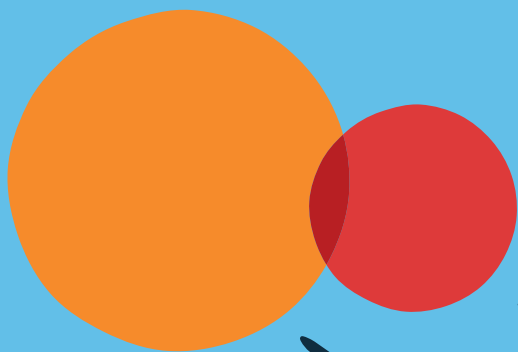


At Home Learning Guide for Toddlers

(1–2 years old)

Week of April 6, 2020



This Week's Theme:

Growing Gardens

[Getting Ready for the Week: Guidelines and Materials Prep](#)

[Nutrition and Wellness Tip of the Week](#)

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MONDAY

- [Physical Development and Wellness Activity: Moving in Different Ways: Taking Big Steps](#)
- [Everyday Learning Experience](#)
- [Social and Emotional Learning: Focus on Routines](#)

TUESDAY

- [Language and Literacy Activity: Books about Gardening](#)
- [Everyday Learning Experience](#)
- [Social and Emotional Learning: Focus on Environment](#)

WEDNESDAY

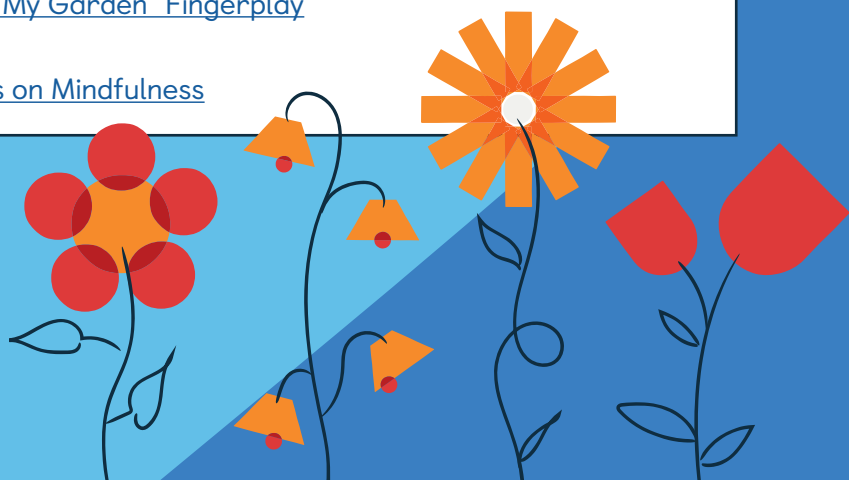
- [Cognitive Development Activity: Measuring Food](#)
- [Everyday Learning Experience](#)
- [Social and Emotional Learning: Focus on Behavior](#)

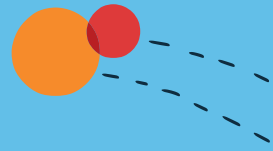
THURSDAY

- [Executive Function Activity: Plant Puzzles](#)
- [Everyday Learning Experience](#)
- [Social and Emotional Learning: Focus on Play](#)

FRIDAY

- [Creative Expression Activity: "This Is My Garden" Fingerplay](#)
- [Everyday Learning Experience](#)
- [Social and Emotional Learning: Focus on Mindfulness](#)





Getting Ready for the Week

During the month of April toddlers in our centers get to explore the natural world through gardening. Included in this guide are several experiences that will help your toddler explore the natural world at home. Here are a few guidelines to keep in mind as you plan for these learning activities and the week ahead.

Our toddler activities help you minimize screen time by including suggestions on how to organize your family time. Toddlers don't play independently for very long and need to be engaged regularly, so we've included a suggested schedule with suggestions on how to bring learning into everyday routines like mealtime, diaper changes, toilet training, math lessons related to clean up time, etc.

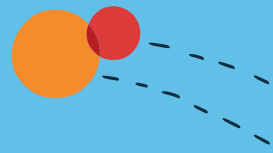
For this age group, our activities include:

- Ways to keep active minds and bodies busy throughout the day.
- Everything is organized by Developmental Domain, so you know they're getting a well rounded education.

Materials to Gather for the Week

Gather these materials Sunday evening and put them in a basket or container so they are ready to go for the week!

- Sidewalk chalk or masking tape
- Books about gardens or gardening, or books that include gardens or gardening in the story or illustrations
- Foods serve during mealtime
- Measuring cups for dry foods
- Measuring cups for liquids
- Crayons, markers, or colored pencils
- Glue
- Paper
- Scissors (for your use only)
- Thin cardboard, such as from a cereal or cracker box



Nutrition and Wellness Tip of the Week

Meal Planning and Preparation

Does it feel like a good part of your day is spent engaged in meal planning, preparation, and clean-up, just to turn around and do it all over again? We know you are juggling full-time parenting with keeping your child learning, all while you may even be working from home. Here are some meal planning tips for your busy family.

Spend **5-10 minutes** each evening planning and doing some advanced prep for dinners, lunches, and snacks for the next three days. A few minutes spent planning and prepping each night will save you hours of time and headaches spent making meals and snacks for your family. Look through your pantry/cupboards and refrigerator and **write down** all the possible meal/snack combinations you can make with what you have on hand (this is also the time to update your shopping list). Recipes can be great for guidance, but they can quickly take you down a rabbit hole, robbing precious time. Think of ways you can incorporate three basic components – protein, vegetable, and fruit and grain – into one-pot meals like soups or casseroles.

For soups: Choose a protein, such as beans, meat/seafood, chickpeas, lentils, tofu, tempeh. Add vegetables, herbs and spices, broth or stock, and water. You can either add the grain to this soup (e.g., noodles) or you can serve a grain such as whole-wheat bread on the side. Soup is a fast, healthy meal option and a great way to use up fresh produce.

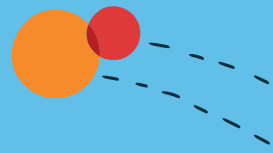
Casseroles: The same concepts as with soups apply here, but substitute a sauce for the broth or stock and bake the dish in the oven.

One-pot meals: Prepared in a slow cooker or Instapot, these meals can save valuable time as well. Place protein, jar of sauce and vegetables in and hit go. Simply add all your components, such as frozen chicken breasts, a jar of salsa, corn, and rice or black beans to the pot, set your cooking time, and go.

For snacks, select foods from two food groups, such as a fruit or vegetable paired with a protein that contains healthy fats.

Some nutrient-rich example:

- Apples and nut butter/sun butter
- Hard-boiled eggs and carrot sticks
- Vegetable sticks and, hummus
- Whole-grain bread/crackers with hummus, nut butter, or avocado
- Unsweetened yogurt with fruit
- Turkey slices and cucumber
- Beans and tortilla (for a tasty treat, sprinkle with cheese and broil for four, minutes)



How to Think Like a Teacher: Teacher Talk

From counting flower petals to answering your child's 1000th question of the day, your words can guide and inspire learning no matter where you are or what you're doing. Check out these resources to help you understand the impact that talking to your child has on their development and to help you find just the right words to keep the learning going.

From Cries to Conversations Check out [this video](#) to learn how even very young children are communicating with you and how you can communicate back to help them develop language skills, guide their behavior, and strengthen your relationship.

Counting Claps and Sorting Shapes: Talking Like a Teacher All Throughout Your Day

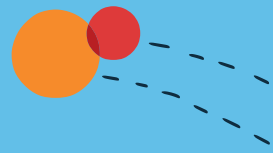
Your child never stops learning, even when it comes to subjects like math, language, and even science. These concepts might sound a bit on the academic side, but they're easy to work into your everyday routines with your child. Here are some examples:

Math: How many steps does it take to get from the couch to the sink to wash our hands? Which cup in the dishwasher is the biggest? What is under the table and what is on top of it? Your child's day is full of opportunities to talk about numbers, size, and position, along with other critically important foundational math concepts.

Language: Rhyming words in a song; Letters on the juice carton; Words that start with the same sound as your child's name: There are as many chances to talk about letters and language during your child's day as there are words in their favorite book. From exposure to sounds and letters for younger children to building vocabularies and book awareness for older ones, you can nurture your child's language development any time of the day.

Science: Problem solving is a foundational skill in scientific thinking, and you can encourage it in your child no matter how old they are. Does a fussy baby react to the sight of a bottle or a rattle? What color crayon does your toddler need to draw the sun? How can your preschooler move the laundry from the basket to the drawer? These everyday problem-solving tasks are the building blocks of scientific thinking and can happen anywhere, any time of day!

For more ideas on how to keep the learning going, look for the **Everyday Learning Experiences** described throughout this guide.

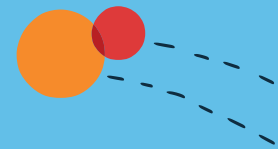


Tips for Talking to Young Children

- **Use positive statements.** Tell children what they CAN do, instead of what they can't.
- **Give simple instructions.** Too many instructions at once can be overwhelming and confusing.
- **Model "I" messages.** Use language that expresses your feelings and the reasons behind them.
- **Ask open-ended questions.** Talk to children, not at them. Ask open-ended questions that allow children to explain their thought processes, and stay curious.
- **Offer choices you can live with.** Give children a choice whenever possible, but be ready to honor their decision.

Want even more great tips on talking to your child? Check out [this article](#) from the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)





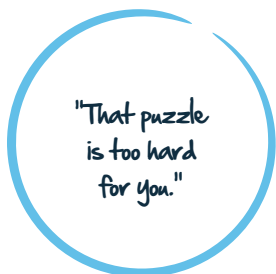
IN OTHER WORDS

COMMUNICATING WITH CHILDREN

Read the speech bubble. Then, rewrite the text so that it sends a clear, positive message, and encourages learning.



"You can walk to the bedroom. How many steps will it take to get there?"

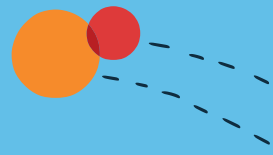


"I see that you want to run. Let's go outside and run to the blue chair!"





Try It! Pick a developmental area where you want to encourage your child's growth, such as math, art, science, or language. Think of ways that you can build their skills in those areas throughout your daily routine. Can you combine more than one learning area in the same experience?



Monday, April 6, 2020

Physical Development and Wellness Activity: Moving in Different Ways: Taking Big Steps

Length of activity: 10-15 minutes

What your child is learning: While practicing taking big steps, your child is developing balance and coordination as well as learning how their body can move in different ways.

Level of Engagement Required by Adult: Medium

What you need: Sidewalk chalk or masking tape

What you do: Make a line of Xs about 6 inches apart on the sidewalk using chalk or on the floor using masking tape. Demonstrate for your child how to step from one X to the next. Invite your child to take big steps from one X to the next until they reach the last X. If needed, gently hold your child's hand and walk alongside them to help them maintain their balance.

If your child is ready: Make the arrangement of Xs in a large square, have your child start on one side and walk from X to X until they have made it back to where they began.

Everyday Learning Activities

Try this to help your child develop the skills described today no matter what you're doing:

Ask your child to name a big animal, then ask them to walk from one room to the next the way that animal would. Can they walk like an even bigger animal?

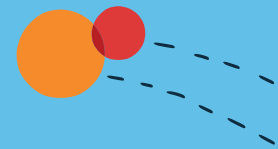
Social and Emotional Learning: Focus on Routines

No matter what your daily schedule looks like, children thrive when they know what's expected of them right now and what's going to happen next. Knowing what comes next can also be a great motivator to get through the task at hand.

Try this: When there's something your child needs to do, like wash their hands or clean up their toys, before they can do what they want to do, like eat a yummy snack or start a new activity, use "first, then" language:

"First we wash our hands, then we eat."

"First we put the blocks in the basket, then we pick a book to read."



Tuesday, April 7, 2020

Language and Literacy Activity: Books about Gardening

Length of activity: 10-15 minutes

What your child is learning: In addition to learning new words as you read the book, your child is also improving their eye-hand coordination when pointing to pictures and on their ulnar grasp (closing fingers against the palm) while helping to hold the book.

Level of Engagement Required by Adult: High

What you need: Books about gardens or gardening, or books that include gardens or gardening in the story and illustrations

What you do: Select a book to read with your child, or if multiple books are available, invite your child to select one. Sit with your child. Share the cover and title of the book with your child and then read the book. After reading the book, go back and look at the illustrations with your child. Talk with your child about the illustrations by asking questions, such as “What do you see in the picture?” “Where are the flowers in the picture?” “Can you point to pumpkin in the picture?”

If your child is ready: After the story, invite your child to turn the pages and to select illustrations of interest. Let your child’s illustration selection guide the conversation and the questions you ask.

Everyday Learning Activities

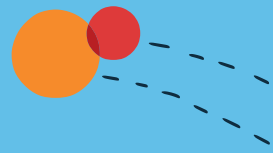
Try this to help your child develop the skills described today no matter what you’re doing:

Show your child a picture of a plant from an item in your home, such as in a book or on a bag of vegetables. Tell them a quick story about how the plant was grown. Can they show you the plant in the picture if you ask them?

Social and Emotional Learning: Focus on Environment

Pictures are a great way to help children remember your daily routine and prevent challenging behaviors. They can also cut back on the number of verbal reminders you have to give, freeing you up for other tasks and giving your child the chance to build independence and confidence.

Try this: As you go through your day, snap a quick picture of the things your child is doing, such as getting dressed, eating breakfast, taking a nap, and putting their toys away. No camera? You can also work together to draw pictures of your day. Arrange the pictures, in order, into a collage. Use this “visual schedule” to help your child remember what’s happening now and what’s going to happen next.



Wednesday, April 8, 2020

Cognitive Development Activity: Measuring Food

Length of activity: N/A

What your child is learning: Through this activity your child is beginning to learn differences in size and volume (full/empty). They are also practicing controlling hand movement and eye-hand coordination.

Level of Engagement Required by Adult: High

What you need:

- ❑ Foods served during mealtime
- ❑ Measuring cups for dry foods
- ❑ Measuring cup for liquids

What you do: Invite your child to help you prepare or serve foods during mealtime. When possible, let your child use measuring tools to help prepare or serve the food. For example, they could use a $\frac{1}{2}$ cup measuring cup to scoop dry cereal out of the box and pour it in their bowl. You can pour milk into a liquid measuring cup and then let your child use the measuring cup to pour the milk into their bowl. While your child is using the various measuring tools, use the terms full and empty to describe their actions. “You put a full scoop of cereal in your bowl.” “You poured all the milk in your bowl, now the measuring cup is empty.”

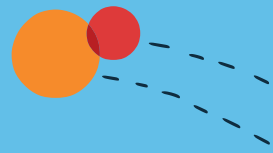
The purpose of this activity is to introduce your child to measurement through the concepts of full and empty, as well as introduce them to tools used for measuring, not for your child to understand units of measurement.

If your child is ready: Have your child help prepare servings for other family members, with other family members asking for more or saying when the amount is good.

Everyday Learning Activities

Try this to help your child develop the skills described today no matter what you’re doing:

Show your child an empty or full container around your home, like a laundry basket or a garbage bin. Talk about how much stuff is in the container- do they know the difference between full and empty?



Social and Emotional Learning: Focus on Behavior

For children, behavior is a form of communication. This means that everything they do is motivated by an underlying feeling or need. The more we can help children learn to name their feelings, the better they'll become at recognizing them and developing strategies for coping with them.

Try this: If your child resists participating in an activity like cleaning up or getting ready to rest, let them know you understand why. Then offer a solution that works for you:

"I see you're frustrated that it's time to clean up. You're having so much fun with those blocks. You're not ready to put them away. Let's build one more tower before we put them back in the box."

Thursday, April 2, 2020

Executive Function: Plant Puzzles

Length of activity: 10-15 minutes

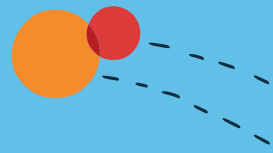
What your child is learning: Through this activity your child is learning to follow a multi-step process that focuses on fine motor skills and problem solving.

Level of Engagement Required by Adult: High

What you need:

- ❑ Crayons, markers, or colored pencils
- ❑ Glue
- ❑ Paper
- ❑ Scissors (for your use only)
- ❑ Thin cardboard, such as from a cereal or cracker box

What you do: Draw a simple picture of a plant, leaf, or flower on a sheet of paper. Glue the sheet of paper to the cardboard. When the glue is dried, invite your child to color the picture. Cut the colored picture into 6 large puzzle pieces, making the shape of each puzzle piece different from the others. Mix up the pieces and invite your child to put the puzzle together.



Example of a Plant Puzzle →

If your child is ready: Create a puzzle with 10-12 pieces, either by cutting the 6 existing pieces into smaller puzzle pieces or by working with your child to create a new puzzle.



Everyday Learning Activities

Try this to help your child develop the skills

described today no matter what you're doing: Ask your child to help you put multiple objects away in a small space, like clothes or toys. How can you work together to make everything fit?

Social and Emotional Learning: Focus on Play

Chances are, you can't always get on the floor and play alongside your child when they want you to or you wish that you could. You can still interact with them while juggling other tasks! Narrating your child's every move or giving a "play by play" of their actions, is a great way to give them the attention you want and to add extra learning to their play.

Try this: Set your child up with an activity while you work on a task of your own that still allows you to see them and talk to them. For five minutes, describe everything you see them doing in detail. Although you'll be multi-tasking, be sure to make eye contact and specific language so your child knows you really are paying attention. Use opening phrases like "I see you..." or "now you are..." to let them know you're watching and interested, even while you're working on something of your own.

Friday, April 3, 2020

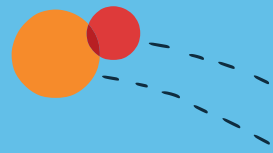
Creative Expression Activity: "This Is My Garden" Fingerplay

Length of activity: 5 minutes

Level of Engagement Required by Adult: High

What you need: N/A

What you do: Familiarize yourself with the words and movements to the fingerplay "This Is My Garden." Sit with your child facing you, either seated or laying on the floor, and perform the fingerplay for your child. Then repeat the fingerplay, inviting your child to perform the finger and hand movements with you.



“This Is My Garden” Fingerplay

This is my garden. (show one hand palm up)

I’ll rake it with care. (use fingers of other hand to “rake”)

I’ll take some seeds

And plant them there. (pretend to drop seeds)

The Sun will shine bright (make a small circle with thumb and forefingers)

Then the rain will fall. (let fingers fall like falling rain)

My garden will bloom

And grow tall, tall, tall. (raise arms in the air)

What your child is learning: While participating in the fingerplay, your child is learning to express themselves through creative movement. They are also expanding expressive vocabulary and focusing on tasks for longer periods of time.

If your child is ready: Invite your child to create new or additional movements that include using their whole body, such as spreading their arms to show their garden or pretending raking.

Everyday Learning Activities

Try this to help your child develop the skills described today no matter what you’re doing:

Take a moment in whatever room you’re in to describe to your child what you are doing, like vacuuming the floor or typing on the computer. Exaggerate your movements- can they mimic what you’re doing? Can they add movements of their own?

Social and Emotional Learning: Focus on Routines

Deep breaths help all of us feel calm and centered throughout the day. Making deep breathing fun for children is a great way to get them in the habit, and practicing alongside them will help you stay grounded, too.

Try this: Using pictures or real items from outside, practicing taking a deep breath in and blowing it out hard by “smelling the flower” and “blowing the leaf.” How deeply do you need to breathe in to smell the flower? How hard do you have to blow out to move the leaf?