



**Communication/
Language**

Exploring Words

Option 1 (IG) Toddlers participate in a book sharing focused on head, shoulders, knees, and toes.

Option 2 (IG) Toddlers point to their head, shoulders, knees, and toes as part of a book sharing.



Cognitive

Sorting and Matching

Option 1 (OO) A toddler sorts two different types of toys.

Option 2 (IG) Toddlers participate together in sorting three different types of toys.



Self-Regulation

Focusing and Remembering

Option 1 (IG) Toddlers practice watching and remembering the location of a moving toy car.

Option 2 (IG) Two toddlers take turns hiding a toy and identifying its location.



Social-Emotional

Interacting with Others

Option 1 (OO) A toddler participates in a back-and-forth physical activity with a caregiver.

Option 2 (IG) Toddlers work together in a shared painting activity.



Physical/Health

Moving Our Bodies

Option 1 (IG) Toddlers carry small bags of books to and from the book area.

Option 2 (IG) Toddlers pack, carry, and unpack bags of pretend food items.

(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 book sharing focused on head, shoulders, knees, and toes.



Key Concepts

Head
Toes



Materials Needed

Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes by Annie Kubler



Also Promotes

Cognitive

BEGIN: *[Invite several toddlers to join you to read a book.]*

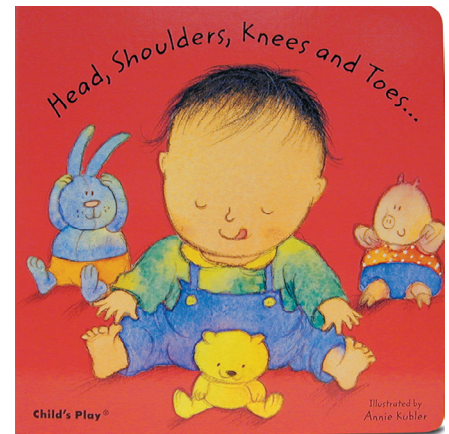
EXPLAIN: Our book is about a song. Some of us may know the song!

[Show book cover. Point to the baby.]

Look at the baby in the picture. The baby is touching his toes!

Let's point to the baby's toes.

The baby is doing part of the song in our book. The words of the song tell about toes. The words of the song also tell about other parts of our body.



I am going to open our book, so we can learn more about the song.

ACT: *[Use a singing voice, especially for the text on the first page. Use the following strategies to engage toddlers in the book:*

- *Point to each body part as you name it by singing. Use questions to create anticipation and interest in what happens next. Example: "What are the children on this page doing? Let's turn the page and see what they do next!" Pause for toddlers to look at pictures.*
- *Acknowledge toddlers' reactions to pictures. Examples: "You are touching your head, Marcos. The boy in this picture is touching his head!" "Amelia, you are smiling and pointing to the baby's mouth. What do you think the baby was eating?"*
- *Invite toddlers to point to parts of their body featured in the book. Example: "Look at the baby's toy rabbits! The toy rabbits are touching their toes too! Let's touch our toes!"*

RECAP: Our book was a song about different parts of a body. The pictures in our book showed babies touching their head, shoulders, knees, and toes. Some of the pictures were silly!

12–24 Months

Option 2 Informal Gathering



Skill and Goal

Receptive language
Expressive language

Toddlers point to their head, shoulders, knees, and toes as part of a book sharing.



Key Concepts

Head
Shoulders
Knees
Toes



Materials Needed

Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes by Annie Kubler



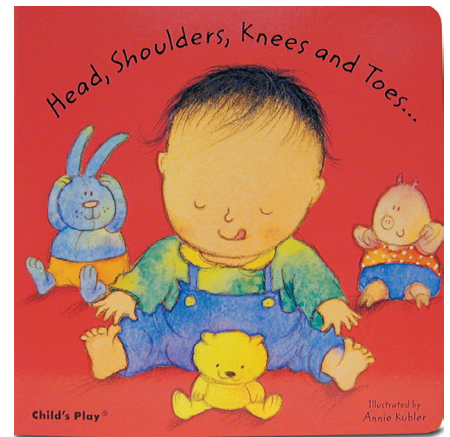
Also Promotes

Cognitive
Physical/Health
Self-Regulation

Invite several toddlers to read a book with you. Use strategies suggested in Option 1 for sharing the book. At the conclusion of the book, ask toddlers if they would like to join you in pointing to some parts of our body shown in our book. Some toddlers may prefer to move to a different activity.

Invite interested toddlers to stand with you and touch or point to a part of their body that you name. Example: “When I say ‘toes,’ we can all touch our toes.” Demonstrate each requested action. Follow the order used in the book (head, shoulders, knees, toes). Request pointing to or touching each shoulder and each knee. Whether it is a right or left shoulder or knee is not important.

If toddlers remain interested, repeat the activity with body parts in the opposite order, from toes to head.



👁️ What to Look For—Options 1–2

Singing adds value to the book sharing. Some toddlers will be familiar with the song and may readily point to body parts featured in the book. Others may prefer to watch and listen. Toddlers are not expected to sing along, although some may sing or say some key words. Positively acknowledge all forms of participation.

📈 More Scaffolding Tips—Options 1–2

Extra support ■ Pause on a page so toddlers can look at a picture prior to your singing. Repeat the name of a body part in your usual voice.

Enrichment ■ Invite toddlers to say some of the words of the song with you, especially names of body parts featured in pictures. Sing slowly and clearly, repeating the word you invite toddlers to say. ■ After several rounds of pointing/touching body parts in Option 2, offer requests without your pointing to the body parts. ■ In Option 2, demonstrate and invite toddlers to touch or point to additional body parts mentioned in the song, including eyes, ears, nose, or mouth.



Interest Area

Materials Needed: *Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes* by Annie Kubler, assortment of books with pictures of bodies

Place the books on a blanket on the floor. Invite several toddlers to point to different body parts shown in book pictures. Include a mix of familiar and less familiar parts. Some toddlers may want to point to some body parts shown in a picture and have you say the name(s).



Family Child Care

Materials Needed: *Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes* by Annie Kubler

Children of all ages will enjoy participating during this song. Older children can demonstrate the body parts to touch, and younger children can watch and imitate their older peers. You may wish to gently touch some body parts of babies as you sing the song. Older children will enjoy singing the song in different ways, such as fast, slow, loud, and quiet.



12–24 Months

Option 1 One-to-One



Skill and Goal

Object inquiry skills

Problem-solving

A toddler sorts two different types of toys.



Key Concepts

Same

Different



Materials Needed

6 each of 2 different types of toys (see Be Prepared)



Also Promotes

Physical/Health

Self-Regulation

Be Prepared: Select two different types of toys that are of interest to the toddler participating in this activity. Gather six toys of each type. Example: Six toy animals and six toy cars. The toys within a category do not need to be identical. Example: The six toy animals could be different animals. Use toys that are approximately the same size. The activity description assumes toy animals and cars are used. These are examples only.

BEGIN: [Invite a toddler to play with some toys at a low table with you. Sit next to the toddler. Put two toys of each type on the table in front of you in a random arrangement. Example: two toy animals, two toy cars. Put the remaining toys on the floor by your side (away from the toddler).]



EXPLAIN: [Point to specific toys as you name them. Use gestures to complement your words. When you sort the toys, put them in front of the toddler and put space between the two groups of toys.]

Let's look at these toys. There are toy animals. There are toy cars. These are different types of toys.

I am going to put our toy animals together. Now I am going to put our toy cars together.



Our animals are the same type of toy. Our cars are the same type of toy.

ACT: [Give the toddler one toy car and one toy animal. Place the two toys on the table in front of the toddler, separate from the toys you just sorted.]

Here are some more toys for us to look at. Here is another toy car. Here is another toy animal.

[Point to a toy as you name its type, or invite the toddler to say whether a toy you point to is a car or an animal.]

You can put the toy car with our other toy cars on the table. You can put the toy animal with our other toy animals.

[See Extra Support tip if the toddler seems unclear about what to do.

Give the toddler more toys from the preselected collection and invite him/her to put each car with other cars and each toy animal with other animals. If the toddler readily sorted the two toys in the first

Option 1 continued

round, place the remaining six toys in front of him/her (three of each type). If it was challenging for the toddler to sort the two toys, offer two more toys (one of each type) to sort and then offer the remaining four toys to sort if the toddler remains interested.]

RECAP: We looked at toy animals and toy cars. These are different types of toys. You put the toy animals together. You put the toy cars together. You put together the same types of toys.

 What to Look For—Option 1

Selecting toys that are of interest to the toddler means you may use different toys for different toddlers. Keeping some of the preselected toys on the floor next to you during the activity may seem logistically awkward, but this procedure can help a toddler maintain focus by placing on the table only those toys he/she is to work with at the moment.

Pay close attention to the ease with which the toddler sorts the toys. The activity description and scaffolding tips suggest ways to respond to a toddler's approach to the task. Offer the activity at a later point if the toddler is not interested in sorting. Also, look for opportunities to informally point out groupings of similar or identical items as part of a typical day. Example: "Here is our tray of snacks. Look, all of the juice glasses are together. The plates of crackers are together."

Some toddlers may focus on toy characteristics, such as color or specific type of animal, that are not part of sorting in the current activity. Positively acknowledge a toddler's attention to details of a toy and consider adapting the activity to help the toddler sort by characteristics of his/her interest. Example: Help the toddler sort the toys by color or by specific type of animal, such as putting all horses together in one small group, and all pigs together in another small group. In future offerings of the activity, you may wish to select two types of identical objects, such as red counters and blue counters of the same size. This approach is used in later ELM sorting and matching activities, especially for toddlers 24–36 months of age, when attention to more specific characteristics of objects is promoted.

It is not necessary for toddlers to understand the term sorting in order to successfully participate in this sorting activity. Helping a toddler notice what is basically the same and what is basically different about the toys is valuable to promote, as suggested in the activity description. Introducing the concept of sorting is a suggested Enrichment tip aimed at toddlers who seem ready to learn a new word.

 More Scaffolding Tips—Option 2

Extra support ■ If the toddler seems unclear on how to sort the toys, encourage him/her to look closely at the toy and the existing groups of toys. Example: (while pointing) "This is a car. We want to put this car with the other cars on the table. Does this car go here with the other cars or does it go here with the toy animals?" ■ If the sorting task seems too challenging for a toddler, offer no more than two invitations to sort (two toys each), as suggested in the activity description.

Enrichment ■ Repeat the activity with two types of objects that represent different shapes, such as 4–6 soft balls and 4–6 soft blocks. ■ Introduce a new word and concept by explaining to the toddler that he/she is sorting toys.



12–24 Months

Option 2 Informal Gathering



Skill and Goal

Object inquiry skills

Problem-solving

Toddlers participate together in sorting three different types of toys.



Key Concepts

Same

Different



Materials Needed

3 different types of toys—1 each per toddler, and 2 each for caregiver (see Be Prepared)

Basket



Also Promotes

Physical/Health

Social-Emotional

Self-Regulation

Be Prepared: This activity is an adaptation of Option 1 for a gathering of two or three toddlers. Determine three different types of toys to use in the activity. Secure one toy of each type per toddler participating in the activity. Example: For three toddlers, secure three balls, three blocks, and three people figures. Also secure two toys of each type for yourself, to be used at the beginning of the activity. Example: two balls, two blocks, and two people figures. Use identical toys, if possible, or toys of similar size. The activity description assumes balls, blocks, and people figures are used. These are examples only. Begin the activity with all toys in an open basket or container on the floor next to you.

Invite two or three toddlers to join you at a low table to play with some toys. Place toddlers at the table (standing or sitting) so each has work space in front of him/her. Take two toys of each of the three types from the basket and place them on the table in a random grouping of six. Encourage the toddlers to look at, touch or manipulate, and name each type. Emphasize there are three different types of toys on the table. Some are blocks, some are balls, and some are people figures. Avoid sorting the toys as you talk with toddlers about the types.

Explain that we can put together the toys that are the same. Put in the center of the table one of each of type of toy, with about 12 inches of space between each. Point to and name each type of toy. Example: “Here is a ball. Here is a block. And here is a people figure.” Then put each of the remaining three toys next to its similar type positioned in the middle of the table. Explain your actions. Example: “I am putting this block next to the other block. I am putting this ball next to the other ball. I am putting this people figure next to the other people figure.”

Explain that each toddler can do the same thing. Place on the table in front of each toddler three different toys; one of each type. Invite the toddlers to put each of their toys with the same type of toy. Help toddlers take turns and offer verbal support if appropriate. After toddlers have placed their toys with the appropriate type of toy in the middle of the table, emphasize again that we put together the types of toys that are the same. Example: (while pointing) “Here are our blocks, all together. Here are our balls, all together. Here are our people figures, all together.”

If toddlers remain interested, take apart the toy groupings on the table and repeat the activity. This time, add your toys to the toddlers’ collections to sort. Depending on the number of toddlers who participate in the repeat round, the number of toys you give to each toddler to sort may not be equal after your toys are added to the collection. See Enrichment tips for adding challenge.



Option 2 continued

What to Look For—Option 2

This activity is more challenging than Option 1 because it involves three, rather than two, different types of objects and occurs within a small gathering of peers. Most of the considerations described in Option 1's What to Look For section apply to the current option.

The small gathering arrangement offers an opportunity to help toddlers experience turn-taking, a skill that takes time for young children to understand and practice. Help toddlers take turns putting their toys with the appropriate group of toys. In addition to supporting toddlers' awareness of taking turns, this approach enables you to give individualized verbal guidance, if necessary, and avoids distractions that could occur if everyone attempts to put a toy in a specific group at the same time.

More Scaffolding Tips—Option 2

Extra support ■ Use two rather than three types of toys if you anticipate three types may be too challenging. ■ Do not add your toys to the collection of toys given toddlers in the repeat round if it seems one or more toddlers in the gathering would benefit from your demonstrating again how to put the same types of toys together. Another possibility is to leave one toy of each type in the middle of the table for the repeat round.

Enrichment ■ For the repeat round, put one toy of each type at one end of the table, with about 12 inches between each. Place the remaining collection of toys in random order at the other end of the table. Help toddlers take turns standing at the end of the table with the remaining collection to pick one of the toys and place it with the same type of toy at the opposite end of the table.

Interest Area

Materials Needed: see below

Provide 10–15 toys that represent 2–3 different types on a low table for toddlers to sort individually or with a peer. Consider using toys that were not part of Option 1 or 2. There are commercially-available toys, such as My First Sorting Bears, designed to support sorting skills.

Family Child Care

Materials Needed: see below

In addition to offering Option 1 and 2 for toddlers, provide opportunities for preschool-age children to sort items in your setting, such as play dishes and utensils. A more advanced approach to sorting for preschool-age children involves distributing one of each type of item per person. Example: Give each child a cup of juice, a napkin, and 2–3 crackers for snack.



12–24 Months

Option 1 Informal Gathering



Skill and Goal Executive function

Toddlers practice watching and remembering the location of a moving toy car.



Key Concepts

Hide
Garage
Watch
Remember



Materials Needed

Toy car
2 small cardboard boxes



Also Promotes

Cognitive

Be Prepared: The car should fit fully inside each cardboard box. If a box (pretend garage) has a flap(s) that closes so nothing in the box is visible, put the box on its side during the activity and pretend the flap is a garage door. If a box has no flap, put the box opening on the floor so the car can be fully hidden when put in the box (garage).

BEGIN: *[Invite several toddlers to join you on the floor to play a game. Show the toy car and place the two cardboard boxes next to each other in front of the toddlers.]*

EXPLAIN: Our game has a toy car and two boxes. We will pretend the boxes are garages. A garage is a place where a car can be parked.

Our toy car likes to drive around and then hide! Our car likes to hide in one of the garages. Let's watch the car drive around and try to remember where the car hides.

ASK: What do we use to watch something? (our eyes)

ACT: *[Point to your eyes when you encourage toddlers to watch.]*

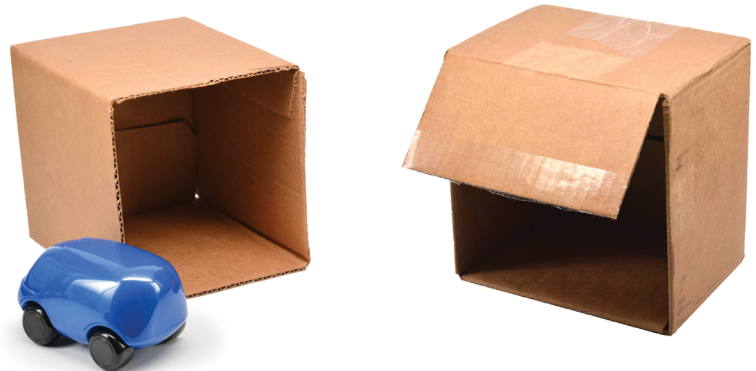
Please watch with your eyes to see where the car goes.

[Move the car around on the floor for a few seconds, always in front of the toddlers. Avoid holding the car in your hand where it is not visible. While the toddlers are watching, put the car in or under one of the boxes. Make sure the car is not visible after it is parked.]

The car drove into a garage. The car is hiding!

I am trying to remember which garage the car is in. I did not watch carefully to see where the car went!

[Have fun pretending you did not pay attention to where the car drove. Look first in or under the empty box. Show excitement when you find the car in or under the correct garage!]



**Option 1 continued**

The car is going to drive around and then hide again! This time I am going to watch the car closely. I want to remember where the car hides.

[Drive the car on the floor, always in full view of the toddlers. Drive the car under the previously empty garage.]

The car drove into a garage. The car is hiding from us again! This time I watched where the car went. I remember where the car went!

[Look in or under the correct garage. Show excitement when you find the car!]

I watched the car drive around and remembered where it was hiding. I found the car!

Should the car drive around and hide again?

[Repeat if the toddlers appear interested.]

RECAP: We used our eyes to watch our toy car drive around and then hide. We could not see the car after it drove into the garage. We remembered where the car went because we watched with our eyes.



12–24 Months

Option 2
Informal Gathering



Skill and Goal
Executive function

Two toddlers take turns hiding a toy and identifying its location.



Key Concepts

- Watch
- Remember
- Hide
- Garage



Materials Needed

- Toy car
- 2 small cardboard boxes (see Option 1 Be Prepared)



Also Promotes

- Cognitive
- Physical/Health
- Social-Emotional

Be Prepared: This option is an adaptation of Option 1 and is designed for toddlers who recently participated in Option 1. See the Option 1 description of the two cardboard boxes. Limit participation to two toddlers at a time.

Invite two toddlers to join you on the floor to play a game. Introduce the car and two boxes that are pretend garages. Remind toddlers that the car likes to drive around and then hide. Explain that the two toddlers participating in this game will take turns driving and hiding the car, and telling where the car is hiding. Show toddlers how to hold the car so it can always be seen. You might want to show how putting the car in the palm of our hand can make it difficult to see the car.

Select one of the toddlers to drive the car around the floor and then hide the car in one of the garages. Offer verbal guidance as appropriate. Urge the other toddler to watch where the car goes, including where it hides. After the car is fully hidden in a garage, pause a few moments and then invite the second toddler to say or point to where the car is hiding. Show excitement when the car is shown. Emphasize that watching the car carefully helped the toddler remember where the car was hiding.

Reverse the toddlers’ roles, with the toddler who was the car’s driver in the first round serving as the careful watcher of where the car goes. Again, provide a brief pause after the car is hidden and then invite the watcher to tell or point to where the car is hiding.

If a toddler appears to be guessing which garage to look in or under, positively recognize the toddler’s effort and try another round. This time, offer reminders to keep watching as you quietly narrate the car’s movements.

👁️ What to Look For—Options 1–2

Both options emphasize how watching helps us remember. Monitor toddlers’ visual tracking of the car in Option 1. Offer fewer and maybe slower movements of the car if it appears toddlers are looking elsewhere part of the time. Also monitor the watcher-toddler’s visual tracking of the car in Option 2. Offer reminders to watch if it seems the toddler is not fully engaged.

Option 2 includes a self-control task for the driver-toddler when you ask the watcher-toddler to identify the car’s hidden location. To help the driver-toddler resist the urge to tell or show the car’s location, you may wish to urge the driver-toddler to sit still while the watcher-toddler tells or points to the car’s location.

Emphasize the importance of watching. Never move the car in Option 1 when toddlers are not watching. Avoid changing the activities into a guessing game. Random guessing does not promote the idea that watching something helps



us remember what happened to something. Do not suggest a toddler “make another guess” if he/she does not select the correct garage in Option 2. Instead, encourage the driver-toddler to reveal where the car is parked. Positively recognize toddlers’ efforts.

More Scaffolding Tips—Options 1–2

Extra support ■ In Option 1, draw additional attention to the car’s location by describing the car’s movements. Example: “Now our car is making a big turn.” ■ In Option 1, use slower movements of the car.

Enrichment ■ Use three garages. ■ While toddlers watch in Option 1, change the locations of the two garages after the car has been hidden.

Interest Area

Materials Needed: toy cars, small boxes (see Options 1 and 2)

Invite several toddlers to play with toy cars and the pretend garages in the block area. Encourage toddlers to drive their cars around the area and to build their own garages for parking or hiding a car. Toddlers who especially enjoyed Option 2 might want to work together to play the Option 2 game again.

Family Child Care

Materials Needed: toy cars, small boxes (see Options 1 and 2), *Goodnight, Goodnight, Construction Site* by Sherri Rinker and Tom Lichtenheld

Share with toddlers and preschool-age children the book about how construction trucks go to sleep at the end of the day, just like the toy cars go to sleep in garages. Preschool-age children may enjoy Option 2, especially with three pretend garages available.



12–24 Months

Option 1 One-to-One



Skill and Goal

Social interaction skills

A toddler participates in a back-and-forth physical activity with a caregiver.



Key Concepts

Together



Materials Needed

Soft, medium-sized ball
Play tunnel (see Be Prepared)



Also Promotes

Communication/Language
Physical/Health

Be Prepared: Use or create a wide and tall tunnel for this activity.

Invite a toddler to join you in rolling a ball back and forth through a tunnel. Explain that we will play together. Invite the toddler to sit on one end of the tunnel. Roll the ball through the tunnel to the toddler and encourage him/her to roll the ball back to you. The toddler may not wish to use the tunnel. Encourage several more rounds of rolling the ball back and forth. Describe actions focused on the back-and-forth arrangement. Example: “I rolled the ball to you, William. Now you have the ball! You can roll the ball back to me!” If the ball gets stuck in the tunnel, use words and gestures to encourage the toddler to figure out how to get the ball. This may be a simple solution, such as lifting the tunnel. It is important to positively recognize as a contribution to your shared effort.

👁️ What to Look For—Option 1

Most toddlers enjoy playing with balls, and this activity provides a new material (the tunnel) to use with a ball. The emphasis is on playing cooperatively, not on successful movement of the ball. Make accommodations to minimize motor challenges of rolling and catching a ball so the emphasis is on your exchanges with the toddler. Accommodations might include adjusting the length of the tunnel, not using the tunnel, or sitting close to the toddler. Show enthusiasm and excitement as the ball is passed back and forth. Say the toddler’s name frequently during this brief activity.

📊 More Scaffolding Tips—Option 1

Extra support ■ If the play tunnel is new to your room, provide opportunities for toddlers to explore the tunnel for several days prior to inviting toddlers to participate in this one-to-one setting with you.

Enrichment ■ Invite the toddler to pick the ball from among different sizes and types of soft balls.



12–24 Months

Option 2 Informal Gathering



Skill and Goal

Social interaction skills

Toddlers work together in a shared painting activity.



Key Concepts

Together



Materials Needed

- Large sheet of paper
- Tape
- Age-appropriate paintbrushes—1 per toddler
- 4 containers to hold paint (see Be Prepared)
- 4 colors of washable tempera paint
- Paint smocks—1 per toddler



Also Promotes

- Communication/Language
- Physical/Health

Be Prepared: This activity is for toddlers who are familiar with using a paintbrush and paint. Use the tape to affix the sheet of paper to a low table. Snack-size paper plates or shallow trays are useful for holding paint. Place a spoonful of paint on each plate/tray. To minimize mess and loss if a plate/tray is dropped or spilled, avoid using too much paint at a time. Paint can be added as needed during the activity.

Invite 3–4 toddlers to paint whatever they wish on a section of the same large sheet of paper. After helping each toddler put on a smock, encourage each toddler to stand at a different place at the table, such as one toddler on each side of the table. Place a plate/tray of paint in front of each toddler and invite each to begin painting.

Periodically briefly comment that the toddlers are painting together. Say each toddler’s name several times as you talk about what is happening.

Point out similar actions with the brushes. Example: “Neveah and Joshua are making dots with the paint. Neveah is making red dots. Joshua is making green dots.”

Help toddlers share the paints. Example: “I think Antonio is trying to reach the yellow paint. Joshua, the yellow paint is close to you. Would you please give the yellow paint to Antonio?”

Toddlers are likely to leave the activity at different points. Acknowledge each toddler’s departure from the table. Example: “Joey is done painting. It was fun to have Joey join the painting.”

Display the dry painting on a wall for others to enjoy.

What to Look For—Option 2

This activity can foster a positive sense of being part of a small gathering of peers. This emphasis is more important than the results of painting. The shared activity includes the same table and sheet of paper and paints, but individuality in what is painted. Toddlers are not expected to work together to produce a particular image. Children will likely differ in their level of interest in painting. Some may enjoy experimenting with each paint color and making different marks on the paper, whereas others may paint briefly and move to another activity.

More Scaffolding Tips—Option 2

- Extra support** ■ Limit the activity to two toddlers and two or three paints if you anticipate difficulties in sharing space and paint. ■ Provide additional brushes in the event a toddler prefers to use a new brush with a different color. ■ Mixing several drops of dish detergent into the paint can make cleanup easier.

**Option 2 continued**

Enrichment ■ Print “Painting Together” or a similar phrase on the paper without interfering with toddlers’ paint marks. The intent is to emphasize for adults the toddlers’ shared experience of painting, not the product.

**Interest Area**

Materials Needed: see below

Gather materials related to a current interest of toddlers in your room. The interest may be a particular type of animal or toy. Arrange the materials in an appealing manner in a designated part of your room. Create a simple theme that can support toddlers’ joint activities with the shared materials. Visit the setting on a regular basis to encourage cooperation and toddlers’ sense of belonging to the play setting.

**Family Child Care**

Materials Needed: paper—1 sheet per child, age-appropriate paintbrushes—1 per child, 4 containers for paint, 4 colors of washable tempera paint, paint smocks—1 per child

Invite toddlers and older children to create paintings that can be displayed and enjoyed in your setting. Provide a sheet of paper for each interested child. Toddlers will enjoy watching older children paint and may imitate some of their actions. Older infants may enjoy holding a wet, chubby paintbrush and “painting” on a piece of construction paper.



12–24 Months

Option 1 Informal Gathering



Skill and Goal

Gross motor development

Toddlers carry small bags of books to and from the book area.



Key Concepts

Carry
In
Out



Materials Needed

Small tote bags—1 per toddler
Small board books—2 per toddler
Cushions (optional)



Also Promotes

Communication/Language
Cognitive

Be Prepared: Put two board books in each tote bag and place the tote bags near, but not in, your room’s book area. Enhance the book area with cushions, if available.

Invite 2–4 toddlers to each carry one tote bag to the book area. Explain there are books in each tote bag. Describe toddlers’ carrying actions. Example: “Everyone is carrying a bag to our book area.” Encourage toddlers to sit down and take books out of their bag. Move from child to child to talk about books in the bag. Example: “Mateo, you took books out of the bag. Look, one of your books is about ducks.” Some toddlers may turn pages and point to pictures. Others may take books out of their bag and be ready to move on. Talk with toddlers about pictures in books of interest. Repeat and extend toddlers’ comments and recognize their actions, like pointing to a book or picture.

Encourage each toddler to put the books in the bag when he/she is done looking at them and then carry the bag to a place you designate, which could be the bags’ original location outside the book area. Draw toddlers’ attention to parts of their body used to move and hold books and carry a bag.



12–24 Months

Option 2 Informal Gathering



Skill and Goal

Gross motor development

Toddlers pack, carry, and unpack bags of pretend food items.



Key Concepts

Carry
Into
Out



Materials Needed

Medium-size paper grocery bags—1 per toddler
Empty, clean food containers—4–6 per toddler
Play vegetables or fruits



Also Promotes

Communication/Language
Cognitive

Be Prepared: Place the paper bags, food containers, and toy foods in the dramatic play area or in a space you create for a pretend grocery store. The small tote bags used in Option 1 can be used for carrying items in this activity, too.

Invite several toddlers to join you to put pretend food items into grocery bags. Create a simple grocery store theme for the activity that involves each toddler packing a bag, carrying bags to a designated area, and taking items out of a bag. Talk with toddlers about what they are putting into the bags, including sizes of items. Some toddlers may wish to add other toys to the bags, such as dolls or toy dishes. Offer a smaller bag to a toddler who has recently begun to walk.

Help toddlers determine how much they can put in a bag without things falling out or the bag becoming too heavy. If you do not wish to pursue this useful cognitive challenge as part of the activity, consider setting a limit on the number of items each toddler can put into and carry in a bag.

Draw toddlers' attention to the parts of their body used for picking up food items and for carrying the bag, including the use of two hands. Examples: "Josh's bag has handles. He is carrying his bag with both hands holding the bag handles." "Candice has both of her hands under her bag."

What to Look For—Options 1–2

Most toddlers greatly enjoy carrying things from one place to another place, and will likely welcome the provision of bags and carrying opportunities. For many toddlers, the process of carrying things will be of greater interest than what is being carried.

Both activity options promote fine and gross motor development, including body coordination involved in walking while carrying an item. Option 2 is more challenging than Option 1 because it involves the additional task of selecting items and then putting the items into a bag. Different sizes of items will require different hand grasps, and maybe the use of two hands. It also is likely that toddlers will use both hands to carry a bag in Option 2, whereas one hand may be used to hold the handle of a tote bag carried in Option 1. As suggested in the activity descriptions, look for opportunities to comment on how a toddler is carrying something. Your brief comment can help heighten a toddler's awareness of what parts of his/her body are involved in doing something.

Toddlers' actions in Option 2 can actively support cognitive growth. Spatial skills that help a child anticipate whether an item is too large, or whether the selected items can actually fit in a bag, are emerging at this age and likely will benefit from your guidance. Ask simple questions that support a toddler in



figuring out what can fit into the bag. Avoid statements, such as “that’s too big for your bag,” that restrict the toddler’s active learning opportunity. Help a toddler find a smaller item to carry once he/she has determined something is too big. Look for ways to promote the concepts of big and small (or bigger and smaller) while a toddler packs his/her bag. Toddlers are generally interested in size.

More Scaffolding Tips—Options 1–2

Extra support ■ Walk next to a toddler who finds it challenging to coordinate walking and carrying a bag. ■ In Option 2, show how to carry a bag using two hands.

Enrichment ■ Provide bigger and smaller bags. Draw attention to the size differences by talking with toddlers about what can fit into a smaller bag and what can fit into in a bigger bag. ■ Help toddlers compare heavier and lighter bags by lifting each.



Interest Area

Materials Needed: Small cloth tote bags and ladies’ purses, baskets with handles, small animal figures or manipulative toys, balls or sand pails, mirror

Place bags or purses near the sensory table. Small tote bags, baskets and purses with handles can foster walking and carrying skills. Put in the sensory table some loose materials to add to bags, purses, or baskets. Loose materials could include small animal figures or manipulative toys. In an outdoor setting, toddlers enjoy carrying balls or sand pails.

Place a mirror in the classroom so the toddlers may see a full view of themselves. Foster balance by asking a toddler who is looking in the mirror to “touch your nose, touch your tummy, touch your legs.” Standing and moving to touch body parts can improve balance. This is an extension of the Communication/Language Option 2 in the current block.

A small brown house icon with a chimney, positioned to the left of the text "Family Child Care".

Family Child Care

Materials Needed: *Caps for Sale* by Esphyr Slobokdina, 20 paper plates

The balancing and coordination skills involved in walking while carrying something (Options 1 and 2) can be extended to preschool-age and older children. Share the book, *Caps for Sale*. Point to the picture of the peddler carrying his pile of hats. Talk about how the peddler must balance the hats as he walks. Then offer an activity related to the book by providing pretend caps for children to carry. Make paper caps by fastening two paper plates together face to face. Encourage children to use two hands to carry a small stack of caps. Older children may enjoy stacking several caps to balance in one hand or on their head!

Caps for Sale is a wonderful story to act out with a mixed-age group of children.

Infants who can sit independently may enjoy passing a toy back and forth to you. Reaching while sitting can help strengthen the infant's torso and balance.