



Fine Motor

Activities to Help Your Toddler Grow and Learn



Your toddler is becoming more skillful with hands and fingers. She can play with and use toys in many ways, including stacking, poking, pushing, and pulling. She is also gaining skill at holding and using crayons or felt-tip pens. She knows how to take pieces out of a simple puzzle and will try to put the pieces back together.

- Tear it Up** After you each wash your hands, show your child how to tear lettuce or spinach leaves into a bowl. Be sure to tell the family who made the salad. (Your child may also like tearing strips of newspaper. Stuff them in a paper bag, tape it up, and make a kick ball.)
- Aim and Drop** Show your little one how to drop a clothespin or spoon into an open milk carton or other plastic container with a large opening. Play the game as long as your toddler enjoys it. Let him shake the container and enjoy the sound.
- Stacking Blocks** Let your little one play with wooden cubes or blocks. Show her how to stack them one on top of another. Build a tower. Count aloud as you stack the blocks so that she begins to hear the sound of numbers. She'll love knocking down the tower. Little plastic containers can be washed out and stacked, too.
- String-a-Snack** Give your toddler a small container of Cheerios or other round cereal and a clean shoelace or a piece of string with tape around the end to make it stiff. Show him how to string the Cheerios. Then eat the Cheerios!
- Place Mats** Make sure your toddler gets plenty of chances to practice writing and drawing. You might keep paper and washable crayons in the kitchen so you can supervise while getting dinner ready. Use her drawings for place mats for the family. Make sure your little writer knows that writing only happens on the paper.
- Snack Helper** Let your toddler help make a snack. With your help and supervision, he can unscrew lids from containers such as applesauce or peanut butter. He can help scoop and spread with a plastic knife. He can also help eat. Yummy!



16–20 months