



**Communication/
Language**

Exploring Sounds

- Option 1** (IG) Toddlers participate in a shared book reading focused on sounds made by farm animals.
- Option 2** (IG) Toddlers participate in a shared book reading that includes a song about farm animals of interest to the toddlers.
- Option 3** (IG) Toddlers participate in book-focused play with farm animal figures, blocks, and a barn.



Cognitive

Solving Problems

- Option 1** (OO) A toddler practices taking apart two connected star builders.
- Option 2** (IG) Toddlers practice taking apart snap beads connected in a chain, with the option of placing the beads in a clear container after they are removed from the chain.
- Option 3** (IG) Toddlers practice taking apart chains of star builders or snap beads as a caregiver offers informal comments about “more” and related concepts of quantities.



Self-Regulation

Getting Calm

- Option 1** (OO) A toddler observes how to calm down after an exciting activity.
- Option 2** (OO) A toddler practices calming down after engaging in an exciting activity guided by a caregiver.
- Option 3** (OO) A toddler independently practices calming down after engaging in an exciting activity.



Social-Emotional

Interacting with Others

- Option 1** (OO) A toddler engages in play with a caregiver focused on rolling a ball back and forth.
- Option 2** (OO) A toddler engages in play with a caregiver focused on taking turns in building a tower with blocks.
- Option 3** (IG) Toddlers engage in play with a caregiver focused on taking turns in making motions that others copy.



Physical/Health

Moving Our Bodies

- Option 1** (OO) A toddler rolls a ball back and forth with a caregiver.
- Option 2** (IG) Toddlers take turns rolling a ball in an effort to knock down a cardboard block.
- Option 3** (IG) Toddlers participate in open-ended play with balls.

(OO)=One-to-One, (IG)=Informal Gathering



12–24 Months

Option 1 Informal Gathering



Skill and Goal
Receptive language
Expressive language
Awareness of differences in sounds

Toddlers participate in a shared book reading focused on sounds made by farm animals.



Key Concepts

Sounds
Animals



Materials Needed

Moo Moo, Brown Cow by
Jakki Wood



Also Promotes

Cognitive

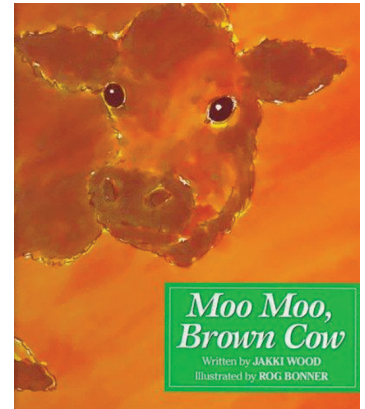
BEGIN: *[Invite several toddlers to join you to read a book. Show the cover of the book. Point to the picture on the cover as you introduce the book.]*

EXPLAIN: Our book is about a cow. Do you see the brown cow on the cover of our book?

[Pause for verbal or nonverbal responses.]

A cow says “moo.” Let’s all say “moo” like a cow!

Our book is about animals that live on a farm.



ASK: What animals do you think we will see in our book?

[Pause for toddlers to respond. Repeat and extend each response. Example: “Camila said ‘oink, oink!’ A pig says ‘oink.’ Camila thinks there will be a pig in our book! Let’s read our book and find out!”

ACT: *Open the book and hold it for each toddler to see. Ask toddlers about the picture and respond positively to each reaction. Example: “Yes, you see a baby, Emily! This is a baby cow. It is called a calf.”*

Read the first page aloud.]

I wonder what animal will be on the next page.

Let’s turn the page and see!

[Pause for toddlers to look at the new picture.]

This animal makes a “baa, baa” sound. Let’s all make a “baa, baa” sound!

[Encourage toddlers to make a “baa, baa” sound. Repeat the sound several times for toddlers to mimic.]

This animal is called a black sheep! Have you ever seen a sheep?

[Continue to read and talk about the pictures in the book using strategies, such as the following, to engage toddlers in the book:

- *Point to and describe pictures. Example: “Look at the mother pig. She is big! The mother pig is feeding her piglets! See their curly tails? The piglets are small. Let’s make a small piglet sound!” Demonstrate making soft pig sounds.*

**Option 1 continued**

- *Expand upon the book text and ask questions to support toddlers' understanding and interest. Pause for toddlers to react to your questions. Examples:*
 - *"This is an orange hen. A hen is a chicken that lays eggs. See her babies? Her babies are yellow, and they are called chicks. What do you think the chicks are doing?"*
 - *"Look at all the green froglets! They are jumping off the lily pad and into the water. What do you think the froglets are going to do in the water?"*
- *Respond to toddlers' comments and pointing by repeating and extending their responses and words. Examples:*
 - *"Yes, ducks say 'quack, quack,' Lucas. You know this is a mother duck and her babies! The babies are called ducklings. See their orange beaks? Where do you think the ducklings are going?"*
 - *"Ana said 'fishy.' Look at the colorful fish! This fish is called a rainbow trout. See all her babies? They have a silly name. The babies are called 'small fry!' Let's make fish sounds together."*
- *Read enthusiastically, varying your voice to add a dynamic quality.]*

RECAP: We looked at pictures of animals that live on a farm. Animals make different sounds. We practiced making some of the sounds that animals make. The kitty in our book has lots of animal friends on the farm! What animal sound should we make again?

👁️ What to Look For—Option 1

Toddlers will likely enjoy making some of the animal sounds with you. Provide sufficient time for toddlers to make animal sounds that seem to be of special interest. Repeat the sound and encourage toddlers to make the sound you make. The pictures of the animal mothers with their babies will be of interest to some toddlers. Toddlers are not expected to remember or recite the names of the baby animals, but using new words during a book reading increases toddlers' awareness of different words attached to different animals.

Notice what animals are of interest to toddlers and spend more time talking about these animals. Use rich language to describe the animals, including color, characteristics, behavior, and sounds. Talking with toddlers about what they see in the book can further develop their language skills. Some toddlers will participate vocally. Others may prefer to watch and listen. Positively recognize each toddler's participation. Example: "I see Lucas looking closely at the picture of the duck in our book. Lucas, do you like ducks?"

📊 More Scaffolding Tips—Option 1

Extra support ■ Sit close to toddlers so they can see the pictures and hear your voice. ■ Remember that toddlers are not expected to sit still during an informal gathering. Welcome a toddler who leaves and then returns to the gathering. ■ Some toddlers may enjoy reading this book in a one-to-one setting where they can look closely at and communicate about the animals of most interest.



Enrichment ■ Invite toddlers to look for the kitty on each page. Example: “Do you see the kitty on this page? No, there is no kitty. Let’s look on the next page. Yes, there is the kitty! Where is the kitty on this page?” ■ Encourage toddlers to make the sounds of both the mothers and the baby animals in the book. One approach is to encourage a louder sound for the mothers and a softer sound for the babies.

12–24 Months

Option 2 Informal Gathering



Skill and Goal
Receptive language
Expressive language
Awareness of differences in sounds

Toddlers participate in a shared book reading that includes a song about farm animals of interest to the toddlers.



Key Concepts
 Sounds
 Animals

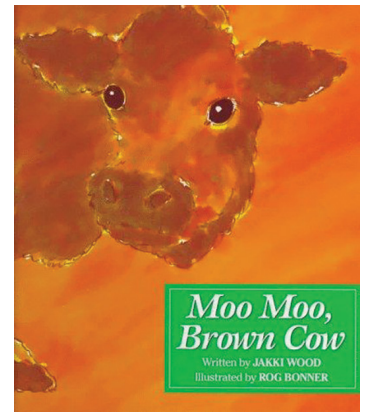


Materials Needed
Moo Moo, Brown Cow by
 Jakki Wood



Also Promotes
 Cognitive
 Self-Regulation

Invite several toddlers to read the book *Moo Moo, Brown Cow*. Talk with toddlers about the animals and their sounds on each page. Look at the pictures of the mothers with their babies and provide the names of the baby animals. After reading the book, invite toddlers to join you in singing a song about animals on a farm. Include in the song some animals featured in the book that seemed to be of particular interest to the toddlers. Hold the book open for toddlers to see the picture of the animal as you sing. Sing “Old MacDonald Had a Farm,” substituting a toddler’s name in place of “Old MacDonald.” Sing as many verses as there are toddlers in your gathering, so each toddler’s name is used once in the song. Encourage toddlers to join you in singing some of the words and animal sounds.



👁️ What to Look For—Option 2

Many toddlers will be familiar with this song and will likely join in singing some of the words and making the animal sounds. Toddlers enjoy hearing their name in a song and will be delighted to hear this special version. Some toddlers will join in the familiar parts, whereas others may prefer to listen to you sing. Recognize the participation of each toddler, whether he/she sings some of the song or connects with the song by listening.

📈 More Scaffolding Tips—Option 2

Extra support ■ Sing the words of the song slowly and with emphasis, encouraging toddlers to join you. ■ Point to the picture of the animal in the book as you sing each verse, providing a visual cue as to the animal toddlers are singing about.

Enrichment ■ If toddlers remain engaged after the song, ask if they would like to sing about more animals. Invite them to choose the animals they would like to include in the song. ■ Insert baby animal names into the song and make softer animal noises when you sing about a baby.

12–24 Months

Option 3 Informal Gathering



Skill and Goal
Receptive language
Expressive language
Awareness of differences in sounds

Toddlers participate in book-focused play with farm animal figures, blocks, and a barn.



Key Concepts

Sounds
 Animals
 In
 Out



Materials Needed

Moo Moo, Brown Cow by Jakki Wood
Big Red Barn by Margaret Wise Brown
 2 sets of farm animal figures
 Toy barn
 Assortment of blocks



Also Promotes

Cognitive
 Self-Regulation

Be Prepared: Arrange the barn, blocks, and farm animals on a low table. Encourage play and exploration by placing some of the animals in the barn, some on top of blocks, some in groups, and some alone.

Invite two toddlers to join you in looking at the two books about farm animals. Talk with the toddlers about some of the animals and their sounds in the *Moo Moo, Brown Cow* book. In the *Big Red Barn* book, emphasize how the animals come out of the barn during the day and go in the barn at night.

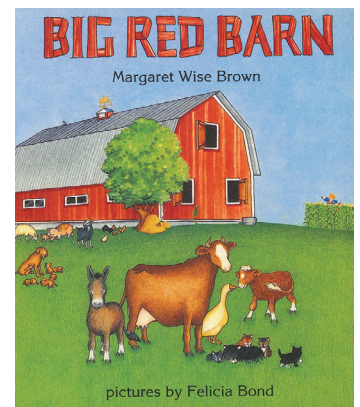
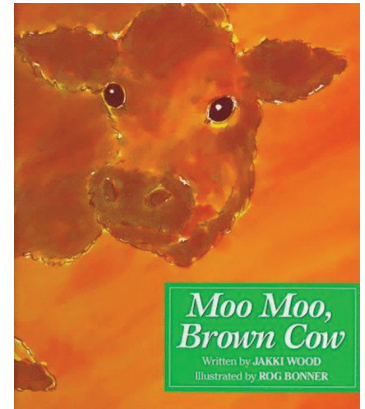
Introduce the farm materials and invite toddlers to play at the table. Encourage toddlers to interact with the farm animals, and to consider the different sounds their animals make as they play. Some toddlers may enjoy moving animals in and out of the barn. You may wish to remind toddlers that there are enough animals for everyone, and that the barn belongs to all the animals, so both toddlers can play. Talk with each toddler about his/her ideas and describe what each is doing with blocks and animals. Examples: “I can see you are putting your animals in the barn. You have a cow, a horse, and a pig! What are your animals going to do in the barn?” “Your animals are out of the barn near the blocks. What would you like to build for your animals?”

During this activity, use questions that encourage more than a yes or no response. Examples:

- “You have two cows. Your cows are taking a walk! Where are the cows going?”
- “You are lining the blocks up. What are you building for your animals?”

Repeat and extend each response. Examples:

- Child: Puts several animals inside the barn and says “night, night.”
- Caregiver: “Your animals are in the barn! I think you are pretending it is time for the animals to go ‘night, night’ like the animals in our book! Your animals are sleeping. What are your animals going to do when they wake up?”



**Option 3 continued**

- Child: "Play!"
- Caregiver: "Your animals are going to play when they wake up! Where are they going to play?"

Here is an example of extending a toddler's nonverbal communication:

- Child: Points to barn.
- Caregiver: "You are pointing to the barn. Our barn is red. Our barn looks like the red barn in our book! Would you like to play with the barn?"
- Child: "Cow!"
- Caregiver: "You have a cow. What would you like to do with your cow?"

👁️ What to Look For—Option 3

Pretend play with animal figures may be new for some toddlers. Arranging the play space in a pleasing way will encourage toddlers to explore and interact with the materials. Some toddlers will enjoy playing with the farm animals, whereas others may prefer to build with the blocks. Some toddlers may "act out" parts of the books, such as going in and out of the barn. Encourage toddlers to interact with the materials in the ways that they choose. Pay attention to opportunities to connect toddlers' play to one or both of the books reviewed at the beginning of the activity.

Look for opportunities to talk with a toddler about his/her plans. Example: "I can see you are lining your animals up. What are your animals doing in the line?" Also, toddlers' use of the toy animals and barn is a good time to look for opportunities to help toddlers become aware of the concepts of in and out.

📊 More Scaffolding Tips—Option 3

Extra support ■ Parallel play with a peer may be challenging for some toddlers. Ensure there are enough animal figures for each toddler to play with. If sharing the barn becomes a conflict, you may wish to put it away and encourage toddlers to play with the blocks and animals. ■ If playing next to a peer and sharing materials are too challenging for a toddler, you may wish to put the materials away and provide the opportunity to play one-to-one with you at a later time. In a one-to-one context, demonstrate and describe sharing and taking turns.

Enrichment ■ Extend the play of toddlers by asking questions about their ideas and actions. Example: "I can see you built a wall and put your animals on top. What are you going to do with your animals next?"

■ Toddlers may enjoy additional props, such as crumpled paper for animal food or hay, or large pieces of felt for blankets or ground cover (grass, dirt, water).



Interest Area

Materials Needed: *Moo Moo, Brown Cow* by Jakki Wood, farm animal figures, two sets, assortment of blocks

Place the farm animal figures in the block area and invite several toddlers to play. Toddlers may want to build a barn or house for the animals or interact with the materials in different ways. Toddlers may enjoy hearing the book read while they interact with the animals. Encourage language use by talking with toddlers about their ideas and actions as they play.



Family Child Care

Materials Needed: *Moo Moo, Brown Cow* by Jakki Wood

This book can be enjoyed by children of all ages. Read the book and encourage children to make the different animal sounds. Talk with children about the names of the baby animals, especially unfamiliar names or animals. Invite children to make the sounds of both adult and baby animals, using louder sounds for the big animals and quieter sounds for the baby animals. Babies may enjoy holding an age-appropriate farm animal during the activity.



12–24 Months

Option 1 One-to-One



Skill and Goal

Problem-solving
Object inquiry skills

A toddler practices taking apart two connected star builders.



Key Concepts

Take apart
Pull
Hold



Materials Needed

Giant star builders
Hands Can by Cheryl Willis Hudson



Also Promotes

Physical/Health
Communication/Language

Be Prepared: If toddlers have not had experience playing with star builders, you may wish to provide several days of exploratory play with the “connected” star builders prior to offering the activity described below. This activity is an opportunity for toddlers to take apart connected stars by holding one star and pulling the other star.

BEGIN: [*Sit on the floor facing a young toddler. Hold two stars that are connected. Give the toddler the connected stars.*]

EXPLAIN: We can play with stars today. Here are stars for you.

There are two stars.
Here is a star. Next to this star is another star.

[*Point to each star as you emphasize there are two. Pause and then describe the toddler’s actions or reaction. Examples: “You are holding two stars with your hands.” “You are tapping two connected stars on the mat.” “Now you are waving the stars.”*]

You can take apart your two stars.

ACT: [*Demonstrate how to disconnect the two stars. Hold the connected stars away from your body and in clear view of the toddler. Describe the action. Example: “I am holding this star, and I am pulling on the other star.” Emphasize the words pull and hold.*]

Put the two stars together (not the focus of today’s activity) and offer the connected stars to the toddler. Pause for the toddler to examine and manipulate the connected stars.

Describe the toddler’s words and actions. Example: “You are holding two connected stars. You said ‘ahh.’ I think you want to pull off a star. You are learning how to take apart the stars.” If appropriate, repeat the demonstration as you say, “Hold one and pull one.”

If the toddler disconnects the stars, enthusiastically acknowledge the accomplishment. Example: “You used two hands and pulled on two stars. The two stars came apart. You did it yourself!”



**Option 1 continued**

Ask the toddler whether he/she wants to take apart the stars again. Offer encouragement. Conclude play with the stars after 2–3 minutes or when the toddler seems to lose interest.

Show the book and invite the toddler to look at it with you. Example: “This book tells us about other things we can do with our hands. Let’s look at our book together.” Engage the toddler in a discussion of the book cover before reading and discussing each page. Encourage the toddler to point to pictures.]


RECAP: We played with star builders. You learned how to take them apart. You held one star and pulled on the other star. The stars came apart. You worked hard and practiced taking stars apart many times. We looked together at a book about things we can do with our hands.

 **What to Look For—Option 1**

If a toddler experiences considerable difficulty or frustration during or after your assistance (see Extra Support tip), modify the activity to suit the toddler’s abilities and interests. Example: the toddler may wish to play with a larger collection of stars by taking stars out of a container and/or putting stars in a container.

Some toddlers may learn to disconnect the stars quickly and will enjoy disconnecting the stars you fit together. Toddlers will be pleased with their ability to make a dramatic change in the connected stars. Some toddlers may implement an activity idea of their own, such as stacking the stars or arranging them in a line.

The enjoyment of one-to-one play with you may prompt some toddlers to focus on your demonstration and persist in disconnecting the star builders.

 **More Scaffolding Tips—Option 1**

Extra support ■ If a toddler tries to separate the stars without success, offer to help by holding one star and encouraging a toddler to pull on the connected star. Another option is to encourage the toddler to put his/her hand on top of your hand as you disconnect the stars. ■ The toddler may not be familiar with the concept of pull. Describe and demonstrate a pull action with your hands with connected stars and/or other objects that can be readily pulled. ■ Pursue the book at a later time if the toddler seems uninterested after working with the star builders.

Enrichment ■ If a young toddler is successful in disconnecting two stars, offer him/her three connected stars to pull apart. ■ Create a three-dimensional shape with several stars and present it to a toddler who seems eager to pull apart stars. ■ If a toddler is interested in connecting the stars, encourage exploration and offer some assistance. Connecting the stars is developmentally more challenging and is often easier to pursue after a toddler masters the task of pulling apart connected stars.



12–24 Months

Option 2 Informal Gathering



Skill and Goal

Problem-solving Object inquiry skills

Toddlers practice taking apart snap beads connected in a chain, with the option of placing the beads in a clear container after they are removed from the chain.



Key Concepts

Take apart
Pulling



Materials Needed

6 snap beads—1 per toddler
Clear containers—1 per toddler



Also Promotes

Physical/Health
Communication/Language

This activity option extends Option 1 by offering practice in taking apart a different set of items (snap beads). Create chains with the snap beads, making and offering longer chains if you anticipate toddlers will respond positively to the challenge of having a greater number of beads to pull off a chain. Toddler-size snap beads can be fastened into a circle if a higher level of challenge seems appropriate.



Toddlers will enjoy altering the bead chain by pulling off individual beads. Continue to refasten snap beads and talk with toddlers about how they got the chain of beads apart. Your attention and positive comments about the toddlers' accomplishments let them know their discovery play is valued.

If toddlers readily disconnected items, provide each interested toddler with a clear container, such as a large non-breakable peanut butter jar. Some toddlers will enjoy dropping beads into the container after taking apart the snap bead chain. Toddlers will enjoy seeing the beads held in a different manner. Playfully describe toddlers' actions during the activity. Example: "Wow. Ryan, you put all the beads into the jar!"

What to Look For—Option 2

If a jar is used, some toddlers will enjoy dumping the beads out onto the floor. Put the bead chain back together and encourage toddlers to take it apart again. This game can be a lot of fun for toddlers when it is presented in a playful manner.

The efforts of toddlers who do not wish to use a container are as important as the efforts of toddlers who use a container. Be careful to avoid offering more attention or reinforcement to toddlers who use a container.

If a toddler wishes to connect the beads on his/her own, offer just enough assistance for the child to be successful. Demonstrate how to connect two beads. Draw attention to the hole on one side of the bead, and the peg on the opposite side.

**Option 2 continued** More Scaffolding Tips—Option 2

Extra support ■ If a toddler wishes to fill the jar and dump the beads, rather than taking them apart, offer encouragement by describing the toddler's actions. ■ If a toddler has difficulty pulling the beads apart, hold one bead while he/she pulls on the attached bead with one or two hands.

Enrichment ■ Draw attention to two beads that are the same color. ■ Make a chain of beads with two alternating colors. Some toddlers may notice the pattern of colors. ■ If a toddler initiates connecting all the beads, offer assistance. Seeing all the beads connected will be interesting to some of the toddlers.



12–24 Months

Option 3 Informal Gathering



Skill and Goal

Object inquiry skills

Toddlers practice taking apart chains of star builders or snap beads as a caregiver offers informal comments about “more” and related concepts of quantities.



Key Concepts

Take apart
Pull
More
Longer
Bigger



Materials Needed

Giant star builders or snap beads—5 per toddler



Also Promotes

Physical/Health
Communication/Language

Create chains with five star builders or snap beads connected in each. Lay the chains along a low table (or other surface) easily accessible to toddlers. Sit close by and talk with toddlers about how they can pull off a star or bead. Remake the chains so toddlers can continue to take apart a chain.

Promote toddlers’ awareness of the concept of more in relation to the chains. Toddlers hear and probably use the word more in relation to food and drink. When appropriate, use the word more and other concepts related to quantity (without explicitly defining them) so toddlers have repeated exposure to these terms as they manipulate different quantities of stars or beads. Use words, such as longer, bigger, and more when you offer comments about the chains. Your use of these terms helps set the stage for learning more about quantities at the preschool stage.

What to Look For—Option 3

A toddler may carry a chain around the room for enjoyment. It is typical for toddlers to carry items from one place to another. It is beneficial to support this interest while also giving gentle encouragement to take apart a chain. Repeat the activity and observe the reactions of individual toddlers.

More Scaffolding Tips—Option 3

Extra support ■ Some toddlers will be most comfortable standing for the activity. Other toddlers may prefer to sit for the ease of controlling the snap beads or star builders.

Enrichment ■ When re-connecting the star builders or snap beads, encourage a toddler to give you one more. ■ Draw attention to two star builders or snap beads that are the same color. ■ Provide assistance to a toddler who is interested in connecting the star builders or snap beads himself/herself.

 Interest Area

Materials Needed: star builders

Create interest in problem-solving by connecting star builders in several different arrangements and placing them on a low table. Discover two different shapes you can create with four stars of all one color. You might include a multicolored arrangement of three builders that toddlers can discover and manipulate.

 Family Child Care

Materials Needed: star builders, non-breakable quart-size containers

Place two connected stars into non-breakable quart-size containers so each toddler has a set to use. Sit with toddlers on the floor and talk with them about pulling apart the stars. Older children can create chains of stars. Encourage an older child to compare the length of the chain to his/her foot, leg, or full height. Example: "Is your chain longer or shorter than your arm? How can you make it the same?"



12–24 Months

Option 1 One-to-One



Skill and Goal Self-control

A toddler observes how to calm down after an exciting activity.



Key Concepts Calm down



Materials Needed None



Also Promotes Communication/Language Physical/Health Social-Emotional

Be Prepared: Become familiar with the “Little Fishy Swimming” rhyme prior to the activity.

BEGIN: [*Invite a toddler to learn a new game about a pretend fish.*]

EXPLAIN: We can have fun playing a game with a pretend fish. I am going to make my hands into a fish, like this. My pretend fish is going swimming!

ACT: [*Demonstrate making a fish by placing your hands together, palm to palm with straight fingers. Move your hands as though swimming through water.*]

I am pretending my hands are a fish that is swimming in the water!

[*Enthusiastically recite the “Little Fishy Swimming” rhyme as you move your hands as though swimming through water. During the last line of the rhyme, separate your two palms wide and then close them with each “bubble.” Give a big clap as you say “pop!”*]

See the little fishy swimming in the water,
Swimming in the water,
See the little fishy swimming in the water,
Bubble, bubble, bubble, POP!

[*Enthusiastically laugh along with the toddler after the “pop!”*]

ASK: Would you like my pretend fish to go swimming again?

ACT: [*If the toddler responds positively, repeat the rhyme enthusiastically with actions. Then comment on how the activity made you feel.*]

I had fun making my hands into a pretend fish during the fishy game. My fishy popped a bubble! I feel happy and excited!

EXPLAIN: I am going to take a break to calm down. I am going to rest after doing something exciting.



Option 1 continued

ACT: *[Demonstrate one or more of the following ways to transition to a calmer state:*

- *Softly announce that the little fishy is tired from swimming and is going to rest.*
- *Quietly hum or sing a familiar song.*
- *Close eyes briefly and take a slow deep breath.]*

RECAP: I pretended my hands were a fish swimming in the water! My fishy was swimming and swimming, and then it popped a bubble! After my fish did a lot of swimming, I rested. Now I feel calm.



12–24 Months

Option 2 One-to-One



Skill and Goal

Self-control

A toddler practices calming down after engaging in an exciting activity guided by a caregiver.



Key Concepts

Calm down



Materials Needed

None



Also Promotes

Communication/Language
Physical/Health

Invite a toddler to join you on the floor to play a game with a pretend fish. Example: “We are going to have fun playing a fish game! I am pretending my hands are a fish that is swimming. See how I am making the fishy swim?” Make a fish by placing your hands together, palm to palm with fingers straight. Move your hands through the air as though a fish is swimming. Enthusiastically recite the “Little Fishy Swimming” rhyme while making your pretend fish move through air (pretend water). During the last line of the rhyme, separate your palms wide and then close them with each bubble. Give a big clap when you say “pop!”

**See the little fishy swimming in the water,
Swimming in the water,
See the little fishy swimming in the water,
Bubble, bubble, bubble, POP!**

Invite the toddler to join you in a second round. Example: “Would you like to try the fish game with me? Let’s make a pretend fish with our hands and make the fishy swim!” Recite the words and demonstrate the actions of the rhyme, encouraging the toddler to imitate your actions. Some toddlers may want to repeat the rhyme together one or more times. Comment on how you are both feeling after the fun activity. Example: “We had fun with the fishy game! I can see you are happy and excited. I feel excited too!”

After the exciting activity, demonstrate how to calm down and encourage the toddler to imitate your actions. Example: “Let’s take a break and rest. It is time for us to calm down.” Encourage the toddler to join you in one or more of the following ways to transition to a calmer state:

- Softly announce that the fish are tired from swimming and it is time for them to rest. Put your “fish” (hands) in your lap.
- Quietly hum or sing a familiar song.
- Close eyes briefly and take a slow deep breath.

If the toddler needs additional support to calm down, you may wish to rub his/her back softly. Acknowledge the toddler’s efforts to calm down with you after the exciting activity. Example: “Our hands are in our laps. Our fish are resting. We had fun playing the fishy game. Then we rested. Now we feel calm.”



12-24 Months

Option 3 One-to-One



Skill and Goal Self-control

A toddler independently practices calming down after engaging in an exciting activity.



Key Concepts Calm down



Materials Needed None



Also Promotes Communication/Language Physical/Health

Be Prepared: Engage a toddler in Option 2 prior to offering the current option on a later day or time (not back-to-back activities). Options 1 and 2 provide information that is helpful for a toddler to know prior to participating in Option 3.

Invite a toddler to join you on the floor to make and play with a pretend fish. Introduce the rhyme (see Option 1 or 2) and show the toddler how to make a fish with his/her hands (see Option 1 or 2). Then invite the toddler to help his/her "fish" go swimming. Example: "Fish like to swim. You can make your fish swim, like this!" Enthusiastically recite the rhyme while moving your hands (fish) through the air as though swimming in water. Encourage the toddler to join you. Remember to separate your palms when saying "bubble," and clap your hands once loudly when you say "pop!"

Then invite the toddler to do the actions independently as you recite the rhyme. Acknowledge the toddler's participation and enthusiasm. Example: "Your fish was swimming and swimming. Then your fish popped a bubble! You like this game. You are laughing and having fun!"

Announce that the fish is tired from swimming and it is time to rest. Invite the toddler to rest his/her "fish" (hands) in his/her lap and to calm his/her body. Example: "Your fish is resting. It is time for you to rest and to be calm. How are you going to calm down? Show me what you do when you want to calm your body." Give the toddler quiet time to calm himself/herself.

Recognize and acknowledge the toddler's efforts to calm down after the exciting activity. Example: "You had fun playing the fishy game, Liana! After your fish went swimming, you rested your fish in your lap and sat quietly. You calmed your body. You are learning how to become calm."



What to Look For—Options 1–3

The three options offer a coherent progression in challenge, from observing (Option 1) to participating with clear guidance (Option 2) to engaging in both parts of the activity (“swimming” and calming down) with minimal guidance (Option 3). Option 3 is most appropriately pursued after a toddler has become familiar with the activity by participating in Option 2, as noted in the Option 3 description.

Some toddlers may become overly excited and need a less stimulating activity. (See Extra Support tip below.) Also, some toddlers may find it especially challenging in Option 2 or 3 to stop the “swimming” actions and move into a phase of calming down. Option 3 may be easily moved into an Option 2 approach if more support is needed for calming down. Demonstrating again how to calm down also may be a helpful way to support a toddler’s efforts to calm down, as suggested in the Extra Support tips.

Some toddlers will enjoy reciting some of the rhyme, such as “pop,” whereas others may focus on the actions. Toddlers are not expected to memorize or say the rhyme.

More Scaffolding Tips—Options 1–3

Extra support ■ If a toddler finds it challenging to calm down in Option 2 or 3, invite him/her to observe you demonstrate one or more ways to calm down (Option 1). It also may be helpful to offer extra time to practice calming down with support in Option 2 or 3. ■ Toddlers who become overly excited during the activity (Option 2 or 3) may benefit from a slower, quieter version of the fish rhyme. Example: invite the toddler to have his/her fish swim slowly and use a gentler, quieter clap for the “pop!” ■ Some toddlers may benefit from a slightly stronger indication that the fish activity is done (Option 2 or 3). Example: “The fish is not swimming because the fish is resting. Swimming is done. It is time to calm down and rest.” ■ Sit next to a toddler who has trouble calming down.

Enrichment ■ Add excitement to the rhyme by saying “bubble” very slowly. Include a dramatic pause right before saying “pop!” ■ Encourage the toddler to recite some of the words of the rhyme with you. Toddlers may particularly enjoy saying “bubble” and “pop!”



Interest Area

Materials Needed: Several toy fish in a basket, assorted nursery rhyme books

Place the toy fish and books on a low table. Invite several toddlers to use the toy fish to repeat the “Little Fishy Swimming” rhyme. Recite several additional rhymes from the books that are of interest to toddlers. You may wish to make up hand motions and encourage toddlers to copy them as you say the rhymes. After the rhymes/finger plays, invite toddlers to sit quietly with you and practice calming down before moving on to another activity.

 Family Child Care

Materials Needed: bubble solution and wand

The Little Fishy Swimming rhyme can be enjoyed by children of all ages. Babies may enjoy holding a toy fish while listening to the rhyme. Older children may enjoy “swimming” around the room with their pretend fish. Consider taking a bottle of bubble solution outdoors. Blow bubbles while reciting the rhyme and invite children to pop them while pretending to be fish. Before moving on to the next activity, invite all the children to “rest” their fish and sit quietly for a few moments.



12–24 Months

Option 1 One-to-One



Skill and Goal

Social interaction skills

A toddler engages in play with a caregiver focused on rolling a ball back and forth.



Key Concepts

Take turns



Materials Needed

Soft ball



Also Promotes

Communication/Language
Physical/Health
Self-Regulation
Cognitive

BEGIN: [*Invite a toddler to sit facing you on the floor. Greet the toddler by name and introduce the ball.*]

EXPLAIN: Here is a ball that we can play with!

ASK: Would you like to roll the ball with me?

[*Pause for the toddler to consider and respond. Interest may be indicated by smiling, nodding, or reaching for the ball.*]

EXPLAIN: We are going to take turns rolling the ball back and forth. I am going to roll the ball to you. Then it will be your turn to roll the ball to me!

ACT: [*Roll the ball gently to the toddler.*]

You have the ball! Now it's your turn! You can roll the ball to me!

[*Encourage the toddler to roll the ball to you.*]

I have the ball. Now it's my turn!

[*Continue to roll the ball back and forth with the toddler, each time indicating whose turn it is. You may wish to turn your words into a chant, such as the following:*

Rolling, rolling, now it's your turn!

Rolling, rolling, now it's my turn!

Use the toddler's name instead of "your."]

RECAP: We played with a ball today. We took turns rolling the ball back and forth! I rolled the ball to you. Then it was your turn and you rolled the ball to me! We had fun taking turns with the ball!

What to Look For—Option 1

Toddlers can develop important social skills while talking and playing with others. Learning how to take turns is a valuable part of social skill development. This activity provides the opportunity for toddlers to practice taking turns during a simple and enjoyable game with a trusted adult. A ball is a favorite toy of many toddlers, and most will enjoy the act of rolling the ball back and forth. If a toddler prefers to hold the ball rather than take turns, you may wish to end the activity and try again at a later time. (See Extra support tip below.) Affirm the toddler's participation in playing with the ball and taking turns.

**Option 1 continued****▬ More Scaffolding Tips—Option 1**

Extra support ■ Provide extra support and encouragement if the toddler wants to hold the ball rather than take turns rolling it. Example: “You like the red ball. You want to hold it. When you are done holding it, you can roll it to me. Then we can play with the ball together!” If the toddler continues to hold the ball, allow him/her to hold it for several more moments and then invite the toddler to choose another activity. You may wish to try again another day, perhaps taking turns with a different toy.

Enrichment ■ If a toddler enjoys taking turns with the ball, ask if he/she would like to invite a friend to play. Help the toddler ask a peer and facilitate the play between the two toddlers.



12–24 Months

Option 2 One-to-One



Skill and Goal

Social interaction skills

A toddler engages in play with a caregiver focused on taking turns in building a tower with blocks.



Key Concepts

Work together
Take turns



Materials Needed

8 building blocks
Basket



Also Promotes

Communication/Language
Physical/Health
Self-Regulation
Cognitive

Invite a toddler to join you on the floor to play. Introduce the blocks and encourage the toddler to explore them. Talk with the toddler about the blocks, such as color, size, or texture. After the toddler has picked up and explored the blocks, place them in the basket and invite the toddler to work with you to build a tower. Example: “Let’s build a tower with the blocks! We can work together to build the tower. We are going to take turns stacking the blocks. Let’s see how high we can build our tower!”

Place one block on the floor between you. Demonstrate picking up a block from the basket and placing it on top of the first block. Encourage the toddler to “take a turn” picking up a block and putting it on top of yours. Example: “I put a block on our tower. Now it is your turn! It is Noah’s turn to put a block on the tower.” Continue to promote back-and-forth interactions and turn-taking. User strategies, such as the following:

- Offer pauses during the activity for the toddler to vocalize, look, or act. Respond to the toddler’s actions or communications. Example: “You said ‘fall down!’ Yes, the block tower got so high it fell down!”
- Describe the toddler’s actions with the blocks. Example: “You have a red block, Noah. You are putting the red block on top of the yellow block!” Describe your actions with the blocks, too.
- Emphasize turn-taking in the interactions. Examples: “I put a blue block on the tower. Now it is your turn, Noah! Which block are you going to put on our tower next?” “You put the blue block on the tower. Now it is my turn. We are taking turns!”

When all the blocks are stacked (or the toddler appears to be done stacking blocks), invite the toddler to tip the tower. Show enthusiasm with the toddler as the blocks fall down. The toddler may want to build another tower with you to knock down. Acknowledge and affirm the toddler’s participation.

What to Look For—Option 2

This activity uses blocks to facilitate back-and-forth interactions with a toddler, with emphasis on taking turns. Learning the skill of taking turns is a slow and gradual process. Toddlers are not expected to understand or engage in turn-taking behaviors independently. This activity provides practice at this new skill during an enjoyable interaction with a familiar adult.

**Option 2 continued**

Some toddlers may want to build the structure on their own. (See Extra support tip below.) Also, a toddler may not be interested in stacking the blocks to build a tower. If this occurs, suggest a different way to play with the blocks that the toddler may want to join. (See Extra Support tip below.) Emphasize positive social interactions during the activity. Affirm the toddler's efforts to work with you and take turns.

 **More Scaffolding Tips—Option 2**

Extra support ■ If a toddler is uninterested in stacking or building a tower, suggest different ways to interact with the blocks. This may include taking turns placing the blocks side by side, or lining the blocks up end to end. ■ If a toddler wants to build with the blocks without taking turns, quietly describe the toddler's actions while he/she creates a structure. Then invite the toddler to build something new together, gently facilitating turn-taking with the blocks. ■ If this activity remains challenging for a toddler, invite him/her to take turns rolling a ball (Option 1).

Enrichment ■ Invite the toddler to select which block you will use during your turn. Example: "Now it is my turn! Which block should I put on the tower next?"



12–24 Months

Option 3 Informal Gathering



Skill and Goal

Social interaction skills

Toddlers engage in play with a caregiver focused on taking turns in making motions that others copy.



Key Concepts

- Take turns
- Watch
- Copy



Materials Needed

None



Also Promotes

- Communication/Language
- Physical/Health
- Self-Regulation

Invite two toddlers to play an imitation game. Explain that the toddlers will watch you and then imitate your motions. Describe the motions as you move and encourage toddlers to copy you. Example: “Please watch what I do. Then you can do the same! I am stretching my arms high. Let’s all stretch our arms high!” Repeat this approach with several different motions, then invite each toddler to take a turn being the “leader” and doing a motion for you and the other toddler to follow. Examples: “Ava, it is your turn for us to copy you! What are you going to do?” “Ava is shaking her hands. Let’s watch Ava and then shake our hands like she is!”

Some toddlers may want to repeat a motion. Other toddlers may want a prompt or suggestion for a new motion. Example: “Maybe you would like to clap your hands, Martin. Would you like me to clap my hands, too? Let’s all clap our hands!”

Encourage toddlers to take turns in leading the motions. Example: “Martin clapped his hands. We clapped our hands too! Now it is Ava’s turn again. Let’s watch Ava to see what she is going to do!”

Acknowledge and affirm each toddler’s efforts to interact and take turns during the activity. Example: “Martin clapped his hands during his turn. We clapped our hands with Martin. When it was Ava’s turn, she patted her head. We patted our heads too! We practiced taking turns together. This was a fun game!”

👁️ What to Look For—Option 3

This activity increases the turn-taking challenge of Option 2 by introducing social interactions with a peer. Games, such as one described in this option, provide valuable practice in the social skill of taking turns. Toddlers may participate in different ways. Some may enjoy imitating you and the peer, as well as having a turn to be the leader. Other toddlers may want to do their own motions and look for you to follow. Gently encourage them to participate in turn-taking. (See Extra Support tip below.)

📊 More Scaffolding Tips—Option 3

Extra support ■ If a toddler seems reluctant to relinquish the leader role, gently remind him/her that it is time for someone else to be a leader, and his/her turn to be a leader will happen again. Example: “It is Martin’s turn to be the leader. It will be your turn next! Martin is rubbing his belly! I am rubbing my belly too. You can rub your belly with Martin and me!” ■ Acknowledge a toddler’s patience in waiting to be a leader. Example: “Now it is your turn, Ava! You waited during our turn, and you are excited it is your turn! What are you going to do?”

**Option 3 continued**

Enrichment ■ If the two toddlers are readily managing the turn-taking process, invite a third toddler to join the game. Use this as an opportunity to demonstrate how to invite another person to join in play.

■ Help toddlers take turns being the leader in walking around the room. Keep each turn short to limit waiting and potential frustration.

**Interest Area**

Materials Needed: soft ball

Provide a soft ball for several toddlers to play with in an open area of the room. Invite 2–3 toddlers to sit facing each other and practice rolling the ball back and forth. Toddlers may want to sit facing each other with legs extended in a V and feet touching their partner's feet to keep the ball from rolling away. Talk with toddlers about their actions and efforts to take turns rolling the ball.

**Family Child Care**

Children of all ages enjoy playing simple games that involve taking turns and copying others. Older children will help to demonstrate positive social interactions during games, and younger toddlers will enjoy watching their peers participate. The following games may be adapted to a mixed age group:

Simon Says—Invite each child to take turns being “Simon,” using their name in place of Simon. Example: “Daniel says to stomp your feet! Let’s stomp our feet like Daniel!” Older children may say the words as they demonstrate the action. Younger toddlers will enjoy hearing their name and seeing their peers copy their motions.

Follow the Leader—Invite the children to take turns being the leader as the group walks around the room. This activity may also work well outside. Older children may enjoy adding actions while they walk, such as stomping like a dinosaur.



12–24 Months

Option 1 One-to-One



Skill and Goal

Gross motor development

A toddler rolls a ball back and forth with a caregiver.



Key Concepts

Push
Roll
Catch



Materials Needed

8-inch ball



Also Promotes

Cognitive
Communication/Language
Social-Emotional

BEGIN: *[Invite a toddler by name to join you in an open space for rolling a ball back and forth. Encourage the toddler to sit on the floor with his/her legs out straight and feet apart. Demonstrate a sitting position.]*

EXPLAIN: We can have fun rolling the ball back and forth. I can go first. Please watch me roll the ball between your feet. You can catch it with your hands and arms.

ACT: 1-2-3 roll!

[Use two hands to push the ball forward so it rolls at a sufficient speed to reach the toddler. Emphasize the difference and connection between push and roll. We push the ball and then it rolls.]

Recognize the toddler's success or effort. Example: "Good try at catching the ball!"

Describe the toddler's actions. Respond to the toddler's non-verbal and verbal expressions. Foster a conversation as you and the toddler play together.

Describe how the ball rolls. Examples: "Our ball rolled fast (or slowly)." "Our ball stopped." "Our ball rolled away." "Our ball was slow and it stopped."

If the ball rolls past the toddler, encourage him/her to get the ball and keep the game going.

Encourage the toddler to push the ball toward you. Demonstrate the action needed to roll the ball, if appropriate.

Roll the ball back and forth with the toddler several times. Then ask the toddler whether he/she wishes to roll the ball some more with you. The activity may end after a few back-and-forth exchanges with the ball.]

RECAP: *[Describe highlights of the activity. Example: "We had fun with the ball. You pushed the ball, and it rolled to me. You caught the ball with your hands."]*

**Option 1 continued****👁️ What to Look For—Option 1**

There is likely to be a wide range of gross motor skills within your group due to differences in age and development. This activity may appear simple, but it involves many cognitive skills related to perception and reasoning that are integral to motor development. These skills include judging:

- when to reach for the approaching ball,
- how to hold hands in relation to the size of the ball,
- which direction to push the ball, and
- how much force to use in pushing the ball.

Pay attention to each one of these skills as a toddler pushes and catches a ball with you. Focus on an aspect that seems most challenging. You may wish to use a larger ball, for example, if hand grip is a persistent challenge. A simple reminder of where to push the ball may help a toddler focus on the appropriate direction. Determining the amount of force to use in pushing a ball takes time to develop. Using two hands (versus one) hand will probably increase the force. At this young age, repeated experience in pushing a ball is likely to lead to awareness of how the amount of force in a push is linked to how far the ball rolls. There is a parallel cause-and-effect discovery for toddlers to make in using their hands to flatten play dough (pushing harder makes the dough flatter).

In addition to the motor and related cognitive skills cited above, look for ways to foster a positive social interaction with the toddler as you cooperate in rolling a ball back and forth. The back-and-forth pattern of interaction in this activity is also an emerging part of children's play with peers.

📈 More Scaffolding Tips—Option 1

Extra support ■ Move closer to the toddler. ■ Increase or decrease the speed of the ball so the toddler can be successful with a catch. ■ Involve another adult in the activity so you (or the other adult) can kneel next to the toddler to provide support and guidance about where to throw a ball or soft items. ■ If a toddler becomes distracted, describe the toddler's behavior. Examples: "I see you are watching Jake and Trina. Would you like to finish our game?" "I see you are finished playing for now. You are carrying the ball to the bin."

Enrichment ■ Provide balls of different sizes, colors, textures, and softness to sustain interest in the activity.

12–24 Months

Option 2
Informal Gathering

Skill and Goal

Gross motor
development

Toddlers take turns rolling a ball in an effort to knock down a cardboard block.



Key Concepts

Roll
Take turns



Materials Needed

8-inch ball—1 per toddler and staff
5–6 rectangular cardboard blocks



Also Promotes

Social-Emotional
Communication/Language

Be Prepared: Create an open space for the activity. Gather balls and blocks. Stand the cardboard blocks on end in the center of the play space.

Invite 2–3 toddlers to play a game of rolling a ball. Give each toddler an eight-inch ball. Invite the toddlers to stand next to you with a ball about three feet from the blocks.

“We have lots of blocks. You can roll your ball and make our blocks fall down.”

Explain that we will take turns. Describe taking turns, if appropriate. Kneel next to a toddler and demonstrate how to push the ball forward. Encourage toddlers to use two hands to push the ball. Offer each toddler some practice pushes with their ball, if appropriate. Assist the first toddler if another demonstration seems needed.

Provide clear and consistent guidance for turn-taking. Example: “Isabell will roll her ball. Then Tory will roll a ball. Okay Tory, hold your ball while Isabell rolls a ball.”

Describe desired actions, including your work in setting up the blocks. Example: “Now it is Tory’s turn. I will set up the blocks for you, Tory. Isabell, be sure to hold your ball. It is Tory’s turn now.”

Recognize toddlers’ actions. Examples: “Yay for Isabell for pushing the ball! Yay for Tory for holding the ball!”

Continue as time and toddler interest permit. At the end of the activity, offer highlights of what happened. Emphasize how we pushed the ball, the ball (sometimes, usually) knocked down a block, and we took turns.

 What to Look For—Option 2

This activity adds challenge to the Option 1 activity by involving turn-taking with several peers and providing a clearer way to explore how the force of a push leads to the length of a roll and whether a block is knocked over. It is important to emphasize the process of pushing the ball, how a push makes the ball roll, and how the amount of force used to push the ball is linked to how far the ball rolls and whether it knocks down a block. There will be differences across toddlers in whether their ball knocks over a block, of course. The important potential learning in this activity is why a ball does or does not knock over a block. Avoid comments that suggest some toddlers’ pushes are more successful than others, and establish a lighthearted tone for the activity so toddlers can freely focus on their experiences in manipulating a ball.

Skill in turn-taking takes time and experience to develop. It is unlikely that most toddlers who participate in this activity will independently engage in

**Option 2 continued**

turn-taking as part of pushing a ball. It is important to consistently provide information on who is to push and who is wait, as suggested in the activity description.

Some toddlers may be interested in throwing a ball at the blocks, but the current activity is focused on pushing the ball with enough force so it rolls and maybe knocks down a block. Throwing a ball is a different set of skills and experiences.

 A small icon of a staircase with three steps, positioned to the left of the section header.**More Scaffolding Tips—Option 2**

Extra support ■ Decrease the space between toddlers and the blocks to increase the chance of hitting a block. ■ Add more blocks to increase chances to tip them over. ■ Use toddler's names with information about who is to push a ball and who is to wait. Be clear about what the turn involves. Example: "It is Taylor's turn to push the ball" (versus "It is Taylor's turn."). ■ Use a basket or box to hold the balls when they are not to be pushed, rather than asking a toddler to hold his/her ball and wait. ■ Ask a toddler who is waiting for a turn to push his/her ball to stand close to you. ■ If guided turn-taking is not effective, add more blocks and set them up so two children may roll balls at the same time.

Enrichment ■ Provide different sizes of balls and encourage toddlers to compare how they roll when pushed.



12–24 Months

Option 3 Informal Gathering



Skill and Goal

Gross motor development

Toddlers participate in open-ended play with balls.



Key Concepts

Ball

Roll

Drop



Materials Needed

8-inch ball—1 per toddler

2–3 large baskets or boxes



Also Promotes

Cognitive

Communication/Language

Invite several toddlers to play with balls in an open space indoors or outdoors. Place the baskets in different parts of the activity space's perimeter (not in the center). Give each toddler one ball. Encourage the toddlers to play with the balls in ways they wish. Possibilities you may wish to suggest include:

- Carry a ball from one basket to another basket
- Drop a ball in a basket and pick it up
- Roll a ball
- Catch a rolling ball pushed by a peer or caregiver

Discourage toddlers from throwing a ball or running with a ball, so everyone can stay safe.

Move around the activity space and describe some specific things toddlers are doing with their balls. Example: "Lucia dropped her ball in a basket. The ball bounced when it hit the basket." In this example, drawing attention to the ball bouncing may prompt Lucia to continue her exploration of what happens when a ball is dropped. Encourage toddlers to describe what they want to do with their ball and also what they are doing.

Consider using a song to describe the activity and draw it to a close. The following possibility is sung to the tune of "The Muffin Man."

We are playing with our balls today,

Balls today, balls today.

We are playing with our balls today.

It's fun to see them roll.

Time to put our balls away,

Balls away, balls away.

Time to put our balls away.

We'll play another day.

👁️ What to Look For—Option 3

The opportunity to move around while manipulating a ball offers new opportunities for toddlers to explore their actions with a ball. Toddlers may practice picking up a ball from the floor, regaining their balance, and walking with an object. The provision of large containers also adds novelty to the activity. Some toddlers may spend their time dropping their ball in a basket or moving their ball from one basket to another. Transporting items from one area to another area of a room is of keen interest to children of this age. Doing

**Option 3 continued**

so without dropping the item may be especially challenging for some toddlers. And, of course, the open-ended nature of the experience supports child-initiated exploration.

Observing and talking with a toddler about his/her ball play helps toddlers focus and persist in a task, such as putting a ball into a box and taking it back out. It is also helpful to demonstrate in this open-ended context how to roll a ball. A toddler may appreciate your help in determining a target of the roll.

Thinking about a motor action and then doing the action is called motor planning. Fostering motor planning in early years can help a toddler develop a solid foundation for later motor skills.

 A small icon of a wooden scaffold structure. **More Scaffolding Tips—Option 3**

Extra support ■ The open-ended quality of the activity may introduce a challenge for some toddlers. Provide suggestions of what to do if a toddler seems uncertain about how to proceed. Offer reminder demonstrations and/or verbal support for actions with a ball previously done in more structured activities such as rolling a ball back and forth (Option 1).

Enrichment ■ Provide balls of different colors and sizes.

**Interest Area**

Materials Needed: push toys, variety of objects, large paper, crayons, mirror, sock balls or shower scrubbies, big blocks, indoor climbers

Support gross motor skills by providing push toys and a variety of objects for toddlers to carry. Draw attention to pictures showing children moving in different ways. Lay paper on the floor with crayons for toddlers to scribble. Draw attention to a mirror where toddlers can see their whole body move. Provide materials toddlers can safely manipulate without constant supervision, such as sock balls or shower scrubbies.

**Family Child Care**

Materials Needed: soft lightweight balls, 4-inch balls, ping-pong ball, paper

Children of all ages will benefit from planned ball play experiences. While toddlers are developing skills in rolling a ball, preschool-age children will generally have an interest in throwing smaller balls in an open area or throwing a ball at a large target. Provide four-inch balls for infants to grasp and explore. Roll a soft ball to an infant and encourage him/her to take hold of it.

School-age children may enjoy playing catch using a ping-pong ball. Or encourage older children to toss a ping-pong ball or paper ball into an opening in a box.