



**Communication/
Language**

Exploring Words

Option 1 (IG) Toddlers participate in a book sharing about body parts, especially head, shoulders, knees, and toes.

Option 2 (IG) Toddlers participate in a book sharing about moving parts of our bodies in specific ways.



Cognitive

Exploring Objects

Option 1 (IG) Toddlers explore building simple structures for toy turtles.

Option 2 (IG) Toddlers use blocks to build houses for toy animals of different sizes.

Option 3 (IG) Toddlers use blocks to build a house for an animal they are pretending to be.



Self-Regulation

Getting Calm

Option 1 (IG) Toddlers watch a caregiver (or an older child) engage in a frog pose (yoga).

Option 2 (IG) Toddlers practice moving into a frog pose (yoga).

Option 3 (IG) Toddlers practice holding a frog pose (yoga) while breathing slowly and deeply.



Social-Emotional

Interacting with Others

Option 1 (IG) Toddlers look at and talk about pictures of peers engaged in activities in their room.

Option 2 (IG) Toddlers identify their own name and say the names of peers.



Physical/Health

Using Our Hands

Option 1 (IG) Toddlers participate in a song that involves clapping.

Option 2 (IG) Toddlers participate in a song that involves different hand and arm movements.

Option 3 (IG) Toddlers participate in a song that involves hand actions and signals to stop.

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



24–36 Months

Option 1 Informal Gathering



Skill and Goal

Receptive language
Expressive language

Toddlers participate in a book sharing about body parts, especially head, shoulders, knees, and toes.



Key Concepts

Head
Shoulder
Knee
Toe



Materials Needed

Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes... by Annie Kubler



Also Promotes

Self-Regulation
Physical/Health

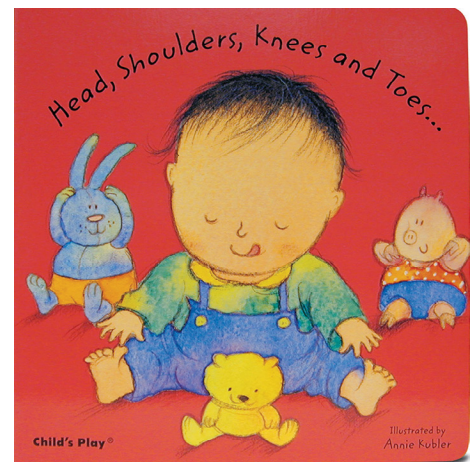
BEGIN: [*Invite toddlers to join you to read a book. Show the book cover. Point to the boy on the book cover when you describe his actions.*]

This little boy is touching his toes. All of us have toes. Where are our toes?

Let's all touch our toes!

EXPLAIN: Our book is about parts of our body. Our head, shoulders, knees, and toes are parts of our body.

ACT: [*Engage toddlers in the book by pointing to and inviting toddlers to say the name of the body part that is the focus of each illustration. Then encourage toddlers to join you in touching the illustrated body part. Example: Pat your head with both hands and encourage toddlers to pat theirs. Describe toddlers' actions. Example: "We are patting our heads!"*]



RECAP: Our book is a fun way to learn and remember the names of some parts of our body. Let's touch our head, shoulders, knees, and toes once more!

👁️ What to Look For—Option 1

Pay attention to the ease with which toddlers identify parts of their bodies so you can determine what pace to use in sharing the book. In general, a slower pace is appropriate for the first time the book is shared. It is likely that toddlers will differ in their familiarity with names and locations of body parts. Avoid a fast pace on the pages that review head, shoulders, knees, and toes unless you are fully confident that all toddlers in your gathering know the names and locations of these parts.

The activity description includes the benefit of inviting toddlers to say the name of the body part that is the focus of an illustration. Remember to repeat the name as you point to the part of your own body. This reinforces name recognition for some toddlers and likely introduces the name to one or more other toddlers.



Option 1 continued

More Scaffolding Tips—Option 1

Extra support ■ Say again the name of a body part identified by one or more toddlers as you talk about illustrations.

Enrichment ■ In a follow-up sharing of the book, invite toddlers to find each of the body parts on a teddy bear or doll.

24–36 Months

Option 2 Informal Gathering



Skill and Goal

Receptive language
Expressive language

Toddlers participate in a book sharing about moving parts of our bodies in specific ways.



Key Concepts

Move
Body



Materials Needed

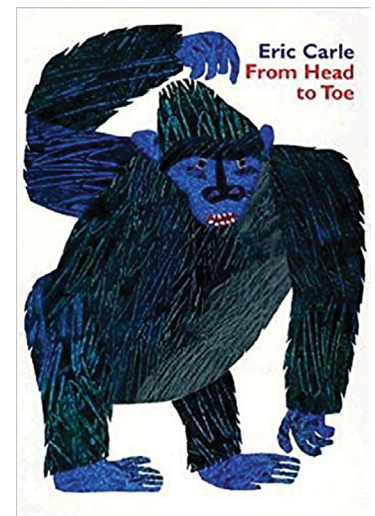
From Head to Toe by Eric Carle
Carpet squares—1 per toddler



Also Promotes

Physical/Health
Self-Regulation
Cognitive

Invite toddlers to join you in reading a book about how animals can move parts of their bodies. Use the book text and your own words to describe the animal's actions in each illustration. Draw attention to how the illustrated person is also moving the corresponding part of his/her body ("I can do it."). Recognize and respond to toddlers' comments and pointing, keeping in mind that some animals probably will not be familiar to toddlers. Example: "You pointed to the donkey and said 'horse.' A donkey is like a horse. This donkey has bigger ears than a horse has. Let's look at the donkey's ears."



At the conclusion of the book, invite toddlers to try doing some of the movements shown in the book's illustrations. Provide a carpet square for each toddler. Use movements that you anticipate will be of interest to toddlers in the gathering. Show the pertinent page, read the text, and say "we can do it!" to encourage toddlers to try the movement. Lead by demonstrating and describing the movement. Examples: "The gorilla 'thumps his chest.' My chest is right here. I can thump my chest like this. Let's all thump our chests like a gorilla!" "The seal can clap his hands. Where are our hands? Let's clap our hands like the seal!"

What to Look For—Option 2

Offering the session in two segments gives toddlers time to look closely at the bold illustrations of different animals, some of which may be unfamiliar, before trying some of the movements. Watch toddlers' reactions to the animals and movements to determine which ones to try in the second segment. Avoid movements you anticipate will be too challenging or may generate too much excitement. Anticipate and positively acknowledge a wide range of toddler attempts at the movements.

Showing and describing a pictured movement prior to trying the movement adds extra steps in your facilitation of movements, but it is cognitively helpful for toddlers to connect an illustration of the movement to their attempts to move in a similar way. Spacing the carpet squares so toddlers can engage in physical movements is important.

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

Extra support ■ Point to and name the pertinent parts of your body prior to demonstrating a movement. The “I can do it” illustrations of people doing a movement are small. ■ Offer a calming-down segment at the end if toddlers get excited.

Enrichment ■ Invite toddlers to join you in saying the repetitive “I can do it” phrase on each page. ■ Add some movements. Example: “The crocodile uses its big mouth to chew things. Let’s pretend we are crocodiles moving (chomping) our mouths!”

**Interest Area**

Materials Needed: *Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes...* by Annie Kubler; *From Head to Toe* by Eric Carle; baby doll; teddy bear

Place the books on a low table with several dolls and teddy bears. Encourage toddlers to find body parts on the dolls/bears that correspond to illustrations in the *Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes...* book, and to gently move parts of the dolls/bears in ways shown in the *From Head to Toe* book. Also invite toddlers to point to and/or move the pertinent part on their own bodies. Encourage toddlers to say the body part and the movement. You may wish to provide a nonbreakable mirror for toddlers to use in pointing to and moving their own bodies.

**Family Child Care**

Materials Needed: *Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes...* by Annie Kubler

Preschool-age children may enjoy touching their head, shoulders, knees, and toes in a slower and then faster pace. Older children may enjoy playing a simple version of “Simon Says” with body parts, such as “Simon says touch our heads.” Help older children take turns being Simon. Infants may enjoy holding a baby doll while watching their peers participate in Options 1 or 2, or the activities suggested here.



24–36 Months

Option 1 Informal Gathering



Skill and Goal

Object inquiry skills

Problem-solving

Toddlers explore building simple structures for toy turtles.



Key Concepts

Inside

Outside



Materials Needed

Vinyl turtles—1 per toddler and caregiver
Building blocks



Also Promotes

Physical/Health

Communication/Language



Optional Reading

Where's Spot? by Eric Hill

The Napping House by Audrey Wood

Be Prepared: Make a simple enclosure with three blocks (one open side) and place one vinyl turtle inside the structure.

Invite 3–4 toddlers to join you in the block area. Draw attention to the simple enclosure and the toy turtle inside. Encourage toddlers to construct houses for the toy turtles. Sit on the floor facing the toddlers to foster effective interaction.

Describe and demonstrate how to make the simple structure by making a second similar structure, or taking apart the existing structure and rebuilding it. Emphasize that our toy turtles need places to sleep and rest. Our houses do not need to be alike. Some toddlers may wish to construct other structures for the turtles.

Give each toddler a toy turtle. Hold and animate a toy turtle to promote imaginative play. Example: Make your turtle say “I am outside. It is cold outside. I want to get inside a house. Who wants to make me a house?”

Describe each toddler’s efforts with the blocks. Speak clearly and pause for a possible response. Encourage toddlers to tell what they are doing. Repeat and extend a toddler’s comments. Example: A toddler says “It he house.” Reply “It is his house. This house is for Turtle.” Point to the inside of the structure. Say “Turtle is inside the house you made.” Draw attention to the words inside and outside during conversations with toddlers. Move your turtle from inside to outside.

If some toddlers readily build a three-sided structure, demonstrate and describe how a fourth side could be a door.

What to Look For—Option 1

Some toddlers may be accustomed to stacking blocks, which is common in early stages of block play, and not experienced in building structures. Provide encouragement for building a house and positively recognize toddlers’ representations of a house. If a toddler lines up two blocks and says it is a house, for example, accept his/her idea and existing skill development. Some toddlers may eagerly copy the house you offer as an example.

The toy turtle is included to support imaginative play and provide a reason for building a structure. There may be other types of objects in need of a house that are of stronger interest to some toddlers.

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

Extra support ■ Help toddlers remove blocks from the shelf for building. ■ Describe the blocks toddlers use. ■ Invite a toddler who has limited familiarity with block play to sit next to you. Encourage the toddler to help you arrange a few blocks. Describe what 1–2 other toddlers are doing with blocks.

Enrichment ■ Display photos of turtles. ■ Invite a toddler to make a house big enough for two turtles.

24–36 Months

Option 2
Informal Gathering

Skill and Goal

Object inquiry skills

Problem-solving

Toddlers use blocks to build houses for toy animals of different sizes.



Key Concepts

Big

Little



Materials Needed

Large and small toy animals—2 per toddler and caregiver (see Be Prepared)

Building blocks



Also Promotes

Physical/Health

Communication/Language

Be Prepared: Use current interests of toddlers in your gathering to select farm or zoo animals for the activity. The activity description assumes zoo animals are used. Secure both larger and smaller sizes of toy animals.

BEGIN: [*Invite several toddlers to play with you in the blocks area to build houses for some zoo animals.*]

EXPLAIN: Here are the animals that need a home. Some of the animals are big. Some of the animals are little.

[*Display a larger and a smaller toy animal, one at a time. Say its name and indicate whether it is big or little.*]

At the zoo, each animal family has a home. We can use our blocks to build zoo homes for our animals. You may build on your own or with a friend.

We have big blocks and little blocks for building.

[*Place a big block and a little block side by side. Point to each block as you say the size.*]

ACT: [*Distribute the toy animals equally, 1–2 per toddler. Toddlers may have preferences. Within your gathering, include both large and small animals.*]

Say the name of the animal(s) you give to a toddler and ask “Does your zoo animal need a little house or a big house?” Also, ask a follow-up question. Example: “Do you want to start building with big blocks or little blocks?”

Help each toddler remove a few blocks of his/her choice from the shelf and move to a suitable building spot. Say the size of blocks a toddler is securing. Example: “Darcy, you are getting little blocks for your animal house.”

Assume the role of building partner. Select a toy animal and build a simple house for it. Describe your actions and what you are building. Example: “Our penguin is little. I am building a little house. I am using little blocks.”

Demonstrate making a box shape with four blocks. Place one toy animal inside the enclosure. Do not expect or coax toddlers to copy your model of a box shape.

If a toddler shows signs of concern or frustration about the size of his/her building, such as building a house that is too little for a big elephant, offer problem-solving assistance by gently (1) encouraging

**Option 2 continued**

the toddler to show or tell what is of concern, (2) state the problem, such as “The elephant is too big for the house,” and (3) ask the toddler what might be done, such as “How can the house be made bigger?”

Stay close to toddlers and maintain active involvement until the activity ends.]

RECAP: We used blocks to make zoo houses for our animals. Some animals are big and need big houses. Some animals are little and need little houses.

[Briefly point to and describe size differences in what toddlers created and/or animals used.]

👁️ What to Look For—Option 2

This activity option continues the Option 1 attention to building a structure and offers more challenge than Option 1 by emphasizing the concept of size. As noted in Option 1, some toddlers may be accustomed to stacking blocks, which is common in early stages of block play, and not experienced in building structures. Your demonstration of building a simple three- or four-sided enclosure may help toddlers think about possibilities for an animal house. Interest in making a roof typically does not arise at this age (but see Enrichment tip).

Some toddlers may focus on building an enclosure and have little or no interest in whether the structure is an appropriate size for the toy animal. Some toddlers may decline the invitation to build an enclosure, and play in their own way with the blocks and animals. Seeing enclosures other toddlers make may lead to further discoveries with blocks. Positively accept different forms of participation in the activity, and avoid directing toddlers’ building efforts.

Big and little are appropriate size descriptors at this age. Important learning may potentially occur when a toddler considers the size of his/her animal in relation to a structure he/she might build. Support toddlers in making size discoveries on their own, and avoid offering directions and rules, such as using small blocks for little animals. A toddler may wish to make two structures, one for a big animal and one for a little animal.

If a toddler becomes discouraged when blocks fall down, acknowledge the child’s feelings and offer to help. Move close to the toddler and encourage him/her to rebuild the fallen section.

📊 More Scaffolding Tips—Option 2

Extra support ■ Provide one toy animal per toddler if you anticipate providing two animals (to live in the same structure or in different structures) might create initial confusion.

Enrichment ■ Ask a toddler to help you make a house bigger or littler. ■ For a toddler who creates an enclosure, demonstrate moving one block to the side to make a door. ■ If a toddler wants to put a cover on his/her enclosure, talk about how the sides of the enclosure need to be as tall as the animal. Alternatively, support the toddler in discovering this concept on his/her own. Provide a light material, such as cardboard, for a roof.



24–36 Months

Option 3 Informal Gathering



Skill and Goal

Object inquiry skills

Toddlers use blocks to build a house for an animal they are pretending to be.



Key Concepts

Big
Little



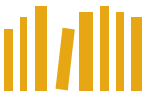
Materials Needed

Large wooden blocks or cardboard building blocks
Paper headbands (see Be Prepared)
Markers of different colors



Also Promotes

Communication/Language
Social-Emotional



Optional Reading

Up, Down, and Around by Katherine Ayres
Where's Spot? by Eric Hill
Rosie's Walk by Pat Hutchins

Be Prepared: Cut a three-inch paper headband for each child. You may wish to add paper strips to represent antennae and triangles to represent ears. Place the headbands and markers on a low table.

Invite several toddlers to join you at the low table to get ready for building with blocks. Explain that each of us can pretend to be a big or a little animal and draw a picture of the animal on a headband. Then we can build a house for the animal we are pretending to be. Offer examples of animals, such as lion or bird or butterfly, if toddlers seem uncertain about possibilities.

Support each toddler in drawing his/her pretend animal on a headband and putting on the headband. Say what animal each toddler is pretending to be and then invite toddlers to the block area to build a house for their pretend animal.

Help toddlers think about whether their pretend animal will want to build a big or a little house. Example: "McKenzie, you are pretending to be a lion. Would a lion like to build a big house or a little house?"

Also, help toddlers decide whether they want to use big blocks or little blocks or maybe a combination of big and little blocks. Help toddlers remove blocks from the shelf and place them in a building area. Support each toddler in building a structure. It may be helpful for the toddler to decide whether he/she wants his/her pretend animal to mostly sit, stand, or lay down in the house. Remind the toddler of the animal and the animal size (big, little) he/she is pretending to be. At this age, one level of building bricks is generally suitable for representing a house. If a toddler builds upward with wooden blocks, be sure to remind him/her to stop building when the structure reaches his/her shoulders or whatever guideline your room uses. Demonstrate building a one-level structure, if appropriate.

Move from one toddler to the next, talking about his/her pretend animal and the house. Use spatial vocabulary, such as inside and outside. Make comments that show you understand the child's purpose or meaning.

👁️ What to Look For—Option 3

Typically at this age, toddlers are beginning to explore new ways to use blocks, often involving pretend play. The current activity builds on this natural progress in block play by providing a pretend element that potentially offers a toddler the cognitive challenge of realizing the pretend animal is smaller or larger than his/her body. Look for opportunities to ask questions or make

**Option 3 continued**

brief comments that support this discovery. Example: “A butterfly is little. You are big.” At the same time, recognize that toddlers will differ in their readiness to consider the size of their pretend animal in relation to their own body as well as in their familiarity with the pretend animal. This activity plan continues the Option 2 focus on size. The structure-building task may involve a larger or smaller house than constructed in Options 1 or 2.

 **More Scaffolding Tips—Option 3**

Extra support ■ Offer positive comments about each child’s project to support toddlers’ awareness of what others are doing. Example: “Lily started with a big line of blocks.” ■ Encourage a toddler to lie on the floor. Invite another toddler to help you arrange blocks next to the child, end to end from his/her feet to head. Explain that the line of blocks could be one side of the building.

Enrichment ■ Provide a mirror in the opening segment for toddlers to look at the headband on their head.

**Interest Area**

Materials Needed: *Rosie’s Walk* by Pat Hutchins; *Up, Down, and Around* by Katherine Ayres; *Where’s Spot?* by Eric Hill; other books that emphasize spatial words; several large boxes; shoebox-size containers; crayons

Place the large boxes in an open activity area in your room. Encourage toddlers to sit in the boxes as self and/or as a pretend animal. Toddlers may use a box for a vehicle or a house. Encourage toddlers to color the boxes with crayons. Also, provide shoebox-size containers the toddlers can fill with toys or make into a pretend car for a doll or soft animal. Talk with toddlers about what can fit inside the box. Share the books in one-to-one or small gatherings. Emphasize the spatial words.

 Family Child Care

Materials Needed: soft toy, one-quart container, small boxes, animal or people figures, barn, *Where's Spot?* by Eric Hill, *The Napping House* by Audrey Wood

For an infant who sits independently, put a soft toy inside a one-quart container and playfully pretend the container is the "house" for the small toy. Emphasize the words in and out as you play with the infant. Cover the toy with the container and encourage the infant to find it.

Toddlers will enjoy playing with small boxes and animal figures. Encourage toddlers to make marks inside the box. Place small boxes next to blocks to encourage building. Add animal or people figures to promote imaginative play. Talk with toddlers about their structures.

Place a barn and animal figures in the building area. Talk with children about where the figures are located. Example: "Who is inside the barn?"

Toddlers and preschool-age children will enjoy hearing you read the book *Where's Spot?* Emphasize relational concepts, such as behind, inside, and under. Toddlers like to answer "no" to each question in the story, such as "Is Spot in the box?"

The Napping House will be enjoyable for preschool-age children. Invite children to name something that is always outside and something that is always inside.



24–36 Months

Option 1 Informal Gathering



Skill and Goal Self-control

Toddlers watch a caregiver (or an older child) engage in a frog pose (yoga).



Key Concepts

Pose
Breathe
Frog



Materials Needed

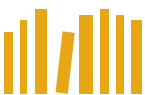
*Picture of frog



Also Promotes

Social-Emotional
Physical/Health

*Printables provided



Optional Reading

The ABCs of Yoga for Kids by
Teresa Power

Be Prepared: Be familiar with the frog pose. Arrange for another adult or preschool-age child in your center to demonstrate the frog pose if you do not wish to do so. Adapt the pose if you anticipate it will be too challenging for toddlers in your room.

BEGIN: *[Invite toddlers to watch a yoga pose.]*

We are learning how to do yoga. Do you remember holding our body still while pretending to be a tree?

Today we will learn a new pose. Remember, a pose is a way of holding our body. Doing a yoga pose can help us feel calm and relaxed.

EXPLAIN: I am going to show you how to do a frog pose.

[Display picture of a frog.]

This is a picture of a frog. Look at how the frog's legs are bent. Frogs use their legs to jump. But we do not jump when we do a frog pose. We try to keep our legs still when we do a frog pose.



ACT: *[Move your body into a frog pose. Describe the position of each body part, as suggested below.]*

I am bending my legs. Remember, the legs of a frog are bent. My arms are straight down between my legs and in front of my body.

I am stretching my body to look like a frog. Do you think my body looks like a frog?

[Pause for and acknowledge toddlers' responses.]

Now I am going to hold my body still and breathe slowly, in and out. We know that breathing slowly can help us to feel calm.

[Demonstrate breathing in and out two times while holding the frog pose.]

Move out of the pose and into a normal stance. If time and toddler interest permit, demonstrate again moving into the frog pose and breathing slowly.]

RECAP: We learned how to do a frog pose. I breathed slowly while holding my body still. Yoga can help us feel calm and relaxed.



24–36 Months

Option 2 Informal Gathering



Skill and Goal

Self-control

Toddlers practice moving into a frog pose (yoga).



Key Concepts

Pose

Frog



Materials Needed

*Picture of a frog

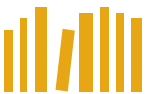


Also Promotes

Social-Emotional

Physical/Health

*Printables provided



Optional Reading

The ABCs of Yoga for Kids by
Teresa Power

Be Prepared: Be familiar with the frog pose. Arrange for another adult or preschool-age child in your center to demonstrate the frog pose if you do not wish to do so. Adapt the pose if you anticipate it will be too challenging for toddlers in your room.

Invite several toddlers to join you in making a frog pose with our bodies. Explain (or remind) toddlers that a pose is a way of holding our body. Example: “Holding a pose with our body can help us get calm. Today we will practice a frog pose.” Show and describe the picture of a frog. Draw attention to how the frog’s legs are bent.



Demonstrate a frog pose as described in Option 1. Then invite toddlers to make a pretend frog with their bodies. Describe each action with legs and arms. Use a calm voice. Emphasize that it is okay for each of our poses to look different. Encourage toddlers to hold the pose as long as they can without losing their balance. Invite several attempts. Talk with toddlers about how their body felt while doing the pose.





24–36 Months

Option 3 Informal Gathering



Skill and Goal

Self-control

Toddlers practice holding a frog pose (yoga) while breathing slowly and deeply.



Key Concepts

Pose
Breathe
Frog



Materials Needed

*Picture of a frog



Also Promotes

Social-Emotional
Physical/Health

*Printables provided

Be Prepared: This activity is for toddlers who have recently participated in Option 2 (and possibly Option 1). Be familiar with the frog pose. Arrange for another adult or preschool-age child in your center to demonstrate the frog pose if you do not wish to do so. Adapt the pose if you anticipate it will be too challenging for toddlers in your room.

Invite several toddlers to join you in doing a frog pose. Show the picture of a frog as a reminder of the pose. Explain that we will practice breathing slowly and deeply when we hold our body in a frog pose. Offer a demonstration that emphasizes the two important parts: slow and deep breaths. Quietly say “in” and “out” to describe your breathing. Then engage toddlers in practicing how to breathe slowly and deeply while standing in a relaxed position. It is not necessary for toddlers’ breathing to be uniform.



Next, move into a frog pose. Use the strategies suggested in Options 1 and 2 to describe your body. Encourage toddlers to also move into a frog pose. Support toddlers’ efforts with strategies suggested in Option 2. Remind toddlers that each of our frog poses can look different.

After toddlers are in a frog pose, use a gentle voice to encourage breathing slowly and deeply while holding the pose. Invite several attempts. Talk with toddlers about how their bodies felt while doing the pose and breathing slowly and deeply.

What to Look For—Options 1–3

Yoga is a popular activity among young children and a demonstrated way to promote self-regulation skills. The benefits of yoga for very young children are described in the *ELM Curriculum User Guide: Birth–36 Months*.

This is the second yoga pose introduced to children 24–36 months of age in the ELM Curriculum. A tree pose was introduced in Block 8. Prior practice in breathing slowly and deeply is offered in Blocks 2 and 5 as well as part of calming down practices in ELM Curriculum activities for children 12–24 months of age.

Some toddlers may find it challenging to hold their body in a pose while also focusing on breathing (Option 3). A slow pace with a quiet, soothing voice can be helpful to toddlers. It also is highly appropriate to focus on Option 2 with toddlers who need more time and practice in holding a yoga pose.

A small icon of a staircase with three steps. **More Scaffolding Tips—Options 1–3**

Extra support ■ In Option 1, display again the picture of a frog when you ask toddlers whether your pose looks like a frog. ■ In Options 2 and 3, offer individualized feedback and verbal support as appropriate. Example: “Elijah, you have your arms down in front your body like I do. Now can you try to bend your knees. That’s it! You are holding your body like a frog!”

Enrichment ■ Invite toddlers to try taking 3–4 slow, deep breaths before moving out of a frog pose.

**Interest Area**

Materials Needed: *The ABCs of Yoga for Kids* by Teresa Power, picture of a frog

Display the book in a calm area of the room with a blanket or yoga mat. Invite toddlers to practice the tree and/or frog pose. Some toddlers may enjoy looking at the yoga book and talking with you about other yoga poses. Encourage toddlers to compare the provided picture of a frog to the picture of a frog pose in *The ABCs of Yoga for Kids* book.

**Family Child Care**

Materials Needed: see activity description

Preschool-age children may enjoy participating in Options 1–3 as well as the Interest Area activity. Older infants will enjoy watching toddlers and others try a frog pose.



24–36 Months

Option 1 Informal Gathering



Skill and Goal

Social interaction skills

Toddlers look at and talk about pictures of peers engaged in activities in their room.



Key Concepts

Friends
Name



Materials Needed

Pictures of activities in your room (see Be Prepared)



Also Promotes

Communication/Language
Cognitive

Be Prepared: Gather pictures of current toddlers engaged in activities in your room or use pictures assembled for the Block 10, Option 3 (Social-Emotional) activity. Become familiar with the first verse and tune of “The More We Get Together.” Limiting the gathering to 3–4 toddlers will help each toddler look closely at pictures you share.

BEGIN: *[Invite 3–4 toddlers to join you in singing a song and looking at pictures of our friends doing things in our room.]*

Open the session by singing the first verse of “The More We Get Together.” Repeat the song and encourage toddlers to sing with you.]

EXPLAIN: Our song says we feel happy being together in our room. Our song says our friends are your friends. Who are our friends?

Our friends are everyone in our room!

We do lots of things with friends in our room. Let’s look at some pictures of friends doing things in our room.

ACT: *[Display each picture, one at a time, and encourage toddlers to help you tell what we see happening. Focus the description on what toddlers can see in the picture; not on what they can recall from past experience. Identify toddlers in the picture by name. A toddler in your gathering may wish to hold a picture (after its discussion) so he/she can see it better. Show and discuss as many pictures as time and toddler interest permit.]*

RECAP: We sang a song about friends being together. We looked at pictures of friends in our room doing different things. We had fun talking about the pictures.

👁️ What to Look For—Option 1

Pay close attention to each toddler’s visual and verbal engagement in the activity. Gently offer a question or comment aimed at a toddler who may benefit from a nudge to contribute.

Note several aspects of the activity’s approach to being inclusive. One is a greater discussion focus on the pictured activity than on toddlers in the activity. Some toddlers may not be represented in pictures shared in the gathering and/or know the names of toddlers shown in a picture. Also, the suggested emphasis in the picture discussion is what can be seen in a picture, and not what can be recalled about the pictured activity. A discussion based mostly on recall runs the risk of excluding from the conversation toddlers with no knowledge of what happened.

**Option 1 continued**

This activity extends Block 10 (Social-Emotional) options that feature discussion of activities children like to do (Option 2) and recall of an activity by toddlers who were involved in a pictured activity (Option 3). The current activity emphasizes what we see in a picture (not what we recall) with toddlers who were not necessarily part of the pictured activity.

 More Scaffolding Tips—Option 1

Extra support ■ Sing the song enthusiastically and slowly. Accentuate key words, including the following: together, happier, friends. ■ A toddler may enjoy looking at and talking about pictures of interest with you in a one-to-one setting.

Enrichment ■ Draw attention to pictured examples of toddlers sharing materials or doing things cooperatively.



24–36 Months

Option 2 Informal Gathering



Skill and Goal

Social interaction skills

Toddlers identify their own name and say the names of peers.



Key Concepts

Name
Listen



Materials Needed

None



Also Promotes

Communication/Language
Self-Regulation
Physical/Health

Invite 3–4 toddlers to join you to listen for our names and do a fun action with our hands. Encourage toddlers to sit with you in a circle and listen carefully for their name. Explain that you will suggest something for each toddler to do after you say his/her name. Demonstrate with your own name or the name of another adult in your room. Example: “If your name is Miss Donna, tap your knees.” Then invite all toddlers in the gathering to say your name (or the other adult’s name) and tap their knees. Below are suggested actions for toddlers in the gathering:

If your name is (child’s name), clap your hands.

If your name is (child’s name), pull your ears.

If your name is (child’s name), tap your head.

If your name is (child’s name), touch the sky.

Immediately after a toddler engages in the suggested action, invite all toddlers in the gathering to say the toddler’s name and do the action. The activity is meant to be lighthearted and fun.

What to Look For—Option 2

Toddlers will enjoy hearing their name in a song and responding with an action. Inviting all toddlers to say again a toddler’s name and do the requested action should help some toddlers manage the self-regulation task of waiting for their turn. Some toddlers may not do the requested action or will do a different action. Positively recognize different approaches to participation. An upbeat invitation, with a big smile and eye contact, can help a toddler feel valued and part of a group.

More Scaffolding Tips—Option 2

Extra support ■ If you anticipate a toddler may find it especially challenging to do an action, suggest the toddler do the action done by the prior participant. It is not necessary for each toddler to do a different action.

Enrichment ■ In a follow-up offering of the activity, invite toddlers to think of actions they would like to do when they hear their name.



Interest Area

Materials Needed: Option 1 pictures laminated

Provide the Option 1 pictures in a basket on a low table or posted at toddler level on a wall or room partition. You may wish to use the book of pictures assembled for Block 10, Option 3 (Social-Emotional) if a book was created. Invite toddlers, 1–2 at a time, to tell what is happening in a picture and point to the part of your room where the activity occurred. Unlike the approach used in Block 10, Option 3, encourage toddlers to describe pictured activities in which they were not necessarily participants. Consider expanding the discussion by accompanying the toddler(s) to the activity area and encouraging the toddler(s) to tell what is currently happening and/or whether there are materials in the area that are also in the picture. Take the picture with you. This activity promotes both language and cognitive skills.



Family Child Care

Materials Needed: none

The Option 2 activity can be adapted for a gathering of children of different ages. Omit the provision of all children in the gathering repeating the action done by the named child. Use age-appropriate actions for each child, such as the following:

Older infants: wave bye-bye

Toddlers: turn around

Preschool-age and older: walk backward several steps



24–36 Months

Option 1 Informal Gathering



Skill and Goal Fine motor development

Toddlers participate in a song that involves clapping.



Key Concepts

Listen
Hand
Song
Words



Materials Needed

Carpet squares—1 per child



Also Promotes

Self-Regulation
Communication/Language
Cognitive

BEGIN: [Arrange carpet squares in an open area. If toddlers are interested in your actions, explain that you are getting ready for some singing time. Invite toddlers to singing time by walking around the room singing a little clapping song. See the following possibility.]

A Song for Inviting Toddlers to Singing Time

Tune: “Go in and Out the Window”

[Clap softly as you sing]

Come over and clap with me.

Come over and clap with me.

Come over and clap with me.

We will have some fun.

Encourage each toddler to sit on a carpet square.]

EXPLAIN: I have a fun song for us to learn and sing.

[Point to your ears and eyes as you refer to each.]

Please listen with your ears. Please watch me with your eyes.

We can clap our hands together during our song. Let’s practice clapping our hands. Let’s all clap together.

[Demonstrate clapping with exaggerated motions. Lead toddlers in clapping for a few seconds. It is not necessary to clap in unison.]

ACT: Our song will tell us when to clap. I will sing our song and clap my hands. Please listen to the words of our song and watch my hands.

[Sing the song below with enthusiasm. Clap your hands at the appropriate times. Encourage toddlers to clap their hands.]

Clap, Clap, Clap Your Hands

Tune: “Row, Row, Row Your Boat”

Clap, clap, clap your hands.

Clap along with me.

Clap with (child’s name),
and Clap with (child’s name).

Clap so merrily.

**Option 1 continued**

I will sing the song again. We are learning when to clap.

[Encourage toddlers to sing if they like. Remind toddlers to clap when the song says clap.]

RECAP: We clapped our hands while singing a song. The words in our song told us when to clap our hands. We had a fun time with our song. It is fun to clap with friends.

👁️ What to Look For—Option 1

Be prepared to positively acknowledge a range of participation in the activity. There may be striking differences across toddlers in learning the words to the song and clapping with the song. During the clapping-practice segment especially, pay attention to whether some toddlers may benefit from additional support for how to clap. Use a slower pace and exaggerated arm and hand movements to demonstrate clapping. Avoid hand-over-hand movement of a toddler's hands.

Some toddlers may join the activity after it begins and will need your guidance on where to sit. It may be challenging for some toddlers to maintain self-control if they feel excited. Help toddlers focus attention on their hands by describing and showing where to place our hands. Examples: "Our hands are for clapping." "Our hands are for holding on our laps."

📈 More Scaffolding Tips—Option 1

Extra support ■ Sit next to a toddler who needs your presence and maybe your quiet coaching on ways to participate. ■ Provide nonverbal reminders on how to use hands, such as placing your hands together in front of your body and folding your hands in your lap.

Enrichment ■ Sing the song loudly with exaggerated clapping. Then sing softly with small movements.



24–36 Months

Option 2 Informal Gathering



Skill and Goal

Fine motor development

Toddlers participate in a song that involves different hand and arm movements.



Key Concepts

Listen
Words
Song
Hands



Materials Needed

None



Also Promotes

Self-Regulation
Communication/Language
Cognitive

Begin the activity with the Option 1 activity. Encourage toddlers to listen to the words of our song and clap their hands. Omit the suggested repeat of the song if toddlers are familiar with when to clap during the song. Encourage toddlers to join you in singing.

Include 2–3 more verses/actions from the following possibilities:

- tap our toes with our fingers
- tap our shoulder or arm with our opposite hand
- stomp our feet

Provide a brief demonstration of each action. Emphasize the use of our finger(s) to tap our toes and our shoulder or arm. Tapping a shoulder or arm with the opposite hand may need more demonstration time and brief practice than other actions. Remind toddlers to listen to the words of the song and watch your hands. While the first verse (Option 1) of the song can be done while sitting, invite toddlers to stand for the additional verses/actions.

What to Look For—Option 2

The additional verses/actions offered in this Option 2 provide more challenge than the clapping included in Option 1. Tapping a shoulder or arm with the opposite hand is an action that crosses the midline. Cognitive benefits of crossing the midline are described in the *ELM Curriculum User Guide: Birth–36 Months*. It does not matter whether a toddler uses his/her right or left hand to cross the midline. Pay close attention to whether some toddlers find this action challenging to do, and be prepared to provide a brief practice opportunity after your focused demonstration. The “stomp our feet” suggestion is a fully gross motor action that toddlers may appreciate after a series of fine motor actions with their hands.

More Scaffolding Tips—Option 2

Extra support ■ Review the names and locations of toes, feet, arms, shoulders. ■ Acknowledge each toddler who joins the gathering. Example: “Trina and Caleb are sitting with us.”

Enrichment ■ Talk with toddlers later in the day about the songs or actions. Example: While having snack, sit with toddlers and encourage them to recall the activity. ■ If the song becomes a favorite, consider making a book with one action simply illustrated on each page.



24–36 Months

Option 3 Informal Gathering



Skill and Goal

Fine motor development

Toddlers participate in a song that involves hand actions and signals to stop.



Key Concepts

Stop
Clap
Tap



Materials Needed

Shaker, maraca, or similar rhythm instrument



Also Promotes

Self-Regulation
Communication/Language
Cognitive

Use the rhythm instrument in the following simple song to help toddlers follow requests for clapping or tapping and stopping. You may wish to say rather than sing the verses. Use the rhythm instrument continuously during the song (shaking it to the beat of the song) and accentuate the last shake at the point you say or sing stop.

In advance of offering the song, demonstrate and lead toddlers in brief practices of clapping, tapping, and stopping. Explain that we are practicing for fun. Demonstrate where to put hands when you say or sing stop. Example: put hands in front of body with palms showing.

This is intended as a fun, lighthearted activity. Repeat a verse or song if toddlers seem interested.

Clapping and Tapping

Tune: “Row, Row, Row Your Boat”

Clap, clap, clap your hands.

Clap and clap and clap.

Clap, clap, clap, clap.

Clap and clap and stop!

Tap, tap, tap your tummy.

Tap and tap and tap.

Tap, tap, tap, tap.

Tap and tap and stop!

👁️ What to Look For—Option 3

You can strengthen supports for the “stop” request by coordinating an accentuated last shake of the rhythm instrument with an emphasis on the word “stop.” Continuous shaking of the rhythm instrument provides a cue to continue clapping or tapping. Still, do not expect all toddlers to stop an action on cue or clap in unison.

Paying attention to stop requests is not the only challenge of this activity. Your use of the rhythm instrument means that your hands are not free to demonstrate clapping. Toddlers have the opportunity to lead the clapping. For the tapping action, you could use one hand to manipulate the rhythm instrument and your other hand to tap your tummy. This is not a strong demonstration of tapping because some toddlers may look at the rhythm

**Option 3 continued**

instrument and not your hand that is tapping. The suggested brief practice sessions prior to offering the song can help toddlers manage these reasonable challenges. It also is important to positively accept a range of approaches to participation in the activity.

More Scaffolding Tips—Option 3

Extra support ■ Introduce the actions and brief practices while toddlers are sitting. ■ Repeat the song at other times of day, such as when toddlers are getting ready to leave the playground.

Enrichment ■ In follow-up uses of the song, add other actions, such as marching in place.



Interest Area

Materials Needed: musical instruments, basket, *Clap Your Hands* by Lorinda Bryan Cauley

Display and share the book *Clap Your Hands*. Talk with toddlers about times they have clapped their hands, such as at a party or during a song we sing in our room. On another day, place musical instruments in a basket on a low table. Encourage toddlers to make sounds with the instruments and by clapping. Draw attention to how we use our hands to make sounds with instruments and with clapping.



Family Child Care

Materials Needed: see activity description

Preschool-age children may enjoy participating in the Option 3 activity. Also, consider leading toddlers and preschool-age children in clapping in different ways, such as the following: clapping fast, clapping slow, clapping high (hands up high), and clapping low (bend to clap).