



Problem Solving

Activities to Help Your Toddler Grow and Learn



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

Scoop and Pour Let your child experience pouring and filling. Provide a lot of recycled materials such as clean milk cartons, yogurt cups, detergent scoops, film containers, and plastic soda bottles for playing in the sand. At home, use uncooked rice or popcorn in a large tray or box and provide scoops and containers. Talk about what your child is doing and use new words such as “empty,” “full,” “pouring,” and “scooping.”

Pretending with Household Objects For pretend play, make a box with household tools—such as a flashlight, paintbrushes, a small shovel, or a broom—for your child. Your child can pretend to paint the walls, dig in the garden, or clean up the house. Talk about the purpose of the items: “Flashlights help us see things in the dark.”

I Can Do, Can You? During bath time or lap time with your child, play I Can Do, Can You? “My eyes blink; can your eyes blink?” “My nose can sniff; can your nose sniff?” “I can clap my hands. Show me you can clap, too.” Do something silly. This game is a lot of fun.

Make-Believe Play Make a cooking box with an apron, pots, spoons, and bowls, or make a doctor bag using a makeup bag with a play stethoscope (old earphones are good), bandages, Popsicle sticks for tongue depressors, a clipboard and/or file folders, and a white dress shirt. Take these out for some special make-believe play. Have a mirror nearby.

Topsy Turvy Turn things (books, cups, a box of cereal) upside down and see if your child notices and turns them back the right way. Have fun with this silly game.

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



20–24 months