



**Communication/
Language**

Exploring Words

- Option 1 (OO)** A toddler participates in a drawing activity with caregiver supports for using words for different purposes.
- Option 2 (IG)** Toddlers participate together in a play dough activity with caregiver supports for communicating item names and their interests.



Cognitive

Solving Problems

- Option 1 (OO)** A toddler participates in a book sharing about finding a puppy that is hiding.
- Option 2 (OO)** A toddler participates in a game of finding a toy dog that hides in different containers.
- Option 3 (IG)** Toddlers participate together in a game of finding a toy dog that jumps around and hides in different containers.



Self-Regulation

Getting Calm

- Option 1 (IG)** Toddlers watch a caregiver calm down after an exciting activity with a special toy.
- Option 2 (OO)** A toddler practices calming down with caregiver support after an exciting activity with a special toy.



Social-Emotional

Exploring Feelings

- Option 1 (IG)** Toddlers participate in movements related to feeling happy as part of a familiar song.
- Option 2 (IG)** Toddlers participate in movements related to feeling happy and sad as part of a familiar song.



Physical/Health

Using Our Hands

- Option 1 (IG)** Toddlers practice holding, and then letting go of, a toy vehicle on a ramp.
- Option 2 (IG)** Toddlers move toy vehicles on pretend roads that include curves.
- Option 3 (OO)** A toddler plays with toy vehicles and a garage with door locks.

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



12–24 Months

Option 1 One-to-One



Skill and Goal

Receptive language
Expressive language

A toddler participates in a drawing activity with caregiver supports for using words for different purposes.



Key Concepts

Draw
Crayon
Say



Materials Needed

Chunky crayons in assorted colors
White drawing paper



Also Promotes

Social-Emotional
Physical/Health



Optional Reading

My Many Colored Days by
Dr. Seuss

BEGIN: [*Invite a toddler to join you at a low table to draw a picture. Give the toddler and yourself a sheet of drawing paper. Put the crayons on the table within easy reach of both of you.*]

EXPLAIN: I am going to draw a picture. You can draw a picture, too. You can draw whatever you want to make with our crayons.

[*Point to crayons.*]

Look at all of our crayons. We have many different colors of crayons.

[*Point to and name some basic colors—such as red, blue, and green.*]



ASK: Which crayon would you like to use first?

ACT: [*Encourage the toddler to select one crayon. Say the name of the color. Example: “You picked a blue crayon. You are going to start drawing with a blue crayon. Let’s say ‘crayon’ together. Crayon.”*]

Select a crayon and make some marks on your paper. Describe and point to what you are doing. Example: “I am making some lines on my paper. These are called lines. I like to draw lines.”

Describe what you see on the toddler’s paper. Example: “You put some marks on your paper. There are pretty blue marks on your paper. Let’s say together ‘blue marks.’”

ASK: Do you want to use a different color of crayon now?

[*If the toddler communicates a nonverbal ‘yes,’ gently say “You can say the word ‘yes.’ You can tell me ‘yes.’ Invite the toddler to take or point to the crayon he/she wants to use next. Say the name of the color.*]

[*If the toddler communicates a nonverbal ‘no,’ gently say “You can say the word ‘no.’ You can tell me ‘no.’” Describe the toddler’s plan to keep using the same color. Example: “You want to keep drawing with the crayon you are using now.”*]

ACT: [*Explain that you are going to now use a different color of crayon. Say the color of the crayon you pick up. If possible, use a crayon that is near the toddler and invite the toddler to give it to you. Example: “Now I want to use a green crayon. There is a green crayon next to*

**Option 1 continued**

you, Joseph. Would you please give me the green crayon?" Thank the toddler for passing the crayon to you.

Recognize any comments the toddler may offer during the activity. Repeat and expand on what the toddler says.

Offer to put the toddler's words on the back of his/her paper.]

RECAP: We had fun drawing together. We used good colors in our drawings. We talked to each other about the crayons we wanted to use.

👁️ What to Look For—Option 1

The use of one or two words is encouraged for different purposes in this activity: for naming an object, describing an action with a crayon, responding to a question, and potentially putting words on a drawing. Toddlers with strong language skills will likely offer far more than one or two words. But the general idea that we use words for different reasons remains the same. Most toddlers are not familiar with the practice of an adult writing a child's words on paper (taking dictation) and are unlikely to say something for you to write. Still, your offer to write some words the toddler says is an informal way to promote the idea that words can be used to tell about something the toddler did.

Some toddlers will enjoy drawing, whereas others may make a few marks and move to a different activity. Toddlers are not expected to draw recognizable shapes or images. Drawing at this age is about experimenting with holding a crayon and making marks on paper. The activity description emphasizes process, not product. There are no questions like "what are you drawing?"

The use of color names in this activity is to support the toddler's emerging understanding that objects have unique names. Young toddlers are aware there are different colors and benefit from hearing color names regularly, but they are not expected to know color names. Avoid letting the activity become a color-naming lesson.

📈 More Scaffolding Tips—Option 1

Extra support ■ Provide 3–5 crayons if you anticipate 7–10 may be too challenging for a toddler to consider. ■ Instead of telling the toddler he/she can tell you yes (or no) in response to your "another crayon" question, simply confirm the nonverbal communication. Example: "You nodded your head 'yes.' You want a different color of crayon."

Enrichment ■ Ask the toddler if he/she would like to take the drawing home.

12–24 Months

Option 2 Informal Gathering



Skill and Goal

Receptive language
Expressive language

Toddlers participate together in a play dough activity with caregiver supports for communicating item names and their interests.



Key Concepts

Play dough
Say



Materials Needed

Play dough—1 ball per toddler (see Be Prepared)
Assortment of play dough tools (see Be Prepared)



Also Promotes

Social-Emotional
Physical/Health
Self-Regulation

Be Prepared: Prepare one ball of play dough about the size of a toddler’s hand for each anticipated participant. Place the dough on a low table where a toddler can sit or stand to participate. Arrange the age-appropriate tools in the center of the table within reach of all toddlers.

Invite 3–4 toddlers to play at a low table with play dough. Point to and name the play dough and each of the tools. Hold up the tool as you clearly say its name. Invite toddlers to play with the dough in ways they wish. Use the following strategies to promote toddlers’ use of words:



- Encourage a toddler to say the name of a tool he/she is using or wants to use. Say the name first and invite the toddler to repeat the name. Example: “Lucia, you are pushing a cookie cutter into your dough. Let’s say together, ‘cookie cutter.’”
- Offer an example of how a toddler can communicate his/her interests. Example: “You did not want Matteau to take the dinosaur mold, Samuel. You were still playing with it. You can tell Matteau, ‘not done’ because you are not done using it. Or you could say ‘still want’ because you still want to use it.” Let’s try saying together the words ‘not done.’ ‘Not done.’”
- Enthusiastically recognize appropriate language use. Example: “You said ‘not done,’ Samuel! Now Matteau knows you are not done using the dinosaur mold.”
- Repeat and extend a toddler’s words. Example: “You said ‘doggy,’ Suzanne. You want the dog cookie cutter.”
- Use an open-ended question to invite a toddler to tell what he/she is doing or plans to do. Example: “You are looking at all of our tools. What are you thinking about doing?”

What to Look For—Option 2

This activity option is slightly more challenging than Option 2 because it involves peers and the potential to communicate with a peer about one’s interest in using an item. There also is potential for toddlers to work together with play dough, although this is not an emphasis of the activity. Similar to Option 1, the activity promotes different uses of words, including names of objects.

Play dough is an enjoyable activity for most toddlers. Manipulating play dough provides both a sensory experience and the opportunity to create.



Some toddlers may choose to use one or more tools, whereas others may prefer to use their hands. Toddlers may enjoy watching the work and creations of their peers.

More Scaffolding Tips—Option 2

Extra support ■ Provide an alternative creative activity for a toddler who has sensory issues with the texture of play dough.

Enrichment ■ Add items not typically provided for play dough work, such as animal figures to make footprints.



Interest Area

Materials Needed: see Options 1 and 2

Provide the materials used in Options 1 and 2 for smaller gatherings of toddlers to explore. Encourage toddlers to say the name(s) of materials they are using and to tell one another what they are doing with the materials. Remain close at hand so you can incorporate into the setting some of the word-use strategies offered in Options 1 and 2.



Family Child Care

Materials Needed: see Options 1 and 2

Preschool-age children will enjoy Option 1 or 2. If you involve a preschool-age child(ren) in Option 2 with toddlers, ensure there are opportunities for both toddlers and older children to talk. Toddlers benefit from verbal exchanges with older children, including hearing words used by older peers. They also benefit from opportunities to talk with, and be listened to by, adults.



12–24 Months

Option 1 One-to-One



Skill and Goal Problem-solving

A toddler participates in a book sharing about finding a puppy that is hiding.



Key Concepts Hiding



Materials Needed *Where's Spot?* by Eric Hill



Also Promotes Communication/Language Physical/Health

BEGIN: [*Invite a young toddler to sit next to you to share a book about a puppy.*]

EXPLAIN: [*Show the book cover. Point to pictures you describe.*]

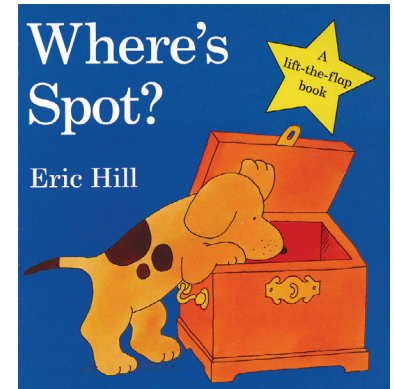
This is a mama dog. She is looking for her baby. The baby is a puppy. The puppy's name is Spot. The mama dog says, "Where's Spot?"

Let's look inside our book and find out what happened to Spot.

ACT: [*Read the text and describe the pictures. Point to images you describe. Use the following strategies to help the toddler focus on finding the missing puppy.*

- After reading the question on each page, ask the toddler if he/she thinks the puppy is in the location shown on the page. Examples: "Do you think the puppy is behind the door?" "Do you think Spot is in the piano?"
- Encourage the toddler to carefully open the book flaps with your help.
- After lifting a flap, ask the toddler: "Is Spot hiding in the (hiding place)?" Toddlers enjoy saying "No!"
- Say the name of the animal hiding behind each flap and ask the toddler to repeat the name with you. Or, ask the toddler what animal is behind a flap. Repeat the name and elaborate upon the toddler's response. Example: "Yes, a bear is hiding behind the door."
- Before turning to a next page, encourage the toddler to say with you: "Where's Spot?"
- About halfway through the book, ask the toddler: "Can Mama Dog see Spot?" Explain that Mama Dog does not know where Spot is. That's why Mama Dog is looking in so many different places.]

RECAP: Our book told us how the mama dog found her baby dog. The baby dog is a puppy named Spot. We looked at pictures of many places where Spot might be hiding. We opened the flaps and found different animals. Spot was hiding in a basket!



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

Some toddlers may be so eager to open a flap that they quickly move to the flap-opening task without listening to the question. If this occurs, gently place your hand over the flap and remind the toddler that we think about a question before we open the flap. If the toddler seems confused by the concept of “before,” explain that first we ask a question, and next we open the flap. Opening the flap gives us an answer to the question.

 **More Scaffolding Tips—Option 1**

Extra support ■ Skip two pages (but not the last three pages, which began with the rug) if the book is too long for a toddler. ■ Show enthusiasm for the book by sharing your surprise when Mama Dog finds an animal, but not Spot, hiding in various places. Ask “Where’s Spot?”

Enrichment ■ After the book sharing, ask the toddler if he/she can remember some of the places where Mama Dog looked for Spot. Return to items (pages) mentioned by the toddler as reinforcement of the toddler’s memory. ■ On the page with the rug, ask the toddler why Mama Dog thinks Spot is under the rug. (because there is a hump in the middle of the rug) ■ If a toddler seems interested in continuing to look at the book after the initial sharing, encourage the toddler to hold the book while looking at pages of interest to the toddler and talking about the pictures.

12–24 Months

Option 2 One-to-One



Skill and Goal

Problem-solving

A toddler participates in a game of finding a toy dog that hides in different containers.



Key Concepts

Hide
Find



Materials Needed

Where's Spot? by Eric Hill
Soft toy dog
3 large containers of different colors



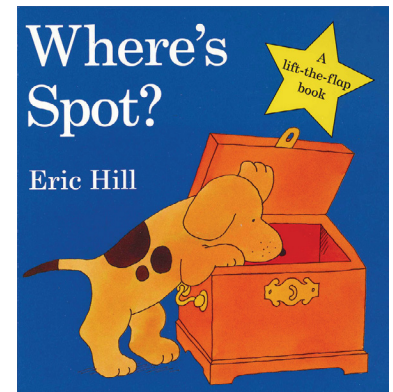
Also Promotes

Communication/Language
Physical/Health

This is a follow-up activity for a toddler who is familiar with the *Where's Spot?* book from participation in Option 1 or a similar book sharing. Offer this game soon after reading (or rereading) *Where's Spot?* Open the activity by explaining that we have our own dog named Spot that likes to hide. We will try to find Spot.

Use two containers (each a different color) for the first round of the game. Be sure the toddler is watching as you place the toy dog (Spot) in a container. Encourage the toddler to find Spot. Repeat by hiding the toy dog again, either in the same container or the other container, while the toddler watches. Invite the toddler to find Spot.

If the toddler easily finds the toy and remains interested, use three containers (again, each a different color). Hide the toy while the toddler is watching and invite the toddler to find Spot. Repeat if the toddler remains interested. Put the toy into the same colored container each time and rearrange the placement of the containers. Keep the hiding pattern consistent by putting the toy in the same colored container.



What to Look For—Option 2

It is easy to increase the challenge of this activity by adding a third container and moving around the containers. There is cognitive benefit for the toddler in watching you hide (and then find) the toy. Ensure the toddler has his/her eyes on the dog before you put it in a container. Avoid turning the activity into a “don’t look while Spot hides” guessing game.

More Scaffolding Tips—Option 2

Extra support ■ Remind the toddler to look at Spot. Point to your eyes when you say “look.” You may wish to invite the toddler to point to his/her eyes, too.

Enrichment ■ Use questions to talk with the toddler about how Spot was always hiding in the same container.

12–24 Months

Option 3 Informal Gathering



Skill and Goal Problem-solving

Toddlers participate together in a game of finding a toy dog that jumps around and hides in different containers.



Key Concepts

Hiding
Find



Materials Needed

Where's Spot? by Eric Hill
Soft toy dog
3 large containers of different colors



Also Promotes

Communication/Language
Physical/Health

This is a follow-up activity to the Option 1 book sharing. Invite 2–3 toddlers to play a game of finding Spot (toy dog). Add fun and interest to the game by animating the toy dog. While toddlers are watching, place the toy in a container and encourage toddlers to find it. Repeat the hiding game with a consistent hiding pattern until the toddlers can easily find the toy. Encourage toddlers to take turns removing the “found” toy from the container. Praise toddlers’ focus and persistence.

Change the hiding strategy when you observe the toddlers can visually follow the toy and remember where it is hidden. Describe the change. Example: “Now our puppy dog is going to jump to a different hiding place.” While the toddlers are watching, put the toy into one container and then move the toy to a second container. After the toy is found, describe what happened. Example: “Spot was hiding in the orange container. Then Spot jumped to the blue container. Watch the puppy jump again!” The activity is intended to be a fun experience for toddlers. Use the same pattern for hiding the toy until the game ends.

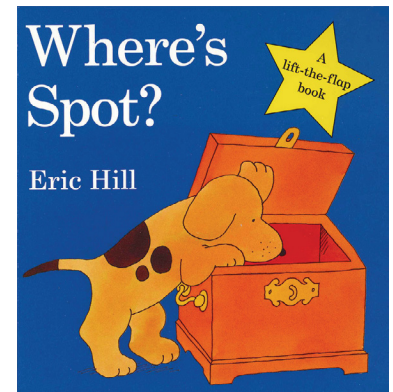
What to Look For—Option 3

The involvement of peers and potentially more complex hiding arrangements makes this activity option more challenging than Option 2. The suggested descriptions of the toy’s location also add language challenge. Careful monitoring of toddlers’ participation and comprehension of your words is essential to a positive experience.

More Scaffolding Tips—Option 3

Extra support ■ Point to containers when you mention each by color. Toddlers do not necessarily know color names. ■ Remind toddlers to look at the toy.

Enrichment ■ Invite the toddlers to hide the toy from you while you watch.





Interest Area

Materials Needed: soft toy animals

Organize an arrangement of soft animals. Encourage toddlers to hide the animals in the room. Join in the search for the hidden animals. Describe the process of looking. Example: "I wonder if the bear is hiding on the mat. I will look on the mat. No, the bear is not on the mat. I will look in more places."



Family Child Care

Materials Needed: toy dog, basket, toy turtle, cloth, paper, drawing tools

Play a brief book-related game with toddlers to promote their skills in focusing and remembering. Place a toy dog (Spot) in a basket and toy turtle (or similar type of toy animal) under a cloth. Encourage toddlers to find Spot the dog. Switch the animal-hiding places as the toddlers watch.

Older children who are familiar with the *Where's Spot?* book may enjoy creating small drawings behind flaps that open. You can make flaps from paper that is taped to a plain sheet of paper. Encourage children to describe what they are drawing.



12–24 Months

Option 1 Informal Gathering



Skill and Goal Self-control

Toddlers watch a caregiver calm down after an exciting activity with a special toy.



Key Concepts

Shake
Roll
Calm down



Materials Needed

Oball™ Rollin' Rainstick
Rattle



Also Promotes

Communication/Language
Physical/Health

BEGIN: *[Invite several toddlers to join you to find out about a new toy.]*

EXPLAIN: *[Hold up the ball and point to the rain stick inside when you describe it.]*

This toy has different things. Do you see the rain stick inside the ball?

Our toy is also a ball. It can roll on the floor, like this.

[Roll the ball on the floor back and forth in front of you.]

This special ball can make different sounds. Do you remember how our rain sticks made different sounds?

Listen closely!

ACT: *[Turn the ball over, allowing the beads to fall slowly down. Touch your ears, encouraging toddlers to listen to the sounds of the rain stick inside.]*

What do we hear? I heard “pitter patter” as the little balls went down, down, down.

Now I am going to do something different with our special ball. I am going to shake it! Let’s find out what kind of sound our ball makes when I shake it.

[Shake the ball for several moments. You may wish to shake it in different ways, such as fast and slow, high and low.]

Now I am going to roll our ball on the floor again. Listen closely!

[Roll the ball back and forth on the floor in front of you.]

Our ball makes a nice sound when it rolls.

I had fun playing with this special ball and listening to the different sounds it can make! I feel excited!

It is time for me to calm down. I am going to put the ball away and rest. Please watch how I calm down.





Option 1 continued

[Put the ball in a separate space, not next to you. Relax your arms. Put your hands in your lap. Take several deep, slow breaths. Close your eyes briefly. Quietly hum or sing a familiar song.]

RECAP: I had fun playing with the special ball. I got excited moving our ball in different ways and hearing different sounds. Then it was time for me to calm down. *[Describe what you did to calm down.]*



12–24 Months

Option 2 One-to-One



Skill and Goal

Self-control

A toddler practices calming down with caregiver support after an exciting activity with a special toy.



Key Concepts

Shake

Roll

Calm down



Materials Needed

Oball™ Rollin' Rainstick

Rattle



Also Promotes

Communication/Language

Physical/Health

Invite a toddler to join you to play with a special toy. Sit facing the toddler and introduce the ball by rolling it to the toddler. Point out the rain stick inside the ball. Encourage the toddler to shake and move the ball to make different sounds. Offer demonstrations of how to play with the ball, if necessary. Describe the toddler's actions with the ball and draw attention to the sounds made by the ball. Show enthusiasm and excitement for the toddler's play with the ball. After an appropriate period of play with the ball, explain that playing with the ball made us feel excited and now it is time to calm down.



Help the toddler calm down with the following strategies that you also pursue:

- put the ball away
- relax arms and put hands in laps
- take several slow, deep breaths
- close eyes briefly
- quietly hum or sing a familiar song

Conclude the session by describing the fun of playing with a special toy. We felt excited. Then we calmed down. We are sitting quietly. We feel calm.

👁️ What to Look For—Options 1–2

Toddlers will enjoy watching you play with this unique toy in Option 1 and interacting with it in Option 2. Some toddlers will focus on the movements they can make with the ball, whereas others may take special interest in the different sounds they hear. Some may prefer to mostly shake the ball and may benefit from your support to try different ways of moving it. Toddlers will also differ in the ease with which they calm down. See the Extra Support tips for ways to help toddlers who may find it challenging to stop shaking or playing with the ball.



More Scaffolding Tips—Options 1–2

Extra support ■ If you anticipate a toddler may become too stimulated playing with the ball, limit the amount of time with the ball and give a “soon we will put away the ball” warning prior to transitioning to the calming-down segment. ■ Help a toddler roll the ball by inviting him/her to widen legs and put feet against yours. Roll the ball back and forth for several moments while talking with the toddler about what he/she hears. ■ Invite the toddler to put away the ball by rolling it gently into a box or space you designate.

Enrichment ■ Encourage the toddler to try new ways of moving the ball. Possibilities include: standing up and then sitting down, using both hands and then one hand, or up high and then down low.

Interest Area

Materials Needed: blanket, assortment of sound-making toys

Place 3–4 sound-making toys, such as bells and shakers, on a blanket for toddlers to play with. Encourage toddlers to listen carefully to sounds of different toys. Draw their attention to different ways of moving a toy, such as faster and slower. Invite toddlers to put the toys down and sit quietly with you before moving to a different activity. Offer calming-down prompts, if appropriate. Avoid making available the toy used in Options 1 and 2 until all interested children have had an opportunity to participate in one or both of these options.

Family Child Care

Materials Needed: Oball™ Rollin’ Rainstick Rattle

Invite children in your care to sit in a circle with legs wide and feet touching their neighbor. Consider placing older children next to young toddlers. Infants can be a part of the circle by sitting on your lap (the ball is designed for children three months and older). Take turns rolling the ball to each child in the circle and encouraging the child who receives the ball to roll it back to you. Before moving to the next activity, invite children to sit quietly for a few moments to calm down. Use calming-down strategies suggested in Option 1.



12–24 Months

Option 1 Informal Gathering



Skill and Goal

Awareness of emotions

Toddlers participate in movements related to feeling happy as part of a familiar song.



Key Concepts

Happy



Materials Needed

Carpet squares—1 per toddler (optional Extra Support tip)



Also Promotes

Communication/Language

Self-Regulation

Physical/Health

Be Prepared: Be familiar with the words and tune of “If You’re Happy and You Know It.” If you anticipate some toddlers may become overly excited, especially during the suggested “turn around” movement, consider less stimulating actions. See Extra Support tips.

BEGIN: [*Invite toddlers to join you for a fun song.*]

We are going to sing a song we have sung before. Our song is called “If You’re Happy and You Know It.” We have fun singing this song!

EXPLAIN: Today we will learn some new things to do when we sing about being happy. You can sing with me and do what I do!

ACT: [*Invite toddlers to stand. Lead toddlers in clapping their hands for the first verse. Begin singing the verse slowly, so toddlers have time to watch your movements as they listen to the words. Smile and make eye contact with each toddler as you sing and clap, encouraging them to join you.*]

After the first verses (clap your hands), consider the following possibilities or create your own:

- Turn around
- Shout “hooray!”

Consider repeating a verse/movement. Have fun with the toddlers as you sing together! Acknowledge the participation of each toddler. Example: “You are having fun turning around, Grayson! You are smiling. I think you are feeling happy!”]

RECAP: We had fun singing our song today! We learned some new things to do with our body when we feel happy. We smiled and showed different ways to say we are happy!



12–24 Months

Option 2 Informal Gathering



Skill and Goal

Awareness of emotions

Toddlers participate in movements related to feeling happy and sad as part of a familiar song.



Key Concepts

Happy

Sad



Materials Needed

Carpet squares—1 per toddler (optional Extra Support tip)



Also Promotes

Communication/Language

Self-Regulation

Physical/Health

Be Prepared: Be familiar with the words and tune of “If You’re Happy and You Know It.” If you anticipate some toddlers may become overly excited, especially during the suggested “turn around” movement, consider less stimulating actions. See Extra Support tips.

Invite toddlers to join you for a song we have sung before. Sing the first line of “If You’re Happy and You Know It” to remind toddlers of the song. Explain that we will learn some new ways to show we are happy. We also will sing about feeling sad and what we can do if we feel sad.

Sing each verse enthusiastically and demonstrate the movement. You may wish to add other movements, such as “tap your head” for feeling happy. Encourage toddlers to join you. Consider repeating verses and movements. The following order is suggested:

- Happy: clap your hands
- Sad: hug yourself
- Happy: turn around or shout “hooray!”

Conclude the activity by positively recognizing the participation of each toddler.

What to Look For—Options 1–2

Toddlers like this popular song. It is offered often in most early childhood programs and is part of some prior ELM activity plans, although with fewer movements than offered in the current activity. Some toddlers may sing some of the words.

The Option 2 adaptation of the song provides an opportunity for toddlers to practice hugging themselves when they feel sad, a strategy introduced in Block 22. Some toddlers may want to hug you or another adult or a peer in the gathering instead of (or in addition to) themselves. You may wish to add a verse about feeling mad if you have explored this emotion in prior discussions with toddlers. See Enrichment tip.

Some toddlers may prefer to watch and listen. Positively acknowledge all forms of participation.

More Scaffolding Tips—Options 1–2

Extra support ■ Provide a carpet square for each toddler to stand on during the activity. Place the carpet squares evenly and safely apart prior to the activity. ■ In Option 2, remind toddlers that “hug yourself” is something we can do when we feel sad. Hugging (squeezing) our body can help us feel better. ■ Modify the song so toddlers can participate sitting down. Change



“turn around” to a different simple action such as “wiggle your arms.” Alternatively, you may end the song with a final verse that invites the toddlers to sit down. Sing this final verse softly, as a way to encourage toddlers to calm their bodies as they sit on the floor.

Enrichment ■ Invite toddlers to think of new actions or movements, such as “pat your head” when feeling happy or “wiggle your body” when feeling silly. ■ Add feeling mad (angry) with a “stomp our feet” movement before a final verse on feeling happy.



Interest Area

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

The attention to feeling sad in Option 2 may be extended to the Interest Area by continuing the Block 22 Interest Area plan of inviting 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 picture of a calm space in *Calm-Down Time*. Provide comfortable seating and encourage toddlers to focus on materials for doing quiet things. As described in Block 22, 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. 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: none

Invite a preschool-age or older child to lead one or more of the verses and movements in Option 2. Engage children in some planning prior to the song by inviting and discussing movement ideas to use in the song. Infants will enjoy watching and listening.



12–24 Months

Option 1 Informal Gathering



Skill and Goal

Fine motor development

Toddlers practice holding, and then letting go, of a toy vehicle on a ramp.



Key Concepts

Hold
Let go
Roll down



Materials Needed

2 toy ramps
Toy vehicles—2 per toddler



Also Promotes

Cognitive
Social-Emotional
Communication/Language



Optional Reading

My First Things That Go by DK Publishing
Little Blue Truck by Alice Schertle
I am a Dump Truck by Josephine Page

Be Prepared: Set up two ramps with space for you to kneel between them.

Invite 3–4 toddlers to join you to play with cars going down a ramp. Open the session by pointing to and naming the ramps. Demonstrate how to use a ramp in this activity by using one hand to pick up and hold a toy car, place it at the top of the ramp, let it go, and watch it roll down. Then invite toddlers, two at a time, to place a vehicle at the top of the ramp, let it go, and watch it roll down.

Help toddlers keep separate (1) the placement of the vehicle at the top of the ramp, and (2) letting it go. Some toddlers may benefit from your verbal support for each step. Example: “Shaun, now you may let go of your car so it can roll down the ramp. Would you like me to say ‘ready, set, go?’” Discourage toddlers from giving the vehicle a push and avoid comparing the two vehicles as they roll. Encourage toddlers to focus on how they use their hand to hold and let go. Example: “You are using your fingers to hold the car. Now your fingers are letting go of the car.”

Toddlers who are watching and eager to have a turn may need a reminder of their forthcoming turn. Example: “We are giving Shaun time to hold and let go of his car. You can use our ramp very soon.”

👁️ What to Look For—Option 1

Emphasizing the separate hand/finger actions involved in this activity—holding/placing the toy vehicle on the ramp and then letting it go—will be a new experience for most toddlers. The activity is intended to foster fine motor skills while providing enjoyment and contributing to self-confidence in manipulating an object that yields an exciting outcome. A prior object-rolling activity (Block 19, Cognitive) focused on problem-solving skills regarding the temporary disappearance of a ball inside a tube and the angle of tubes. Toddlers will be pleased to see the vehicles roll down the ramp in the current activity. Defining the activity as a race, or setting rules, is not suggested.

Some toddlers will be eager to roll a vehicle down the ramp repeatedly. Other toddlers may participate for a short amount of time. While helping toddlers



**Option 1 continued**

wait for a turn is necessary, establishing an exact turn-taking scheme is impractical. The concept of turn taking takes time to develop.

Some toddlers may be interested in trying to roll other toys down a ramp. This interest might lead a toddler to discover that some toys, such as a soft animal toy, may not slide down a ramp. Consider setting up ramps with small balls as a follow-up activity.

 **More Scaffolding Tips—Option 1**

Extra support ■ Mark spots on the floor for toddlers to stand while two children use the ramps. ■ Say aloud the names of toddlers who are rolling a vehicle and who is next.

Enrichment ■ Vary the length and angle of the ramps. See Block 19, Cognitive Option 2 for ideas.



12–24 Months

Option 2 Informal Gathering



Skill and Goal

Fine motor development

Toddlers move toy vehicles on pretend roads that include curves.



Key Concepts

Drive
Road
Turn



Materials Needed

Toy vehicles—1–2 per toddler (See Be Prepared)
Rug with roads



Also Promotes

Communication/Language



Optional Reading

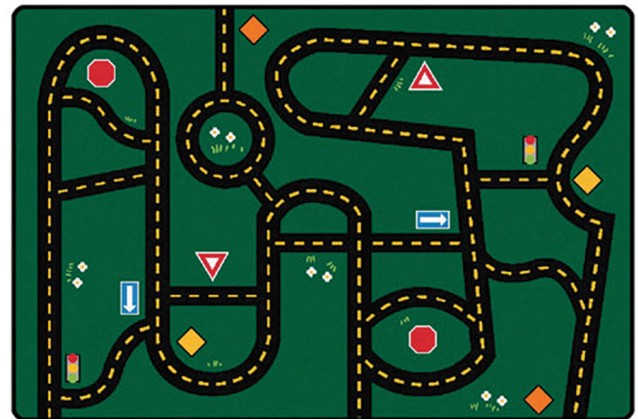
My First Things That Go by DK Publishing

Little Blue Truck by Alice Schertle

I am a Dump Truck by Josephine Page

Be Prepared: Include some vehicles that are the same. Place toy vehicles around the edge of the road rug to create interest in vehicle play.

Sit near the rug and invite 2–3 toddlers to join you on the floor. Point to the lines on the rug and explain these are roads we can use for driving our toy trucks and cars. Point to and describe some curves in a road. Demonstrate moving a toy vehicle on part of a road. Include a turn in your demonstration.



Encourage toddlers to drive a toy vehicle on the roads. Describe each toddler's actions. Example: "Angel, you are turning the little car on the curvy road." Point to the curvy section of road. Talk with toddlers about how the toy vehicles look the same and different. Example: "Diego, I see you picked a truck to drive on the road. It looks the same as this truck." Point to a similar truck. Keep a toy vehicle for your own use when a demonstration seems appropriate.

Draw attention to the presence of peers in the gathering. Examples: "We are playing together." "Playing with friends is fun." When appropriate, suggest a toddler show another child his/her vehicle. You may wish to introduce the idea of sharing vehicles by trading your vehicle with a toddler. Example: "Thanks Diego. You shared a truck with me."

👁️ What to Look For—Option 2

Holding and moving a toy vehicle supports small motor coordination. Moving a toy car in a straight line and moving it around a curve or circle require different hand positions. Drawing attention to various details of the road, such as a turns or a roundabout, can help toddlers anticipate different types of movements of a vehicle.

Some toddlers will enjoy moving the toy vehicles along the lines on the rug. Other toddlers may move the vehicles on the floor. Some toddlers will enjoy using their fingers to spin the wheels on the vehicles. Some toddlers will enjoy sorting the vehicles and lining them up on their own.

**Option 2 continued**

Some toddlers will enjoy finding two vehicles that are the same. Draw attention to features that make the vehicles the same. It is not necessary to teach the color names to toddlers at this age.

At this age, toddlers do not know how to share toys on their own. Support awareness of others by suggesting spaces toddlers can play without bumping others. Facilitate sharing. Your comments about the vehicle play and attention to toddlers' actions will help toddlers maintain interest in the activity.

 A small icon of a staircase with three steps, positioned to the left of the section header.**More Scaffolding Tips—Option 2**

Extra support ■ Invite a toddler to sit and play next to you. ■ Demonstrate moving your vehicle on a curve if it appears a toddler is uncertain about how to do this. ■ Facilitate verbal exchanges between toddlers. Example: “Trina is asking you for the bus. Would you like to use the truck now?”

Enrichment ■ Encourage an interested toddler to place two similar vehicles side by side. ■ Provide materials toddlers can carry in the toy vehicles. ■ On another day, add people figures for toddlers to move and use in pretend play.



12–24 Months

Option 3 One-to-One



Skill and Goal

Fine motor development

A toddler plays with toy vehicles and a garage with door locks.



Key Concepts

In
Out
Turn
Open



Materials Needed

Toy garage with key
3 cars



Also Promotes

Cognitive
Communication/Language



Optional Reading

My First Things That Go by
DK Publishing

Be Prepared: The activity is designed for a toddler who has experience manipulating small toys and seems ready to explore the fine motor skills promoted with use of a key.

BEGIN: [*Invite one toddler to explore the garage and cars with you on a low surface or on the floor. Begin the activity with the garage doors open.*

Sit facing the toddler. Point to each garage door while saying its name.

Example: "Here is a garage door.

Here is a garage door. And here is

another garage door. We have a lot of garage doors for the cars!"]



ACT: [*Encourage the toddler to move toy cars in and out of the garage. Draw attention to the garage doors. Wait to introduce the key.*

Describe the toddler's actions. Example: "You took one car out."

Respond to the toddler's inquiry about the key as soon as he/she notices it. Explain that a key locks and unlocks each garage door. Demonstrate how the key works on one garage door. Emphasize as you demonstrate that we turn the key. Then invite the toddler to try using (turning) the key.



Provide time for the toddler to explore the key and lock. Offer verbal support and demonstration as needed and when the toddler nods or says "yes" to your question, "Would you like me to help?" Some toddlers may be interested in trying to operate the key without your assistance.

If you demonstrate use of the key, point out specifics. Show the toddler how you are holding the key. Point to the keyhole. Slowly place the key into the keyhole. Then encourage the toddler to turn the key.

Recognize a toddler's persistence. Examples: "You know the key goes into the hole. You are trying different ways to use the key to open the little door." "You are working hard to open the garage."]

RECAP: You moved cars in and out of the garage. You closed and opened the garage doors. You learned how to hold the key and unlock the little door. You worked hard to put the key into the hole and turn it.

**Option 3 continued**

What to Look For—Option 3

Some toddlers may be fully focused on moving cars in and out of the garage and manipulating the garage doors. Some toddlers may focus mostly on locking and unlocking the garage doors. Both interests support fine motor development. Toddlers are not expected to develop proficiency with a key and lock. What's important is providing time for an interested toddler to explore and practice. Watch for signs of frustration in working the key, and offer assistance.

Look for parts of a toddler's play that may benefit from your assistance. The parts include the use of one hand for the following steps: holding a key in one hand, putting a key into a lock hole, turning a key to unlock the door, pulling open a garage door, and removing a car. Offer verbal support or demonstration for the part(s) of the task that seems most challenging to a toddler. Example: "Hold the key (this way) and look at the keyhole."

More Scaffolding Tips—Option 3

Extra support ■ Some toddlers may enjoy turn taking with you. Ask the toddler "Would you like me to take one car out, too?" ■ Raise or turn the garage so the toddler can clearly see the lock. ■ A toddler may benefit from a notice that the activity is about to end. Example: "Grace, you may open the garage door a few more times. Then we are all finished. It is almost time for snack."

Enrichment ■ Support pretend play themes that may emerge after toddlers more easily manage the garage doors and locks. Example: A toddler may use the key as a pretend remote control device to open a garage door.



Interest Area

Materials Needed: board books about vehicles, toy vehicles, tape, building blocks, button box, toy keys

Display books about vehicles together in the room. Place some toy vehicles on a low surface for continued play. Tape lines on the floor or low surfaces for toddlers to follow with toy cars. Foster fine motor skills by inviting toddlers to use connecting building blocks as part of creating structures related to vehicle play.



Family Child Care

Materials Needed: toys to hold and shake, nonbreakable dish, toy vehicles, washable paint, paper

In addition to offering Options 1–3, support the fine motor skills of toddlers and preschool-age children by providing toy vehicles that they can drive through washable paint to make tire tracks on paper. Offer age-appropriate toys to infants to hold and shake. Vary the shapes of toys offered to older infants. Also, infants will enjoy taking items out of a nonbreakable dish.