



**Communication/
Language**

Exploring Words

- Option 1** (IG) Toddlers say together the name of each child who is present.
- Option 2** (OO) A toddler participates in a book sharing focused on pictures of different expressions in children’s faces.
- Option 3** (IG) Toddlers talk about pictures of peers engaged in activities in their room.



Cognitive

Solving Problems

- Option 1** (OO) A toddler practices taking apart two connected magnetic toys.
- Option 2** (IG) Toddlers practice taking apart a chain of star builders or snap beads.
- Option 3** (IG) Toddlers practice taking apart a stacking ring and putting rings in a pitcher, with a guided opportunity to put the stacking ring back together.



Self-Regulation

Paying Attention

- Option 1** (OO) A toddler watches and helps a caregiver determine whether two items are the same or different.
- Option 2** (OO) A toddler finds a toy in a basket that matches a toy selected by a caregiver.
- Option 3** (OO) A toddler independently finds items in a basket that match.



Social-Emotional

Interacting with Others

- Option 1** (IG) Toddlers participate in a book sharing focused on being part of a family and part of a community at a child development center.
- Option 2** (OO) A toddler identifies himself/herself and others in pictures of children in your room.
- Option 3** (IG) Toddlers identify peers present in their room by playing a peekaboo game focused on who is hiding/missing.



Physical/Health

Moving Our Bodies

- Option 1** (OO) A toddler practices throwing a large ball to knock over empty milk jugs.
- Option 2** (OO) A toddler practices throwing a sock ball toward colorful streamers.
- Option 3** (IG) Toddlers practice throwing a ball.

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



12–24 Months

Option 1 Informal Gathering



Skill and Goal

Receptive language
Expressive language

Toddlers say together the name of each child who is present.



Key Concepts

Name
Clap



Materials Needed

None



Also Promotes

Social-Emotional
Physical/Health

BEGIN: *[Invite toddlers to join you for some fun in saying our names. Encourage toddlers to sit in a circle. Some may prefer to stand.]*

EXPLAIN: A lot of our friends are here. Let's say the name of everyone who is here. We can say our name and then clap.

ACT: *[Point to yourself.]*

My name is (your name). I am going to say "(your name) is here" and then clap. Please listen and watch.

(Your name) is here.

[clap, clap]

I'm going to say "(your name) is here" one more time. Please say this with me and clap with me!

(Your name) is here.

[clap, clap]

We can say the name of everyone who is here.

[Ask toddler sitting next to you "What is your name?" Repeat the name for all to hear.]

Let's say together "(name of toddler) is here" and then clap.

Let's try it!

[Encourage toddlers to join you in saying: "(name of toddler) is here" and then clapping twice.]

Ask the next toddler in the circle "What is your name?" Repeat the name for all to hear.]

Let's say together "(name of next toddler) is here" and then clap!

[Repeat the process as you move around the circle: invite a toddler to say his/her name, repeat the name, and invite all toddlers to say the phrase "(name of toddler) is here" and then clap twice.]

RECAP: We had fun saying who is here! We said everyone's name and clapped. We know the names of our friends. Everyone has a name. We clapped to show we are happy our friends are here. Let's all clap one more time!

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

Toddlers enjoy hearing their own name during activities. If a toddler is reluctant to say his/her name when asked, enthusiastically offer the name and encourage all toddlers to engage in the repetitive welcome phrase and clap. Some toddlers will clap only and others may prefer to watch and listen.

📈 More Scaffolding Tips—Option 1

Extra support ■ Speak slowly and deliberately, including when you repeat a toddler's name. Some toddlers may not know the names of all peers in the room. ■ Include in the routine the name(s) of a toddler(s) who may be watching from a distance (not in the circle).

Enrichment ■ At a later point in the day, invite toddlers to engage in a version of the routine to recognize toddlers who are not present. Example: This could be done while waiting to go outside. Use this phrase: We miss (name of toddler).

12–24 Months

Option 2 One-to-One



Skill and Goal

Receptive language
Expressive language

A toddler participates in a book sharing focused on pictures of different expressions in children's faces.



Key Concepts

My
Your
Face



Materials Needed

Making Faces: A First Book of Emotions by Abrams
Applesseed



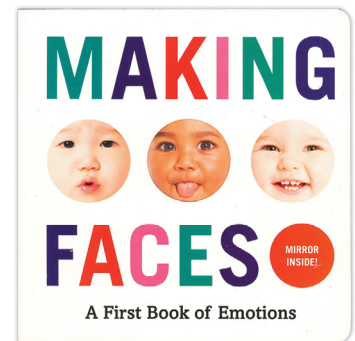
Also Promotes

Cognitive
Social-Emotional

Invite a toddler to join you in looking at pictures of children's faces. Ask the toddler what he/she sees on the cover of the book. Use your own words to describe the pictured face on each page. Explain that you can make a face like the face shown in the book. Emphasize the word "my" when you draw attention to your face. Example: "Our book shows a picture of a happy face. I am making a happy face. This is my happy face." Encourage the toddler to do the same, emphasizing the word "your."

Example: "You can make a happy face. Let's see your happy face!" Continue this pattern with the book's pictures of faces that are easy to mimic.

On the last page of the book, invite the toddler to look in the book's mirror. Show excitement about seeing the toddler's face. Example: "We see Asia's face in the mirror! Asia's face is in our book!"



What to Look For—Option 2

Look for opportunities to promote the toddler's early awareness of how books can be used to learn things. Example: When you invite the toddler to mimic a face, point to the picture in the book as the face we want to make. Avoid requesting the toddler to "make a face like my face." The Enrichment tip suggested below also involves referring to a page in the book.

This activity builds on toddlers' natural interest in faces and the fun of making faces. It is meant to be an enjoyable experience. Positively acknowledge whatever faces a toddler makes! The book's content can help a toddler informally understand there are different kinds of feelings. It is not necessary or appropriate to teach about different emotions in this activity.

Pronouns are an important part of daily life. The session uses the face-making activity to emphasize two pronouns ("my" and "your") that are linked to toddlers' emerging sense of self.

More Scaffolding Tips—Option 2

Extra support ■ The toddler may want to spend more time with the book's mirror after the activity.

Enrichment ■ At the conclusion of the book sharing, suggest the toddler again make some of the faces shown in the book, this time using the book's mirror. Return to the book's picture of an emotion of interest when you offer this idea. Example: "You made a sad face, like this picture of a sad face in our book. What does your sad face look like in the mirror?"

12–24 Months

Option 3 Informal Gathering



Skill and Goal

Receptive language
Expressive language

Toddlers talk about pictures of peers engaged in activities in their room.



Key Concepts

What
Who



Materials Needed

Picture album of activities (see Be Prepared)



Also Promotes

Cognitive
Social-Emotional

Be Prepared: Gather and/or take pictures of current toddlers engaged in interest areas and other activities in your room. If possible, make sure each toddler in your room is included in one or more pictures. Assemble the pictures in an album or book.

Invite small groups of toddlers, one group at a time, to look at pictures of children doing things in your room. Focus on pictures that include toddlers in the group looking at the pictures with you.

Invite toddlers to say what is happening in the picture and who is in the picture. Encourage a toddler to point to what he/she is describing. Repeat and expand on toddlers' words. Examples: "Yes, this is a picture of you giving your baby doll a bottle! Your baby doll was hungry, so you are feeding her." "Jaxon is reading a book in this picture." Offer information only if toddlers seem uncertain. Example: "I think I see Emmanuel in this picture. Can you find Emmanuel?"

What to Look For—Option 3

The activity is an opportunity to promote toddlers' emerging language skills by encouraging them to talk about what and who. Toddlers may initially respond to a picture by saying who is in the picture. Affirm their responses in a way that invites more talk. Example: "Yes, this is Sammy. What is he doing in this picture?"

It is not necessary to have firsthand knowledge of what happened in a picture in order to talk about it. Toddlers can talk about pictures of activities they did not experience or observe by simply describing what they see in the picture. Example: "What do you think is happening in this picture?" The discussion of pictures is not intended to be about recall.

Some toddlers may talk about specific toys or materials shown in a picture. The picture also may prompt some toddlers to tell what they have done or like to do (not in the picture) with the toy or material. Positively acknowledge all language contributions to the session.

More Scaffolding Tips—Option 3

Extra support ■ Ensure each toddler has an opportunity to participate in a small group discussion of the pictures.

Enrichment ■ Place the album in the book area for toddlers to visit at a later time.



Interest Area

Materials Needed: *Making Faces: A First Book of Emotions* by Abrams Appleseed, album of pictures (Option 3), several age-appropriate mirrors or large wall mirror

Place book, album, and mirror(s) in a comfortable area of the room for toddlers to explore on their own or with a peer(s). Toddlers may repeat parts of an activity option, such as making faces in a mirror (Option 2). Children especially enjoy looking at pictures of themselves and friends. Encourage toddlers to locate and name pictures of their friends and caregivers in the album (Option 3).



Family Child Care

Materials Needed: album of pictures of activities in your setting

Expand Option 3 to include all children in your setting. Toddlers and older children will enjoy talking about the names and activities of infants as well as themselves.



12–24 Months

Option 1 One-to-One



Skill and Goal

Problem-solving Object inquiry skills

A toddler practices taking apart two connected magnetic toys.



Key Concepts

Take apart
Pull
Hold



Materials Needed

Magnetic toys, such as
GeoMag™ GBaby



Also Promotes

Physical/Health
Communication/Language

BEGIN: *[Invite a toddler to join you to play with special toys.]*

EXPLAIN: I have some special toys that we can take apart. Let's play with them!

[Place two connected magnetic toys in front of the toddler. Point to each of the parts as you describe there are two.]

This toy has two parts. Let's see if we can take them apart.



ACT: *[Describe and demonstrate how to use both hands to pull apart the two connected parts. Example: "I am holding this toy with two hands. I am going to pull with this hand. Look! The toy came apart!"]*

ASK: Would you like to take apart the toy?

[Offer the toddler two connected magnetic toys.]

EXPLAIN: Use two hands to hold the toy and then pull it apart!

ACT: *[Describe the toddler's actions with the toy. Example: "You used two hands to take apart the toy. You held the toy and pulled it apart!" Emphasize the words pull and take apart.*

If the toddler tries but does not pull the toys apart, demonstrate again how to hold with one hand and pull with one hand. See Extra Support tips for other ways to help.

Ask whether the toddler wants to take apart a toy again. Conclude play with the toys after several minutes or when the toddler loses interest.]

RECAP: We learned how to take apart a special toy. We used both hands to take the toy apart!

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

If a toddler has difficulty after you offer several different forms of assistance (see Extra Support tips), offer an alternative activity, such as playing with a larger collection of magnetic toys. The toddler may enjoy putting the toys into and out of a container or simply looking at their differences. Describe the toddler's actions.

Some toddlers may easily take apart magnetic toys and wish to rearrange them in different ways. Encourage toddlers to persist in pulling toys apart. Affirm their persistence with encouraging descriptions. Example: "Myah, you are pulling with your hands. You are getting very strong!"

📈 More Scaffolding Tips—Option 1

Extra support ■ If a toddler continues to try separating the magnetic toys without success, offer to help by holding one part of the toy and encouraging the toddler to pull on the second part of the toy. Hold the toy so the toddler engages in a downward motion rather than pulling to the side. Another option is to invite the toddler to put his/her hand on top of your hand as you pull apart the toy. ■ Describe and demonstrate the concept of "pull" if you anticipate this is an unfamiliar word.

Enrichment ■ If a toddler is easily able to take apart two parts of the toy, add a third piece. GeoMag™ toys can be interchangeably connected to each other. Encourage the toddler to hold the toy and pull to take apart each of the three pieces.



12–24 Months

Option 2 Informal Gathering



Skill and Goal

Problem-solving Object inquiry skills

Toddlers practice taking apart a chain of star builders or snap beads.



Key Concepts

Take apart
Pull
Hold



Materials Needed

15 interlocking star builders or snap beads

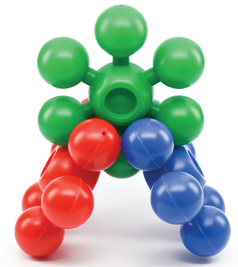


Also Promotes

Physical/Health
Communication/Language

Be Prepared: Create several sets of two and three connected star builders plus one set of three or four connected star builders that can stand on its own.

Invite several toddlers to join you to take apart several of the connected stars. Toddlers will enjoy taking apart connected star builders and seeing the parts separated on the floor or low surface.



It is common for a toddler to take apart connected star builders by pulling one star to the side. Some toddlers may turn a stand-alone shape so he/she can use a sideways pull to remove a connected star builder.



Demonstrate how to remove a single star using an upward pull. Hold the star builder shape and encourage the toddler to remove a star by pulling up. You may hold up the star builder shape (off the table or floor) and suggest one toddler remove a star with a downward pull.

👁️ What to Look For—Option 2

A toddler may tell you or gesture to communicate his/her interest in putting two stars back together. Restate the toddler's question or request. Observe the toddler's approach to connecting the stars. If the child has difficulty with the material, demonstrate how to hold one star builder in each hand. Point to the space between the rounded arms and encourage the toddler to push the stars together.

If a toddler tries to connect stars without success, offer assistance by holding one star. Encourage the toddler to push a second star onto the first. Provide just enough help so that a toddler can be successful.

📊 More Scaffolding Tips—Option 2

Extra support ■ Hold one star and encourage a toddler to pull a connected star.

Enrichment ■ Connect a long chain of stars for a toddler to take apart.



12–24 Months

Option 3 Informal Gathering



Skill and Goal

Problem-solving Object inquiry skills

Toddlers practice taking apart a stacking ring and putting rings in a pitcher, with a guided opportunity to put the stacking ring back together.



Key Concepts

Together
Apart
On
Off



Materials Needed

Stacking ring toys—1 per toddler
Clear, round pitcher—1 per toddler



Also Promotes

Physical/Health

Invite several toddlers to join you on the floor to play with stacking ring toys and pitchers. Give each toddler one toy with all the rings stacked in place. Encourage the toddlers to take the rings off the spool of the toy and drop them into their pitchers.

Describe each toddler's actions. Emphasize the words on, off, together and apart. Point to a spool and talk about the rings as all gone. Toddlers typically understand the concept of "all gone." Act surprised to see the rings in the pitcher!

Putting the rings back together is a more challenging task that may be of interest to some but not all toddlers. Explain that "we can put the rings together again." Encourage toddlers to take the rings out of their pitcher and put them on the floor. Secure a complete, taken-apart set to use as a demonstration. Hold up the largest ring and explain that it goes first. Point to each large ring on the floor. Assist each toddler in finding his/her largest ring. Example: "Dylan, here is a big blue ring for your spool."

Move around and assist toddlers who want to put the toy back together. Point to and describe the ring next in order of size. If toddlers begin stacking the rings in random order, they will not be able to get them back on the spool. Act as a coach for toddlers, so they experience success.

What to Look For—Option 3

The opening segment of the activity involves two separate actions. Give encouragement to each toddler for the tasks of removing the rings and placing them in the pitcher.

Close monitoring of toddlers' actions is especially needed for the second segment of the activity, when toddlers have an opportunity to stack the rings on the spool. Some toddlers may opt for a trial-and-error approach to the task. Others may watch your demonstration. If a toddler seems frustrated in putting the toy back together, find the next ring and hand it to him/her. At this age, toddlers may not notice differences in size. Toddlers may understand the difference in size more easily if you lay the rings out in order on the floor. Individualized support is important to a toddler's sense of success in putting the rings on the spool.

Some toddlers may leave the gathering after removing rings from the spool. It is not necessary for toddlers to finish all the steps available with a stacking ring. Taking the rings off and seeing the rings on the floor or in a container is a useful cognitive contrast to viewing the rings stacked in order by size.

Option 3 continued More Scaffolding Tips—Option 3

Extra support ■ If a toddler shows strong interest, but has difficulty in putting the rings in order on a spool, stack four rings onto the toddler's spool. Encourage the toddler to put the (fifth) small ring on the top.

Enrichment ■ If a toddler wants to play some more with the rings after stacking them, invite him/her to dump the stacked rings onto the floor. Some rings may roll under furnishings, providing another achievable problem to solve.

 Interest Area

Materials needed: magnetic toys, such as GeoMag™ GBaby

Place magnetic toys on a low surface. Arrange toys so that they are connected in several different arrangements. Sit with toddlers and encourage them to use both hands to pull apart the magnetic toys. After toddlers have pulled apart several pieces, snap them back together in different arrangements. You may muffle the sound of the toys on the tabletop by placing a table pad or bath towel on the surface.

 Family Child Care

Materials needed: Velcro®, blocks, flannel board

Place small dots of Velcro® on the backs of several blocks for more disconnecting fun. Place blocks with Velcro® on a flannel board lying on the floor. Encourage toddlers to pull blocks from the flannel board. Older toddlers and preschoolers may enjoy placing the blocks in different patterns on the flannel board as younger toddlers continue to practice pulling the blocks from the flannel board.



12–24 Months

Option 1 One-to-One



Skill and Goal Concentration

A toddler watches and helps a caregiver determine whether two items are the same or different.



Key Concepts

Match
Same
Different



Materials Needed

Large basket
Toys (see Be Prepared)



Also Promotes

Communication/Language
Cognitive

Be Prepared: Secure four pairs of identical toys, such as two teddy bears, two trucks, two ducks, and two cups (eight toys total). Place all toys in the basket. Use toys of your choice. The activity description includes examples of cups, teddy bears, and toy trucks.

BEGIN: *[Invite one toddler to join you in looking at some toys.]*

We have a basket of toys.

ASK: What toys are in our basket?

ACT: *[Encourage the toddler to remove one toy at a time and say its name. Repeat what the toddler says. Example: "You said 'duck,' Marco. You are holding a toy duck!" Offer the toy's name if the toddler does not say it, and encourage the toddler to repeat the name with you. Return toys to the basket.]*

Display one set of items that are the same and one set of items that are not the same, as suggested below:]

Some of the toys in the basket are the same. Here are two cups. They are the same. Things that are the same are a match. These two cups match. The two cups match because they are the same.



[Pick up a cup and a teddy bear.]

These two toys are different. This is a cup, and this is a teddy bear. They are not the same. These two toys are not a match.



[Return all toys to the basket.]

I would like you to help me find toys that match. Toys that match are the same.

[Invite the toddler to pull one toy from the basket.]

This is a toy truck. I am going to look through the toys in our basket to find another toy truck. Two toy trucks would be a match. Two toy trucks are the same.



**Option 1 continued**

[Look through the toys in the basket, picking up several different toys, one at a time, and talking about how they are the same or different. Example: "This is a cup. Is this cup the same as the toy truck? No! The cup and the truck are different. They do not match." Then pick up a toy truck from the basket.]



EXPLAIN: [Hold up the two toy trucks in front of the toddler.]

This is a toy truck. This is another toy truck! The two trucks are the same. Things that are the same are a match. The two trucks match!



[Put aside the two matching toys.]

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

[Invite the toddler to select one toy from the basket. Encourage the toddler to say the name of the item. Offer the name if the toddler does not provide one.]



Once again, look through the toys in the basket and pick up several toys, one at a time, to hold next to the item pulled by the toddler. Begin the comparison with an item that is different from the toy pulled by the toddler.]

- ASK:**
- Are the (toy name) and the (toy name) the same?
 - Why not?

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

ACT: [Hold up next to each other the two toys that are the same. Ask the toddler whether the toys are the same or different.]

Describe how the two toys are the same. Emphasize that the two toys are a match.]

RECAP: You watched and helped me find two toys that were the same. We looked at some toys that were different. We found toys that are the same. What do we call two things that are the same? (a match)

12–24 Months

Option 2 One-to-One



Skill and Goal

Concentration

A toddler finds a toy in a basket that matches a toy selected by a caregiver.



Key Concepts

- Match
- Same
- Different



Materials Needed

- Large basket
- Toys (see Be Prepared)



Also Promotes

- Communication/Language
- Cognitive

Be Prepared: Secure four pairs of identical toys, such as two teddy bears, two trucks, two ducks, and two cups (eight toys total). Place all toys in the basket. Use toys of your choice. The activity description includes examples of cups, teddy bears, and toy trucks.

Invite a toddler to join you in finding two toys in a basket that match. Explain or remind the toddler that items match when they are the same. Introduce the basket of toys and show two toys that are the same. Describe how they are the same. Example: “Each of these two cups is red. We pretend to drink from the cups when we play in housekeeping. The two cups match because they are the same.” Then show two different toys and ask the toddler whether the toys are a match. Why not?



Next, pull a toy from the basket and say its name (or invite the toddler to say its name). Invite the toddler to look at the toys in the basket to find another toy that matches the toy you pulled. Give the toy you pulled from the basket to the toddler so he/she can hold and look at it closely. If appropriate, offer verbal support for finding another toy that is the same. Example: “Jaylen, you are holding a teddy bear. Are the teddy bear and the toy truck the same? (pause for response that you affirm) The bear and the truck are not a match. They are different.”



Repeat the process by pulling another toy from the basket, if the toddler remains interested. Offer similar types of support. Emphasize the concept of a match.

Conclude the activity by describing the toddler’s concentration efforts. Example: “You looked at each of the toys in the basket. You found a toy that matched another toy!”



12-24 Months

Option 3 One-to-One



Skill and Goal

Concentration

A toddler independently finds items in a basket that match.



Key Concepts

Match
Same



Materials Needed

Large basket
Toys (see Be Prepared)



Also Promotes

Communication/Language
Cognitive

Be Prepared: Select four to five pairs of identical toys (8–10 total). Select toys that are different from items included in Options 1 and 2 if the toddler participated in Option 1 or 2. Place all toys in the basket.

Invite a toddler to find toys in the basket that match. Remind the toddler that items that match are the same. Present the basket of toys and encourage the toddler to pick one toy, place it on the floor, and look closely at all other toys in the basket to find one that matches. Encourage the toddler to pull other toys from the basket, one at a time, to hold next to the target toy. The toddler can put toys that do not match into a separate collection (not return to the basket). After a match is found, all toys (except the two matching toys) should be returned to the basket. Suggest the toddler find another set of matching toys if he/she remains interested. It is not necessary for the toddler to find all matching toys in the basket, although some toddlers may be eager to do so. Conclude the activity by describing the toddler’s concentration actions. Example: “You looked closely at the toys in the basket. You found toys that match!”

What to Look For—Options 1–3

The options in this activity plan advance a toddler’s skills in concentration by introducing and emphasizing the concept of a match. A prior activity plan (Block 4) focused on comparing objects and encouraged toddlers to determine whether two objects were the same or different. The same-or-different comparison is central to determining whether items match. Option 3 should be pursued with a toddler who has demonstrated some skill in looking closely at two items as part of a comparison. Consistently emphasize the process of finding a match, particularly looking closely at how toys are the same or different.

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 Option 3, place fewer items in the basket if you anticipate 8–10 toys will be too challenging.

Enrichment ■ Encourage toddlers to tell why two toys are a match or not a match. Toddlers cannot be expected to provide highly verbal responses, but you can expand on the comments they make. It also is beneficial for toddler to think about a reasonably challenging question.



Interest Area

Materials Needed: large basket, four pairs of matching toys that differ from those used in Options 1–3

Place toys in the basket for two toddlers to use in a matching game they play together. Encourage toddlers to take turns picking one item from the basket and then finding the matching item.

Some toddlers may prefer to work together to find matching toys. Provide more than four pairs of matching toys if toddlers want to play some more.



Family Child Care

Materials Needed: two toys that match (more if the activity is popular)

Be Prepared: Hide one of two matching items in your setting.

Show a toy to a toddler and invite him/her to find the “hidden” matching toy. After the toddler finds the matching toy, ask how the two toys are the same (how they match). Offer more practice with a different pair of identical toys if the toddler enjoys the activity. Two toddlers or a toddler and an older child in your setting could work as a team in finding a hidden matching toy. A school-age child may enjoy hiding the matching toy. Also, a toddler will have fun hiding a matching toy for you to find.



12–24 Months

Option 1 Informal Gathering



Skill and Goal

Social interaction skills

Toddlers participate in a book sharing focused on being part of a family and part of a community at a child development center.



Key Concepts

Belong
Family
Friends



Materials Needed

I Belong by Cheri J. Meiners

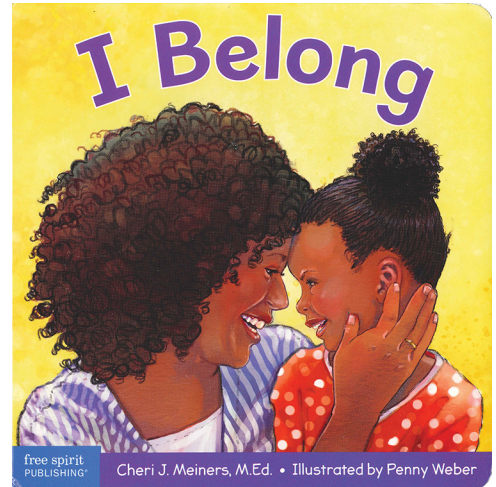


Also Promotes

Communication/Language

BEGIN: *[Invite several toddlers to join you to read a book. Show the cover of the book.]*

EXPLAIN: Our book is about a girl who feels good about being a part of a family and about having friends at her child development center. All of us belong to a family and have friends in our room. We all belong! We have families, and we have friends, just like the girl in our story.



ACT: Let's read our book and learn more about the girl!

[Use the strategies suggested below to help children understand the concept of belonging.]

- *Use pictures to engage toddlers in discussions of positive connections and interactions among people featured in the book. Example: "The girl and her friend in this picture are working together! What do you think they are working on?"*
- *Ask questions that help toddlers anticipate what might happen next in interactions among children featured in the book. Example: "The children are playing at the water table. Look at this boy. I think he wants to play, too! What do you think is going to happen?"*
- *Respond to toddlers' comments and pointing by repeating and extending their responses and words. Examples: "Elaine is pointing to the flowers. They are called sunflowers." "You are pointing to the kitty, Erik. The girl is playing with her family and they have a kitty! They all look happy to be together."]*

RECAP: Our book was about different ways that we all belong! We all have families, and we all have friends, just like the girl in our book. Let's look around at our friends who are with us today! We all belong.

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

Young children have strong feelings about the important people in their lives. Toddlers are likely to connect with the book character’s feelings as she spends time with her family and her friends. In addition to using strategies suggested in the activity description, look for opportunities to help toddlers relate the book’s content to their own families and communities. Example: “The children in this picture are running and playing together. They are smiling and laughing. The children are happy because they are friends. What do you like to do with your friends that makes you feel happy?” Toddlers may not respond verbally, but may smile or look at their friends with interest. Acknowledge all types of participation in the activity.

📈 More Scaffolding Tips—Option 1

Extra support ■ Some toddlers may be interested in talking about particular pictures. ■ Say with appreciation the name of each toddler in the session at the conclusion of the book (see Recap). Also, say the names of children in your room who are absent.

Enrichment ■ Use toddlers’ names frequently during the book reading.



12–24 Months

Option 2 One-to-One



Skill and Goal

Social interaction skills

A toddler identifies himself/herself and others in pictures of children in your room.



Key Concepts

Name



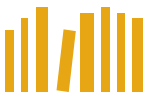
Materials Needed

Photos of children in your room (see Be Prepared)



Also Promotes

Communication/Language



Optional Reading

I Belong by Cheri J. Meiners

Be Prepared: This brief activity is to occur where pictures of children in your room are posted. If individual child pictures are not posted, secure photos of activities that include some children currently in your room.

Invite a toddler to join you in looking at pictures of toddlers in your room. Invite the toddler to find his/her picture, if available. Example: “This looks like you! What is the name of the child in this picture?” Show enthusiasm and excitement over the toddler finding his/her photo. Then encourage the toddler to say the names of children shown in the pictures or point to children in the pictures as you say their names. The toddler may want to talk about the photos of particular children. During and at the conclusion of the activity, emphasize that we belong to a room with many nice friends!

What to Look For—Option 2

The length of a toddler’s time in the room is an obvious factor in familiarity with peers. Do not hesitate to say names of children in the pictures if the toddler seems uncertain. This is not a test, and toddlers will differ in how many children in the room they know. For toddlers who recently joined your room, the activity can serve as a helpful introduction to who is in the room. Remember to include other caregivers.

More Scaffolding Tips—Option 2

Extra support ■ If a toddler is new to the room, consider breaking the activity into several different sessions so a reasonable number of pictures is considered in each. You might want to say something about the interests of specific children. Example: “This is Sam. He likes to play with blocks.”

Enrichment ■ For 1–2 selected pictures of children, invite the toddler to tell where the pictured child is currently playing in the room. Example: “Yes, this is Asia. What is Asia doing right now in our room?”



12–24 Months

Option 3 Informal Gathering



Skill and Goal

Social interaction skills

Toddlers identify peers present in their room by playing a peekaboo game focused on who is hiding/missing.



Key Concepts

Friend
Peekaboo



Materials Needed

Large scarf or light blanket



Also Promotes

Communication/Language
Cognitive
Self-Regulation

Invite several toddlers to play a *Peekaboo* game. Say the name of each toddler who is in the gathering as you point to each or encourage the toddler to “give a big smile.” The intent is to review faces and names. Then invite each interested toddler, one at a time, to “hide” under or behind the scarf. With enthusiasm, ask who is missing from the gathering. Encourage the toddlers to name their “hiding” peer. Example: “Who is missing? Who is hiding from us? Let’s say the name of our missing friend!” After the toddler is named, encourage the “hiding” toddler to remove the scarf and say “Peekaboo!” Quietly ask another toddler if he/she would like to hide next; some toddlers may not feel comfortable under or behind the scarf. Acknowledge all forms of participation.

What to Look For—Option 3

Toddlers enjoy hearing their own name during activities. This game also provides the opportunity for toddlers to practice identifying and naming the peers in their group. Playing *Peekaboo* will be familiar and enjoyable for most toddlers, although some may be uncomfortable being covered with a scarf or blanket. (See Extra Support tip.) Some toddlers will readily say the names of peers, and others may repeat a name after you. Some toddlers may prefer to watch and listen to the game. A toddler who watches with anticipation and smiles when the hidden toddler is revealed is making connections between each peer and his/her name.

More Scaffolding Tips—Option 3

Extra support ■ Some toddlers may be more comfortable with a transparent scarf, or covering their eyes with their hands and then removing the hands to say “peekaboo.” ■ Provide encouragement for toddlers who seem eager for their turn to hide under or behind the scarf. Example: “Your turn is going to be next, Keiko! Your turn is after Elijah.”

Enrichment ■ Invite toddlers to place the scarf over you and encourage them to say your name before you remove the scarf with enthusiasm. Have fun with the game!



Interest Area

Materials Needed: photos of children in your room

As a follow-up to Option 2, make pictures of children currently in your room available for toddlers to look at on their own. Encourage toddlers to find their own photos as well as pictures of friends they play with often. Also invite toddlers to say what a pictured peer likes to do in your room.



Family Child Care

Materials Needed: large scarf or light blanket

Peekaboo is a familiar and enjoyable game for most children. Invite all the children in your setting to take turns "hiding" under the scarf or blanket, as described in Option 2. Encourage children to name each child under the scarf. Promote turn-taking, if necessary, so one child does not become the sole person to say who is hiding. Show enthusiasm and excitement as each child removes the scarf and says "peekaboo!"



12–24 Months

Option 1 One-to-One



Skill and Goal

Gross motor development

A toddler practices throwing a large ball to knock over empty milk jugs.



Key Concepts

Throw
Push
Forward



Materials Needed

4–6 half-gallon empty milk jugs
1 large (7-inch) ball



Also Promotes

Communication/Language
Cognitive

Be Prepared: This activity is for toddlers who can easily stand and walk. Set up a row of milk jugs in an open area, and place the ball on the floor. You may wish to add interest to the milk jugs by wrapping them in colored tape.

BEGIN: [*Sit near the milk jugs and invite one toddler to throw a ball with you. Example: “Hi Ryah. Would you like to throw our big ball at the milk jugs? Maybe you can make a jug fall down!”*]

EXPLAIN: Please stand in this spot. Hold the ball with both of your hands. Look at the jugs. Then try to throw the ball toward the jugs. Push the ball forward when you throw it.

ACT: [*Provide a demonstration if the toddler seems uncertain about what to do. Emphasize the use of two hands, looking at the jugs, and pushing the ball forward.*]

Offer enthusiastic verbal support. Encourage the toddler to try throwing the ball again. You may wish to suggest the toddler use more strength. Example: “Try a big throw.” It also may be helpful for the toddler to move closer to the jugs.

Describe the toddler’s actions. Example: “You are holding the ball and looking at the milk jugs. You are getting ready to throw.”

Reset the milk jugs if they tip over.

Repeat and extend the toddler’s responses to throwing the ball. Directly face the toddler so he/she can see your face as you speak.]

RECAP: [*Describe what happened. Example: “You practiced throwing a big ball. You used two hands to throw the ball at our milk jugs. First you looked at the jugs. Next you pushed the ball forward for a good throw. Some jugs fell down!”*]

What to Look For—Option 1

Some toddlers will be excited to throw the ball. Others may wish to participate after they see peers use the ball. A toddler is more likely to attempt a controlled throw if there is a specific, achievable target, such as the milk jugs used in this activity. Encourage all toddlers to participate in throwing during the week. Practice in throwing may start and end within a few minutes.

A large ball encourages use of two hands and engages a toddler’s entire body, fostering strength and body coordination. The focus is the toddler’s body movement, use of both arms, and a push forward motion.

**Option 1 continued**

The activity plan's suggested phrase "big throw" is a way to help a toddler informally understand the concept of throwing with more strength. It is not appropriate to formally teach toddlers about the use of body strength in throwing a ball.

Throwing involves skills in eye-hand coordination and upper body strength. Toddlers will gain experience in spatial awareness as they see where the ball goes.

 A small icon of a staircase with three steps, positioned to the left of the text.**More Scaffolding Tips—Option 1**

Extra support ■ A toddler with little interest or experience in throwing a ball may like to roll the ball toward the milk jugs or roll a ball back and forth with you. Watch for a signal he/she wants to throw.

Enrichment ■ For repeated practice, use a different item as a target, such as soft blocks. ■ You may wish to use a camera to document a toddler's throwing actions.



12–24 Months

Option 2 One-to-One



Skill and Goal

Gross motor development

A toddler practices throwing a sock ball toward colorful streamers.



Key Concepts

Throw



Materials Needed

Crepe paper streamers
1 plastic coat hanger
Tape
Sock balls (see Be Prepared)



Also Promotes

Communication/Language
Cognitive

Be Prepared: Prepare 4–5 sock balls by rolling adult tube socks into balls (one sock per ball). Cut streamers of different colors long enough to hang within 24 inches from the floor. Tape overlapping streamers along the bottom of the hanger. Hang the streamers in a space for throwing soft items. Throwing rolled socks is an activity easily adapted for a small space.



Invite a toddler to stand about two feet from the paper streamers and throw a sock ball toward them. Kneel next to the toddler as he/she throws. Tailor your support to the toddler. Some may benefit from a demonstration. Some may need help in slowing their actions so they can better control their arm. Encourage a toddler to let go of the sock ball so it travels forward. It may be helpful to offer “Get ready, Throw” guidance. Encourage the toddler to retrieve the ball(s). Offer as many practice throws as time and child permit.

👁️ What to Look For—Option 2

Toddlers will delight in seeing the colorful streamers move when touched by the balls. The activity is a fun way to strengthen balance. Pay attention to how a toddler positions his/her feet for a throw and encourage standing on both feet, if appropriate. Allow plenty of time to practice throwing. Avoid keeping any kind of score. Catching a ball is a different skill and should not be combined with throwing.

📈 More Scaffolding Tips—Option 2

Extra support ■ Encourage a toddler to move closer to the streamers if appropriate. It is important for each toddler to experience success (moving the streamers) with the activity.

Enrichment ■ Offer this activity to two toddlers at a time. Encourage them to take turns so each toddler can see what happens to the streamers after throwing a ball and can watch their peer throw the ball.



12–24 Months

Option 3 Informal Gathering



Skill and Goal

Gross motor development

Toddlers practice throwing a ball.



Key Concepts

Throw



Materials Needed

4-inch O Ball®—1 per toddler



Also Promotes

Communication/Language
Cognitive

In an open space indoors or outside, invite 2–3 toddlers to play with balls. Give an easy-to-hold ball to each toddler and demonstrate how to throw overhand. Help toddlers focus on the sequence of throwing the ball by saying aloud: “Put the ball near your ear. Now throw.” Encourage overhand throwing in a certain direction with no specific target, such as “throw toward the fence.” Avoid talking about how far the ball traveled. Provide practice opportunities as long as time and child interest permit.



👁️ What to Look For—Option 3

Toddlers generally begin to develop an ability to throw overhand as they reach their second birthday. As in any developmental area, there are striking differences in how toddlers progress in large motor skills. Throwing a ball in a desired direction may be a skill some toddlers have not yet developed. Some toddlers’ attempts to throw may be disorganized. Some toddlers may simply fling a ball in any direction. If a toddler’s throw is mostly disorganized, provide very soft items to throw, such as adult-size tube socks rolled up like a ball (see Option 2) with a large target, such as a wall or a laundry basket.

📊 More Scaffolding Tips—Option 3

Extra support ■ It is not necessary to use an overhand throw. A toddler may have his/her own preferred way to throw a ball. The goal is primarily to engage toddlers in a brief throwing activity that promotes motor coordination.

Enrichment ■ Offer different-sized balls if the activity is offered outdoors.
■ Provide a target, such as a basket or hoop on the ground.



Interest Area

Materials needed: low box or laundry basket, soft larger balls, basket of shower scrubbies

Create an area of the room for toddlers to throw soft items. Toddlers like to throw shower scrubbies, probably because it is a common item generally used for other purposes. Provide a large, low box or laundry basket as a target for toddlers’ throwing. Keep a couple of very soft larger balls in the room for toddlers to roll.



Family Child Care

Materials needed: small ball or beanbag, balls of soft material or beach balls

Older children may enjoy helping younger children learn to throw a ball in any of the activity plan's three options. Infants generally enjoy experiences with balls. During play times with infants, sit on the floor facing an infant who can sit. Roll a small ball to the infant and encourage him/her to roll a ball back to you.