Let your child move the paint around with his fingers. Encourage him to move his fingers all over the paper. Open up the paper and look at the beautiful picture.

Cotton Ball Art

Lay a large piece of colored construction paper on a table. You also will need a package of cotton balls and paste or a glue stick. Put paste on a cotton ball and show your toddler how to stick the cotton onto the paper. You can do this activity together. Two-year-olds get a lot of satisfaction from this game. Hang the cotton ball picture so that everyone can view it.





Tune in to Toddlers

28-32 Months
Language Play

Zip-Lock Bag Books

These books are fun to make. Take several small ziplock bags and sew them together along the bottom edge opposite the ziplock closing. A regular overcast stitch works fine. Next, cut some cardboard to just fit inside the bags. This makes the pages stiff and easier to turn. Then find magazine pictures or photos. Slip pictures into the bag on either side of the cardboard. Zip the bag shut. You can change the pictures when your child becomes bored with them.

Spoon Talk

Find a small plastic spoon that is easy for your child to hold. Draw a happy face on one side and a sad face on the other. Magic marker works well. Hold up the happy side and say, "I'm so happy, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha." Give the spoon to your child and ask him to repeat what you said. Hold up the sad face and say, "I'm so sad, boo hoo, boo hoo." Give the spoon to your child and ask him to repeat what you said. Talk about things you can say when you are happy or sad and how your face shows happiness or sadness.





Tune in to Toddlers

28-32 Months

Outdoor & Water Play

What Can You See?

Play this game while out walking or riding in the car. Ask your toddler to tell you what he sees. If he sees a flock of birds, ask him where the birds are going, and talk about the birds. Even if all you get is “birds fly home” it’s a real win. You then make up your own version of what he said, for instance, “Yes, the birds are flying home. They are flying away because winter is coming and it is going to be cold here. They are going where there is no snow.” Don’t talk too much, just keep the conversation moving about what he has seen.

Washing Up

Children love to play with squirt bottles. Add 3 or 4 Tbsp. of distilled white vinegar to a spray bottle and fill it with water. Show your child how to spray his bottle at a mirror or window and shine it with a crumpled newspaper, a rag, or a paper towel. The object isn’t really to clean house (although this may be a bonus), but to teach him how to use the spray bottle. Don’t expect a perfect job; just have fun spraying and polishing.

Wash the floor together. Give your child his own small mop or sponge so he can help when you are washing the floor. You can’t hold him back! He wants to get water everywhere, and it’s fun mopping it up.





Tune in to Toddlers

28-32 Months Physical Play

Jump, Jump, Jump

Once toddlers master standing and walking, they love to jump. They don't always get completely off the ground, but they try. You can help by playing some simple and fun jumping games.

Just hold hands with a child and jump up and down, with or without music. You could chant, "Jump, jump, jump..." Simple as it seems, this activity is a real winner!

You might sew some jingle bells onto an elastic that will fit a child's ankles comfortably. He will love to jump up and down to music on the record player and make the jingle bells ring.

Finger Puppets

Your fingers make wonderful puppets. All you have to do is draw on them. Using a washable felt-tip marker, you can make faces of any kind. Draw two eyes, a nose and a mouth on each finger of one hand. Recite the poem "Five Little Monkeys" as you wiggle one finger at a time.

*Five little monkeys jumping on the bed,
One fell off and hurt his little head.
Mama called the doctor, and the doctor said,
"No more monkeys jumping on the bed!"*

Draw on your child's fingers and let him say the poem with you. Also, you can cut off the fingers of an old glove to make simple finger puppets for children. Use marking pens to draw on faces. You also can add other details with scraps of fabric, yarn and fake fur.





Tune in to Toddlers

28-32 Months

Thinking Games

Let's Count

Take a walk through your house holding your two year old's hand. Start by counting chairs. Walk from room to room, saying out loud, "One chair, two chairs," etc. When you reach the number five, stop. It is best to keep the numbers fairly low, because two year olds lose interest if there are too many of any one thing.

Your child is likely to enjoy this game very much. Count cars parked along the street, your front steps, the number of petals on flowers, the number of peas on your child's plate. Count the steps you and he take. Change the way that you step. You can take large steps, small steps, hopping steps, jumping steps, etc. Don't worry if your toddler doesn't always count in the correct order. He'll get there after a while.

Building a Train Matching Games

Gather two groups of blocks, one for you and one for your child. Colored blocks work well. Ask your child to make a train with you. Put one of your blocks down and ask him to put one of his down. Encourage him to choose a matching block from his group. Continue placing blocks next to one another. Talk about the train you are making together. Touch one block and say, "This is the block that you put down." Point to another block and say, "This is the block that I put down." Move the train of blocks and say, "Here comes the train. Choo, choo, choo." Change roles and you follow what he does.





Tune in to Toddlers

32-36 Months
Creative Play

Dancing Bottles

Plastic liter pop bottles can hold lots of fun for your toddler. Try these ideas:

1. *Swirling objects bottle.* Fill a plastic pop bottle half full with water. Add some food coloring. Then add small, light plastic toys, plastic sequins, beads, some things that float and some things that do not. Glue on the cap. Let him shake the bottle to make the objects swirl around.
2. *Dancing yarn bottle.* Put several pieces of yarn cut in short pieces (about 3 inches to 6 inches) into a plastic pop bottle. Fill the bottle with water. Glue on the cap. Let him shake the bottle to make the yarn dance inside.
3. *Colored bubbles bottle.* Fill a plastic pop bottle one third full with water. Add tempera paint and about 1/3 cup of liquid detergent. Glue on the cap. Let the child shake the bottle to make colored bubbles.

Squishy Bags

Take a small, resealable ziplock bag. With your help, let your child press the button on a shaving cream can to put some shaving cream inside of the bag. Fill only about half full. Then let him pick out two different colors of food coloring and put a squirt of each in with the shaving cream. Close the zip closure. Let him squeeze the bag to mix the colors.





Tune in to Toddlers

32-36 Months

Language Play

Dressing Up

Gather dress-up things for your child in a box. Scarves, neckties, hats, shoes and jewelry all work well, and he will enjoy them very much. To get things started, put a scarf over your shoulder and a hat on your head. Change the tone or accent of your voice. Let him try on whatever is in the box. He may put it on backwards or upside down. No matter, encourage and compliment him. Dressing up makes a child feel very special. When you compliment him about his choices, he will feel that his ideas are valuable.

A Simple Word Book

Toddlers are increasing the words they learn every day. Sometimes they say words and sometimes they just think them, but they understand many. Take a few of your toddler's favorite words and find pictures to match them – car, doggie, etc. Show him the pictures and ask him about them. Paste each picture on a separate sheet of paper and make a book for him. Your toddler will love looking at the book with you as well as by himself.





Tune in to Toddlers

32-36 Months

Outdoor & Water Play

Eye Dropper Fun

Plastic eye droppers will hold the attention of many older toddlers. When you first show this to your child, it is a good idea to have two of them – one for yourself and one for him. “Look what I can do with mine. I squeeze this and bubbles come out. Then the water goes in. Can you do that with yours? Now when I squeeze it, I can make the water go in this jar...watch.”

After he has had a chance to play with it for a while, you could have him transfer colored water from one margarine tub to another using an eye dropper. Small plastic pet food dishes with two compartments also work well for this. A baking pan underneath can catch drips.

Another idea is to transfer water with an eye dropper from a margarine tub to a dry sponge. “Where did it go?” He also may enjoy filling small containers such as film canisters, bottle caps, jar lids, etc.

Blindfold Walks

Take your child on a blindfold walk outdoors. Tie a scarf over his eyes as a blindfold, and have him hold your hand as you lead him along. Make your trail across grass, pavement, gravel, and sand. Have him talk about what he is experiencing.

Be alert, because this can frighten some children. If your child is afraid of the blindfold, just have him keep his eyes closed for the walk.





Tune in to Toddlers

32-36 Months
Physical Play

Pushing Boxes

If you have large empty boxes, your toddler may choose to push them around the room. Help him decorate the box. He can make a car, a bus, or a train. He can give a doll or stuffed toy a ride.

Here's A Bunny

Simple fingerplays help develop your child's small muscle skills and language. Try this simple fingerplay with your child.

Here's a bunny with ears so funny.
(raise two fingers)
And here's a hole in the ground.
(make hole with fingers of other hand)
At the first sound he hears.
He pricks up his ears.
(straighten fingers)
And pops right into the ground.
(put fingers into hole)





Tune in to Toddlers

32-36 Months

Thinking Games

The Sorting Game

Chances are that your youngster has many toys scattered all over the place. This game helps clean up the toys and teaches matching skills at the same time. Pick one type of toy, for example, blocks, and go on a search all over the house. Make it fun by saying things like, “block, block, where are you?” “Oh, here you are!” He will enjoy this very much.

Put all of the blocks into a container. Try matching the blocks by size. Pick one block and ask him to find another of the same size. You can also match blocks by color. When you have finished with blocks, start looking for other toys. Cars and dolls are good toys to search for, as well.

Matching Crackers

Matching games are great challenges for your two-year-old. Put an assortment of crackers on a place mat. Select interesting shapes and sizes. Pick up a cracker and talk about its shape, size and smell. Ask your child to find a matching cracker. Praise him when he matches correctly. After you have matched all the crackers, mix them up and play again. Of course, let him eat them. The same game can be played using different cereal, blocks, coins, or anything with different shapes and sizes. Be careful that he doesn't put coins and other non-food objects in his mouth.





Tune in to Kids

ART

9 Ideas for Drawing Fun

Why?

Drawing is important in the development of writing skills. Children practice moving their arms, wrists, and fingers.

You need:

Crayons, chalk, markers, things to draw on (ideas below).

How to play:

Here are 9 ways to make drawing fun:

1. Use markers on aluminum foil.
2. Use crayons on scraps of wood.
3. Use chalk on sandpaper.
4. Use markers on scraps of fabric.
5. Use crayons for nature rubbings. Place paper on top of interesting items such as leaves, rocks, and tree bark. Take the side of the crayon and rub over paper. The interesting texture underneath will come through.
6. Dip chalk in water and draw on colored paper.
7. Use markers on paper towels or coffee filters.
8. Use markers on wax paper for a stained glass effect.
9. Use crayons for rubbings. With crayons and paper in hand, march around the room. Find different textures. Place paper on object. Rub the side of the crayon over the paper. Compare the patterns the different textures make.

Something to think about:

Young children don't always have something in mind when they start to draw. Even if they do, parents can't always tell what it is. That's okay. Asking what the picture is or trying to name it can turn children off. You can ask them how they are feeling as they work or ask if they would like to tell you about it. These comments show that you are interested without passing judgment.





Tune in to Kids

ART

Boxed Art

Why?

It's amazing what you can find around the home for art projects. Children use lots of throwaways in this activity. Here's a great way to use household throwaways for art projects.

You need:

Used boxes and containers (cereal, toothpaste, oatmeal boxes, milk cartons, egg cartons, toilet paper, and paper towel rolls, - almost anything you normally, throw away), glue.

How to play:

Let children build whatever they want by gluing the odd boxes and shapes together. They may have something in mind to make, or they may just stick things together with no reason. When they are finished they can decorate their sculptures with paint, color crayons, or colorful paper.

Here's another idea:

Instead of using boxes, try scraps of wood. Building sites often will have scraps they will give you. Have children glue the scraps together. Most preschoolers will have a hard time nailing the pieces of wood together with a hammer.

Something to think about:

Almost anything can be used for creative art. Look in the garage or basement of most child care teachers and you will find tons of useable "stuff". Sometimes, all you need to do is put out some trashable stuff, scissors, glue and crayons, and turn your children loose. Their imaginations will take over from there.





Tune in to Kids

ART

Funnie Fun

- Why?** Old newspapers provide lots of fun in this easy, creative art activity.
- You need:** Old newspapers and comics, glue, paper.
- How to play:** Let your children tear strips and shapes from old newspapers. The Sunday comics or advertisements work great because they are so colorful. They can glue their shapes onto a piece of paper to make all kinds of designs.
- Here's another idea:** If you help them mix strips of newspaper with flour paste (flour and water), they can mold the mixture into shapes. Let them dry in a warm place. Later the shapes can be painted.
- Something to think about:** Tearing works well if your children haven't mastered scissors. It is easier for young children to tear than to cut with scissors. Besides, there's something about tearing paper that is a lot of fun.





Tune in to Kids

ART

Gadget Printing

- Why?** Painting comes in all shapes and sizes. Here's a different kind of painting for discovery fun that lets that creativity out.
- You need:** Tempera or other kid-safe paint, foam meat trays (the kind meat from the grocery store, comes in; wash with warm, soapy water before using), different gadgets to print with (gears, toy car wheels, nuts, and bolts, corks, sponges, wood scraps, foam hair, rollers, rolled cardboard, etc.), paper.
- How to play:** Place a thin layer of paint in the bottom of a foam meat tray. Have children dip a variety of gadgets into paint and then make a print on a piece of paper. See what designs the different gadgets make.
- Here's another idea:** Print on wax paper to make interesting suncatchers. Hang in sunny window when dry.
- Something to think about:** Many of the art projects of young children don't look like anything. That's O.K. Actually, they aren't supposed to. The fun is in the doing; the creating. It's not in making something that looks right. At this age, don't worry about your children's artistic abilities. They'll be more concerned about how their artwork looks when they're older.





Tune in to Kids

ART

Musical Painting

- Why?** Finger-painting is an all-time favorite. Here's a new twist for added creativity.
- You need:** Finger-paint (tempera or other kid-safe paint will do) large sheets of sturdy paper, aprons or homemade smocks (your old shirts work well).
- How to play:** Put out paper and finger-paints. Turn on a tape player or the radio and watch children as they paint to the music. Change the tape to faster or slower paced music or change the radio station and see if it affects your little artists.
- Here's another idea:** Add different things to the finger-paint to see what happens (salad oil, liquid starch, hand lotion, shaving cream, table salt).
- Something to think about:** Art projects are great for creativity and expression, but they can get messy. Young children love to get up to their elbows in art. Drop cloths and smocks are a good idea for almost all art projects. But the creativity is well worth it.





Tune in to Kids

ART

Painting Snow

- Why?** Can't think of what to do in the snow? This is a fun wintertime activity that strengthens creativity and small muscle development.
- You need:** Tempera or other kid-safe paint, squirt bottles, snow.
- How to play:** Fill squirt bottles with a thin mixture of water and tempera. Let children paint the snow by squirting their bottles. Use a variety of colors. You will get a rainbow of colors and designs. Watch the color of the snow change as the children paint over it.
- Here's another idea:** You can try the same idea in the summer. Hang up large sheets of paper along a fence or lay them on a sidewalk. Let children paint the paper by squirting their bottles.
- Something to think about:** Creative art is more than coloring books and crayons. Art ideas are everywhere. Just use your imagination. Your ideas are much more fun than coloring books.





Tune in to Kids

ART

Styrofoam Masterpieces

Why? Don't throw away those styrofoam pieces used as packing in boxes. They make for great construction projects.

You need: Pieces of packing styrofoam, toothpicks, straws or pipe cleaners.

How to play: Provide a variety of styrofoam shapes for children. Let them create sculptures by attaching the various pieces with toothpicks, drinking straws, or pipe cleaners.

CAUTION: Toothpicks should not be used with children under age three.

Here's another idea: Add markers, glue, felt, paper scraps, etc. so that children can decorate their sculptured creations. You also can use marshmallows, pieces of cheese or fruits. They can eat their project when they are done, except for the toothpicks.

Something to think about: Art is fun, but it's more than that for young children. They can learn all kinds of other skills. In activities like this one, they gain eye-hand coordination and finger control.





Tune in to Kids

ART

Treasure Mobiles

- Why?** Children love to collect and save things. You name it, they collect it. Here's a creative way to display their treasures.
- You need:** Dowel rods or coat hangers, colorful yarn, collected objects or pictures drawings, family pictures, newspaper clippings, keepsakes from trip, materials found on a walk: twigs, leaves, pine cones, string, and clothes hanger.
- How to play:** Tie or paper clip objects or pictures to pieces of yarn. Attach yarn with objects across length of a dowel rod or coat hanger. Use another long piece of yarn to hang the mobile from the ceiling. Change mobiles as children create new treasures.
- Here's another idea:** Double mobile: Tie dowel rods together in the middle so that they will form a cross. Hang mobile from ceiling with extra yarn. Tie objects and pictures onto each of the ends.
- Something to think about:** Parents often want to know what to do with all their child's art. Making mobiles out of them is one idea. Other ideas include framing them for presents, making greeting cards or place mats for the dinner table, using them to wrap gifts, and making a scrap book.





Tune in to Kids

LANGUAGE

10 Ideas to Boost Your Child's Language Skills

Why?

Children who can talk, listen, read, and write do better in school. Now is the time to start building those skills.

How to play:

Here are 10 ways to boost your child's language skills:

1. Read traffic signs, store names and billboards with children.
2. Tell your children stories told to you as a child.
3. While grocery shopping, talk about what foods you're buying and why.
4. Visit the library to pick out books together.
5. Let them play dress-up and pretend. They talk a lot while acting "grown-up."
6. Pay attention to what your children watch on TV. Children read and play more when they watch less TV.
7. Put books in places they can reach. Let them pick up a book and look through it at any time.
8. Listen when they talk. Listen to stories they make up.
9. Have them help you make a meal. Talk about what you are doing and why. Show recipes to children.
10. Let them open and look at "junk" mail.

Something to think about:

Parents are children's best role models. Be a good model. Let children see you reading, listening, writing and speaking. Show some eagerness for reading and children will catch it.





Tune in to Kids

LANGUAGE

Find the Magic

Why? There's magic in children's books. They bring fun and wonder. They build dreams. They help children learn about the world and themselves. Reading with your children can help them do better in school later on.

You need: Any favorite children's book.

How to play: Find a cozy, quiet place to read the story. Call it your reading spot. Hold the book up or lay it on your lap. Make sure children can see the pictures. Try using fun voices as you read. Make the word "scared" sound scared, or the word "tired" sound tired. Have them guess what happens next. Involve them in saying repeated words or phrases. Ask questions like these: "What do you think will happen next?" "How do you think the boy feels?" "What would you do if you were in the story?"

Here's another idea: Look for ways during the day to add to messages in the story. For example, after reading a book about colors, you might have children find the same colors in the room. Or, after reading a book about ranch animals, talk about their favorite animal. They might even draw a picture of that animal.

Something to think about: Parents are children's best role models. Be a good model. Let children see you reading, listening, writing and speaking. Show some eagerness for reading and children will catch it.





Tune in to Kids

LANGUAGE

Fingerplays

Why?

Fingerplays are fun and help children learn. They help build vocabularies and good listening skills. And they help children gain control of their fingers and hands.

How to play:

Here are some fingerplays to try with your children:

Little Ducklings

All the little ducklings swim without a care

(hands with palms together zigzag back and forth)

Heads are in the water, tails are in the air

(point thumbs up)

Funny Bunny

Here is a bunny with ears so funny

(hold up two fingers for ears curving fingers a little)

Here is a hole in the ground

(make circle with thumb and fingers from other hand)

When a stranger he hears, he perks up his ears

(hold "ear" fingers up straight)

and hops in his hole so round.

(dive "ear" fingers into hole)

More on next page...



Fingerplays (con't)

Eensy, Weensy Spider

Eensy, weensy spider went up the water spout

(walk fingers up above head)

Down came the rain and washed the spider out

(pull hands down quickly like being washed down)

Out came the sun and dried up all the rain

(make circle with hands)

So eensy, weensy spider went up the spout again.

(walk fingers back up above head)

Here's another idea:

Make up your own fingerplays. It's easy. Just think of a simple rhyme. Add finger movements to it.

Something to think about:

Children love fingerplays because they are catchy. They really help build vocabularies especially for younger preschoolers.



Tune in to Kids

LANGUAGE

Magazine Family Puppets

- Why?** Puppets build language. They allow self-expression; they invite imagination. They develop muscles. All around, puppets are just great.
- You need:** Old magazines or catalogs, cardboard or poster board, scissors, popsicle sticks, glue.
- How to play:** Help your child collect pictures of people from magazines or catalogs. Glue them to pieces of cardboard or poster board, and then glue a popsicle stick to the backing to make a puppet. Use the Magazine Family Puppets to make up stories and situations with your child. Start a story and let your child finish it. Let a member of the Magazine Family ask your child a question and see how your child responds.
- Here's another idea:** Find pictures of your child at different ages. Glue popsicle sticks to the backs. Tell your child a story about the different things she did at the different ages the pictures represent. Almost anything can become a puppet, old socks, small paper sacks, paper cups. Make all different kinds with your children.
- Something to think about:** Children don't need a lot of expensive materials to make puppets. They don't need a lot of art skills. What they need the most, they already have, a lot of imagination.





Tune in to Kids

LANGUAGE

Treasure Chest

Why? It's hard to find a child who doesn't like to dress-up. But dress-up is more than just fun. It builds children's language skills and imagination.

You need: A large box or suitcase, dress-up clothes.

How to play: Find a big box or a suitcase that can be used to store a collection of dress-up clothes. Include things that children can put on themselves such as: T-shirts, large vests, jackets, scarves, gloves, ties, sunglasses, purses, shoes, boots and wigs. A separate box with a hat collection can be fun and entertaining.

Here's another idea: Put together boxes around different themes. For example, you might collect samples from an office, such as: pens, memo slips, play telephone, old calculator, etc. Children can then take out the treasure chest and play office. Other themes might include zoo keeper, doctor's office, fast food restaurant, and carpenter. You also might go to the library and check out some books that match your themes.

Something to think about: Children spend lots of time pretending. Pretend play helps them use their creativity and problem solving skills. It also helps them learn about different people and jobs. It is one of their favorite ways of learning about the world around them.





Tune in to Kids

LANGUAGE

What Happens Next?

- Why?** Children are so imaginative. This activity allows them to imagine what comes next in a story. It also helps develop their listening skills and their memories.
- You need:** A story to read that children haven't seen before, paper, crayons or markers.
- How to play:** Read the story to your children. Stop short of the ending. Ask them how the story might end. Have them draw how they think the story ends. Finish the story to see how the author ended it.
- Here's another idea:** You could tell a story instead of reading one. Stop every once in a while and ask what children think will happen next. Continue with your story or change it by their ideas. By stopping and asking for their ideas, you actually tell the story together.
- Something to think about:** Children's ideas on how the story ends don't have to be right. Most stories could end many different ways. The point is that children get to use their imagination and listening skills.



Tune in to Kids

MATH

Color Wheel Game



Why?

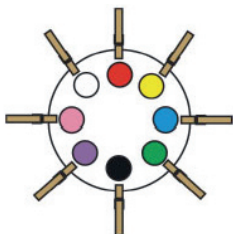
An all-time favorite – children learn to match colors in this game. The fingers and the eyes work together to place a clothespin on a large circle.

You need:

Scissors, poster board or thin cardboard, crayons or felt pens, spring-type clothespins.

How to play:

To make the color wheel, cut an eight inch circle out of the cardboard or poster board. Around the edge of the circle, make eight small circles about the size of a quarter. Color each small circle a different color using felt-tip markers or crayons. Take eight of the clothespins and color them the same colors you used on the color wheel.



Ask children, “Can you find the red color on a clothespin? How about on the large circle?” Have them squeeze the clothespin to open it. Put the clothespin on the circle that is the same color. Try different colors. Change the rules and have fun. Watch those little fingers with the clothespins.

More on next page...

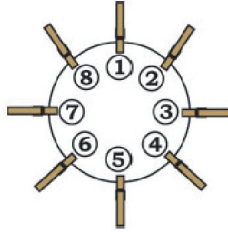


Color Wheel Game (con't)

Here's another idea:

Instead of colors, make a number wheel.

Cut another eight inch circle from the cardboard or poster board. Around the edge of the circle, write the numbers 1 to 8. Take 8 clothespins and write a number from 1 to 8 on each one. Play the game the same way as the color wheel.



Something to think about:

Young children don't learn colors all at once. They need lots of practice. In fact, they learn by trying things over and over again. Try many different ways to teach colors.

Tune in to Kids

MATH

Copy Me, Copy You



Why?

Your child can learn to match and count objects.

You need:

20 pennies (you can also use elbow macaroni, Cheerios or buttons).

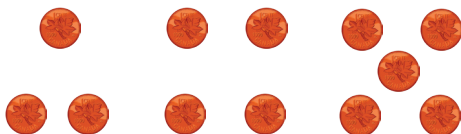
How to play:

Give 10 pennies to your child. Take 10 pennies for yourself. Make a row of three pennies like this:



Ask children to make a row just like yours with their pennies. If they do it correctly, repeat using more pennies. Continue to increase the number of pennies until you use all your pennies. If your children are incorrect in matching your row, have them count the number of pennies in your row and then the number of pennies in their rows. Are they the same? Have them try again. Repeat this activity using patterns other than rows. For example:

CAUTION: Supervise this game because children may swallow the pennies.



More on next page...



Copy Me, Copy You (con't)

Here's another idea:

Instead of using all pennies, add a few pieces of macaroni to your patterns. This is much harder. Your child will have to match your patterns and where you put pennies and macaroni. Using pennies and buttons is even more difficult, because they are both round.

Something to think about:

This game is more difficult than simply matching shapes or colors. Being able to match patterns will help later on when your child learns to add a series of numbers. It also will help them in learning to read. Different patterns of letters mean different words.



Tune in to Kids

MATH

Five Little Monkeys

Why?

Young children love fingerplays. And these fingerplays can help them practice counting.

How to play:

Do this classic fingerplay with your child.

Five little monkeys (show five fingers on one hand)
jumping on a bed, (second hand, palm up)
One fell off (point with one finger)
and hurt his head. (hold head)
Mommie called the doctor (use hands like telephone)
and the doctor said,
"No more monkeys (shake head and finger)
jumping on the bed." (repeat: four, three, two, one little monkey
jumping on the bed)

Here's another idea:

Here are a couple of other counting fingerplays:

Five rabbits were hiding (clenched fist) in the woods one day.
1-2-3-4-5 jumped out (fingers come out as they count)
and then they ran away. (imitate running with fingers)

Five little fingers (show five fingers on one hand)
reach for the sky. (reach hand up high)
Four little fingers (show four fingers on one hand)
crawl up the floor. (walk fingers across floor)
Three little fingers (show three fingers on one hand)
grab your knee. (grab knees)
Two little fingers (show two fingers on one hand)
touch your shoe. (touch shoes)
One little finger (show one finger on one hand)
away it runs. (hide it behind your back)

More on next page...



Five Little Monkeys (con't)

Something to think about:

Children learn more than just counting with fingerplays. Make up your own fingerplays with your child. The funnier the better. Fingerplays also work well when you are waiting in line with your child. It gives them something to do.

Tune in to Kids

MATH

The Hide and Seek Tube Game



Why?

Playing hide & seek... and learning at the same time. It takes a while for children to remember things in order. This game will help them learn the meaning of words like first, next, and last. Children also will enjoy the suspense involved in this game.

You need:

A long piece of string or yarn (30-36 inches), a cardboard tube from a paper towel or wrapping paper roll, three different objects to tie on the string (for example: a spool, a small car, a button, a paper clip, a balloon, a small plastic animal or a small barrette) colored construction paper or colored shelf paper.

How to play:

Tie the three objects on one string leaving some space between each object. Be sure the string is long enough on each end so that you can drop it all the way through the tube and then begin pulling. The objects should be close enough together on the string so that all are inside the tube when the string is pulled to hide them in the tube.

Talk about the objects. Have your children watch them as they go into one end of the tube. Ask them to guess what will come out of the other end first, next, and last. Repeat several times using different objects. You can change the color of the objects or add new objects. For fun, let them pull the string and you guess.

More on next page...



The Hide and Seek Tube Game (con't)

Here's another idea:

Rather than paper towel rolls, you might use shoe boxes, old cereal boxes, or oatmeal boxes. Also, as your children catch on to this game, add more objects on the string.

Something to think about:

This game seems pretty simple. But children have to understand the idea of ordering before they understand that 1 comes before 2 and 2 comes before 3.

Tune in to Kids

MATH

The Magical Disappearing Game



Why?

Presto it's magic. Here's a game that helps your children guess what's been added and what's been taken away.

You need:

Several different small items such as: coin, marble, toy car, rock, bath towel, leaf, spoon, crayon, small doll, pine cone (any small item will do).

How to play:

Place three different items in front of your children. Have them tell you what they are. Count them. Cover them with the towel and take one away. Take the towel off the remaining items and see if they can tell you what you took away. Count the remaining items. As your child gets better at this memory game, use more items. Change roles and see if you can guess.

Here's another idea:

Play the same game but instead of taking something away, add a new item. See if your child can guess what you added.

Something to think about:

In this game, children practice the basic math skills of adding and subtracting. At this age, don't worry about children getting the adding and subtracting right. They will get it later. For now, the guessing is the most fun.



Tune in to Kids

MATH

Picture Puzzles



Why? Puzzles exercise the mind. Playing with puzzles is fun. Puzzles help children learn how to fit the parts together to make a whole. Children use their hands and eyes together as they play with a puzzle.

You need: Poster board or lightweight cardboard, large picture (8" x 10" or larger is best) from a magazine or inexpensive picture book (pictures of animals are good choices), scissors, glue, clear contact paper.

How to play: Cut a piece of poster board the same size as your picture. Glue the picture to the poster board. Be sure to put glue all over the poster board so that all parts of the picture are glued to the poster board. Cover the front and back with contact paper (it will make it last longer.) The puzzle should be cut into a few large pieces, about four or five. Begin by taking out one puzzle piece and letting the child practice putting it back. Take turns fitting pieces of the puzzle together and talk about the finished picture. Let children do as much of the puzzle as they are able.

Here's another idea: For a greater challenge, children can put the puzzle together using designs rather than pictures. Cover the cardboard with scrap wallpaper or shelving paper. Cut into pieces and let children put back together.

More on next page...



Picture Puzzles (con't)

Something to think about:

Some young children love puzzles. Others do not. That's okay. Puzzles can help children see that things can be broken into smaller parts (subtraction) and put back together into larger parts (addition).

Tune in to Kids

MATH

Shaping Up



Why?

Get those children into shape. Shapes are fun to play with. Children learn the names of shapes. They also can make designs with shapes.

You need:

Different colored construction paper, scissors, white paper, markers.

How to play:

Cut different shapes (triangles, circles, squares, diamonds, and rectangles) from several colors of construction paper. Cut a large size and a small size of each shape. Outline the shapes with colored felt markers on a piece of white paper. Have children match their shapes to the ones you outlined. You can color your outlined shapes if you want your child to match colored shape pieces to colors. For even more challenge, add colors to the shapes you outlined on the white paper. Children will have to match in terms of shapes, size and color. Wow!

Play a riddle game by saying: "I see a shape with four straight sides and square corners. Find it." (square or rectangle.) "I see a shape which is round. Find it." "I see a shape with three sides, all the same length. Find it." Your children can ask riddles, too.

More on next page...



Shaping Up (con't)

Here's another idea:

Encourage children to make pictures with the designs. Let them glue the shapes onto a piece of paper to make fun designs. Use the names of the shapes as you play with them.

Something to think about:

Matching is one of the best ways for children to learn shapes. At first, just use a few shapes all the same size. Then you can add shapes of different sizes.

Tune in to Kids

MATH

Socks, Socks, and More Socks



Why? What makes things the same? What makes them different? This game helps children see similarities and differences in socks. It can be done as youngsters help you fold the laundry.

You need: All kinds of family socks (white ones, colored ones, large and small ones, plain ones and ones with stripes).

How to play: For younger preschoolers, use only a few pairs of socks. Mix up the socks. Have the children sort them into pairs. As they work, ask what they are looking for. "I'm looking for the red one." "I'm looking for the blue one." "I'm looking for the one with pink stripes." When the mates are all found, count the number of pairs of socks. Count the numbers which do not have mates.

Here's another idea: Give children an empty egg carton and a variety of coins. Have them sort the coins by same and different. They can put their piles into the different egg carton cups. Try other same and different sorting games with buttons, leaves, or just pieces of colored paper.

CAUTIONS: Be cautious with coins. Young children may swallow them quickly.

Something to think about: Learning same and different is basic to understanding numbers, adding, and subtracting in school. Practicing while they are young will help children learn later on.





Tune in to Kids

MOTOR SKILLS

Animal walk

Why?

In this activity, children exercise large muscles, learn to follow directions, and learn animal names.

You need:

Music with a good rhythm.

How to play:

Turn on the music. Have children say the name of an animal. Then they have to move around like that animal does. For instance, they might say “frog”. Then they hop around the room like a frog. You call out the name of an animal next. Take turns with children moving like the animal named. Be creative with your animals ex: elephant, bird, snake, alligator, kangourou, etc.

Here's another idea:

Rather than moving like an animal, call out different ways to move: hop, jump on one foot, roll, crawl, balance on one foot, etc.

Something to think about:

Just like children's language develops, so does their physical ability. First they learn to sit up, crawl, to walk, to run, to skip, and so on. Games like animal walk help practice these developing skills.





Tune in to Kids

MOTOR SKILLS

Bubble Magic

Why? Bubbles, bubbles, everywhere. Children love chasing bubbles. Older ones like blowing them. This activity strengthens chasing and catching skills.

You need: Fly swatter, shallow pan or tray, bubble mixture (store-bought or home made).

You do: If you want to make your own bubble mixture, here's what to do. Mix $\frac{3}{4}$ cup liquid soap, $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of sugar or glycerin, 2 quarts of warm water.

How to play: Pour bubble mixture into shallow pan. Dip the fly swatter into the tray. Blow on fly swatter or wave it through the air. Let children try to catch the bubbles. Can they catch the bubbles without popping them? Try this outside on a day with a light breeze. Other things to try: plastic strawberry baskets, small tin can (file down all sharp edges), straws, or squirt bottle.

Here's another idea: Let each child decorate a styrofoam cup. Make a hole, three-fourths of the way down the cup, large enough to insert the straw. Place the cup, open end down, into the soap. Pick up and hold right side up. Blow into the straw and watch bubble expand from the top of the cup. On a very cold day, bubbles will freeze instantly. Try poking a hole in a frozen bubble. If you are careful, they won't break. This idea is for older children. Children three and under have a tendency to suck on straws before they learn to blow.

More on next page...



Bubble Magic (con't)

Something to think about:

Keep safety in mind. Never leave young children alone to do these activities. Besides, they are much more fun to do together.



Tune in to Kids

MOTOR SKILLS

The Little Engineer

Why?

You have more things around your house that can be used as blocks than you can imagine. A block can be anything that stacks. Playing with blocks builds balance, eye-hand coordination, and imagination.

You need:

Anything safe to stack such as: sponges, wooden cubes or table blocks, cardboard blocks, cardboard boxes, egg cartons, spray can tops, corks, beanbags, or a combination of an odd assortment of these and other things.

How to play:

Make a tower. Encourage your child to make one like yours. Begin with three items. Add one, then have your child add the next one. With the two of you taking turns, see how high you can stack the towers. You also can build the tower and invite your child to knock it down. Your child begins to learn about cooperation and working together by having the opportunity to play the role of the builder-upper and knocker-downer. The stacking up is the challenging part and the knocking down is the fun part for children.

Here's another idea:

Collect milk cartons of different sizes. Wash them out thoroughly. Cut off the top point and fold down the top flaps to square off the box. Tape the edges. Cover the whole thing with contact paper. The blocks will be sturdier by taking two milk cartons of the same size, cutting off the pointed ends, stuffing one with newspaper and jamming it inside of the other carton. Tape around the edge where they join with a strong tape.

More on next page...



The Little Engineer (con't)

Here's another idea:

Grocery bags also work well. Let your child help you crumple newspaper to fill a paper grocery sack. When it is almost full, packed rather tightly, fold the top over and square off the end and tape it shut. Since these are big, and yet relatively light, children have fun lifting and stacking them. Because they are soft, nobody gets hurt when they topple down.

Something to think about:

You don't always need expensive, store-bought toys for your children. When you think about it, simple toys and games for children are everywhere around the house. These homemade blocks are a good example. Your children will learn just as much with these toys. And they'll have fun making them and decorating them with you.



Tune in to Kids

MOTOR SKILLS

Newspaper Ball Game

Why?

Catching and throwing looks so easy. But it's not. This fun game lets children learn and practice those skills.

You need:

Old newspapers, box or trash can.

How to play:

Crumple a newspaper page to form a newspaper ball. Make a ball for yourself and your child. Take turns throwing the ball to each other. Throw the balls at the same time. Put a trash can or box in the middle of the floor and have children try to throw the newspaper ball into it.

Here's another idea:

Play safe soccer. Learning to kick a ball is difficult for young children. And they can't practice inside with a real ball. Newspaper balls are soft and don't break things. Practice kicking the newspaper ball back and forth with your child.

Something to think about:

Young children have so much energy. Physical games help work that off. And they learn and practice so many skills when they play the games.





Tune in to Kids

MOTOR SKILLS

Pasta Snakes

Why?

Many young children love stringing large macaroni onto a shoestring or heavy cord. This is an excellent activity for developing eye-hand coordination.

You need:

A shoestring, heavy string or cord, some uncooked manicotti, cannelloni or other variety of large pasta with a hole in the middle.

How to play:

Let the child string the pasta onto the shoestring. This is a great quiet activity for you and your child, and it can be repeated time and time again with the same supplies. Tie one piece of pasta at the end of the string if you don't want the pasta to fall off. Can also be used as a necklace.

CAUTION: Dry macaroni could be swallowed by a young child. Use only large-sized macaroni until the child is older. Discard any broken pieces; they are sharp.

Here's another idea:

Use large wooden beads, plastic or wooden spools or cereal with holes.





Tune in to Kids

MOTOR SKILLS

Play Dough Magic

Why? Children need to develop control of their fingers and hands. Play dough is a great way to squeeze, poke, push and punch a workout for the fingers.

You need: Play dough (homemade or store bought), cookie cutters, milk jug lids, potato masher, small plastic animals, other objects that would make an interesting pattern.

How to play: Here's an easy no-cook recipe for making your own playdough. Non-hardening, No-Cook Play Dough

1 cup salt
1 ½ cup flour
½ cup water
2 tablespoons cooking oil
Mix and knead

Children enjoy rolling snakes, smashing pancakes and wadding the clay into a ball. Encourage child to poke, pound and roll the clay. It is more important that they enjoy playing with clay than creating something to save. Clay dough magic comes when the ball of clay is changed into another shape.

Here's another idea: Add some food coloring to give your play dough some color. Add a box of flavored gelatin mix to the dry ingredients. This gives added color and aroma.

Something to think about: Whether store-bought or home-made, play dough is a must for young children. They can make so much with it and use it in so many ways, and it can keep them busy for a long time.





Tune in to Kids

MOTOR SKILLS

Safe Volleyball

Why?

Have you ever tried to keep a balloon in the air by patting it up? It's not easy for little ones. It takes balance, eye-hand coordination, and stamina. This game builds all three.

CAUTION: You need to supervise this activity at all times. Young children can suffocate with balloons. Only adults should blow up balloons. Young children can suck in rather than blow out and get the balloon stuck in their throats.

You need:

Balloons.

How to play:

Clear away a safe place in your home. Blow up balloons. Give one to each child. Tell children that the object of the game is to not let their balloon touch the ground. Show them how to keep it in the air by patting it upward. Turn them loose! You might want to have some music playing in the background. They can decorate their balloons with markers.

Here's another idea:

As your children get older, they may want to try patting one balloon back and forth with another child. Even older children can play indoor volleyball. Tie a string between the backs of two chairs as a net. They must hit the balloon back and forth over the net. This game burns off a lot of energy.

Something to think about:

Again, this game needs your supervision. This could get out of hand. Watch so that children don't swallow the balloons.





Tune in to Kids

MUSIC

Incredible Family Parade

- Why?** Make music a family affair. Everyone gets involved in this activity.
- You need:** Fun marching music items for homemade instruments: whistles, wooden blocks, spoons, an old pot, sticks to pound together, paper towel rolls to blow into.
- How to play:** Go on your own family parade. Have everyone in the family (you, too) join in. Choose fun music to move to. Let each person in the family select a homemade instrument. Start the music. March around the house while playing the instruments.
- Here's another idea:** Have children put on dress-up clothes for the parade. You might even make paper plate masks and newspaper hats.
- Something to think about:** This can get loud try it when you have the patience. It's probably not an activity you want to do right before children's bedtime.





Tune in to Kids

MUSIC

Musical I Spy

- Why?** This is a musical guessing game. Children will learn to describe what they see and guess what others see. They will love moving to the music.
- You need:** Music (light instrumental music works best).
- How to play:** Start the music. When the music begins, children move in whichever ways the music inspires them. They can skip, hop, jump or march, but they must move. When the music stops, they freeze, then stare at something straight in front of them. They say, "I Spy," and describe something they see. You have three chances to guess what they spy. The music starts again until you stop the music, then the process of "I Spy" begins all over again. Take turns let your children guess what you spy.
- Here's another idea:** Have children act out the motions in popular children's songs, such as "If You're Happy and You Know It." Have them clap their hands, stomp their feet, jump in place and so on. Take turns making up new ways of showing that you're happy.
- Something to think about:** Young children may play "I Spy" by just giving colors. There are no winners or losers. Children enjoy moving to the music, freezing when it stops and describing what they see.





Tune in to Kids

MUSIC

Musical Scarves & Streamers

Why?

Children love dancing to music. They are so much fun to watch. Here's an easy twist to make it even more fun.

You need:

Scarves, fabric scraps, ribbons, crepe paper, music.

How to play:

Gather old scarves or cut pieces of lightweight fabric scraps into streamers. Streamers also may be made from rolls of crepe paper. These are particularly nice for outdoor dancing because they can be thrown away at the end of the activity. Turn on some lively music. Let the children move freely with the music. Of course, you don't want them running inside to the music.

Here's another idea:

Try micro-dancing. Instead of dancing with their whole bodies, children dance with just parts of it. For example, play some quiet music. Have children "dance" with just their face. They might move their mouth, wiggle their nose, or blink their eyes to the music. Or maybe they can dance with just their fingers. Younger children may have some difficulty with micro-dancing.

Something to think about:

I'm sure you've noticed that young children are moving all the time. Just add some music and you're set. This activity also develops their physical skills.





Tune in to Kids

MUSIC

Shake, Rattle & Roll

Why?

Here's something easy for you and your children to make. It will help develop rhythm and enjoyment of music.

You need:

An empty plastic bottle with lid, dried seeds, macaroni or gravel, tape or glue.

How to play:

Have children put seeds, macaroni, or gravel into a clean plastic bottle. Have them fill the bottle about one-fourth full. Have them replace the lid and use glue or tape so that the lid can't come off. Have them shake the instrument in different ways (fast, slow, and in a rhythmic fashion.) Turn the radio or TV on and have children shake the bottle to the rhythm of the music. Sing a song like "Skip to My Lou," "Mary Had a Little Lamb" or make up your own tune.

Here's another idea:

Play sound shaker game. Take six empty film containers. In two containers, place a spoonful of rice; in two other containers, place a spoonful of salt; in remaining two containers, place a spoonful of dried beans. Put lid on containers. Have children shake and compare sounds. Match the sounds.

Something to think about:

There is sheer joy in making sounds. But games like these teach too. Children can learn ideas such as soft, loud, quieter, same and different all of which will help later when they go to school.





Tune in to Kids

MUSIC

A Simple, Silly Song

Why?

What was your favorite song as a child? Children love to sing. No doubt they know lots of songs already. Here's an easy way to make up your own songs. Your children will love to sing them. And it helps build their language.

How to play:

Choose a favorite song. Let's say "Where is Thumpkin?" Just change the words or make up new ones. For example, change "Where is Thumpkin?" to "Where is Jenny?"

Where is Thumpkin?
Where is Thumpkin?
Here I am.
Here I am.
How are you today, sir?
Very well I thank you.

Run away, run away.
Where is Jenny?
Where is Jenny?
Here I am.
Here I am.
How are you today, ma'm?
Very well I thank you.
Clap your hands, clap your hands.

More on next page...



A Simple, Silly Song (con't)

Here's another idea:

Come up with all new words to favorite songs. Here is a made up song to the tune of "Mary Had a Little Lamb" Let's go to the grocery store, grocery store, grocery store, Let's go to the grocery store, to see what we will buy.

Something to think about:

It will take children a while to learn the new song. Children learn by repetition. You may need to sing it a few times before they are able to join in.

Tune in to Kids

SCIENCE

Discovery Walk



Why?

Getting out is the best way to learn about nature. Children build their observation skills. What do they see? What do they learn?

How to play:

Take your children on a nature walk. Parks, river banks, fields all make great places to find things. While you are walking, keep track of different kinds of animals you see. You might even have older children look for more specific animal signs, such as spider webs, ant hills, feathers, animal tracks, bird calls or nests. Look at trees, leaves, ponds, etc. Ask children questions about what they see.

Here's another idea:

Take a plastic bag with you on your walk. Children can collect items to take home. Better yet, they can help pick up trash to keep the area clean.

Something to think about:

Most of what young children learn, they learn by doing. They touch, look at, take apart, put together. Nature walks are one way to let them discover all the fun things around them.



Tune in to Kids

SCIENCE

Five Minute Edison



Why?

Thomas Edison was a famous inventor. He was famous for asking, "I wonder what would happen if...?" This game builds on that same ability in all children.

You need:

A magnet (simple refrigerator magnet will do).

How to play:

Show how metal things stick to a magnet. Ask children "I wonder what would happen if we tried to stick it on this cabinet? Let's see." Let children go on a hunt around the room to find out what sticks to a magnet and what doesn't. You may want to make a list of "yes-sticks" and "no-doesn't stick."

Here's another idea:

You can play "What would happen if..." with nearly everything. "What would happen if we mixed this red paint with this yellow?" "What would happen if we bounced this ball down these stairs?" "What would happen if we blew on this dandelion?"

Something to think about:

Children are natural experimenters. They learn by trying something. This attitude will help them later in school. Playing "What would happen if..." games helps foster this attitude.



Tune in to Kids



SCIENCE

Float or Sink

Why?

Does it float? Does it sink? Help your children discover what makes objects float or sink. They can test the answers to their questions.

You need:

A sink or dishpan or any pot (about six inches deep) and objects that float or sink, for example:

Objects that float

cooking oil (about 2 T.)
small sticks
styrofoam
rubber band
plastic ball
feather

Objects that sink

nail or screw
coin
marble
scissors
spoon
rock or pebbles

How to play:

Fill the sink or pan with four or five inches of water. Spread the objects that you have selected on a table or on the floor close to the sink or pan of water. Ask children which ones they think will float and which ones will sink. Have them select an object and tell you, before putting the object in the water, whether it will sink or float. Have them test the object. Talk about why one floated and the other didn't. Is one larger? Is one heavier? Does one contain more air? Is one softer? Continue until all objects have been tested or until the children are tired.

More on next page...



Float or Sink (con't)

Here's another idea:

Add dish washing soap or soap flakes to the water. Add food coloring too, for color, if you like. Beat with an egg beater and watch the bubbles. Throw a few bubbles into the air. Watch them float and burst. Let children wash some unbreakable kitchen utensils or washable toys.

Something to think about:

This game shows what great natural scientists children are. They are experimenters. They are constantly trying things out to see what happens. Sometimes their experimenting may break or ruin something. Have patience. They usually don't do it on purpose. They are learning.

Tune in to Kids

SCIENCE

Homemade Bug Pals



Why?

Are your children interested in bugs and insects even dead ones? Here they can make their own pet bug.

You need:

Play dough or clay, tooth picks (not with young preschoolers), pipe cleaners, macaroni or paper for legs, wings and eyes.

How to play:

Let children make their very own pet insect (ants, flies, caterpillars, spiders, etc.). The clay is for the body. They can add the other body parts.

Here's another idea:

Have children make farm or zoo animals. Also, you might use egg cartons for the body instead of clay.

Something to think about:

Children find insects and bugs everywhere. Actually, there are more insects than any other type of animal. Most bugs and spiders are not harmful. But children need to be cautious. Children need to be taught to handle bugs carefully. Too many children tend to destroy every tiny creature they see.



Tune in to Kids

SCIENCE

Ice Collage



Why? This is an “icy” discovery activity. Children learn about freezing water and making ice. And they learn what will melt it.

You need: Collection of small nature items (leaves, small sticks, small cones, and feathers) aluminum pie pan.

How to play: Take a walk with your children and collect small items from the park or your yard. Place your collection of leaves, sticks, small cones, and feathers in an aluminum pie pan. Find a piece of string or yarn that is about eight inches long that can be used as a hanger. Lay the string in the pan forming a loop that hangs over the edge. Fill the pan with water and freeze the collection. Take the ice collage out of the pan and hang it outside in a tree. Watch the collage slowly melt as the sun shines on the collection.

Here's another idea: Talk about what makes ice melt. Experiment with different things that can melt ice (stove, sun, heater). Experiment with which melts the ice faster.

Something to think about: Children are born scientists. They will enjoy looking at the sparkle of sun shining on the ice. They will enjoy putting the collage together and will have dozens of questions.



Tune in to Kids

SCIENCE

Let's Go Sailing



Why? What child doesn't like sailing boats, at least for a little while? About anything that floats can become a boat. Here's an easy idea you can do at home.

You need: ½ gallon cardboard milk carton, plastic straw, gum or clay, sheet of construction paper.

How to play: Cut the milk carton in half lengthwise. Lay one of the halves on its side for the base of the boat. Have children put a wad of chewing gum or clay inside to hold the sail. Take a plastic straw and stick it in the gum for the mast. Cut two small holes in a piece of paper, one near the top and one near the bottom. Thread the paper sail onto the straw mast. Your sail boat is ready.

Here's another idea: Take them with you to a pond or stream to sail. Sail them in the gutter after a heavy rainstorm. Have races and have fun.

Something to think about: Some things are hard for young children to understand, things they cannot see or touch like the wind. But we can see what it does and how it feels. Ask the children to look outside the window. Is the wind blowing? What do they see that lets them know the wind is blowing? Is it strong or gentle? Show them how they can make wind by blowing on their hands. A piece of paper moves when they blow on it. Talk about the fun things that they have done while playing with the wind.



Tune in to Kids

SCIENCE

Sprouting Seeds



Why? To understand, children need to see it to believe it. Show the growing (sprouting) process of plants.

You need: Re-closable sandwich bags, paper towel, grass seeds.

How to play: Have children put paper towel into the bag. Dampen the towel with water. Place the seeds on top of the paper towel. Close the bag and in 5-7 days the seeds should sprout. Talk about the three parts of a plant (roots, stems, leaves.) Transplant the seeds outside.

Here's another idea: Use flower seeds, such as marigolds, instead of grass seed. You might start seeds in potting soil and a paper cup or small milk carton.

Something to think about: Parents can talk about how plants have roots, stems and leaves and that they need water and sunlight. But young children won't understand this until they actually see it.





Tune in to Kids

SELF-DISCOVERY

A Tasty Game

Why?

Can children taste? Yes. Children's taste buds are well developed, even at birth. But identifying those tastes is not so easy. Playing this game will help your children learn how different things taste.

You need:

Food with different tastes: something salty (such as table salt or pretzels); something sweet (such as sugar); something sour (such as a lemon, pickle or sauerkraut); something bitter (such as unsweetened chocolate or strong coffee) and an apple, pear or carrot.

How to play:

This game is best played casually as your children are helping you make a meal or snack. Give them one food item to taste. Ask how it tastes. Don't be surprised if all you get is "good" or "bad." It takes time to learn what sweet, sour, bitter and so on mean. Tell them the correct word for the taste, such as "salty." Try another food. The more times you play this game, the better your children will be able to distinguish the different tastes.

Here's another idea:

Play the same and different taste game with your child. Have children taste a lemon (or any familiar food that is sour) and an apple (or any favorite food that is sweet). Ask if the foods taste the same or different. Have them describe how the foods taste. Continue with other food items.

More on next page...



A Tasty Game (con't)

Something to think about:

Children's sense of taste is strong. That is why even as babies everything goes into their mouths. That is also why the risk of poisoning is so high. Children like to see how different liquids and pills (harmful or safe) taste. That is why it is so important to keep household poisons and medicines safely locked away from children.



Tune in to Kids

SELF-DISCOVERY

Did You Hear What I Heard?

Why?

How well do your children listen? Learning to listen starts young. This easy game has your children practicing their listening.

You need:

Piece of paper and a pencil.

How to play:

Go on a walk to the park or in the neighborhood. Stop every once in a while. Have children close their eyes and tell you what they hear. Write it down on a sheet of paper. (If they are old enough, they can write the list.) Ask what else they hear. Keep going until they are out of sounds. You may have to help identify some of the sounds. Keep walking but stop every once in a while to listen to other sounds. Count how many sounds you heard when you get home.

Here's another idea:

Play an "I hear" guessing game. Have children listen for sounds. Say "I hear something that is ticking, what is it?" or "I hear something that is banging, what is it?" Have them guess. Change places and have them ask and you guess.

Something to think about:

Learning to listen is an important skill in life. It helps children do better in school. It also helps children be better communicators. If you are concerned about your child's hearing, or any other skill, talk to your doctor, child care provider, or local school district. They can point you in the direction for help.





Tune in to Kids

SELF-DISCOVERY

Feely Bag Game

Why? How do young children learn? Mostly through their senses. This activity allows them to learn through the sense of touch.

You need: Medium-size paper sack assorted objects such as feathers, large buttons, plastic people, rocks, small balls (do not use small objects if you are using this activity with younger children).

How to play: Place the assorted objects, inside the bag so that children can touch them (just a few items for the younger ones). Have them try to guess what the object is by feel. Don't let them peek! You also might ask them to find something smooth, round, soft, or rough.

Here's another idea: Instead of a sack, use a box with a hole cut into it so that children can stick their hands in it to feel the objects. Take turns let them chose the objects and you guess.

Something to think about: We actually learn more from touch than we realize. This game helps children put words smooth, soft, hard to what they feel through touching.





Tune in to Kids

SELF-DISCOVERY

Fingernail Dance

- Why?** Dancing fingernails? Toddlers love to play “Find your nose” games. Here’s a more advanced version. Children will increase their eye-hand coordination and color awareness.
- You need:** Washable colored felt markers or five different colors of fingernail polish.
- How to play:** Have your children color each fingernail on one hand a different color. You may need to help younger ones. Then have a “follow-the-leader” game. Tell them to:
Put their red fingernail on their ear.
Put their green fingernail on their nose.
Put their blue fingernail high in the air.
Shake their black fingernail as hard as they can.
Hide their yellow fingernail.
Try other directions. Wash off the fingernails when done or when children want to.
- Here’s another idea:** For older children, color the nails on both hands. Have 10 different colors and expand the “follow-the-leader” game. Make up your own directions for the game.
- Something to think about:** Children learn about themselves by learning about their bodies. They learn what they can do. Playing games helps children see themselves and their abilities.





Tune in to Kids

SELF-DISCOVERY

Name That Feeling

Why? Young children have a hard time understanding feelings. They certainly have them. This activity helps children identify their feelings.

You need: Old magazines.

How to play: Take a couple of old magazines that have pictures of people. Gather your children and look through the magazine for pictures of people. Ask them how the person in the picture is feeling. How can they tell? If they don't know, help them by saying, "She looks happy because..." or "She looks frightened because..."

Here's another idea: Let your child tear or cut out the people pictures. Have them group the pictures into "happy," "sad," "angry," and so on. If they want, they can glue their pictures onto a larger sheet of paper to make a feeling collage.

Something to think about: Young children can have very strong feelings. It is not hard for us to tell. But children can be confused or frightened by those strong emotions. You can help by teaching them how to identify those feelings and assuring them that those feelings are normal and that it is okay to feel this way. It's okay to say, "I'm mad," but not okay to hit mommy because you're mad.





Tune in to Kids

SELF-DISCOVERY

Smelling Jars

Why? How does cinnamon smell? Vinegar? This simple activity allows children to identify smells.

You need: Several small film containers with holes poked in the top, different scents: cinnamon, onion, vanilla extract, cotton balls, lemon juice, etc.

How to play: Fill the containers with a variety of smells. Saturate cotton balls with different scents. Give your children three containers. Watch their faces as they smell. Ask if the smells are the same or different. Ask which one they like best. Try the other containers.

Here's another idea: Play a smelly matching game. Make two containers each of three different smells. Place the containers in front of children. Tell them that some smell the same and some smell different. Have them try to find the smells that go together.

Something to think about: Helping young children explore the senses also helps them learn more about themselves. They learn that they can smell, touch, taste, see and hear. These senses are the way they learn about the world.





Tune in to Kids

SELF-DISCOVERY

What Big Feet You Have

Why? Here's a great family-time activity. This activity helps give children a better understanding of their family and themselves.

You need: Paper (grocery bag or newspapers will do), pencil or crayon, scissors, masking tape.

How to play: Have children trace around hands and feet of family members, including themselves. Write names next to prints. Cut out the prints, then color or paint them, if they wish. Tape prints to refrigerator or wall or tie prints to a clothes hanger to make a family mobile.

Here's another idea: Talk with your children about the different sizes of the hands and feet. Bring your hand and theirs together. Ask them, "Are they the same size? Can you tell whose hands are bigger? ... Smaller?" With all the hand and foot prints in front of them, ask them to find the largest hand and foot as well as the smallest hand and foot. Give them a set of three prints; small, medium and large. Ask which hand is the largest, which hand is the smallest, and which is the middle size.

Something to think about: As children grow from babies to preschoolers, they begin to learn about those closest to them mom and/or dad. The next group closest is the rest of their family. Activities like these build family togetherness and valuable time together.





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