



**Communication/  
Language**

**Exploring Sounds**

- Option 1** (IG) Toddlers explore how zoo animals make different kinds of sounds.
- Option 2** (IG) Toddlers manipulate toy figures or puppets and make sounds that represent animals described in a story about sounds made by zoo animals.
- Option 3** (IG) Toddlers engage in movements and sounds while pretending to be different zoo animals featured in a book.



**Cognitive**

**Exploring Objects**

- Option 1** (IG) Toddlers pretend they are driving a car and then use blocks to build and play with roads of their design.
- Option 2** (IG) Toddlers use pretend tunnels (cardboard boxes) in building and playing with roads they make with blocks.
- Option 3** (IG) Toddlers use props to create pretend settings or activities at the destination points of roads they create with blocks.



**Self-Regulation**

**Paying Attention**

- Option 1** (IG) Toddlers observe actions coordinated with words as part of a song.
- Option 2** (IG) Toddlers practice movements coordinated with the words of a song.
- Option 3** (IG) Toddlers independently practice movements coordinated with the words of a song.



**Social-Emotional**

**Interacting with Others**

- Option 1** (IG) Toddlers practice taking turns as part of playing with peers.
- Option 2** (IG) Toddlers practice taking turns while participating in a song activity.
- Option 3** (IG) Toddlers explore ways to initiate or join play with peers and work together in farm-focused pretend play.



**Physical/Health**

**Moving Our Bodies**

- Option 1** (IG) Toddlers practice physical movements named in a song.
- Option 2** (IG) Toddlers practice three different sets of physical movements.
- Option 3** (IG) Toddlers practice four physical movements repeatedly requested in a song.

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



## 24–36 Months

### Option 1 Informal Gathering



**Skill and Goal**  
Receptive language  
Expressive language  
Awareness of differences  
in sounds

Toddlers explore how zoo  
animals make different  
kinds of sounds.



#### Key Concepts

Hear  
Sounds  
Zoo  
Zookeeper



#### Materials Needed

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



#### Also Promotes

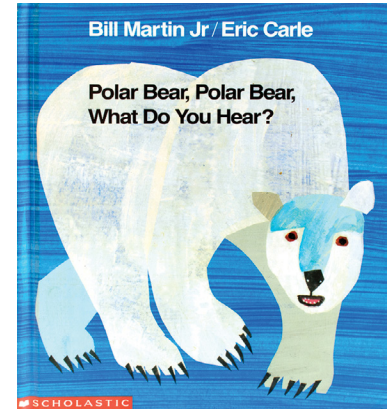
Self-Regulation

**BEGIN:** [Help toddlers transition to book reading by singing a familiar song or the “Polar Bear Song.” Sit facing toddlers.]

**EXPLAIN:** [Hold the book so all toddlers can see the cover. Point to the illustration and title on the book cover.]

This book tells us about different kinds of animals that live at a zoo. A polar bear in our book hears the sounds of animals at a zoo.

The name of our book is *Polar Bear, Polar Bear, What Do You Hear?* This is a polar bear. Polar bears are white.



**ACT:** Let’s gently touch our ears.

[Point to your ears.]

Our ears hear sounds.

**ASK:** What sound do you think a polar bear makes?

[Point again to your ears. Acknowledge and expand on toddlers’ responses. Example: “Yes, sometimes polar bears growl.”]

**ACT:** Let’s turn the page and learn about other animal sounds at a zoo.

[On each page, point to and name the pictured animal. Describe the sound the animal makes. Example: “This is a picture of a hippopotamus. Hippopotamus is a big word. Our book says “I hear a hippopotamus snorting in my ear. ‘Snort’ is the sound a hippopotamus makes. This is a snorting sound.” Demonstrate a snorting sound.

On the page with the zookeeper, explain that the man shown in the picture is a zookeeper. He has an important job at the zoo. He gives food and water to the animals. Ask toddlers what they see in the picture. Toddlers may notice the man’s hat or boots, or the fish in the pail. Expand on children’s comments and connect their interests to the work of a zookeeper. Examples: “The zookeeper is going to feed fish to some animals at the zoo.” “The zookeeper is going to give water to animals at the zoo.”



## **Option 1 continued**

*On the last two pages, emphasize “growling,” “roaring,” and other animal sounds when you say them in the book text. Explain that children shown in the book are dressed up like animals that live at a zoo.*

*Point to several of the pictured children and ask what animal the child in the picture is pretending to be. Remind children that the zookeeper heard children’s voices. What kind of sounds were children making? (animal sounds)]*

**RECAP:** We listened to our book *Polar Bear, Polar Bear, What Do You Hear?* The words told us about sounds at a zoo. We saw colorful pictures of animals at a zoo. We made sounds like the animals in the book. Let’s make quiet zoo animal sounds while we move around the room.

### What to Look For—Option 1

Toddlers will enjoy making animal sounds associated with the pictures. Some toddlers may become excited to make the animal sounds and find it challenging to stop making animal sounds on their own. If toddlers need support for becoming quiet, demonstrate and practice a hand signal that means “stop” or “it is time to be quiet.” Encourage toddlers to make the signal with you.

Some toddlers may react to images of animals they perceive as dangerous, such as the leopard or snake. Watch for nonverbal reactions of concern or curiosity. It may be helpful to offer a reassuring explanation. Example: “These are pictures in our book. The animals are not at our center. The pictures cannot hurt us.”

### More Scaffolding Tips—Option 1

**Extra support** ■ Toddlers may not be familiar with a zoo. Explain that a zoo is a special place where different types of animals live. People visit a zoo to see and hear animals. ■ In the last pages of the book, when you ask toddlers to identify the animal a pictured child is pretending to be, offer hints as appropriate. Example: “This girl is wearing colorful feathers. I wonder what animal she is pretending to be.” ■ If toddlers have difficulty keeping focused on the book, skip several of the animal pages or offer each toddler a small object to hold. ■ It may be helpful for toddlers to move close to you for the story. ■ Help maintain children’s interest in the book by offering brief comments about the story. Example: “The polar bear heard a roar. Let’s turn the page to find out which animal roared!”

**Enrichment** ■ Invite toddlers to recite the repeated phrase with you: “What do you hear?” ■ On the page with the peacock, explain that peacocks usually make no sound but sometimes make a loud “yelp” sound to say hello to another peacock. ■ After the book reading session, open to a random page and talk with toddlers about the animal. ■ Encourage toddlers to listen to other types of sounds in the room. Example: “Daniel, Daniel, what do you hear?” Allow time for each toddler to focus on and describe a sound.

## 24–36 Months

### Option 2 Informal Gathering



#### Skill and Goal

Receptive language

Expressive language

Awareness of differences  
in sound

Toddlers manipulate toy figures or puppets and make sounds that represent animals described in a story about sounds made by zoo animals.



#### Key Concepts

Sounds

Loud

Quiet



#### Materials Needed

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

Animal figures or puppets (see Be Prepared)



#### Also Promotes

Self-Regulation

Cognitive

**Be Prepared:** Collect animal figures or puppets that loosely represent most of the 10 animals pictured in the book: polar bear, lion, hippopotamus, flamingo, zebra, boa constrictor, elephant, leopard, peacock, and walrus.

The intent is to help toddlers connect the book pictures (animals) to the representations (toy figures, puppets) the children are holding. In addition, this activity gives toddlers the opportunity to practice responding to a simple request.

Sit on the floor with toddlers and toy animals. Invite toddlers to hold an animal figure or puppet.

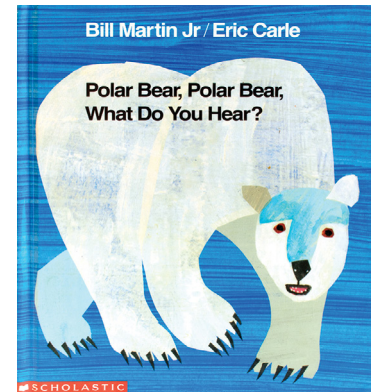
Encourage each toddler to tell about the pretend animal he/she is holding, including the name of the animal. Expand on each child's comments and describe their actions. Examples: "Noah told us he is holding a bird. There is a peacock in the book we will read. A peacock is a type of bird." "Ella is making an elephant trunk with her arm. She is telling us about the animal she is holding." Engage children in a discussion of the sound each animal makes.

Read *Polar Bear, Polar Bear, What Do You Hear?*

When you read about and discuss each animal, draw toddlers' attention to the animal figure or puppet that corresponds to the animal shown on the page. Invite the toddler holding the corresponding item to make it move like the animal shown in the book and/or show the figure or puppet to others.

As you look at and talk about the animal on each page, demonstrate each animal sound. Invite toddlers to make the sound with you. Encourage toddlers to make the animal sound twice: once with a loud voice and once with a quiet voice. Emphasize the words loud and quiet. Recognize toddlers' loud and quiet animal sounds. Example: "I heard your loud roaring sound. Then I heard your quiet roaring sound."

Close the session by suggesting it is time for the animal figures to go to sleep. Encourage toddlers to gently carry their "sleeping" animals to the basket or to a low tabletop.



**Option 2 continued****👁️ What to Look For—Option 2**

Toddlers may participate in this activity in different ways. Some toddlers will make the animal sounds and repeat familiar phrases. Other toddlers may enjoy holding their animal figure while listening and watching. Some toddlers may want to make an animal sound repeatedly. Model a quiet voice when you encourage toddlers to use indoor voices.

Some toddlers may readily show and/or move their animal corresponding to the animal picture in the book, whereas others may need to be reminded what to do.

**📈 More Scaffolding Tips—Option 2**

**Extra support** ■ Some toddlers may benefit from a description and demonstration of loud and quiet voices. Examples: “We use loud voices outside. Let’s use a loud voice together.” “We use quiet voices inside. Let’s use a quiet voice together.” ■ Some toddlers may need extra practice following requests during an exciting activity. Look for other opportunities for toddlers to practice following simple requests. Example: “Max, please put our book on the shelf.” ■ Toddlers who are not familiar with the story may need opportunities to practice the animal sounds. After reading the book, some toddlers may enjoy revisiting some pages and making the corresponding animal sounds.

**Enrichment** ■ Connect the activity to toddlers’ lives. Talk with toddlers about visiting a zoo. Toddlers may want to tell about an experience visiting a zoo or animals they want to see in a zoo. Examples: “Ally told us she visited a zoo with her mom. I wonder what animals she saw?” “Paul growled like a polar bear. I think Paul would like to see a polar bear in a zoo.”



## 24–36 Months

### Option 3 Informal Gathering



#### Skill and Goal Expressive language Awareness of differences in sounds

Toddlers engage in movements and sounds while pretending to be different zoo animals featured in a book.



#### Key Concepts

Sounds  
Move



#### Materials Needed

*Polar Bear, Polar Bear, What Do You Hear?* by Bill Martin Jr. and Eric Carle  
Carpet squares—1 per toddler for 3–4 toddlers (See Be Prepared)



#### Also Promotes

Self-Regulation  
Physical/Health

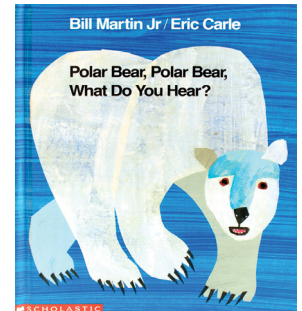
**Be Prepared:** Place carpet squares several feet apart to facilitate children's movements.

Invite 3–4 children to join you, with each toddler sitting or standing on a carpet square. Example: "We are going to pretend to be an animal in our book. We can make sounds like an animal in our book. We can move our bodies like an animal in the book."

Offer an example of pretending to be an animal described in the book by showing the picture of the hippopotamus in the book. Talk about what the hippopotamus says and does. Examples: "There is a hippopotamus in our book. The hippopotamus snorts. Let's make a snorting sound!" "The hippopotamus swims in the water. How can we move our bodies to pretend we are swimming? Let's act like a hippopotamus!" Demonstrate pretending to be a hippopotamus while staying on the carpet square. Encourage toddlers to pretend they are moving and sounding like a hippopotamus.

Continue discussion of some animals featured in the book, such as the snake that "hisses and slithers," the leopard that "snarls and runs fast" (for 'fast' running, demonstrate running in place), and the elephant that trumpets and walks slowly (walking in place). Focus on as many animals as time and children's interest permits. For each animal, invite children to make a sound and move like the animal. Use the book for illustrations and key information. After discussion and pretend actions with each animal, encourage toddlers to make a quiet animal sound before moving to discussion of the next animal.

To bring the session to an end, encourage children to do the "slow elephant" movement. This will help calm their bodies and ready them to sit quietly "because it is time for the zoo animals to rest."



### What to Look For—Option 3

Toddlers will enjoy the practice of pretending. Some toddlers may focus on the sounds, whereas others may focus on the body movements. A smaller number of toddlers may readily engage in both sounds and movements. Accept and affirm different levels of participation. Maintain enthusiasm and a light-hearted tone. Some children may need verbal reminders about staying on their carpet square. Example: "Our carpet squares help us know where we are supposed to be while we pretend we are an animal. We do not want to bump into each other. Everyone has their own carpet square. We are safe when we stay on our squares."

**Option 3 continued** More Scaffolding Tips—Option 3

**Extra support** ■ Some toddlers may need extra support to make quiet sounds for each animal while staying on their square. Examples: “Hayden is making a quiet snorting sound. Let’s make a quiet sound like Hayden.” “Amelia is slithering like a snake on her square. Everyone is safe when we stay on our own square.” “The elephant walks slowly. We are walking slowly on our squares.” ■ Some toddlers may have difficulty moving from discussion of one animal to the next. Allow for time between introducing the new animal and talking about the animal’s sound and movement.

**Enrichment** ■ Toddlers who enjoy this activity may want to play the game that involves other animals. Example: “Cora is barking like a dog. Cora wants to pretend to be a dog. How can we move our bodies like a dog?”

**Interest Area**

**Materials Needed:** *My First Zoo: Let’s Meet the Animals* by DK Publishing, *Polar Bear, Polar Bear, What Do You Hear?* by Bill Martin Jr. and Eric Carle, *Dear Zoo Animal Shapes* by Rod Campbell, animal figures

Place a copy of the book *Polar Bear, Polar Bear, What Do You Hear?* on a low table with zoo animal figures to promote toddler’s imaginary play, storytelling, and memory. Find and display other books related to zoo animals. Use *My First Zoo* book to find pictures of animals included in *Polar Bear, Polar Bear What Do You Hear?* Help toddlers see similarities in the two pictures. On another day, place zoo animal figures in the sensory table with the sensory material of your choice.

**Family Child Care**

**Materials Needed:** paper plate, drawing tools, colored paper, feathers, glue, scissors

Read today’s book to toddlers, preschoolers, and older children. Some toddlers may listen to the story while holding another book. Infants may enjoy holding books and looking at pictures. After the story, older children may enjoy drawing and representing an idea about a zoo. Example: Encourage children to make an animal mask by coloring and decorating a paper plate. Small pieces of colored paper and feathers can be added with school glue. Cut holes for eyes. For a toddler’s mask, cut one rectangular opening instead of two eyeholes. One larger eye area is easier for toddlers to manage. Encourage preschool and older children to look at the illustrations for mask ideas. Older children may enjoy saying the words for each page, such as “Lion, lion, what do you hear?”



## 24–36 Months

### Option 1 Informal Gathering



#### Skill and Goal

##### Object inquiry skills

Toddlers pretend they are driving a car and then use blocks to build and play with roads of their design.



#### Key Concepts

Short      Long  
Big        Small  
Car        Road  
Truck



#### Materials Needed

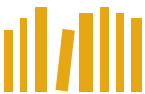
Building blocks  
Toy cars and trucks  
\*2 pictures as shown



#### Also Promotes

Social-Emotional  
Communication/Language

\*Printables provided



#### Optional Reading

*Baby Touch and Feel Cuddly*  
*Animals* by DK Publishing

**BEGIN:** *[Invite toddlers to join you in the block center. Sit on the floor facing toddlers. Pretend you are holding and moving the steering wheel of a car.]*

I am driving a car. I am moving the steering wheel of a car.

Let's all pretend we are driving a car.

*[If toddlers are familiar with the "Wheels on the Bus" song, sing the first verse several times. Invite toddlers to sing with you while moving their pretend steering wheels.]*

**EXPLAIN:** I am driving my pretend car to the grocery store. I need to buy some milk.

**ASK:** Where are you driving your pretend car?

*[Encourage each toddler to say where he/she is going in his/her imaginary car.]*

**EXPLAIN:** *[Stop moving your imaginary steering wheel and look both ways in a pronounced manner when you describe the following driving experience.]*

I see a stop sign. I will stop my car and look both ways. There may be other cars coming or people walking near my car. I do not want to hit another car or person while I am driving.

**ASK:** Do you see anything while you are driving your pretend car?

*[Follow-up prompts, if needed: "Do you also see a stop sign?" "Are there other cars ahead of you or next to you?"]*

**EXPLAIN:** Let's stop driving our cars now.

Cars and trucks go on roads. A road is like a big line for trucks and cars.

*[Display picture of cars and trucks on a four-lane road. Point to and move your finger along the road when you describe it.]*

Some roads have many cars and trucks. Our picture shows a big road. There are many cars and trucks on this road.





**Option 1 continued**

*[Point to the width of the four-lane road when you say it is big. Pause for toddlers to look closely at the picture. Respond to any comments or questions.]*

*Display picture of a car on a small road.]*

Some roads have a small number of cars or trucks. Here is a picture of a road with just one car on it. This is a small road.

*[Point to the width of the road when you say it is small.]*

Some roads are long. People can drive their cars or trucks far, far away on a long road. Some roads are short. People cannot drive very far on a short road.



*[Encourage toddlers to tell about their experiences on roads. Example: "Have you ever been in a car or truck on a road that had a lot of cars and trucks? What happened?"]*

**ASK:** Do you live on a long road or a short road?

**EXPLAIN:** We can use our blocks to build some roads. We can build a big road or a small road. We can build a long road or a short road.

Then we can move some of our cars and trucks on the roads we build.

**ACT:** *[Sit near the block shelf to help toddlers take turns removing blocks. Actively interact with toddlers as they use the blocks. Encourage toddlers to verbalize their plans and ideas. Model sharing and friendly interactions. Example: "Trinity, may I use this block, please?"]*

*As toddlers begin to lay blocks onto the floor, ask about their ideas. Example: "Haley and Elijah, I see you started making your road. You placed firetrucks on it. How can you make your road longer?" Listen and respond to toddlers' ideas.*

*Provide guidance and assistance as needed during the activity. Sit close by to observe and describe toddlers' actions. Point out long and short roads. Point out big and small roads if toddlers created roads with different numbers of lanes.*

*Ask questions that support problem-solving. Example: "Haley and Trinity, let's talk about the bus and truck. Haley is making the truck go on this road. Trinity is driving her bus on the same road. What can you do so the truck and bus do not bump into each other?"*

*After about 10 minutes, gather toddlers and support the process of putting away blocks and toy vehicles.]*

**RECAP:** We learned about roads today. We pretended we were driving a car. We looked at pictures of a big road and a small road. Then we put some blocks in a line to make roads for our cars and trucks.

*[Describe highlights of toddlers' road work. Examples: "Some roads were long. Some roads were short." "Some roads were big and some roads were small." "Our cars and trucks went on the roads we built."]*

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

There are likely to be differences across toddlers in their ability and willingness to participate in imaginary car driving at the beginning of the activity. It is fine if some toddlers prefer to watch you or other toddlers engage in driving a pretend car.

Anticipate and enthusiastically accept differences in how toddlers use the blocks. Generally toddlers will lay the blocks flat, end-to-end, or side to side. Some toddlers may enjoy placing one or two blocks on the floor and playing with little cars on the blocks. Other toddlers may be eager to build roads that intersect with one another. It is not necessary to teach a toddler how to build a road with blocks.

Toddlers will differ in their level of interest in the basic road differences introduced during the activity (big, small, long, short) and their readiness to use these concepts in working with blocks. Over time, toddlers will develop and try out increasingly complex ideas in block play.

Some toddlers may prefer to stack blocks to represent buildings rather than build a road. Gently encourage a toddler who is stacking blocks to connect his/her activity to the road-building efforts of other toddlers. The building (stacked blocks) could be placed next to a road.

Often toddlers bump into one another as they move around. Their understanding of spatial relations is still developing. Show toddlers how to hold blocks at the end to avoid bumping one another with a block.

Toddlers may come and go from the block activity. Encourage a departing toddler to tell you his/her plan. Example: Ask a toddler to say “I am all finished” or “I am coming back.”

**📊 More Scaffolding Tips—Option 1**

**Extra support** ■ Help toddlers avoid small disputes by suggesting they spread their work with blocks into the entire available space. ■ Move around within the activity space from toddler to toddler to talk about their ideas and to encourage participation. ■ In discussing big and small roads, it may be helpful to display the two pictures together and discuss the main differences.

**Enrichment** ■ Suggest toddlers place blocks side-by-side to create a bigger road, such as the four-lane road shown in the picture. ■ If the block road extends to the end of the block area, talk with toddlers about how the cars could turn around. ■ Model the strategy for making a crossroad. ■ Point out differences in the length of roads built by toddlers, using the concepts (long, short) included in the activity. ■ Provide paper and markers in the block area for toddlers to draw lines.



## 24–36 Months

### Option 2 Informal Gathering



#### Skill and Goal

##### Object inquiry skills

Toddlers use pretend tunnels (cardboard boxes) in building and playing with roads they make with blocks.



#### Key Concepts

Tunnel  
(see Option 1)



#### Materials Needed

Building blocks  
Smaller cardboard boxes  
(see Be Prepared)



#### Also Promotes

Social-Emotional  
Communication/Language

**Be Prepared:** Secure several smaller cardboard boxes that can be cut and incorporated into roads made by children in Option 1. Different types of boxes, such as shoeboxes and oatmeal boxes, add variety to the activity. Cut openings in both ends of boxes to create tunnels.

Offer the boxes as pretend tunnels in the road-building segment of the Option 1 activity. The use of tunnels can promote toddlers' emerging spatial relations skills by adding a modest challenge to building and using roads with tunnels.

Toddlers will benefit from figuring out where to place a tunnel and how to use the blocks in relation to the tunnel. Some children may line up blocks end-to-end on both sides of the tunnel. In this arrangement, toy vehicles will move on the floor side of the box when going through the tunnel. Some children may want to place blocks (their road) in the tunnel. Toy vehicles will move continuously on blocks in this arrangement; they will not experience a bump when moving off and onto the blocks when going through the tunnel. A spatial challenge in this road construction plan occurs when the blocks are wider than the box. Children who pursue a solution to this challenge may ask you to cut a side off the box so it can fit over blocks they have lined up for a road.

If a toy vehicle happens to be too tall to move through a tunnel, engage toddlers in a discussion of what is happening.

### What to Look For—Option 2

Some toddlers may find it challenging to create a road that includes a tunnel. Approach the situation as a problem for child(ren) to solve. Offer encouragement. Use questions or hints that can help a child find a solution on his/her own rather; avoid arranging the blocks as a demonstration of what might be done. In addition to the road-with-tunnel arrangements suggested in the activity description above, some children may create a road with their blocks and place a box on top of the blocks.

Anticipate that some children may wish to alter their road construction after moving their toy vehicle through a tunnel. Some children may want to eliminate a "bump" (if blocks do not go continuously through their tunnel), and children who placed a box on top of their road may wish to stabilize a tunnel that moves a bit when a toy vehicle goes through it.

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

**Extra support** ■ Provide an assortment of toy vehicles. ■ Describe for children their road-building efforts and positive social interactions you observe. Toddlers can maintain focus when it is shared with an observant, friendly adult.

**Enrichment** ■ Toddlers may wish for you to take pictures of their roads, especially the tunnels, and display the pictures in the block area. ■ Provide paper and crayons for toddlers to draw and/or “write about” their tunnel and road.

## 24–36 Months

Option 3  
Informal Gathering

## Skill and Goal

## Object inquiry skills

Toddlers use props to create pretend settings or activities at the destination points of roads they create with blocks.



## Key Concepts

(see Option 1)



## Materials Needed

Building blocks  
 Props from dramatic play center  
 Small dishes  
 Pieces of cloth  
 Scarves  
 Toy animals or people figures  
 Loose parts, such as canning jar rings and paper cups



## Also Promotes

Social-Emotional  
 Communication/Language

Extend toddlers' road-building work (see Options 1 and 2) by providing materials that children can use to create a place or activity at the end and/or beginning of their road. Children may use toy dishes for breakfast before embarking on a trip in their toy vehicle to their place of work or a farm or their child development center. Children could include a stop en route to their destination, such as a gas station or store. The materials you provide are likely to shape the theme of toddlers' play with the road.

Talk with toddlers about their play ideas. Describe their actions and offer positive comments. Example: "Your kitchen looks like a cozy place." Describe play themes that emerge. Some toddlers may assume the role of an animal as part of the play.

 What to Look For—Option 3

Toddlers enjoy playing in groups, and often need guidance and support from their caregiver. Be prepared to help toddlers share materials, take turns, and assign roles. Generally, if there are several toddlers working with blocks, it is a good idea for one adult to stay seated on the floor in the activity area to facilitate early interactive play and to serve as a coach for social problem-solving.

If toddlers become very excited during the activity, interject a short pause for a drink of water, or suggest a nighttime theme. Encourage a minute of rest, disguised as a play theme. Example: "It is bedtime on the boat. Where will the cat sleep?"

If toddlers wish to exclude another child from the play, tell them everyone can play. Assist toddlers in considering various roles friends can play, such as the little brother, cousin, or uncle. Stay close and help toddlers resolve issues that arise from playing in close proximity, and from sharing materials.

It is a good idea to keep track of how much time is needed for cleanup from an activity that involves different items from different parts of your room. Give several reminders, such as ten minutes (and then five minutes) before cleanup.

 More Scaffolding Tips—Option 3

**Extra support** ■ If the activity area becomes crowded, help toddlers manage their play by moving furnishings to create more space. ■ If cleaning up is difficult for a toddler, suggest he/she can put away one type of toy.

**Enrichment** ■ If toddlers have a unified theme in their play, such as a favorite restaurant or an emergency (a fire, accident) at their destination point, identify a book on the topic that can be shared with children later in the day.





### Interest Area

**Materials needed:** small soft blocks, figures or smaller vehicle toys, \*road pictures (Option 1), books about construction, paper, crayons, construction hats

Place small soft blocks on a low table with figures or smaller vehicle toys. Display the \*road pictures. Place books about construction in the block center and book area. Cover a table with paper and provide crayons for toddlers to draw roads. Encourage toddlers to drive little cars on the roads they draw. Place construction hats in the dramatic play area to extend the construction work activity.

\*Printables provided



### Family Child Care

**Materials needed:** blocks, chalk, toy vehicles

During a gathering time, provide blocks for toddlers and preschool-age children. Some toddlers may carry the blocks from one area to another. Encourage toddlers to help make the road. Talk with children about places you know they have traveled by car. Example: "Andrew and his family followed a road from their home all the way to his grandmother's home." Outdoors, provide chalk and toy vehicles for toddlers to continue road work. Infants who can sit without support will enjoy holding blocks.



## 24–36 Months

### Option 1 Informal Gathering



#### Skill and Goal Concentration

Toddlers observe actions coordinated with words as part of a song.



#### Key Concepts

Sing  
Move  
Bus



#### Materials Needed

\*1 picture as shown



#### Also Promotes

Communication/Language  
Cognitive  
Physical/Health

\*Printables provided



#### Optional Reading

*Wheels on the Bus* by Raffi

**Be Prepared:** Become familiar with the words and movements of the first two verses of the song, “Wheels on the Bus.” One resource is the book suggested in Optional Reading.

**BEGIN:** *[Invite several toddlers to join you for a song about a bus. Display picture of a bus.]*

This is a picture of a bus. Many children ride on a bus to go to school. This is called a school bus.



H. Michael Miley/wikimedia/(CC BY-SA 2.0)

**ASK:** Have you ever seen (or been on) a bus? What was it like?

**EXPLAIN:** *[Point to wheels in picture of bus.]*

The wheels on a bus help the bus to move. The wheels go around and around when they move.

I am going to sing a song about a bus. You may know this song. Please listen to the words that I sing.

*[Point to your ears.]*

**ACT:** *[Sing the first verse (wheels) of the bus song without movements. You may wish to move your body slightly with the beat of the song. Sing words clearly and at a pace that allows children to hear each word. Smile and look at each toddler as you sing.]*

**EXPLAIN:** We can move parts of our body to this song! Please watch me move my arms when I sing about the wheels.

*[Demonstrate the wheel motion.]*

I am moving my arms around and around. The wheels on a bus go around and around when they move.

**ACT:** *[Sing the first verse (wheels) of the bus song, this time moving your arms.]*

I sang the words and moved my arms.

**ASK:** Would you like me to sing about another part of the bus?

*[If one or more toddlers say “yes,” introduce the second verse (horn). Explain the movement that accompanies the horn. Sing the verse clearly with both words and movement.]*

**RECAP:** We listened to the words in a song about a bus. I used my arms and hand to make the movements of the wheels and to pretend I was honking the horn on the bus. This was a fun song!

## 24–36 Months

### Option 2 Informal Gathering



#### Skill and Goal Concentration

Toddlers practice movements coordinated with the words of a song.



#### Key Concepts

Sing  
Move  
Bus



#### Materials Needed

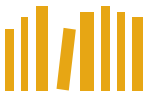
\*1 picture as shown



#### Also Promotes

Communication/Language  
Cognitive  
Physical/Health

\*Printables provided



#### Optional Reading

*Wheels on the Bus* by Raffi

**Be Prepared:** Become familiar with the words and movements of several verses of the song “Wheels on the Bus.” One resource is the book suggested in Optional Reading.

Invite several toddlers to sing a song about a bus. Show the picture of the school bus and talk with toddlers about their experiences seeing (or riding on) a bus. Introduce the song and invite toddlers to listen to the words and sing with you when they are ready.



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Sing the first verse slowly and clearly without movement. Smile and look at each toddler. After the words have been sung, introduce the accompanying movement. Example: “We can move parts of our body when we sing the song! The song tells us that wheels go around. We can make our arms go around like this when we sing about wheels. Let’s all make our arms go around like wheels!” Invite toddlers to sing the verse again, this time adding the arm movements.

## 24–36 Months

### Option 3 Informal Gathering



#### Skill and Goal Concentration

Toddlers independently practice movements coordinated with the words of a song.



#### Key Concepts

Sing  
Move  
Bus



#### Materials Needed

\*1 picture as shown



#### Also Promotes

Communication/Language  
Cognitive  
Physical/Health

\*Printables provided



#### Optional Reading

*Wheels on the Bus* by Raffi

**Be Prepared:** This activity is designed for toddlers who are familiar with the words and movements for several verses of the song “Wheels on the Bus,” so they can participate with minimal prompting or demonstration. Become familiar with the words and movements of up to four verses of the song “Wheels on the Bus.” One resource is the book suggested in Optional Reading.

Invite several toddlers to sing a song about a bus. Show the picture of the school bus and remind toddlers of parts of a bus included in the song, including wheels, horn, and doors. Introduce the song and invite toddlers to sing and do the accompanying movements with you. Sing clearly and slowly, smiling at each of the toddlers. Encourage toddlers to sing the words and move their bodies along with each verse of the song. You may wish to sing up to four verses if toddlers are enjoying the activity.



H. Michael Milley/wikimedia/CC BY-SA 2.0)



### What to Look For—Options 1–3

The three options gradually increase the challenge of coordinating physical movements and words to a song. The first and second options promote skill in paying attention, and the third option adds the task of recalling both actions and movements. In the first two options, look at how children watch your actions. You may wish to describe specifics of an action if you notice puzzled faces. In the third option, look at the ease with which children engage in singing and coordinating the appropriate movement. Toddlers who are new to the song may be more successful starting with the first option. Keep in mind that many toddlers are relatively new to the task of doing an action in coordination with a word. Some may do the motion but not say the word, whereas others may say the words but not do an action. Positively acknowledge all levels of participation.

### More Scaffolding Tips—Options 1–3

**Extra support** ■ Briefly mention the skill that helps children be successful in each of the three options. Examples: (for Option 1) “We know what actions to do because we paid attention to what I did with my arms and hands. We listened to the words in the song.” (for Option 3): “We are remembering what actions to do with different parts of our song.” ■ If toddlers seem to have difficulty focusing on a specific action, it may be helpful to invite children to “get their wiggles out.” Example: “Let’s stand up and get our wiggles out.” Lead toddlers in wiggling (in the following order) their arms, legs, feet, and their whole body. Then ask toddlers to sit again so the bus song can continue. Example: “We did a good job getting our wiggles out. Now we are ready to sit on the floor and sing our song again.” ■ Help toddlers understand key words and related actions when you introduce a new verse. Example: “People are ‘up’ when they are getting on or off the bus. People are ‘down’ when they sit to ride the bus. Let’s all practice ‘up’ and ‘down’ by moving our bodies.”

**Enrichment** ■ Provide a toy bus for toddlers to touch and hold before and/or after the song. Encourage toddlers to turn the wheels and open and close the doors like the actions in the song. ■ Invite toddlers to select verses they would like to sing and move to. Some toddlers may enjoy making up their own verses for the group to sing.

### Interest Area

**Materials Needed:** dollhouse, toy school bus, people figures

Invite several toddlers to play with the dollhouse and school bus. Invite toddlers to incorporate the school bus into their dollhouse play. Talk with toddlers about their experiences with seeing or riding on a bus. Encourage toddlers to explore the bus and talk with them about how the wheels go around, the doors open and close, and the people get on and off.





## Family Child Care

Participating in song and movement activities is enjoyable for children of all ages. Infants will enjoy watching and being part of the group. Guide children in a song game of your choice. Add more sections or lines as children are ready. Older children may enjoy leading the song game and thinking of new verses or movements for the group to try.



## 24–36 Months

### Option 1 Informal Gathering



#### Skill and Goal

##### Social interaction skills

Toddlers practice taking turns as part of playing with peers.



#### Key Concepts

Play together

Take turns



#### Materials Needed

Blocks

Toy farm animal figures

Several baskets



#### Also Promotes

Communication/Language

Self-Regulation

**Be Prepared:** Place the farm animal figures in baskets in the block area. Keep blocks on their shelves so toddlers have an opportunity for shared work in removing blocks.

**BEGIN:** *[Invite toddlers to join you in the block area to build a farm using blocks. Place the basket of animal figures close to toddlers. Begin the activity with the first two or three toddlers who come to the block area. Other toddlers will be drawn into the activity by your enthusiasm and the play interactions.]*

**EXPLAIN:** Let's build a farm for our animals. Building a farm is a big job. We will need lots of helpers. Here are the animals who need homes.

**ACT:** *[Encourage toddlers to take turns removing animals from the baskets.*

*Describe turn taking. Example: "It is Nevaeh's turn. She takes out one animal. Next, Josiah, you take a turn. Please take out one animal. Yes, now Nevaeh takes another animal. Josiah, who has a turn next? Yes. Josiah gets a turn."*

*Encourage toddlers to name each of the animal figures as they are removed from the basket. Offer the name if toddlers are not sure.]*

**ASK:** What should we build on our farm so all our animals have a home?

*[Pause for toddlers to offer idea(s). Use toddlers' ideas as a starting point for the activity. If no ideas are offered, ask toddlers how the blocks might be used to build homes for the farm animals.]*

**ACT:** *[Invite toddlers to get the blocks they would like to build with from the shelf.*

*Encourage toddlers to play together. Examples: "Yes, making a dog house is a good idea. Josiah and Nevaeh, do you want to work on the doghouse together?" "Maybe you would like to make your doghouse big, so you can put both your puppies inside to be friends."*

*Encourage toddlers to invite a peer to play. Example: "Alexis, you can ask a friend, 'Do you want to play with me?' You have a good idea about making a bed inside the doghouse. Maybe Riaan would like to help you."*

*Point out positive interactions. Example: "You are all working together to get the animals from the baskets."*

**Option 1 continued**

*End the activity after 10–15 minutes. You may wish to keep the farm structures intact for the rest of the day so toddlers can play with them. Describe this plan to toddlers. Alternatively, you might lead toddlers in cleanup. Encourage all toddlers to help take care of the toys by putting them away.]*

**RECAP:** We played together with blocks and animals. We took turns taking animals from the basket. Some friends built homes for animals. We are learning how to play together.

*[Describe some actions you observed that led to positive play. Example: “Josiah and Nevaeh worked together to build a doghouse!”]*

**👁️ What to Look For—Option 1**

Toddlers will be excited to get blocks from the shelf for building. Some toddlers may attempt to get more blocks than they can easily carry. Facilitate turn taking as toddlers remove blocks from the shelf.

There are likely to be differences across toddlers in their familiarity with farm animals and farms. Some toddlers may remember the word “barn” from book sharing or other experiences. Be sure to offer names of animals and farm buildings so all toddlers have the benefit of farm knowledge related to the play activity.

Toddlers are developing an understanding of spatial relations and sometimes attempt to play very close to others. Social interactions will be most positive if toddlers have enough room to move without bumping others. Help toddlers find a good spot for play. Generally, toddlers play next to one another (parallel play). Suggesting two toddlers “work together” introduces the idea of interactive play and cooperation.

Stay close to toddlers and actively facilitate block building by talking aloud about toddlers’ intentions and actions. Examples: “Nevaeh, Josiah is saying he wants a big doghouse for all the dogs. Do you want to work with Josiah, or would you like to keep making one little house for the puppy? It is okay if you and Josiah have your own ideas.”

If issues regarding materials arise, provide guidance as needed. Example: “Josiah, that block is being used by Nevaeh to build her barn. There are more blocks on the shelf. Would you like me to help you find another long block? We have blocks for everyone.”

**📊 More Scaffolding Tips—Option 1**

**Extra support** ■ A toddler might choose to be close to the other toddlers without taking an active role. Provide support for developing social skills by suggesting a role for the toddler, such as holding animals or stacking blocks. ■ Describe another toddler’s play to a toddler who seems hesitant to participate. Example: “Jonelle is barking because she is pretending to be a nice, friendly puppy.” ■ Suggest phrases and words for toddlers to initiate play, such as “Do you want to play?”

**BLOCK**  
**1**

# Interacting with Others *(continued)*



## ***Option 1 continued***

**Enrichment** ■ Some toddlers may want to bring items, such as dishes and dolls, from the housekeeping area to the farm activity. Talk with toddlers about how they want to use the new materials. Allow extra time to help toddlers put materials away. ■ Provide toy figures of people for toddlers' use in their play. Toddlers may wish to make a house for a farm family or a bed for a farmer.

## 24–36 Months

### Option 2 Informal Gathering



#### Skill and Goal

##### Social interaction skills

Toddlers practice taking turns while participating in a song activity.



#### Key Concepts

Farm animals  
Taking turns



#### Materials Needed

Toy farm animals  
Basket



#### Also Promotes

Communication/Language  
Self-Regulation



Invite several toddlers to sit around a low table and sing a song about farm animals. Introduce the basket of animals and invite one toddler at a time to pick out a farm animal to hold. Depending on the number of farm animals, each toddler may have the opportunity to select a second animal. Help toddlers understand the concept of taking turns. Example: “Josie is picking her farm animal, let’s see what she chooses! Jack, you will get to pick your animal next. After that it will be Amiyah’s turn!” Acknowledge the disappointment of a toddler who does not get the opportunity to select a specific farm animal. Provide a later opportunity for the toddler to play with the desired animal. (See Extra Support tip)

As toddlers pick out their animals, encourage each toddler to name the animal he/she is holding. Example: “Josie, you are holding an animal that has feathers. What is the name of your animal?” Encourage the small group to make the sound of the animal. Example: “Josie told us she is holding a duck. Let’s all practice making the sound of a duck!”

Once toddlers have their animals, explain that we can sing “Old MacDonald Had a Farm” together. Invite each toddler to hold up their animal during the song. Example: “We are going to sing about each of our animals! First, we will start with Josie’s duck. Josie will hold up her duck while we sing. Next, we will sing about Jack’s horse, and Jack will hold up his horse. Everyone will get a chance to hold up their animal while we sing!”

At the conclusion of the song, provide a description of toddlers’ behaviors during the activity. Example: “We all took turns picking a farm animal from the basket. Then we sang a song together. We took turns holding up our animals. We had fun together with our song and farm animals!”

### 👁️ What to Look For—Option 2

This activity is about providing a fun, interactive experience for toddlers to enjoy together. Toddlers have the opportunity to practice waiting for their turn to pick out, and later hold up, their animal during the song. Limiting the “waiting time” for each toddler to have a turn supports new skill development. (See Extra Support tip) Some toddlers may benefit from being frequently reminded of when their turn will occur. Examples: “Your turn will be next,



**Option 2 continued**

Amiyah." "Josie's turn will be after Amiyah picks her animal." Toddlers may be excited about holding their animal up during the song and may not do so at the appropriate time. Acknowledge their enthusiasm and enjoyment in the activity with their peers. Example: "Amiyah, I can see you are excited about holding up your cow! You are singing all the words of our song with your friends while you hold your cow."

Recognize and acknowledge each type of positive interaction during the activity. Examples: "Jack was excited, and he waited patiently for us to sing about his horse!" "Amiyah sang all the words about the animals! I think you liked singing together with your friends, Amiyah." "We all had fun singing together!"

 **More Scaffolding Tips—Option 2**

**Extra support** ■ A toddler who is disappointed about not getting to select a specific animal may enjoy time to play with the desired animal after the song. Example: "Jack, I can see that you are disappointed you do not get to hold the cow during our song. Would you like to hold and play with the cow when we are finished singing?" ■ Waiting for a turn to pick out an animal may be challenging for some toddlers. Limit the activity to two or three toddlers to minimize the wait time.

**Enrichment** ■ Toddlers may enjoy "trading" animals to sing a second round of the song. Encourage toddlers to use their words to negotiate the exchange. Example: "Jack, I know you really wanted to hold the cow. You can ask Amiyah if she will give you the cow, and if she would like to have your horse." ■ Toddlers who enjoy this activity may have fun putting all the animals back in the basket and taking turns during the song to pick one out to sing about.



## 24–36 Months

### Option 3 Informal Gathering



#### Skill and Goal

##### Social interaction skills

Toddlers explore ways to initiate or join play with peers and work together in farm-focused pretend play.



#### Key Concepts

Play together



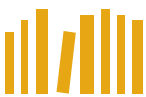
#### Materials Needed

- Blocks
- Toy barn
- Toy farm animal figures
- Paper for tearing and crinkling



#### Also Promotes

- Communication/Language
- Self-Regulation



#### Optional Reading

*Big Red Barn* by Margaret Wise Brown

Place the farm animal figures, toy barn, and different colors/sizes of paper near the block area. You may also wish to place the *Big Red Barn* book nearby to support toddlers’ interest in the animals and building structures. Invite several toddlers to explore the new materials in the block area. Example: “We have some new things in our block area today. We have farm animals and a barn, just like in our book *Big Red Barn*. How can we use the blocks and paper on the farm? Who would like to play?”

Encourage toddlers to play together by helping them learn how to start play and how to join in an established group. Help toddlers become familiar with two specific phrases: “Do you want to play?” and “May I play with you?”

Encourage toddlers to work together to think of new ideas for the materials, such as the paper and blocks. Examples: “I think the animals on our farm are hungry. I wonder if we can tear this paper into pieces of pretend food for the animals. What do you think the animals would like to eat?” “Joshua said horses like to eat hay. Maybe we can crinkle some pieces of paper to use as pretend hay for the horses!” “We have a barn for the animals, what else can we build on our farm?” (Ideas may include a fence, dog house, farm house, pigpen, etc.)

Acknowledge and describe the positive interactions throughout the activity. Examples: “Delilah and Samuel are working together to build a fence for the horses. They are sharing the blocks!” “Marcus and Joshua made food for their animals. Marcus helped Joshua crinkle the paper to look like hay. Now their animals are eating!”

### What to Look For—Option 3

This activity provides opportunities to practice positive social interactions, especially joining another child engaged in ongoing play, inviting others to play, and sharing materials. Some toddlers will jump right in and begin playing. Encourage and provide explicit support for toddlers to use their words to invite another toddler to play. Example: “Delilah, you are building blocks around the cows. I see that Samuel is watching you. Would you like to use your words to ask Samuel if he would help you build with the blocks?” Some toddlers may prefer to watch before joining in play. If the toddler appears interested in an activity, encourage them to ask to join the play. Example: “Samuel, I see you are interested in what Delilah is building with the blocks. Would you like to build with her? You can say ‘can I play with you?’ to Delilah. Let’s ask her and see what she says!”

**Option 3 continued**

Some toddlers will enjoy playing together, whereas others will prefer to play with their own materials next to others (parallel play). Recognize and acknowledge each type of play, while encouraging social interaction. Example: “Jeni, I see you are using all the long blocks to build a fence around your horse. Do you need more long blocks? I see Marcus has some. How about asking Marcus if you can use them?”

**More Scaffolding Tips—Option 3**

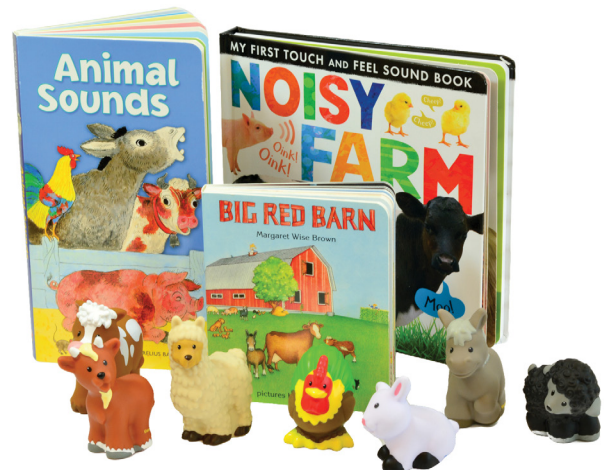
**Extra support** ■ Some toddlers may need additional support to share materials while playing in the same space. Model phrases toddlers can use when sharing space. Examples: “I see that you want the block that Jeni is using. You may ask Jeni if you can have the block after she’s done. Let’s look for another block you can use now.” “Jeni, you don’t like it when Jamal takes the block you are using. You can tell him you are not done yet. Let’s help him find another block.”

**Enrichment** ■ Toddlers may enjoy “acting out” parts of the *Big Red Barn* book. Read the story and talk about how the animals come out of the barn in the morning to eat and play, then go back in the barn at night to sleep. Invite toddlers to practice moving their animals in and out of the barn while talking with them about what the animals are doing. Example: “Jamal put the horses in the barn. In our book, the horses go in the barn to sleep. What are your horses doing, Jamal?” ■ Some toddlers may want to bring additional items into the farm activity, such as dishes, people figures, or cars/trucks. Talk with toddlers about how they want to use the new materials.

 Interest Area

**Materials Needed:** *Big Red Barn* by Margaret Wise Brown, blocks, toy farm animal figures

Promote interactive play by placing farm animal figures near the blocks. Display the *Big Red Barn* by Margaret Wise Brown and several other richly-illustrated books about farms or farm animals in the block area so toddlers may look at pictures during block play. The books are intended to spark ideas for using blocks and animals. Toddlers may benefit from your talking with them about pictures in the book. Example: If toddlers are interested in making a pigpen, find a picture of a pigpen in a book and show it to toddlers. “Maybe our book will show us how it is made. Here is a picture of a pen for pigs. The fence is on all sides of the pig house.”



 Family Child Care

**Materials Needed:** *Big Red Barn* by Margaret Wise Brown, blocks, toy farm animal figures

Preschool-age children in your setting may be good models for toddlers who are developing social interaction skills with peers. Place the farm animals in the block area and include all children in the activity. Provide plenty of materials for play. Sit on the floor where it is easy to talk with toddlers and to give them guidance in playing with others. Some toddlers may want to interact primarily with you. Help them shift an interaction with you to an interaction with a peer by inviting other children to participate in a specific task, such as making a corral for horses.



## 24–36 Months

### Option 1 Informal Gathering



#### Skill and Goal

**Fine motor development**

**Gross motor development**

Toddlers practice physical movements named in a song.



#### Key Concepts

Shake



#### Materials Needed

None



#### Also Promotes

Self-Regulation

**Be Prepared:** Learn the song “Shake My Sillies Out,” which is available on the internet and other resources, such as “Raffi in Concert.” Singing the song (versus using a recording of the song) helps you use movements that are appropriate for children in your group, regulate the pace of the song, and clearly say movements that may be difficult for children to hear on a recording. You may wish to use carpet squares to help toddlers stay in their personal space.

Begin an informal gathering with a familiar song. Playfully ask toddlers if they have any wiggles or jiggles inside themselves! Invite children to engage in several movements (one movement at a time) that helps them shake out their wiggles. Lead toddlers in movements included in the song, such as shaking a leg, stretching an arm, and yawning widely.

Explain that you will sing a song that helps us practice getting our sillies out. Sing the song so all toddlers can hear you. Lead toddlers in motions, such as shaking and clapping. Use motions that toddlers in your room can readily do (see What to Look For).

Generally toddlers are interested in spirited songs and activities. To help children calm their bodies and minds after shaking their sillies out, encourage toddlers to give themselves a hug at the end of the song. Suggest toddlers hold up their fingers and pretend to blow out candles.

### What to Look For—Option 1

Two different types of toddler actions are important to monitor during the activity. One is the ease with which children engage in the gross motor skills you include in the song. Provide more time or practice or adaptations for movements that seem challenging. Look for hints of emerging movements that you can include in the song today or at a later point. Example: At approximately 22 months of age, many toddlers have the strength, balance, and coordination skills for jumping in place with two feet together. Include jumping in the song if you see evidence of this emerging skill. Encourage toddlers who are not ready to jump to reach up high.

The other important set of actions to observe is toddlers’ skills in controlling their behaviors. The activity supports the development of self-control by encouraging children to follow a request, wait for a signal (words in your song) to start or stop a specific action, and to move in a specific way. You may want to provide additional time for toddlers to act as requested and/or repeat the request.



## ***Option 1 continued***

### More Scaffolding Tips—Option 1

**Extra support** ■ Limit the number of ways to “shake my sillies out” if the activity seems too challenging for most toddlers. ■ Toddlers may need reminders to stay in their own space to avoid bumping into others. ■ Use gestures and demonstrations to provide information non-verbally.

**Enrichment** ■ Invite toddlers to suggest movements for getting their “sillies out.”





## 24–36 Months

### Option 2 Informal Gathering



#### Skill and Goal

**Fine motor development**

**Gross motor development**

Toddlers practice three different sets of physical movements.



#### Key Concepts

Clap  
Wiggle  
Thumb  
Walk  
Around



#### Materials Needed

Colorful no-slip placemats or carpet squares  
Lively recorded music



#### Also Promotes

Self-Regulation

**Be Prepared:** Learn the thumb song with hand motions described in the activity below. Arrange the colored mats or carpet squares in a large circle to allow for plenty of movement. Cue up recorded music just before you start the activity. The activity has three separate segments: clapping, wiggling thumbs, and walking around a circle of mats or carpet squares. At this age, it is not suggested that you wait until all toddlers are paying attention to introduce a new segment. Promptly begin a new segment. Toddlers will turn their attention to the activity when they hear or see action.

**BEGIN:** *[Invite toddlers to an informal gathering. Ask each toddler to choose one of the colored placemats or carpet squares. Toddlers will use the place mat as their spot to sit later in the activity.]*

*Begin a clapping rhythm as soon as two toddlers arrive at the gathering area. Encourage toddlers to join you in energetic clapping. Continue clapping as you sing a song using toddlers' names. (Tune: "Skip to My Lou")]*

We see Jordan, clap our hands

We see Angel, clap our hands

We see Xavier, clap our hands

Clap for all our friends

Clap and smile for friends we know

Clap up high and way down low

Clap along, you can too

Clap along, that's what we do

*[Repeat or improvise as you wish until three or four toddlers are gathered.]*

**EXPLAIN:** Let's sit down on our colored mats. We used our hands to clap! One part of our hand is our thumb.

We can open our hand wide to see our thumb. We can close our fingers and keep our thumb on the side.

*[Demonstrate closing your fingers and keeping your thumb out. Give time for toddlers to follow your example.]*

Let's wiggle one of our thumbs.



## Option 2 continued

**ACT:** *[Explain that you will sing a song for thumbs! Start the song right away. Encourage toddlers to imitate your action. (Tune: "I'm a Little Tea Pot")]*

**Oh, my thumb is up**  
*[Thumb up]*

**and my thumb is down.**  
*[Thumbs down]*

**Watch my thumb dance around.**  
*[Move thumb in a big circular motion]*

**Dancing on my shoulders,**  
*[Thumb moves on opposite shoulder]*

**dancing on my head,**  
*[Move thumb on top of head]*

**Dancing on my knees,**  
*[Move thumb on opposite knee]*

**then tuck it into bed.**  
*[Close hand with thumb hidden]*

*[Repeat the song and actions if appropriate. Thank toddlers for focusing on the thumb song! Invite toddlers to stand. Draw attention to the mats or carpet squares. Explain that we can walk around our mats while clapping. Lead toddlers around the circle of mats/squares one time, saying a simple phrase, such as:*

**We walk and clap**  
**We walk and clap**  
**All the way around.**  
**Walk and clap**  
**Walk and clap**  
*[Continue the phrase until you complete one time around the circle]*  
**And then we sit right down.**

**EXPLAIN:** Now we can clap and walk around the mats with music. Let's all stand up to walk around the mats and clap. We will stop walking and clapping when the music stops.

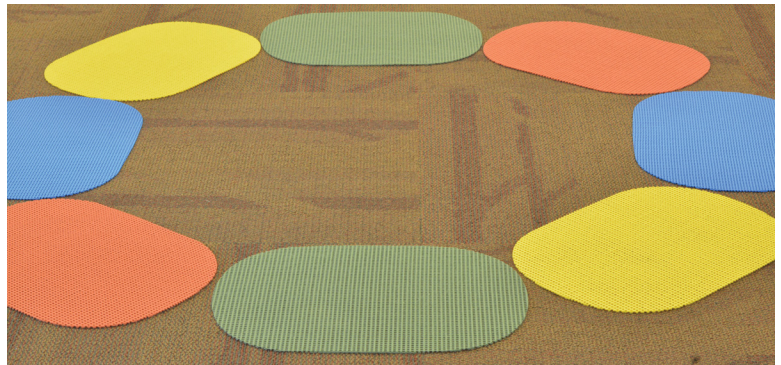
*[Begin the recorded music. Clap and walk around the circle with toddlers.]*

**Option 2 continued**

**ACT:** [*Widen the circle of mats to create a larger activity space that prevents crowding.*

*Approach the walk-and-clap activity as a little celebration just for today. Add your own special touch to make the activity fun for toddlers!*

*Stop the music and remind toddlers to sit down on a mat. Help toddlers get calm with a relaxing song or other calming technique.]*



**RECAP:** Today we moved in different ways. We clapped for our friends. We danced our thumbs all around. Then we walked around the circle and clapped our hands.

**👁️ What to Look For—Option 2**

As the Informal Gathering begins, toddlers will be excited to clap as more children join the gathering. At this age you are likely to hear spontaneous exclamations, such as a toddler shouting when a friend is near. Simply respond, by saying “Yes, here is our friend Emmanuel. We clap for Emmanuel.”

If this is an introduction to walking around the gathering area, you might begin by practicing with toddlers simply walking around a circle on colored mats. Add clapping action at a later time.

Being really prepared for the activity will help you create a fun, energetic skill-building experience. With intentional planning, toddlers will gain experience getting excited and calming. The activity supports Self-Regulation.

**📈 More Scaffolding Tips—Option 2**

**Extra support** ■ Help a toddler isolate his/her thumb by gently touching a toddler’s thumb and saying, “Here is your thumb.” ■ Some toddlers may need a description or a reminder of the meanings of words used in the second segment: up, down, around, head, shoulder, knee. ■ For the third segment, omit the music or the clapping if you anticipate a combination of walking, clapping, and hearing music will be too challenging for most toddlers.

**Enrichment** ■ For the third segment, add or use a gross motor movement toddlers can achieve, such as taking bigger steps or hopping in place. ■ Instead of clapping in the third segment, offer each child a shaker or small bell to move while walking around a circle.



## 24–36 Months

### Option 3 Informal Gathering



#### Skill and Goal

**Fine motor development**

**Gross motor development**

Toddlers practice four physical movements repeatedly requested in a song.



#### Key Concepts

Turn  
Touch  
Reach  
Bend



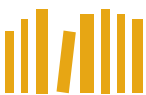
#### Materials Needed

Carpet squares



#### Also Promotes

Self-Regulation



#### Optional Reading

*Clap Your Hands* by David Ellwand

*Teddy Bear, Teddy Bear, Turn Around* by Scholastic Inc.

*Jesse Bear, What Will You Wear?* by Nancy White Carlstrom

**Be Prepared:** Learn the tune, words, and actions for the “Teddy Bear” song. Arrange carpet squares where toddlers may sit.

Open the session by singing a familiar song or rhyme that invites children to join a gathering. Explain that we will do actions requested in the “Teddy Bear, Teddy Bear” song, such as turn, touch, reach, bend. Demonstrate each action and encourage toddlers to imitate your movements. Some children may be familiar with the actions and rhyme, and would be eager to demonstrate for others.

Say or sing the words and lead toddlers in the actions. Use modified lyrics for the last verse by saying or singing “brush your hair” instead of “say your prayers.”

Close the activity with a favorite song or finger play.

### What to Look For—Option 3

Pay attention to the ease with which toddlers do the actions, so you can pace the song to match skill levels. Toddlers will learn four actions in the song with repeated experience. It is helpful for toddlers to hear the words and see your actions as they participate. Toddlers will enjoy a sense of satisfaction as they complete the four actions.

As a follow-up activity on another day, toddlers may enjoy interacting with you and a teddy bear toy during a play period or other informal gathering. Toddlers may wish to teach the bear what to do by demonstrating the actions.

More teddy bear actions for toddlers to imitate are found in the book *Jesse Bear, What Will You Wear* by Nancy White Carlstrom. Toddlers may like to demonstrate what Jesse Bear is doing on each page, such as eating, washing hands, and dressing. The book also shows the little bear on his back with legs in the air.

### More Scaffolding Tips—Option 3

**Extra support** ■ Repeat the song and model the movements. ■ Encourage a toddler to sit or stand near you if you anticipate the actions may be challenging for the toddler to do.

**Enrichment** ■ Repeat the song for individual children at a playtime, using a real staircase. ■ On another day, share books that invite toddlers to make movements. *Clap Your Hands* by David Ellwand offers a variety of gross motor actions for toddlers to try.



### Interest Area

**Materials Needed:** colored mats, rainbow scarves, basket, mirror, paint, soft bear toys

Encourage toddlers to explore uses of the colored mats by placing them in an accessible location. Put rainbow scarves in a basket near a mirror to encourage toddlers to move with the scarves. At a low art table, encourage toddlers to make handprints on paper by painting one thumb and their fingers. Provide soft bear toys in the dramatic play area. Arrange figures of bears or teddy bears with related books.



### Family Child Care

In addition to the thumb actions in Option 2, children of all ages will enjoy “Where is Thumbkin.” Infants may simply wave their hands as you sing. Preschool and older children will enjoy the challenge of isolating each finger.

For more challenge and fun, encourage children to move toes. Invite children to remove their shoes and put their socks inside the shoes. Sing “If You’re Happy and You Know It” and lead children in the actions. Add a novel verse about toes. Example: “If you’re happy and you know it wiggle your toes.”