

Language, Motor and Problem solving Activities



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



Activities Handouts



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.



Language Activities:

3-year-old 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:

- Point to or name body parts.
- Follow two different instructions: "[1] **Get your shoes and** [2] **throw this away.**"
- Pointing to or naming common objects, like cat, dog or ball.
- Use action words to describe activities: "**The dog is barking.**"
- Have your child practice using their first and last name.
- Teach opposites like "big and small."
- Use sentences with 3-4 words.
 - Model by talking about things you see using describing words like "the ball is red."
- Teach direction words using small toys like "**on top,**" "**under,**" or "**next to.**"
- Use pronouns like his, hers, theirs, or mine: "That is **mine**" or "that is **his** ball" or "I did it!" or "I want ____."



Language Activities:

4-year-old 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:

- Practice using pronouns, like his, hers, theirs, mine. "That is *his* ball."
- Describe common objects: "the ball is *round*."
- Use endings on words ("ed", "s", "ing"): played*ed*, toys*s*, running*ing*.
- Use full sentences such as "Are you coming too?" instead of "coming too?"
- Teach direction words using small toys like "on top," "under," or "next to."
- Count objects.
- Use feeling words like happy, sad, mad.
- Use their first and last name
- Follow three different instructions: "[1] Go upstairs, [2] get your toys, and [3] put them in the bin."
- Practice identifying colors, like green, blue, and red.
- Ask "what" questions, like "*What* do you want for dinner?"



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.



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.



Fine Motor Activities:

3-year-old skills

Activities that use the small muscle of the hand help children to be independent in their daily activities. These activities help to get them ready for writing in school.

Fine motor activities to practice:

- Take off and put on a jacket.
- String beads. Start with bigger beads and move to smaller.
- Color pictures and copy simple shapes. Simple shapes are a vertical line, horizontal line, circle, and square.
- Tear paper for collages.
- Complete zippers, buttons, and snaps.
- Hold a crayon/marker with 3 fingers (tripod grasp). If this is hard, practice drawing or coloring with broken crayons.
- Use scissors. You can use Play-doh scissors or cut/snip a strip of paper.
- Complete simple puzzles with 3 to 6 pieces.



Fine Motor Activities:

4-year-old skills

Activities that use the small muscle of the hand help children to be independent in their daily activities. These activities help to get them ready for writing in school.

Fine Motor Activities to Practice:

- Take off and put on a jacket.
- Stack blocks.
- Ask your child to copy your block designs.
- String beads. Start with bigger beads and move to smaller.
- Color a picture.
- Practice zippers, buttons, and snaps.
- Copy shapes and letters with different materials. Examples are shaving cream, sidewalk chalk, sand, finger paint, and crayons.
- Draw simple shapes (lines, circles, plus signs, squares, triangles).
- Copy the letters of their name.
- Copy UPPERCASE letters.
- Draw a person.
- Hold a crayon or marker with 3 fingers (tripod grasp). If this is hard, practice drawing or coloring with broken crayons.
- Use scissors to cut across a thick line.
- Complete simple interlocking/ jigsaw puzzles.



Gross Motor Activities:

3-year-old skills

Activities that use the big muscles of the body allow kids to participate in recess, gym class and at the playground.

Gross motor activities to practice:

- Kick a ball.
- Catch a ball with two hands.
- Throw a ball overhand.
- Climb a ladder on the playground.
- Jump up/down and forward/backward with both feet.
- Balance on one leg.
- Walk upstairs, alternating feet.
- Jump over pool noodles or other objects.



Gross Motor Activities: 4-year-old skills

Activities that use the big muscles of the body allow kids to participate in recess, gym class and at the playground.

Gross Motor Activities to Practice:

- Catch a ball with two hands.
- Throw a ball overhand.
- Climb a ladder on the playground.
- Hop up and down on one foot.
- Jump forward with 2 feet.
- Balance on one leg.
- Briefly walk on tip toes or heels.
- Walk upstairs, alternating feet.



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.



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.



Problem Solving Activities:

3- year-old skills

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

Problem Solving Activities to Practice:

- Answer simple questions about what things do. Examples are "What do you hear with?," "Show me what you use to drink?"
- Practice copying. Examples are copying a design with blocks, drawing a circle and a plus sign.
- Complete simple puzzles, like shapes and animals.
- Sort objects or pictures. Examples are socks, spoons, or animal pictures.
- Practice sorting and naming colors and shapes.
- Practice answering, "What is your last name" or "Are you a boy or girl?"
- Draw simple pictures. For example, draw the head of a person and ask your child to add 2 body parts.
- Count numbers. Examples are things like "give me one block" or "hold up one finger."
- Practice imaginary play skills.



Problem Solving Activities:

4-year-old skills

(1 of 2)

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

Problem-Solving Activities to Practice:

- Read a book with your child and ask about what is happening (or will happen) in the story.
- Complete simple puzzles.
- Practice simple riddles, like "mother is to girl as father is to __?__ [boy]."
- Practice imitation, like making designs with blocks or drawing squares or triangles.
- Match objects or pictures. Examples are socks, forks, or spoons.
- Sort items by colors and shapes.
- Practice imaginary play skills.
- Practice answering, "Who is your friend?" or "What is your full name?"



Problem Solving Activities:

4-year-old skills

(2 of 2)

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

Problem-Solving Activities to Practice:

- Draw simple pictures, like draw the head of a person and ask your child to add 4-6 body parts.
- Practice numbers and counting. For example, give me five blocks, hold up five fingers, count 5 items touching each one as they count.
- Practice grouping items. Examples are give me all the red blocks or point to all the big dogs.
- Practice finding objects that are the same and those that are different. Example, find the cup that is different.
- Play games to work on turn taking and following directions. Examples are Candyland or memory games [with 4 cards].

