



**Communication/
Language**

Exploring Words

- Option 1** (IG) Toddlers participate in a shared book reading focused on pictures of different animals.
- Option 2** (IG) Toddlers participate in a shared book reading and a follow-up activity focused on different animals.
- Option 3** (OO) A toddler holds and manages a book to identify an animal puzzle piece that is the same as the animal featured on a book page.



Cognitive

Exploring Objects

- Option 1** (IG) Toddlers participate in a shared book reading focused on size and pretend to make their bodies big and small.
- Option 2** (IG) Toddlers make their bodies big and small as part of a rhyme.
- Option 3** (OO) A toddler matches toy bears and bowls by size as part of a shared book reading focused on size.



Self-Regulation

Paying Attention

- Option 1** (OO) A toddler watches and helps a caregiver focus on characteristics of two objects to determine whether they are the same or different.
- Option 2** (OO) A toddler finds a toy in a basket that is the same as the toy a caregiver selects.
- Option 3** (OO) A toddler independently finds items in a basket that are the same.



Social-Emotional

Interacting with Others

- Option 1** (OO) A toddler participates with a caregiver in open-ended play that includes a dollhouse and related toys as a follow-up to a shared book reading.
- Option 2** (IG) Toddlers participate in open-ended play with a shared dollhouse and related materials.



Physical/Health

Moving Our Bodies

- Option 1** (OO) A toddler who shows beginning interest in stairsteps uses hands and knees to crawl up and down steps with caregiver support.
- Option 2** (OO) A toddler who is ready to stand while going up stairsteps practices walking up the steps and using a sitting position to come down the steps with caregiver support.
- Option 3** (OO) A toddler practices stepping down a set of stairs after stepping up the stairs.

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



12–24 Months

Option 1 Informal Gathering



Skill and Goal

Receptive language
Expressive language

Toddlers participate in a shared book reading focused on pictures of different animals.



Key Concepts

Pictures
See
Animals



Materials Needed

Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See? by Bill Martin Jr & Eric Carle



Also Promotes

Cognitive

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

EXPLAIN: This book is called *Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?* This book is about seeing. We see things with our eyes.

[Point to your eyes.]

These are my eyes. Please point to our eyes.

[Encourage toddlers to point to their eyes.]

We will use our eyes to look at the pictures in our book! This is the brown bear. I am pointing to his eyes.

[Point to the bear's eyes.]

The brown bear and other animals in our book use their eyes to see different animals.

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

[Pause for toddlers to respond. Repeat and extend each response.]

Let's read our book and find out what animals we will see!

ACT: *[Open the book and hold it for each toddler to see. Ask the toddlers about the picture and respond positively to each reaction. Example: "Tiana said 'bear.' Yes, this is the brown bear from the cover of our book! Look, he has eyes and a nose and a mouth!"*

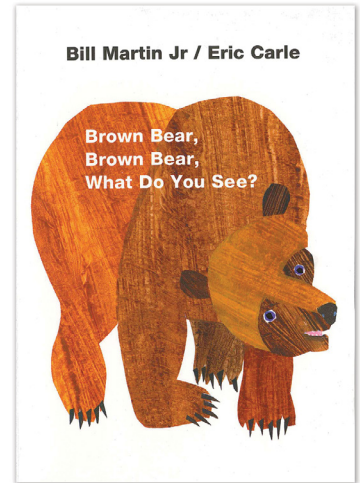
Read the first page slowly and accentuate each word for toddlers to hear and understand.]

What animal do you think we will see on the next page?

[Pause to allow time for toddlers to respond and to create anticipation.]

Let's turn the page and see!

[Turn the page and show enthusiasm for the animal pictured. Provide time for toddlers to look at the new picture.]



**Option 1 continued**

This is a red bird! The brown bear looked with his eyes and saw a red bird. The bird has red wings and a yellow beak. What else do we see?

[Pause for toddlers to respond.]

I wonder what animal the red bird will see on the next page. Are you ready for me to turn the page?

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

- *Point to and describe pictures. Encourage toddlers to point to and talk about pictures with you. Examples:*
 - *"Look at this animal! It is white and furry and wearing a collar. What is this animal called?"*
 - *"Look at the yellow duck! The duck has orange feet. His feet help him swim underwater."*
- *Expand on the book text and ask specific picture-related questions to help toddlers understand the story. Examples:*
 - *"This is a purple cat. Do you see the cat's long tail? Look at the cat's eyes!"*
 - *"This is a horse. The horse is blue! I have never seen a blue horse. Have you ever seen a blue horse?"*
- *Repeat and extend toddlers' comments and pointing. Examples:*
 - *"You said 'quack,' Joseph. You know this is a duck. A duck says 'quack!' See the duck's eyes? I wonder what animal the duck is going to see on the next page!"*
 - *"Isabella is pointing to our fish tank. We have a goldfish in our fish tank, just like the goldfish in this picture! Our goldfish has fins and swims in the water. Do you think the goldfish in our book swims in the water too?"*
- *Read the text with an enthusiastic voice to add a dynamic quality.]*

RECAP: The animals in our book used their eyes to see other animals. We used our eyes to see the different animals, too! Which animal was your favorite? Would you like to look at the picture of that animal again?

What to Look For—Option 1

The illustrations of familiar animals are likely to sustain toddlers' interests in the book. Pay attention to toddlers' visual engagement of pictures. If toddlers seem focused on pictures and related discussion, provide information about animal characteristics, such as color, body parts, skin (fur, feathers), size, sounds, or actions (fly, hop, swim). Toddlers at this age are not expected to know or remember colors or body part names, but early awareness of concepts related to animal characteristics can contribute to vocabulary knowledge over time.

Toddlers are likely to connect with the rhythmic, repetitive text of the book. Some may join you in reciting some of the familiar words. Others may prefer to watch and listen. Positively recognize different forms of participation.



More Scaffolding Tips—Option 1

Extra support ■ Sit close to the toddlers so they can see the pictures and hear your voice. ■ Follow the pace of the toddlers in the gathering. If there is interest in a particular animal or picture, pause to spend some time talking about the item. ■ Some toddlers may prefer to read this book with you in a one-to-one setting where they can spend more time looking at the pictures and listening to the repetitive text.

Enrichment ■ Invite toddlers to repeat some of the familiar text with you. ■ On the last page of the book, invite toddlers to point to particular animals. Example: "Where is the green frog on this page of our book? Let's look for the green frog and point to it!"

12–24 Months

Option 2 Informal Gathering



Skill and Goal

Receptive language
Expressive language

Toddlers participate in a shared book reading and a follow-up activity focused on different animals.



Key Concepts

Pictures
See
Animals



Materials Needed

Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See? by Bill Martin Jr & Eric Carle
Animal figures or stuffed animals—1–2 per toddler (see Enrichment tip)



Also Promotes

Cognitive
Physical/Health
Social-Emotional

Invite several toddlers to read a book about animals with you. When you read the book, pause on each page to talk about what toddlers see in the picture. You may wish to invite toddlers to point to specific animals on the last page. Example: “Where is the purple cat on this page? Let’s point to the purple cat.”

After the book sharing, introduce the toy animals and give each toddler one to hold. Use the words and cadence of the story text in a rhyme that includes each child’s name, one at a time. Example: “Tyler, Tyler, what do you see?” Encourage the toddler you name to hold up his/her toy animal. Some toddlers may say the name or make the sound of the animal. Finish the rhyme with a cadence and phrase that mirrors the book text. Example: “I see a bear looking at me!”

Recognize each toddler’s type of participation. Examples: “You said ‘meow,’ Madison. A cat says ‘meow.’ You see a cat looking at you!” “You are dancing your horse, Jeremiah. I think you like this song!”

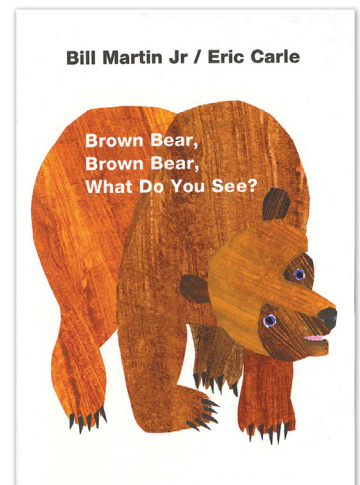
Offer a second round of rhymes if time and child interest permit.

👁️ What to Look For—Option 2

Toddlers enjoy hearing their name, especially in a song or rhyme. It is important to visually engage, with a big smile, the toddler who is featured in the rhyme. Gently try to get the attention of a toddler who does not look at you when you say his/her name in the rhyme. It is fine if a toddler does not hold up a toy animal when his/her name is offered in a rhyme. Participation may look different for each toddler.

📊 More Scaffolding Tips—Option 2

Extra support ■ If conflicts arise over who holds which toy animal, offer two toy animals that are the same. Example: if two toddlers want to hold a toy horse, provide a horse for each toddler. Alternatively, you may invite toddlers to ‘trade’ animals for a second round of the rhyme. ■ Some toddlers may enjoy holding a toy animal during the book sharing as well as during the rhyme.



***Option 2 continued***

Enrichment ■ Provide a different set of toy animals for toddlers to hold. You may wish to invite toddlers to select the animal they would like to use during the rhyme. ■ Recite the rhyme slowly and encourage toddlers to join in with some of the words. ■ Invite toddlers to select an animal picture from the book to recite in their rhyme. Invite a toddler to hold and show the book picture of the chosen animal while you recite the rhyme with the toddler's name.

12–24 Months

Option 3
One-to-One

Skill and Goal

Receptive language
Expressive language

A toddler holds and manages a book to identify an animal puzzle piece that is the same as the animal featured on a book page.



Key Concepts

Picture
Animal
Same
Different



Materials Needed

Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See? by Bill Martin Jr & Eric Carle
Mudpuppy Eric Carle
Brown Bear Color Pairs Puzzle (see Be Prepared)



Also Promotes

Self-Regulation
Cognitive
Physical/Health

Be Prepared: Use the animal pieces of the puzzle only for this activity.

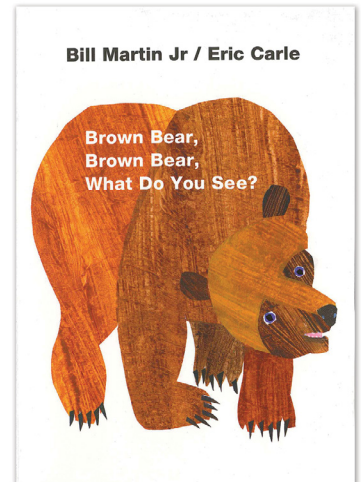
Invite a toddler to read a book with you and to find puzzle pieces that are the same as the animals shown in our book. Read the book with the toddler, pausing on each page to invite the toddler to point to the picture of the animal shown on the page. Point to (or invite the toddler to point to) and talk about physical characteristics of each animal, such as the cat's tail, the bird's wings, the sheep's ears, and the horse's long legs and tail.

At the end of the book, ask the toddler to hold the book. Introduce 2–3 puzzle pieces, especially animals that seemed to be of special interest to the toddler. Point to and describe one of the puzzle pieces. Example: "This is the horse. Remember, there was a horse in our book. Let's try to find the page of our book that shows the horse." Provide verbal support for the toddler to hold the book and turn pages in search of the animal shown on the puzzle piece. Describe the toddler's actions. Example: "You are turning the pages of the book carefully. You are looking at each page to find an animal that is the same as the animal shown on the puzzle piece."

When the toddler finds the page featuring the animal shown on the puzzle piece, explain that the pictures of the animal are the same. Hold a different puzzle piece next to the book illustration and explain that the two animals are different. Point out that the toddler looked carefully to find in the book the animal that is the same as the animal shown on the puzzle piece.

Provide several more puzzle pieces for the toddler to consider, one at a time. It is not necessary for a toddler to search for all nine animals shown on puzzle pieces.

Conclude the activity by describing the toddler's efforts. Example: "You turned pages of our book to find a picture of the animal shown on the puzzle. The picture of the animal in the book is the same as the picture of the animal on the puzzle piece."


 What to Look For—Option 3

Notice how the toddler approaches each of the emerging skills promoted in the activity: holding the book, turning the pages of the book, and looking at animals shown on each page to find one that is the same as the animal shown on the puzzle piece. Managing the book, including page turning, supports

**Option 3 continued**

motor skill development. Determining whether two pictures are the same or different promotes a cognitive skill. Focusing on each picture (in the book and in the puzzle piece) requires concentration, a self-regulation skill. Provide assistance when and where appropriate. It is important to avoid assuming full responsibility for one of the tasks in the activity, such as turning pages. When a caregiver holds the book and turns its pages, the toddler has no opportunity to practice how to manage a book.

It may be tempting to describe the activity as finding animal pictures that match. Using the concept of a match may be too advanced for some toddlers at this age. The activity description focuses on skills required for determining a match, particularly looking closely at pictures to determine whether they are the same or different. The concepts of same and different pertain to many other skills in life, and are not limited to finding a match.

The book and puzzle pieces emphasize color, but discourage the toddler from finding pictures that are the same color. Concentration skills are promoted when the toddler looks more carefully at features of the animal, such as those emphasized in the activity plan's shared book reading approach. Also, animals come in different colors; not all birds are red, and a blue horse is quite novel!

 **More Scaffolding Tips—Option 3**

Extra support ■ Jointly hold the book with the toddler if book management is too challenging, but be careful to not assume full responsibility for turning pages. ■ Remind the toddler to turn one page at a time and to go slowly. We are not in a hurry to find a book picture that is the same as the picture in the puzzle piece. It may be appropriate to help a toddler turn pages, but ensure the toddler also is turning the page. ■ The toddler may wish to hold the puzzle piece while trying to find the same picture in the book. This enables the toddler to look closely at the picture and to maybe hold it next to a book picture to determine whether it is the same or different.

Enrichment ■ Encourage the toddler to trace with his/her finger the outline of the animal shown in the book and in the puzzle piece.



Interest Area

Materials Needed: *Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?* by Bill Martin Jr & Eric Carle; several animal figures or stuffed animals similar to the animals in the book; Mudpuppy Eric Carle Brown Bear Color Pairs Puzzle (animal pieces only)

Place the book, animal figures, and animal puzzle pieces on a low table. Invite several toddlers to look at the book and then look at the items displayed on the table. Encourage toddlers to find a picture of the animal in the book that is the same as the animal shown on a puzzle piece (independent use of Option 3). Also, invite toddlers to find animal figures or stuffed animals that are like the animals shown on book pages.



Family Child Care

Materials Needed: *Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?* by Bill Martin Jr & Eric Carle; large paper secured to a low table; assortment of age-appropriate paintbrushes; paint smocks; assortment of paint colors

Be Prepared: Mix several shades of 2–3 paint colors. Example: Add white and black to the red to create several red shades to paint with, creating an 'Eric Carle' look.

Read this popular book with all interested children. Talk with children about what they see on each page. After the book reading, invite children to work together to paint a picture using the shaded colors similar to the pictures in the book. Talk with toddlers about the colors they are painting with, and the actions they are taking with the paintbrushes. Babies may enjoy exploring a small amount of finger paint on a high chair tray during the activity. Display the group artwork on the wall after the paint is dry.

12–24 Months

Option 1
Informal Gathering

Skill and Goal

Object inquiry skills

Toddlers participate in a shared book reading focused on size and pretend to make their bodies big and small.



Key Concepts

Small
Big



Materials Needed

The Three Bears by Byron Barton



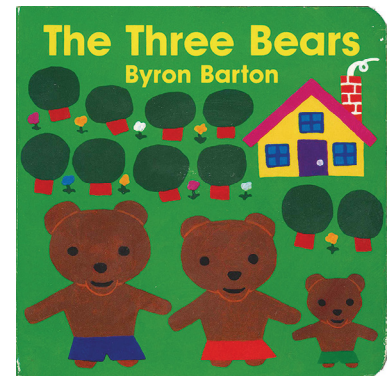
Also Promotes

Physical/Health
Communication/Language

Invite toddlers to join you to read a book about three bears. As part of the book reading, point to and use your own words to describe illustrations that show size differences in bears, chairs, and porridge bowls. Emphasize the concepts of big and small. Consider using your arm to show differences in the height of big and small.

At the end of the book, ask “How can we move our bodies to pretend to be really big like the big bear?” Encourage toddlers to stand and stretch their arms wide. Encourage toddlers to describe their imitations of big.

Then ask “How can we move our bodies if we want to pretend to be small?” If toddlers seem unclear about how to respond, suggest that they get lower to the floor and/or partially roll themselves up. Again, encourage toddlers to describe what they are doing (or have done) with their body to make it smaller. Emphasize the concepts of big and small in relation to body positions.


 What to Look For—Option 1

Toddlers may respond differently to the two main teaching strategies used in this activity to promote awareness of big and small: (1) looking at, listening, and talking about the size of characters and objects in a book, and (2) moving their bodies into big and small positions. Some toddlers may readily engage the book segment of the activity but seem unclear about how to make their body seem bigger or smaller without a demonstration or suggestion. Toddlers who easily participate in both segments of the activity likely have a good beginning understanding of the concepts of big and small. The scaffolding tips suggest ways to respond to differences in toddlers’ participation.

 More Scaffolding Tips—Option 1

Extra support ■ Refer to book illustrations and storylines related to big and small while toddlers make their bodies smaller and bigger. You may wish to show a book picture of big or small in a discussion of how toddlers moved their bodies. ■ Offer at least one additional way toddlers can make their bodies small and big if this segment of the activity seems challenging. Provide a demonstration and description for toddlers to follow. A toddler in the gathering may offer a small or big body position that others can imitate.

BLOCK
4

Exploring Objects *(continued)*



Option 1 continued

Enrichment ■ If toddlers easily make their bodies big and small, invite them to show a size between big and small. Remind toddlers that our book had a small bear, a big bear, and a bear that was not big and not small. ■ Invite toddlers to name big and small things in your room or playground.

12–24 Months

Option 2
Informal Gathering

Skill and Goal

Object inquiry skills

Toddlers make their bodies big and small as part of a rhyme.



Key Concepts

Small
Big



Materials Needed

2 teddy bears (see Be Prepared)



Also Promotes

Physical/Health
Communication/Language

Be Prepared: Secure a smaller and a larger teddy bear. Become familiar with the “Teddy Bear, Teddy Bear” rhyme by asking a co-worker or finding an internet source.

BEGIN: [*Hold up one teddy bear and invite toddlers to join you for some teddy bear time. As children join the gathering, recite part of the “Teddy Bear, Teddy Bear” rhyme while moving the toy bear to the actions. Stand and lead toddlers in imitating your actions as you repeat the rhyme lines. Then encourage toddlers to sit.*]

EXPLAIN: [*Hold up the two different-sized teddy bears, one in each hand. Slightly move each bear as you describe it.*]

I have two teddy bears. This is a small teddy bear.

[*Pretend the small teddy bear speaks. Use a small teddy bear voice for the following:*]

I am a small teddy bear!

ASK: Can you make yourselves get small like me?

ACT: [*Encourage toddlers to pretend to be small by shrinking down closer to the floor. Use the small teddy bear voice to describe toddlers’ actions. Example: “Lara, you made yourself small by shrinking and getting closer to the floor!”*]

EXPLAIN: This is a big teddy bear!

[*Draw attention to the big teddy bear and use a big bear voice.*]

I am a big teddy bear!

ASK: Can you pretend to make yourself bigger?

ACT: [*Encourage toddlers to stretch up high. Use the big teddy bear’s voice to describe toddlers’ actions. Example: “Look at Justin! He is big like me! We are big!”*]

Invite toddlers to again pretend they are small. And then again pretend to be big.

Recite the “Teddy Bear” rhyme lines, one at a time. After each line, ask toddlers to describe or show you how to do the action with a teddy bear. Examples: “How does our small teddy bear turn around?” “How does our big teddy bear touch the ground?” Alternate between big and small bears for the four lines of the rhyme.]

**Option 2 continued**

RECAP: We have a small teddy bear. And we have a big teddy bear. We pretended to make ourselves small. We pretended to make ourselves big. Let's learn one more way to show big and to show small.

[Say the following with actions and then lead toddlers in the actions as you say the words.]

This is big, big, big

[Open arms wide]

This is small, small, small

[Cup hands together]

[Repeat if toddlers remain engaged.]

👁️ What to Look For—Option 2

Toddlers will enjoy imitating your motions and telling you how to move a teddy bear as part of the rhyme. At this age, toddlers will find it a fun challenge to discriminate between small and large plus make corresponding changes with their bodies. The activity is designed to promote awareness of a basic difference in size (small, large). Some toddlers may not make the motions but are likely to become more aware of size differences by looking at the two bears and watching their peers pretend to be small and big. Repeat the words “big” and “small” as you describe various actions. Some toddlers may show interest in repeating parts of the activity.

📈 More Scaffolding Tips—Option 2

Extra support ■ Accept and extend toddlers’ alternative words for “big” and “small.” Example: if a toddler refers to the small bear as a “baby bear,” offer support for the idea: “Yes, our small teddy bear looks like a baby bear. A baby bear is small. This teddy bear is small.” ■ Speak clearly and use a slower pace if some toddlers seem to have difficulty following you.

Enrichment ■ When you recite the rhyme near the end of the activity, combine two actions into one line. Example: “turn around and touch the ground.” ■ Encourage toddlers to think about how the two bears are the same. Example: “Do our two bears do the rhyme the same way?” Follow-up question: “Does the small teddy bear turn around the same way the big teddy bear turns around?”

12–24 Months

Option 3 One-to-One



Skill and Goal

Object inquiry skills

A toddler matches toy bears and bowls by size as part of a shared book reading focused on size.



Key Concepts

Small

Big



Materials Needed

The Three Bears by Byron Barton

3 teddy bears (see Be Prepared)

3 bowls (see Be Prepared)



Also Promotes

Physical/Health

Communication/Language

Be Prepared: Select toy bears and bowls that represent small, medium, and big sizes.

Invite one toddler to sit with you to talk about big and small things. If the toddler is familiar with *The Three Bears* book, begin the activity by inviting the toddler to match the bowls to the corresponding bear. Begin by reading the book if it is unfamiliar to the toddler.

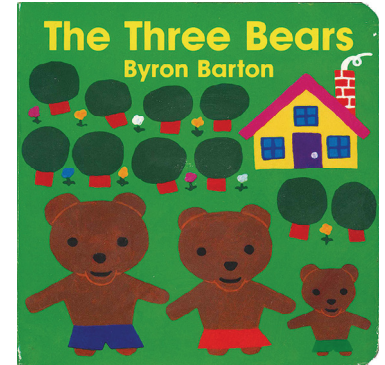
During the bear and bowl matching segment, describe the items (three bears of different sizes, three bowls of different sizes) and then invite the toddler to do the matching. Provide verbal assistance only if necessary. Example: “You are holding a big bear. What bowl would a big bear use? A big bowl or a small bowl?” Point to bowls as you describe their size. Emphasize the big bear gets the big bowl, and the small bear gets the small bowl, regardless of whether the toddler successfully matches the two. Extend the activity by separating the bowls from their bears and then pretending to feed one of the bears from its corresponding bowl. Encourage the toddler to select the bear and then select an appropriate-sized bowl for the bear. Offer assistance by asking questions and pointing to options.

Follow the toddler’s pace for looking at and talking about the book illustrations. If appropriate, encourage the toddler to point to illustration features that you identify.

👁️ What to Look For—Option 3

Your informal knowledge of the toddler’s familiarity with the book or story of the three bears is key to determining the starting point for the activity. Begin with the book if you are uncertain. If the toddler shows familiarity, engage him/her in helping you tell the story. Set aside the toy bears and bowls if you begin with the book unless you wish to incorporate these items into telling the story and you do not anticipate the bear and bowl items would distract the toddler from focusing on the book.

This option involves less caregiver guidance than Options 1 and 2, which are more appropriate for toddlers becoming aware of big and small concepts.



**Option 3 continued** More Scaffolding Tips—Option 3

Extra support ■ You may wish to look at and describe (using your own words) the book illustrations rather than read the book if the toddler is familiar with the story or seems to have limited interest in the activity. ■ Focus on the big and small bear/bowl matching first, and then point to and describe the medium-sized bear and bowl (which will be matched by default). This reduces the challenge of the toddler matching three different sizes at the same time.

Enrichment ■ Invite the toddler to match three things: a book illustration that shows a particular size of bear and bowl, and the toy bear and bowl provided as part of your activity. ■ A toddler may wish to reenact part of the book story with the bowls and toy bears.



Interest Area

Materials needed: *The Three Bears* by Byron Barton, teddy bears of different sizes, three different-sized nesting cups, several different-sized blocks

Place picture-rich books about size in a book basket placed on a low table or surface. Example: *The Three Bears* by Byron Barton. Also, provide teddy bears of different sizes for toddlers to play with. Mention size (small or big) when you refer to a bear. On another day, encourage play with the bears by placing three different-sized nesting cups or several different-sized blocks nearby. Observe toddlers' play and, when appropriate, point to basic differences in size. Example: "You put the small bear on a big block."



Family Child Care

Materials needed: teddy bears of different sizes, three different-sized nesting cups, several different-sized blocks

Infants will enjoy holding toys used in Option 1 and suggested for the Interest Area. Preschool-age children may eagerly pursue your suggestion that they arrange a collection of similar play materials by size, such as a group of small toy cars and a group of big toy cars. Make up and offer a little rhyme called "When I Was a Baby" and encourage children to imitate your actions.



12–24 Months

Option 1 One-to-One



Skill and Goal Concentration

A toddler watches and helps a caregiver focus on characteristics of two objects to determine whether they are the same or different.



Key Concepts

Same
Different



Materials Needed

Large basket
4 pairs of toys (see Be Prepared)



Also Promotes

Cognitive

Be Prepared: Select four pairs of toys (eight total), such as two rubber ducks, two toy cups of the same color, two blocks of the same size and color, and two baby dolls of the same size. Place all of the toys in the basket except for two different items, such as one rubber duck and one baby doll.

BEGIN: *[Invite one toddler to join you in finding two things in a basket that are the same.]*

EXPLAIN: We have a basket of toys. You can look at them!

ASK: What do you see in the basket?

[Offer the basket of toys and provide time for the toddler to explore the toys. Name and briefly describe each toy the toddler picks up or touches. Return all toys to the basket, placed in random order.]

[Display two identical items, such as blocks.]

EXPLAIN: Some of the toys in our basket are the same. Please look at these two blocks. They have the same shape and the same color. They are the same.

[Display two items that are different, such as a baby doll and a block.]

These two toys are not the same. This is a baby doll and this is a block. They are different. They look different and we play with them in different ways.

I want to find toys in our basket that are the same.

ACT: *[Display for the toddler a toy, such as a rubber duck.]*

This is a rubber duck. Our rubber duck is yellow. I am going to look in the basket and try to find another yellow duck. I want two toys that are the same.

[Look through the toys in the basket and pick up one toy at a time to compare to the rubber duck. Hold the two toys next to each other for ease of comparing. Describe your comparison of the two toys to determine whether they are the same. Example: "This is a red cup. This is not the same as the yellow duck. It is red. The duck is yellow. The two toys have different shapes. And we play with them in different ways. The cup and the rubber duck are not the same. They are different toys."]

**Option 1 continued**

After comparing several toys to the rubber duck, one at a time, pick up the other rubber duck from the basket. Hold the two toys next to each other in front of the toddler.]

EXPLAIN: This is a yellow rubber duck. This is another yellow rubber duck! The ducks look the same. We can play with the two toys in the same way.

ACT: Now let's try to find two more toys that are the same.

[Display a toy, such as a baby doll.]

This is a baby doll. We can play with the baby doll by pretending to rock it to sleep. I am going to look in the basket and try to find another baby doll.

[Once again, look through the toys in the basket and pick up several different toys, one at a time, to hold next to the baby doll. Begin the comparison with an item that is different from the baby doll. Example: "This is a brown block. We can build with this block.]

ASK:

- Are the block and the baby doll the same?
- Why not?

[Repeat and expand on the toddler's response. Emphasize how the two toys are different.]

ACT: *[Hold up next to each other two toys that are the same. Ask the toddler whether the two toys are the same or different. Describe (or ask the toddler to describe) how the two toys are the same.]*

This is a baby doll. This is also a baby doll! The baby dolls look the same. Both dolls have the same color of hair and they are wearing nighttime clothes.

RECAP: Today you watched and helped me find two toys that are the same. We looked at some toys that were different. We also found two toys that are the same. We paid close attention to what each toy looks like.



12–24 Months

Option 2
One-to-OneSkill and Goal
Concentration

A toddler finds a toy in a basket that is the same as the toy a caregiver selects.



Key Concepts

Same
Different



Materials Needed

Large basket
4 pairs of toys (see Be Prepared)



Also Promotes

Communication/Language
Cognitive

Be Prepared: Select four pairs of toys (eight total), such as two rubber ducks, two toy cups of the same color, two blocks of the same size and color, and two baby dolls of the same size. Select different pairs of toys if the toddler participating in this activity previously participated in the Option 1 activity. Place all of the toys in the basket.

Invite a toddler to join you in finding two toys in a basket that are the same. Introduce the basket of toys and show the toddler two toys from the basket that are the same. Explain how they are the same. Example: “Here are two cups. They are both red and they have the same shape. They look the same.”

Next, show the toddler two different toys and ask whether the two toys are the same or different.

Support the toddler’s search for a toy that is the same as another toy by holding up a toy and inviting the toddler to find another toy in the basket that is the same. Give to the toddler the toy you selected so he/she can hold and look at the toy closely. If appropriate, offer verbal assistance in finding another toy that is the same by describing the toddler’s comparison. Example: “Daniel, you are looking at a baby doll and a rubber duck. Do they look the same? How are the two toys different?”

Conclude the activity by describing the toddler’s effort to find two toys that are the same. Example: “You looked at all the toys to find one that is the same as the rubber duck. You looked closely at each toy in the basket.”



12–24 Months

Option 3 One-to-One



Skill and Goal

Concentration

A toddler independently finds items in a basket that are the same.



Key Concepts

Same
Different



Materials Needed

Large basket
4–5 pairs of toys (see Be Prepared)



Also Promotes

Cognitive

Be Prepared: Select 4–5 pairs of toys (8–10 total), such as two rubber ducks, two toy cups of the same color, two blocks of the same size and color, and two baby dolls of the same size. Select different pairs of toys if the toddler participating in this activity previously participated in the Option 1 or Option 2 activity. Place all of the toys in the basket.

Invite a toddler to find toys in a basket that are the same. Offer four or five pairs depending on your understanding of the toddler’s skill in looking closely at items and determining whether they are the same or different.

Present the basket of toys and invite the toddler to pick one toy, place it on the floor (or table) next to the basket, and then look closely at all other toys in the basket to find a toy that is the same as the toy the toddler first picked.

You may wish to offer some structure for the search by suggesting the toddler pull one toy at a time from the basket, compare it to the toy he/she initially selected, and say whether the toy is the same or different. See the Extra Support tip if a toddler finds it too challenging to identify a toy that is the same.

Conclude the activity by describing the toddler’s concentration actions. Example: “You looked closely at the toys in the basket and you found toys that are the same!”

What to Look For—Options 1–3

The self-regulation skill of concentration is a central part of the cognitive task of comparing two or more items to determine whether they are the same or different. The same-or-different determination is essential for sorting and matching items. First and foremost, however, a child needs to look closely at the characteristics of something. The task of concentrating is the primary focus of this activity plan. Options 1 and 2 are less challenging than Option 3 because they confine the comparison to two items and, in Option 1, the toddler is learning how the caregiver goes about finding two items that are the same. Option 3 is appropriately pursued when a toddler has demonstrated some skill in looking closely at two items as part of a comparison. Looking at 8–10 toys to find two that are the same could be overwhelming without prior experience in comparing item characteristics.

Each toddler should experience success in looking at the toys. In some cases, this may mean offering fewer items for a toddler to look at and offering more practice at a later point.



More Scaffolding Tips—Options 1–3

Extra support ■ Provide adequate amounts of time for a toddler to look at and determine whether two toys are the same or different. There is no need to rush. ■ In Options 2 and 3, expand on a toddler's communications as he/she compares two toys. Example: "You are shaking your head 'no,' June. You know that the block and the cup are not the same! The block and the cup are different toys." ■ If the Option 3 plan is too challenging, invite the toddler to pick two toys at a time from the basket and say whether the two toys are the same or different. The toys should be set aside (not returned to the basket) after the toddler makes a comparison.

Enrichment ■ Verbally change one of the characteristics of two toys that are the same and ask the toddler whether the two toys would still be the same. Example: "We have a red cup and another red cup. The cups are the same. Let's pretend one of the cups is blue. Would the two cups be the same if one is red and one is blue?" ■ In addition to focusing on characteristics of toys, talk about whether the two toys being compared are used in the same way. Example: The two baby dolls look the same. We also can play with the baby dolls in the same way. We can rock the baby dolls to sleep and put them in their beds."

Interest Area

Materials Needed: four different toys from the activity plan's three options, such as a rubber duck, toy cup, block, baby doll, basket

Place the four toys on a low table. Invite several toddlers to look closely at each toy and try to remember what the toy looks like. Encourage the toddlers to go on a "scavenger hunt" to find a toy in the room that is the same as one of the four toys. Suggest a toddler take the toy with him/her if it seems too challenging for the toddler to leave the toy on the table and remember what the toy looks like.

Family Child Care

Materials Needed: four pairs of toys, such as two rubber ducks, two kitchen items, two blocks of the same size and color, and two small baby dolls of the same size. Separate the toys into two groups, each with one of the two identical toys.

Invite older children to place the toys from one group in different places in your setting that are easily viewed by toddlers. Hold up one toy from the other group and encourage toddlers to "hunt" for the same toy in your setting. Toddlers and older children may enjoy switching roles of "hiding" the toys.



12–24 Months

Option 1 One-to-One



Skill and Goal

Social interaction skills

A toddler participates with a caregiver in open-ended play that includes a dollhouse and related toys as a follow-up to a shared book reading.



Key Concepts

Play together



Materials Needed

Llama Llama Red Pajama by Anna Dewdney
Dollhouse and furnishings
People figures
Pet animal figures
(Enrichment tip)



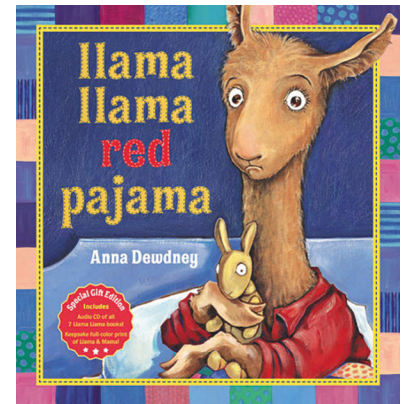
Also Promotes

Cognitive
Communication/Language

Be Prepared: Provide the dollhouse and people figures for toddlers' open-ended exploration for several days prior to implementing this activity. Children's familiarity with the materials will enhance their engagement of the activity and reduce the likelihood of other toddlers wanting to join an activity designed to be one-to-one. On the day you implement the activity described below, set out a barn or similar prop plus people and animal figures for toddlers to explore as an alternative to joining the activity intended for one toddler. Place the dollhouse and its furnishings on a low table or the floor.

Invite a toddler to share a book and play together. Read the book, pausing on each page to talk about the pictures. Help the toddler connect the bedtime routine to his/her own experiences.

At the conclusion of the book sharing, invite the toddler to explore the dollhouse. Point out some of the items available, especially parts of the dollhouse you think would be of interest to the toddler. Encourage the toddler to begin playing with the materials. Support engagement and interaction during the play with strategies, such as the following:



- Describe the toddler's actions. Example: "You are holding a baby and a mommy. You are moving the baby and mommy to the dollhouse bedroom."
- Invite the toddler to tell you about his/her play. Example: "What are the baby and mommy doing in the bedroom?"
- Repeat and extend the toddler's words. Example: "Your baby is going night night. The mommy put the baby in the bed to go night night."
- Ask the toddler if he/she would like you to join the play. If the toddler invites you to hold a figure, imitate his/her actions or join their play theme. Example: "You are putting all the people to bed. What would you like me to do with my person?"
- Suggest a familiar play theme, such as bedtime, for a toddler who seems unsure how to interact with the materials. Example: "You are holding a boy. What is the boy going to do? Maybe it is time for the boy to go to bed. Let's look in our dollhouse and see if we can find a bed for the boy."

End the session by briefly summarizing what happened during the play segment, including the toddler's interaction with you. Example: "You put the people in the dollhouse, and then you took the people out. You had fun playing with the people figures. Thank you for letting me play with you!"

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

The shared book reading may provide a focus for the toddler's follow-up play with the dollhouse and related objects. A play theme related to the book may or may not happen, however. Toddlers will interact with the materials in different ways. Some toddlers will have ideas and intentions with the people figures, whereas others may seem unsure how to use the materials. If appropriate, provide suggestions for familiar play themes while being careful to not direct the play. Suggesting a focus related to the book may be particularly helpful if the toddler showed interest in the book. Some toddlers may respond to the dollhouse play in unconventional ways, such as lining up people figures or furniture items. Continue to follow the toddler's lead as he/she interacts with the materials. As you talk with the toddler during the activity, remember to pause regularly so the toddler has an opportunity to contribute verbally.

 **More Scaffolding Tips—Option 1**

Extra support ■ One way to suggest a play focus is to describe the materials and their possible uses. Example: "This is a house where the pretend people live. You can move the people around and even make them talk!" ■ Toddlers may want to return to the dollhouse at a later time to further explore the play materials.

Enrichment ■ If a toddler is interested in pets, add several pet figures to the play. ■ Invite the toddler to act out or include a part of the Llama Llama story. The toddler may want to put a figure to bed and say "goodnight."



12–24 Months

Option 2 Informal Gathering



Skill and Goal

Social interaction skills

Toddlers participate in open-ended play with a shared dollhouse and related materials.



Key Concepts

Play together



Materials Needed

Dollhouse and furnishings
People figures
Pet animal figures



Also Promotes

Communication/Language
Self-Regulation



Optional Reading

Llama Llama Red Pajama by
Anna Dewdney

Be Prepared: Arrange the dollhouse and its furnishings on a low table or the floor. Place the people and animal figures throughout the play area.

Invite two toddlers to play with the dollhouse. Introduce the items available and encourage the toddlers to interact with the materials as they wish. Toddlers may choose to play with the materials individually or together. Encourage the toddlers to notice one another's actions as they play. Example: "Stefan is putting all the animals in the dollhouse kitchen. I wonder if the animals are going to eat!" Encourage toddlers to play together when there is a natural opportunity to do so. Example: "Aisha and Eli, you are both playing with an animal figure. Maybe the dog and the cat would like to play together!" Acknowledge positive social interaction as it is happening. Example: "You are playing together with animals in the dollhouse."

What to Look For—Option 2

This activity shifts the social interactions from a caregiver (Option 1) to another peer. Toddlers are likely to participate in this activity in different ways. Some toddlers will enjoy playing together with the materials, whereas others may prefer to play side by side. Some toddlers may imitate the actions of a peer. Recognize and acknowledge positive social interactions as the toddlers play.

More Scaffolding Tips—Option 2

Extra support ■ If a toddler has difficulty sharing the dollhouse or other materials with a peer, explain that we need to share our playthings. You may wish to offer Option 1 for a toddler who finds it challenging to share.

Enrichment ■ Add figures and props that may enrich play themes. ■ To encourage the toddlers to watch, and maybe imitate, the actions of one another, quietly describe some of their separate uses of the materials.



Interest Area

Materials Needed: dollhouse and furnishings, people figures

Make the dollhouse and materials available for exploration. Talk with the toddlers about their ideas and actions as they play. Encourage the toddlers to interact with each other as well as the materials. Model positive social interactions.



Family Child Care

Materials Needed: dollhouse and furnishings, people figures, animal figures, blocks

Invite children to play with the dollhouse in the block area. Some children will enjoy building structures for the people and animal figures, and others may focus on the dollhouse. Encourage toddlers to watch and imitate the actions of their peers. Babies may enjoy holding a chunky animal or people figure during the activity.



12–24 Months

Option 1 One-to-One



Skill and Goal

Gross motor development

A toddler who shows beginning interest in stairsteps uses hands and knees to crawl up and down steps with caregiver support.



Key Concepts

Crawling
Turn around
Backward



Materials Needed

Stairsteps (See Be Prepared)
1 caged bell



Also Promotes

Cognitive

Be Prepared: Stair equipment for toddlers typically has 3–4 steps ending with a platform surrounded by safety rails. If you use some other type of steps, ensure there are secure supports at the top for the toddler to grasp. Affix the caged bell at the top of the steps so it can be easily reached by a toddler who stands or sits at the top of the steps.

BEGIN: [Station yourself at the steps of an indoor or outdoor toddler climber. Kneel beside the steps and invite a toddler to go up the steps with your help.]

EXPLAIN: You can use your hands and knees to go up the steps. Today you will use hands and knees only. Crawling up is safest for you.

[Some young toddlers will be adventurous and eagerly climb up steps.]

ACT: [If the young toddler stands at the first step or attempts to put his/her foot on the first step, tap the floor next to the first step and say, “Crawling up is best for you.” If necessary, gently help the toddler get into a hands-and-knees position on the first step. Lightly place one hand on the toddler’s back the first few times he/she goes up. Repeat phrases, such as:

- “Great. You are using your hands and knees to go up the steps.”
- “You are using a safe way to go up the steps.”

Once the toddler reaches the platform or top of the stairs, cheerfully acknowledge his/her accomplishment! Example: “Hurray for you, Bodhi. You crawled up the stairsteps!”

Invite the toddler to turn around and look into the room, standing or sitting on the platform at the top of the steps. Encourage the toddler to hold the railing if he/she stands.]

ASK: Would you like to ring the bell now?

[Point to the bell attached to the climber. Wait for the toddler’s reaction.]

EXPLAIN: You can ring the bell and then crawl back down.

ACT: [Encourage the toddler to get on hands and knees to crawl down the steps backward. Provide help in turning around and getting in position for crawling backward. This is a challenging task (see Extra Support tips).



**Option 1 continued**

- Give verbal cues, such as: “Turn around. Your feet go first.”
- Indicate the direction to turn by lightly touching the toddler’s side or leg as you say “Turn your body. Feet go down first.”
- If a toddler has difficulty turning around, say “I will help you turn around” before helping a toddler reposition. With two hands, rotate the toddler’s body from a head-first position to a feet-first position.]

RECAP: [Describe the toddler’s efforts. Example: “Today you crawled up the steps on your hands and knees. You rang our bell and then crawled down backward on your hands and knees! You put your feet down first.”]

👁️ What to Look For—Option 1

Teaching a young toddler to crawl up and down steps on his/her hands and knees is the safest and most appropriate method. A toddler who can use feet to go up and down stairs can be offered Option 2 or Option 3 of this activity plan.

Some toddlers may appear restrained in approaching steps and will need time to be near you to watch other toddlers crawl up and down. It is not unusual for a child to wait until he/she has given consideration to a new situation to feel ready to try. Some toddlers may wait a month or two before the time is right. Let the toddler decide when to approach the steps.

Young toddlers are generally delighted to reach the platform or top of the steps. Some toddlers will enjoy standing. Looking out at the classroom and the other children is enjoyable. Some toddlers may be excited to ring the bell, but for others, the achievement of making it up the steps is sufficiently satisfying.

As with mountain climbing, going down stairsteps is more difficult than going up! Going down steps backward presents an additional challenge because the toddler cannot see in the direction of his/her movement. It will take practice for a toddler to remember to turn around. It may require assisting a toddler 20 or more times for him/her to remember and turn. Small touches or repositioning the toddler can be used as needed. It is helpful for some toddlers to feel how to get into feet-first position. Rotating a toddler’s body using both your hands informs the child of what movement is needed.

Generally, young toddlers learn to crawl up steps before developing the reverse actions of crawling down. Some toddlers will be successful in crawling up steps and have difficulty learning to crawl down; they naturally want to go headfirst. It is important to stay next to the steps to prevent a toddler from walking off a step.

**Option 1 continued**A small icon of three steps of varying heights. **More Scaffolding Tips—Option 1**

Extra support ■ A toddler may not reach the platform or top step. Recognize and praise a toddler's step-crawling accomplishment whether he/she reaches the top or second step only. ■ Omit the challenge of crawling down the steps if the toddler shows no interest or is reluctant. Simply pick up the toddler and return him/her to the floor for more practice in crawling up the steps or moving to a different activity.

■ For a toddler who is hesitant to crawl up the steps, offer the activity at a time when there is little or no activity at the steps. ■ If a toddler does not want to ring the bell, suggest he/she wave to someone in the room. Make sure a standing toddler is adequately balanced to use one arm/hand for waving. Example: "Imani, do you see Ms. Jasmine? Let's wave to her!"

Enrichment ■ Seeing the room from a slightly higher elevation is an exciting cognitive experience. Encourage the toddler to tell what it's like at the top of the steps and what he/she sees.



12–24 Months

Option 2
One-to-One

Skill and Goal

Gross motor
development

A toddler who is ready to stand while going up stairsteps practices walking up the steps and using a sitting position to come down the steps with caregiver support.



Key Concepts

Step up



Materials Needed

Stairsteps



Also Promotes

Cognitive

Position yourself next to the stairsteps when another adult is fully available to support children's activities in other parts of the room. Invite toddlers to step up the stairs with your help. Encourage toddlers to leave all toys elsewhere in the room. A toddler's hands should be free for holding onto a railing and helping to balance his/her body. (Toddlers who are learning to crawl on steps or need practice in crawling up and down steps should be offered Option 1. Learning to go up stairsteps while standing generally follows the accomplishment of successfully crawling up.)

Give support and guidance to one toddler at a time. Show each toddler where to hang on. One hand should hold the rail, and the other arm and hand should aid in balancing. Some toddlers may use the same to step up on each stair.

Coming down the stairs will be a challenge for most toddlers. At an early stage of learning to step up a set of stairs, a toddler typically comes down by sitting on the top step and then lowering himself/herself to each the next step while maintaining a sitting position. (Walking down the steps is supported in Option 3 of this activity plan.)

There may be toddlers who can maintain balance when stepping down. A toddler will have greater control and balance when moving down stairsteps sitting than when standing.

 What to Look For—Option 2

Some toddlers will use the same foot to step up on each stair for several months. It is not necessary to guide or teach the toddler to use alternating feet at this age. Some toddlers will develop the ability to go up four steps without help.

Striving for independence is sometimes expressed as resistance to do what is asked by an adult. If a toddler does not want to come down and other toddlers are waiting, offer an interesting alternative to staying at the top of the stairs. In general, it is better to coax a toddler down from the little climber than to remove him/her. Perhaps a way to get back down is a slide or another set of steps. Suggest the toddler crawl down backward while pretending to be a puppy or kitten. Some toddlers will accept other ideas, such as pretending to be a firefighter or a prince/princess crawling down the steps.

 More Scaffolding Tips—Option 2

Extra support ■ Use a doll or soft animal toy as a teaching tool. Invite a toddler to assist you in teaching a doll how to go up and down the steps.
 ■ Use verbal reminders to help toddlers get accustomed to sitting on the steps to go down.

BLOCK
4

Moving Our Bodies *(continued)*



Option 2 continued

Enrichment ■ Add a fun activity for the toddler at the platform level. Place a container of rolled socks or cloth balls for a toddler to drop from the platform to the floor. Stand near the toddler to observe and assist if needed. If more than one toddler is on the platform, facilitate turn taking.



12–24 Months

Option 3 One-to-One



Skill and Goal

Gross motor development

A toddler practices stepping down a set of stairs after stepping up the stairs.



Key Concepts

Stepping down



Materials Needed

Stairsteps



Also Promotes

Cognitive

Invite a toddler to practice stepping up and stepping down a set of stairs. Positively acknowledge the toddler's accomplishment in reaching the platform or top step. Verbal guidance for turning around may be needed. Encourage the toddler to look around the room and tell what he/she sees. For the stepping down part of the activity, a toddler may feel most secure stepping down with the same foot. At this age, there is no need for concern if a child leads with the same foot over and over.

Give clear and informative reminders to help the toddler remain focused and safe, such as:

- One step at a time
- Hold the rail
- Go nice and slow

The toddler may wish to repeat the practice in stepping up and down the stairs.

What to Look For—Option 3

Sometimes toddlers focus on a destination or become absorbed in play and forget to use the stairstep skills they have practiced. It is common for toddlers to want independence and to ignore adult suggestions, preferring “I’ll do it myself” autonomy. Still, if you observe a toddler hurrying in his/her play, or becoming intensely involved in accomplishing a goal, move close to the toddler, kneel at eye level and talk in a calm manner about what he/she is doing. Make suggestions for actions that may slow or de-escalate an exciting play interaction that still fits into the toddler’s play interest. Example: “Hi. I am a helper. Here is some (pretend) food for busy puppies. I will watch you come down the steps for pretend puppy treats.”

Even when a toddler is not rushing or focused on something else, provide clear and informative reminders, such as those suggested in the activity plan. Avoid general statements, such as “be careful.”

More Scaffolding Tips—Option 3

Extra support ■ Encourage the toddler to sit down on the steps if he/she feels out of balance.

Enrichment ■ When you are with toddlers in settings outside your room, take note of even single steps a toddler needs to navigate. Example: When approaching a single step down, offer an explanation of what is to come. “Here is one step down. Watch where your foot is going. Your foot is going down to the sidewalk.” Also give verbal reminders, such as “big step.”



Interest Area

Materials needed: non-breakable mirror, toddler climber, laminated footprints, tape, wooden boxes or activity centers, plastic wading pool, and cushions

Fasten a non-breakable mirror at the platform level of the toddler climber so toddlers see themselves when they go up the steps. Foster walking skills by laminating your favorite footprints and attaching them to the carpet with clear tape for toddlers to step on.

Provide opportunities for crawling in and out of toddler equipment, such as wooden boxes or activity centers toddlers can get inside. Set up a small plastic wading pool as a book nook. Add a few cushions to encourage toddlers to crawl in and out.



Family Child Care

Materials needed: small toys

Coach toddlers in stair skills according to their age and development. Encourage preschool-age and older children to practice going up and down with alternating feet. Emphasize safety, including holding the rail and one child at a time going up or down.

Support existing motor skills for infants in your care. Each infant may be developing different motor skills. Observe the movements each infant makes when he/she is alert and playful. Encourage the skill you observe by providing space to move freely. Also, talk and interact with the infant as he/she is moving; describing the actions is a form of support. Provide appropriate play for individual infants. Example: If an infant has learned to roll over and is beginning to creep forward, place small toys within reach and just out of reach.

An infant who has begun to play with his/her hands and feet may enjoy an activity of “bicycle riding” motions. Place one infant who is alert and ready for play on his/her back on the floor. Sit facing the infant. Hold the infant’s feet in your two hands. Gently circle the infant’s feet as if he/she is pedaling a bicycle. Add a little song, such as the following. (Tune: “Wheels on the Bus”):

Baby’s little feet go round and round

[Use infant’s name]

Round and round

Baby’s little feet go round and round

All through the town.