

Activities for children 2 to 3 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



Motor Activities:

25-36-month-old skills

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

Motor activities to practice:

- Draw a circle and a straight line.
- String large beads.
- Stack blocks and building towers with 6-10 blocks.
- Play "Follow the Leader." For example, walk on tiptoes, walk backwards, walk slow or fast with big and little steps.
- Eat with a spoon and a fork.
- Add hand gestures or actions to your child's nursery rhymes like London Bridge, Itsy Bitsy Spider, and Humpty Dumpty.
- Act out animal moves. Examples are a frog hop or horse trot.
- Have them help you set the table. Examples are putting out the plates, then cups, then napkins.
- Jump in place.
- Kick a ball.



Problem Solving Activities:

2- year-old skills

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

Practice these during play time:

- Give child objects to match to each other.
- Name and sort objects of different shapes and colors.
- Pretend play. For example, pretend that a block is a chicken nugget, stir with pretend spoon.
- Practice answering, **"what is your name"** or **"how old are you?"**
- Practice sorting. Examples are **"Give me all the red blocks"** or **"Point to all of the big dogs."**
- Find the item that is different from a group of items.
- Point to details in the picture as you look at a book.
- Complete simple puzzles.
- Use the word **"more."** Examples are more goldfish, more milk.
- Play a memory game with 4 cards.



Social & Emotional Activities:

2 - 3 years

- Give the child directions that have two steps. Say, "Put LEGOs in the box, and then put the box in the closet."
- Make a "Me Book" with the child. Take some pieces of paper and glue in pictures of the child, family members, pets, or other special things. Tape/staple the pages together.
- Let the child help when you are cooking and cleaning. Children can do things such as putting flour in a cup or putting away spoons and forks in the drawer.
- Let the child do more things for him/herself, like putting on own shoes and coat. Make sure you give children plenty of time!
- Most children love to imitate. Try new words, animal sounds, and noises, and see if the child can repeat what you say or how you sound.
- Encourage creative play, such as drawing with crayons, painting, and playing with Play-doh. Playing with chalk on the sidewalk is fun.
- Schedule a playdate with another child. Keep it short, such as 1 or 2 hours. Have some playtime with enough toys for two, snack time, and some outdoor play.
- Play with the child and help them learn how to share. Show the child how to share and offer praise when they share with you.



Social & Emotional Activities:

2 - 3 years

- Set limits and be consistent with what the child can and cannot do; give praise for following the rules.
- Talk about the child's emotions; encourage them to identify the feelings of others or characters in books. Support the child to express feelings safely.
- Help the child solve a problem when upset.
- At mealtimes, encourage others, like peers or family members, to talk about their day and include the toddler. Say, "Latoya and I went to the park today. Latoya, tell your sister what we did."
- Give the child directions that have at least two steps when doing things like cooking, dressing, or cleaning. Say, "Put that pan in the sink, and then get the red spoon."
- Tell silly jokes with the child. Simple "What am I?" riddles are also fun. Have a good time and laugh with your child.
- Play games that involve following simple rules, such as Mother May I and Red Light, Green Light.
- Create a pretend argument between stuffed animals or dolls. Talk with the child about what happened, feelings, and how best to work out problems when they come up.

