

Activities for children 1 to 2 years old



Development and Behavior Toolkit for Children Birth to 5

Activities to Support Healthy Early Child Development

For more information, please contact the Cincinnati LEND program at LENDTraining@cchmc.org



Language Activities: 1 to 2-year-old skills

New Talker Skills

Language activities focus on what children say and how they listen. Developing language skills helps a child understand directions, get their needs met, and make friends.

Language Activities to Practice:

- Look at books and talk about what you see. Point to and label pictures, actions or make sounds to go with pictures.
- Talk to your child through out the day.
- Point to or name body parts.
- Follow one step instructions: **"Come here"** or **"Get your shoes."**
- Point to and use your words to show what you want.
- Use songs to increase words. An example is "Head, shoulders, knees, and toes."
- Model how to refer to self by first name and correct pronoun (mine, me).
- Use action words to describe activities: **"The dog is barking."**
- Ask your child **where** questions to find items: **"Where is the blanket"** or **"Where is the ball?"**
- Use two words together: **"More milk"** or **"Want down"** or **"Big truck."**
- Use pronouns like mine or yours.



Motor Activities:

12-24-month-old skills

Motor skills are activities that use the body's movements to do specific tasks or behaviors.

Motor activities to practice:

- Eat finger foods using their thumb and finger.
- Play fun games like Pat-a-cake and This little piggy.
- Squat to pick up items from floor without holding on.
- Throw a ball while sitting.
- Creep up and down stairs.
- Walk while carrying toys or other objects.
- Walk backwards.
- Stack blocks and building towers of 2-6 blocks.
- Climb onto furniture and chairs.
- Scribble with a crayon.
- Help with daily routines like dressing.
- Use a spoon to feed themselves.



Problem Solving Activities:

1-year-old skills

Problem Solving activities help a child think, learn, and become more independent.

Practice these during play time:

- Play peek-a-boo.
- Make faces in the mirror.
- Hide a toy under a towel or behind the couch and have your child find it.
- Sing along to music with the child.
- Ask “Where is the ball?,” “Where is the shoe?” and help child find items.
- Help child turn pages in picture books/board books.
- Ask child to follow a direction such as “Give it to me” or “Throw this away.”
- Ask child “Where is your nose, eyes” or similar questions.
- Encourage activities that use eyes and hands. Examples are stacking blocks, exploring simple shape or animal puzzles.



Social & Emotional Activities:

13 - 18 months

- Provide a safe, loving environment; be consistent and predictable. Give the toddler lots of hugs and kisses and give praise for good behavior.
- Set limits that are firm, fair, and consistent. Encourage the toddler's wanted behaviors rather than punishing or correcting unwanted behaviors. Give four times more encouragement than correction.
- Describe the toddler's emotions - "You are mad when we have to leave the park." Make different faces in the mirror (happy, sad, etc.).
- Encourage the toddler to have empathy - for example, to hug or pat another child who is sad.
- Toddlers like to have a regular daily routine. Talk to him/her about what you are doing now and what will be happening next. Give him/her time to be active and time to be quiet.
- Have a pretend party with stuffed animals or dolls. You can cut out little "presents" from a magazine, make a pretend cake, and sing the birthday song.



Social & Emotional Activities:

13 - 18 months

- Toddlers need a lot of time to move around and exercise. Go for a walk, visit a playground.
- Dance with the toddler. Make a simple instrument out of a large plastic food tub (for a drum) or a small plastic container filled with beans or rice (for a shaker).
- Let the toddler help with daily tasks. Give him/her simple "jobs" to do and provide praise. He/she can wipe off a table, put toys away, or help sweep up.
- Set up playdates with other children. Children don't understand how to share yet, so make sure there are plenty of toys. Stay close by and help him/her learn how to play with other children.
- Storytimes, especially before naptime and bedtime, are a great way to settle down before sleep. Let the child choose books to read and help turn pages. Encourage the child to name what he/she sees.



Social & Emotional Activities:

19 - 24 months

- Be calm and comforting during and after temper tantrums.
- Give the toddler lots of hugs and kisses and give specific praise for good behavior, like "Great job holding my hand!"
- Be consistent with what the toddler can and cannot do.
- Use words to describe the toddler's emotions - "You are happy when we visit the library." Help the toddler label their feelings. "You seem mad".
- Encourage the toddler to have empathy - to hug/pat a child who is sad.
- Arrange playdates for the toddler to play with other children; have lots of toys to play with because toddlers are still learning to share.
- Give the toddler simple tasks to do to help around the house, such as sweeping and helping with dinner. Give praise for being a good helper.
- Play Parade or Follow the Leader with the child.
- Try to keep to set routines during the day, and let your child know what will be happening next. Say, "Remember, after we brush your hair, we get dressed."



Social & Emotional Activities:

19 - 24 months

- Have a special reading time every day with the toddler. Before bedtime or naptime is a great time to read together.
- Give the child choices but keep them simple. Let the toddler choose a red or a blue shirt while dressing and choose between milk or juice at lunchtime.
- Encourage the child to pretend play. Put a few small chairs in a row to make a “bus.” Ask, “Where will we go today?”
- Teach the child simple songs and finger plays, such as “The Itsy-Bitsy Spider.”
- Get down on the floor and play with the child. Try to follow your child's lead by playing with toys they choose and trying their ideas.

