



**Communication/
Language**

Exploring Words

- Option 1** (OO) A toddler contributes to a shared book reading session by holding and managing the book.
- Option 2** (IG) Toddlers practice holding and managing books they select and look at as part of planning and preparing for a pretend party.
- Option 3** (IG) Toddlers practice using books they select and look at as part of play with toy trucks and cars.



Cognitive

Solving Problems

- Option 1** (OO) A toddler anticipates what person or animal he/she may see in a book on peekaboo.
- Option 2** (IG) Toddlers guess what animals are hiding behind the flap of a peekaboo book.
- Option 3** (IG) Toddlers participate in a shared reading of a peekaboo book and then use clues about an animal featured in the book to guess what toy animal is hidden in a paper bag.



Self-Regulation

Focusing and Remembering

- Option 1** (IG) Toddlers observe a simple memory game.
- Option 2** (OO) A toddler participates in a simple memory game.
- Option 3** (IG) Toddlers participate together in a simple memory game.



Social-Emotional

Interacting with Others

- Option 1** (IG) Toddlers watch and imitate actions of staff and peers with play dough.
- Option 2** (IG) Toddlers watch and imitate actions of peers as part of food-related play with play dough.
- Option 3** (IG) Toddlers engage in pretend grocery store play.



Physical/Health

Using Our Hands

- Option 1** (IG) Toddlers use their hands and fingers to feel and manipulate sand and shells.
- Option 2** (IG) Toddlers use scoops, cups, and their hands to manipulate a dry material, such as sand, in pretend play.
- Option 3** (IG) Toddlers use their hands to manipulate objects and pour water from a bottle to a cup and from a cup to a bottle.

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

Revision 07/22/20



24–36 Months

Option 1 One-to-One



Skill and Goal

Receptive language

Expressive language

Awareness of print and pictures

A toddler contributes to a shared book reading session by holding and managing the book.



Key Concepts

Picture

Hold

Page

Turn



Materials Needed

All the World by Liz Garton



Also Promotes

Social-Emotional

Invite a toddler to sit next to you to share a story. Show the toddler the cover of the book and point to and describe images on the cover, especially the two children and the path/road. Explain, "Our book is called *All the World*. It was written by a person whose name is Liz Garton."

Open the book and begin to read the text. Use your own playful words to describe some of the pictures. Also, as you read the book, point to a picture and ask the toddler what he/she sees. Emphasize words that rhyme and words that repeat.

Pause while reading to respond to the toddler's comments or actions, such as pointing to a picture.

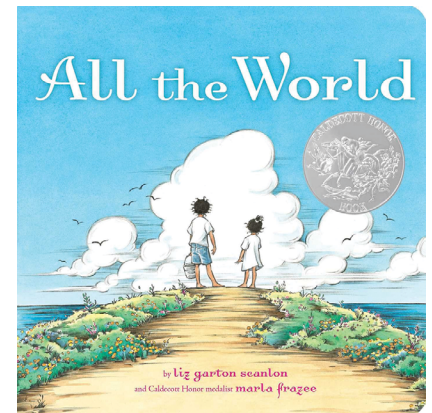
During or at the conclusion of the book sharing, ask the toddler if he/she would like to hold the book. Place the book on the toddler's lap and, if it appears necessary, show him/her how to turn one page.

Point to details in some of the pictures, and encourage the toddler to point. Examples: "The truck is on the road." "The children are playing by the water."

Encourage the toddler to:

- Turn one page at a time
- Hold the book right-side up
- Handle the book gently
- Talk about what is happening on a page
- Close the book
- Return the book to the basket.

At the end of the session, offer some highlights of the exchange, including the toddler's role in holding and managing the book. Examples: "Our book is about people working and having fun outside." "You helped us read the book together by holding the book and turning the pages." "You pointed to pictures and talked about what you saw." "You liked the picture of the girl in the tree."



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

If the toddler closes the book before it ends, ask if he/she is “all done” with this book. Encourage the toddler to select another book from the basket or display. Talk about the picture on the cover and say the name of the book. Continue with the book the toddler chose.

If a toddler points to a picture and says, “What is that?” briefly describe the illustration in your own words. Example: “The kids are digging in the sand.” Pause for the toddler to respond.

If a toddler brings you a book he/she read the day before, simply comment, “You like this book. Let’s read it again.”

Toddlers will begin to develop interest in books when they are shared daily and in an enthusiastic way. Help toddlers recognize there are books about topics they enjoy.

📈 More Scaffolding Tips—Option 1

Extra support ■ Skip a page if the toddler seems restless. ■ Use your voice in various ways to emphasize words and add interest to the story.

Enrichment ■ Go back to revisit a page that seems to be of special interest. ■ Point to the title as you say it. Tell the toddler a woman named Marla Frazee drew the pictures for the book.

24–36 Months

Option 2 Informal Gathering



Skill and Goal

Receptive language

Expressive language

Awareness of print and pictures

Toddlers practice holding and managing books they select and look at as part of planning and preparing for a pretend party.



Key Concepts

Pictures Hold

Page Turn



Materials Needed

Bear's Birthday by Stella Blackstone

Happy Birthday, Mouse! by Laura Numeroff

Happy Birthday, Tacky! by Helen Lester

It's My Birthday by Helen Oxenbury

Mr. Cookie Baker by Monica Willington

Ruby's Tea for Two by Rosemary Wells

Small colorful plates

Decorative props

Colored tissue paper

Toy cameras

Basket



Also Promotes

Social-Emotional

Be Prepared: Arrange the dramatic play center for a pretend party. Gather books suggested in the Materials Needed list and secure other books about baking or parties. Place the books in a basket.

Invite four toddlers to the dramatic play center to make plans for a pretend party. Sit on the floor facing the toddlers and talk with them about what children do at a party. Explain that we can plan a party together by looking at books for ideas about what to eat and do at a party. Draw attention to the books in the basket. Describe what several of the books are about. Point to a book's pictures and explain that the pictures show what we might eat or do at the party.

Encourage each child to select one book from the basket and look at the pictures. Some toddlers may want to look at a book together. Draw attention to pictures of baking or sharing food.

Demonstrate and describe how to hold a book and turn the pages of a book. Provide specific guidance to toddlers on how to hold a book on their laps and turn pages. Remind toddlers that we are using the books to get ideas for a party.

Encourage toddlers to share books with each other. Example: "Each of us should look at more than one book. Different books will give us different ideas."

Encourage the toddlers to talk about what they saw in the books that they want to use in the pretend party. Also encourage active participation in preparing the dramatic play area for a party. Help the toddlers take turns talking. Facilitate sharing and turn taking. Refer to the books and revisit pictures you noticed toddlers looking at. Example: "I saw Tanya looking at this book about how to make cookies. Look at this picture of cookies! Will cookies like these be part of the party?"



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

Look for instances of a toddler holding a book upside down and/or not turning pages of a book. Quietly provide support for appropriate use, including page turning. Some toddlers will be more comfortable standing with a book on a low surface than sitting with a book.

If a toddler shows no interest in the party theme of the book-focused first segment of the activity, help him/her find a different book to explore. It is fine if a toddler wants to bring a favorite book from another area. The party theme is secondary to the goal of promoting skill in holding a book and turning its pages. A toddler who does not want to look at party (or food-related) books may be interested in a role in the activity's second segment focused on party preparations, such as putting plates on the table or taking pictures of friends with the toy camera. You may be able to refer to a book picture related to the child's contributions to party preparations.

📈 More Scaffolding Tips—Option 2

Extra support ■ In the opening part of the activity, draw attention to a book cover to help a toddler select a book of interest. Point out how a book cover can tell us what is inside a book. ■ Provide one-to-one support to a child who seems unclear about how to use the book or spends almost no time with a book. Emphasize how the book pictures can give ideas for planning a party. ■ Watch for and help a toddler who seems unsure about his/her role in the second segment of the activity, such as inviting the child to help you “cook” or get the baby doll ready for the party.

Enrichment ■ Wrap colored tissue paper around several small toys and place them in a basket. Help toddlers wrap tissue around items of their choice. ■ Bring crayons and folded paper to dramatic play for making celebration cards. Toddlers are not expected to print letters or draw recognizable objects. ■ Wrap small boxes in white paper and suggest toddlers decorate a “cake” with crayons.

24–36 Months

Option 3 Informal Gathering



Skill and Goal

Receptive language

Expressive language

Awareness of print and pictures

Toddlers practice using books they select and look at as part of play with toy trucks and cars.



Key Concepts

Book Hold

Open Page

Pictures Turn

Words



Materials Needed

Building blocks

Large and small toy cars and trucks

Big Board First 100 Trucks and Things That Go by Roger Priddy

I Am a Dump Truck by Josephine Page

I Am a Garbage Truck by Ace Landers

Red Truck by Kersten Hamilton

Roadwork by Sally Sutton

School Bus by Donald Crews

When I Build with Blocks by Niki Alling



Also Promotes

Physical/Health

Social-Emotional

Be Prepared: Gather the books listed in Materials Needed and secure additional books related to vehicles. Place some of the books in a basket in the building center, and arrange several books on the shelf with toy cars and trucks. Be familiar with the content of the books, especially illustrations, so you can help toddlers connect a book (or a book picture) to their construction work.

BEGIN: [*Invite several toddlers to the building center for an informal gathering. Sit facing toddlers and welcome each one.*]

EXPLAIN: Today we have some special time for using blocks and trucks. We have big cardboard building bricks and big cars and trucks. We also have books about cars and trucks.

[*Draw attention to the basket of books.*]

You may build whatever you like and use toys from the shelf.

ACT: [*Encourage the toddlers to get blocks and vehicles they want to use. Remain on the floor with the toddlers to observe their building and truck play, and to talk with them about their ideas.*]

Identify books that relate to the toddlers' building ideas, such as dumping trash, building a road, or arranging cars. Example: "Sam, I see you are using cubes in the dump truck and pretending you are the garbage truck driver. Here is a book about a garbage truck. Would you like to look at it with me?"



If a toddler shows interest in a book, move close to the child to look at the pictures with him/her. Turn the book so the cover is showing. Encourage the toddler to hold the book on his/her lap and open it to the first page.

When you share a book with a toddler, help the toddler take the lead in looking at pictures and turning pages. Offer guidance about how to use the book. Example: if the toddler has the book upside down, explain that it is easier to see the pictures if we turn the book.



**Option 3 continued**

If the toddler turns several pages at once, wait for a good opportunity to explain page turning. Example: "We can feel the pages with our fingers. There are more pictures to see. Our book has pictures on every page."

Point to available text (even if it is one word) as you look at a book picture with a toddler. Explain the use of words. Example: "These words say the red truck is loaded with wood for building houses."

If a toddler finds one picture especially interesting, encourage the toddler to point to details and talk about it. Offer comments and ask questions. Examples: "I see this little truck is loaded with corn." "Do you see the big truck?" "What other things do trucks carry?"

If a toddler does not refer to one of the books in the building area, look for one that may be of interest to the child. Show interest in the toddler's building and a related book. Example: "James, this has pictures of roads going through tunnels. I will take it out of the basket so you can look at it when you are ready."

Assist toddlers in putting books away.]

RECAP: *[Offer highlights of how toddlers looked at books as part of building roads and buildings for trucks.]*

👁️ What to Look For—Option 3

Your role of helping connect a toddler with a pertinent book requires close monitoring of each toddler's efforts and interests. Offer books or point out book illustrations that seem pertinent to what a child is doing in the activity. Avoid insisting on their use of the books. For some toddlers, it may be too challenging to briefly consult a book and build at the same time.

If a toddler is new to using blocks with other children, talk aloud about a block center idea (such as making a road). Help a toddler get started building by inviting him/her to build with you. As he/she becomes active in building with you, stay close and shift your role to an observer.

At this age, toddlers are not expected to articulate a detailed plan for block building, but talking with a child before, during, and/or after the activity can reinforce his/her cognitive skills in thinking about a plan.

📊 More Scaffolding Tips—Option 3

Extra support ■ Gently help a toddler turn the book around. ■ Point to details in pictures. ■ Listen carefully. Allow plenty of time for a toddler to express an idea.

Enrichment ■ To promote scribbling or beginning marks of letters, provide paper on clipboards or 5"x7" cards and markers for toddlers to make signs for their buildings or small traffic signs for their roads.



Interest Area

Materials Needed: books on topics of interest to children

Display books in all areas of the room. Arrange books on the book display so all covers are showing, and the books are right-side up. Model and demonstrate how to handle books. Provide baskets for related books. Example: put several books about going to sleep in one basket and books about pets in a separate basket. Rotate books regularly, leaving the favorites. Encourage toddlers to sit with you and hold one book on their lap. Make book time a regular part of the daily routine. Make sure every child has a one-to-one book experience with a staff member daily.



Family Child Care

Materials Needed: *A Box Can Be Many Things* by Dana Meachen Rau, *Anna Hibiscus* by Atinuke, *Mr. Cookie Baker* by Monica Wellington, *Sleepyheads* by Sandra J. Howatt, *The Little Red Hen* by Diane Muldrow

Provide books for children of all ages. Infants will enjoy cloth books with bright pictures. Toddlers should have a variety of board books with clear illustrations and books with photographs of real objects, people, and animals, along with books about subjects they understand. *Sleepyheads* by Sandra J. Howatt is a calming book about resting.

Preschool children will enjoy picture books about real and make-believe subjects. Text should be printed clearly across a page in a line to help children begin to associate reading with lines of letters and words. *Mr. Cookie Baker* by Monica Wellington shows the steps in making cookies. *The Little Red Hen* by Diane Muldrow is a fun book with repeated phrases.



24–36 Months

Option 1 One-to-One



Skill and Goal Problem-solving

A toddler anticipates what person or animal he/she may see in a book on peekaboo.



Key Concepts

Peekaboo
Person
Animal



Materials Needed

Peekaboo Morning by
Rachel Isadora



Also Promotes

Communication/Language

BEGIN: [*Invite a toddler to read a book with you. Greet the toddler by name.*]

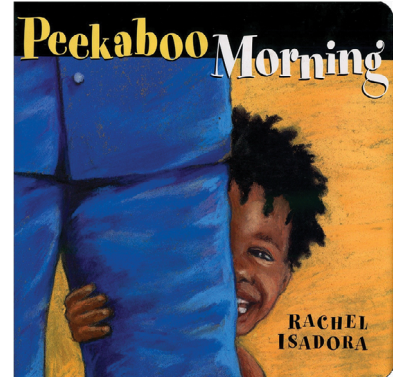
Our book is about what a little boy sees in the morning after he wakes up.

EXPLAIN: [*Show book cover. Point to the little boy peeking out.*]

Here is the little boy. He is peeking out! Our story is about peekaboo. The little boy is playing peekaboo when he peeks out.

I wonder what the little boy is peeking out from. The little boy looks like he is laughing. I think this is going to be a fun book!

Our book is called *Peekaboo Morning*. Let's find out what happens.



ACT: [*Open the book and hold it close to the toddler.*]

In the opening pages of the book, emphasize the idea that the boy in the book cannot see something at first, but then he sees it. Promote the idea that "there is something there but the boy cannot see it right away."

Beginning with the scene in which the boy sees the back of someone wearing a hat (who turns out to be the boy's grandma), encourage the toddler to think about what the boy in the book might see. Point to specific clues, such as the hat, and encourage the toddler to imagine whether a person or an animal might be wearing the hat. Ask this question before turning to the page that shows what the boy actually sees.

Help the toddler think carefully about the clues. Examples: a hat would be worn by a person, not an animal, and the small segment of the animal ear would be connected to an animal, not a person.

After the toddler indicates the clue(s) points to a person or an animal, ask a follow-up question that builds on the toddler's idea (person or animal) and the illustration. Example: "What person do you think might be wearing the hat?"

In addition to the hat (grandma), you can use this two-part strategy with clues for grandpa (a man's legs in a chair), the bunny (small

Option 1 continued

portion of ear at bottom of the prior page), and the butterfly (something we often see near flowers).

After reading the entire book with the child (focusing on the peekaboo theme), return to book illustrations that might prompt conversation with the toddler. Examples:

- the little boy using his spoon to give his dog some cereal (examples: “What is happening in this picture?” “Do you think the boy should be sharing his cereal with his dog? Why?”);
- “What do you think the little boy and grandma are laughing about?”]

RECAP: The little boy in our book plays *peekaboo*. We thought about what the boy in the book might see. We looked closely at the pictures to try to figure out whether the boy might see a person or an animal. At the end of the book, the little boy saw us. Do you think the boy could really see us?

 What to Look For—Option 1

Most toddlers are familiar with the game of *peekaboo*. Devote some brief time to demonstrating and describing *peekaboo* if it appears the toddler needs a description.

The activity builds on toddlers’ understanding that something exists even when it cannot be seen (technically known as object permanence) by encouraging the toddler to consider what the boy in the book is seeing.

Look for the ease with which the toddler responds to your questions in the two-part strategy in thinking about what the boy in the book might see. The reason for using a two-part strategy for thinking about what the little boy might see is that the toddler cannot be expected to think of accurate possibilities. The clues in the book illustrations are too vague. Encouraging the toddler to think about whether the little boy will see a person or an animal offers a strong possibility of some success in using the clues. Also, the person-or-animal consideration supports the toddler’s use of two categories for thinking about clues and then considering possibilities within a category (example: the category of person includes a grandpa). If it appears the toddler is unclear about your questions, do not ask the follow-up question; remain focused on the person-or-animal options.

 More Scaffolding Tips—Option 1

Extra support ■ Repeat and expand on the toddler’s comments. ■ When you return to selected pages of a book, pause on topics that seem of special interest to the toddler. Example: “You pointed to the picture of the puppy. Do you like puppies? What do you like to do with puppies?”

Enrichment ■ Invite the toddler to look closely at a picture to find less prominent images. Example: “Where is the bunny hiding?” ■ If the book’s peekaboo theme seems especially exciting to the toddler, cover your eyes with your hands when the text says “peekaboo” and encourage the toddler to repeat the word “peekaboo” with you during the story. ■ Encourage the toddler to tell you what things on a page give us an idea of what the little boy will see (instead of you pointing to the clues).



24–36 Months

Option 2 Informal Gathering



Skill and Goal Problem-solving

Toddlers guess what animals are hiding behind the flap of a peekaboo book.



Key Concepts

Pictures
Words
Peekaboo
Guess
Hiding



Materials Needed

My First Peekaboo Animals
(*World of Eric Carle*) by Eric Carle



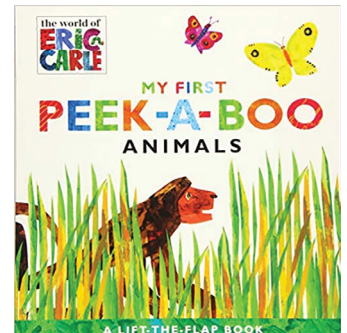
Also Promotes

Communication/Language

Invite three to four toddlers to read a peekaboo book. Explain that our book is about animals playing peekaboo. Offer a brief description and demonstration of peekaboo if it appears one or more toddlers are not familiar with peekaboo.

Explain that we will listen to words and look at pictures, and guess which animal is hiding under a flap of the book.

Begin reading the book, emphasizing and summarizing the clues offered in words and a pictures on each page. Invite toddlers to guess what animal is hiding under the flap. Example: “The words tell us this animal has a long trunk. Do you see the long trunk peeking out? What animal do you think is under the flap?” Pause for toddlers to think and share their ideas. Acknowledge each response, including those that may be incorrect. Reveal each animal under the flap with enthusiasm, starting with reading the word “peekaboo!” on the flap.



The book sharing activity should be light-hearted and fun, not about getting the right answer. Examples: “Amaya said “elephant.” She thinks an elephant is under the flap!” “Jayden is using his arm to make a long trunk. Jayden thinks the animal is an elephant!”

At the end of the book, acknowledge by name each toddler for his/her efforts in guessing the hidden animals.

What to Look For—Option 2

Some toddlers will enjoy guessing each animal based on the word and picture clues. Others will prefer to watch and listen. Some toddlers may act out the animal they think is hiding under the flap. Positively acknowledge each response, even if it is incorrect. Encourage toddlers to pay attention to pictures and words while also supporting a lighthearted approach to the book sharing.

More Scaffolding Tips—Option 2

Extra support ■ To reduce toddlers’ possible concern about being “right” about what is hiding under a book flap, offer a silly suggestion. Example: for the large elephant with the long trunk, suggest it may be a tiny mouse. Correct your silly statement after the animal is revealed. Example: “The elephant is large and has a long trunk. It could not be a tiny mouse!”

Enrichment ■ Give attention to one or more of the following concepts included in the book: big, little, long, slow, on, in, loudest, swing, gallop, hop, flutter, colors.



24–36 Months

Option 3 Informal Gathering



Skill and Goal Problem-solving

Toddlers participate in a shared reading of a peekaboo book and then use clues about an animal featured in the book to guess what toy animal is hidden in a paper bag.



Key Concepts

Guess
Animals
Take a turn



Materials Needed

My First Peekaboo Animals (World of Eric Carle) by Eric Carle
Selected animal figures (see Be Prepared)
Small paper bag



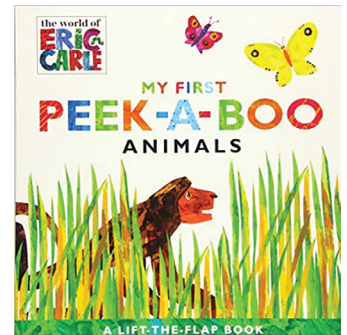
Also Promotes

Communication/Language
Self-Regulation
Social-Emotional

Be Prepared: Gather animal figures for several of the animals featured in the book: elephant, tiger, turtle, monkey, horse, butterfly, frog, lion.

Invite several toddlers to play a guessing game with the *My First Peekaboo Animals (World of Eric Carle)* book. Encourage toddlers to guess the animal under each flap as you read the book.

After the book sharing, explain that we will guess which animal in our book is hiding in the paper bag! Emphasize that each of us will take a turn to guess what is in the bag. Behind your back, choose one animal and place it in the bag. Describe the animal, using some of the clues offered in the book. Examples of clues: color, size, movement (such as gallop), physical characteristics (such as big floppy ears), habitat (such as water), and sounds (such as a roar).



Emphasize that this is a fun guessing game. Give each toddler time to think about and guess the animal, even if the “correct” animal is already guessed. Positively acknowledge each response.

Positively acknowledge and extend the words of each response. Examples: If a child says “roar!,” a suggested response is, “You said ‘roar,’ Brayden! What animal says ‘roar?’” If a child says “lion!,” a suggested response is, “Brayden thinks there is a lion in the bag! Let’s look and see!” If a toddler jumps up and down, a caregiver could say “You are jumping up and down like a frog. You remember that frogs jump!”

After all toddlers have had opportunities to guess, invite one toddler to reach into the bag and pull the animal out to show the group.

Continue the guessing game until each toddler has had a chance to pull an animal out of the bag. If toddlers are positively engaged in the activity, continue for another round, using the rest of the animals.

👁️ What to Look For—Option 3

The follow-up activity (hiding and guessing animal figures in the bag) is an opportunity for toddlers to connect two sets of information—the peekaboo descriptions in the book and your descriptions of animals hidden in the bag—to guess what is hiding. When toddlers are guessing, it may be helpful to remind them to think about animals in the book in addition to your descriptions. Drawing on the book information supports short-term recall.

During the follow-up to the book reading, monitor toddlers’ behaviors to determine whether you need to offer supportive reminders about (a) each

Option 3 continued

toddler taking a turn and (b) waiting patiently for everyone to take a turn. Some toddlers may want prompt feedback on whether their guess is “right” and find it challenging to wait for everyone to make a guess.

Avoid a focus on “who was right” in guessing an animal in the bag. The activity is not intended as a competition. Maintain a lighthearted approach to the book reading and follow-up activity.

 **More Scaffolding Tips—Option 3**

Extra support ■ If guessing the animal is challenging based on the verbal clues, turn to the corresponding animal page in the book to provide a picture clue. You may wish to start with easier animals to guess, such as elephant, monkey, or horse. ■ Some toddlers may enjoy this activity in a one-to-one context. Place all the animals in a group and give the toddler the opportunity to pick out the animal based on the clues given.

Enrichment ■ Provide additional clues that are not in the book. Example: (for elephant) “This animal is large, gray, and has two tusks.” ■ Offer as a clue the sound the animal makes.

 **Interest Area**

Materials Needed: *My First Peekaboo Animals (World of Eric Carle)* book, scarf or piece of cloth, animal figures of the animals in the book (elephant, tiger, turtle, monkey, horse, butterfly, frog, lion)

Place book and animal figures on low table with the scarf or piece of cloth. Invite toddlers to choose an animal to “hide” under the scarf/cloth. Ask the toddler questions about the animal and guess which animal it might be. Encourage toddlers to help each other guess the animals. Toddlers may also enjoy playing with the figures in the block area.

 **Family Child Care**

Materials Needed: *My First Peekaboo Animals (World of Eric Carle)* book, animal figures of the animals in the book (elephant, tiger, turtle, monkey, horse, butterfly, frog, lion)

Read the book and encourage the older children to guess the animal under the flap. Younger toddlers and babies may enjoy holding an animal figure from the book during the reading and activity. Ensure the animal figures are large enough for a baby to hold. After the book, line up the remaining figures to play a game of *I Spy*. Give details of an animal that you are looking at. Provide both challenging and simple details for all ages to participate. Example: “I spy with my little eye . . . an animal that is gray.” Give all children time to think and respond before giving a second clue. Acknowledge and affirm each response. Older children may enjoy taking turns being the person to provide clues.



24–36 Months

Option 1 Informal Gathering



Skill and Goal Executive function

Toddlers observe a simple memory game.



Key Concepts

Watch
Remember



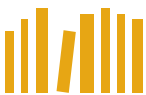
Materials Needed

Toy frog
3 small identical baskets



Also Promotes

Communication/Language
Cognitive



Optional Reading

In the Small, Small Pond by
Denise Fleming

BEGIN: *[Invite several toddlers to join you on the floor to play a game. Show toddlers the toy frog and three baskets.]*

Our little frog likes to hop, hop, hop and then hide! Let's play a game of watching the frog hop and remembering where the frog hides.

Our frog likes to hide under baskets. Watch with your eyes to see where the frog goes.

ACT: *[Turn the three baskets upside down and place them in a row so the toddlers can see each basket.]*

Hop the frog around on the floor, always in front of the toddlers, and on top of the baskets for a few seconds. While toddlers are watching, place the frog under the middle basket.]

EXPLAIN: The frog hopped under a basket. The frog is hiding!

ASK: I wonder where the frog is hiding! Did you watch where he went?

ACT: I am going to try to remember which basket the frog is hiding under.

[Have fun pretending you did not pay attention to where the frog hopped. Look under the right, then under the left basket. Show excitement when you find the frog under the middle basket!]

The frog is going to hop, hop, hop and then hide again! This time I am going to watch closely and try to remember where he goes.

[Hop the frog on the floor and on top of the baskets, always in full view of toddlers. Hide the frog in the left or right basket.]

The frog hopped under a basket. He is hiding from us again! Did you watch him? I watched where he went. I am going to try hard to remember which basket he is hiding under.

[Point to the correct basket. Ask toddlers: Is this the basket I should look under first? Pause for and acknowledge their responses.]

Look under the correct basket. Show excitement when you find the frog!]

I watched where the frog hopped and I thought hard to remember where he was hiding. I found the frog hiding under the basket!



Option 1 continued

Should the frog hop, hop, hop and hide again?

[Repeat once again if toddlers show interest.]

RECAP: We played a game of watching and finding our toy frog. We used our eyes to watch the frog hop and then hide. We could not see the frog after it went under a basket. I watched the frog and remembered where he went. I found the frog under the basket!



24–36 Months

Option 2
One-to-One



Skill and Goal

Executive function

A toddler participates in a simple memory game.



Key Concepts

Watch
Remember



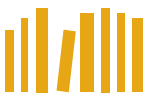
Materials Needed

Toy frog
3 small identical baskets



Also Promotes

Communication/Language
Cognitive



Optional Reading

In the Small, Small Pond by
Denise Fleming

Invite one toddler to play a memory game on the floor with you. Introduce the frog and three baskets. Explain that the frog likes to hop, hop, hop and then hide. Introduce the memory game of finding the hidden frog. Example: “We are going to play a game of finding where the frog is hiding! We are going to watch where the frog goes, and then remember where the frog hides.”

Place the three baskets upside down in a row in front of the toddler. Remind the toddler to use his/her eyes to watch where the frog hops. Hop the frog around the floor and, while the toddler is watching, place the frog under the middle basket. Invite the toddler to remember where the frog is hiding. Example: “Our frog hopped around and now he is hiding from us! Do you remember which basket the frog is hiding under? Which basket should we look under?”

Describe the toddler’s actions. Example: “You are looking under the basket that is closest to you. There is no frog.” Provide hints for a toddler who is unsure about which basket to look under. Example: “You looked under this basket and the frog was not there. We need to try a different basket. Maybe the frog is hiding under this one. Let’s look and see!”

Provide positive verbal support for the toddler’s efforts. Examples: “You watched the frog hop around and then hide from us.” “You remembered where the frog was hiding!” or “You looked under some baskets but we did not see the frog!”

Play the game again if the toddler shows interest. End the activity by emphasizing that we watched and remembered. Example: “Hailey, you watched where the frog went, and you tried to remember which basket he was hiding under. We found him together!”



24–36 Months

Option 3
Informal Gathering



Skill and Goal
Executive function

Toddlers participate together in a simple memory game.



Key Concepts

- Watch
- Remember
- Take turns



Materials Needed

- Toy frog
- 3 small identical baskets



Also Promotes

- Communication/Language
- Cognitive



Optional Reading

- In the Small, Small Pond* by Denise Fleming

Invite two toddlers to join you on the floor to play a memory game. Introduce the frog and explain that the frog likes to hop around and then hide under a basket. Explain that the two toddlers will take turns. One toddler will hop the frog around the area and hide it under a basket while the other toddler watches and tries hard to remember which basket the frog is hiding under. Then the toddlers will reverse roles.

Your role is to facilitate the two toddlers' play, making sure turns are taken and that each toddler understands what he/she is to do. Use prompts suggested in Options 1 and 2 to help toddlers focus on the frog's location.

Play the game for two rounds (each child does the hopping or the finding twice). Offer a third round if both children seem interested. Close the session by reminding toddlers that we worked hard to watch and remember where the frog went.

👁️ What to Look For—Options 1–3

By design, the three options provide different levels of challenge in watching and remembering. Options 1 and 2 differ in level of involvement (watching, acting). Option 3 is appropriately suited for two toddlers who have demonstrated skill in watching and remembering. In Option 3, provide as much appropriate support to the toddler who does the frog "hopping" as to the toddler who does the frog "finding." The process of moving and hiding the frog is as beneficial as trying to watch and remember. If the toddlers in Option 3 find the activity to be too challenging, tactfully switch the game into you moving and hiding the frog and the two children taking turns turning over a basket(s).

Some toddlers will observe and remember quickly. Other toddlers will need additional support and hints to remain focused and remember where the frog is hidden. Toddlers who are at a beginning level of learning to focus and remember may benefit from repeated participation in the game. (See Extra Support tip below.)

Try to avoid having this activity turn into a guessing game. Guessing does not promote short-term memory skills, and works against the development of an understanding of watching and remembering. One of your important roles is to encourage a toddler to observe the frog closely as you (or another toddler) place it under the basket. If the toddler does not select the middle basket in the early rounds of Options 1 or 2, do not prolong the search by suggesting the toddler "make another guess." Instead, lift the middle basket to reveal the toy frog and try another round.

**Option 3 continued**

Some toddlers may enjoy hiding the frog from you. Reversing the roles in this game can be beneficial for the toddler. (See Enrichment tip below.)

More Scaffolding Tips—Options 1–3

Extra support ■ Provide opportunities to repeat the game, especially at a different time and day. Provide extra time to practice playing the game with support in Option 2 as long as a toddler remains fully engaged. Ensure each toddler has the opportunity to be successful at one of the options in this plan. ■ If the toddler is challenged by remembering the location of the frog, expose part of the frog at the bottom of the basket. This is appropriate for Option 2 especially, but not for Option 3. ■ If it is challenging for a toddler to remain focused on the actions of the frog, reduce the amount of hopping time. It also may be helpful to move the frog with slow and intentional movements, and draw attention to each segment of hopping. Example: “Let’s watch the frog hop around. Where is the frog now? Where is he hopping to next?”

Enrichment ■ Invite the toddler to make the toy frog hop and hide while you watch and remember where the frog is hiding. Ensure the toddler does not make up his/her own rules that prevent you from seeing the toy frog at all times. ■ Encourage the toddler to describe how he/she found where the frog was hiding. Reinforce a toddler’s descriptions of watching and/or remembering.

**Interest Area**

Materials Needed: water table; toy pond animals, such as frogs, fish, and ducks; artificial plants for the animals to “hide” behind; *In the Small, Small Pond* by Denise Fleming

Help toddlers prepare for the activity by reading and describing the pictures in the book suggested above. Place toy frogs, fish, and ducks in the sensory table with warm water. Add artificial plants for toddlers to use to “hide” the water animals. Talk with toddlers about their ideas and actions as they play with the pond animals.

**Family Child Care**

Materials Needed: water table; toy pond animals, such as frogs, fish, and ducks; artificial plants for the animals to “hide” behind; *In the Small, Small Pond* by Denise Fleming

Read the book and talk with children in your care about how the pond animals in the book are hiding. Invite small groups of children to play at the water table and encourage them to “hide” the animals in the plants like the pond animals hide in the book. Young toddlers may enjoy playing with chunky pond animals in a basin filled with a small amount of water. Talk with children about their ideas and actions as they play.



24–36 Months

Option 1 Informal Gathering



Skill and Goal

Social interaction skills

Toddlers watch and imitate actions of staff and peers with play dough.



Key Concepts

Round
Watch
Do the same



Materials Needed

Play dough
Art smock or apron—1 per toddler



Also Promotes

Physical/Health

Be Prepared: Roll soft play dough into one ball for each toddler. Use approximately one toddler-size fist of play dough for each ball.

Note there is an important shift in the middle of the activity. The first segment encourages toddlers to imitate your actions with play dough. The second segment encourages toddlers to imitate what a peer(s) is doing with play dough.

BEGIN: *[Invite several (no more than 4–5) toddlers to gather at a low table to work with play dough. Welcome toddlers by recognizing each toddler who is present. Example: “James and Anthony are ready to play. I am helping Jada and Micha get art smocks. Everyone will have play dough.”*

Pass out the balls of play dough, again saying each toddler’s name.]

ASK: How does this play dough feel?

[Encourage each toddler to comment. Repeat and extend each response. Example: “Micha says the play dough feels squishy.”]

EXPLAIN: Our play dough is round like a ball.

I am going to make my play dough flat. Watch me push down on my play dough.

Please do the same thing with your play dough. Let’s all make our play dough become flat.

ACT: *[Push down on your ball of dough to flatten it. Use the side of your fist to lightly pound your play dough. Explain that your fist is “like a little hammer.” Encourage toddlers to watch and imitate your actions.]*

EXPLAIN: First our play dough balls were round. Now our round balls are flat! You watched me push down on my play dough. Then you did the same thing with your play dough.

I pretended my fist was like a little hammer. You did the same thing with your fist. We pounded our play dough flat by pretending our fist was like a hammer.



ASK: Let’s change the shape of our play dough again. What would you like to make?

**Option 1 continued**

[Pause for toddlers to offer a suggestion. If necessary, offer some ideas (such as rolling the play dough into a pretend snake or long hot dog) but do not act on them with your own play dough.]

Recognize and expand upon the first several ideas offered by toddlers. Encourage toddlers to do what one of their peers is doing. Example: "Anthony wants to push his fingers into the play dough to make holes. We can all make holes, too. Let's do what Anthony does!"

ACT: *[Encourage the toddler (whose suggestion is to be imitated) to follow through on his/her actions with the play dough as a model for other toddlers. Imitate toddler's actions with your own play dough.]*

Draw attention to your imitation. Example: "I am using Anthony's idea with my play dough. I am making holes in my play dough like Anthony is doing."

Avoid leading the play at this point. Offer verbal support and guidance for toddlers to do what another toddler is doing.

There may be several toddlers' actions with play dough that other toddlers could imitate. Example: "Some of us can make holes like Anthony is doing. Some of us can make our play dough back into a ball like Shawnee is doing."

Describe toddlers' actions with the dough. Continue to encourage toddlers to imitate another toddler's work with play dough. Example: "Ana says she is making a baby mouse home. James, are you wondering how to make a mouse home? Watch Ana use her finger to make a hole."

RECAP: Today we worked with play dough together. You did what I did with my play dough to make it flat. Then we did what some of our friends did with their play dough. We are learning how to watch and do what others are doing.

👁️ What to Look For—Option 1

This option supports toddlers noticing what another person is doing by imitating the person's actions. Some toddlers will promptly watch and imitate others. Other toddlers may not imitate actions of another person until they have had adequate time to make their own discoveries with play dough. Accept all forms of participation. What is important is the opportunity for toddlers to become aware of what someone else is doing with play dough. The imitation element of this option is a way to encourage watching. One of your important jobs in this option is to help toddlers shift from watching and imitating your actions to watching and imitating the actions of another peer(s) with play dough.

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

Extra support ■ At the beginning of work with play dough, roll your ball of play dough slightly to emphasize the ball shape of the play dough. Draw attention to your slight rolling action. ■ Invite toddlers to stand and/or sit. Some toddlers may find it easier to flatten their play dough by standing. ■ Show toddlers how to press the dough with both hands if using one fist like a hammer does not seem to work.

Enrichment ■ Encourage toddlers to watch and imitate the play dough actions of a peer sitting closest. This means having several toddlers be a “model” for what others might do with their play dough. ■ Invite toddlers to play a guessing game. Select one toddler at a time to make something of their choice with their play dough. Encourage other toddlers to “guess” what the selected toddler is making while copying that toddler’s actions with the play dough.



24–36 Months

Option 2 Informal Gathering



Skill and Goal

Social interaction skills

Toddlers watch and imitate actions of peers as part of food-related play with play dough.



Key Concepts

Watch
Do the same



Materials Needed

Play dough
Toy plates, bowls, plastic knives, and eating utensils, enough for each toddler
Different types of play food items



Also Promotes

Physical/Health

Be Prepared: Divide the play dough into one ball for each toddler. Use a low table for the activity. Put the play food items in the center of the table.

Invite several toddlers to join you at a low table to play together with play dough. Talk with toddlers about the play food items on the table. Hold and pass around each item you discuss. You may wish to ask toddlers about the shape of the food and if they have ever tried the food item. Example: “Olivia says she has eaten an avocado. Did you like the avocado, Olivia?”

Give each toddler one ball of play dough. Introduce the food-related toys and invite toddlers to make some type of pretend food with their play dough. Example: “We can create different things with our play dough. Here are some kitchen items we can use with our play dough. I am going to make some blueberries with my play dough and put them in a bowl.”

There will be many opportunities to encourage watching and imitating as toddlers manipulate and create with the play dough. Describe each toddler’s actions and encourage others to watch and do the same if they would like. Example: “Avery told us he is making a long hot dog. He is rolling his play dough. Watch how he uses his hands to make a hot dog. Who wants to roll their play dough to make a hot dog like Avery?” Use the play dough activity to promote and model friendly interactions.

What to Look For—Option 2

The play food items and kitchen-related toys provide prompts and ideas for toddlers to further explore their play dough while watching and imitating others. This option is not about the act of creating food with play dough. Some toddlers may be interested in creating food items and using the kitchen related toys. Others may create unrelated objects or simply enjoy the sensory experience of manipulating the dough. Acknowledge each toddler’s actions and continue to encourage watching and imitating others. Example: “Jayden is making a snake with his play dough! Jayden and Avery are both rolling their play dough to look like a snake and a hot dog.”

More Scaffolding Tips—Option 2

Extra support ■ Encourage toddlers who appear initially hesitant to manipulate their play dough to watch you and their peers create with the dough. You may wish to invite a toddler to help you with your creation. Example: “Would you like to help me make blueberries for my bowl, Jamal? I am rolling my play dough into small balls, just like the blueberries in our book.”

BLOCK
3

Interacting with Others *(continued)*



Option 2 continued

Enrichment ■ Invite toddlers to work together to create a food or other item. Example: “Avery is making a long hot dog with his play dough. Would you like a bun for your hot dog, Avery? Would anyone like to help me make a hot dog bun for Avery? What should we do first?” ■ Toddlers may enjoy thinking about their favorite food to create. Talk with toddlers about how they can create the food with their dough. Example: “Is pizza your favorite food, Lydia? A pizza is flat and round. How can you make your play dough flat and round?”



24–36 Months

Option 3 Informal Gathering



Skill and Goal

Social interaction skills

Toddlers engage in pretend grocery store play.



Key Concepts

Play together



Materials Needed

- Toy food items
- Small boxes and containers (may be from actual food items, such as an empty cereal box)
- Several paper or cloth grocery bags
- Toy shopping cart and toy cash register (optional)



Also Promotes

- Communication/Language
- Cognitive



Optional Reading

At the Supermarket by Anne Rockwell

Be Prepared: Arrange a portion of the dramatic play area to resemble a grocery store by placing food items and containers on shelves. These items will be in addition to the familiar play materials toddlers use daily, such as dolls, dishes, and animals.

Introduce the new items in the dramatic play area and encourage toddlers to play together. Example: “We have new things here that we can play grocery store with! Who would like to go shopping?”

Provide enough new and different play materials to support toddlers’ creation of a play theme, such as taking a child (doll) to the grocery store to buy food for the child’s pet (toy animal) at home.

Describe toddlers’ play interactions with one another. Example: “Zoe smiled at you and asked you for potatoes.” Serve as a coach to toddlers in suggesting ways to ask another toddler to play. Example: “May I play?” “Do you want to play?” In some situations, you may wish to more directly help a toddler become part of play interactions. Example: “Jennifer wants to play, too. Let’s find a bag for her groceries.”

Acknowledge positive interactions. Example: “Zoe and Cole went shopping at the grocery store. Now they are cooking together!”

What to Look For—Option 3

Some toddlers will enjoy engaging in pretend play with the new materials, whereas others may prefer to play in the dramatic play area in ways they are used to. Support toddlers in pursuing their own dramatic play themes while continuing to support positive interactions. Encourage toddlers to extend their play by providing new ideas. Examples: “In our book, the little boy and his mother bought ingredients to make a birthday cake. What are you and Zoe going to make with the food you are putting in your shopping bag?” “Trevor is playing with a baby doll. Trevor, would you like Zoe and Cole to buy some food for your baby at the store?”

Some toddlers may have limited interest in pretend play with peers and may prefer to engage in other activities in your room. Continue to offer interesting and new materials in the dramatic play area to encourage toddlers to join. (See Extra Support tip below.)



Option 3 continued

More Scaffolding Tips—Option 3

Extra support ■ Toddlers may enjoy reading and looking at the illustrations in the supermarket book (see Optional Reading) prior to playing grocery store. ■ Some toddlers may be reluctant to join pretend play with peers. Continue to offer these toddlers varied experiences to practice positive interactions with peers. Example: a toddler who prefers to build or create may enjoy pretending to be a construction worker building with large blocks alongside a peer. ■ Provide enough materials for a small number of toddlers (2–3) to reduce the chances of conflict over materials. While it is highly valuable to help toddlers learn turn taking, it is also important for toddlers to have positive play-based interactions with peers (the focus of this activity plan) that may be hindered if there is an insufficient supply of play items. Many other ELM activity plans support the development of skills in turn taking.

Enrichment ■ Invite toddlers to take on different pretend roles, such as grocery store clerk, customer, or mom/dad and child. ■ Talk with toddlers about what they would like to cook with their food. Encourage two toddlers to pick out ingredients to cook together. Example: “Zoe and Cole want to cook spaghetti. What do you need to buy to make spaghetti?” (This suggestion is meant to be a fun and light-hearted exchange, not an exercise in picking out correct food items.)



Interest Area

Materials Needed: toy food items, small boxes and containers (may be from actual food items, such as an empty cereal box), several paper or cloth grocery bags, toy shopping cart and toy cash register (optional)

Place the items listed in Materials Needed in the dramatic play area. Encourage toddlers to join in pretend play in small groups. Remind toddlers how they can ask another toddler to play, such as “May I play?” and “Do you want to play?” Acknowledge positive interactions.



Family Child Care

Materials Needed: play dough, plastic place mats, flour, warm water

Invite preschool-age children to join toddlers at a table to use play dough. Provide a plastic place mat for each child to define their space and to simplify cleanup. Sprinkle 1–2 teaspoons of flour on each place mat along with the play dough. Children will enjoy the sensory experience of smoothing the flour with their hands. Encourage children to imitate your motion of smoothing the flour on the place mat. You may wish to demonstrate again how to flatten the play dough balls. Describe children’s key actions (push, pull, roll). Infants who can sit in a high chair will enjoy playing with a small puddle of water and watching the other children. Put a plastic bib on the infant and roll up his/her sleeves. Put 1–2 tablespoons of warm water on the high chair tray.



24–36 Months

Option 1 Informal Gathering



Skill and Goal

Fine motor development

Toddlers use their hands and fingers to feel and manipulate sand and shells.



Key Concepts

Full
Empty
Hidden
Under



Materials Needed

Dry sand or similar material
Sensory table
20 sea shells
8-oz. container—1 per toddler and staff



Also Promotes

Communication/Language
Social-Emotional
Cognitive



Optional Reading

Seashells by the Seashore by Marianne Berkes

Be Prepared: Select and bury shells in 4–6 inches of sand in the sensory table. Arrange several containers so they are easy for toddlers to reach. Add a little water to the sand if it appears dusty.

Invite 3–4 toddlers to join you at the sensory table. Limiting the number of toddlers in the activity will help you provide individualized attention to their experiences. Explain that we can scoop the sand into the containers and pour it out again. Demonstrate by filling your container and then pouring all the sand out. Encourage toddlers to fill their containers using both hands. Emphasize the concepts of full and empty when playing with a container. Example: “The sand in your container (cup) is all gone. Your container is empty!”

Also encourage toddlers to feel the sand as it moves from their container to the sensory table. Describe the texture of the sand. Repeat and expand on toddlers’ comments about the sand. Demonstrate moving the sand with your hands.

Toddlers will be pleased and excited to discover hidden shells. Encourage toddlers to use both hands to feel for the sea shells. Join in the pleasure of their discovery! Example: “We did not see any shells. We found shells under the sand by digging and feeling with our hands!”

It will be enjoyable for toddlers to hide the shells under the sand again. Some toddlers will enjoy a game of hide and find with you. Some toddlers may wish to take turns playing a game of hide and find with a peer.

What to Look For—Option 1

Look carefully at toddlers’ facial expressions, the direction of their gaze, and hand movements with the sand and shells. Drawing toddlers’ attention to the different tactile experiences of sand and shells helps toddlers focus on their sense of touch. Invite toddlers to describe what they are feeling with their fingers and hands. Also draw attention to how toddlers are using their fingers and hands to feel the sand and shells. The sensory activity can support hand strength and dexterity.

The activity will take an important turn when toddlers discover the hidden shells. Having control of hiding and finding shells is enjoyable. Knowing an unseen object exists (technically known as object permanence) is fun for toddlers to explore. Toddlers sometimes enjoy covering their own hands under sand and “surprising” you by pulling them out.

**Option 1 continued**

Some toddlers may respond to the shell discovery by trying to find as many shells as they can. This is a useful pursuit as long as it does not become a competition among toddlers at the table. It also can be helpful for you to encourage toddlers to feel their shells, and especially compare differences in the textures of shells with their fingers.

More generally, look for opportunities to interact with each child; foster emerging communication and language skills; encourage toddlers' awareness of what others are doing with the sand and shells; and encourage sharing and cooperation, such as exchanging shells to feel with fingers.

More Scaffolding Tips—Option 1

Extra support ■ Demonstrate how to dig a small hole with your hands to hide a shell.

Enrichment ■ Ask a toddler to feel in the sand for a big shell and a smaller shell.



24–36 Months

Option 2 Informal Gathering



Skill and Goal

Fine motor development

Toddlers use scoops, cups, and their hands to manipulate a dry material, such as sand, in pretend play.



Key Concepts

Full Empty
Pour Scoop



Materials Needed

Dry, continuous material (see Be Prepared)
Sensory table
Scoop—1 per child and staff
Cup—1 per child and staff (see Be Prepared)



Also Promotes

Social-Emotional
Communication/Language



Optional Reading

Chicken Soup with Rice by Maurice Sendak
Eating the Alphabet by Lois Ehlert
The Best Mouse Cookie by Laura Joffe Numeroff

Be Prepared: Put dry sensory material into the sensory table about four inches deep. Your center’s regulations will determine a choice of dry material. Cone shapes may be used instead of cups.

BEGIN: [*Invite 3–4 toddlers to join you at the sensory table to scoop and pour. Greet each toddler by name.*]

EXPLAIN: There is one scoop and one cup for each of us to use. We can scoop sand into a cup. If our cup gets full, we can pour it into the table.

These toys remind me of ice cream dishes! I am going to stay with you to see what you like to do with these toys.

ACT: [*Toddlers may begin scooping as soon as they reach the sensory table. Talk about the use of the scoop and cup even though the children have begun. Encourage toddlers to keep the cups and scoops in the tub. Example: “Our toys stay in the tub. There are lots of ways to use these toys.”*]

Demonstrate and describe some actions toddlers might try. Examples:

- *Use scoop to fill the cup or use cup to fill a scoop*
- *Pour the dry material out*
- *Use the scoop to stir or move the dry material in the sensory table*
- *Use hands to fill a cup or scoop.*
- *Use hands to mix and move the sensory material.]*

ASK: Would you like to pretend our toys are in an ice cream shop?

[*Pause for toddlers to respond. Repeat and elaborate upon their responses.*]

ACT: [*Sit or kneel at the sensory table to foster communication. Initiate conversations for toddlers to join. Allow time for toddlers to form ideas into words.*

Describe toddlers’ actions. Examples: “Derek, you used your scoop to fill up the ice cream cup.” “Malia I see you are helping Derek. You are being friendly.”

Repeat and extend the toddlers’ words. Example: A child’s comment “pink cream a Mommy” can be restated as “Pink ice cream for Mommy. You are making yummy pink ice cream for your Mommy!”

**Option 2 continued**

Describe your actions with the toys. Examples: "One scoop of ice cream is in my cup. It is a small dish for a baby." "Now I pour ice cream out; my cup is empty."

If a toddler leave the sensory table, invite another child to join the activity.]

RECAP: *[Briefly describe something about each toddler's play experience as the activity closes or when a toddler is ready to stop. Example: "You used your hands and your scoop to fill the cup. You told us you eat chocolate ice cream at home."]*

👁️ What to Look For—Option 2

The texture of the dry material may be the most interesting part of this activity for some toddlers to explore. Toddlers may pile and scoop the sensory material with their hands. Describe what you see toddlers doing. Example: "I think you like the feel of the ___ (material) and want to make a pile of it with your hands."

Anticipate that toddlers may have different ideas about what the material could represent. Examples: food for animals, an item for cooking. There may be an opportunity for you to connect a book (see Optional Reading list) to a child's interest.

Look for and verbally support instances of toddlers practicing specific movements with their hands. Fine motor activities are important for hand-eye coordination and for making observations about properties of the materials. It is important for each toddler to have opportunities to control and experiment with materials. By scooping the dry material, for example, a toddler directly experiences an empty cup and a cup that is full. The toddlers can also experiment with tipping the cup and observing how the contents spills out.

Playing with sand or related dry material can be a soothing experience for some toddlers. The focus and attention of a toddler may be significantly increased during sensory play.

📊 More Scaffolding Tips—Option 2

Extra support ■ Demonstrate scooping and pouring early in the activity. ■ Support communication and language experiences by ensuring each toddler has time to talk. Toddlers may be eager to tell about their play. If a toddler interrupts while another toddler is talking, quietly say, "It is Derek's turn to talk. Let's listen to his words. Then we will be happy to listen to you."

Enrichment ■ Vary the play materials in the sensory table. Provide containers and scoops of a different size or shape, such as hand shovels for sand play. Toddlers may wish to continue the activity throughout the week. ■ Other dry material can be used to add interest during a second week.



24–36 Months

Option 3 Informal Gathering



Skill and Goal

Fine motor development

Toddlers use their hands to manipulate objects and pour water from a bottle to a cup and from a cup to a bottle.



Key Concepts

Pour
Fill



Materials Needed

Warm water
Sensory table
1-oz. bottle—1 per toddler and staff
Container—1 per toddler and staff
Water smock—1 per toddler
Pad or rug



Also Promotes

Cognitive
Communication/Language

Be Prepared: Select bottles that are slim enough for toddlers to hold with one hand. Set up the sensory table with about four inches of warm water. Use a pad or rug under the table to absorb accidental spills and prevent slipping.

Open the session by inviting several toddlers to practice pouring. Sit or kneel next to the sensory table. Demonstrate how to fill a bottle by holding it under water. Encourage each toddler to fill a water bottle and to pour it back into the water table or into their container. Describe toddlers' actions with the water and items. Focus on how toddlers are moving their hands to manipulate objects and pour water. Draw attention to faster and slower pouring of water, and to different amounts of water in bottles and containers. Encourage toddlers to describe what they are doing and to look at what other toddlers are doing.

👁️ What to Look For—Option 3

Look for and draw attention to differences in how toddlers manage the bottles and containers, especially their pouring behaviors. Point out how they are using their hands to play with the water. Example: "You used your hand to fill your bottle to the top and then you used your hand to pour all of the water into your container." Recognize that your descriptions of a child's actions provide an opportunity for him/her to say more. Look expectantly at a toddler after you offer a comment about his/her actions so the toddler (if looking) has a cue that you are willing to listen if he/she wishes to comment.

Look for opportunities to comment on cause and effect relationships with water pouring. Example: "You turned your hand way over and the water poured out fast."

📈 More Scaffolding Tips—Option 3

Extra support ■ Hold a container for a toddler who uses two hands for pouring. ■ Give gentle reminders about splashing. Example: "We can splash outdoors. Our water stays in the tub." ■ If a toddler drinks the water, promptly provide drinking water or guide him/her to the water fountain.

Enrichment ■ Provide funnels for filling bottles. ■ Place a small assortment of other containers, scoops, and sieves near the water table for toddlers to explore. ■ Add color to the water so toddlers can easily see the level in the bottle.



Interest Area

Materials Needed: puffy paints, soft items, glue, silky fabric, look and feel books, cloth bags, natural materials, such as grass, pine cones, bark, flowers, vanilla or lemon extract, water, variety of sound makers

Sensory activities provide beneficial active learning experiences and support toddlers' development in several domains. As you prepare the environment, consider sensory learning. Provide puffy paints and soft items for toddlers to glue onto sturdy surfaces. Place silky fabric in the building area and observe toddlers' reactions and building ideas. Display look and feel books. Place toys in cloth bags and encourage toddlers to feel the toy before seeing it. Arrange natural materials, such as tall grasses, pine cones, bark or flowers in the room. Put a few drops of vanilla or lemon extract in the water for play. Another day, display a variety of sound makers.



Family Child Care

Materials Needed: rattles, dish tubs, water, tubes, paper towel rolls, glue, texture materials, and toys that are soft and malleable

Provide sensory experiences for infants by offering soft, malleable toys as well as rattles. Talk with children about how play materials feel. Set up sensory bins for preschool-age children. Dish tubs with a few toys and water or a dry sensory material make a good individual activity for an older child. Preschool-age and older children will enjoy the addition of tubes with different-sized openings to pour materials through. Save paper towel rolls for sensory play. Toddlers and preschool children will enjoy using glue and textured material for collage.