



**Communication/  
Language**

**Exploring Words**

**Option 1 (IG)** Toddlers participate in a book sharing focused on bedtime illustrations of construction trucks with human-like characteristics.

**Option 2 (IG)** Toddlers explore toy trucks as part of a book sharing focused on different types of trucks.



**Cognitive**

**Exploring Objects**

**Option 1 (IG)** Toddlers explore pictures of two cats in different locations.

**Option 2 (OO)** A toddler puts a teddy bear in different locations suggested by a caregiver after a book sharing on location words.



**Self-Regulation**

**Getting Calm**

**Option 1 (IG)** Toddlers watch a caregiver calm down after getting excited playing a xylophone.

**Option 2 (OO)** A toddler practices calming down, with caregiver support, after making music with a xylophone.



**Social-Emotional**

**Exploring Feelings**

**Option 1 (IG)** Toddlers make happy and sad faces as part of a review of a story about feeling happy and sad.

**Option 2 (IG)** Toddlers are encouraged to use different ways to communicate feeling happy or sad in response to a pretend event described by a caregiver.



**Physical/Health**

**Using Our Hands**

**Option 1 (OO)** A toddler explores the size and texture of different types of balls with caregiver guidance.

**Option 2 (OO)** A toddler carries 1–2 balls at a time from one basket to another basket with opportunities to pay attention to characteristics of the ball.

(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 bedtime illustrations of construction trucks with human-like characteristics.



#### Key Concepts

Shhh  
Moon  
Truck  
Bedtime



#### Materials Needed

*Goodnight, Goodnight, Construction Site* by Sherri Duskey Rinker and Tom Lichtenheld



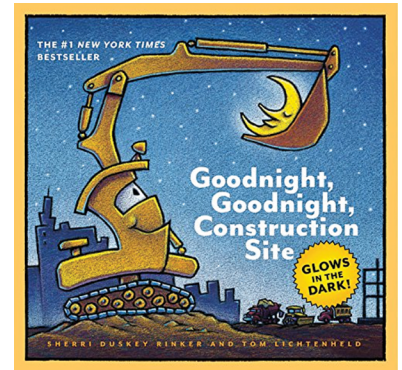
#### Also Promotes

Cognitive

**Be Prepared:** In this session, you use your own words to describe the book's detailed illustrations rather than read the book text. Prior to sharing the book with toddlers, determine how you will talk about each illustration. General suggestions are offered in the activity description below (see ACT). You may wish to include some key phrases in the book's text, although this is not necessary. The rich illustrations provide lots to talk about.

**BEGIN:** [*Invite several toddlers to join you to look at pictures of trucks.*]

**EXPLAIN:** Our book is about trucks at bedtime. Bedtime is when we get ready to go to sleep. The book tells us about different kinds of trucks. The trucks help build things or move things like dirt. The trucks have worked hard all day. It is time for the trucks to rest.



[*Show cover of book and describe the illustration. Point to the moon when you name it.*]

Look at the dark sky. Let's find the moon. We can all point to the moon!

We see a moon and dark sky because it is nighttime. The truck in our picture is getting ready to sleep.

We know how to say "Shhh," so people and things can be quiet at bedtime. Remember the mommy who said "Shhhh!" to the noisy farm animals so her baby could sleep?

[*Demonstrate and encourage toddlers to put a finger by their mouth and say "Shhh!"*]

[*Point again to the moon. Point to the eyes on the truck.*]

Look at how the moon is sitting in part of the truck. This is a silly place for the moon! Usually we see a moon up in the sky.

Look at how the truck has eyes that are looking at the moon! Trucks do not have eyes like we do!

I wonder if this is going to be a silly book. Let's open the book to find out.

**ACT:** [*Use the following strategies to help toddlers focus on the illustrations:*

**Option 1 continued**

- Encourage toddlers to say “Shhhh. Goodnight truck. Goodnight.” after you describe a truck’s bedtime arrangement. It is not necessary to include the word “construction” when you say goodnight to a truck.
- Point to and describe the type of work done by the truck. Examples: lifting heavy things for a new building, digging holes, and carrying dirt.
- Invite toddlers to find and point to the moon in various illustrations.
- Point out human-like characteristics of the trucks—such as eyes, grins, and other facial expressions. Draw attention to the truck taking a bedtime bath and sleeping with a blanket, the truck curled up in a soft dirt bed, and the truck sleeping with a teddy bear.
- Incorporate into your descriptions some key action words that you can stretch out and say a little louder. Examples: crunch, roar, yawn.

*It is not necessary to describe each illustration or truck. Wrap up the session if toddlers seem to be losing interest.]*

**RECAP:** The trucks shown in our book worked hard all day. The trucks were tired and getting ready for bed. The trucks did some things we do at bedtime. Do you think this is a silly book?

**👁️ What to Look For—Option 1**

Most toddlers will easily connect with the bedtime theme of the book, including the opportunity to say goodnight to each truck and look for the moon. The rich illustrations will appeal to many toddlers but your descriptions of each picture probably will be necessary for toddlers to notice some details. Toddlers’ familiarity with trucks will likely influence whether they think the facial expressions and human-like bedtime routines are humorous. This is a relatively long book and some toddlers may leave the session before it ends.

**📊 More Scaffolding Tips—Option 1**

**Extra support** ■ Show the cover of the Block 14 (Communication/Language) book on noisy farm animals to help toddlers remember a prior use of “Shhh!” ■ Help toddlers connect a bedtime routine to their own experiences, such as taking a bath or sleeping with a favorite toy.

**Enrichment** ■ Say the name of types of trucks or parts of trucks that seem to be of particular interest to toddlers. Example: “This is called a scoop. The scoop helps the truck pick up (scoop up) things like dirt. The moon is sitting in the scoop.” ■ Use the crane truck to describe how a truck can get tired from working hard. Encourage toddlers to use their arm to “reach, stretch, and lift high” like the truck does to move heavy things.

## 12–24 Months

### Option 2 Informal Gathering



#### Skill and Goal

Receptive language  
Expressive language

Toddlers explore toy trucks as part of a book sharing focused on different types of trucks.



#### Key Concepts

Truck  
Bedtime



#### Materials Needed

*Goodnight, Goodnight, Construction Site* by Sherri Duskey Rinker and Tom Lichtenheld  
Toy trucks (see Be Prepared)

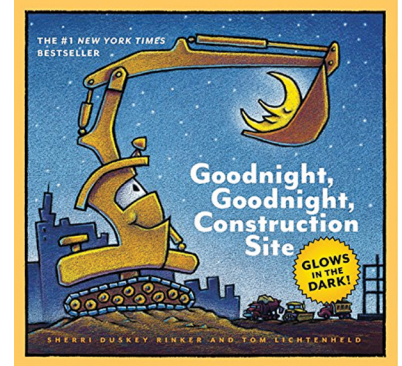


#### Also Promotes

Cognitive

**Be Prepared:** This activity is designed for toddlers who are familiar with the book through participation in Option 1 or a similar book sharing. Secure toy trucks that are similar to some of the trucks featured in the book; such as crane truck, cement mixer, bulldozer, and excavator. The activity description suggests you use your own words, rather than reading the book text, to describe illustrations. Determine how you plan to describe illustrations, including information on what a specific truck does.

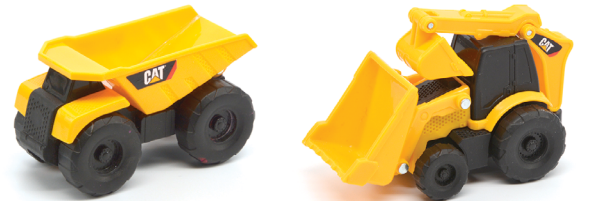
Invite several toddlers to look at our book about trucks at bedtime. Show the book cover to help toddlers remember the book. Mention aspects of the book that were of particular interest to toddlers in the Option 1 offering. Example: “Remember, one of the trucks in our book took a bath. Another truck slept with a teddy bear. We had fun finding the moon in the pictures of the trucks.”



Show and describe illustrations for which you have a corresponding toy truck.

You also may wish to revisit illustrations that attracted toddlers’ attention in Option 1.

For each illustration you select, point to and describe what the illustrated truck does. Then show the corresponding toy truck, if available, and point to (or ask toddlers to point to) the part of the truck emphasized in your description. Example: “Here is our toy dump truck. A dump truck carries things like dirt. Where would dirt go in our toy truck?”



You also may wish to describe again some of the human-like characteristics of the illustrations featured in Option 1 if this seems to be of interest to toddlers. Example: If a toddler points to the water in the illustration of the cement mixer, talk about how the truck takes a bath at bedtime.

### 👁️ What to Look For—Option 2

This activity emphasizes the jobs done by different types of trucks. It is not necessary or appropriate to introduce technical information, but look carefully at toddlers’ reactions to your descriptions to determine whether more information would help toddlers better understand an illustration. The book sharing can promote the idea that different types of trucks do different types of things. Connecting a toy truck to a book illustration can have cognitive

**Option 2 continued**

benefits, especially if you help toddlers connect parts of the illustration to the toy that sits before them. Pay attention to visual focus, pointing, smiles, or utterances that suggest a toddler would like to again focus on information offered in Option 1. Example: Toddlers may like to again repeat the phrase, “Shhh. Goodnight, truck, goodnight.” This time, include the name of the truck type if you introduced the name during your description of the truck. Example: “Shhh. Goodnight, cement truck, goodnight.”

 **More Scaffolding Tips—Option 2**

**Extra support** ■ Pass around the toy truck(s) so interested toddlers can explore with their hands a truck part you describe.

**Enrichment** ■ Invite toddlers to join you in reciting the repeated phrase, “Shhh . . . goodnight construction truck, goodnight.” Read the text slowly and deliberately, encouraging toddlers to imitate your words. ■ Introduce the name of the type of truck you describe if toddlers seem ready to learn new words.

**Interest Area**

**Materials Needed:** *Goodnight, Goodnight, Construction Site* by Sherri Duskey Rinker and Tom Lichtenheld, other books that show pictures of trucks and/or toy trucks represented in the books

Place the books and toy trucks in the block area. Invite toddlers to look at book pictures and to use the trucks to create buildings or roads with the blocks. Toddlers may choose to interact with the materials in different ways, including building with blocks or driving the trucks. Look for opportunities to connect a toddler’s action or creation to a picture.

**Family Child Care**

**Materials Needed:** *Goodnight, Goodnight, Construction Site* by Sherri Duskey Rinker and Tom Lichtenheld

In addition to offering Options 1 and 2 for young toddlers, read the book text with preschool-age children. Preschool-age children also may enjoy participating in the suggested Interest Area. Infants may enjoy holding a toy truck or car when you share the story.



## 12–24 Months

Option 1  
Informal Gathering

## Skill and Goal

## Object inquiry skills

Toddlers explore pictures of two cats in different locations.



## Key Concepts

Different

Up

Down



## Materials Needed

*Cat Up, Cat Down* by  
Catherine Hnatov



## Also Promotes

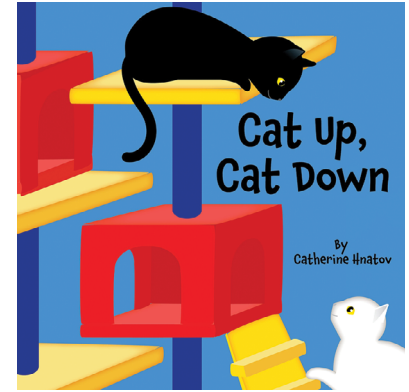
Communication/Language

**BEGIN:** [Invite several toddlers to join you in looking at pictures of cats in different places. Show book cover. Point to each cat as you name it.]

**EXPLAIN:** Our book is about two cats. One cat is black. One cat is white.

Here are the two cats. The black cat is up. The white cat is down. The words up and down tell us where the cats are.

The cats do different things on each page. Let's find out what the cats do.



**ACT:** [Use the following approach to each illustration:

- Point to and say the location of each cat, such as in a box and on a table.
- In addition to reading the book text, use your own words to describe important parts of an illustration.
- Emphasize how the cats are in different places. Example: "The white cat is behind the plant. The black cat is in front of the plant. The cats are in different places."
- Invite toddlers to point to the location of each cat in an illustration. Example: "Where are the cats in this picture?" Describe where toddlers point, emphasizing the location word. Example: "The cats are sleeping under the chairs."
- Describe (or invite toddlers to tell) what each cat is doing in its respective location.]

**RECAP:** Two cats did different things in our book. Sometimes one cat was up and the other cat was down. Up and down are different places. Let's all put our arms up. Now let's all put our hands down.

### 👁️ What to Look For—Option 1

Toddlers are likely to enjoy the colorful illustrations in this board book. The intent is to introduce position words, known as spatial prepositions. In addition to drawing attention to the different location of each cat, pause on each page so toddlers can look closely at what the cats are doing in their respective locations.

**Option 1 continued**

It is not necessary or appropriate for toddlers to learn all of the position words used in the book. Up and down are emphasized in the activity description because they are often among the first position words toddlers learn. Seeing and hearing the location of the two cats can help toddlers understand that some words tell us where things are located. The book also offers contrasting descriptions of objects, including big/small and tall/short.

 **More Scaffolding Tips—Option 1**

**Extra support** ■ When you describe the illustration of cats in front of and behind the plant, invite toddlers to put a hand in front of their tummy and then behind their back.

**Enrichment** ■ Point to the locations of items in your room that correspond to locations emphasized in an illustration.



## 12–24 Months

### Option 2 One-to-One



#### Skill and Goal

##### Object inquiry skills

A toddler puts a teddy bear in different locations suggested by a caregiver after a book sharing on location words.



#### Key Concepts

Different



#### Materials Needed

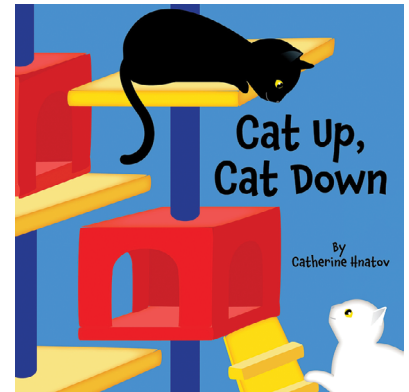
*Cat Up, Cat Down* by Catherine Hnatov  
2 teddy bears or other stuffed animals  
Doll bed  
Small table



#### Also Promotes

Communication/Language  
Physical/Health

Invite a toddler to look at pictures of cats with you. Share the book near a doll bed and small table, perhaps in the housekeeping area. Use the strategies suggested in Option 1 for sharing the book.



At the end of the book, give the toddler a teddy bear and invite the toddler to move his/her teddy to different places with you. Use your teddy bear to demonstrate and lead. Accentuate the location word. Offer the two opposite locations consecutively and pause briefly between each set of locations. Example: Move bears up and down, then pause, put bears on and off the table, then pause. During the pause, explain that we put our bears in different locations. Location possibilities are listed below:

- Let's lift our bears up to the sky.
- Let's put our bears down on the floor.
- Let's put our bears on the table.
- Now let's put take bears off the table.
- Let's put our bears in the bed so they can sleep.
- Now let's take our bears out of the bed.

Show book illustrations that correspond to the positions used with the teddy bears if time and toddler interest permit after you and the toddler put the teddy bears in different locations.

### What to Look For—Option 2

This activity offers active experiences with location words. Use a pace that follows the toddler's pace. Pursuing two sets of locations (a total of four different locations) may be sufficient for most toddlers' interest levels. If a toddler remains interested, pursue more complex locations, such as close/far apart, only after a toddler has engaged in the simpler locations suggested in the activity plan.

### More Scaffolding Tips—Option 2

**Extra support** ■ If a toddler prefers to play with the teddy bear in his/her own ways, discontinue the location requests and describe what the toddler is doing with the bear. Emphasize location words, where possible.

**Enrichment** ■ Give the toddler two teddy bears to manipulate, one in each location you suggest.





### Interest Area

**Materials Needed:** *Cat Up, Cat Down* by Catherine Hnatov, several baby dolls, doll bed, small table  
Place the book and dolls in the housekeeping area. Invite toddlers to play with the dolls using the available props. Describe toddlers' actions with the dolls, emphasizing location words when appropriate.



### Family Child Care

**Materials Needed:** *Cat Up, Cat Down* by Catherine Hnatov  
Invite a preschool-age or older child to be the leader in Option 2. Whisper locations to the leader. Also, preschool-age children may enjoy moving a toy to the more challenging spatial positions shown in the book, such as close/far apart and inside/outside. You or an older child may offer the location requests.



## 12–24 Months

### Option 1 Informal Gathering



#### Skill and Goal

##### Self-control

Toddlers watch a caregiver calm down after getting excited playing a xylophone.



#### Key Concepts

Tap

Louder

Quieter

Calm down



#### Materials Needed

Toy xylophone and mallet



#### Also Promotes

Communication/Language

Physical/Health

**BEGIN:** *[Invite several toddlers to join you at a low table to listen to the sounds of a musical toy.]*

**EXPLAIN:** I have a toy that makes music! It is called a xylophone.

*[Display toy. Show mallet when you describe it.]*

This is a mallet. The toy xylophone will make sounds when I tap it with this mallet.

*[Point to your ears.]*

Listen to the sounds I can make by tapping the mallet on the xylophone.

**ACT:** *[Tap different notes on the xylophone with the mallet. Play a scale or play a few lines of a familiar song. Then pause for toddlers' possible responses.]*

I can make louder sounds with the xylophone. I can make quieter sounds with the xylophone. Please watch how I tap the xylophone with the mallet.

*[Tap the same note on the xylophone hard, 2–3 times.]*

I made a louder sound. Now I am going to make a quieter sound.

*[Tap the same note on the xylophone softly, 2–3 times.]*

That makes a nice sound!

*[Use an enthusiastic, excited approach to tapping the xylophone repeatedly to provide a mix of louder and quieter sounds.]*

I had fun tapping the xylophone to make different sounds. The music makes me feel excited.

It is time for me to calm down. I am going to put the mallet away and rest my body.

*[Place the mallet under the xylophone. Use a quiet voice to explain that you are done making music with the xylophone. You are going to do some things to calm down. Relax your arms and put your hands in your lap. Close your eyes briefly. Take several slow, deep breaths. Quietly hum a familiar song.]*





## ***Option 1 continued***

**RECAP:** I had fun making music on the xylophone. I made louder and quieter sounds with a mallet. I got excited. Then it was time for me to rest my body. I did some things to calm down. Now I feel calm.



## 12–24 Months

Option 2  
One-to-One

## Skill and Goal

## Self-control

A toddler practices calming down, with caregiver support, after making music with a xylophone.



## Key Concepts

Tap  
Calm down



## Materials Needed

Toy xylophone and mallet



## Also Promotes

Communication/Language  
Physical/Health



Invite a toddler to join you at a low table to play a musical toy. Introduce the xylophone and briefly demonstrate how to use the mallet to tap the xylophone bars. Demonstrate making louder and quieter sounds. Give the toddler the mallet and encourage him/her to tap the xylophone. Invite the toddler to make louder and quieter sounds, and to use different bars on the xylophone.

After 1–2 minutes, explain that the toddler’s music is making you feel excited and that the toddler may feel excited, too. Announce that it is time for us to calm down. Invite the toddler to put away the mallet. Help the toddler practice resting his/her body through demonstration and verbal support as follows:

- Use a quiet voice to say again that it is time for us to calm down.
- “Let’s relax our arms. Let’s put our hands in our laps.”
- “Let’s close our eyes for a little bit.”
- “I am going to hum a song. Maybe you would like to hum a song.”

Acknowledge the toddler’s efforts to calm down. Explain that you are both sitting quietly and resting. You got excited playing and listening to the xylophone. Now we feel calm.

## What to Look For—Options 1–2

The calming-down strategies suggested in both activity options have been offered in prior activities focused on resting after a period of excitement. What is different in the current plan is the use of the xylophone. Toddlers differ in what excites them. The xylophone is a fun toy for most toddlers, and encouraging a toddler to make louder and quieter sounds and to tap a range of xylophone bars is likely to yield a modest level of excitement. Concentrating on making different types of sounds can be exciting by itself. Some toddlers may focus on their tapping motions, whereas others may listen closely to different sounds as they move up and down the xylophone bars.

The calming-down segment of Option 2 intentionally promotes a “let’s do this together” approach. It is not necessary for a toddler to feel excited in order to practice calming-down strategies. Avoid omitting the calming-down segment if a toddler seems relaxed. There may be a future point when the toddler is truly excited and would benefit from a previously-practiced calming-down routine.



### More Scaffolding Tips—Options 1–2

**Extra support** ■ If a toddler has difficulty calming down in Option 2, provide a demonstration as described in Option 1 and then offer verbal support for the toddler to do the same. ■ If a toddler taps the xylophone too hard in Option 2, gently place your hand over the toddler's hand and tap the bars together. Emphasize we want to be safe and not hurt the xylophone. ■ Give a warning signal that soon we will practice calming down if a toddler has difficulty stopping play with the xylophone.

**Enrichment** ■ Encourage the toddler to make faster and slower music in addition to louder and quieter sounds on different bars.

### Interest Area

**Materials Needed:** musical instruments—including toy xylophone and shakers, blanket

Place the instruments in a designated part of your room for toddlers to explore. You also may wish to provide practice in following requests to make and stop making music with an instrument by engaging several toddlers at a time in a game of *Play and Stop*. Use hand signals to tell toddlers when to play and when to stop playing an instrument. Invite toddlers to put their instrument (including xylophone mallet) on the blanket when you offer a stop signal. The blanket will help the instruments become quiet. If you anticipate conflict over who plays the xylophone, encourage toddlers to take turns or do not include the xylophone in the game. Repeat the *Play and Stop* game several times and then invite toddlers to sit quietly with you to practice calming down before moving to another activity.

### Family Child Care

**Materials Needed:** variety of age-appropriate musical instruments

Preschool-age and older children may enjoy joining toddlers for the *Play and Stop* game suggested for an Interest Area. This game promotes self-regulation skills. Infants will enjoy holding a shaker during the activity. You could use soft, recorded music instead of, or in addition to, hand signals. Provide support for a calming-down period at the end of the game.



## 12–24 Months

### Option 1 Informal Gathering



#### Skill and Goal

##### Awareness of emotions

Toddlers make happy and sad faces as part of a review of a story about feeling happy and sad.



#### Key Concepts

Feelings  
Happy  
Sad



#### Materials Needed

*A Ball for Daisy* by Chris Raschke



#### Also Promotes

Communication/Language  
Physical/Health

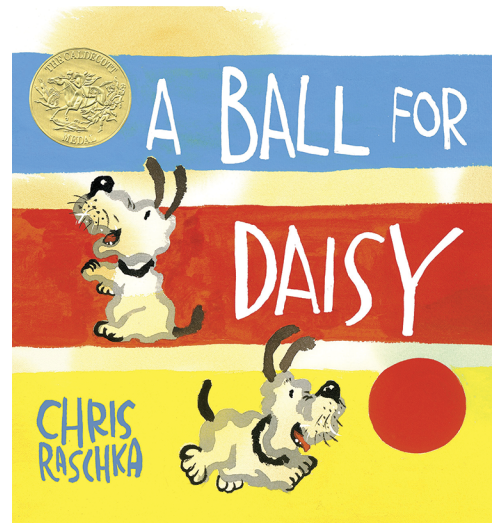
**BEGIN:** *[Invite several toddlers to join you to make happy and sad faces.]*

**EXPLAIN:** Sometimes things happen that make us feel happy. Sometimes things happen that make us feel sad.

*[Show book cover.]*

A while ago we read this book about a dog named Daisy. Daisy liked to play with a favorite ball. One day a larger dog took Daisy's ball. The larger dog broke the ball. Then a friend gave Daisy a new ball.

Let's look at some pictures of things that happened in this book.



**ACT:** *[Display book illustrations that show the following in the order in which they happened: (1) playing with red ball, (2) lying on couch with red ball, (3) bigger dog taking Daisy's favorite ball, (4) favorite ball being destroyed by bigger dog, and (5) a friend giving Daisy a new ball. For each illustration:*

- *Use your own words to remind toddlers what is happening in the picture.*
- *Ask whether Daisy is feeling happy or sad.*
- *Point to and describe features of Daisy's face and body posture that show how Daisy feels.*
- *Make a facial expression that represents how Daisy felt. Example: "We can make a big smile when we feel happy. Look at the big smile on my face!"*
- *Encourage toddlers to make the facial expression you demonstrate.]*

**RECAP:** We talked about feeling happy and feeling sad. Things happened that made Daisy feel happy. Things also happened that made Daisy feel sad. Our face can tell people how we are feeling.

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

Happy and sad feelings were explored with this book in Block 14 (Social-Emotional). The story is reviewed in the current activity with a combination of different strategies pursued for key events. The strategies were not offered in a combined manner in Block 14. The strategies are used together in a repetitive approach in the current activity to strengthen toddlers' awareness of happy and sad feelings. Happy and sad are typically the first emotions young children learn to name. Some toddlers may prefer to watch others make happy and sad faces rather than offer a happy or sad expression with their own face. Positively acknowledge all forms of participation.

**📈 More Scaffolding Tips—Option 1**

**Extra support** ■ Read the book, using strategies suggested in Block 14 (Social-Emotional), if toddlers do not seem to recall the story. ■ Point to key parts of your face when you demonstrate happy and sad expressions. Examples: Point to your mouth and describe how it looks when you smile. Point to how you look down when making a sad face.

**Enrichment** ■ Ask toddlers to tell or point to the part or position of their face that tells us they feel happy (or sad).



## 12–24 Months

### Option 2 Informal Gathering



#### Skill and Goal

##### Awareness of emotions

Toddlers are encouraged to use different ways to communicate feeling happy or sad in response to a pretend event described by a caregiver.



#### Key Concepts

Feelings  
Happy  
Sad



#### Materials Needed

None



#### Also Promotes

Communication/Language  
Cognitive

Invite several toddlers to join you to talk and sing about feeling happy or sad. Describe two pretend situations, one at a time, and encourage toddlers to communicate with words, facial expressions, and song how the situation might make them feel. Use the following order:

- Briefly describe a pretend situation. Examples: “Let’s pretend we built a tall tower with blocks and it fell down.” “Let’s pretend we are going with our family to our favorite place to eat.”
- Ask toddlers how the situation might make them feel. Example: “Would you feel happy or sad?”
- Invite toddlers to use a short sentence to say they feel happy or sad. Example: “Let’s all say together, ‘I feel happy.’”
- Lead toddlers in making a facial expression that communicates the feeling. Example: “Let’s use our faces to show how we would feel.”
- Lead toddlers in singing with actions an appropriate verse of “If You’re Happy and You Know It.” Examples: “If we’re happy and we know it, clap our hands.” “If we’re sad and we know it, stomp our feet.”

### 👁️ What to Look For—Option 2

This short activity is intended to reinforce toddlers’ awareness of how happy and sad feelings can be communicated. Toddlers may differ in whether they participate in each of the different forms of communication offered in the activity: saying the feeling word, making a facial expression that shows the feeling, and singing about the feeling with actions. Inviting toddlers to use the feeling word in a brief sentence may seem unnecessary after they identify a feeling, but an important step in awareness of feelings is to say how we feel.

Elaborate slightly on your verbal description of a situation if it appears toddlers are confused about the pretend arrangement. It is cognitively challenging to imagine an event without a picture or props. Use situations that most toddlers in your room will have experienced or watched.

### 📊 More Scaffolding Tips—Option 2

**Extra support** ■ Point to your mouth when you demonstrate a smile or a frown.

**Enrichment** ■ Draw attention to different ways toddlers show happy and sad facial expressions. ■ Use “pat your legs” instead of the suggested “stomp your feet” in the song if you anticipate stomping may lead to overexcitement.





### Interest Area

**Materials Needed:** pictures of different common facial expressions

Display on a wall or room divider some pictures of young children (preferably toddlers or preschool-age children) showing different facial expressions. Talk with individual or several toddlers about the expressions. Point to facial features you or the toddler mentions. Encourage the toddler(s) to join you in making a similar expression. Emphasize how each of us may make a different kind of happy or sad face.



### Family Child Care

**Materials Needed:** none

In Option 2, invite preschool-age or older children to lead toddlers in making a happy or sad face and in singing an appropriate verse of the suggested song. An older child may wish to show several different versions of happy and sad faces. Some smiles are bigger than others. Some frowns are more pronounced than others. An older child can help show there are different types of happy and sad faces.



## 12–24 Months

Option 1  
One-to-One

## Skill and Goal

Fine motor development

Gross motor development

A toddler explores the size and texture of different types of balls with caregiver guidance.



## Key Concepts

Ball

Feel

Different

Bigger

Smaller



## Materials Needed

4–6 different balls (see Be Prepared)

Large basket



## Also Promotes

Cognitive

Communication/Language

**Be Prepared:** Secure balls that differ in size, with several requiring two hands to hold or manipulate, and balls with different textures, including a ball that can be easily squeezed with one hand. Place the balls in the basket or container that you keep next to you during the activity.

Invite a toddler to sit on the floor across from you to look at and play with different kinds of balls. Take one ball from the basket that is next to you and give it to the toddler to hold and feel. Use the following strategies to encourage the toddler to pay attention to characteristics of a ball:



- Encourage the toddler to feel the bumps on a texture ball. Invite the toddler to use two hands to squeeze together a ball that squeezes.
- Use two hands to offer a bigger ball. Emphasize how we use two hands to hold the ball. Invite the toddler to try holding the larger ball with one hand and then holding the ball with two hands. Talk about how two hands make it easier to hold a larger ball.
- Offer two contrasting types of balls together as follows: (1) Use two hands to hand a larger ball to the toddler, and then use one hand to hand a smaller ball to the toddler. Describe the balls as bigger and smaller. Point out how we use two hands to hold a bigger ball and one hand to hold a smaller ball. Encourage the toddler to hold (not only look at) each ball, one at a time. Encourage the toddler to return the balls to you. (2) Use one hand to offer a texture ball and then one hand to offer a smooth ball. Encourage the toddler to feel each with one hand at a time or maybe one hand per ball at the same time. Emphasize how the two balls feel different.
- Invite the toddler to roll or give (not throw) the ball(s) to you after he/she is done exploring it. Put the returned ball(s) in the basket next to you.
- At the conclusion of the activity, emphasize how there are different kinds of balls. Describe several balls that seemed to be of particular interest to the toddler.

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

This activity extends the Block 16 exploration of balls with gross motor actions. The current activity promotes a closer look at specific balls by focusing on fine motor skills in feeling and manipulating balls. Toddlers often overlook specific characteristics of balls when they are engaged in gross motor play with a ball, such as in Block 16. As indicated in prior activity descriptions, hand preferences are in development at this age and it is not necessary or appropriate to encourage a toddler to use a particular hand. Retrieving and putting away a ball(s) before introducing a different ball(s) helps a toddler focus on the ball(s) you offer. Visible balls can easily distract a child's attention. The gross motor part of this activity involves the toddler returning a ball(s) to you. Omit the suggestion that a toddler roll a ball back to you if you anticipate a roll might prompt the toddler to become confused about the activity.

**📈 More Scaffolding Tips—Option 1**

**Extra support** ■ Demonstrate how to hold and feel a ball if the toddler seems uncertain about what to do after you give him/her a ball(s). ■ A toddler may prefer to stand to hold and feel different balls.

**Enrichment** ■ Invite the toddler to put a larger ball and then a smaller ball in his/her lap and notice how much space each ball takes up.



## 12–24 Months

### Option 2 One-to-One



#### Skill and Goal

**Fine motor development**  
**Gross motor development**

A toddler carries 1–2 balls at a time from one basket to another basket with opportunities to pay attention to characteristics of the ball.



#### Key Concepts

Ball  
Carry  
In  
Out



#### Materials Needed

Balls used in Option 1  
2 large baskets



#### Also Promotes

Cognitive  
Communication/Language

**Be Prepared:** Place all balls in one of the larger containers. Put the container with balls in a location that is easy for a toddler to walk to from the location where you position yourself during the activity. Put the empty container next to you.

Invite a toddler to join you at the basket with the balls in it. Invite the toddler to look at the balls with you. Describe basic characteristics of the balls emphasized in Option 1—larger ball, smaller ball, ball that we can squeeze, ball that has bumps. Avoid using colors to describe the balls. Point to the empty basket that is nearby. Explain that you would like the toddler to help you put some of the balls in the empty basket. You will sit near the empty basket. Describe a ball for the toddler to take out of the basket of balls and carry to the empty basket. Move to the empty basket or accompany the toddler to the empty basket while he/she carries the ball, if appropriate.



Comment on how the toddler is carrying the balls. Examples: “You are using both hands to carry the bigger ball.” “You have one ball in each of your hands!” Describe how the toddler is putting the ball in our empty basket. Describe again the key characteristic of the ball. Thank the toddler for carrying a ball to the basket near you. Invite the toddler to walk to the basket that contains the balls and get another ball. Describe the type ball you would like the toddler to carry to the basket near you. Example: “There is a larger ball in the basket. Please get the larger ball and carry it to the basket near me.”

Repeat the process until all balls are in the basket near you or the toddler loses interest. Conclude the activity with an enthusiastic description of the toddler’s efforts.

### What to Look For—Option 2

Toddlers enjoy carrying objects from one location to another and are likely to respond positively to the invitation to carry balls to an empty basket. Be flexible and fully accepting of the type of ball the toddler carries to the basket. Encourage the toddler to limit the number of balls he/she carries. Two may be carried at one time, one in each hand, if the toddler’s fine motor skills are sufficiently developed. Look for opportunities to describe how a type of ball is carried, as suggested in the activity description and in the following example: “It is easier to hold a ball that has bumps on it.” Make sure the toddler has a clear path from the container to you (no barriers or turns) so he/she can focus more on the ball(s) being carried and less on the trip. Watch carefully for safety

**Option 2 continued**

considerations and immediately pick up a ball that falls. Return a ball that falls to the toddler or to the basket with the balls in it, not to the empty basket.

 A small icon of a staircase. **More Scaffolding Tips—Option 2**

**Extra support** ■ Put 3–4 balls in the basket rather than 4–6. ■ Omit your description of a ball to carry to the basket near you if this is confusing to the toddler. It is fine for the toddler to carry any ball of interest, but describe the ball when the toddler puts it in the basket near you. ■ Offer a progress report toward the end of the activity. Example: “Wow, this basket (the one near you) is getting full. Almost all of the balls are now in this basket!”

**Enrichment** ■ If a toddler is familiar with descriptions of the balls in the basket (based on his/her participation in Option 1), omit the opening segment review of balls in the basket. Stay near the empty basket.

**Interest Area**

**Materials Needed:** see activity description

Option 2 can be adapted for independent play by putting the two baskets in close proximity (5–8 feet apart) and encouraging several toddlers to carry balls from one basket to the other. Put up to 10 different balls in the basket if you anticipate several toddlers will participate at the same time. Emphasize the actions of in and out. Encourage toddlers to tell what kind of ball they are carrying.

**Family Child Care**

**Materials Needed:** see activity description

An infant will enjoy holding an appropriately sized ball while watching a toddler engage in Options 1 and/or 2. A preschool-age child could be paired with a toddler for Option 2. Put up to 10 balls in the basket for the pair to take out of the basket and carry—one each. Depending on the toddler’s knowledge of ball descriptions, you could describe a different ball for each to carry or encourage the preschool-age child to help the toddler find the ball you describe. It also is fine to offer ball descriptions only when the balls are put in the basket near you.