



**Communication/
Language**

Exploring Words

- Option 1** (IG) Toddlers participate in a shared book reading about a chameleon that wants his own color.
- Option 2** (IG) Toddlers participate in a shared book reading about a chameleon, followed by individual work with play dough on paper that matches in color.
- Option 3** (IG) Toddlers participate in a shared book reading about a chameleon, followed by matching colors of paper.



Cognitive

Exploring Objects

- Option 1** (IG) Toddlers participate in a shared book reading about building a house and a follow-on opportunity to build with blocks individually or with a peer.
- Option 2** (IG) Toddlers work together to solve the problem of using blocks to build a boat that is big enough to fit all toddlers (3–4) in the gathering.
- Option 3** (IG) Toddlers participate in a shared book reading about a gorilla at a zoo and a follow-on opportunity to play with toy zoo animals and blocks, including building houses for the animals.



Self-Regulation

Getting Calm

- Option 1** (IG) Toddlers watch a stomach move up and down when breathing slowly and deeply to calm our minds and bodies.
- Option 2** (IG) Toddlers practice breathing deeply and slowly while placing a hand on their stomach to notice how their body moves when they are breathing.
- Option 3** (IG) Toddlers practice breathing deeply and slowly while placing a stuffed toy on their stomach to notice how their body moves when they are breathing.



Social-Emotional

Interacting with Others

- Option 1** (OO) A toddler participates with a caregiver in open-ended pretend play with a dollhouse and furnishings and toy zoo animals.
- Option 2** (OO) A toddler participates with a caregiver in open-ended pretend play that includes opportunities to use various felt pieces in creative ways with animal figures and blocks.
- Option 3** (IG) Toddlers participate together in play that includes toy zoo animals, blocks, and felt pieces, and emphasizes sharing materials and noticing what others are doing.



Physical/Health

Moving Our Bodies

- Option 1** (IG) Toddlers engage in specific playful fine and gross motor movements guided by a song, and practice stopping the movement when they hear “stop” paired with a hand signal.
- Option 2** (IG) Toddlers practice responding to requests for moving a streamer by swinging their arm to the front and to the back, including swinging slowly and coming to a stop.
- Option 3** (IG) Toddlers practice requested up and down arm movements as part of moving one or two scarves.

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

Revision 1/15/20



24–36 Months

Option 1 Informal Gathering



Skill and Goal

Receptive language

Expressive language

Awareness of print and pictures

Toddlers participate in a shared book reading about a chameleon that wants his own color.



Key Concepts

Chameleon

Pictures

Words

Color



Materials Needed

A Color of His Own by Leo Lionni



Also Promotes

Social-Emotional

BEGIN: [*Invite several toddlers to read a book about a chameleon.*]

Our book is about a chameleon. A chameleon is a type of lizard that changes colors! Most animals stay the same color. An elephant is always gray. Please think about the types of animals you know. Do they change color or do they stay the same color?

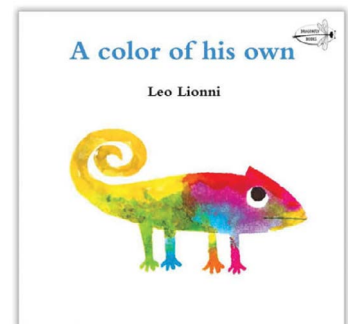
[*Encourage toddlers to talk about animals they know staying the same color. Follow-up prompt, if needed: “Does the dog you know ever become a different color?”*]

The chameleon in our book wants to stay the same color. He goes looking for a color that can be all his own. Our book tells us about the different colors he sees and who he meets. I think you will like this book!

EXPLAIN: [*Display book cover. Point to the chameleon.*]

Here is the chameleon. He has a lot of colors on his body!

Our book is called *A Color of His Own*. Let’s find out what happens to the colorful chameleon in our story!



ACT: [*Open the book. Hold the book close to toddlers. Ask them what they see. Respond positively to toddlers’ reactions to the pictures. Repeat and expand toddlers’ words.*]

Our book has pictures and words.

[*Point to the words.*]

These words say ____.

[*Read the first page aloud.*]

Continue to read and talk about the book using the following strategies to engage toddlers and help them understand how books work:

- *Point to and describe pictures. Example: “Look at all the colors the chameleon can be! The words tell us chameleons change color wherever they go. I wonder what color the chameleon will be next? Let’s turn the page to see.”*

**Option 1 continued**

- *Expand upon the book text by asking specific questions to help toddlers understand the story. Emphasize concepts that may be new to toddler. Examples:*
 - *"The chameleon decided to stay on a green leaf so he could be green. The chameleon was cheerful. Cheerful means happy. The chameleon was cheerful to have a color of his own. What do you think is going to happen to the green leaf?"*
 - *"The chameleon is alone in the 'long winter night.' Look at the chameleon in this picture. How do you think the chameleon is feeling?"*
 - *"The chameleon found another chameleon! There are two chameleons. The two chameleons are the same color. Their faces are smiling in the pictures. What do you think the chameleons are feeling?"*
- *Vary your voice to add interest.]*

RECAP: The words and pictures in our book told us about a chameleon that wanted a color of his own. He tried to be green, but the leaf changed colors! He was sad and lonely until he met another chameleon. The two chameleons stayed together so they could be the same color. What did the two chameleons feel at the end of the story?

👁️ What to Look For—Option 1

Notice what topics children connect with in this story. Possibilities include colors, how a chameleon changes colors, feelings, and friends. Some children also may notice the use of plurals (one chameleon, two chameleons). Discuss topics of interest to toddlers by asking recall questions about what happened (especially in relation to the chameleon's color changes) and by labeling things, such as colors on a page.

📊 More Scaffolding Tips—Option 1

Extra support ■ Pause while reading to draw attention to the chameleon's color changes, a central theme of the story. Example: "The chameleon climbed on a green leaf. Now the chameleon is green."

■ Help toddlers understand that a story character (chameleons) can have feelings. Example: "There is a smile on the chameleon's face. What do you think the chameleon might be feeling?"

Enrichment ■ If you anticipate toddlers would like to talk about some of the feelings mentioned in the story, pursue a conversation about feelings of happy and sad, including why the chameleon felt sad and happy. ■ Encourage toddlers to notice physical characteristics of the chameleon by pointing to and labeling some body parts or inviting toddlers to point to, or name, body parts they may know. Examples: Head, tail, legs, eyes, and mouth.

24–36 Months

Option 2 Informal Gathering



Skill and Goal

Receptive language

Expressive language

Awareness of print and pictures

Toddlers participate in a shared book reading about a chameleon, followed by individual work with play dough on paper that matches in color.



Key Concepts

Picture

Color

Match

Chameleon



Materials Needed

A Color of His Own by Leo Lionni

Play dough in four colors

Sheets of construction paper in colors matching the play dough

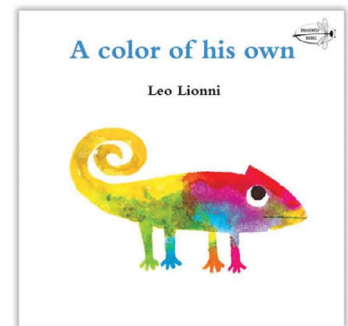


Also Promotes

Cognitive

Physical/Health

Invite several toddlers to read a book about a colorful chameleon. Read the story, emphasizing how the chameleon changes color to match the color of the object he is on. Example: “In this picture the chameleon is red because he is on a red leaf. The color of the chameleon matches the color of the leaf. Both colors are red.” Engage in reading practices suggested in Option 1.



At the conclusion of the story, give each toddler a sheet of construction paper with a ball of play dough in a matching color on top. Explain the color match. Example: “You have blue play dough on top of blue paper. The color of your play dough and your paper match. They are both blue.” Explain that the sheet of paper is like the leaf in the story. Invite toddlers to create their own reptile or other type of animal with the matching play dough.

Talk with toddlers about their ideas and actions with the play dough. Examples: “Zoe is rolling her play dough. I wonder what she is making with her red play dough?” Describe children’s efforts. Example: “Jeffrey said he is making a dinosaur. Jeffrey is making a yellow dinosaur!”

👁️ What to Look For—Option 2

Play dough is an enjoyable sensory item that supports cognitive and fine motor development. This option combines the sensory experience with a connection to a story. Working with play dough that matches the color of construction paper is intended to support a story theme.

Look for and talk about toddlers’ interests with the play dough. Their work with play dough is an avenue for encouraging talk about plans, interests, and actions. Language development is the goal of this option, not naming colors or creating an animal similar to an illustration in the book.

📈 More Scaffolding Tips—Option 2

Extra support ■ If a toddler finds it particularly challenging to work with play dough, provide other materials, such as crayons and paper.

Enrichment ■ Invite toddlers to match the color of their construction paper to an item that has a similar or same color in the room. The intent here is to emphasize the concept of matching, not color identification.

24–36 Months

Option 3 Informal Gathering



Skill and Goal

Receptive language

Expressive language

Awareness of print and pictures

Toddlers participate in a shared book reading about a chameleon, followed by matching colors of paper.



Key Concepts

Green

Yellow

Red

Matching



Materials Needed

A Color of His Own by Leo Lionni

Sheets of construction paper (see Be Prepared)

Pieces of construction paper (see Be Prepared)

Glue sticks—1 per toddler



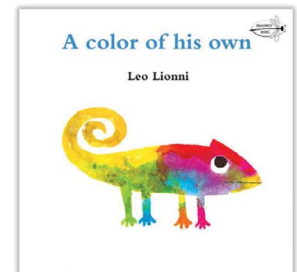
Also Promotes

Cognitive

Physical/Health

Be Prepared: Gather sheets of construction paper in shades of green, yellow, and red. Cut additional pieces of construction paper into various shapes, also in shades of green, yellow, and red.

Invite several toddlers to join you in reading the book *A Color of His Own*. Read the book, using practices suggested in Option 1. Emphasize the concept of matching, as emphasized in Option 2. In addition to pointing out a match between the color of the chameleon and what the chameleon is sitting on, draw attention to matching color (yellow) of the two chameleons.



After the story, invite toddlers to select a piece of construction paper and then match the cut pieces of paper to the color of the paper they selected. Emphasize how this is similar to the chameleon matching the color of the leaf in the picture. Example: “You chose green paper, Antonio. Now you can find shapes that match the color of your paper, just like the chameleon in this picture matches the color of the leaf!”

Invite toddlers to glue the matching colored shapes to their construction paper if they wish. Some toddlers may prefer to sort the colors rather than use the glue. Toddlers who enjoy matching one color may want a different-colored sheet of construction paper to match additional colored shapes.

Encourage toddlers to talk about what they are thinking and doing to match colors. Repeat and expand on their comments in ways that support continued participation in the activity. Example: Child picks up a yellow square and says “yellow.” Staff response: Yes, you are holding a yellow square! Do you see any other shapes that are yellow?”

If time permits, invite toddlers to find items in the room that are the same or similar color as their construction paper. Acknowledge and build on matches. Example: “Wow, you found a red truck! The red truck matches the color of your paper. The red truck also matches the color of your shirt! Do you think you can match the color to anything else in our room?”

👁️ What to Look For—Option 3

Pay attention to and support toddler participation in the matching process. The activity is not intended to be about making a product or identifying a range of colors, but about the task of matching objects of a particular color. Toddlers will differ in their interest in gluing or continuing to find and organize cut pieces of paper on their construction paper. Support the types of participation a toddler pursues. Avoid letting the activity become instruction

**Option 3 continued**

in gluing. Of central importance to the activity is encouragement of toddler discussion of what they are doing to find matches.

More Scaffolding Tips—Option 3

Extra support ■ Emphasize the color of the paper a child is working with. Point out different shades of the same color, if available in the activity. It is not necessary for a toddler to know all of the colors of paper involved in the activity.

Enrichment ■ This option can be expanded into matching other colors, or finding other objects with matching colors throughout the room. Each learning center likely has items that match in color.

■ Toddlers who like to work with art materials may enjoy using crayons or paint to create color pages that can be used for a matching activity in the future.

**Interest Area**

Materials Needed: *A Color of His Own* by Leo Lionni; *Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?* by Bill Martin Jr and Eric Carle; play dough in multiple colors; items to manipulate play dough, such as cookie cutters, plastic knives, and/or molds

Place the books on a low table along with play dough and other items. Review the books and invite toddlers to create their own colorful animals with the play dough. Talk with toddlers about their ideas and what they are doing with the play dough.

**Family Child Care**

Materials Needed: *A Color of His Own* by Leo Lionni; play dough in multiple colors; and items to manipulate play dough, such as cookie cutters, plastic knives, and/or molds

This book may be shared with all young children in your setting. Play dough is also enjoyed by both older and younger children. Babies may enjoy holding a chunky animal during the story. After the book reading, invite toddlers and older children to create with the play dough. Older children may enjoy sharing play dough ideas and techniques with toddlers.



24–36 Months

Option 1 Informal Gathering



Skill and Goal

Object inquiry skills
Problem-solving

Toddlers participate in a shared book reading about building a house and a follow-on opportunity to build with blocks individually or with a peer.



Key Concepts

Build



Materials Needed

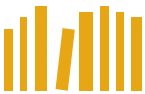
Building blocks

Jack's House by Karen Magnuson Beil



Also Promotes

Communication/Language
Social-Emotional
Self-Regulation



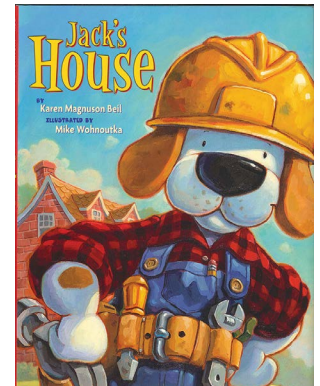
Optional Reading

Polar Bear, Polar Bear, What Do You Hear? by Bill Martin Jr. and Eric Carle

Dear Zoo: Animal Shapes by Rod Campbell

Invite toddlers to share a book with you. Sit close to toddlers so all can easily see the pictures in *Jack's House*. As you read the book, take time to point to and describe pictures, and encourage toddlers' responses.

Invite toddlers to build houses with blocks as a follow-on activity. Support toddlers' building interests and efforts. At this age, blocks laid on the floor in a square or rectangle will represent a house, barn, or variety of vehicles. Corners can be challenging for some toddlers to make. Provide only enough help for a toddler to be successful in making a corner. To support toddlers' building interests, show pertinent illustrations in the book, if appropriate. Toddlers may opt to work with blocks individually or with a peer.

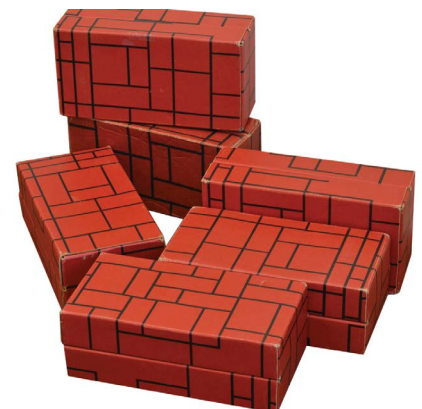


Conclude the activity by describing (or inviting toddlers to describe) how each toddler (or pair of toddlers) used blocks to build something. Give more emphasis to a toddler's building process than to the outcome.

👁️ What to Look For—Option 1

You may see toddlers arrange blocks in lots of different ways. Early block building efforts generally appear disorganized because toddlers have limited understanding of the properties of the blocks. For a toddler, a pile of blocks may represent something grand! With repeated experiences, young children begin to understand ways to use the blocks. Providing open-ended opportunities to build with blocks can help toddlers develop an understanding of spatial concepts.

Although this activity's work with blocks follows a book on building houses, it is not necessary for the blocks to be arranged in any particular way. This does not mean your gentle guidance is not needed, however. Example: some toddlers may line up blocks end to end and then realize there is no door! Support their problem-solving by asking questions about how people/animals get into their house and where a door might be put. Offer as little help as necessary, so a toddler develops his/her own solution. A toddler may simply move one block out of the line to provide a door.



**Option 1 continued**

While some toddlers may not wish to participate in block building, consider extending a special invitation to a toddler(s) who normally does not play with blocks. Ask the toddler to sit with you, watch what some other toddlers are doing, and ask “What would you like to make with blocks?” Describe the toddler’s building actions without directing the effort. Your supportive attention to the toddler’s efforts is likely to support beneficial exploration of blocks.

 **More Scaffolding Tips—Option 1**

Extra support ■ Demonstrate how to stand a cardboard block on end. ■ Acknowledge toddlers who wish to observe. Invite a toddler to sit close to you. Talk about the building activities of other toddlers.

Enrichment ■ Toddlers’ work with blocks often leads to pretend play based on routines experienced at home, such as mealtime and bedtime routines. Provide meaningful props for toddlers, such as felt squares for beds or animal homes.



24–36 Months

Option 2 Informal Gathering



Skill and Goal

Object inquiry skills
Problem-solving

Toddlers work together to solve the problem of using blocks to build a boat that is big enough to fit all toddlers (3–4) in the gathering.



Key Concepts

Big
Bigger



Materials Needed

Building blocks



Also Promotes

Communication/Language
Social-Emotional



Optional Reading

Boats by Byron Barton

Blue Boat by Kersten Hamilton and Valeria Petrone

Mister Gumpy's Outing by John Bruningham

Richard Scarry's Boats by Richard Scarry

Be Prepared: A gathering of 3–4 toddlers will likely work best. If books on boat building are available (see Optional Reading), place them near the activity area.

Initiate the activity with one of the Informal Gathering Starters described in the *ELM Curriculum User Guide: Birth–36 Months*. Organize toddlers in a circle. Encourage toddlers to look around the circle at each person. Ask, “How could we make a boat big enough for all the friends here?” Lay four blocks on the floor in the center of the circle. Explain that we can use the blocks to build a boat. Slide the blocks together so they are side by side. Ask “Is this boat big enough for all of us?” Toddlers will relish saying “No!” Encourage toddlers to think about making a bigger boat. Listen to toddlers’ suggestions. Repeat and extend their ideas.

Invite toddlers to work together to make the boat bigger. It may work best for toddlers to decide (with your guidance) to organize into smaller groups to work on different parts of the boat. Some toddlers will likely focus on the building aspect and other toddlers may gather items to bring into the boat. If toddlers run out of blocks, offer carpet squares to enlarge the boat, if necessary. Describe toddlers’ actions and ask open-ended questions to support their thinking.

Allow time for toddlers to play in their boat or add things to their boat.

If books are available, let toddlers know there are pictures of boats in the books. Open *Mister Gumpy's Outing* and point out the shape of the boat. Explain “There are animals and people in this boat.” Some toddlers may enjoy looking at the books about boats.

At the conclusion of the activity, engage toddlers in a discussion of what they did and in putting away the blocks (unless it is to be left available; see Enrichment tip). Remind toddlers that we wanted to build a boat that would fit everyone. Does our boat fit everyone?

What to Look For—Option 2

You may see some toddlers highly motivated to make the boat, and some toddlers who seem unclear about what action to take. Give one block to a toddler who is unsure how to participate and show him/her a place the block can go. Some toddlers may need reminders that the boat building is something we are doing together. Help a toddler contribute to a specific part of the larger effort, rather than fully do his/her own building project.

In the opening segment, toddlers may be eager to start building with blocks and not engage in much discussion of how to enlarge the boat. Gently encourage toddlers to talk about ways to make the boat larger. Once some ideas are presented, encourage toddlers to move forward with the building

**Option 2 continued**

and become an observer who provides support for problem-solving (such as suggesting carpet squares if there are not enough blocks).

More Scaffolding Tips—Option 2

Extra support ■ Point out instances of toddlers working together, including taking turns. ■ Draw attention to a toddler’s comment that toddlers seem to have not heard or paid attention to. Example: “Stella has an interesting idea for making the boat bigger.”

Enrichment ■ If space and toddler interest permit, make the pretend boat available for further play during other times of the day. ■ If books on boats are available, show and talk with individual, or several, toddlers about how a boat in a book illustration is similar to or different from the boat made by toddlers.



24–36 Months

Option 3 Informal Gathering



Skill and Goal

Object inquiry skills

Toddlers participate in a shared book reading about a gorilla at a zoo and a follow-on opportunity to play with toy zoo animals and blocks, including building houses for the animals.



Key Concepts

Small

Big

Bigger



Materials Needed

Good Night, Gorilla by Peggy Rathmann

Building blocks (see Be Prepared)

Zoo animal figures

Animal puppet (preferably a zoo animal)

Books about zoo animals



Also Promotes

Communication/Language

Social-Emotional



Optional Reading

Dear Zoo: Animal Shapes by Rod Campbell

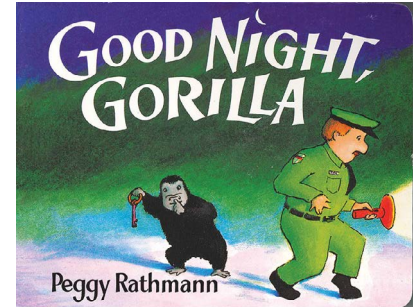
Be Prepared: The block collection should include some large blocks for building a zoo. Arrange zoo animal figures and several books about zoo animals on a low table or shelf.

BEGIN: *[Use the animal puppet to invite several toddlers to gather in the block area for a book and block play. Sit on the floor facing toddlers.]*

EXPLAIN: *[Display the book cover. Point to the gorilla and zookeeper when you describe each.]*

Our book is about a gorilla at the zoo.

Look! The gorilla is holding the zookeeper's keys. The gorilla is holding his finger to his mouth like this.



[Hold your finger to your mouth as you say "Shhhhhh." Speak quietly as you ask the following:]

ASK: Do you think the zookeeper sees the gorilla holding the keys?

[Repeat and expand toddlers' responses.]

EXPLAIN: The gorilla is trying to be very quiet with the keys! The gorilla does not want to make a noise with the keys. The zookeeper is not looking at the gorilla.

The zoo is dark. It is bedtime. Let's open our book and find out what happens.

ACT: *[On each page, point to animals and say (or invite toddlers to say) animal names. Example: "The gorilla is using the keys to open an animal house. Who lives in this house at the zoo?" Respond to toddlers' reactions.]*

Read the text and describe pictures. Use your own words to elaborate on book text that may seem unclear to toddlers.

Describe toddlers' participation in the book sharing. Example: "You used your eyes to look at the picture. You can see what animal house the gorilla is opening."

Encourage toddlers to point to and talk about the pictures. Repeat and expand upon their comments.

Enjoy laughing with toddlers when the animals enter the zookeeper's house and fall asleep. Use your voice to express surprise when the zookeeper's wife awakens to see the animals.]

Option 3 continued

EXPLAIN: *[At the conclusion of the book sharing, invite toddlers to play with blocks and animal figures. Explain that the blocks and toy animals can be used to build houses for the animals or do something that happened in the book. Or the blocks and toy animals can be used in any way a toddler wants.]*

Encourage toddlers to take turns getting the blocks.

Describe different ways toddlers are using blocks, such as stacking blocks, or lining up the blocks end to end.



Describe and encourage interactive play. Example: "Shawna and Lucas, I see you are working together to make lots of animal houses, like a zoo."

Emphasize words that describe size, such as small, big, and bigger, as toddlers make structures. Example: "Shawna, the elephant is bigger than the lion. You and Lucas used lots of blocks to make the elephant house bigger."

Help toddlers anticipate next steps in their building. Example: "Lucas, the lion is big. What blocks do you need for your lion house?"

Encourage toddlers to use materials from other areas of the room if they wish.

Describe similarities between the book story and toddlers' work with the blocks and animal figures. Example: "Anna, you are playing with a gorilla that looks like the gorilla who got the keys in our book."

RECAP: Today we read a book about a gorilla and played with blocks and toy zoo animals.

[Describe toddlers' responses to the book and uses of the play materials. Example: "We laughed when the gorilla opened the animal houses at the zoo and the animals followed the zookeeper to his home. You used blocks and animals to make a zoo. Some friends used blocks for people houses."]

What to Look For—Option 3

The shared book about a zoo will lead many, but probably not all, toddlers to use the blocks and animal figures in ways related to the book. Toddlers will come to block play with different ideas. Some toddlers may create enclosed structures as part of their own zoo. Other toddlers may spend time discovering how to line blocks end to end. Accept and positively recognize all efforts.

The caregiver questions and comments suggested in the activity plan are aimed at promoting toddlers' emerging cognitive abilities, especially spatial relations and problem-solving skills. Gently offer your verbal contributions in ways that may prompt thinking but do not direct a toddler's activity. Example: Asking "How can you make your house bigger?" can be very helpful to a toddler, but telling the toddler

**Option 3 continued**

how to make a house bigger is generally not helpful. Your intentionality in interacting with toddlers (in contrast to a “stand back and watch” posture) can help strengthen their thinking skills. Watch a toddler carefully to determine when your suggestion might be well received.

Talking about toddlers’ play with blocks and animal figures is valuable. Some toddlers may describe their block structure in detail. Examples: “It is a place for lions.” “There is a tree.” “One block is a door.” Other toddlers may simply describe their structure with one word. Describe problem-solving you observe during play. Example: “The top of the house falls down when you open the door.” Describe instances of toddlers playing side by side or toddlers beginning to share ideas and materials.

 **More Scaffolding Tips—Option 3**

Extra support ■ Move from toddler to toddler to focus on each child’s thinking and actions. Listen carefully as toddlers tell you about their building idea. ■ Ask questions and help with problem-solving, such as how to make an animal house bigger. ■ Ask questions to support toddlers in solving problems related to sharing. Example: “Destiny would like to use two blocks to finish a wall. You have lots of blocks. Can you find two blocks to share with Destiny?” ■ If a toddler enjoys knocking down blocks, redirect the toddler to a safe area and tell the toddler to knock down only his structure(s).

Enrichment ■ Ask open-ended questions about a toddler’s creation or plans. Examples: “What would happen if . . .?” or “How did you . . .?” ■ Encourage a toddler to describe his/her structure. ■ Take a photo of block structures for posting in the room. ■ Provide props, such as keys or pretend food, to enhance the activity. ■ If a toddler asks a question related to the story, refer to the book even if you know the answer. The intent is to demonstrate uses of a book.

**Interest Area**

Materials Needed: cardboard blocks, zoo animals, figures, several sets of play keys, *Good Night, Gorilla* by Peggy Rathmann

In the block center, provide cardboard blocks, zoo animals, figures, and several sets of play keys. Place the book *Good Night, Gorilla* near the blocks. As toddlers play, point out the animals, people, and the zookeeper’s keys in the book. Encourage toddlers to imitate characters in the book as they play. Example: “What does the gorilla in the book do with the zookeeper’s keys? What could our zookeeper do with the keys?”

Another interest area idea is to set up sensory play with boats and water, and another area where toddlers can create shapes with small fit-together blocks.



Family Child Care

Materials Needed: sidewalk chalk, toy animals, and different-sized cardboard boxes

In an outdoor setting, provide children with sidewalk chalk, toy animals, and different-sized cardboard boxes. Preschool-age children may wish to draw the outline of a zoo. Ask toddlers about their play ideas. Repeat and extend toddlers' responses. If a toddler does not verbalize, observe the play and offer comments. Example: "I see you in the box driving. Your sound is like a fire truck. Maybe you are thinking about driving a big red fire truck." Encourage toddlers to use the cardboard boxes as animal houses and place them in the zoo for imaginary play with the animals. Use the words "small," "big," and "biggest," when describing the box sizes. Example: "The giraffe is very big. Will you need a small box or a big box for the giraffe?" Infants who can sit independently may enjoy holding toy animals as the older children play in their pretend zoo.



24–36 Months

Option 1 Informal Gathering



Skill and Goal Self-control

Toddlers watch a stomach move up and down when breathing slowly and deeply to calm our minds and bodies.



Key Concepts

Breathe in
Breathe out
Up
Down



Materials Needed

None



Also Promotes

Social-Emotional
Physical/Health

BEGIN: *[Invite several toddlers to join you to practice our breathing.]*

We are learning how to breathe slowly and deeply.
We can calm our minds and bodies when we breathe slowly and deeply.

Let's all breathe in and breathe out slowly. We want to take a deep breath when we breathe in.

[Lead toddlers, standing or lying down, in breathing slowly and deeply. Draw attention to each part: taking a deep breath and breathing slowly.]

ASK: What happens when we breathe?

EXPLAIN: Air goes in and out of our bodies when we breathe. I am going to lie down so you can watch what happens with my body when I breathe in and out.

ACT: *[Lie down, or invite a volunteer toddler to lie down, in front of toddlers. Place your hand on your stomach and demonstrate taking a deep, slow breath in and then out.]*

ASK: I took a deep breath in and then I pushed the air out of my body. What did you see?

[Encourage toddlers to comment on your hand moving up and down with your breath. Example: "What happened with my hand when I took a breath in and out?"]

EXPLAIN: My stomach went up when I breathed air in. Please watch again.

[Demonstrate taking a deep, slow breath in, with your hand on your stomach.]

My stomach goes down when I breathe air out.

[With your hand still on your stomach, demonstrate slowly breathing out.]

Breathing air makes part of my body move.

ACT: I am going to practice breathing slowly and deeply. I am going to put my hand on my stomach so I can feel my stomach go up and down. Please watch my hand go up and down while I breathe slowly and deeply.



Option 1 continued

[Demonstrate breathing deeply in and out, with your stomach/hand rising and falling. Repeat several times to give toddlers the opportunity to view your hand moving up and down. Model feelings of calm and relaxation as you demonstrate breathing deeply and slowly.]

RECAP: Breathing deeply and slowly can help us calm our bodies. Parts of our body move when we breathe deeply and slowly. What happened to my stomach when I took deep and slow breaths?



24–36 Months

Option 2 Informal Gathering



Skill and Goal

Self-control

Toddlers practice breathing deeply and slowly while placing a hand on their stomach to notice how their body moves when they are breathing.



Key Concepts

Breathe in
Breathe out
Up
Down



Materials Needed

None



Also Promotes

Social-Emotional
Physical/Health

Invite several toddlers to join you on the floor to practice breathing slowly and deeply. Remind toddlers that we can calm our bodies and minds by breathing slowly and deeply. Explain that parts of our body move when we breathe in and breathe out. Lie on the floor to demonstrate (or invite a volunteer child to demonstrate) how your hand placed on your stomach moves up and down when you breathe in and out deeply and slowly. Explain that the air you breathe in and out moves part of your body.

Invite toddlers to lie on their backs and put a hand on their stomach. Describe and demonstrate how our hand should be open, with all fingers touching our stomach. We should not make a fist with our hand. We want to relax our hand on our stomach. Some toddlers may need guidance in locating their stomach and placing their hand in an open position.

Invite toddlers to breathe in and out with you. Example: "I am going to take a deep breath in and then take a deep breath out. Please breathe in and out with me. Let's see what happens with our hand on our stomach when we breathe deeply and slowly."

Lead children in breathing in and out 3–4 times. Offer reminders, as appropriate, about breathing slowly and deeply, and keeping our hand open and relaxed on our stomach.

Pause to talk briefly with toddlers about what happened with their hand when they took deep and slow breaths. Restate and expand their comments. Emphasize that their stomach (as felt by their hand) went up and down as they breathed in and out.

Invite toddlers to practice breathing again, this time even more slowly. Example: "Let's breathe deeply again. This time, let's find out if we can breathe more slowly." Provide individualized guidance to toddlers who report that their hand did not move up and down.

Recognize all forms of participation while encouraging toddlers to follow your actions.



24–36 Months

Option 3 Informal Gathering



Skill and Goal

Self-control

Toddlers practice breathing deeply and slowly while placing a stuffed toy on their stomach to notice how their body moves when they are breathing.



Key Concepts

Breathe in
Breathe out
Up
Down



Materials Needed

Small stuffed toys—1 per child



Also Promotes

Social-Emotional
Physical/Health

Invite several toddlers to join you on the floor to practice breathing slowly and deeply. Remind toddlers that we can calm our bodies and minds by breathing slowly and deeply. Explain (or remind toddlers) that parts of our body move when we breathe in and breathe out. Our stomach goes up when we breathe in deeply. Our stomach goes down when we breathe out.

Explain that we will practice breathing deeply and slowly by putting a small toy on our stomach. We can watch and feel the toy move up and down on our stomach while we breathe. We can pretend we are rocking the toy to sleep!

Demonstrate and describe the process of breathing deeply and slowly, while watching our stomach move, based on information in Options 1 and 2. Use a stuffed toy for your demonstration. Then provide a stuffed toy to each toddler. Encourage toddlers to join you in breathing deeply and slowly while watching the toy move on his/her stomach. Help toddlers get situated with their backs fully on the floor and a toy on their stomach. Lead them in breathing deeply and slowly.

After several minutes of breathing, encourage toddlers to tell what happened to the toy on their stomach. Were they able to rock the toy to sleep?

End the session by reminding toddlers that we can calm our bodies and minds by breathing slowly and deeply. Ask toddlers whether they like to practice breathing deeply and slowly and why.



What to Look For—Options 1–3

You are likely to see differences across toddlers in the ease with which they focus on their breathing and take slow and deep breaths. Some toddlers may breathe deeply but quickly. Others may breathe slowly but not deeply. It can be challenging for toddlers to coordinate the three main parts of the activity: breathing slowly, breathing deeply, and paying attention to how their stomach moves. Provide attention to the part(s) of the process that seems most challenging. Although the use of a stuffed toy in Option 3 may have considerable appeal (especially the suggestion that toddlers rock the toy to sleep), Options 1 and 2 may be more helpful to toddlers in learning how to breathe slowly and deeply.

Some toddlers may intentionally breathe deeply and quickly to explore how their stomach moves, especially when a stuffed item is on it. This can be exciting to toddlers. Some may try to bounce the toy on their stomach. Explorations of this nature may help a toddler better understand the connection between breathing and stomach movement, but they do not support the goal of helping a toddler learn a practice for calming his/her body and mind. It may be helpful to acknowledge the fun of deep and quick breathing, and point out that the toddler is learning how moving air quickly into his/her body helps move part of his/her body. After positively offering this acknowledgment, it is important to encourage the toddler to return to the goal of the activity. It may be helpful to return to the activity at a later time or pursue Options 1 or 2 if placing an object on the stomach (Option 3) prompts too much excitement.

More Scaffolding Tips—Options 1–3

Extra support ■ Repeat Options 1 and/or 2 with toddlers who find it difficult to focus on their breathing, including paying attention to how their stomach moves when they breathe. ■ Sit next to a toddler who is struggling to concentrate on how his/her hand moves on his stomach when breathing deeply. Your presence may help the toddler focus. Consider placing your hand over the toddler's hand to encourage a relaxed hand with all fingers touching the stomach. Gently and quietly talk about what is happening as the toddler breathes in and out.

Enrichment ■ Talk with toddlers about how breathing slowly and deeply makes them feel. Encourage toddlers to think about how breathing slowly can help them feel calm when they are upset. Invite toddlers to use slow breathing at other times during the day when they would like to feel calm. ■ At another time during the day, engage interested toddlers in this breathing exercise while playing quiet, soothing music or a recording of nature sounds.



Interest Area

Materials Needed: several teddy bears or other stuffed animals

Provide several stuffed animals in a calm area of the room. Invite toddlers to visit the space when they want to calm down. Invite toddlers to lie down and place a favorite stuffed animal on their stomach. Encourage toddlers to practice breathing slowly in and out while watching the animal rise and fall (Option 3).



Family Child Care

Materials Needed: nontoxic bubble solution and wands, pinwheels for older children

Practicing how to breathe deeply and slowly can benefit children of different ages. Provide appropriate materials to help children notice their breathing. Example: take bubbles and pinwheels outside for children to gently "blow." Toddlers will enjoy blowing bubbles, and babies can be soothed by watching the bubbles float in the air. Older children can practice using their breath to make the pinwheels turn as younger children watch.



24–36 Months

Option 1
One-to-One

Skill and Goal

Social interaction skills

A toddler participates with a caregiver in open-ended pretend play with a dollhouse and furnishings and toy zoo animals.



Key Concepts

Pretend



Materials Needed

Dollhouse
Dollhouse furnishings
Small toy zoo animal figures
2 small boxes (4" x 4")



Also Promotes

Communication/Language
Physical/Health

Be Prepared: Place items in a quiet area. Organize the dollhouse furnishings and animal figures in separate groupings outside of the house.

BEGIN: [*Invite a toddler to join you. Position yourself on the floor next to the toddler.*]

Would you like to see what is in the little house today?

We could play together!

[*Provide brief silence while the toddler looks in the house and at the materials. Wait for the toddler to begin playing. Allow the theme of the play to come from the toddler.*]

EXPLAIN: These are zoo animals. Zoo animals do not live in people houses. But it is fun to pretend. Maybe you would like to put the zoo animals in the people house. Or maybe you would like to put the zoo animals in these little boxes.

ACT: [*Describe the toddler's actions and items that seem to be of interest. Example: "You are putting two tigers in one room of the house." Pause so the toddler has an opportunity to respond.*]

Ask what you might do to contribute to the play. Examples: "I see you are putting the baby animals in the boxes. Would you like me to have an animal? Which animal would you like me to play with?" The toddler may or may not have a plan.

Invite the toddler to tell what he/she is doing. Example: "What are the baby animals doing in the boxes?" Repeat and expand upon the toddler's comments.

Use questions to engage the toddler in conversation related to the play. Examples: "Do you think these animals can talk to each other?" "Have you been to a zoo? What was it like?"

RECAP: [*Describe some highlights of the activity, including details from the toddler's interaction with you. Example: "We had some special time to play and talk. You pretended the animals lived in the people house and told me where each one lived in the house."*]

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

The play items offer several different opportunities for a toddler's focus. Some toddlers may be interested primarily in the house, whereas other toddlers may want to use the boxes to create a house for the animal figures. Toddlers may also focus on both the house and boxes, perhaps using them in a coordinated manner. Some toddlers may play with the figures as a family, others may use the dollhouse as a zoo.

Interactions between you and the toddler matter more than the sophistication of the toddler's play with the materials. A toddler who uses few words during the activity may have many ideas about the play materials. By staying close and focused on the toddler, you communicate strong interest in the toddler even if a small number of words are exchanged. Over time, a toddler may express more ideas as he/she experiences your attention and acceptance of his/her interests and ideas.

📈 More Scaffolding Tips—Option 1

Extra support ■ If the toddler seems uncertain about how to begin to play with the materials, offer a choice of several figures and what might be done with them. Example: "Here are two tigers. Do you think the tigers should live in the house, or would you like to build a house for them?" ■ Ask questions that support the toddler's decision-making about the activity. Example: "Do you want your animals upstairs or down here?" ■ Speak in a quiet voice if the toddler seems hesitant about the activity.

Enrichment ■ Ask questions that encourage more than one-word answers. Example: "Here is the giraffe. Who can be in the giraffe's family?" ■ A toddler may like to organize pairs or sets of similar or identical animals for room arrangements, especially if numerous animals are made available for the activity. Talk with the toddler about how they are the same.



24–36 Months

Option 2 One-to-One



Skill and Goal

Social interaction skills

A toddler participates with a caregiver in open-ended pretend play that includes opportunities to use various felt pieces in creative ways with animal figures and blocks.



Key Concepts

Pretend



Materials Needed

- Small toy zoo animal figures
- Blocks of different sizes
- Felt pieces (see Be Prepared)



Also Promotes

- Communication/Language
- Physical/Health



Optional Reading

Goodnight Gorilla by Peggy Rathmann

Be Prepared: Create felt pieces in various sizes and shapes in natural colors, such as green for grass, brown for dirt, gray for stone.

Place the blocks, felt pieces, and animal figures on the floor. Invite a toddler to play with the materials. Example: “We have different animals and blocks. We also have some felt. What would you like to do with these things?”

Encourage the toddler to touch the materials, including the felt pieces. Pause for the toddler to look at and think about what is available. Offer some ideas if the toddler seems unclear about how to proceed. Examples: “Maybe you want to build a house or a zoo for the animals.”

Draw attention to the felt pieces if the toddler does not incorporate one or more into his/her play. Example: “You are building a fence for your animals. I see green and brown felt. Would you like to use a piece for your animals to walk on inside your fence?”

Ask the toddler how he/she would like you to participate. Example: “I have two lions. What would you like me to do with the lions?”

What to Look For—Option 2

The felt pieces offer a novel play material that can be used in a number of creative ways. A toddler might use the felt as a blanket or clothing or as a rug or piece of grass for a toy animal to stand on. Whether and how the toddler uses the felt may reflect important differences across toddlers in whether the materials are used together or separately. Some toddlers may generate a play theme that incorporates all, or nearly all materials, whereas others may prefer to play with the animals or blocks separately. The felt pieces may be ignored.

Monitoring the toddler’s communications during the play period is important for determining how you might promote language during the play. The activity plan suggests that you encourage the toddler to communicate about his play activities as descriptions of what he/she intends to do or is actually doing. Example: “I see you are stacking the blocks on top of each other. Tell me about what you are building!” There are other suggestions in the activity plan and in the scaffolding tips for how to do this.

Asking the toddler what he/she wants you to do as part of the play (suggested in the plan) is a way to support the toddler’s communications. You may receive (a) no response or (b) a suggestion that you engage in an independent (parallel) play effort or (c) an invitation to join the toddler in building or doing something together. Accept the toddler’s response as an indication of his/her current approach to play and avoid joining the toddler’s actions (response “c”) if you are not invited or given a role. The “rule” here is to follow the child’s lead of his/her preferred play.

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

Extra support ■ Toddlers who are unsure how to interact with the building materials may enjoy reading the book *Goodnight Gorilla* with you. Talk with the toddler about the zoo where the animals live, and how each zoo animal home is a little different. ■ If a toddler offers little or no information about what he/she is doing or intends to do, describe his/her actions as a possible springboard for more conversation. Example: “You are putting a small block on top of a bigger block. What are you going to do next?”

Enrichment ■ Invite the toddler to tell what he/she plans to do with the materials or describe what he/she is doing. Also, ask “why” questions regarding the toddler’s actions with the materials unless you anticipate this would distract the toddler from concentrating on what he/she is doing. Repeat and expand upon the toddler’s comments. ■ Talk with the toddler about their experiences in visiting or seeing pictures of a zoo. Ask the toddler about the animals he/she saw and what the animals’ “homes” inside the zoo looked like. Invite the toddler to build a similar home for their zoo animals if it seems the toddler would benefit from a concrete suggestion of what to do with the materials. ■ Encourage the toddler to think of other ways to use the provided materials, such as using the felt pieces to cover or dress the animals.



24–36 Months

Option 3 Informal Gathering



Skill and Goal

Social interaction skills

Toddlers participate together in play that includes toy zoo animals, blocks, and felt pieces, and emphasizes sharing materials and noticing what others are doing.



Key Concepts

Play together



Materials Needed

- Small toy zoo animal figures
- Blocks in different sizes
- Felt pieces (see Be Prepared)



Also Promotes

- Communication/Language
- Physical/Health

Be Prepared: Create felt pieces in various sizes and shapes in natural colors, such as green for grass, brown for dirt, gray for stone.

Place the materials on the floor and invite 3–4 toddlers to explore and talk about the items. Invite toddlers to play together with the items, encouraging them to consider ways to build homes for the animals. Examples: “We have many zoo animals. The zoo animals need a place to live. Would you like to build something for the animals?” “How can we use these materials to build a home for the lion?” Draw attention to the felt pieces (see Option 2). Allow toddlers to take the lead in how they want to play with the materials.

Encourage toddlers to notice one another’s actions during their play. Example: “Dimitri is putting all the small blocks in a row.” “Maria put a blanket on the baby tiger. I think the baby tiger is going to sleep!”

Encourage and recognize toddlers’ interactions with each other. Example: “Maria, you gave a small block to Dimitri so he can finish his row!” Describe positive social interactions. Examples: “We are playing together with the animals!” “We are sharing the blocks.” “We are building a zoo together.”

What to Look For—Option 3

The activity plan suggests that you promote a home-building theme for the play because a common goal in the play is likely to foster interactions among children. Toddlers may or may not follow your home-building suggestion, however. They also may or may not make use of the felt pieces, a novel item among the materials (see Option 2). What is most important is for toddlers to determine what they wish to do, either together or separately. Anticipate differences across toddlers. In a group of four toddlers, for example, 2–3 may work together and 1–2 others may do something different.

Social skills (the foundation skill promoted in this activity) can be supported in different ways. Some toddlers will enjoy interacting with their peers as part of playing with the materials. Others may prefer to play next to their peers. Pointing out what specific toddlers are doing in the activity can help foster interest in others.

Pay attention to what each toddler is doing and direct your communications to specific toddlers, tailored to what he/she is doing. Recognize both verbal (asking for an item) and nonverbal (giving an animal to each peer) interactions. Enthusiastically acknowledge toddlers’ group and individual efforts. Examples: “We worked together to make a home for the zebras! Dimitri built a fence with the small blocks and Maria put all the zebras inside.” “Sammy built a fence and then put all of the animals inside the fence.”



Option 3 continued

More Scaffolding Tips—Option 3

Extra support ■ Offer specific ways toddlers can “build something for the animals” if they seem unclear on how to move forward. Example: “Maybe we can use the small blocks to make a fence for the zebras.”
 ■ Provide words for a toddler to communicate with a peer, such as asking for an item. Example: “Dimitri, I see you are looking at the small blocks in front of Maria. Would you like to use the blocks? You can say to Maria, ‘can I have the blocks?’”

Enrichment ■ Add several people figures to toddlers’ play. Invite toddlers to explore possible roles of the new figures, such as zookeeper or zoo visitor. ■ Toddlers may enjoy looking at pictures of animals and their habitats. Place several books with rich illustrations or photos near the play area. ■ Invite toddlers to bring new materials into the play activity, such as small cups or plates to feed the animals.

Interest Area

Materials Needed: small toy zoo animal figures, blocks in different sizes, felt pieces in natural colors in a variety of sizes and shapes (such as green for grass, brown for dirt, gray for stone), several books about zoo animals

Arrange the materials on the floor or low table. Place several books with rich illustrations or photos of zoo animals near the play area. Encourage toddlers to explore the books and to interact with the related materials. Talk with toddlers about their ideas and actions.

Family Child Care

Materials Needed: block area, small toy zoo animal figures, people figures, felt pieces in natural colors in a variety of sizes and shapes (such as green for grass, brown for dirt, gray for stone), several books about zoo animals

Children of all ages will enjoy interacting with different materials in the block area. Select a book about zoo animals and their habitats to read with the group. Place the books and materials in the block area and invite children to explore and play. Encourage older children to interact with toddlers as they play together. Babies may enjoy playing with soft blocks and chunky age-appropriate animals.



24–36 Months

Option 1 Informal Gathering



Skill and Goal

Gross motor development

Fine motor development

Self-control

Toddlers engage in specific playful fine and gross motor movements guided by a song, and practice stopping the movement when they hear “stop” paired with a hand signal.



Key Concepts

Listen

Move

Stop



Materials Needed

None



Also Promotes

Communication/Language

Self-Regulation



Optional Reading

Duck and Goose: Let’s Dance
by Tad Hills

Baby Dance by Ann Taylor

Be Prepared: Learn the song “Stop and Go,” available on the internet and also in the *Play Your Instruments and Make a Pretty Sound* CD by Ella Jenkins.

Invite toddlers to an informal gathering. Sit on the floor facing toddlers and welcome each child by name.

Explain that today we have a fun song that tells us to move and stop. Our song will surprise us with the word “stop!” Display and describe a signal for “stop” by holding your arm straight out with palm facing outward. Encourage toddlers to imitate the stop hand signal. Example: “Let’s all make the stop signal with one hand.” Repeat: “Stop.” Explain to toddlers “Now we know one part of our new song is stop.”

Point to your ears and explain that we will move our bodies and listen with our ears.

Explain that we will begin while we are sitting down. Let’s wiggle our fingers and listen with our ears! Explain that you will sing one part of our song while we wiggle our fingers. Our fingers will stop moving when we hear the word stop. Demonstrate wiggling all your fingers so all toddlers can clearly see.

Sing one verse of the song:

**We wiggle,
And we wiggle
And we wiggle
And we stop.**

[Emphasize stop and make the stop signal with one hand.]

Ask “Did you hear the word stop?” Point to your ears. Pause for toddlers to react. Respond to their verbal and nonverbal responses.

Invite toddlers to stand up and listen for the word stop in our song!

**Option 1 continued**

This time we can clap our hands while I sing. Demonstrate clapping your hands.

Encourage toddlers to practice clapping their hands.

Sing the next verse of the song:

We clap,
And we clap
And we clap and clap.

We clap
And we clap
And we clap

And stop.

[Exaggerate the stop signal and word.]

Add a verse about walking. Example: "Let's walk around the rug and listen to the song. We stop when the song says stop." Lead toddlers in walking to an area where there is adequate space for moving around.

Ask toddlers if they know how to stomp. Some toddlers may wish to demonstrate stomping steps. Acknowledge and describe the demonstrations. Example: "Big steps are like stomping." Encourage toddlers to try stomping. Example: "Let's all take big steps around our rug. Let's stomp, stomp our feet."

Ask toddlers whether our ears can hear the word stop if we are stomping. In your comments about their responses, emphasize that they will need to listen carefully. Point to your ears.

Lead toddlers in two verses with stomp as the action.

Conclude the activity by inviting toddlers to calm their bodies. Sing or quietly say "tap, tap, tap" as you lead toddlers in gently tapping their chest. Sing or talk slightly slower than usual.

👁️ What to Look For—Option 1

Toddlers will likely differ in stopping a movement when the stop signal is provided. Approach the "stop" part of the activity as enjoyable practice in controlling the actions of our bodies. Repeating one sequence several times may help toddlers learn to anticipate the word stop and understand the pattern of the singing game. Offering both the spoken word and hand signal for stop is valuable because a toddler cannot always look for a hand signal while doing a movement.

Using your singing voice and not a recorded song offers many advantages, including opportunities to tailor the song and your volume to the needs of toddlers. See the *ELM Curriculum User Guide: Birth–36 Months* for more information on the benefits of your singing.

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

Extra support ■ Omit the stomping activity if you anticipate this will create too much excitement or inappropriately lengthen the activity. ■ Walking around a circle or the edge of an area rug may provide needed structure for the walking and stomping verses.

Enrichment ■ Add other gross motor movements, depending on toddlers' interests. Examples: drive, cook (stir), splash, or swim. ■ Separate from this activity, the "Stop and Go" song can be practiced in a safe large motor area with toddlers who run with good balance.



24–36 Months

Option 2 Informal Gathering



Skill and Goal

Gross motor development Self-control

Toddlers practice responding to requests for moving a streamer by swinging their arm to the front and to the back, including swinging slowly and coming to a stop.



Key Concepts

Swing
Front
Back
Stop



Materials Needed

Crepe paper streamers in several colors (see Be Prepared)
Scissors (staff use only)
Tape (staff use only)
Carpet squares—1 per toddler



Also Promotes

Communication/Language
Social-Emotional

Be Prepared: Make a rainbow streamer with mixed colors for every toddler. Cut 100 12-inch lengths of crepe paper and bind 10 streamers together at one end with tape. Place carpet squares in a circle for toddlers to stand on. Provide sufficient distance between squares so toddlers can swing their arms. Select an activity to start the informal gathering from suggestions offered in the *ELM Curriculum User Guide: Birth–36 Months*. The activity will work best with 4–5 toddlers at a time.

Encourage toddlers to stand on their carpet square as they join the gathering. Explain that we will move our arms like a swing. Demonstrate and describe swinging your arms to the front and to the back, using a moderate rate of movement. Encourage toddlers to practice with you as you swing your arms and say “Our arms swing to the front, our arms swing to the back.”

Give a streamer to each toddler. Explain that we can have fun swinging our rainbow streamers to the front and to the back. Demonstrate and describe moving your streamer and lead toddlers in moving their streamers in a swinging motion. Offer guidance with a singing voice, such as “Front and back” and “Swing, swing. Front and back.”

After a few moments, say “swing and stop.” Congratulate toddlers for hearing the word “stop.” If appropriate, repeat the practice of toddlers swinging their streamers and stopping when you offer the signal.

Ask toddlers for ideas of other ways we can move our streamers. Encourage exploration and offer a minute for toddlers to move their streamers in the gathering area with you.

Offer a stop request and explain that we can learn a way to slow down our streamers. Demonstrate moving your streamer in slow motion and then hold it with two hands.

Next encourage toddlers to gently swing their streamers to the front and to the back as you lead toddlers in a song about who is with us today. Demonstrate swinging the streamer gently. Example: “Let’s swing our streamers to the front and to the back, and sing about who is here today! You may help me sing if you like. Please swing your streamer as I sing the name of every friend. I will start our song with Nakita. Please join me in singing, if you like.”

**Option 2 continued**

Sing a simple song, such as “Singing and Swinging,” that includes the name of each toddler who is participating in the gathering. Swing your streamer to the front and back as you sing. (Tune: “ABC Song”)

**Let’s look around our group today
See what friends have come to play
Nakita and Joshua,
Diego and Marika,
Angel and Robert
Katy Jo, too.
[Continue naming all children in the gathering.]
We sing about friends who came to play.**

To close the activity, suggest the streamers are tired and need a rest! Sit down facing toddlers. You may wish to sing a little song (see suggestion below) and demonstrate putting the streamer on your lap. (Tune: “Farmer in the Dell”)

**The streamers take a nap,
The streamers take a nap,
Hi ho the Derry oh, hold your streamer on your lap.**

Collect the streamers.

👁️ What to Look For—Option 2

This activity should be uncomplicated for toddlers who are accustomed to movement games. For toddlers who find it challenging to imitate your actions with streamers, it may be helpful to offer separate experiences in following hand and arm movements as part of listening to a request and watching your demonstration. Example: finger actions with “Itsy Bitsy Spider.”

Repeatedly saying or singing the requested movements is intended to help toddlers become familiar with position words (front, back) and an action word (swing).

Some toddlers may have difficulty slowing down and stopping streamer movements. You may wish to repeat practice with this valuable self-control skill (Self-Regulation).

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

Extra support ■ Lead toddlers in practicing the movements without props. ■ In addition to including toddlers' names in the final song, use toddlers' names throughout the activity to give positive feedback and to let toddlers know you are fully engaged. Example: "Natasha, you are moving your streamer in front and back so it does not touch our friends." ■ Spread carpet squares farther apart if toddlers need more space.

Enrichment ■ Introduce new movement positions, such as high and low. ■ Encourage toddlers to use their opposite hand.



24–36 Months

Option 3 Informal Gathering



Skill and Goal

Gross motor development Self-control

Toddlers practice requested up and down arm movements as part of moving one or two scarves.



Key Concepts

Move
Up
Down
Arm
Stop



Materials Needed

Small scarves—2 per toddler and staff
World Playground for Kids
CD



Also Promotes

Communication/Language



Optional Reading

Duck and Goose: Let's Dance
by Tad Hills
Baby Dance by Ann Taylor

Be Prepared: Listen to the CD to choose two songs to share with toddlers, with one of the two songs to be used if there is time and toddler interest for a second round of moving scarves to music. Set up the CD or other music source in advance of the activity to avoid toddlers waiting.

BEGIN: *[Invite a group of toddlers to join you in moving scarves to music.]*

Display one scarf and move it up and down with one arm.]

EXPLAIN: Today we will move scarves to music! Each of us will have two scarves. We can use our arms to move our scarves. Let's all point to one of our arms.

[Lead toddlers in pointing to one of their arms.]

We will move our scarves up and down. Let's all move our arms up. Now let's all move our arms down.

[Lead toddlers in moving their arms up and then down. Say up and down with each movement.]

We need to stand on both of our feet so we do not tip or fall down when we move our arms.

[Demonstrate and describe standing firmly on both feet.]

We will want to stop moving our arms and flags when our music stops.

Please watch me carefully so you know how to move your scarves.

ACT: *[Lead toddlers by demonstrating how to move their scarves. Try to follow the tempo of the music with your own scarf. Offer gradual challenge, using the movements suggested below. Repeat movements with a different pace (slowly at first, faster the second time, following the music tempo). Repeat movements that seem challenging and do not use suggested movements that may be too challenging. In movements with one arm only, it does not matter which arm toddlers use.]*

- Move one arm up and down.
- Move your other arm up and down.
- Move both arms up and down in unison (at the same time).
- Alternate moving one arm up and the other arm down.



**Option 3 continued**

- Use both hands/arms to hold both scarves and move them up and down.
- Turn around (with your back to toddlers) and move one arm up and down.

Stop movement requests when the music stops. Offer a second round (with different music) if time and toddler interest permit.

Offer a brief activity that helps toddlers calm down. Examples: lay on the floor with both hands on tummy, alternate sides, use one hand to pat the opposite arm, use a deep breathing technique (Block 5, Self-Regulation).]

RECAP: Collect the scarves. Describe and demonstrate briefly how toddlers moved the scarves. Emphasize how toddlers looked at and followed your actions with the scarves. Talk with toddlers about what movement they liked best and why.

👁️ What to Look For—Option 3

Some toddlers may participate by observing and holding the scarves. Provide assurances that they may move their scarves anytime they wish. When you request a different arm movement, offer a focused invitation to a toddler who is observing.

Right- and left-hand is not meaningful to teach to toddlers at this age. Avoid requesting movement of a specific arm. If necessary, refer to an opposite arm as “your other arm.”

📊 More Scaffolding Tips—Option 3

Extra support ■ Use one scarf only if you anticipate management of two scarves may be too challenging. ■ Make sure toddlers maintain sufficient space between each other. Interrupt the activity to make adjustments in carpet squares and children’s position on carpet squares. ■ Some toddlers may benefit from an analogy, such as “Our scarves go up and down like the wings of a bird when it is flying.” ■ Encourage toddlers to keep the scarves within their personal space and not move the scarf toward another child. Example: “Scarves stay with us. Scarves stay off friends.”

Enrichment ■ Present the activity outdoors on a windy day, with fewer and simpler movements.



Interest Area

Materials Needed: building blocks, pop beads, star builders, *Duck and Goose: Let's Dance* by Tad Hills; *Baby Dance* by Ann Taylor; *Here We Go Round the Mulberry Bush* by Child's Play, scarves, mirror, exercise stepper, basket, sock balls

Provide play materials that foster fine motor skills, such as small building blocks and toys that go together and come apart. Examples: pop beads or star builders. Update play materials in dramatic play centers. Add interest to the sensory tubs with different materials. Arrange appealing displays of books about movement or dance plus books that connect to a toddler's special interest, such as birds or construction. *Here We Go Round the Mulberry Bush* by Child's Play shows children moving in various settings familiar to toddlers.

Create a space for toddlers to continue exploring up and down movements with scarves near a mirror. Add an exercise stepper for toddlers to use in pretend play and practice stepping up and down. Another day, place a basket of sock balls in an area for toddlers to throw. Mark a space on a wall as a target to guide the direction of toddler's throwing.



Family Child Care

Structured moving activities can be presented to children of all ages. Mobile infants may enjoy participating by being present and interpreting the activity in their own way. It is not necessary for all children to be at the same developmental level. Some will understand and enjoy the stop and start signals and the specific directions, whereas other children may have a more free form way of moving.

Preschool-age and older children may enjoy games of *Simon Says* with a focus on large motor skills, such as reaching, bending, balancing, and hopping. Another game, *Sound and Movement*, is a group game in which each person has a turn to make a movement with an accompanying sound. Other players imitate the sound and action.

Infants in your care will enjoy your focused attention when they are moving their bodies. Describe the actions to the infant, even though he/she does not yet understand the words.

Books depicting children moving in different ways can be shared with one child or a small informal gathering to support communication and language skills.