



**Communication/
Language**

Exploring Words

Option 1 (IG) Toddlers participate in a book sharing about different ways to carry a baby.

Option 2 (IG) Older toddlers participate in a book sharing focused on different ways to carry babies, with opportunities to explore wearing a doll carrier.



Cognitive

Exploring Objects

Option 1 (OO) A toddler uses blocks to represent an item(s) related to his/her special interest as part of individualized guided play.

Option 2 (IG) Toddlers use empty boxes to represent other items of interest as part of open-ended play.



Self-Regulation

Focusing and Remembering

Option 1 (IG) Toddlers watch a caregiver focus on and remember the hiding place of a galloping toy horse.

Option 2 (OO) A toddler practices watching a galloping toy horse and remembering its hiding place.



Social-Emotional

Exploring Feelings

Option 1 (IG) Toddlers participate in a book sharing about a boy who does many different things and has different types of feelings.

Option 2 (IG) Toddlers participate in a book-related discussion of how to manage a situation(s) related to feeling worried or upset.



Physical/Health

Using Our Hands

Option 1 (OO) A toddler takes off stackers from a peg-based stacking toy with the opportunity to put stackers back on the toy's peg.

Option 2 (OO) A toddler practices putting pegs in a pegboard.

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

Revision: 07/15/2020



12–24 Months

Option 1 Informal Gathering



Skill and Goal Receptive language Expressive language

Toddlers participate in a book sharing about different ways to carry a baby.



Key Concepts Carry



Materials Needed

Carry Me (Babies Everywhere) by Star Bright Books



Also Promotes Social-Emotional

BEGIN: [*Invite several toddlers to join you to look at pictures of different ways to carry a baby. Show the cover of the book. Point to pictures as you describe them.*]

Look at the picture of the baby and parent on the cover of our book.

Where is the baby in our picture?
Where is the parent?

The baby is being carried on the parent's back. Our book shows pictures of different ways to carry a baby. Our book is called *Carry Me*. Let's look inside our book.



ACT: [*Read the book text and use your own words to describe pictures. Point to features of pictures that you describe.*]

Draw attention to how the baby is being carried, such as in a blanket or a basket or riding in a backpack or in a parent's arms.

Repeat and extend toddlers' comments and pointing. Example: "You are pointing to the beautiful hat the baby is wearing. The mom is wearing a hat, too. I think it is cold outside in this picture."

Spend more time on pictures that seem to be of particular interest to toddlers.

Skip the last two pages of small pictures and country names.]

RECAP: We looked at pictures of different ways to carry a baby. Some babies were on their parent's back. Other babies were on their parent's side or in their parent's arms.

👁️ What to Look For—Option 1

Watch toddlers' gazes to determine whether some pictures may be especially challenging to figure out. In general, you may wish to use a slower pace so toddlers have time to look at each picture. The book's pictures, each of a different set of infant and parent in varying dress and positions, will take longer to view than similarly styled illustrations offered in many books. The diversity of people shown in the book will be novel to many children.

**Option 1 continued****More Scaffolding Tips—Option 1**

Extra support ■ The opening segment's question of where are the baby and parent on the book's cover can be extended to each photo. You can support a toddler's understanding of baby and parent by alternating the focus of a question for each picture. Example: "Where is the baby in this picture? Now let's find the parent. Where is the parent in this picture?"

Enrichment ■ If a particular infant-parent pair seems to be of special interest to a toddler, tell the country where they live (see last two pages of book). The intent is to introduce or support the idea that people live in different places, not to teach the name of a country. Examples: "This baby and dad live in a country called Scotland." "This baby and mom live in the United States. We also live in the United States."

12–24 Months

Option 2 Informal Gathering



Skill and Goal Receptive language Expressive language

Older toddlers participate in a book sharing focused on different ways to carry babies, with opportunities to explore wearing a doll carrier.



Key Concepts Carry



Materials Needed

- Carry Me (Babies Everywhere)* by Star Bright Books
- Several baby dolls
- Baby blanket
- Doll carrier (see Be Prepared)



Also Promotes

- Cognitive
- Physical/Health
- Social-Emotional

Be Prepared: This activity is for older toddlers (18 months and above) who are familiar with the *Carry Me* book through participation in Option 1 or a similar book sharing. The age parameter ensures all toddlers can wear a doll carrier, if they wish. If possible, also secure a sling for carrying a baby doll.

Invite 2–3 toddlers to join you to look at pictures of different ways to carry a baby. Remind children we have looked at this book before. Show and describe photos that you anticipate will be of interest to toddlers in the session. Emphasize how the baby is being carried. Invite toddlers to help you describe the photos. Examples: “What do we see in this picture?” “How is the baby being carried?”



Introduce the doll carrier and a baby doll. Invite a volunteer child to show how it is worn. Help the toddler put the doll in the carrier. Describe how the item is being worn and how it protects the baby. Encourage the volunteer child to walk around briefly while wearing the carrier. If the carrier is new to the child, ask how it feels on his/her body. Invite other toddlers to try wearing the doll carrier. You may wish to encourage toddlers wearing a carrier to position the baby in different ways (facing out versus in). Describe difference for the baby (doll) and the person wearing the carrier. Also, introduce the baby blanket for a toddler(s) to use in holding a baby doll. Encourage using the blanket to partially and then fully cover the baby. Explain how we do not tightly cover the doll’s head with a blanket. Draw toddlers’ attention to how their peers are carrying the doll. Help toddlers connect their explorations with a carrier to an appropriate book photo. Encourage toddlers to talk about what they are doing and what they see their peers doing. Conclude the session by inviting toddlers to help you tell what happened.

What to Look For—Option 2

Look for ways to support toddlers’ descriptions of photos in the book and especially their hands-on extension of the book with a doll carrier. It is not necessary for the toddlers’ explorations to replicate book photos, but there is cognitive benefit in comparing a photo to a toddler’s experiences with a carrier. An Enrichment tip seeks to enhance this learning. Some toddlers may be highly familiar with a doll carrier, especially if a carrier is regularly available in your room, whereas other toddlers may find it challenging to put on and use the item. Provide help as needed.

**Option 2 continued** More Scaffolding Tips—Option 2

Extra support ■ Some toddlers may enjoy holding a baby doll during the book sharing. Avoid including the doll carrier during the book sharing segment of the activity so toddlers are not potentially distracted from focusing on the book.

Enrichment ■ Invite toddlers to describe what is the same or similar and what is different in a comparison of a pertinent book photo to how a toddler is using a doll carrier.

**Interest Area**

Materials Needed: *Carry Me (Babies Everywhere)* by Star Bright Books, doll carrier (including a sling, if available), blanket, several baby dolls

Arrange the book and other items on the floor or a low table. Invite toddlers to interact with the materials in ways of their choosing. Some toddlers may enjoy looking at the book photos again whereas other toddlers may wish to extend or elaborate on the Option 2 use of the carrier(s) and doll(s). Talk with toddlers about their actions and, if appropriate, encourage different ways to position the doll in a carrier without directing the play.

**Family Child Care**

Materials Needed: *Carry Me (Babies Everywhere)* by Star Bright Books, doll carrier (including a sling, if available), blanket, several baby dolls

Engage a preschool-age child in Option 2 by himself/herself or with another preschool-age child. Encourage the child(ren) to tell how their use of a carrier is similar to and different from a pertinent photo in the book. Serve as an observer and commentator, not a decision-maker, about a child's explorations.



12–24 Months

Option 1 One-to-One



Skill and Goal

Object inquiry skills

A toddler uses blocks to represent an item(s) related to his/her special interest as part of individualized guided play.



Key Concepts

Blocks



Materials Needed

Soft or cardboard blocks



Also Promotes

Physical/Health

Communication/Language

Be Prepared: The session is an opportunity for a toddler to use blocks to represent something directly related to his/her interest. Identify 1–2 interests of the toddler you invite to participate in this individualized session with you. Consider some ways the toddler might use blocks to enhance this interest. Examples: For an interest in dolls, blocks could be benches or chairs for dolls to sit on or beds for dolls to sleep in. For an interest in farm animals, blocks could be used to make a fence around an area where animals live and are kept safe. For an interest in a firetruck or safety vehicles, blocks could be used to make a road for the firetruck to use in reaching a fire.

Determine an appropriate way to initiate a play session with a toddler: (1) Ask a toddler who is already engaged in play with materials of the toddler's choosing whether it's okay to join his/her play, or (2) invite a toddler to play with you in an interest area that appeals to the toddler or with materials of interest to the toddler.

If you join a toddler's ongoing play, ask and observe what the toddler is doing, so you can join the play in a supportive way that acknowledges the toddler's lead.

If you invite a toddler to play in an area or with materials of interest to the toddler, use the most appropriate place in your room. The play does not need to occur in the blocks area. Present or point to play materials you anticipate will be of interest to the toddler and ask the toddler what he/she would like to do with them. Be prepared to offer a suggestion and take a first step with pointing, gestures, and/or actions. Example: "Let's pretend there's a big fire over there. Our firetruck needs to get to the fire fast! What should we do?"

At the point a play theme is emerging or established, suggest that maybe a block or set of blocks could be used. Example: "I have an idea. We could use some blocks to build a road for our firetruck. Do you want to do that?" Do not pursue your block idea if the toddler shows no interest in it. There may be another way a block(s) could be used. If a block(s) is incorporated into the play, encourage the toddler to help you get and bring the block(s) to your play area.

If a block is not of interest to the toddler, there may be another item that could represent something related to the play. Example: A red ball could be the big fire the firetruck needs to help put out.

Conclude the session by thanking the toddler for playing together. Briefly talk about the play, emphasizing how the block (or other item) was used in the play.

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

Using an object to represent something else is a valuable cognitive skill that eventually contributes to a wide range of pursuits—including science, engineering, and many forms of creative expression. Pretending an item is something else occurs naturally in the play of some children, but certainly not all children.

Blocks are used in this activity because they can represent many different things and are easy for toddlers to manipulate. Blocks are not essential, however, and another object can be suggested to the toddler. See the red ball example in the activity description. Note, also, that the activity description suggests you not bring blocks to the play or situate the play in the block area, and that the toddler help secure blocks if they are used. Look for ways to support the toddler's lead role in the play.

Always monitor the toddler's comprehension of what you say. Language skills develop rapidly at this age but there are many concepts and words that young toddlers may not know. As in all activities, use gestures and actions to complement your words.

📊 More Scaffolding Tips—Option 1

Extra support ■ Demonstrate two ways to construct with blocks, if appropriate: building up and building out. See Block 5 Cognitive, Option 1. Remember that young toddlers generally do not use blocks to build structures like houses. ■ Age-appropriate Duplos™ may be a useful alternative to blocks.

Enrichment ■ Add props related to the play as appropriate, always with the toddler's okay.



12–24 Months

Option 2 Informal Gathering



Skill and Goal

Object inquiry skills

Toddlers use empty boxes to represent other items of interest as part of open-ended play.



Key Concepts

Box



Materials Needed

Large, recycled cardboard boxes—1 per toddler



Also Promotes

Physical/Health
Communication/Language
Social-Emotional

Invite 2–3 toddlers to join you in an open area of your room to play with cardboard boxes. Open the session by telling the toddlers that we can play with the boxes in ways we wish. Ask an open-ended question, such as “What could we do with these boxes?” or “How can we play with these boxes?” If this does not generate ideas from the toddlers, introduce several ideas that you anticipate will be of particular interest to toddlers in the gathering. Examples: home, car, boat, castle, barn, cave. Try to use a box as is. Try to avoid the potentially time-consuming task of reworking a box (involving cutting and taping), unless this satisfies a toddler’s specific idea of what the box is to represent. Toddlers are likely to pursue parallel play, although several may want to do something together. Comment on toddlers’ actions and talk with each about their plans.

👁️ What to Look For—Option 2

Thinking imaginatively about what a large empty box might represent may be too challenging for some toddlers. If appropriate, offer several ideas and encourage toddlers to move forward with one of them rather than being dependent on you for direction. Playing with a box as is can promote lots of creative thinking. Reworking a box to fit a toddler’s idea also may be consistent with the goal of this activity, but be mindful of time constraints.

📈 More Scaffolding Tips—Option 2

Extra support ■ Present the boxes in suggestive positions. Examples: two boxes with their openings next to each other (neighboring houses?), a box with its opening on the floor (for hiding things?), and a box with its opening facing up (as vehicle?).

Enrichment ■ Add props related to emerging play themes as appropriate and with a toddler’s okay.



Interest Area

Materials Needed: see activity description

If space permits, keep the Option 2 boxes available for continued play. Add smaller boxes that can be put inside the larger boxes or used for other purposes. If space is limited, make available one large box and 3–4 smaller boxes. Initiate the interest area with a reminder of what some toddlers did with the boxes in Option 2. Offer suggestions if needed. Talk with toddlers about their plans and actions.



Family Child Care

Materials Needed: see activity description

Older toddlers and preschool-age children may enjoy participating in Option 2. Two or more preschool-age children may like to work together on making things with a box or two.



12–24 Months

Option 1 Informal Gathering



Skill and Goal Executive function

Toddlers watch a caregiver focus on and remember the hiding place of a galloping toy horse.



Key Concepts

Watch
Remember



Materials Needed

Toy horse
2 small boxes (see Be Prepared)



Also Promotes

Cognitive
Communication/Language

Be Prepared: The boxes should be large enough for the toy horse to fit into standing up and should not be transparent. Small cardboard boxes work well. In this activity, the opening of the boxes will be on the floor, so the horse cannot be seen when inside a box.

BEGIN: *[Invite several toddlers to watch a hiding game. Show and point to the toy horse and boxes when you describe them.]*



We need to watch our toy horse. Our horse likes to gallop around and then hide! Our horse likes to hide in these boxes. The boxes are pretend barns.

Let's watch the horse gallop around and hide in a barn. Do you think we can remember which barn the horse hides in?

ACT: *[Place the two barns next to each other in front of the toddlers.]*

Gallop the horse on the floor for a few seconds, always in front of the toddlers. While the toddlers are watching, have the horse gallop into (under) one of the boxes but pretend to be distracted, looking elsewhere.]

The horse galloped into a barn. The horse is hiding!

Oh no! I did not watch carefully. I do not know which barn the horse went into!

[Look in (under) the empty barn and have fun pretending you did not pay attention to where the horse galloped. Show excitement when you find the horse in the other barn!]

Our horse wants to gallop around and hide again! This time I am going to watch closely and try to remember where our horse goes.

[Gallop the horse on the floor, always in full view of the toddlers. Gallop the horse into (under) the previously empty barn.]

The horse galloped into a barn. It is hiding from us again! Did you watch the horse?

This time I watched the horse carefully. I remember where our horse is hiding!



Option 1 continued

[Look under the correct barn. Show excitement when you find the horse!]

I watched where the horse galloped. I remembered which barn the horse went into. I found the horse!

Should the horse gallop around and hide again?

[Repeat if toddlers appear interested.]

RECAP: We watched our horse gallop around and then hide. I did not watch carefully the first time the horse galloped around. I did not know where the horse was hiding! I watched the horse carefully the next time the horse galloped around. I remembered where our horse was hiding! I found our horse!



12–24 Months

Option 2 One-to-One



Skill and Goal

Executive function

A toddler practices watching a galloping toy horse and remembering its hiding place.



Key Concepts

Watch
Remember



Materials Needed

Toy horse
3 small boxes (see Be Prepared)



Also Promotes

Cognitive
Communication/Language

Be Prepared: The boxes should be large enough for the toy horse to fit into standing up and should not be transparent. Small cardboard boxes work well. In this activity, the opening of the box will be on the floor, so the horse cannot be seen when inside a box.

Invite a toddler to play a game of watching a galloping toy horse and remembering where the horse hides. Introduce the horse and two boxes that represent barns. Explain that the horse likes to gallop and then hide in one of the pretend barns. We can watch the horse carefully and remember where the horse hides. We can find the horse hiding in a barn because we watch and remember.



Place the two barns in a row in front of the toddler. Remind the toddler to use his/her eyes to watch the horse. As the toddler is watching, gallop the horse around the floor and then into one of the barns. Ask the toddler whether he/she remembers where the horse is hiding. Invite the toddler to look under the barn where he/she thinks the horse is hiding. Express excitement when the toddler finds the horse. Describe the toddler's actions. Example: "You watched the horse carefully with your eyes. You remembered which barn the horse went into. You found the horse!"

If the toddler appears to be guessing or is unsure which barn to look under, explain that our horse will go galloping and hide again. We can work hard to watch and remember where the horse is hiding. Offer a second round of galloping and hiding, again with two barns. Remind the toddler to watch the horse closely. Use slower actions with the horse.

If the toddler readily identifies the horse in the first round (by watching and remembering, not guessing), offer a second round with three barns in front of the toddler. Explain that we will need to work harder to watch and remember because this time there are three different barns where our horse may hide. Repeat the galloping and hiding actions, always in full view of the toddler. Recognize the toddler's efforts to watch and remember.

👁️ What to Look For—Options 1–2

Although Option 1 is designed as an informal gathering, it can be offered in a one-to-one setting for a toddler who would benefit from individualized experiences with focusing and remembering skills. The Option 1 goal of introducing the concepts of watching and remembering may not be fully needed for toddlers who show good progress in developing these self-regulation skills. You may wish to offer the first segment of Option 1 as a reminder and then move directly into Option 2.



As noted in earlier descriptions of similar activities, avoid allowing an activity to become a guessing game. Guessing undermines the importance of watching and remembering. If a toddler does not select the correct barn in an early round of the game, do not prolong the search by suggesting the toddler “make another guess.” Instead, lift the correct barn to reveal the toy horse and offer another round.

More Scaffolding Tips—Options 1–2

Extra support ■ Point to your eyes when you describe watching the horse carefully. ■ Explain that a barn is like a house for farm animals. ■ Invite the toddler to practice hiding and then revealing the horse under different barns.

Enrichment ■ As an extension of Option 2, reverse roles by inviting the toddler to make the toy horse gallop and hide while you watch and remember where the horse is hiding. ■ Slide the barn with the horse underneath to a different position while the toddler watches.

Interest Area

Materials Needed: toy horse and other animals that occupy barns, 3 small boxes as pretend barns
Invite several toddlers to play in the block area with the toy animals and pretend barns. Encourage toddlers to hide the animals in the pretend barns and build new barns out of blocks for the toy animals to hide in. Can toddlers remember where their animals are hiding? Toddlers may want their animals to move from one barn to another or share a barn.

Family Child Care

Materials Needed: toy farm animals, blocks, *Big Red Barn* by Margaret Wise Brown
Preschool-age children may enjoy joining toddlers in an adaptation of the Interest Area activity. Read *Big Red Barn* with children and then invite them to make barns from the blocks and help the toy animals go to sleep in different barns. Infants may enjoy holding and exploring an age-appropriate toy animal during the book sharing.



12–24 Months

Option 1 Informal Gathering



Skill and Goal

Awareness of emotions

Toddlers participate in a book sharing about a boy who does many different things and has different types of feelings.



Key Concepts

Feeling



Materials Needed

I Feel by Cheri J. Meiners



Also Promotes

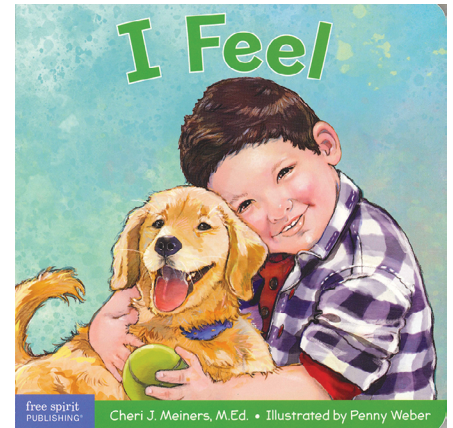
Communication/Language

BEGIN: [Invite several toddlers to read a book about a boy and the different things he does. Show the book cover and point to the boy and dog when you name each.]

Our book tells us about this boy. Here is the boy's dog. The boy is hugging his dog.

Let's look at the boy's face.

- ASK:**
- Do you think the boy is feeling happy or sad? (happy)
 - What in the picture tells us the boy is feeling happy? (smile on face)



[Repeat and expand on toddlers' comments. Point to and emphasize parts of the book's cover picture that tell us what the boy is feeling.]

ACT: [Use the following strategies to share the book:

- Add your own words to the book text to describe and explain what is happening. Example: "The boy is crying because he hurt his knee."
- Point out what the boy is feeling inside. Example: "The boy is feeling sad because his kite crashed."
- Emphasize that the boy's feelings change when different things happen. Example: "Here the boy is smiling and feeling happy. Oh no, his kite crashed! Look at his face. Is he feeling happy now? What is he feeling now?"
- Draw attention to the situation where the boy was angry because his friend was trying to take his ball. Emphasize that the boy and his friend talked, and talking with his friend helped the boy feel better inside.
- Acknowledge and build on toddlers' comments and pointing. Examples: "You said 'uh oh,' Evelyn. The boy's kite crashed." "Wyatt said 'owie.' The boy fell off his bike and hurt his knee."]

RECAP: The boy in our story did many different things. Sometimes he felt happy. Sometimes he felt sad. He had different kinds of feelings.

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

The experiences of the boy in this story will be of interest to most toddlers. Look for ways to enhance toddlers' awareness of (1) the different feelings experienced by the boy and (2) how the boy's feelings changed and are connected to the situations he experienced. These are the basic messages of the session. If a toddler shows interest in a specific situation, retell the part of the story of interest. The session is not intended to provide an in-depth look at different types of feelings.

📊 More Scaffolding Tips—Option 1

Extra support ■ In discussion of the picture and text about feeling loved, remind toddlers of our story about Mama Fox always loving Little Fox, no matter what Little Fox did (Block 20). ■ Emphasize that when the boy is feeling up, he is feeling good inside (happy) and when he is feeling down, he feels bad inside (sad).

Enrichment ■ Encourage a toddler to tell about a similar situation (such as hurting his/her own knee) if the toddler introduces the topic.



12–24 Months

Option 2 Informal Gathering



Skill and Goal

Awareness of emotions

Toddlers participate in a book-related discussion of how to manage a situation(s) related to feeling worried or upset.



Key Concepts

Feeling



Materials Needed

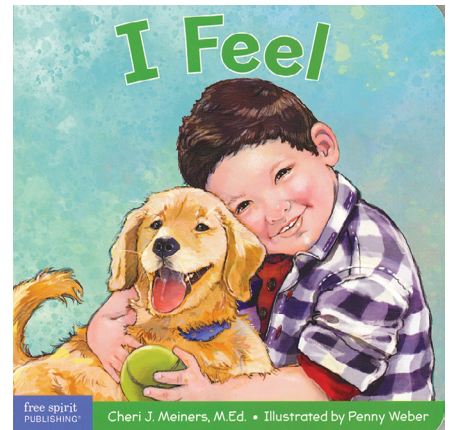
I Feel by Cheri J. Meiners



Also Promotes

Communication/Language
Self-Regulation

This activity is for toddlers who are familiar with the *I Feel* book from participation in Option 1 or a similar book sharing. Select 1–2 worrisome or upsetting situations in the story that you anticipate would be helpful for toddlers in your room to explore in a little more depth. The situation might pertain to feeling afraid or a toy-related conflict with a peer. Use your most recent experiences with toddlers in your room to make this decision.



Open the session by reminding toddlers about the story, especially how the boy did different things and how his feelings changed. Show selected pages and use your own words to describe examples of what happened. This segment of the activity is for review purposes only.

Return to the picture(s) that shows the situation you wish to highlight in this session. Use the following approach:

1. Invite toddlers to tell what happened. Repeat and build on their comments.
2. Offer a brief summary of the situation, making sure you describe it in the order in which it happened. Point to pertinent parts of the picture.
3. Emphasize what the boy did to feel better about the situation. Add additional suggestions about what a toddler could do to deal with the situation. Examples: Asking for help from an adult, telling what we feel inside, talking about what happened.

Conclude the session with firm reassurances that people in our room and families can help us when we feel worried or upset.

👁️ What to Look For—Option 2

Toddlers will likely differ in their readiness to contribute verbally to this session. Some may prefer to watch and listen. Look for ways to communicate and reinforce the general message that there are things we can do when we feel worried or upset (referenced as feeling “down” in the book). Toddlers are not expected to learn and remember a range of different actions to take when feeling worried or upset.

**Option 2 continued** **More Scaffolding Tips—Option 2**

Extra support ■ This session may be more helpful to some toddlers when offered one-to-one.

Enrichment ■ Use a teddy bear or similar prop to role-play a helpful response to the situation you highlight.

**Interest Area**

Materials Needed: dollhouse with furnishings and people figures

These play materials typically have considerable appeal. Periodically stop by the play area, observe long enough to get a good idea of the toddlers' theme or uses of the people figures, and gently ask what a people figure you name might be feeling. Example: "The baby is crying. What do you think the baby is feeling?"

**Family Child Care**

Materials Needed: *I Feel* by Cheri J. Meiners

Preschool-age children may welcome participation in Option 2, especially in a one-to-one context that addresses a pertinent situation(s) described in the book. Offer a teddy bear or other prop the child could use to act out a way to respond to feeling worried or upset.



12–24 Months

Option 1 One-to-One



Skill and Goal

Fine motor development

A toddler takes off stackers from a peg-based stacking toy with the opportunity to put stackers back on the toy's peg.



Key Concepts

Stacker

Off

In

On



Materials Needed

Stacking toy with peg (see Be Prepared)

Bowl or basket



Also Promotes

Cognitive

Communication/Language

Be Prepared: Secure a stacking toy with a peg, such as Fat Brain SpinAgain Stacking Toy or Double Rainbow Stacker from Kaplan Toys. Please note that most stacking-ring toys require rings to be placed on the peg according to size of hole and may be too challenging for some toddlers. (See Block 10 Cognitive, Option 3.) Place the fully assembled toy on a low table.

BEGIN: [Invite a toddler to play with a stacking toy. Kneel or sit on a low chair. Some toddlers may wish to stand. Point to a stacker and explain that we call these stackers.]



ACT: [Remove the top stacker with your fingers when the toddler is watching. Put the removed stacker in the bowl. Describe your actions. Emphasize that you took a stacker off the peg and put the stacker in the bowl. Invite the toddler to take the next stacker off the peg and put the stacker in the bowl. Describe the toddler's actions, emphasizing off and in actions.

Draw attention to the growing number of stackers in the bowl. Example: "There are lots of stackers in the bowl now. You took many stackers off the peg and put them in the bowl." Encourage the toddler to take remaining stackers off the peg.

After all stackers are off the peg, ask the toddler if he/she would like to put some stackers back on the peg. If not, put all stackers on the peg, one by one, and invite the toddler to take them off the peg again, one by one.

If the toddler would like to put stackers back on the peg, pick up a stacker, point to the hole in the middle of the stacker, and demonstrate putting the stacker on the peg with two hands. Draw attention to how the peg goes into the hole on the stacker.

Encourage the toddler to put a stacker on the peg. Offer verbal guidance, if necessary. Describe the toddler's actions. As the toddler places stackers on the peg, draw attention to how there are more and more stackers on the peg and the bowl is getting empty. Encourage the toddler to put on the peg any stackers that remain in the bowl.]

RECAP: [Enthusiastically recognize the toddler's effort, whether it is taking some or all of the stackers off the peg or putting some or all of the stackers on the peg. Point out how the toddler's hands and eyes did a lot of work, moving and looking at the stackers.]

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

This activity promotes small-muscle strength and eye-hand coordination. The activity can also support a toddler's awareness of quantity as the number of stackers in a bowl (or on the peg) increases or decreases. Avoid counting the stackers; counting is not appropriate to teach to toddlers. Instead, offer comments such as "There are many balls in the bowl now." It is not necessary or important for a toddler to pay attention to the color or size of stackers for this activity.

For some toddlers, removing some or all of the stackers from the peg is a big accomplishment. Enthusiastically recognize the effort. Example: "Rio, you took all the stackers off the peg! Now the stackers are in the bowl."

Puzzled looks on toddlers' faces in response to your verbal requests may indicate a lack of vocabulary knowledge, including understanding of the prepositions off, on, and in. Clearly enunciating and accentuating these words as you demonstrate actions and offer gestures can help strengthen toddlers' understanding of these frequently used words.

📈 More Scaffolding Tips—Option 1

Extra support ■ If a toddler seems unsure of how to remove a stacker, engage in a turn-taking arrangement so you can provide a demonstration and (hopefully) an eventual path to the toddler removing the stackers by himself/herself. ■ Move your finger around a stacker's hole when you describe the hole. Encourage the toddler to also trace the hole and feel the top of the peg. ■ Offer gentle hands-on assistance in putting a stacker on the peg only if verbal guidance does not seem to help.

Enrichment ■ Offer a second round in which the toddler is encouraged to both take off and put on the stackers.



12–24 Months

Option 2 One-to-One



Skill and Goal

Fine motor development

A toddler practices putting pegs in a pegboard.



Key Concepts

Hole

Peg

In

Out



Materials Needed

Pegboard and pegs

Bowl

Mat or towel



Also Promotes

Cognitive

Communication/Language

On a low table, place a pegboard with several pegs in it and a bowl of pegs. A non-skid mat or hand towel placed under the pegboard can reduce slipping and soften the sound of pegs dropping onto the surface.

Invite a toddler to play with the pegs and pegboard. The toddler may prefer to stand. Sit or kneel near the toddler. Point to and describe the pegboard and pegs. Emphasize the holes in the board and the tip on the peg that goes in a hole.

While the toddler is watching, take a peg from the bowl of pegs and demonstrate putting it in a hole, drawing attention again to the peg's tip and the hole. Emphasize how your fingers are holding and moving the peg. Then take a peg out of a hole and put it in another hole in a different part of the pegboard. Again, emphasize how your fingers are holding and moving the peg. Tell the toddler that he/she can put pegs in the board wherever he/she wishes.

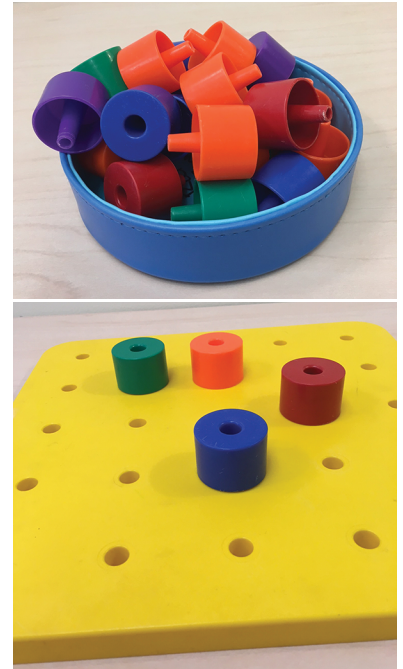
Support the toddler's efforts by remaining close to him/her and offering assistance as appropriate. Example: Point again to the tip of the peg and demonstrate how a tip goes in a hole. Quietly describe the toddler's actions, emphasizing the words in, out, tip, and hole.

👁️ What to Look For—Option 2

Play with pegs and pegboards promotes eye-hand coordination and skills in manipulating a relatively small item (a peg). It is a more challenging form of play than Option 1 because a peg requires more refined muscle control and eye-hand coordination than a stacker and peg.

Toddlers tend to approach pegboards in interesting and varied ways. Toddlers new to the materials may put in a relatively small number of pegs. For some toddlers, putting in five pegs requires considerable persistence. Some toddlers may put in a few pegs and leave the task feeling satisfied. Some toddlers may be most interested in removing pegs you put in.

Toddlers new to pegs and pegboards may struggle initially with the side of the peg to put in the hole. You can help the toddler with this struggle by demonstrating how to turn a peg so the tip faces the hole. Toddlers also may experiment with either hand or try both hands to put a peg in a hole. Refrain



**Option 2 continued**

from commenting unless you anticipate the toddler may become frustrated or not learn through trial and error that typically one hand is sufficient. Realizing that fingers are essential to the task may take some time, although it may help for you to offer gentle reminders, such as “Remember to use your fingers” as you point to your or the toddler’s fingers.

Once toddlers figure out the fine motor skills for managing a peg, they may pursue a pegboard pattern of interest, such as filling one line of holes with pegs. Or they may prefer a particular color or set of colors of pegs. Continue to describe what you see without offering any direction.

 A small icon of a staircase with three steps, followed by the text "More Scaffolding Tips—Option 2".**More Scaffolding Tips—Option 2**

Extra support ■ Put 5–8 pegs in the bowl for starters. ■ If a toddler becomes frustrated with a peg, transition to Option 1 or a different activity. Try pegs at a later point.

Enrichment ■ Offer two pegboards and a shared bowl of pegs for two toddlers to work side by side.

**Interest Area**

Materials Needed: materials used in Options 1 and 2, toy dishes, muffin pans, balls or small toys
Offer the materials used in Options 1 and 2 with staff guidance. Supplement with other fine motor materials, such as small toys in muffins tins and toy dishes.

**Family Child Care**

Materials Needed: pegboards, pegs of assorted colors in a bowl

The pegs and pegboard are an extension of pattern work offered in ELM’s Mathematics activities for preschool-age children. Preschool-age children generally enjoy making patterns and will welcome opportunities to create a simple peg pattern of their design, such as red-blue-red-blue.