



**Communication/
Language**

Exploring Words

Option 1 (IG) Toddlers participate in a book sharing focused on pictures of children engaged in everyday activities in different parts of the world.

Option 2 (IG) Toddlers talk about their experiences with activities shown in pictures of children from different parts of the world.



Cognitive

Exploring Objects

Option 1 (IG) Toddlers participate in discussion of how to get things clean while washing toys.

Option 2 (IG) Toddlers talk about uses of kitchen items in the housekeeping area.

Option 3 (OO) A toddler engages in guided play with toy building tools.



Self-Regulation

Paying Attention

Option 1 (OO) A toddler watches a caregiver find identical pairs of toy farm animals.

Option 2 (OO) A toddler practices finding identical pairs of toy farm animals with caregiver guidance.

Option 3 (OO) A toddler practices finding identical pairs of toy farm animals with minimal caregiver guidance.



Social-Emotional

Exploring Feelings

Option 1 (IG) Toddlers participate in a book sharing focused on ways to calm down when feeling upset.

Option 2 (IG) Toddlers practice some ways to calm down when feeling upset.



Physical/Health

Moving Our Bodies

Option 1 (OO) A toddler practices using a riding toy.

Option 2 (OO) A toddler practices using a four-wheel riding-toy car.

(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 pictures of children engaged in everyday activities in different parts of the world.



Key Concepts

Pictures
Children



Materials Needed

To Be a Kid by Maya Ajmera and John D. Ivanko



Also Promotes

Social-Emotional

Be Prepared: The book describes more activities and offers more pictures per activity than most toddlers will want to engage in one session. Select activities (pages) and pictures that you anticipate will be of most interest to toddlers in your gathering.

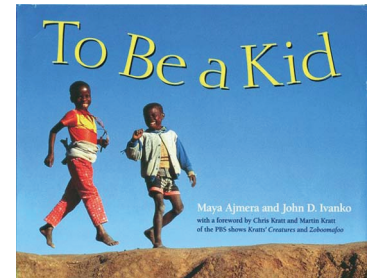
BEGIN: [*Invite several toddlers to join you to read a book.*]

EXPLAIN: Our book is about children doing different things. The children live in many different places.

[*Show book cover. Point to children in pictures you describe.*]

Look at the pictures of children on the cover of our book. The children are laughing. I think they are happy!

Let's look inside our book to find out what the children shown in our book like to do.



ACT: [*Use the following approach to sharing the book:*

- *Show activities (pages) you selected for discussion with toddlers.*
- *Use your own words plus book text to describe what children in the pictures are doing. Point to aspects of pictures you describe. Some toddlers may be unfamiliar with some of the pictured activities, such as young children in graduation robes.*
- *Acknowledge and build on toddlers' comments and pointing. Example: "Benjamin said 'mommy.' Our book shows pictures of mommies carrying their babies. There are daddies on this page too!"*
- *Ask toddlers what they see in a picture. Example: "Tomas is pointing to a kitty in this picture. What other animals do we see?"*
- *Spend more time on activities or pictures that appear to be of particular interest to toddlers.*]

RECAP: The children shown in our book live in many different places. They are doing the same kinds of things. We enjoyed looking at the pictures and talking about what we see.

What to Look For—Option 1

The pictures in this book tend to show somewhat older children, a feature that should appeal to young children's general interest in what "big kids" do. Toddlers who do not have older children in their family and/or neighborhood

**Option 1 continued**

may benefit from your description of what is happening in a picture. Watch for signs of toddler confusion about a picture or what you are saying.

The book's international character is a major plus. Cognitively, toddlers cannot be expected to have an understanding of the world and its many parts and cultures. Still, the pictures communicate clearly that children can engage in similar types of activities wherever they live.

 More Scaffolding Tips—Option 1

Extra support ■ If toddlers begin to lose interest, appropriately conclude the book sharing, perhaps with the suggested RECAP.

Enrichment ■ Point out that children shown in the book do some of the activities with other children and some of the activities by themselves.

12–24 Months

Option 2 Informal Gathering



Skill and Goal Receptive language Expressive language

Toddlers talk about their experiences with activities shown in pictures of children from different parts of the world.



Key Concepts

Pictures
Children
Like



Materials Needed

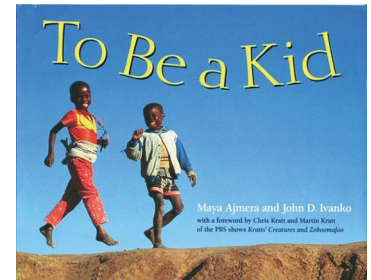
To Be a Kid by Maya Ajmera and John D. Ivanko



Also Promotes

Physical/Health
Self-Regulation

This activity is for children who are familiar with the *To Be a Kid* book from participation in Option 1 or a similar experience. Open the session by showing the book cover and reminding toddlers that the book has pictures of children who live in different places doing the same kinds of things. Turn to a page that shows an activity you anticipate is of interest to toddlers in your gathering. Use the following strategies to engage toddlers in discussion of the pictured activity:



- Focus on two of the pictures by asking toddlers what they see and expanding on their comments. Point out some differences in the pictures and also emphasize similarities in how children are engaged in the activity.
- Talk with toddlers about their experiences with this activity, such as a time when they were carried by an adult (this may be a daily occurrence) or when toddlers danced in your room.
- Invite toddlers to stand up if they like doing (or would want to do) the activity. Example: “Our pictures show children playing ball. Let’s stand up if we like to play ball.”

Repeat the above process for 1–2 more activities shown in the book.

What to Look For—Option 2

Language skills differ significantly at this age. Positively recognize toddlers who gesture or smile or nod in response to a picture or what is being said about a picture. This activity option offers an opportunity to look more closely at several pictures of a similar activity. Look for ways to engage toddlers in identifying similarities. Example: “Where is the ball in this picture? Now let’s look at this other picture. Where is the ball?” Also, look for ways to help toddlers connect their experiences to the experiences of children shown in the pictures. Keep in mind a toddler’s association with a pictured activity may be a description of what an older sibling or relative does or has done, such as watching an older sister run a race. The standing-up provision adds some physical movement to the session and a way to express what they like. Anticipate that toddlers may stand because a peer is standing.

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

Extra support ■ Invite toddlers to sit before introducing another set of pictures in the book.

Enrichment ■ Help toddlers identify things they play with that are similar to items shown in pictures, such as a swing instead of a merry-go-round.

**Interest Area**

Materials Needed: *To Be a Kid* by Maya Ajmera and John D. Ivanko, chunky crayons in assorted colors, white drawing paper

Place the book and drawing materials on a low table. Invite toddlers to look at the pictures in the book. Encourage toddlers to think about activities they like to do while they draw with the crayons. Talk with toddlers about their ideas and actions as they draw. They may want you to write some of their words on their paper.

**Family Child Care**

Materials Needed: *To Be a Kid* by Maya Ajmera and John D. Ivanko

Preschool-age children may enjoy participating in Option 2. Their descriptions of experiences with activities shown in the book's pictures may be of special interest to toddlers. Preschool-age children also may want to participate in the suggested Interest Area activity.



12–24 Months

Option 1 Informal Gathering



Skill and Goal

Object inquiry skills

Toddlers participate in discussion of how to get things clean while washing toys.



Key Concepts

Wash
Sponge
Washcloth



Materials Needed

Sensory table (see Be Prepared)
Assortment of small toys (see Be Prepared)
Water smocks—1 per toddler
Tear-free shampoo
Kitchen sponges—1 per toddler
Washcloths—1 per toddler
Small towels—1 per toddler
2 bowls



Also Promotes

Physical/Health
Social-Emotional

Be Prepared: Secure different types of water-safe toys so toddlers have experiences in cleaning smooth and rougher surfaces, corners, and angles. Put 2–3 inches of warm water in the sensory table with a few drops of tear-free soap or shampoo. Place the toys on a tray.

Invite 2–4 toddlers to join you at the sensory table to wash some of our toys. Present the tray of toys and invite each toddler to take a toy to wash. Encourage toddlers to put their toy in the water and move their fingers around the toy.

After a brief period of toy exploration, present the sponges and invite each toddler to take one. Encourage toddlers to squeeze a sponge when it is dry, put it in the water, take it out of the water, and squeeze it wet. Talk about how the water comes out of the sponge. Then invite toddlers to use the sponge to clean their toy. Encourage toddlers to use their sponge to get all parts of the toy clean. Describe how toddlers are using a sponge, including possible differences in whether a toy is being washed while held above the water or submersed in the water.

Then present the washcloths and invite toddlers to use a washcloth to clean their toy. Collect the sponges in one of the bowls before distributing a washcloth. Again, encourage toddlers to squeeze the washcloth when it is dry, put it in the water, take it out of the water, and squeeze it wet. Talk about how the water comes out of the washcloth. Invite toddlers to use the washcloth to clean their toy. Describe how toddlers are using a washcloth, including whether the toy is being washed in or out of the water and how a toddler is using his/her fingers to move the washcloth. Example: “Sam is using his finger to push part of his washcloth into a hole in his toy.”

Collect the washcloths in the second bowl and distribute towels for toddlers to use in drying their toy. You may wish to encourage toddlers to step back a bit from the sensory table while drying their toy. Describe how toddlers are using a towel. Example: “Sam has his toy all wrapped up in a towel. He is using both of his hands to dry the toy. Paige is using her towel to dry different parts of her toy.”

Conclude the session by thanking toddlers for working hard to get our toys clean. Briefly summarize what happened, especially how toddlers approached the task of washing a toy.

What to Look For—Option 1

Different approaches to washing and drying a toy are likely to emerge in toddlers’ efforts. Offer comments on toddlers’ actions without suggesting

**Option 1 continued**

that toddlers copy a method. The activity does not prescribe a specific way to wash a toy. Toddlers may discover that a sponge and a washcloth can be used to do some different things in washing the same toy.

A toy-washing activity is offered in Block 8, Option 2, with a focus on toddlers sharing items and taking turns, and in Block 13, Option 1 and Interest Area, with a focus on being a helper. While these are important goals in any peer activity, the main focus of the current activity is how sponges and washcloths can be used to clean different types of toys.

 **More Scaffolding Tips—Option 1**

Extra support ■ Remind toddlers that water stays in the table. Encourage toddlers to use paper towels to help clean up spilled water. ■ Explain or remind toddlers that soap helps us get things clean.

Enrichment ■ Offer a second toy to wash if toddlers remain interested.



12–24 Months

Option 2 Informal Gathering



Skill and Goal

Object inquiry skills

Toddlers talk about uses of kitchen items in the housekeeping area.



Key Concepts

Cook
Wash



Materials Needed

Dishes
Food toys



Also Promotes

Physical/Health
Social-Emotional

Engage 2–3 toddlers in talk about how we use different parts of the kitchen in your room’s housekeeping area. Use a mix of open-ended questions and brief descriptions that build on toddlers’ interests and activities in the kitchen. Examples: “What are you cooking?” “How do we use a sink?” Include some attention to cooking and washing dishes, if appropriate. Use gestures frequently. Repeat and build on toddlers’ responses and describe their actions. Give attention to the appliances (stove, sink, refrigerator), specific dishes and utensils, and food materials that could be used with an appliance or dishes. Follow toddlers’ leads. It is not necessary to pursue discussion of all appliances, dishes, or food items. Provide a brief demonstration of how an item can be used if it appears toddlers are not certain. Invite toddlers to try out your demonstration.



👁️ What to Look For—Option 2

Pretend play may involve toddlers using kitchen items in unconventional ways, such as putting animal toys in the oven. The current session is focused on customary uses of kitchen materials. Toddlers are likely to vary in their awareness of how appliances and dishes work. Toddlers’ vocabulary skills will largely shape discussions about how appliances and dishes are used in the kitchen. Some toddlers may respond to a question by showing use of an item or pointing. Look for opportunities to provide words for their actions and foster back-and-forth exchanges rather than promote a series of separate question-and-answer segments. Certainly there is potential for a pretend element in the activity, such as pretending to wash dishes in a sink, but the intent is for pretend actions to approximate actual uses of materials.

📊 More Scaffolding Tips—Option 2

Extra support ■ Always point to items you ask about or describe. Provide and repeat names of items. ■ Kneel so you are at toddlers’ eye level.

Enrichment ■ Support a play theme, such as preparing a meal for a hungry family, if one emerges during interactions.



12–24 Months

Option 3 One-to-One



Skill and Goal Object inquiry skills

A toddler engages in guided play with toy building tools.



Key Concepts

Fix
Make



Materials Needed

Toy building tools
Building blocks



Also Promotes

Physical/Health
Social-Emotional

Invite a toddler to join you in your room’s building area to fix or make something. Present the box of toy building tools and encourage the toddler to hold items of interest.

Example: “Look at all of our building tools. What tool do you like (or want) to use?” Talk with the toddler about how the item could be used. Use open-ended questions and expand on the toddler’s comments or actions. Example: “You are using the saw to cut a block. What are you making?” Demonstrate uses of tools that seem unfamiliar to the toddler. Give attention to fixing and making. It is not necessary to use each tool. Conclude the session by describing what happened.



👁️ What to Look For—Option 3

Watch facial expressions and gestures carefully as part of promoting a back-and-forth exchange with the toddler. Try to use and discuss at least two different tools. If a toddler seems interested in one tool only, such as the hammer, consider ways to introduce a related tool, such as a screwdriver. Talking about and demonstrating use of a tool will be more meaningful to a toddler if it is part of pretend actions in making or fixing something that is familiar.

📈 More Scaffolding Tips—Option 3

Extra support ■ Offer a hammer or a saw if the toddler does not select one from the collection of toy building tools.

Enrichment ■ Support a play theme if one emerges during uses of the toys.

Interest Area

Materials Needed: actual kitchen items

Provide in the kitchen area some actual items that are nonbreakable and easy for toddlers to lift and hold. Select items that toddlers will recognize as real and not typically available for play in your room. Examples: Serving dishes used for lunch in your room or center, muffin tin, spoons. Encourage toddlers to use the dishes in their play. Help several toddlers compare the actual item and its play counterpart in your room by looking and touching.



Family Child Care

Materials Needed: see activity description

Older toddlers and preschool-age children may enjoy participating in Options 2 or 3 or the Interest Area activity. Invite preschool-age children to demonstrate uses of kitchen items in Option 2.



12–24 Months

Option 1 One-to-One



Skill and Goal Concentration

A toddler watches a caregiver find identical pairs of toy farm animals.



Key Concepts

Same
Different
Look



Materials Needed

Matching pairs of animal figure (see Be Prepared)



Also Promotes

Communication/Language
Cognitive

Be Prepared: Secure 7–9 pairs of identical farm animal figures. One possibility is two sets of Fisher Price Little People Farm Animal Friends®.

BEGIN: *[Invite one toddler to join you at a low table to watch you play a game. Display on the table all animal figures you plan to use in the activity. Put the toy animals in random order, standing up.]*



EXPLAIN: I am going to play a game with these toy farm animals. We have a lot of toy animals. Please help me look carefully at the animals.

[Encourage the toddler to pick up or touch some animal figures. Say the name of the animal and describe a main characteristic. Example: “You are holding a cow, Xavier. The cow has white spots.” Continue this approach for 2–3 toy animals. The intent is to demonstrate how to look carefully at an animal figure.]

I want to put together the animals that are the same. I need to pay attention to what the animals look like. Here is a cow. Now I want to find another cow.

ACT: *[Put one of the toy cows in front of the toddler. Pick up and then return to the table several other toy animals, but not another cow.*

Pick up a sheep and hold it next to the cow positioned in front of the toddler.]

These animals are different. They do not look the same.

I want to keep looking for another cow. Do you see another cow?

[Pause for the toddler to respond. If he/she does not identify the second cow, point to the other cow saying “Here is the other cow!” and invite the toddler to pick it up and put it next to the other cow sitting in front of him/her.

Emphasize the two toys are the same by pointing to and describing basic characteristics of the toy cow.

Next, pick up a toy pig and put it on the table in front of the toddler. Invite the toddler to touch or hold the toy pig as you describe it.]

**Option 1 continued**

Here is a toy pig. Our pig has a curly tail. I am going to look carefully at our other toy animals and try to find a pig that looks like this pig.

[Pick up several animals but not the pig, one at a time, and hold each next to the pig that is in front of the toddler. Talk about your comparisons. Example: "This animal looks different than our pig. This animal is a horse. A horse and a pig are different animals. They are not the same.

Invite the toddler to find the other pig. If he/she does not identify the second pig, point to the other pig saying "Here is the other pig!" and invite the toddler to pick it up and put it next to the pig sitting in front of him/her.]

The two pigs look the same. Both pigs have a curly tail. They look the same.

Let's try one more.

[Pick up a duck and put it on the table in front of the toddler. Invite the toddler to touch or hold the toy duck as you describe it.]

This is a duck. Our duck has orange feet. Please help me try to find another duck that looks like this duck. We want to look carefully at our other animals.

[Repeat the steps of looking through the animals and comparing several to the duck. Encourage the toddler to help you look. If the toddler does not identify the second duck, point to the duck for the toddler to pick up and put next to the duck toy sitting in front of him/her. Talk about how the two toys are the same.]

RECAP: We looked carefully at all of the toy farm animals to find animals that are the same. We worked hard!



12–24 Months

Option 2 One-to-One



Skill and Goal Concentration

A toddler practices finding identical pairs of toy farm animals with caregiver guidance.



Key Concepts

Same
Different
Look



Materials Needed

Matching pairs of animal figures (see Be Prepared)



Also Promotes

Communication/Language
Cognitive

Be Prepared: Secure 4–5 pairs of identical farm animal figures. One possibility is two sets of Fisher Price Little People Farm Animal Friends®.



Invite a toddler to join you at a low table to find toy farm animal that are the same. Introduce the toy animals and encourage the toddler to pick up and look at some of the toys. Describe main characteristics of the toys the toddler picks up. It is not necessary to describe all toys. Invite the toddler to help you put all of the toy animals on the table, each standing on its legs.

Put in front of the toddler two toy animals that are different. Ask the toddler if the toys are the same or different. Talk about how the two toys are different. Return one of the two toys to the collection of farm animals and keep the remaining toy on the table in front of the toddler. Invite the toddler to look carefully at all of the toy animals to find a toy animal that is the same as the toy animal in front of him/her. Provide verbal support as needed.

When the toddler puts together an identical pair, talk about how the two toys are the same. Then put the two toys aside. Present another toy animal to the toddler and invite him/her to look carefully at all of the toy animals to find a toy that is the same as the toy animal you gave to him/her. Provide verbal support as needed. Continue this process if more pairs can be formed and the toddler remains interested.

Conclude the session by recognizing the toddler's efforts and describing what he/she did to find toy animals that are the same.



12-24 Months

Option 3 One-to-One



Skill and Goal

Executive function

A toddler practices finding identical pairs of toy farm animals with minimal caregiver guidance.



Key Concepts

Same
Different
Look



Materials Needed

Matching pairs of animal
(see Be Prepared)



Also Promotes

Communication/Language
Cognitive

Be Prepared: Secure 6–7 pairs of identical farm animal figures. One possibility is two sets of Fisher Price Little People Farm Animal Friends®.

Invite a toddler to join you at a low table to play with some toy farm animals. Put in front of the toddler two pairs of toy farm animals: One pair of toy animals that are the same and one pair of toy animals that are different. Example: a pig and a horse, and two cows. Leave some space between the two pairs. Invite the toddler to look carefully at the toy animals and tell which animals are the same. Talk with the toddler about how the two toy animals in the other pair are different. Point to characteristics you describe.



Arrange the toy animals in random order on the table and invite the toddler to put together toys that are the same. If the toddler seems uncertain about what to do, give the toddler a toy animal and ask him/her to look at the other toy animals and try to find a toy that is the same. Offer verbal support as needed. Describe the toy farm animals the toddler puts together and acknowledge the toddler's efforts.

👁️ What to Look For—Options 1–3

Look for opportunities to emphasize the concepts of same and different, and avoid saying two items are a “match” without describing why they are a match. Consistently monitor a toddler's actions to determine whether more or less challenge would be appropriate to offer during the activity. The three activity options are sequenced to make it easy to move from one option to another while the activity is underway. Example: If Option 3 seems too challenging for a toddler, promptly incorporate the supports suggested in Option 2. Making an adaptation during an activity can occur seamlessly.

Focus on major characteristics of toy animals, such as shape, to describe how they are the same or different, and avoid using color names as the only distinguishing characteristic of a toy.

The activity options use similar types of toys (farm animals) and therefore are slightly more challenging than prior activities that used different types of objects to promote concentration skills (Blocks 4, 10, and 16).

 More Scaffolding Tips—Options 1–3

Extra support ■ In the opening segment of Option 1, promptly show two identical toy animals when you describe your interest in putting together toy animals that are the same. ■ Use 3–4 pairs of toy animals in Option 1 if you anticipate the suggested 7–9 pairs (a total of 14–18 figures) may be too challenging. ■ To provide verbal support in Option 2 for finding the same toy, point to a toy in the collection and ask whether the animal is the same or different than the animal the toddler is holding. Also, encourage a toddler to hold two animals next to each other in order to look carefully at whether they are the same or different.

Enrichment ■ Remind the toddler that things that look the same are a match.

 Interest Area

Materials Needed: see activity description

Identify five different toys that are the same as one or more toys available in your room. Example: an animal figure, a block, a doll, a cup, a spoon. Put the toys on a low table and invite several toddlers to look for another toy in the room that is the same type of toy. Emphasize that the color may be different. Encourage toddlers to bring the toys they find to the table and place them next to the same type of toy. Talk with toddlers about how they looked at many different things during their search and stayed focused on finding one type of toy.

 Family Child Care

Materials Needed: toy animals used in Options 1–3

Be Prepared: Place one set of toy animals in different places in your setting.

Offer an adaptation of the Interest Area activity by inviting toddlers and preschool-age children to participate in a scavenger hunt for farm animal figures. Give each child (or pair of children) a toy animal and encourage him/her to find the same type of toy animal somewhere in your setting. Encourage the child to bring the two toy animals to a space you designate. Talk with children about how they looked and found the same type of toy. Emphasize the process of looking and staying focused on finding one type of toy animal.



12–24 Months

Option 1
Informal Gathering

Skill and Goal

Awareness of emotions

Toddlers participate in a book sharing focused on ways to calm down when feeling upset.



Key Concepts

Calm down

Upset



Materials Needed

Calm-Down Time by
Elizabeth Verdick



Also Promotes

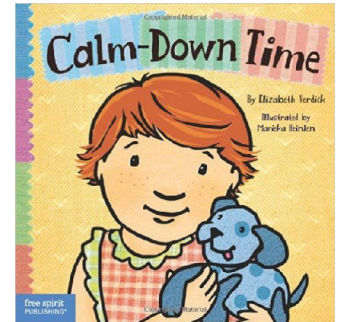
Communication/Language

Self-Regulation

BEGIN: [*Invite several toddlers to join you in reading a book about calming down.*]

We are learning how to calm down when we get excited. Remember, we can calm down by taking deep breaths and relaxing our arms.

Our book tells us how to calm down when we feel upset. We can feel upset when we are mad or sad about something.



ACT: [*Show the book cover. Ask toddlers whether the child shown on the book cover looks calm. Talk about why she looks calm.*]

Use your own words to expand on the book text while pointing to corresponding aspects of illustrations. Examples:

- *Facial expressions that show what a child is feeling*
- *Wanting to scream or shout when we feel mad or sad*
- *Giving ourselves a hug (“a squeeze”)*
- *Getting a hug from someone else*

Explain that “taking care of me” means we do things to make sure we feel good.

Emphasize “in” and “out” when you describe taking deep breaths.

Respond to toddlers’ pointing and comments.]

RECAP: We know some ways to calm down when we are excited. Our book told us how to calm down when we feel mad or sad about something. Calming down is a good thing to do when we feel excited or upset about something.

👁️ What to Look For—Option 1

Most toddlers will easily connect with the book’s focus on calming down. ELM’s Self-Regulation activities regularly promote how to calm down after a physically or cognitively exciting activity. The current activity broadens the uses of and approaches to calming down.

Look for ways to emphasize the idea that calming down can be helpful when we feel mad or sad, as well as when we are excited. This session is the first to directly promote the use of calming down when we feel upset. Also look for

**Option 1 continued**

ways to highlight calming-down strategies that are mostly specific to feeling upset, such as hugging oneself, crying, and asking someone to hold or hug you.

The emotions of sad and mad are the focus of prior Social-Emotional activities, and reminders or examples of what these words mean may be helpful. Young children are often asked something like, “What are you upset about?” The session is an opportunity to help toddlers connect the feelings of sad and mad to the word upset.

 **More Scaffolding Tips—Option 1**

Extra support ■ Offer a familiar example(s) of feeling mad or sad. ■ Emphasize that it is children (not you) who are saying “1, 2, 3. Take care of me.” in the book. Make sure toddlers do not erroneously think “take care of me” means take care of you.

Enrichment ■ Invite toddlers to describe what they see in a picture, especially illustrations of facial expressions.



12–24 Months

Option 2 Informal Gathering



Skill and Goal

Awareness of emotions

Toddlers practice some ways to calm down when feeling upset.



Key Concepts

Calm down
Upset



Materials Needed

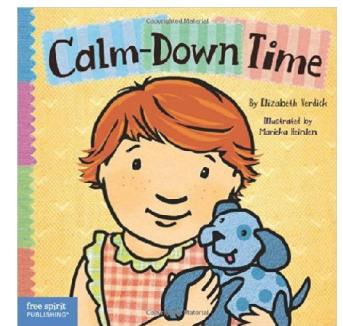
Calm-Down Time by Elizabeth Verdick



Also Promotes

Self-Regulation
Communication/Language

This activity is for toddlers who have been introduced to the *Calm-Down Time* book through participation in Option 1 or a similar book sharing. Show the book cover and remind toddlers that the book tells us some ways to calm down when we feel upset (angry or sad). Select book pages that show calm-down strategies you want to emphasize with toddlers in your gathering. Describe the picture while pointing to specifics. Then demonstrate and invite toddlers to practice the strategy. Possibilities include the following:



- **Breath slowly:** Use a quiet voice to lead toddlers in breathing in and out.
- **Ask for a hug:** Suggest words a toddler could use to ask for a hug from an adult in your room. Invite a toddler to demonstrate how to ask for a hug. Then hug the volunteer toddler.
- **Wrap arms around oneself and give a squeeze:** Demonstrate giving yourself a hug and lead toddlers in doing the same. Describe toddlers' actions.
- **Gently rock back and forth or side to side:** Demonstrate one or both of these movements and lead toddlers in doing the same. Describe their actions.
- **Sing a quiet song:** Use a simple song that is familiar to toddlers. Invite toddlers to join you in singing the song quietly.
- **Describe the calming-down space in your room if you have created one.** Visit the space with toddlers and show how it can be used.

Offer frequent reminders of how the strategy can help. Example: "Hugging ourselves can help us feel better inside. We do not need to stay angry or sad. We can do things to feel better." Use a quiet voice throughout.

👁️ What to Look For—Option 2

Most of the calming-down strategies described in the book may be new to many toddlers. With the exception of breathing slowly, the strategies are not among the techniques promoted in the Self-Regulation activities focused on calming down after an exciting activity. And saying "in" and "out" while helping toddlers practice slow, deep breathing may be a new experience. Some toddlers may prefer to watch and listen. Positively acknowledge different forms of participation.



Option 2 continued

More Scaffolding Tips—Option 2

Extra support ■ Prioritize the strategies, so you can focus first on strategies you want toddlers to have an opportunity to practice or watch. Time or toddler interest may be limited.

Enrichment ■ Encourage toddlers to describe book pictures you show. Invite them to tell whether a practiced strategy makes them feel calmer.



Interest Area

Materials Needed: see activity description, *Calm-Down Time* by Elizabeth Verdick

Invite toddlers to gather some items in your room and place them in a temporary designated space that can be used for calming down. Show and describe the pertinent book picture, if appropriate. Encourage toddlers to focus on materials for doing quiet things. Examples: crayons or markers, paper, books, stuffed toy animals such as teddy bears, foam balls for squeezing. Set up the space with comfortable seating. The space does not need to be maintained long term or necessarily used by toddlers. The intent is to help toddlers think about materials that can help us get calm. Carrying the items to the designated space can help reinforce the choices. Talk with toddlers about their selections. If a temporary designated area is not feasible, take several toddlers on a walk through your room and invite them to point to and talk about materials that can help us calm down.



Family Child Care

Materials Needed: Option 2 materials

Preschool-age children may enjoy participating the Option 2 activity. Encourage toddlers to repeat the “1, 2, 3. Take care of me.” phrase, offered several times in the book. Preschool-age children are more likely than toddlers to understand the meaning of “take care of me” and will have more experience in saying 1, 2, 3. Use of numbers in the phrase does not pertain to counting.



12–24 Months

Option 1 One-to-One



Skill and Goal

Gross motor development

A toddler practices using a riding toy.



Key Concepts

Hold
Move
Stop



Materials Needed

Riding toy



Also Promotes

Cognitive



Optional Reading

My First Things that Go by DK Publishing

Freight Train by Donald Crews

Cars and Trucks from A to Z by Richard Scarry

BEGIN: [Invite a toddler to practice using a (riding toy). Help the toddler put a helmet on his/her head, making sure it is securely fastened. Remind the toddler the helmet helps keep our head safe.]

ACT: [Kneel in front of the riding toy and hold it steady. Describe your actions and their reasons.]

I will hold the (riding toy) so it does not move.

[Point to the riding toy's handle.]

This is called a handle. Please hold this handle with your hands.

[Point to or tap the toddler's leg.]

Now move your leg over the (riding toy).

Now you are sitting on the (riding toy)!

[Acknowledge the toddler's response. Example: "You have a big smile. I think you are happy sitting on the (riding toy)."]

Do you want to make the (riding toy) move?

[If the toddler's reply is "no," enthusiastically acknowledge the toddler's accomplishment of getting on the riding toy.

If the toddler's reply is "yes," explain that he/she can make the toy "go" by moving his/her feet on the floor. If the toddler is on a riding toy with a pedal, help him/her put his feet on the pedal and move the pedal with his/her foot. Touch or tap the child's shoe to give a sensory signal to "push with this foot."

Describe the toddler's actions. Example: "Wow, you are making the (riding toy) go by moving your feet."

If the toddler has difficulty getting the riding toy to move, ask if he/she would like a little push. If the response is "yes," provide a light push to give the toddler a sensation of moving on the riding toy. Encourage the toddler to push with one foot and then the other foot. Some toddlers may be successful using both feet at the same time on a riding toy that does not have a pedal.



**Option 1 continued**

Describe how to stop the toy from moving. Explain that stop means we do not move our legs/feet. Describe the importance of responding to a verbal request and/or hand signal.

Help the toddler get off the riding toy. Emphasize the importance of not moving the toy when getting off.]

RECAP: [Briefly describe the toddler's experience on the riding toy. Example: "Devi, you got on the little car and made it move. You got off all by yourself."]

👁️ What to Look For—Option 1

Learning the sequence of skills for moving around on a riding toy may span several days or weeks. It takes time at the toddler's own pace to maintain balance while getting on and off the riding toy while holding the toy still, hold the handle while sitting in a balanced position, and coordinate the use of legs and feet to move the toy.

Generally toddlers learn to ride a four-wheel toy before using a pedal toy. Pushing a tricycle with a toddler who cannot use the pedals is not recommended. Some toddlers may enjoy pushing a riding toy from behind before attempting to get on.

Before learning to manage the pedals, you may see a toddler attempt to move a riding toy forward by moving his/her upper body forward and back, in a rocking motion. Talk with the toddler about his/her interest. Example: "Elijah, it looks like you want the trike to go." Wait for a response. Ask the toddler if he/she would like help.

Note the activity description includes two places where the toddler is explicitly asked whether he/she wants to pursue a next step: making the toy move and wanting help in making the toy move. Accomplishing the first step of getting on the toy may be completely satisfying to some toddlers. A toddler may be pleased to simply sit on the toy and watch other toddlers at play. Urging the toddler to begin riding is not suggested. Giving the toddler a light push without his/her okay also is not suggested.

Close supervision is needed with riding toys because most toddlers do not have well-developed spatial understanding of how to avoid bumping into others.

📈 More Scaffolding Tips—Option 1

Extra support ■ Use a hand/arm gesture with your request that the toddler move his/her leg over the riding toy.

Enrichment ■ Add an element of pretend play by taking the role of gas station worker. Toddlers can ride over to you to get gas. It is a nice way for a toddler and caregiver to touch base with one another.



12–24 Months

Option 2 One-to-One



Skill and Goal

Gross motor development

A toddler practices using a four-wheel riding-toy car.



Key Concepts

Hold
Move



Materials Needed

Riding-toy car



Also Promotes

Cognitive

Help a toddler put on a helmet and secure it. Invite the toddler to get into the riding car. Kneel at the side of the car. Hold the car to prevent it from moving as the toddler gets in. Describe what you are doing.

Steps promoted in Option 1 can be adapted to a car. Give attention to opening and closing the door, keeping the car still while getting in and out, moving legs/feet alternately to make the car move, and making a controlled stop. The actions for moving the riding car are similar to the other riding toys, but the distance between the toddler's feet is not the same.

Support a toddler's interest in pretend play as part of using the car. A toddler may enjoy stopping to talk with you about plans, such as "going to the grocery store" or "driving Mommy's truck."



👁️ What to Look For—Option 2

Kneeling at eye level with a toddler fosters good communication. You can easily stabilize the riding toy and talk to the toddler from a kneeling position.

Toddlers are often interested in carrying play materials in the car, by putting them on the seat or holding them as they drive. Your room may have rules about carrying items in the car.

You may notice a toddler doing a lot of looking around while using a toy car. Sitting in and moving around on a riding car gives a toddler a new perspective on the environment and other children at play. A spatial perspective for knowing when and how to avoid bumping into furnishings or people is not generally fully developed at this age. Riding-toy play must be supervised by a caregiver.

📊 More Scaffolding Tips—Option 2

Extra support ■ Remind the toddler why it is important to wear a helmet, and why we hold the car still when getting in and out.

Enrichment ■ Provide verbal support for helping the toddler move the car backwards. ■ Create a barrier for the car rider to go around.



Interest Area

Materials Needed: *My First Things that Go* by DK Publishing, *Freight Train* by Donald Crews, *Cars and Trucks from A to Z* by Richard Scarry, vehicle toys

Extend the interest in riding toys by providing a variety of small toy vehicles on a low surface for toddlers to push with their hands. Also, talk with toddlers about pictures in books focused on different types of vehicles.



Family Child Care

Materials Needed: riding toy

Children learn a lot by watching others, and a preschool-age child can help demonstrate proper use of a riding toy in Option 1. Preschool-age children also may enjoy participating in the Interest Area activity.