



**Communication/
Language**

Exploring Words

- Option 1** (IG) Toddlers participate in a book sharing focused on little ducks who go away and come back.
- Option 2** (IG) Toddlers participate in a shared book reading followed by pretending to be little ducks in a key part of the story.
- Option 3** (OO) A toddler participates in a book sharing focused on looking at pictures to figure out what might happen next.



Cognitive

Exploring Objects

- Option 1** (IG) Toddlers practice naming familiar pictured items.
- Option 2** (OO) A toddler practices naming familiar pictured, and actual, items.



Self-Regulation

Paying Attention

- Option 1** (OO) A toddler watches a caregiver look carefully at familiar toys to find objects that are the same.
- Option 2** (OO) A toddler practices looking carefully at familiar toys to find objects that are the same.



Social-Emotional

Exploring Feelings

- Option 1** (IG) Toddlers look at and talk about pictures of different facial expressions with a caregiver.
- Option 2** (IG) Toddlers practice making facial expressions shown in a picture and demonstrated by a caregiver.



Physical/Health

Moving Our Bodies

- Option 1** (IG) Toddlers participate in open-ended play with different types of balls.
- Option 2** (OO) A toddler practices throwing a small ball to knock over empty milk jugs.
- Option 3** (IG) Toddlers practice overhand throwing by tossing soft balls into pretend water.

(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 little ducks who go away and come back.



Key Concepts

Duck
Mother
Little
Quack



Materials Needed

Five Little Ducks by Child's Play



Also Promotes

Cognitive

BEGIN: [*Invite several toddlers to join you to read a book. Show the cover of the book and point to the ducks as you describe them.*]

EXPLAIN: Our book is about a family of ducks. There are pictures of the ducks on the cover of our book. This is the mother duck. Do you see the little ducks? They are the mother duck's babies.

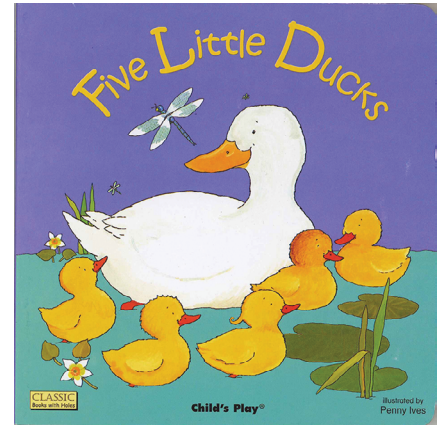
ASK: The little ducks go on a walk in our story. Where do we think the little ducks will go?

[*Pause for toddlers to respond. Repeat and extend responses.*]

Example: "You said 'water,' Jaylen. Ducks like to swim in the water! Let's read our book to find out where the little ducks go."

ACT: [*Use the following strategies to engage toddlers in the book:*]

- *In addition to reading the text, use your own words to describe pictures and key parts of the story. Point to and name items that may be unfamiliar to some toddlers. Example: "This is a nest. The mother duck made a nest for the little ducks to sleep in."*
- *Use gestures frequently. Example: On the first page, point your finger away from your body to communicate "far away."*
- *Acknowledge and build on toddlers' comments and pointing. Example: "Makayla is pointing to the frog. There are lots of different animals in this picture. I think Makayla likes the red frog!"*
- *Encourage toddlers to repeat words or phrases in the story. Example: "The mother duck is going to call her little ducks home. What does a duck say? (Pause for response.) Let's all say together 'quack, quack, quack' to help Mother Duck call the little ducks home!"*
- *Invite toddlers to tell what they see in a picture or what they think will happen next. Examples: "The little ducks went over the hills and far away. Where are they now? What do we see in this picture?" "The mother duck looks sleepy. What do we think the little ducks are going to do?"*



**Option 1 continued**

- *Use appropriate enthusiasm and excitement in your voice and facial expressions to read and talk about the story.]*

RECAP: The little ducks in our story went on a walk. They went far away! The mother duck called her little ducks. We helped the mother duck call her little ducks by saying “quack, quack, quack!” All the little ducks came back to the mother duck! Thank you for helping me read this story.

👁️ What to Look For—Option 1

Toddlers will enjoy listening to the rhythmic, repetitive text of the book. The book’s richly-detailed illustrations also will appeal to many toddlers. It is not necessary or appropriate to emphasize the number of ducks on each page because toddlers are not expected to count. Instead, emphasize that the little ducks “go away” and then “come back.”

📈 More Scaffolding Tips—Option 1

Extra support ■ Follow the pace of toddlers in the gathering. If there is interest in a particular animal or picture, spend a few extra moments talking about the interest. A toddler(s) who wants to talk about specifics of each picture may benefit from a one-to-one session with you and the book.

Enrichment ■ In addition to “quack, quack, quack,” invite toddlers to repeat some of the familiar text with you.

12–24 Months

Option 2 Informal Gathering



Skill and Goal Receptive language Expressive language

Toddlers participate in a shared book reading followed by pretending to be little ducks in a key part of the story.



Key Concepts

Go away
Come back



Materials Needed

Five Little Ducks by Child's Play
Duck puppet
Rubber ducks—1 per toddler



Also Promotes

Physical/Health
Cognitive
Self-Regulation

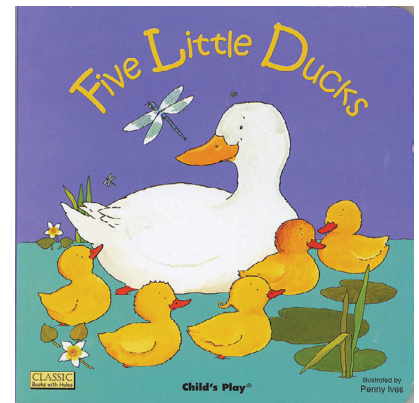
Invite several toddlers to join you in reading a book together. Use strategies suggested in Option 1. Use a rhythmic, sing-song voice to emphasize text in which the little ducks go away and then come back.

At the conclusion of the book, invite the toddlers to pretend to be the little ducks in the story that go away and then come back. Give each toddler a rubber duck. You use the duck puppet as the mother duck. Show and explain to toddlers that your puppet is the mother duck.

Remind toddlers that the ducks went away. Use a hand/arm gesture to communicate “go away” over a hill. Encourage toddlers to hide their ducks. Offer several suggestions, such as toddlers putting their duck behind their back or using their other hand to cover their duck. Be flexible about how toddlers hide their duck.

Then remind toddlers that Mother Duck said “quack, quack, quack” and some ducks came back. Encourage toddlers to show their ducks. Offer a surprised face when the ducks come back!

Repeat this two-part activity several times if toddlers remain interested. Ignore the counting element of the story, where a certain number of ducks came back each time.



👁️ What to Look For—Option 2

The follow-on activity uses two different prompts—go away and the “quack, quack, quack” call from Mother Duck to come back—to encourage toddlers to do two different actions: hide their ducks and then help their ducks come back. The activity promotes understanding of the go away and come back themes used repeatedly in the story. Toddlers will hide their ducks in a variety of ways, typically not recognizing that you can easily see their “hidden” duck. Remain flexible and accepting of toddlers’ actions with their ducks. Some toddlers may become overly excited during the activity and benefit from support to calm down, as suggested in the Extra Support tip.

As described in Option 1, toddlers are not expected to learn about numbers and counting.

**Option 2 continued**A small icon consisting of three black squares of increasing size, arranged in a staircase pattern.**More Scaffolding Tips—Option 2**

Extra support ■ Provide guidance for calming down at the end of the activity if toddlers get overly excited. Explain that the ducks are tired from all of the walking and need to rest. Invite toddlers to place their ducks in a nest (basket) with the mother duck puppet for a nap. You may also invite toddlers to pretend to be little ducks closing their eyes briefly before moving to another activity.

Enrichment ■ Toddlers may enjoy taking turns being the mother duck, especially in saying “quack, quack, quack, quack” to call her little ducks home.

12–24 Months

Option 3 One-to-One



Skill and Goal

Receptive language
Expressive language

A toddler participates in a book sharing focused on looking at pictures to figure out what might happen next.



Key Concepts

Ducks



Materials Needed

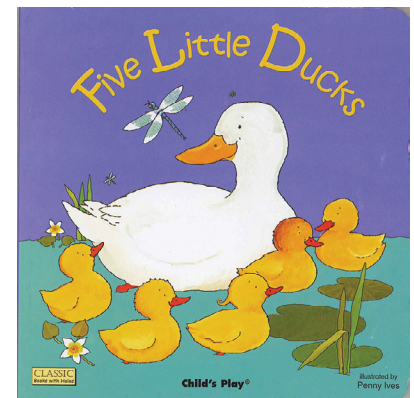
Five Little Ducks by Child's Play



Also Promotes

Cognitive
Self-Regulation

Share *Five Little Ducks* with one toddler, using strategies suggested in Option 1. Draw attention to the interesting cutouts that provide clues about what happens on the next page. For the first several cutouts, point to and describe what you see and help the toddler connect the cutout images to what might happen next. Example: "Look at what is poking out of the water looking at the ducks. I see eyes and sharp teeth! What do you think it is?" Pause for the toddler to look closely at the cutout and respond. "Let's turn the page to find out!" "It is a big fish!" Also, encourage the toddler to use his/her fingers to feel the cutouts.



After you use the first several cutouts to show how a cutout works in the story, point to a cutout and invite the toddler to tell what he/she sees. Talk with the toddler about what might happen next. Base your approach on the toddler's emerging verbal skills and vocabulary knowledge. Remember that a toddler's facial expressions, gestures, and finger pointing are important forms of communication, especially at this age. Describe what you see the toddler communicating.

The toddler may enjoy repeating some of the book's words and phrases, consistent with opportunities suggested in Option 1.

👁️ What to Look For—Option 3

Toddlers who are familiar with the story through participation in Option 1 or a related shared reading may find it easier to engage in Option 2. Familiarity with the story does not diminish the challenge of Option 2, however. The repeated use of cutouts to anticipate what happens next can promote valuable cognitive skills and strengthen story comprehension. It is not necessary to pursue cutouts with the same level of depth on each page. Give more attention to cutouts related to a toddler's favorite part of the story.

📊 More Scaffolding Tips—Option 3

Extra support ■ Point to, and name, pictured items that seem to be of particular interest to the toddler—such as water, grass, flower, nest, and rainbow.

Enrichment ■ At the end of the book, return to a cutout or page that seemed to be of particular interest to the toddler. Talk again about how the cutout helped us figure out what might happen. Work backwards from a favorite picture to the cutout on the prior page.



Interest Area

Materials Needed: *Five Little Ducks* by Child's Play, several rubber ducks, assortment of other pond animals (such as frogs, fish, or turtles), sensory table

Place the ducks and other pond animals in the sensory table with a small amount of warm water. Invite several toddlers to play with the animals in the water. Toddlers may enjoy hearing the book read while they interact with the ducks and animals. Encourage toddlers to have the pond animals go away to the other side of the sensory table, and then come back. Remind toddlers of how the little ducks went away and came back in our story.



Family Child Care

Materials Needed: *Five Little Ducks* by Child's Play, Optional: duck puppet, rubber duck for each baby

Infants and older children can participate in Option 1 in meaningful ways. Infants may enjoy holding a rubber duck during the book sharing. Preschool-age children who are learning to count may wish to count the number of ducks on some of the pages. Older children may enjoy being the mother duck in Option 2.



12–24 Months

Option 1 Informal Gathering



Skill and Goal

Object inquiry skills

Toddlers practice naming familiar pictured items.



Key Concepts

Name

Picture



Materials Needed

Baby Touch and Feel: First Words by DK Publishing



Also Promotes

Communication/Language

BEGIN: *[Invite several toddlers to join you to look at pictures of things we may see or use every day.]*

EXPLAIN: Our book has pictures of many different things. Let's try to tell the names of the different things we see in our book.

[Point to the balloons on the book cover.]

These are balloons. Sometimes there are balloons at birthday parties.



ASK: Have you ever seen or played with a balloon?

[Encourage toddlers to tell about their experiences with balloons.]

ACT: *[Use the following steps for each page:*

- *Point to the pictured item. Ask toddlers to tell the name of what is shown in the picture. Pause for a response(s). If a toddler(s) provides a reasonably appropriate name for the item, repeat the name and then invite toddlers to say the name with you. If there is no response to your request, say the name of the object and invite toddlers to say the name as you repeat it. See the What to Look For section for handling toddler responses that are not the customary name of the pictured item.*
- *Use a variety of clues in your invitations to say the name of a pictured item. Examples: "Yum-yum. I see something good to eat. What do you see?" "The animal shown in this picture says 'woof-woof.' What is the name of the animal we see in this picture?"*
- *Briefly describe a characteristic of the pictured item or how it is used. Where possible, connect the pictured item to an experience or similar object in your room. Example: "We wear shoes on our feet. Let's look at our own feet. There are shoes on our feet."*
- *If toddlers show interest in feeling the textured part of each page, help interested toddlers take turns touching a picture.]*

RECAP: We know the names of many different things! We said the names of things shown in our book. We talked about the things we looked at in our book.

Option 1 continued What to Look For—Option 1

The activity supports the larger goal of helping toddlers understand that all objects and actions have specific names. The activity promotes a toddler's attentiveness to characteristics of the object and association of a specific word to a specific object. Most toddlers will be familiar with many or most of the items shown in the book, but some may not know the names.

Sensitively respond to toddler words that are not the customary name for the pictured item. A toddler may respond with a word related to a picture, such as "eat" for the picture of the bowl and spoon or the name of the dog in his/her family for the picture of the dog. Positively acknowledge the response by connecting it to the name of the pictured item. Example: "We eat with a bowl and spoon! We ate applesauce with a bowl and spoon at lunch today!" If a toddler responds with a word that seems unrelated to the pictured item, enthusiastically recognize his/her verbal effort. "Thank you for telling us about this picture, James. We usually call this a flower. Let's all say together the word 'flower.'"

Approach the activity with a fun and supportive atmosphere that encourages toddlers to try new words. If you are concerned that toddlers may experience the activity as a test, omit the strategy of asking toddlers to say the name of the pictured item. Instead, say the name and then encourage toddlers to say the name with you.

 More Scaffolding Tips—Option 1

Extra support ■ Use the activity in a one-to-one setting with a toddler who seems reluctant to talk in the informal gathering. Note the first segment of Option 2 focuses on pictured items.

Enrichment ■ After the last picture, return to a previous page and slowly say "I see a ____!" Encourage toddlers to complete the sentence.

12–24 Months

Option 2 One-to-One



Skill and Goal

Object inquiry skills

A toddler practices naming familiar pictured, and actual, items.



Key Concepts

Name
Picture



Materials Needed

Baby Touch and Feel: First Words by DK Publishing
Items shown in book (see Be Prepared)
Box



Also Promotes

Communication/Language
Physical/Health

Be Prepared: Gather items that are similar to those shown in the book—such as a shoe, sock, bowl and spoon, ball, and teddy bear. Place the items in the box or other type of container.

Invite a toddler to join you to look at some things we may see or use every day. Use strategies suggested in Option 1. After looking at and naming all pictures in the book, introduce the box and invite the toddler to take an item from the box. Encourage the toddler to say the name of the item he/she selected. Repeat the name. Provide the name of the item if the toddler seems uncertain or reluctant to verbalize the name. Encourage the toddler to say the name with you. Then invite the toddler to find the picture of the corresponding item in the book. Repeat this procedure with all items in the box or until the toddler loses interest.



What to Look For—Option 2

This activity supports a toddler’s awareness that specific characteristics of an object can be different, but the object still has the same name. Example: a smaller ball, a larger ball, a red ball, and a blue ball are all called balls. Finding the picture of the item in the book that corresponds to the actual item also supports this awareness because the actual item and the pictured item are unlikely to be identical.

If a toddler is especially eager to remove items from the box, you may wish to rework the activity so items are named and compared to a book picture after all objects are removed from the box.

More Scaffolding Tips—Option 2

Extra support ■ Limit the number of items you place in the box. ■ Provide additional information or clues about items the toddler does not readily name. Example: “We wear these on our feet. I am wearing them (*point to your shoe*) and so are you (*point to toddler’s shoe*)! What are these called?” ■ Provide hands-on assistance in turning pages of the book.

Enrichment ■ After a toddler appropriately identifies some items in the box, switch roles so the toddler is picking items from the box for you to name. Intentionally offer an inappropriate name, such as calling a shoe a ball.



Interest Area

Materials Needed: *Baby Touch and Feel: First Words* by DK Publishing, items used in Option 2

Place the book and Option 2 items on a low table. Invite several toddlers to point to and hold an actual item that corresponds to an item pictured in the book. This offers the challenge of moving from picture to actual item rather than actual item to picture as pursued in Option 2. Another possibility is to encourage toddlers to find items in your room that correspond to several pictures in the book that you identify.



Family Child Care

Materials Needed: *Baby Touch and Feel: First Words* by DK Publishing, basket

After looking at and talking about the book's pictures with toddlers and preschool-age children, invite children to go on a treasure hunt in a specified part of your setting to find some of the items in the book. Pair older and younger children to find objects to bring back and put in the basket. You may wish to suggest that a specific pair of children find a particular item shown in the book. When all children have returned from their hunt, review by name each item in the basket.



12–24 Months

Option 1 One-to-One



Skill and Goal Concentration

A toddler watches a caregiver look carefully at familiar toys to find objects that are the same.



Key Concepts

Same
Different
Put together
Look



Materials Needed

4 blocks (see Be Prepared)
4 toy vehicles (see Be Prepared)
Basket



Also Promotes

Cognitive
Communication/Language

Be Prepared: Secure two sets of two blocks each that are identical in shape and color. Example: two short, blue blocks and two long, red blocks. Also secure two sets of two identical types of vehicles each. Example: two cars and two trucks. If possible, use vehicles of the same color or two cars of the same color and two trucks of the same color. Put the items in a random arrangement in a basket or other type of container.

BEGIN: *[Invite a toddler to help you put together things that are the same. Sit next to the toddler at a low table, with the basket of items in front of the toddler.]*



EXPLAIN: There are different toys in our basket. Let's look at what is in our basket. Then you can help me put together toys that are the same.

ACT: *[Remove items from the basket, one at a time. When you remove an item, put it in front of the toddler (or invite the toddler to hold it) and say its name or invite the toddler to say its name. Repeat and expand any toddler utterances about the item. Example: "You said 'vroom,' Laila. You are holding a car. You know that cars go 'vroom!'" Do not comment on whether the same type of item has already been removed from the basket.]*

After all items have been removed from the basket, put them in a line in front of the toddler. Remove the basket from the table.

Explain that you are going to put together things that are the same. Pick up one of the items and then describe looking for another item that is the same. Example: "This is a truck. I am looking for another truck." Hold the truck next to a car. "This is a truck and this is a car. A truck and a car are different. Oh, look. Here is another truck. I am putting together these two toys. They are the same."

Place the two identical toys in the center of the table, within easy view of the toddler but away from the line of remaining toys.



**Option 1 continued**

Repeat the above procedure with each of the remaining toys. Emphasize type or size of toy, not color. Remind the toddler that you are looking at all the toys to find a toy that is the same. Consistently provide opportunities for the toddler to hold an item and say its name.]

RECAP: You helped me put together toys that are the same. We looked carefully at each of the toys. We found toys that are the same. Look at the toys we put together.

[Point to and name the pairs of toys, indicating why they are the same. Example: "These blocks are the same. They are both short. These cars are the same."]



12–24 Months

Option 2 One-to-One



Skill and Goal

Concentration

A toddler practices looking carefully at familiar toys to find objects that are the same.



Key Concepts

Look
Same
Different
Put together



Materials Needed

4 blocks (see Be Prepared)
4 toy vehicles (see Be Prepared)
Basket



Also Promotes

Cognitive
Physical/Health
Communication/Language

Be Prepared: Secure two sets of two blocks each that are identical in shape and color, but different than the blocks used in Option 1. Also secure two sets of two identical types of vehicles each, but different than the vehicles used in Option 1. Example: two black flatbed trucks and two yellow pickup trucks. Put the items in a random arrangement in a basket or other type of container.

Invite a toddler to join you to look at some toys and put together the toys that are the same. Sit next to the toddler at a low table, with the basket of toys in front of the toddler. Invite the toddler to take the toys out of the basket, one at a time. Say the name (or invite the toddler to say the name) of each toy as it is removed from the basket. After all toys have been removed from the basket, remove the basket from the table and invite the toddler to line up all eight items in front of him/her. Encourage the toddler to look for toys that are the same and put them together. Pause for the toddler to figure out a way to proceed.



If the toddler seems uncertain about what to do, pick up (or invite the toddler to pick up) one of the toys and hold it next to each other toy, going from left to right in the line of toys. For each toy that is compared to the toy in your (or the toddler's) hand, ask "Is this the same or different?" As part of the comparison, point out why two toys are different. Example: "You are holding a truck next to a block. A truck and a block are different toys." Stop the toy-by-toy comparison when a same toy is found. Emphasize how two toys are the same when the toddler puts them together.

At the end of the activity, briefly described how the toddler found toys that were the same. Emphasize how the toddler looked carefully at all the toys to find toys that were the same.

👁️ What to Look For—Options 1–2

The activity options continue the Block 15 focus on looking carefully at things for the purpose of finding items that are the same. Block 15 used pictures on a puzzle to promote concentration skills. Activities in the current block use blocks and vehicles. Use whatever items you wish from your room. As suggested in Be Prepared, it is helpful to use the same colors of items to help a toddler focus on type or size of item, not color. Option 2 is likely to work best after a toddler has participated in Option 1 at an earlier point in the week or



day. Pay attention to a toddler's reactions to Option 1 to determine how to organize Option 2. A toddler who eagerly helps you find identical items in Option 1 may be ready for a more challenging experience in Option 2, such as one or more of the approaches suggested in the Enrichment tips.

More Scaffolding Tips—Options 1–2

Extra support ■ If Option 2 seems too challenging for a toddler, you can easily transition to the approach suggested in Option 1. Ensure each toddler has the opportunity to be successful in one of the activities. ■ After all eight items are lined up in front of the toddler, say the name of each item, moving from left to right, as you or the toddler point to each. Example: “Block, block, car, truck, block. . .”

Enrichment ■ In a repeat of Option 2, invite the toddler to put together toys that are different. ■ Encourage the toddler to look for other blocks in the block area that are the same as the pairs of blocks that were put together during the activity (Option 1 or Option 2). ■ Offer more toys in Option 2, such as 12 different items, including some that are not the same.

Interest Area

Materials Needed: 6–10 blocks, including 1–2 that are different than all others; 6–8 toy vehicles, including 1–2 that are different than all others

Place the blocks and vehicles on a low table. Invite several toddlers to play with the materials in ways they wish. Some toddlers may want to build with the blocks and drive the vehicles. As toddlers play, offer gentle comments about how a toy is the same or different than another toy. If toddlers appear ready for a change in their play, invite them to put together things that are the same. Provide time for toddlers to figure out how to do this, perhaps organizing small groupings of toys that are the same. Allow toddlers to discover on their own that some toys are different than all others.

Family Child Care

Materials Needed: see activity description

Identify 3–5 different toys that are the same as one or more toys readily available to children in your setting. Example: a doll, an animal figure, a block. Put the selected toys on a low table and invite toddlers and preschool-age children to look for another toy in your setting that is the same type of toy. This is akin to a scavenger hunt. You may wish to organize the activity so each child is searching for a specific type of toy. Example: “Jeremiah will look for another doll. Tony will look for another block.” Or you may wish to pair one toddler with one older child to look for a toy(s) that is the same as one displayed on the table. Infants may want to hold an age-appropriate item as they watch their older peers look for specific items. Emphasize the importance of looking.



12–24 Months

Option 1 Informal Gathering



Skill and Goal

Awareness of emotions

Toddlers look at and talk about pictures of different facial expressions with a caregiver.



Key Concepts

Feelings
Face



Materials Needed

Baby Faces by Margaret Miller



Also Promotes

Communication/Language

BEGIN: [Invite 3–4 toddlers to join you to look at pictures of babies. Show the book cover as you introduce the activity. Point to features of the baby’s face as you name each.]

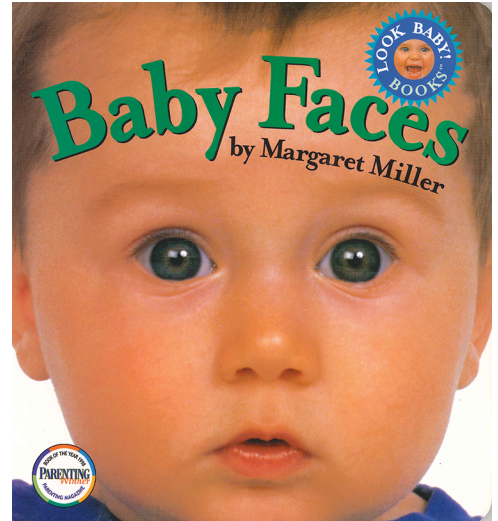
EXPLAIN: Let’s have some fun looking at pictures of babies.

Look at this baby’s face!
Here are the baby’s eyes.
Here is the baby’s nose. And here is the baby’s mouth.

Let’s all point to our eyes!

[Point to your eyes.]

We will use our eyes to look at pictures of babies’ faces in our book. The faces can tell us what a baby may feeling.



ACT: [Show and describe pictures using the following strategies:

- Draw attention to prominent features of an expression, such as tears or smiles.
- Read the word associated with the expression and invite toddlers to repeat some of the words with you, especially yucky, yum-yum, stinky, and yippee.
- Explain why the baby may be making the face. Example: “This baby has his tongue out! I think the baby ate something that tasted good.”
- Tell more about the printed word and connect it to the facial expression. Examples: “Sometimes we say ‘yum-yum’ when we like something we eat.” “‘Yippee’ means we feel excited or happy about something.”
- Respond to toddlers’ comments or pointing. Example: “You are pointing to the baby who is crying, Nora. Sometimes we cry when we feel upset or sad.”]

RECAP: We looked at pictures of baby’s faces. Each face told us what a baby may be feeling.

**Option 1 continued**

[Describe several faces that seemed to be of particular interest to toddlers in your gathering. Example: "One face told us the baby was feeling upset or sad. The baby was crying. Another face told us the baby smelled something bad. The word by the picture said 'stinky!' The baby smelled something that was stinky."]

👁️ What to Look For—Option 1

Toddlers will differ in their interest and readiness to connect with the concept of feelings as shown in different facial expressions. Some may readily recognize differences across faces shown in the book and will be interested in what a particular face may be telling us and why. Others may be more interested in features of a face, such as eyes and hair. Connecting a word to a particular facial expression can help build vocabulary related to feelings. The "uh-oh" phrase and corresponding expression is less straightforward than the other pictures and may be challenging to pursue with younger toddlers. You may wish to give little or no attention to the "uh-oh" picture.

📈 More Scaffolding Tips—Option 1

Extra support ■ Invite toddlers to point to parts of the pictured faces that you name, such as eyes, ears, nose, or mouth. Toddlers may enjoy pointing to the same part of their body, as suggested in the opening segment of the activity description.

Enrichment ■ At the conclusion of looking at and talking about pictures in the book, return to pictures for a closer look at how parts of the face tell us what the baby might be feeling. Examples: what a mouth looks like when a baby smiles, what our eyes look like when we cry.



12–24 Months

Option 2 Informal Gathering



Skill and Goal

Awareness of emotions

Toddlers practice making facial expressions shown in a picture and demonstrated by a caregiver.



Key Concepts

Feelings
Face



Materials Needed

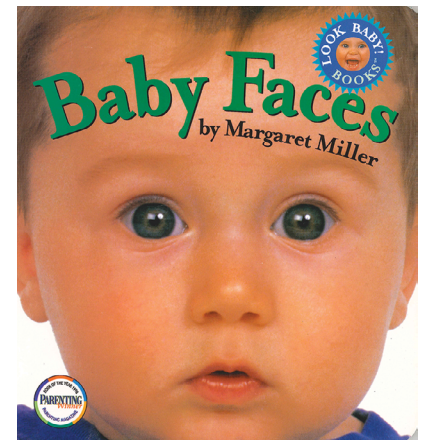
Baby Faces by Margaret Miller



Also Promotes

Communication/Language
Physical/Health

Invite toddlers to join you to do different things with our faces. Show and describe a picture of a specific facial expression included in the book. Draw attention to prominent features of the expression and say the book's word, such as yucky, associated with the expression. Begin with a picture of a baby who is happy ("yippee") or a picture you anticipate will be of particular interest to toddlers in your gathering. Make a facial expression similar to the expression pictured in the book. Draw attention to your face. Example: "Look at my face. I am making a happy face!" Then invite toddlers to make a face that tells the same feeling. Examples: "Make a face that tells us you are happy!" "Make a happy face!" Repeat this process for 2–3 more pictures.



👁️ What to Look For—Option 2

This activity can help toddlers deepen what they learned from the Option 1 activity. Toddlers who participated in Option 1 will likely find it easier to participate. Look for opportunities to connect the different facial expressions to information shared in Option 1. Beginning the activity with more familiar feelings is important because emotions that are unfamiliar (or less familiar) to toddlers will be challenging for toddlers to represent in their own faces. Some toddlers may make no attempt to show an invited facial expression but may learn a lot by watching you and their peers. Positively acknowledge all forms of participation.

📈 More Scaffolding Tips—Option 2

Extra support ■ Offer exaggerated facial expressions. ■ Do not use the book picture if it appears toddlers find it easier to use your facial expression as an example of what to do. Continue to remind toddlers of information about the expression communicated in Option 1.

Enrichment ■ Invite toddlers to make facial expressions they would like you and their peers to copy.



Interest Area

Materials Needed: books with pictures of facial expressions, several nonbreakable handheld mirrors

Place the books and mirrors on a low table. Invite toddlers to look at the pictures in the books, and to explore their reflections in the mirrors. Encourage toddlers to imitate some of the facial expressions shown in the books. Talk with the toddlers about what they see as they make faces in the mirrors. Some toddlers may not wish to use the mirrors.



Family Child Care

Materials Needed: storybook that describes feelings

Invite preschool-age and older children to participate in Option 2 after toddlers have participated once on their own with just you. Encourage preschool-age and older children to take turns leading the gathering in making faces that you suggest. Focus on familiar emotions, particularly happy and sad, and encourage the older children to show different ways of telling us they feel happy or sad.



12–24 Months

Option 1 Informal Gathering



Skill and Goal

Gross motor development

Toddlers participate in open-ended play with different types of balls.



Key Concepts

Ball
Hold
Throw



Materials Needed

Large and small balls—2 per toddler
Container to hold balls



Also Promotes

Communication/Language
Self-Regulation

Invite 3–4 toddlers to an open space to play with balls. Support opportunities for toddlers to practice existing skills and try out emerging skills. Give individual attention to toddlers' actions. Use your voice to create interest and enthusiasm.

Some toddlers will be delighted to simply carry a ball. Provide a designated area for toddlers who wish to throw a ball. Mark spots for throwing with tape or rubber floor markers. Encourage toddlers to use different balls and to bend over to pick up balls from the floor.

Describe the range of toddlers' uses of a ball, including holding and throwing.

After about 10 minutes of lively play, organize a calming-down gathering by encouraging toddlers to put the balls in a container and to sit on the floor with you.



👁️ What to Look For—Option 1

Toddlers benefit from unstructured physical play as well as play guided by a caregiver. This activity provides opportunities for toddlers to practice their current ball manipulation skills and maybe try new ones. This activity may last about 10 minutes. End the activity if you observe toddlers who seem overstimulated, tired, or beginning to stumble. Remember, at this age, toddlers are not expected to catch a ball.

📈 More Scaffolding Tips—Option 1

Extra support ■ If a toddler seems unsure of how to play with a ball, increase your level of guidance. Example: Demonstrate how to carry or roll a ball forward with two hands. Encourage the toddler to do the action with you.

Enrichment ■ Encourage a toddler to roll or throw a ball toward you. Roll it back to the toddler.



12–24 Months

Option 2 One-to-One



Skill and Goal

Gross motor development

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



Key Concepts

Ball
Throw



Materials Needed

4–6 half-gallon empty milk jugs (see Be Prepared)
Small (3") ball



Also Promotes

Communication/Language
Cognitive
Self-Regulation

Be Prepared: This activity is for a toddler 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 covering them with colored tape. An alternative material is a commercially available bowling set designed for young toddlers.

Invite one toddler to stand in front of the jugs and throw a ball toward the jugs. Suggest an approach to throwing that is appropriate to your understanding of the toddler’s throwing skill and experience. Provide a demonstration if the toddler seems uncertain about what to do. Emphasize using one hand, looking at the jugs, and pushing the ball forward. Offer enthusiastic verbal support for the toddler’s attempt and encourage the toddler to try throwing the ball again. Describe the toddler’s actions. Reset the jugs if they tip over. Conclude the activity with a brief description of what happened.

What to Look For—Option 2

The current activity adds challenge to the Block 10, Option 1 throwing activity by using a smaller ball that enables use of one hand. The Block 10 activity used a larger ball and promoted use of two hands. Note the Extra Support tips related to use of both hands and/or a larger ball if use of one hand is too challenging. It is important for the toddler to experience success in the activity.

Toddlers will differ in their throwing experiences and interest. Encouraging the toddler to throw the ball in a way he/she wishes is appropriate. An overhand throw may be of interest to a toddler who has experience throwing a larger ball with two hands. A toddler may wish to try several different ways to move the ball (underarm, overhand, roll). Each way provides practice in eye-hand coordination. The activity is not intended to teach a particular way to throw. Avoid telling a toddler which arm to use.

More Scaffolding Tips—Option 2

Extra support ■ Encourage the toddler to move closer to the jugs. ■ Invite the toddler to use two hands with the ball if it is challenging to use one hand. You also may wish to offer a larger ball to throw or roll with two hands (repeating Block 10, Option 1).

Enrichment ■ Engage interested toddlers in the activity several times per day.



12–24 Months

Option 3 Informal Gathering



Skill and Goal

Gross motor development

Toddlers practice overhand throwing by tossing soft balls into pretend water.



Key Concepts

Ball
Throw



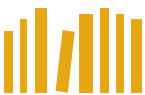
Materials Needed

12–20 soft balls (see Be Prepared)
2 yards blue fabric (see Be Prepared)
Basket



Also Promotes

Communication/Language
Cognitive
Self-Regulation



Optional Reading

Row, Row, Row Your Boat by Child's Play
Clap Your Hands by Lorinda Bryan Cauley
I Can, Can You? by Marjorie W. Pitzer
All Fall Down by Mary Bridget Barrett

Be Prepared: Gather 12–20 sock balls or other soft, cloth balls suitable for indoor throwing. A sock ball can be made by rolling adult tube socks into balls (one sock per ball). Place all balls in the basket or other type of container. Spread two yards of blue fabric on the floor to serve as pretend water. An area rug may be used instead of the fabric.

BEGIN: [*Invite several toddlers to play a game throwing balls into pretend water.*]

EXPLAIN: [*Point to the fabric.*]

We will pretend this is water. We can throw some balls into the pretend water.

[*Point to a spot for each child to stand, approximately two feet from the fabric. Example: "This is a good place for you to stand, Lilly." Then demonstrate an overhand throw with a ball.*]

Please look at how I am holding a ball. I am putting the ball close to my ear. Then I throw the ball with my arm.

ACT: [*Give one ball to each toddler.*]

Now we are ready to throw a ball into our pretend water! Put the ball near your ear and use your arm to throw into the water.

[*Having one toddler throw at a time enables you to offer specific verbal support of throwing.*]

Kneel at eye level to the toddlers as much as you can to enhance your communication. Describe each toddler's actions. Example: "Alright Zach, you made the sock ball go high. It went right into the water!"

Announce the sequence in a fun way! Example: "Lilly, you are holding the sock ball close to your ear. You see the water. And 'whoosh!' You use your arm to throw the ball right to the water."

Are you ready to throw another ball?

[*Give each interested toddler another ball to throw. Depending on the space arrangement and number of toddlers, you may wish to encourage toddlers to throw at the same time for this second and additional rounds. Continue the throwing practice until all balls are on the fabric.*]

Let toddlers know when the activity is nearly over. Example: "We are almost finished. Each of us can throw two more balls. Then we will be all done throwing for now."

**Option 3 continued**

Encourage toddlers to help collect the balls, place them in the basket, and have some calming-down time before moving to another area.]

RECAP: We threw balls into pretend water. We put a sock ball close to our ear and looked at our pretend water. Then we threw the ball. We are learning about throwing. We had fun!

👁️ What to Look For—Option 3

There may be notable differences in toddlers' motor skills for throwing. The activity emphasizes overhand throwing, but toddlers may prefer to roll a ball into the pretend water or use an underarm throw.

Watching someone else throw a ball is helpful in learning to throw. In addition to your demonstration, having toddlers throw one at a time (with your description of actions) in the activity's first round of throwing can be beneficial. Your descriptions of the throwing sequence can strengthen the child's awareness of the separate steps and their order. Motor planning is the technical term for thinking about and carrying out a motor skill in a sequence.

Hand and arm preference is not well established at this age. You may see a toddler throw with left and right hand on the same day. Suggesting one hand or another is not recommended.

Throwing balls is typically an exciting activity for toddlers and you may experience louder voices, laughing, and maybe shouting. It is appropriate for toddlers to express their excitement in these ways, assuming the actions do not become overstimulating and a calming-down period is offered at the end of the activity. Self-regulation activities in the ELM curriculum offer guidance on how to help young children calm down.

📈 More Scaffolding Tips—Option 3

Extra support ■ As a toddler holds a ball, gently guide the toddler's hand to his/her ear. Explain "Now you are ready to throw." ■ Kneel next to a toddler and throw a ball at the same time. Describe each action. ■ Offer a larger ball and use of two hands if the one-hand throw emphasized in this activity is too challenging.

Enrichment ■ Offer beanbags or slightly heavier balls. ■ Talk with toddlers about how throwing a ball into real water would make a splash.



Interest Area

Materials Needed: *Row, Row, Row Your Boat* by Child's Play, *Clap Your Hands* by Lorinda Bryan Cauley, *I Can, Can You?* by Marjorie W. Pitzer, *All Fall Down* by Mary Bridget Barrett, *Shake My Sillies Out* by Raffi, large empty tub, soft balls, cloth fish, empty sensory table, large (7") ball

Place a large empty tub in the room as a target for throwing. Provide lots of soft balls for indoor throwing. On another day, provide cloth fish for toddlers to throw into an empty sensory table (little pool). Sit on the floor with toddlers at play time and engage in back-and-forth ball rolling with the large ball.

Display and share board books with pictures of children and animals moving in different ways. Emphasize movement words. Point to pictures portraying movements. Also share the paperback book, *Shake My Sillies Out* by Raffi. Toddlers will enjoy the illustrations and words.



Family Child Care

Materials Needed: ball, milk jugs, sock ball, laundry basket, hula-hoop, cushion, *Pete the Cat: Play Ball!* by James Dean

Infants will enjoy a simple game of passing a ball back and forth to you. Mobile infants may roll a ball to you. Preschool-age and older children may enjoy having several targets for throwing soft balls; such as a laundry basket, a hula-hoop, and/or a cushion. An older child may enjoy reading aloud *Pete the Cat: Play Ball!* by James Dean. Children of all ages will enjoy the pictures and the story of this popular cat.