

Getting Children Off To a Strong Start

Easy tips and activities for
you to do with your
Toddler




BROOMFIELD
Early Childhood Council
In partnership with Bal Swan Children's Center

Colorado Early Learning
Development Guidelines 

www.earlylearningco.org

The Broomfield Early Childhood Council was founded in 2007 as a partnership based community organization. We focus on building awareness of the whole child and supporting best practices in health and well-being through health, mental health, family support and engagement, and early learning and care. Creating a Broomfield community where all children are valued, healthy, and thriving happens best when people and agencies serving children and families work together in partnership to create lasting solutions that will meet the needs of children, families and their providers.

Learn more at www.broomfieldecc.org or contact us at info@broomfieldecc.org



Why Activity Cards?

Learning begins long before children start school and teaching isn't just for teachers.

No matter how we interact with young children – whether we're first-time parents, grandparents or involved friends and neighbors – we all play an important role in giving them a great start.

These cards have been created by the Broomfield Early Childhood Council quick reference for anyone working with or caring for young children to help create activities that will foster strong development. They are taken directly from the Colorado's Early Learning & Development Guidelines, www.earlylearningco.org

The research-based Colorado Early Learning and Development Guidelines provide descriptions for what children can know and be able to do so that everyone who interacts with young children can prepare them for a lifetime of success. Encourage children to show independence in self-care tasks, helping when necessary (e.g. brushing teeth, wiping nose, toileting, washing hands, feeding oneself)

Play!

Why it's important:

Along with the 5 senses, toddlers use developing gross and fine motor skills to explore and interact with their social and physical environment.



Some activities:

- Have tactile books available, such as books with faux fuzzy animal fur
- Have a sandbox and/or water table where the toddler can use scoops and buckets
- Put familiar objects in a box or bag and use touch to identify the items
- Use bubbles and encourage the toddler to catch them
- Play games that require physical actions (e.g., rolling, throwing, and kicking balls; going over and under objects; chasing)
- Ask the toddler to complete simple jobs that use small muscles in the hand like wiping down tables, placing napkins for snacks, and putting toys away
- Provide toys that require hand-eye coordination, such as puzzles, shape sorters, blocks, construction toys, lacing cards, and beads to string
- Use play dough and clay to help develop squeezing, rolling, patting, and pounding skills
- Provide opportunities to practice safe behavior and listening, like taking walks and being in the community

Make Friends



Why it's important:

Toddlers learn the intricacies of social interaction by observing the interactions of others around them. Toddlers have a growing ability to share in the emotional experiences of others, will engage in simple cooperative play with peers, and will continue to look to adults for problem solving and to communicate experiences.

Some activities:

- **Encourage the toddler to greet adults by name. Recognize new people in the room and explain to the toddler who they are and why they are there**
- **Listen carefully and with interest when the toddler talks to you and expand on her message**
- **Have duplicates of favorite toys and toys that it takes two to play with**
- **Recognize the toddler's preferences for playmates and encourage their interactions, remembering that different playmates may be preferred depending on the activity**
- **Read books that demonstrate how characters' behaviors affect other characters**
- **Encourage toddler to help clean up at the end of the day by putting the toys in the usual places**
- **Read about diverse families and people**
- **Provide toys that encourage imaginative play with specific roles (e.g., cooking and eating, doctor and patient)**
- **Demonstrate and describe how to cooperate in daily activities (e.g., talk about waiting your turn in the grocery checkout line)**

Express Feelings

Why it's important:

Although toddlers look for reassurance and support from nurturing adults, many toddlers are increasingly able to identify express, and manage their own feelings and needs and have a developing understanding that their actions can influence the environment where they live.



Some activities:

- **Squat down to the toddler's eye level when he seeks you out**
- **Provide encouragement for the toddler to try a new activity while you remain close to offer support**
- **Provide regular and purposeful interactions that include holding, talking, cuddling, hugs, pats on the back, and other physical touches when appropriate**
- **Discuss physical differences as they come up, such as differences in skin tone, eye color, and hair texture/style**
- **Allow the toddler time to do things for himself and acknowledge the actions**
- **Allow the toddler to keep favorite toys or possessions in a special place**
- **Help the toddler identify feelings as they are occurring**
- **Support transitions from activity to activity by providing preparation (e.g., "In five minutes it will be time to clean up")**
- **Give clear expectations for safe behaviors and use simple rules that the toddler can understand**

Talk!

Why it's important:

Many toddlers are on the brink of language explosion. They can now communicate in a way that is understandable to most adults who speak the same language, can combine words into simple sentences, can engage in back-and-forth conversations, and can demonstrate understanding of others' comments, questions, or requests.

Some activities:

- Read with expression and use hand motions and other body movements when singing or telling stories
- Talk about what you are doing (e.g., "I am going to wash off this table and then we can sit down and eat")

continued on reverse

- Use fanciful language and playful approaches to add interest and new vocabulary to ordinary routines (e.g., “Let’s walk like big, heavy elephants. Tromp. Stomp.” “Would you like to walk in a zig-zag, or in a straight line?”)
- Engage the toddler in noticing and playing with sounds (e.g., words and nonsense words that rhyme with her name)
- Encourage the toddler to “talk like a big girl/boy” but focus on what she is trying to say, not how it is said
- Recognize that children who are English language learners may mix words from different languages in the same sentence; repeat what the toddler says using words all in the same language
- Acknowledge the toddler’s contributions to the conversation, and then build on them by offering questions, information, and extensions of their ideas, but resist the temptation to rush or interrupt the toddler as he thinks of how to say something
- Choose books that invite interaction (e.g., textures to feel, flaps to lift)
- Help the toddler make connections between the stories and pictures in books and their own experiences

Think!

Why it's important:

Toddlers' developing ability to use actions, objects, or ideas to represent other actions objects or ideas, combined with a growing understanding of cause-and-effect relationships, begins a cognitive leap that spurs more complex make believe play, a developing understanding of how things move and fit into space, a growing understanding of number and quantity, and the ability to group, sort, categorize, and connect objects and people according to attributes.

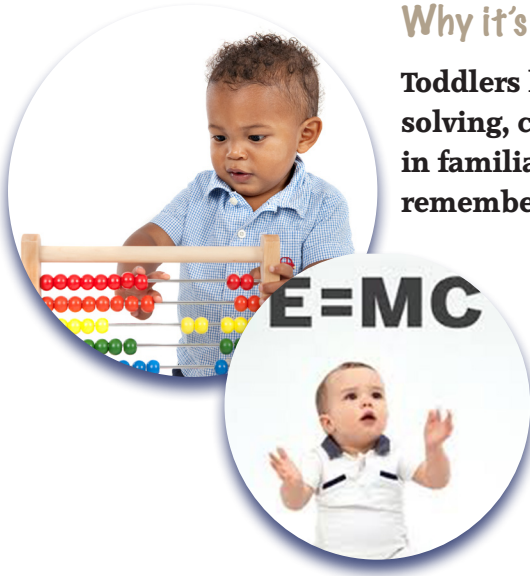
Some activities:

- **Provide opportunities to observe and practice cause-and-effect, such as push and pull toys, busy boxes, jack-in-the- box toys, rolling items down a hill or tube**

continued on reverse

- **Provide materials that make sounds, such as containers with rice or beans, maracas**
- **Provide the chance to play with sand, water, and containers to pour, fill, scoop, weigh, and dump**
- **Chart and talk about changes in the toddler's height and weight**
- **Provide things for the toddler to crawl through, get under, and hide behind, using prepositions and spatial vocabulary**
- **Encourage imitation and pretend play by providing toys that can be used for pretend play (e.g., dolls, dishes, cars, trucks, blocks) and join the make-believe play by following the toddler's direction or making suggestions**
- **Practice counting with the toddler by pointing to items in number books**
- **Use numbers in everyday speech (e.g., "Do you need one shoe or two shoes to go to the park?")**
- **Sing songs and recite nursery rhymes and fingerplays that include numbers**
- **Take opportunities to count with the toddler and point out the number of things in the environment**

Learn!



Why it's important:

Toddlers have a growing capacity for problem solving, can often anticipate the series of steps in familiar activities, events, or routines, and can remember characteristics of the environment, people in the environment, and past events.

Some activities:

- **Show delight in the accomplishments, new skills, and abilities that the toddler has developed**
- **Ask open-ended questions that encourage the toddler to predict what may happen or to think of other solutions**
- **Provide photos and picture books of past family events, commonly seen animals, or things of interest to the toddler**
- **Provide flexible, but predictable routines and daily schedules**
- **Reread favorite books and sing favorite songs repeatedly to help the toddler remember the words**
- **Keep toys and objects in specific places so that the toddler can search for and find particular things**

Simon Says

Purpose/Skills

- To listen to and follow verbal directions
- To demonstrate understanding through actions
- To build vocabulary- body parts, movement words such as up down, jump, clap

Procedure

- Explain how to play “Simon Says.” (Tell children that you will give directions for them to follow. If you say “Simon says” first, they should do it. If you do not say “Simon says” first, they should not do it.) Tell children to listen carefully and follow directions.

continued on reverse

- **Start the game with “Simon says, put your finger on your chin.” Help any children who are having difficulty by pointing to your chin and putting your finger on it. Continue with commands that include up, down, and out.**
- **Once children are comfortable following one-step directions, give them two-step directions to follow. For example, ask them to stand on their right foot and hop in place.**
- **Teacher Tip: Experienced players of “Simon Says” are often “out,” or excluded from the game, when they make a mistake. Young children and English Language Learners should keep playing even when they make mistakes, so that they can improve through play.**

Enrichment

Invite children to take turns giving the directions.

Source: school.familyeducation.com/preschool/activity/30334.html

Create an Art Space

- **Using what you have at home (shoe boxes, Tupperware containers etc.) organize art materials by type**
- **Gluing a photo of the items on the front of the container will help your child put things back where they belong**
- **Some good supplies to have include: crayons, markers, paper, safety scissors, glue, paints, chalk, clay, popsicle sticks, pipe-cleaners**
- **Scraps of paper, photos from magazines, fabric scraps etc. are great for making collages**
- **Sponges, blocks, toy car wheels etc. can be painted on and used as stamps**

Tips for a successful art time:

- **Allow time for setting up, letting your child explore and create and cleaning up**
- **Bring out only 1 or 2 types of art materials at a time**
- **Praise your child's efforts, i.e. "I like how you used so many colors!"**
- **Try to resist the idea that there is a "right way" or taking over for your child. Remember it is about your child exploring, gaining new skills like learning how to cut with scissors and having fun.**
- **Display art somewhere visible, store in a binder or large folder, or take a photo**
- **Jump in and make your own art too!**