

Active Alphabet

a guide for parents



Active
Alphabet
for toddlers



Queensland Government

Message from the Minister

Early childhood is a crucial time for developing skills and establishing positive attitudes, particularly towards physical activity.

Parents and carers have a vital role to play, and the best place to start is at home.

Active Alphabet has been designed to help you help your toddler lay the foundations for an active, healthy life.

It encourages a range of fun movement skills for each letter of the alphabet, including rolling, sliding, balancing, marching, jumping and climbing, and also contains important health and safety messages.

By encouraging healthier lifestyles we can reduce the risk of chronic health problems and help Queenslanders to live longer and enjoy better health.

The Queensland Government is committed to making Queenslanders Australia's healthiest people. We believe that encouraging, and participating in physical activity with your child is just as important to their development as helping them with their homework.

Active Alphabet is a must for any parent or carer of children aged over 15 months.

I am sure you will enjoy using this resource and getting your toddlers involved in safe and fun play that will give them the best possible start to an active and healthy life.



Phil Reeves MP

Minister for Child Safety and Minister for Sport

Contents

- | | | | |
|----|--|----|---|
| 4 | What is Active Alphabet? | 18 | Ff – Following
Family fitness |
| 5 | Questions and answers | 19 | Gg – Go games |
| 6 | Aa – Arching
Activity ideas
Around the house
Action songs
Art | 20 | Hh – Hanging around
Hopping
Health |
| 10 | Bb – Balancing
Books – children
Books – adult | 21 | Ii – I spy
Eyes and hands together
Indoor activities |
| 12 | Cc – Climbing
Catching
Clay | 23 | Jj – Jumping |
| 14 | Dd – Dancing
Development
Dough
Dads | 24 | Kk – Kicking |
| 16 | Ee – Energetic
Encourage
Emerging skills
Equipment suggestions
Everyday tasks | 25 | Ll – Leaping
Linking |
| | | 26 | Mm – Marching
Motor skills
Moving |

- 28 **Nn** – Nodding your head
Nutrition
- 30 **Oo** – Open
Obstacle courses
Organised sport
- 32 **Pp** – Perching
Pushing and pulling
Practise makes perfect
Playgroups and playgrounds
Poems
- 34 **Qq** – Quickly
Quietly
Questions – encourage questions
- 36 **Rr** – Rolling
Running
Riding and rocking
Rhythmic play
- 38 **Ss** – Sliding
Swinging
Striking
Sun facts
Safety
- 41 **Tt** – Throwing
Toys
- 44 **Uu** – Upside down
Up and down
- 45 **Vv** – Vanish
Volleyball and other
ball games
- 47 **Ww** – Walking
Water play
Water safety tips
Words
- 50 **Xx** – Extend
Exercises
- 52 **Yy** – Yelling
Yes – just do it!
- 53 **Zz** – Zig, zag and zip
Zoo loo
- 54 **Where do I find
more information?**
- 56 **References**

What is Active Alphabet?

Active Alphabet is designed especially for parents, carers and their toddlers to use together to learn basic active movement skills while also learning important health messages.

Movement is important for your toddler's healthy growth and development. It also helps children learn about their bodies and master physical actions that make them feel good about themselves.

It's important to remember that movement skills do not develop simply because a child grows older. They develop by using large and small muscles every day. It is important for your toddler to roll, crawl, walk, run, climb, jump, throw things and move!

And it is also important for you, as a parent or carer, to be active. Parental activity levels and lifestyle have a real influence on a child's activity patterns. It is important that you are a positive, active role model for your toddler and that you introduce them to movement and activity from a very early age.

Active Alphabet for parents and *Active Alphabet for toddlers* will be a great help in keeping you and your toddler active.

Parent book

Active Alphabet for parents is a book packed full of helpful hints and information about having active fun with your toddler. It gives you information about how your toddler moves, ideas for games and active things you can do together, recipes, songs, poems and places to go for further information.

Although the information is tailored to toddlers aged from 15 months to three years, the activities and games can be enjoyed by children (and adults) of all ages.

There is no need to read the book from cover to cover in one go. Just dip in and see what you find. The information is organised alphabetically and you can use the list of contents to find different topics. Don't forget to use your own judgement and tailor the ideas to suit you, your child and your own situation. And remember to join in, even if it feels silly doing it!

Toddler book

Active Alphabet for toddlers is an ABC book especially for your toddler. This is a fun book about moving and grooving and will be loads of fun for both you and your toddler. Not only will she love you to sit and read it to her, but she will have fun exploring the pictures on her own.

If your toddler is very young, he may like to just look at a few of the pages and you can talk about the pictures with him and try a few of the fun movements. When your toddler is older he may enjoy reading the book all the way through and moving and grooving on his own.

The book uses some simple words and some more challenging words. It has animals that you know very well and some that are a little unusual. And starring in the book are a group of very active toddlers and two fun toddler characters Max and Jo.

We know that this book will be a lot of fun – happy moving!

Questions and answers

Most parents have lots of questions about whether they are doing ‘the right thing’. This section will answer some more commonly asked questions.

How much exercise do toddlers need?

It's important to give your child lots of opportunities to be physically active as toddlers learn how their bodies work (and burn off energy) by running, jumping, climbing and exploring their world.

What if my toddler doesn't want to join in?

If YOU do the activity your toddler is more likely to join in. If she still doesn't want to join in, it may be that your toddler isn't ready for the activity yet, so try again in a few weeks or months.

My toddler is always so active and never sleeps. What can I do?

It is important to give your toddler lots of opportunity to use up all that energy. Try to plan some activity every day that allows him to be really active like climbing, running, jumping or swinging. Make sure you limit his time in the car seat, stroller and high chair. After he's been busy, plan some quiet activity like reading that will really slow things down. If you can, have a lie down when he does. Stopping him from getting overtired is important and it's worth putting effort into planning your day around his need to have a rest.

My toddler is 16 months and still not walking. Should I be worried?

Babies walk when they are ready. Lots of things influence when a baby walks including her build and her personality (whether she's outgoing or cautious). If you're concerned have a talk with your local doctor or a child health nurse.

My toddler wants to be carried all the time. What should I do?

It's important not to expect too much of your toddler – although they are very active they also tire easily. But you can try a number of things:

- praise your toddler for using his ‘walking feet’
- talk about how important it is to walk eg ‘walking will help make you a faster runner’
- offer him lots of cuddles so that he gets that closeness in other ways
- meet him half-way eg ‘no I can't carry you all the time but would you like me to carry you from the car to the shop?’
- make the stroller available so that she can walk for a while and sit down when she needs a break.

Does shade provide enough sun protection when my toddler is playing outdoors?

When possible it is best to plan outdoor activities before 10am or after 3pm. Find out if there is any natural or built shade available, as it may be necessary to provide your own sun shelter such as an umbrella or beach cabana. Shade provides some protection but ultraviolet radiation bounces off some surfaces (eg water, light coloured clothing and white surfaces) so it is important to use sun protection as well, such as a shady hat, protective clothing and sunscreen.

Aa

arch applaud amble accelerate

I can arch, I can bound, I can make an ape sound.

Arching

Toddlers love to pretend and they particularly like pretending to be animals. Help your toddler to explore the way different animals move and the sounds they make. See if she can arch and bound and make an ape sound (see *Toddler book – A*). You and your toddler can have fun imitating the movements and sounds of a whole range of animals. If you have a pet have a look at the way it moves. You could even help your toddler to make her own scrap book of favourite animals and write words to describe how each one moves.

Try:

- hopping like a frog
- jumping like a kangaroo
- walking through the jungle like a big, heavy elephant
- creeping like a tiny mouse
- flying like a big eagle
- walking like a giraffe with a long neck – knees stiff and walking on tiptoes.

Activity ideas

Fun with streamers

Give your toddler crepe paper streamers to twirl and swirl while he runs and moves in all different ways. He can do this both indoors and out.

Bubble fun

Give your toddler a dish of water with left over bits of soap, a whisk and some bubble blowing gear. Let him make soapy water and blow bubbles and chase after them.



SAFETY TIP: Remember your toddler needs sun protection outside and always carefully supervise any activity involving water.

Shadow game

Go outside on a sunny day and look for your shadows. Show your toddler how your shadow moves with you.

Play a fun shadow game:

- Can he jump on his shadow?
- Can he jump on your shadow?
- Can he make his shadow tall, short, wide, thin, make it jump, stand on one foot and touch its toes?
- What other shadows can you find?
- Can he run from shadow to shadow?

As you go about your everyday activities or go for a walk, show your toddler how shadows change throughout the day. Sometimes shadows are very long and stretchy and sometimes they're nowhere to be found!

Ladder fun

Give your toddler the challenge of the unexpected. Put a ladder on the floor and let him explore it. The very young toddler may crawl over the rungs and the older toddler may walk between them. Later he may try walking sideways or backwards.

Activity boxes

Make up a number of movement activity boxes for your toddler. These boxes are a way of encouraging your toddler to initiate and explore on his own (Weiser, 1991:128-136). The boxes can be shoe boxes, small cardboard boxes with lids, large ice cream containers or even lunch boxes with hinged lids. The contents can be as simple as a collection of small bean bags to play with and balance, spools for stacking and rolling, musical instruments to play, or clay to explore.

Around the house

Meet the challenge of your active toddler by making your home and your daily routine as toddler-friendly as possible. You could:

- Install a swing, a slide, a sandpit or a cubby in the backyard.
- Take her to a park with a range of play equipment.
- Take her to an outdoor area where she can run safely as fast and as far as she can!
- Set up one or more areas inside the house where she can jump, roll and climb. You might even let her climb on certain chairs and sofas with a carpet or mat on the floor to cushion any falls.

- Set up a work area inside with child-size table and chairs. At different times give her:
 - crayons or paint and paper
 - child safe scissors (designed to cut paper only)
 - old cards to cut up
 - play dough.
- Make tunnels and cubby houses in large cardboard boxes.



SAFETY TIP: Be sure to remove any staples beforehand.

- Play lots of different types of music. Encourage her to respond to the beat and to move in lots of different ways. Join in the fun and move and dance with her. She could:
 - walk gently on tiptoe
 - crawl on all fours
 - turn around and around and sit
 - clap hands
 - jump and bounce
 - sing along.

(O'Brien, 2001:39-40)

Action songs

Action songs can encourage different types of movement from rowing and hopping to jumping. Try these old favourites:

Ring-A-Ring-A-Rosie

*Ring-a-ring-a-rosie
A pocket full of posies
A tissue, a tissue
We all fall down.*

Row, Row, Row Your Boat

*Row, row, row your boat
Gently down the stream
Merrily, merrily, merrily, merrily
Life is but a dream.*

Hop and Jump

*Hop on one foot (hop)
Hop on the other
Jump on both feet (jump)
That is best.
Wave with one hand (wave)
Wave with the other
Nod you head (nod)
And take a rest.*

I'm a Little Teapot

*I'm a little teapot short and stout
Here is my handle, here is my spout.
(Make a handle with one arm and a spout with the other.)
When I get all steamed up then I shout:
Just tip me over and pour me out!
(Bend over to pour from the spout.)*



Art

Physical activity is not just playing games. Many other activities are also physical and are part of an active, healthy lifestyle. Art is one of these and it's not only active – it's great fun!

Painting

This is an old time favourite that toddlers love. Try:

- finger painting outdoors with a bucket of water handy to wash those messy hands
- painting on paper or painting large brown cardboard boxes using thick paint and thick, short handled brushes
- painting with water using small, flat brushes and a bucket of water.

Drawing

Give your toddler some large sheets of paper and a handful of thick crayons and the chances are he will be occupied for ages. Don't forget to keep an eye on him to ensure he's not drawing on the walls!

Modelling

Playing around with dough and clay are things that even parents still like to do (*see D – Dough and C – Clay for some squishy things to do*).

Glueing and collage

Let your toddler play with glue and eventually he will become interested in using it as a way to stick things together. Start off with things that are easy to handle like coloured patty pans, old wrapping paper cut into shapes or cotton balls. As toddlers like to use lots and lots of glue, it's a good idea to let him glue onto something firm like pieces of card or empty boxes.

Toddler friendly glue

You need

- 1/2 cup water
- 1 cup flour

You do

- Mix the flour and water together in a bowl using a spoon or your hand.

Toddler friendly finger paint

You need

- 12 level tablespoons cornflour
- 2 litres water
- food colouring

You do

- In a large saucepan mix cornflour with 1 cup of cold water
- Boil rest of water and pour onto cornflour mixture
- Bring mixture to the boil, stirring vigorously for about 1 minute until mixture is clear and thick
- Remove from heat and add colour

Toddler friendly paint

Make up one quantity of toddler-friendly finger paint (see recipe above) or make up the recipe below.

You need

- Cel Mix – a non-toxic glue base (available from most pre-school suppliers)
- food colouring

You do

- Mix up a quantity of Cel Mix according to the directions on the packet
- Add food colouring

Bb

balance bounce bound bustle

I can balance on a bat with a blue bilby.

Balancing

Since balance is probably the single most important component of skilled physical performance, there should be ample opportunity for children to engage in activities that promote it.

(Riggs, 1980:128)

Putting one foot directly in front of the other requires a lot of balance. It is very different to walking and is difficult for a toddler. Help your toddler to practise balancing at first by giving her your hand to hold onto. Allow her to find her own balance. Gradually encourage her to hold onto just one finger until she can do it on her own (see *Toddler book – B*). Help your toddler with some of these exercises:

- balancing on a curb or low wall
- walking along the lines of floor tiles or paving stones
- walking along a wooden plank (about 20cm wide) placed flat on the floor or grass outside as part of a fun obstacle course (see *O – Obstacle courses*). Later elevate it onto two phone books and later still onto two sturdy child-size chairs.

Books – children

Some fun active books to share with your toddler:

Cabrera, Jane *If You're Happy and You Know It!*
Gullane Children's Books.

Nimmo, Jenny and Uft, Caroline *Pig on a Swing.*
Hodder Children's Books.

Oxenbury, Helen and Rosen, Michael
We're Going on a Bear Hunt. *Walker Books.*

Andreae, Giles *Giraffes Can't Dance.*
Orchard Books.

Kemp, Moira *The Noisy Baby.* *Hodder Children's Books.*

Dann, Penny *Row, row, row your boat.*
Orchard Books.

Dann, Penny *If you're happy and you know it.*
Orchard Books.

Dann, Penny *Teddy bear, teddy bear, turn around.*
Orchard Books.

Books – adult

Recommended books for adults about moving with toddlers:

Movement

Davies, Mollie (2003) *Movement and Dance in Early Childhood*. London: Paul Chapman Publishing.

Pica, Rae (2003) *Experiences in Movement, Birth to Age 8*. Clifton Park, NY: Delmar Learning.

General

O'Brien, Maureen (2001) *Watch Me Grow I'm Two*. New York: Harper Collins Pubs. Inc.

Activities / Songs / Fingerplays

Hodges, Di (2000) *501 TV-free Activities for Kids*. Dingley, Vic: Hinkley Books Pty Ltd.

Silberg, Jackie (1994) *Games to Play with Two Year Olds*. Maryland: Gryphon House.

Available from ABC Shops:

Ph: 1300 360 111

Fax: 1300 360 150

Website: www.abcshop.com.au

Clark, Henrietta (2003) *The New Useful Book*. Sydney: ABC Books.

Available from Playgroup Association of Queensland:

Ph: 1800 171 882

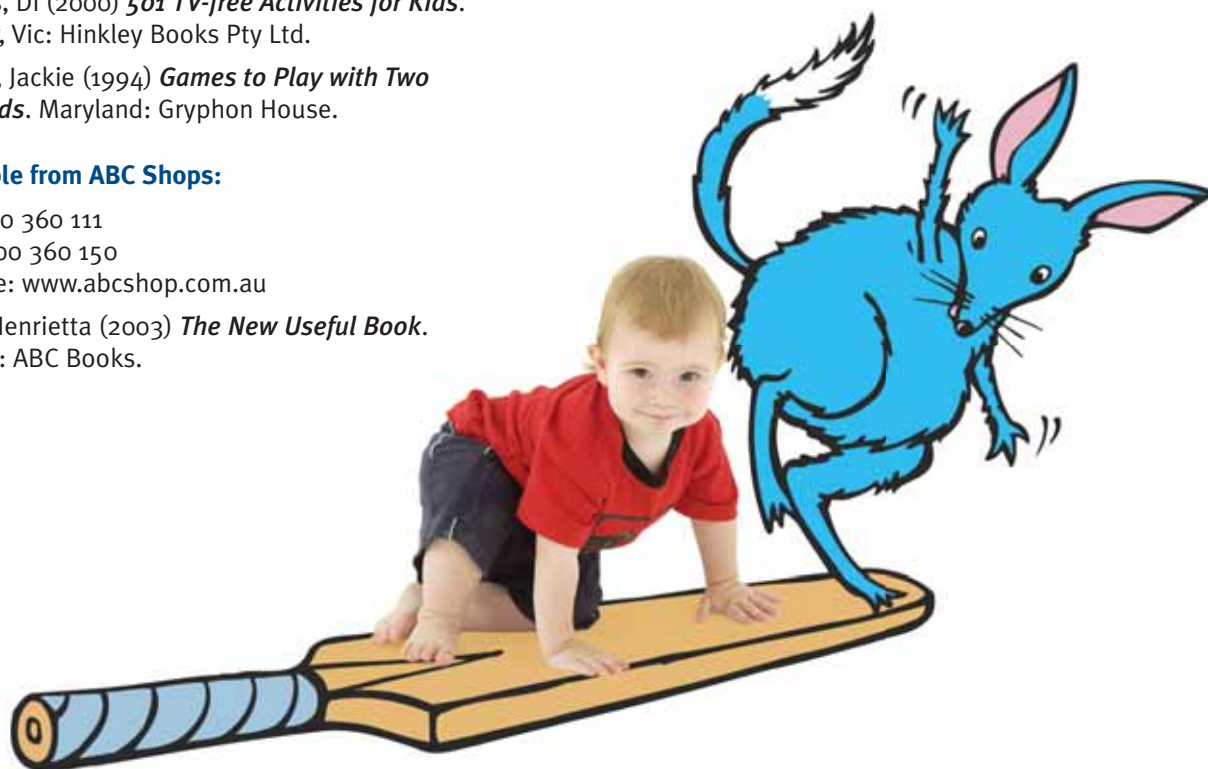
Email: info@playgroupqld.com.au

Website: www.playgroupaustralia.com.au

Let's All Play Together activity card set

Sing and Grow Together CD and resource booklet

See also The Playgroup Shop at www.playgroupaustralia.com.au go to *State and Territory Profiles/Queensland/Resources*



Cc

climb catch crawl chase

If I climb... I can catch a cranky crow.

Climbing

Climbing is one of the most challenging activities for young children, beginning even before they can walk. Climbing up precedes climbing down. (Riggs, 1980:128)

In the early stages of climbing, the action itself is the goal. By age two or two and a half, climbing becomes purposeful. The child will use an object as a climbing-off space to reach even higher levels.

The ability to climb stairs with alternating feet (with no support) is achieved sometime before the third birthday. Descending stairs independently is more difficult and will be conquered after the fourth birthday.

(Weiser, 1991:121)

Indoors and out

Offer your toddler lots of opportunities for safe climbing so that he can learn for himself what he can and cannot do (see *Toddler book - C*). Here are a few ideas:

- Pile some big pillows in the middle of the floor and let your toddler climb to the top.
- Set up a low slide with a few steps leading up to it.

- Make an obstacle course with some cardboard boxes, sheets, blankets and other soft furnishings so that your toddler can practise hiding, playing peek-a-boo and climbing over, under and through.
- Visit the local park and try out any toddler-friendly climbing challenges.

SAFETY TIP: Watch out for any hazards around climbing areas.

Set up climbing adventures with some sort of soft fall around such as blankets, doonas or rubber matting.

Take into consideration the surface of the floor and the ground outside.

Make a rule of inspecting climbing equipment before allowing your child to use it.

Always supervise – be there and be aware!



Climbing frames

Climbing frames are good value in terms of valuable and varied play over many years. If you decide to buy a climbing frame buy the biggest frame possible. You will be able to add all kinds of swinging gear, slides and scrambling nets when your toddler is older and can transform it into a tent or a house by throwing an old sheet over it. Other factors to consider when deciding on what type of frame to purchase include:

- A wooden frame that pulls apart can be used both indoors and outside.
- Tubular metal has a long life but tends to get rusty when the paint chips and can feel unfriendly on cold days and too hot to handle on hot days.
- Permanent wooden frames need occasional weatherproofing.

Catching

The goal of catching is to retain possession of the object you catch. It is better to catch an object in the hands than to trap it against your body because if the object is caught in the hands, the catcher can quickly manipulate it, usually by throwing it.

(Haywood & Getchell, 2001:179)

Catching is harder than throwing and early attempts at catching will see toddlers trapping the ball against the chest and often turning away and closing their eyes in anticipation of the ball's arrival.



Catching games

Play these catching games indoors or outside in the shade:

- Sit on the floor with your legs stretched out in a 'V'. With your toddler sitting across from you, roll the ball to her and ask her to roll it back to you.
- Tap a balloon to your toddler and ask her to catch it. See if she can tap it back to you.
- Play a game of 'Pass the Balloon'. This is fun to do with a small group of toddlers standing in a circle. To get the game started, join in the circle and be part of the game. Add music and when the music stops, the child holding the balloon gives it a gentle hug.

Clay

Your toddler will enjoy the very special qualities of clay and dough (*see D - Dough*). Clay is a firmer texture than dough and calls for more strength in the fingers and hands. Nothing compares to the feeling of handling and squeezing wet clay. You can purchase clay from your local art supply store. Make sure you keep it in an air-tight container in the fridge and cut off small pieces as you need them.

Clay is a messy, outdoor activity but can be lots of fun in a shady spot on a summer afternoon, perhaps followed by some water play.

Dd

dance dash dodge dive

I love to dance with a dashing dinosaur.

Dancing

Toddlers love to move to music. Give your toddler colourful scarves to trail around and dance with. He may also enjoy dancing with a stuffed toy and he'll definitely love dancing with you (*see Toddler book – D*). Suggest or show him different ways to move. Try to offer him different types of music from soft, gentle and dreamy – to loud, exciting and fun. Remember that loud music can be too exciting sometimes so try and finish off with something slow and gentle.

Here are some ideas to get you moving:

Gentle

- float • sway • laze • dream

Energetic

- jump • race • spin • thump

Soft

- tiptoe • slide • cradle • rock

Feel that beat

Encourage your toddler to tap out the beat of favourite songs by clicking wooden blocks or sticks together, tapping a triangle with a wooden stick, shaking bells or home-made shakers, or playing a rhythm on a saucepan with a wooden spoon.

This tends to be a rather noisy activity, so how long you can endure it will depend on how you feel on that particular day! You may enjoy it more outdoors in the shade of a tree with a portable cassette player and lots of space to soak up the 'music'.

Development

During your toddler's early years she will be learning and practising an incredible amount of actions that will develop into life-long movement patterns. These include:

- rolling
- sitting
- crawling
- standing
- walking
- walking backwards
- step climbing
- running
- coordinated running
- hopping
- galloping
- skipping
- walking up and down stairs
- bouncing on one foot
- throwing
- catching



Don't forget to record in a book the dates when your toddler can achieve these milestones.

By having lots of practice in using her body everyday in lots of different ways your toddler is learning to control larger movements. By the end of three years she will be able to do things like:

- climb well
- walk up and down stairs using alternating feet
- kick a ball
- run easily
- pedal a tricycle
- bend over easily without falling.

(American Academy of Pediatrics, 2000:1)



Dough

Play dough is an all-time toddler favourite. It can be a quiet activity that exercises fingers and hands, a rowdy activity with the dough being pounded with glee, or a creative activity where shapes are endlessly explored.

Play dough is easy to make (*see recipe on the right*) and heaps of fun. Don't forget to sit down and have a go yourself.

Dads, step-dads, adopted dads, uncles, grandfathers, neighbours, caregivers

Research has shown that one of the primary activities dads (and males generally) engage in when they spend time with their babies is active play. (*Zero To Three, No2:2*)

Males are more likely to encourage babies and toddlers to try new things, take a few risks and engage in the sort of play that involves physical abilities. Research suggests that male carers (whether biological father, step-father, adopted father, uncle, grandfather, neighbour or caregiver) play an important role in a toddler's development.

This book is full of wonderful activities that males and toddlers can do together. They are just suggestions to get you started so have fun making up your own games as well.

Simple dough recipe

You need

- 1 cup flour
- 1/3 cup salt
- 1/3 to 1/2 cup water
- a few drops of vegetable oil
- food colouring (optional)

You do

- Put flour and salt into a large bowl
- Add food colouring and oil
- Slowly add water
- Mix it all together with your hands
- Put it out onto a board, bench or table and knead it until it feels nice and springy

Play dough will keep for a few days stored in a tightly closed container or plastic bag in the refrigerator.

Cooked dough recipe

You need

- 2 cups flour
- 4 tablespoons cream of tartar
- 2 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 1 cup salt
- 2 cups boiling water
- food colouring

You do

- Mix dry ingredients together in a large bowl
- Add oil
- Pour in boiling water and stir with a wooden spoon

This mixture feels really nice and will keep for longer than uncooked dough. Store in a closed container or plastic bag in the refrigerator.

Ee

energise elevate escape embrace

I can be as energetic as an excited emu.

Energetic

As we all know, toddlers have an abundance of natural energy. You can encourage them to use this energy in a number of ways (both inside and out) by trying out different movement skills.

Ask your toddler the following questions and then both of you can try out the movements:

- Can you slide on your tummy?
- Can you hop three times?
- Can you roll like a ball?
- Can you creep like a mouse?
- Can you grow as tall as a tree?
- Can you be as energetic as an emu?

(see Toddler book – E)

Also encourage your toddler with words and making choices:

- What colour ball would you like?
- What size ball do you want to play with?
- Would you like to walk to the park or ride your tricycle?

Rest time

Although your curious and energetic toddler is on the move just about all the time (under the sink, out the door, across the yard or looking for things behind the couch) he really isn't good at knowing when he's tired and needs a rest.

It is very common for toddlers to be cranky and demanding just because they are overtired. If you can, try to let him have some really energetic play

outside, everyday. He'll also need at least one sleep through the day and some quiet time as well *(see Q – Quietly)*.

Emerging skills

The period between one and three years of age is a time of emerging skills. It is a time when the freedom to explore, and an adult's support and encouragement to act upon things is very important.

The new skills that your toddler is developing will invite experimentation. She will be testing:

- How far can I run before mummy catches me?
- How far can I go before I get too scared?
- How many things can I carry in one go?

And don't forget that all toddlers are different. Some are cautious and some exuberant; some like to watch and others like to do; some walk early and others talk early; and some will be quick to learn new things while others take longer. But they all like to be busy and operate on 'toddler time' and will not be rushed! Be patient and rediscover the world through your toddler's eyes. Show her that you trust her and respect her explorations. Show her that she can trust you to keep her safe.

Equipment suggestions

You don't need expensive equipment to get your toddler active. Most activities can be done using things that you already have around your home. However, for those special purchases check out the suppliers of playground equipment in your Yellow Pages Directory under *Kindergarten & Nursery Equipment and Supplies*.



Everyday tasks

To help your toddler work toward controlling and strengthening small muscles, encourage him to do many things himself. It takes a little longer and some things are frustrating at first but it's worthwhile. And remember to notice and praise his efforts!

Real work for real people

Encourage your toddler to:

- feed himself using a child-size spoon and fork
- pour his own drink
- pour milk on his cereal
- dress and undress himself and use zippers and buttons
- help you around the house by
 - tearing up lettuce leaves for a salad
 - pushing the start button on the dishwasher
 - using his small broom to help you sweep
 - hanging out small items of washing on a little clothesline
 - digging in his own garden while you work in your garden
 - 'organising' a variety of important-looking things that you've given him from your desk.

(O'Brien, 2001:40)



Curiosity and action go hand in hand.

Activity	Equipment
Balance	planks for walking along ropes large balls bean bags balloons chairs and stools of different heights scoops for catching games <i>(make your own scoop by carefully cutting the bottom section off a large plastic milk bottle, retaining the handle – cover any sharp edges with strong tape)</i>
Climbing	wooden climbing frame double-sided steps trees <i>(under supervision)</i>
Sliding	slides planks slopes
Hanging and swinging	ropes trapeze rings ladders
Running	space

Ff

follow fly flap float

I want to follow that fancy flamingo.

Following

Toddlers love to follow and they especially like to follow YOU everywhere – to the bathroom, the toilet, the clothesline, the car and the dinner table! There are lots of ‘following’ games you can play that are not only lots of fun but can make everyday routines easier and lead to lots of interesting movements (see *Toddler book – F*).

Follow the leader

This is a game that you can play just about any time. Move in different ways and in different directions including:

- in a circle – forwards, backwards, sideways
- on a line, beside a line, with feet on either side of a line
- on dots, footprints, stepping stones
- on tiptoe
- marching, crawling, hopping, turning around and stooping.

Follow the drum

Show your toddler how to move to a drum beat and take turns at drumming a beat – fast, slow, loud and soft.



Follow the tape

Mark a twisty, wavy line with masking tape and have fun following it. Try to:

- walk on it
- slide along it
- tiptoe on it
- make it lead somewhere special like a surprise picnic.

Family fitness

Toddlers are strongly influenced by the habits and attitudes of other members of their family. Parents, in particular are important role models. Try and take time out to have some active family fun.

Walking, playing and running in the backyard or using playground equipment at a local park can be fun for the entire family.

Family walk

Set aside some time for a family walk or go for a longer hike on a Saturday afternoon. Pack a picnic and a ball and have some inexpensive, healthy fun together.

Growth chart

On your toddler’s birthday measure her height against a wall. While she is standing in place make a game of stretching up and squatting down. Count how many times she can go up and down with her feet flat and on her toes. See how high she can go when she stretches tall. And just for fun count how many times you can do it and how high you can go. Don’t forget to keep a yearly record of her height and weight.

Games

Play games together like hopscotch, chasey, throwing, catching or kicking a ball (see *G – Go games*).

Gg

go glide gallop grasp

I can go, go, go... faster than a goanna.

Go games

Simon Says

Use a Simon Says game to teach your toddler about different parts of his body and different movements. Keep it simple at first and gradually add more body parts and more actions. Use the same sort of game to encourage your toddler to listen and follow directions. Always make sure that the emphasis is on fun. Here are some suggestions to start your game off:

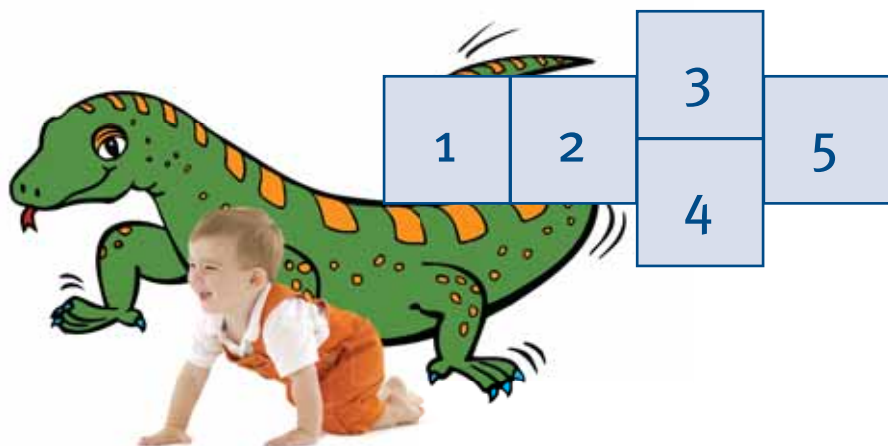
- *clap your hands*
- *wiggle your toes*
- *wiggle your fingers*
- *hold your wrist*
- *stand up*
- *bend down*
- *grab your ankles*
- *move over*
- *stamp your feet*
- *lie down*
- *turn around*
- *twist your waist*
- *open your eyes*
- *walk forward*
- *clap your hands*
- *shake your shoulders*
- *blink your eyes*
- *tap your neck*
- *jump forward*
- *bump your elbows*

- *close your eyes*
- *sit still*
- *knock your knees*
- *march*
- *tug your ears*
- *open and close your mouth*
- *pinch your nose*
- *run (on the spot)*
- *nod your head*
- *raise your hand*
- *shake hands*
- *walk backward*

Finish the game off with 'Simon says you listened very well and that's the end of our game!'

Hopscotch

The simple game of hopscotch is another all-time favourite. It is played using a number of squares drawn with chalk on a flat surface (concrete is best or even a verandah or patio). Number the squares from one to five as seen in the diagram. Show your toddler how to throw a small object such as a bean bag so that it lands in one of the squares and then jump or hop into that square to collect the object.



Hh

hang hug hop hide

I want to hang around with a happy hippo.

Hanging around

Most toddlers love hanging by the arms from a low bar or a branch of a tree (see *Toddler book – H*). The horizontal bars and ladders at the park are especially fun. You can even do this at home by holding a sturdy broom or pole for your toddler to hang from. You can help her hang in different ways such as frontwards, backwards and upside down.



SAFETY TIP: Always make sure you are holding her and there is something soft to land on like pillows or a mattress.



Hopping

Hopping involves the child propelling herself on one foot and then landing on the same foot. Few children under age three can hop repeatedly. (Haywood & Getchell, 2001:137)

Show your toddler how to stand on one foot, holding her to help her balance. While she stands on one foot lift her up and down to show her what it means to hop. As she gets older she'll be able to do this on her own. As she hops sing her this hopping song:

Hop Little Rabbit

*Hop little rabbit, hop, hop, hop.
Hop little rabbit don't you stop.
Hop little rabbit, one, two, three.
Hop little rabbit, hop to me.*

Health

Follow these simple rules to keep toddlers healthy:

- Give your toddler nutritious meals and snacks (see *N – Nutrition*).
- Give your toddler lots of opportunities every day to be physically active.
- Make sure your toddler has plenty of rest (see *Q – Quickly and quietly*).
- Make sure your toddler is protected from the sun (see *S – Sun facts*).
- Give your toddler lots of hugs and smiles.
- Visit your local *Community Child Health Service* for information about child development and general information about your toddler's needs (see *Where do I find more information p.54*).
- Make sure your toddler is protected from harm (see *S – Safety*).



i spy imitate inspect invert

I can spy with my eye... it's an ibis.

I spy

Using his eyes together with his hands, fingers and body is something that your toddler has been practising since he was just a few months old. Help him to use his eyes to really notice things by playing some fun 'looking' and 'listening' games.

I spy with my little eye

Who hasn't played this game? Instead of letters try animals, colours, shapes or what the *thing* is used for eg 'I spy with my little eye something that's red and round and we throw it!'

You can make this game more active by pretending to spy animals, and then trying to move like them (see *Toddler book - I*).

What are you wearing?

While you are waiting for the bus (or whenever) play this little game:

- If you are wearing (black) shoes, jump up and down.
- If you are wearing (red) socks clap your hands.
- If you are wearing a (blue) shirt stand on one foot.

Make it very simple to start with and gradually make it harder by adding more details.

Eyes and hands together

During the action-packed years that your child is a toddler, she will learn to use her eyes and hands together to control smaller movements. She will be doing things like:

- making vertical, horizontal or circular strokes with a pencil, crayon or paint

- turning the pages of a book, one at a time
- building towers with blocks or containers
- holding a pencil in some sort of writing position
- screwing and unscrewing jar lids and large nuts and bolts
- turning rotating handles.

Your toddler can practise her hand-eye coordination skills by:

- colouring with large crayons
- playing with play dough and clay (see *P - Play dough and C - Clay*)
- helping you make biscuits and making her own shapes and using a cookie cutter
- threading large beads on wool
- pegging springed clothes pegs around the edge of a container or pegging up small items onto a low clothes line (decorate the pegs with paint, or glue on cut-out cardboard story figures or animals)
- cutting out designs from short strips of wrapping paper.



SAFETY TIP: Buy a pair of toddler-safe round-edged plastic scissors but check that they cut paper really well so that he has lots of success with the activity.



Indoor activities

Toddlers are so active they need opportunities to be energetic indoors as well as out. Here are a few more indoor activities.

Sliding

This can be lots of fun. Depending on the surface of the floor, let your toddler pretend to skate wearing thick socks, or pull him around while he sits in a box or on an old blanket (although that can be hard on the back – yours not his)!

Swinging

Screw two stout hooks in a clear play space inside or on a deck or patio and use them to hang a toddler swing. As your toddler gets older hang a thick, soft rope (with a big knot) for him to sit on and swing, and then a rope ladder, a trapeze or a climbing rope.

SAFETY TIP: Make sure there is enough space around this area for swinging and put a mat or old mattress under the rope or trapeze in case of falls. Supervise this activity well and always take down or hook up swings and ropes when not in use.



Obstacle course

Set up an indoor obstacle course using furniture that you don't mind being used in this way. Also use an assortment of other bits and pieces eg a plank to walk along, a ladder on the floor (to step between the rungs), some rope to jump over, vinyl stepping stones and large cardboard boxes to crawl through (see *O – Obstacle courses*).

Ride-on toys

Ride-on toys can be used to negotiate any indoor 'circuit'. One house-bound toddler made a circuit of the deck, dining room, lounge, hallway, bedroom, bathroom and back to the deck, and now at age 10 is a very accomplished bike rider!

Push/pull toys

Toys such as large trucks or a sturdy cart invite lots of packing and moving-type play (see *P – Pushing and pulling*).



SAFETY TIP: Avoid lightweight free-wheeling toys like prams and lawnmowers until your toddler is absolutely steady on his feet.

Punching bags

Fill a strong paper or cloth bag with scrunched up balls of paper and hang this punching-bag from a hook in a clear space and let your toddler hit it with a wooden spoon. Make it into a game and when the music stops, you stop hitting. Your toddler can help you tear up newspaper and make it into balls to fill the bag.

Playing house

Let your toddler help you with everyday activities such as cleaning the floor, washing the dishes and making the bed (see *E – Everyday tasks*).



jump jiggle jog juggle

**I want to jump into a pouch like a joey
– but I think I'm too big.**

Jumping

Jumping involves a child propelling herself off the ground with one or both feet, then landing on both feet. By the time a child has developed the ability to run she has also acquired the physical abilities necessary to jump. (Wickstrom, 1983:65)

But getting both feet to leave the ground at once is harder than most of us remember, and frustrating for the child who wants to but can't. (Haiken, 2003)

There are lots of opportunities around your house for your toddler to practise her jumping. Help her:

- bounce on an old mattress or low trampoline while you hold her hands
- jump off a low sofa onto pillows piled on the floor
- draw a series of boxes or circles and jump from one to the other.



SAFETY TIP: Set clear guidelines about what can and can't be jumped on and off.

Long, long, long jump

Try this fun game with your toddler. How far can you jump if you work together? You broad jump first and your toddler starts where your heels landed and jumps as far as she can. Continue taking turns and measure how far both of you have jumped!

Jumping on sand is fun as well. Help your toddler to look for the marks she made when she landed and see if she can jump further next time.

Jump rope

Set up an obstacle course either inside or outdoors. Use a rope as a river and get your toddler to jump over it. Later when she has had lots of jumping practise, tie a sock half filled with rice, dried beans or sand to a long rope and swing the rope around you just above the ground. See if your toddler can jump the rope when it comes around.

Jumping jacks

Once your toddler can jump with her feet together, show her how to jump and land with her feet apart. When she can jump both ways show her how to alternate the two and play this jumping game:

Jump one jump two

Look, look what... can do. (insert your toddler's name)

Feet together feet apart

This will exercise your heart.

Kangaroo hops

Ask your older toddler to jump holding a bean bag between her knees! Then try this yourself and see how much fun you can have together.

KkK

kick knock kneel knead

I can kick, kick, kick, like a king size kangaroo.

Kicking

Kicking is a unique form of striking where the foot is used to impart force to a ball or balloon.

(Wickstrom, 1983:197)

Leg and arm swing

Balancing on one leg is a challenge for your toddler. Show your toddler how to hold onto the back of a chair with one hand, stand on one foot and swing the other leg forward and backward. Once he has his balance he can swing his free arm as well.

Splash, splosh, splash

Kicking in water is something toddlers love to do. He can kick in:

- the shower recess
- puddles after rain
- a paddling pool.



SAFETY TIP: Supervise water games closely.

Kicking practice

Kicking something that stays put gives your toddler a better chance of hitting it. Try kicking:

- empty plastic bottles
- plastic bottles partly filled with water
- plastic bowling pins (one at a time).

Kickball

Simplify the kicking action for your toddler by showing him how to kick a stationary ball. A large beach ball is good for this. At first your toddler will kick by simply pushing his leg forward. This will help develop good reaction skills and give him practice standing on one foot. Later roll the ball towards his feet as he stands still and encourage him to kick it back to you. Then encourage him to give each foot a go at kicking so that he's using both sides of his body (*see Toddler book – K*).



Remember that children learn by watching and doing. Watching mum and dad play footy in the yard can be lots of fun. Joining in is good fun too!

L I

leap laugh lift lunge

I can leap as lightly as a ladybird.

Leaping

Leaping involves the child propelling herself on one foot and landing on the other foot.

(Haywood & Getchell, 2001:129)

Leaping, like jumping, is great fun. Encourage your toddler to leap:

- from the edge of the pool into your arms



SAFETY TIP: Always supervise children near water.

- from one hoop or carpet square to another
- over a rope held just off the ground
- with both left and right legs
- lightly like a ladybird *(see Toddler book – L)*.

Linking

Help your toddler make links between an action, the word to describe it and the way it feels. This can be done by:

- talking about what physical activity or game she is playing *(see W – Words)*
- taking her to playgroup and your local playground where she'll see other children moving in different ways *(see P – Playgroups and playgrounds)*
- taking her to sporting events to watch older children and adults doing physical activity
- playing movement songs with her.

Hokey Pokey

*You put one arm in
You put one arm out
You put one arm in
And you shake it all about
You do the Hokey Pokey
And you turn around
That's what it's all about!*

(Do the actions and clap your hands as you say the last line.)

Head and Shoulders

*Head and shoulders
Knees and toes
Knees and toes
Knees and toes
Head and shoulders
Knees and toes
We all clap hands together!*

(Do the actions and clap your hands as you say the last line.)

(see A – Action songs)



M m

march move mimic meander

I can march up a mountain with a very messy moose.

Marching

Marching is a difficult activity for toddlers. It requires balance and coordination and your toddler may take a while to get the hang of it. But it's a wonderful activity that exercises both the body and the mind.

Older toddlers will enjoy marching to a song, to music or just for the fun of it. Try these fun marching ideas:

- let your toddler dress up and pretend to be a soldier marching
- make a game of marching to the bathroom, car or table for lunch
- pretend to be a messy moose marching up a mountain (see *Toddler book – M*)
- sing a marching song.

The Grand Old Duke of York

*The Grand Old Duke of York
He had ten thousand men
He marched them up to the top of the hill
And he marched them down again.
And when they were up, they were up
And when they were down, they were down
And when they were only half way up
They were neither up nor down.*

(Play simple marching music or tap out a marching rhythm on a drum or with your hands.)

Boom, Boom, Boom

*Boom, boom, boom, Beat the drum!
Boom, boom, boom, Here we come!
Boom, boom, boom, Do not lag!
Boom, boom, boom, Wave the flag!*

Motor skills

Movement is the key to learning and a healthy life. Starting at birth children develop two kinds of motor skills:

- **Large motor skills** which involve the development of the large muscles in the legs, back, shoulder and arms so that over time the baby and toddler can reach, crawl, walk, climb and throw; and
- **Small motor skills** which involve the development of smaller muscles in the wrists, hands and fingers as well as small optical muscles that control eye movement. Over time the baby and toddler will learn to point, hold things like a cup or a crayon, chew solid food, turn the pages of a book, do up buttons and draw etc.

As your baby grows into a toddler and older she will use these skills in different combinations:

- to move from one point to another by running, jumping, hopping, galloping, and skipping
- to control objects (such as a ball or a bat) by throwing, catching, striking, kicking, and dribbling
- to move in place by bending, stretching, twisting, turning, and swinging.

Moving

Exploring, moving, tumbling, pretending, singing, and running all help children to learn about themselves and the world around them. *(Zero To Three, No2:2)*

Moving helps toddlers:

- be healthy and strong
- learn about their bodies
- express themselves
- master physical actions and feel good about themselves
- learn about the things around them using their sense of smell, touch, sight and sound
- interact with other children.

Moving in a way that is right for a particular situation is a sign of development. Give your toddler lots of opportunities to try out different types of movements such as:

- gently stroking a cuddly toy
- treading carefully to make footprints with paint
- treading heavily to make footprints in the sand
- squeezing paint out of a tube
- wheeling a trolley

- building towers
- setting out cups and saucers
- dressing and undressing
- rocking a doll or a teddy
- pretending to be a baby.

(Davies, 2003:37)

Explore the world of movement and play lots of games with your toddler that will give them practise in:

- kicking and throwing a ball
- balancing on one foot
- walking upstairs



Don't forget to moderate your toddler's time in restraints like the high chair, stroller, and car seat.

- standing and walking on tiptoes
- climbing
- running
- jumping
- swinging
- pedalling.



N n

nod nibble nuzzle nap

I can nod my head but NOT in bed with a nibbly newt!

Nodding your head

Action songs and rhymes encourage lots of body movement. Sing these songs with your toddler:

If You're Happy and You Know It

*If you're happy and you know it
Nod your head
If you're happy and you know it
Nod your head
If you're happy and you know it
Then you really ought to show it
If you're happy and you know it
Nod your head!*

(see Toddler book – N)

(Repeat using different body parts and different movements: flap your arms, wriggle your bottom, clap your hands and knock your knees.)

Hokey Pokey

*You put your head in
You put your head out
You put your head in
And shake it all about
You do the Hokey Pokey
And you turn around
That's what it's all about!*

(Repeat using different body parts: elbow, arm, leg, bottom, knee and hand.)

Nutrition

Typically developing children should be trusted to judge when they are hungry and when they have eaten enough to be full and should not be urged, nagged or promised rewards to eat more food.

(O'Brien, 1997:161)

The extremely rapid growth of infants comes to an end about their first birthday. Along with this slowing of growth can come a decline in an interest in food. As long as your toddler is eating healthy food and continues to grow and gain weight there is no need to be concerned about his drop in appetite.

Encouraging healthy eating habits

- Tell your toddler that it will be time to eat soon (at least 10 to 15 minutes before mealtime) as it will give him a chance to finish his play before eating.
- When planning a meal include foods that your toddler enjoys and gradually introduce new foods as well. Your toddler may need to try a new food many times before readily accepting and liking it.
- When time allows, encourage your toddler to help with simple meal preparation.
- Choose foods that are easy for your toddler to eat with his fingers or a spoon.
- Introduce spices and herbs gradually, use small amounts of sugar, and do not add salt.
- Allow hot dishes to cool a few minutes before serving.
- Use cereals and oats to make slices, biscuits and small muffins that are toddler-size.

- Most toddlers prefer simple food with different foods served singly rather than combined in one dish.
- Steam raw vegetables slightly to make them easier to chew and digest.
- Avoid hard and chunky foods that need lots of chewing and may be choking hazards if swallowed whole eg nuts, popcorn, sausages cut into large pieces and raw vegetables.
- How much your toddler eats may be very different from how much another child eats.
- Never nag your toddler about eating. If he doesn't eat offer him a healthy snack a few hours later. If he doesn't eat the snack, offer food again at the next mealtime. Children often make up for a small meal or a missed meal at the next mealtime.
- Don't make your toddler eat everything on his plate. Offer nutritious food and let your toddler decide what and how much to eat from the food on offer.
- Don't use food, especially treats or sweets, as a reward. Use non-food items, such as stars on a chart, praise or a walk to the park to reward good behaviour. Using food rewards sets up an expectation or habit and often leads to comfort eating later in life.
- Encourage your toddler to feed himself with child-friendly cutlery and his fingers.
- Spills and messes are a necessary part of learning to eat. You might consider putting a plastic sheet or towel under his chair to catch spills and he might enjoy helping to clean up!
- Unless your toddler has special health care needs he should be encouraged to drink from a cup with or without a spout, rather than a bottle.
- If possible keep to regular mealtimes.
- To build up an association of mealtime as a pleasant family time make a rule of no toys or television during mealtimes. This will also help your toddler to focus on the meal and avoid distraction.
- Talk to your doctor, a child health nurse or dietitian if you have any concerns about your toddler's eating habits.

(Adapted from: O'Brien, 1997:164 & American Academy of Family Physicians, 2000:1-2)

Nutritious foods for toddlers

Good sources of protein

cheese
meat or cheese sandwiches
scrambled eggs
home made cheese pizza
macaroni and cheese
fish fingers (check the label to look for less than 10% fat)
hamburger and meatloaf
whole milk
yoghurt

Good sources of energy

banana smoothies
yoghurt
mashed potatoes
home made bars and biscuits
custard
home made (oven baked) potato chips or wedges
milkshakes
fruit
bread

Popular vegetables and fruits

broccoli with cheese
steamed carrot sticks
steamed green beans
peeled and sliced apples and pears
watermelon without seeds
canned peaches
bananas
grapes or cherries (cut in half)

SAFETY TIP: Safety tip: Avoid these foods because toddlers may choke on them:

- nuts
- hot dogs
- raw vegetables
- popcorn
- sausages cut up in large pieces





open overtake oomph outstretch

I can open my wings and glide like an owl.

Open

The act of opening and shutting your arms, hands and eyes involves both involuntary muscle action (eyes), large muscles action (arms) and quite specific fine muscle action (hands). Your toddler will enjoy activities that use these skills in different ways.

Using hands in a fun way

Open Shut

*Open shut them
Open shut them
Do a little clap.
Open shut them
Open shut them
Lay them in your lap.
Creep them, creep them
Right up to your chin
Open wide your little mouth
But do not let them in!*

(Start with your hands open on your lap and do the actions.)

Here is a Beehive

*Here is a beehive
Where are the bees?
Hiding away where nobody sees.
Watch them come creeping
Out of their hive
1, 2, 3, 4, 5!*

(Start with one hand shut into a fist. As the bees come out slowly open up the hand, one finger at a time, until all five fingers are open. Then let the five bees buzz away.)

Pretend

Play these pretend games:

- move your arms and pretend to fly like a bird eg an owl – don't forget to open your eyes wide (see *Toddler book – O*)
- move your arms and fly like a big, heavy bird eg a pelican
- crouch down in a tight ball and stand up slowly and open your arms like a beautiful flower
- crouch down like a little, tiny seed and stand up and open your arms like a plant growing out of the ground.

Obstacle courses

Obstacle courses are the sort of activity that toddlers never tire of. Make an obstacle course that challenges your toddler without being too difficult at first. You can set up your obstacle course indoors or outside. Why not build it around a favourite story or incorporate music? You could even include special 'handicaps' for older children such as completing the course with a small bean bag balanced on their head. It can be as silly or as serious as you like.

Indoors

Some over and under ideas for your indoor obstacle course include:

- jumping over a rope on the floor
- sliding under a rope tied between two chairs at about adult knee height
- climbing over a pile of cushions
- crawling under a low table
- crawling through the legs of chairs (make a tunnel out of chairs with a sheet draped over)

- playing leap frog from one carpet square to another
- crawling through balloons tied under a table
- crawling through a cardboard tunnel (with a tower half way along for standing up in and having a look around).

Outdoors

Outdoor ideas:

- use garden furniture for children to climb over or crawl under
- mark out a river with a blue towel
- make use of outdoor equipment such as ladders, slides, sandpits and cubbies
- add cardboard boxes, blankets and sheets to create mysterious tunnels
- make a treasure hunt by hiding something in the sand with 'x' marking the spot
- incorporate water for extra fun eg:
 - a paddling pool to splash through
 - water-filled balloons to throw at a simple target or sit on and burst.

Organised sports

Most toddlers up to age three are not developmentally ready to play in organised sports or to be involved in competitive activities. If your child doesn't want to participate in an activity for any reason, don't force him. Leave the activity for now and try it again in a few months.

(Dowshen, 2000:2)

Young babies begin to develop manipulative skills from a few months. When they reach, grasp, release, focus, hit, or push and pull, they are learning the skills that will be needed later to play tennis, football, cricket, basketball etc.

These basic movement skills that your toddler is learning and practising today will form the foundation of his movement abilities as an adult *(see M – Motor skills)*.



SAFETY TIP: Always empty paddling pools when not in use.



Pp

perch push pull prance

I can perch like a plump pelican.

Perching

Standing on one foot takes a lot of balance and is good practise for the more difficult skills of kicking and hopping. Hopping involves the child propelling herself on one foot and then landing on the same foot. Few children under age three can hop repeatedly.

(Haywood & Getchell, 2001:137)

Perch like a pelican

Show your toddler how to stand on one foot, holding her to help her balance. Pretend to be different types of birds such as a cockatoo perching in a tree or a pelican perching at the beach *(see Toddler book – P)*.

Your toddler will find it easier at first to hold onto the back of a chair for support and can let go as she gets more confident.

Pushing and pulling

The younger toddler will enjoy push toys that help keep him upright and steady. Cars and trucks with a sturdy handle for pushing (as well as a seat for riding) will get a lot of use. The more experienced walker will enjoy toys that can be pulled along *(see T – Toys)*.

Don't feel that you need to buy expensive toys. Make a simple pull toy by stringing cereal boxes or shoe boxes together with a handle for pulling.



SAFETY TIP: Make sure the strings between the boxes are a short length.

Practise makes perfect

Toddlers learn skills primarily through 'doing'. They practise early skills such as walking over and over until the skill is perfected. When learning these new skills, instruction and imitation play an important part but the most essential part is practise.

Once he learns 'how' your child will love to practise removing a given item of clothing repeatedly; opening and closing the refrigerator door even after you've asked him not to; and jumping off the next-to-last step of the staircase despite how many times you've told him it isn't safe. *(O'Brien, 2001:39)*

One of the greatest challenges of this period is allowing your toddler to engage in all the practise of new skills that he craves, while accommodating other considerations such as safety, time restraints and grown-up practicalities.

Playgroups and playgrounds

Now is the time to start encouraging friendships in the playground, at playgroup and child care, and in your neighbourhood. Being around other children of the same age or older allows your toddler to imitate and experiment with movement skills he sees other children doing.

Watching other children moving can also help your toddler make links between a physical act (eg jumping), the way it feels, and the words to describe it. Make a game out of watching other kids, then encourage your toddler to have a go at it and talk about it. This process of linking a movement with the mental picture and the verbal expression leads to better coordination and physical confidence. (O'Brien, 2001:49)

Poems

Active poems are fun to read and great fun to move to. Try one of these:

Me – Moving

*I dart and dash
I jig and jump
I scamper, skate and scramble.
I strut and stride
I slip and slide
And frequently I amble.
I leap and lurch
I crawl and creep
I rove and romp and ramble.
I turn and trip
I skid and skip
And now and then – I gambol!*

By Gordon Winch (Richardson, 1989:10)

Thumper

*Thumper, bumper
Rough and touch
Crasher, smasher
That's enough!
Lightly, sprightly
Soft as mice
Creeping, sleeping...
That's nice!*

(Child & Family Canada, 2003,2)

Reach for the Ceiling

*Reach for the ceiling
Touch the floor
Stand up again
Let's do more.
Touch your head
Then your knee*

*Up to your shoulder
Like this... see?
Reach for the ceiling
Touch the floor
That's all now –
there isn't anymore.*

(Weiser, 1991:128)

Bouncing

*Bouncing, bouncing
Up and down
Bouncing, bouncing
Turn around
Bouncing, bouncing
Be a clown
Bouncing, bouncing
Hit the ground!*

(Child & Family Canada, 2003,2)

(see A – Action songs)



Remember to cuddle and rock your toddler every day!



Qq

quick quiver quack queue

I can move quickly and quietly like a quoll.

Quickly

Toddlers like to be on the move. Moving is how they learn and it's important to allow them to safely explore and be active. Try out the quick movements in these fun chants – 'run' like the gingerbread man or 'go' on a pretend bear hunt (see A – Action songs).

Bear Hunt

*We're going on a bear hunt
We're going to find a big bear!
Let's push through the grass
Let's splash through the water
Let's squelch through the mud
Let's creep through the forest
Let's run through the storm
Let's tiptoe through the cave.*

(Based on the text of 'We're Going on a Bear Hunt'.)

Gingerbread Man

*Run, run as fast as you can
You can't catch me
I'm the gingerbread man!*

Quietly

Toddlers can tire quickly and don't have much endurance so it's also important to allow time for quieter activities.

Your toddler will enjoy having a cuddle in a rocking chair, or sitting on your lap while you tell a story or sing a quieter song. She'll follow your lead when you lower your voice and the tempo of the song. Yes, she is a bundle of energy, but she needs quiet times too. And so do you!



Try some of these quieter games or share some story books:

Come and see me

While YOU'RE sitting having a rest ask you toddler to stand at the other end of the room or at the end of the path and using his name play this game:

Ben, Ben (use your toddler's name)

Come and see me

How will you come?

Let me see

Will you...

(Walk backwards, walk clapping your hands, walk holding your ankles.)

Story books

Story books are a wonderful way to try and get your 'quick' toddler to be 'quiet'. Stories can be listened to quietly and bits can be repeated and laughed over (see *B – Books*).

Simon Says

Use this old time favourite game to help your toddler relax. Try *Simon says*:

- lie down
pinch your nose
- blink your eyes
wiggle your toes
- wiggle your fingers
wiggle your nose
- open and close your mouth
make a humming sound with your mouth shut
- tug your ears
close your eyes.



Taking a nap outside can be fun just for a change.

Questions... encourage questions!

Use questions to encourage your toddler to notice the details of how he moves and how other children and animals move.

Watching others

Give your toddler lots of opportunities to observe other children and adults at play eg in books, in pictures, at sporting events or being active doing yoga, tai chi or in gym classes.

Use questions and comments to make your toddler aware of movement processes:

- Did you see how Cameron took off?
- Why did Sophie use both hands?
- Is it easier to hit the target with the small or the big ball?

Making a scrapbook

Make a scrapbook of action photos of your toddler doing active things. Write a short description (including her age) under each photo and read it often with your toddler. Compare what she can do 'now', with what she was doing 'then'. Keep adding to it as your toddler is able to do more and more things.

Rr

roll run ride rock

I can roll and wriggle like a rascally raccoon.

Rolling

Learning to roll over was an important achievement for your baby. Now that he is a little older, your toddler will enjoy repeating this action many times.

Roll over

This game is an old favourite. Play it with other toddlers or with a couple of stuffed toys. Put an old blanket or a picnic rug on the floor and help your toddler to act out the rhyme. Start with a small number (three or four) and increase the number if your toddler enjoys it (see *Toddler book – R*).

*There were three (or more) in the bed
And the little one said
'Roll over, roll over!
So they all rolled over and one fell out.*

(Count down until...)

*There were none in the bed
And that's how it ends
'Roll over, roll over!'*

Experimenting

Help your toddler to experiment with rolling on the carpet inside or a small hill outside in the park. If he enjoys it you might suggest that he rolls in different ways:

- slower
- faster
- arms outstretched
- arms at his side
- one arm outstretched and the other at his side.

Running

Running ability develops out of coordinated walking. At first your toddler will do a fast walk that may be stiff and awkward and accompanied by lots of falls. A more mature running style will develop during the preschool years. In the meantime give your toddler lots of running practise. Try these fun running games.

Run and stop

'You run and you run and you run and STOP!'
Call out the word 'stop' or use music. Try other movements such as walking on tiptoe, crawling, marching and jumping.

People-chasing and ball-chasing

This is a great activity to do on grass in wide open spaces. Getting your toddler to chase something is not only great fun but it teaches her about changing direction. Roll a ball to your toddler and get her to chase it and then roll it back to you. When she gets more confident, smaller balls can be used. Also get her to chase you or a friend and make it more fun by changing direction often.

Run for a hug

Go to the park with a friend and let your toddler run as fast as she can between you. Reward each pass with a hug and a toss in the air and you'll get some exercise as well!

SAFETY TIP: Be careful in public places such as parks, beaches and playgrounds for common hazards such as discarded needles and glass.

Encourage your toddler to wear shoes in outdoor areas you are unfamiliar with.

Closely supervise your toddler in places such as car parks as she will want to practise her running everywhere!



Tip, top, touch

Set up a roundish running track in your backyard by tying brightly coloured scarves to trees, posts or the fence. Include some fun alternatives such as getting your toddler to touch each scarf and then sit quickly in the middle of the track or in a cardboard box. Run the track with her and count in seconds how long it takes.

Let your toddler run on different surfaces as running on grass is different from running on carpet. Running barefoot is fun as well.

Riding and rocking

Once they are mobile, most toddlers love a bit of speed and will enjoy having their own 'set of wheels'. Your toddler will enjoy ride-on toys. At first he will use both feet to move himself along and later will use a walking motion to propel himself.

The older toddler will enjoy pedalling a tricycle. Pedalling helps to develop leg muscles and coordination.

Rocking toys are fun as well and make use of other muscles.



SAFETY TIP: Establish a safety rule of wearing a helmet whenever riding outdoors – even when riding his tricycle. If he is riding inside be sure to block off any stairs.

Be careful of fingers getting caught in or under rocking toys.

Rhythmic play

Toddlers love rhythmic play from the early experience of being lifted up in the air as a baby and being jiggled up and down on a lap – to playing 'Giddy-up Horsey' sitting on an adult's foot and piggy back rides. And as she gets older your toddler will enjoy more energetic play.

Your toddler will love:

- being lifted up into the air
- dancing together, swaying in time to music and clapping hands

- sitting on the floor across from you, holding your hands and rocking back and forth while you sing 'Row, row, row your boat'.

Knee-bouncing rhymes

Try these knee-bouncing rhymes with your toddler on your lap:

This is the way that...

This is the way that (name) **rides**
Trip, trip, trip, trip.

(Gentle voice and bounce child on knee slightly.)

This is the way that (name) **rides**
Hobbledeehoy, hobbledeehoy.

(Slightly louder voice and more vigorous bouncing.)

This is the way that (name) **rides**
Hoydiho, hoydiho.

(Boisterous voice and bounce the child and rock her from side-to-side.)

And this is the way that (name) **rides**
Galloping, galloping, home!

(Faster voice and high bouncing – bounce the child gently off on 'home'.)

Use family names and finish off with your toddler's name.

Giddy-up Horsey

Begin with the child sitting on both of your knees, holding your hands as if they were reins. Make sure to hold his hands to keep him from falling.

Giddy-up horsey
Giddy-up now!
Giddy-up horsey
Don't fall down!

(On the word 'down' open your legs and let the child's bottom slip down between your knees about halfway to the floor.)

(Adapted from Drake, 2000:1)



Ss

slide stretch skip splash

I like to slide with a slippery seal.

Sliding

Sliding is a wonderful feeling of flying through the air in a safe way. Your toddler will climb up to a slide and enjoy the feeling of sliding down many, many times (see *Toddler book – S*). Have some sliding fun with your toddler by:

- sliding down with her on a large playground slide
- standing at the bottom of a smaller slide to catch her as she slides down
- making a water slide with a sheet of vinyl, a plastic tablecloth or an old shower curtain. Spread the sheet on a gentle grassy slope and put a trickling hose at the top of the slope so that the vinyl is wet and water keeps flowing on it. Your toddler sits on the vinyl at the top and slides down. This is a great fun activity and will keep your toddler occupied for ages.

Striking

Striking is the act of swinging at and hitting an object. A young child can frequently swing a bat or a paddle with reasonably effective form, before being able to hit an object.

(Wickstrom, 1983:165)

Hit the Ball

Put a tennis ball in the toe of an old pair of tights (put the two legs together to make it stronger) and tie it from the clothes line or somewhere inside so that it hangs at a comfortable height for your toddler.

Encourage him to hit the ball with the flat of his hand and later with a bought or home-made racquet (lightweight, with a short handle and large hitting surface). He'll play on his own when he starts to get good at it but at first spend the time encouraging and praising his efforts.

Swinging

Swings can be made from many things. **Swinging is still the pleasantest thing ever a child could do.** (Riggs, 1980:133)

Swinging is a more robust form of rocking and seems to be a continuation of a baby's love of rhythmic movement. Children love to swing and at the same time they learn a lot about weight, balance and gravity.

Swinging can involve the movement of the whole body and that wonderful feeling of weightlessness, or just the movement of arms or legs as in marching or kicking. Why not consider:

- buying or making a swing (if you have a backyard with enough space)
- setting up a hammock
- visiting the local park and letting your toddler have a swing in one of the toddler swings or sitting her on your lap and swinging together
- swinging your toddler around just for the fun of it
- singing as you swing and feeling the rhythm.

SAFETY TIP: Hold your toddler under his arms as this is safer than swinging him by his hands. If your toddler doesn't like the feel of swinging round, stop and perhaps try it another time.



Sun facts

Queensland has the highest rate of skin cancer in the world. Exposure to sunlight in childhood is the main risk factor for melanoma and other types of skin cancer in adulthood. *(Al-Yaman et al, 2002:290)*

Playing outside has wonderful benefits for both you and your toddler but beware of the sun.

The facts are:

- Ultraviolet radiation from the sun causes damage to the cells in the skin layers. Ultraviolet radiation is not hot and cannot be seen or felt.
- It doesn't need to be hot outside for skin damage to occur.
- Try to keep your toddler out of the sun between 10am and 3pm.
- Protect your toddler from sunlight and UV rays when outdoors:
 - make it a rule for everyone to wear a shady hat outdoors
 - always use sunscreen especially formulated for children and apply to parts of the body that are not already covered by a hat and clothing
 - keep in the shade where possible.
- Wear closely woven, dark coloured (eg blue, green or red) clothing with a collar and sleeves as these provide the best protection from the sun.
- Encourage your toddler to wear sunglasses to protect his eyes.



NOTE

Be a good role model, always wear a broad-brimmed hat outdoors.

Safety

The parent's job is to act as 'spotter', standing by to rescue him when he needs it, helping him learn to adopt safe habits but allowing him to lead the way whenever possible in his journey of physical discovery.

(O'Brien, 2001:30)

Toddlers are focused on learning new skills and exploring their environment – not on being safe.

Always ensure you:

- 'play it safe' even if it takes a bit longer and it's going to make you late
- are consistent with safety rules
- don't rely on verbal messages alone
- monitor your toddler for over-excitement and distract her to a quieter activity
- have children fully visible when moving the car in and out of the driveway.



Keeping your toddler safe

Until your toddler is a little older it is best to overestimate what she can do. Ask yourself:

- Can she reach the knives?
- Can she unscrew the top off the detergent bottle?

It is also important to underestimate what she understands and remembers. Ask yourself:

- Does she know NOT to run behind the swing?
- Does she know NOT to touch the hot iron?

Toddlers love to put things on their heads and in their mouths

Remember:

- Plastic bags can suffocate children.
- Balloons can be fun but they should be used with care. Young children can suffocate on broken pieces.
- Children this age should NOT have hard, chunky food which can pass down the windpipe and obstruct breathing. Always supervise closely at meal times.
- Children should only be given age-appropriate toys and these should be checked regularly for wear (*see T – Toys*).
- Watch children in the garden very carefully. Many plants are poisonous and their leaves, flowers, berries or fruit are attractive to toddlers and they love to pop them in their mouths. A poison plants leaflet is available from the Queensland Poisons Information Centre on 13 11 26 or online information is available on www.health.qld.gov.au/poisons/informationcentre/.

Toddlers at this age are very curious and very active

Other safety precautions around the house include:

- Use outlet covers on all unused electrical sockets.
- Throw away frayed electrical cords. Run electric cords behind furniture and use tape to hold them down. Don't run cords under rugs as this can cause a fire.
- Fence the garden and lock gates particularly into water areas such as pools, spas, ponds and dams.
- Keep toddlers away from all machinery such as appliances, power tools and lawnmowers.
- Supervise play with dogs and remove any bones or dog food from the play area.
- Always hold your child's hand or put him in a stroller while in shops and malls.
- Plan ahead:
 - place a mat on the playroom floor for leaping and somersaulting
 - place interesting containers full of harmless items in cabinets within his reach and lock away any potentially dangerous items
 - use a gate to keep him out of non-child-proofed rooms.
- Be 'stair aware'
 - use safety gates at the top and bottom of stairs
 - make the stairs a 'no play zone'
 - keep stairs well lit and free from clutter.
- Cut down toddler access to windows by placing guards on windows and keeping furniture like beds and couches a safe distance away.

Tt

throw twist turn tag

I can throw way over my toes, two turtles and a toad.

Throwing

Throwing and catching are important skills for everyday play. Throwing develops progressively.

Your child will start with rolling, then go on to bouncing a ball and throwing underhanded before finally learning to throw overhand. *(Haiken, 2003)*

Young children's throwing patterns, especially those of children under three years, tend to be restricted to arm action alone. *(Haywood & Getchell, 2001:146)*

Learning to throw

Lightweight beach balls are best as beginning balls. Gradually the size of the balls may be decreased down to tennis ball size. As the balls become more hand-sized, show your toddler how to throw underhand and overhand *(see Toddler book - T)*.

Bring in the laundry

While you're taking the washing off the clothesline give your toddler her own basket and a collection of objects (screwed up paper, small plastic toys and scarves etc) to throw into it. Start by putting the basket close so that she starts off just dropping things in and then move it further away as she becomes more skilled at the game.

Ring toss

Show your toddler how to drop a ring or quoit onto a peg. Gradually encourage her to back away and try tossing it.

Throwing at a target

Aiming a small bean bag or a ball at a target is a more advanced skill. Start off with a simple target such as a box or basket where it's very obvious that the toddler has succeeded in hitting her target. Later try throwing through a hoop and into a box.

Sponge fun

Draw a circle or a face on a wall or on a blackboard propped up against a wall. Take it in turns to throw wet sponges at the 'target'. Have some fun rubbing it out and drawing different 'targets'.



SAFETY TIP: Great for a hot day but remember to avoid the middle of the day and wear hats and use sunscreen.

Make your own bean bags

You need

- some old adult socks
- dried beans
- needle and strong thread

You do

- Cut off the toe-ends of the socks
- Fill with beans
- Sew the open ends shut very, very securely

Check your bean bags regularly to make sure they haven't split open.

Toys

Look for toys that your toddler can use in different ways.

Balls – any ball that’s easy to grasp (eg underinflated beach balls) are great for young toddlers. Older toddlers will enjoy a variety of balls (eg vinyl balls, cloth balls, and bumpy balls). Try throwing balls into a box or basket, kicking them over a line or into a box, or hitting a large ball with a plastic bat.

Basic climbing equipment – toddlers have lots of fun with commercial climbing gyms but they are often expensive and can be quickly outgrown. Look for a second-hand toddler climbing frame (make sure it’s in good condition) or make your own climbing challenges using bits and pieces around the house. You could use a wooden ladder, a sturdy child-size table, large cardboard boxes, a sturdy adult chair, large cushions or a smooth plank of wood with a cleat or wedge at either end (see *C – Climbing*).

Chubby crayons and large sheets of paper – tape the paper to the table so it can’t move and let your toddler create some masterpieces to hang on his bedroom wall.

Construction toys – large blocks and pieces that can be linked or snapped together will give your toddler a chance to use his fingers and his imagination.



Look for other toys that your toddler can use in active ways.

Dress up clothes – set aside a box for old adult shirts, hats, scarves, shawls, shoes and wigs for dressing up time.

Hoops – can be used for rolling, jumping into or even modified toddler skipping.

Illustrated books and cassette tapes – nursery rhymes and simple repetitive stories can be listened to over and over again.

Non-toxic paint and large brushes – and remember old play clothes and an area where you don’t mind a mess.

Picture books – let your toddler have his own library of books so that he can ‘read’ any time he wants.

Puzzles – look for inset puzzles (with little knobs on each piece) as well as puzzles with thick and easy-to-handle pieces.

Ride-on cars and tricycles – particularly with compartments for carrying things. The older toddler will enjoy pedalling and all toddlers love packing and unpacking.

Scaled-down toys – the sort of things that allow the toddler to do the things that he sees the adults around him doing (eg tools, tea set, kitchen equipment, rakes, brooms and shopping carts).

Small wooden blocks – to stack or sort.

Sturdy cardboard boxes – of different sizes make good building blocks.

Toy musical instruments – guitar, keyboard, tambourine, drum, bells and rhythm sticks etc. Make your own shakers (beans or rice in empty plastic bottles – glue the lid shut) and rhythm sticks (cut wooden broom stick in short lengths and sand ends smooth). Play lots of different types of music and encourage your toddler to play along.

Toys or things that stack – measuring cups and plastic storage containers from your kitchen will keep your toddler occupied for ages.

Toys that encourage sorting – by colour, shape or size.

Toys that give your toddler practise – in threading, lacing, buttoning, opening and shutting, dressing and undressing.

Toys with parts that open and close, knobs that turn, things that slide – save your empty cosmetic containers.

Train sets – your toddler will enjoy linking the cars together and running the train round and round the track or the house.

Trolleys, carts – anything with wheels that can be pushed around.

Water toys – a plastic sieve, sponges, things that float (eg corks) and containers for pouring, filling and emptying.

Wheeled toys that can be pulled along – particularly popular if they make noises or move in funny ways when they're pulled.

(Baby Centre Medical Advisory Board:No1)



Remember... tiny amounts of TV please!



U u

upside down uncurl unbutton uplift

I'm upside down too, like an umbrella cockatoo.

Upside down

Being upside down is the sort of activity that eventually develops into rolling and handstands. Not all children are comfortable with the feeling of being upside down but it develops all sorts of balance mechanisms and is a good activity to encourage.



SAFETY TIP: Always stay close by when your child is trying new things like hanging upside down.

Peek-a-boo, I can see you!

Has your toddler had a look at the world through his legs? If he hasn't, show him how! Stand with your feet hip-width apart, bend your knees, bend at the waist and drop the top half of your body down and have a look at an upside down world. It's a favourite toddler activity and it's a good introduction to hanging upside down. It makes a great photo as well (see *Toddler book - U!*)

Hanging

If she likes being upside down let her sit on your lap facing you and hold her hands and lower her back so that she can hang upside down with her back supported by your legs.

Trapeze and rings

At first your toddler will just swing from the rings and as she gets older and stronger can use this equipment to hang upside down and do lots of other tricks as well. Consider buying a trapeze and rings from a kindergarten supplier.

This type of equipment isn't very expensive, it can be set up on a verandah (inside or outside) and your child will get lots of use from it over many years (see *E - Equipment suggestions*).

Up and down

Toddlers love doing an action over and over again and take delight in being able to perfect a movement. Although your toddler may have mastered the skill of climbing up and down on a chair at home, he will still want to practise the skill at your friend's house or at the coffee shop while you're trying to have a quiet cup of coffee!

Have fun practising skills at home and get into the spirit of things and make a game of it. You can join in by doing the chanting.

Chants

Up and Down

*Up and down, up and down
Clap, clap and turn around.
Up and down, up and down
Clap, clap and bow.*

(Use this little chant in lots of different ways - reverse the actions.)

down then up, down then up

(Add other movements.)

*walk and stop
jump and squat
slide to the side*

Stepping up

Toddlers enjoy low steps and hills to climb up and down. Why not make your very own stepping stones and have fun stepping all over the house or the yard?

Stepping stones

You need

shallow boxes
(10-20 cms high)

You do

- Fill with newspaper
- Cover with contact

V v

vanish volley vault vibrate

I can vanish like a vole – in a box or up a pole.

Vanish

While you spend most of your day keeping an eye on your toddler (and you certainly don't want her vanishing anywhere) she may still enjoy having her own special place and playing a vanishing game with you.

Jack-in-the-Box

Next to 'Peek-a-boo' this must be one of the best vanishing games. There are lots of different 'Jack in the Box' songs but try this one and use a cardboard box or a cane laundry hamper with a lid to hide in (see *Toddler book – V*).

Jack in the box... jumps up!

(Child jumps up with arms stretched up.)

Jack in the box... goes flop!

(Child bends over from the waist and goes floppy.)

Jack in the box... turns round and round

(Child turns around once or twice.)

And then she goes back in her box... kerplop!

(Child jumps back down into her box.)

Boo!

Just as your baby enjoyed playing peek-a-boo (you may have used your hands or a baby blanket), your toddler will enjoy similar games. Chasey games are even more fun when mum or dad pretends to hide behind a tree and leans out to say 'boo'!

Hide and seek

Toddlers will enjoy playing simple hide-and-seek games. Try it inside using large pillows or furniture in the playroom.

Cardboard boxes

Large cardboard boxes make wonderful pretend homes, caves, tunnels and towers. Join the boxes together, cut out windows, string a piece of cloth across the opening for a door and make tunnels with corners and dead ends (with a hatch that opens so that she can climb out). Your toddler may enjoy making a large box into a cubby with cushions, baby blankets and stuffed toys. This is her own safe place to 'vanish'.



SAFETY TIP: Play safe by always removing any loose staples from cardboard boxes before using them with your toddler.

Follow the music

This is a simple hide-and-seek game played by hiding a wind-up music box in the playroom and asking your toddler to find it.



Volleyball and other ball games

Few toddlers can manage a game of catching ball but there are lots of ball games that they can enjoy such as rolling, throwing, catching and hitting. Toddlers love games and what could be more fun than ball games? Have fun with these games or make up some of your own.

Volleyball

String up a rope between two posts or trees and make it low so your toddler can hit a balloon over a rope to you.



SAFETY TIP: Take the rope down when you're finished.

Bowling

Make or buy an indoor bowling set and set it up inside (in a hallway if you have one) or outside on a strip of carpet or on the grass or concrete.

Target practise

Play a game of tossing a small bean bag or ball into a box, basket or bucket. Start with it close and gradually move it further away.

Catching

Throw a balloon or soft ball to your toddler and encourage him to catch it and then throw back to you.

Sweep

With the open end of a box as your goal, take turns at trying to hit (with a lightweight racquet or bat) or sweep (with a child-size broom) a ball into the box.

Bean bag hit

Place a large beach ball in the centre between you and your toddler. The aim is to try to move the ball toward the other person by throwing small bean bags at it.

Balloon fun

Show your toddler how to keep a balloon in the air by gently tapping it with both hands and then one hand.

(Child & Family Canada, 2003:4 & Weiser,1991:127-131)

Types of balls

Give your toddler a range of balls to play with:

- rolled up socks or tight balls of wool – great for rolling across the floor or for throwing and catching
- big, light inflatable balls – good for starters to throw around and practise catching and kicking
- soft, spongy balls – non threatening and don't travel as fast as other balls
- bean bags – land where they're thrown rather than rolling away
- balloons – are slow, they don't hurt and allow your toddler more time to catch (not recommended on a windy day of course)
- ping pong balls – light weight and are easy to throw (although not easy to catch) and are fun to chase.

W w

walk wiggle wave waddle

I'm going for a walk to catch a wiggly whale.

Walking

Walking is first observed in about 80 percent of all infants between 10 and 15 months after birth. (Johnson, 2003:1)

Babies move naturally from some form of crawling, to standing, to walking. Some babies walk a little earlier, some a little later. Your baby will walk when his body and nervous system are ready. Quite often babies start walking and then go back to crawling. This is normal and there is no need to worry. Early 'walkers' in particular are often unsteady on their feet but it really is a matter of practise makes perfect.

Why not play some games that use different types of walking. Play these games inside or out.

Tiptoe through the...

Throw paper streamers on the ground and tiptoe with your toddler through the streamers trying not to stand on any. Pretend you are tiptoeing through a field of flowers, some angry ants or puddles of water.

Go for a walk and sing a song (see *Toddler book - W*).

Sing to the tune of 'The Farmer in the Dell':

*We're going for a walk
We're going for a walk
We're going for a little walk
To catch a wiggly whale!*

(Honig, 1995:77)

Follow the path

Make a path for your toddler to follow. Start with a straight, wide path and later make the path narrower, longer, curved or make it turn at an angle. Why not try:

- marking out a path with chalk on concrete, flour on grass, or masking tape on the carpet or tiles
- making a circle on the floor with rope
- using carpet squares for stepping stones
- making dots or footprints out of vinyl.

Follow the leader

Play this favourite game. Get your toddler to follow you, then you follow her:

- around in a circle – forwards, backwards and sideways
- walking on a line, beside a line and with feet on either side of a line
- walking on dots, footprints and stepping stones
- walking on tiptoe.

Alphabet fun

If your toddler is interested in the alphabet, draw a few very large letters on the ground and show her how to walk around the outline.

Footprints in the sand

Walk on wet sand and then follow your steps back home. Or make footprints with paint on paper or fabric and hang inside for your toddler to admire.



Save your toddler's printed footprints, to hang on the wall, to use as wrapping paper or to frame and give as a gift.

Water play

Water play is an absolute all time favourite for toddlers. And its not only fun but also great for their development.

Allow your toddler to splash in the bath, paddling pool, swimming pool and at the beach.

- Toys, floats and containers enable your toddler to investigate pouring, floating, sinking, filling and emptying.
- Playing in a small pool of water allows experimentation with moving in water in a safe way.
- Being carried on mum's back while he swims or being pulled through the water introduces your toddler to early swimming skills such as breathing, moving, balance, rhythm and stroking.

Rainy day songs

If the weather is warm, it's fun to splash through puddles in the rain and learn some rainy day songs and rhymes.

Sally's Galoshes

*Sally's galoshes
Make splishes and splashes
As Sally's galoshes
Go out in the rain.*

(Repeat – getting faster each time.)

When the Rain is Falling Down

*When the rain is falling down
Falling down, falling down
Out comes my big umbrella
When the rain is falling down.*

Rain, Rain Go Away

*Rain, rain go away
Come again another day.
Little (child's name) wants to play
Because it is a holiday.*

Water safety tips

Never take your eyes off your toddler when there is water around – whether it's a whole swimming pool full, a bath full or just a small bucket full. Be safe by:

- teaching children water safety
- ensuring that paddling pools are emptied immediately after use
- ensuring that pools are securely fenced and gates are latched and closed
- keeping lids securely on buckets and containers that contain water
- never leaving toddlers unattended in the paddling pool, bath or shower – not even for a minute.

(For more tips on safety see S – Safety tips)





Words

Use words to describe what your toddler is doing. Use lots of different action words so that your toddler is hearing interesting and descriptive words.

Moving from here to there

walk
run
hop
jump
slide
crawl
creep
roll

Moving your body

twist
turn
bend
stretch
spin
curl
balance
rock

Child-inspired words

wiggle
squiggle
squirm
shake
burst
swoosh
bang
pop
bounce
whoosh
blast-off
sizzle

Direction

on
off
into
through
around
along
about
sideways
forward
backward
over
under

Numbers

one
two
once
twice
first
second

Parts of the body

hand
foot
feet
head
hips
back
shoulders
elbows
ankles

Body shapes

straight
crooked
angular
curled
round
twisted
flat
arched

(Adapted from Riggs, 1980:144)



eXtend eXplode eXpand eXhale

I can extend and stretch and make an X (just like a Xenops)

Extend

Toddlers are still learning about their own bodies. Help your toddler to learn about her body through movement.

Move your body

Play games that use all the different body parts:

- hide your hands, hide one ear and hide your toes
- move like something familiar eg melt like an ice cream or pop like popcorn
- move different body parts in different ways eg swing your arms like an elephant's trunk and shake your bottom like a wet dog
- put a bean bag under your body, between your knees or on one foot
- choose a part of your body to move in different ways eg feet can wiggle, curl, stretch, tiptoe, stamp, kick, tap, circle, walk, run, hop, skip and dance around the room.

Copy cats

Stand in front of your toddler and ask her to copy your actions. Then you can copy hers.

Try movements like:

- stretching as tall as you can
- making an X with your arms and legs out wide (see *Toddler book – X*)
- twirling around one way and then the other
- moving your head to one side and then the other.

Exercises

Toddlers can be quite chubby but if they are active and eating healthy food this shouldn't be a problem. As toddlers grow into their preschool years their body shape changes, their legs get longer compared with their bodies and they tend to lose that baby fat.

But it is also important to give your toddler lots of opportunities to be physically active – to run, jump, twirl, climb on and off furniture (under supervision only), dance, try new skills like kicking and throwing and pedalling, play on swings, hang from bars and go for walks. Let your toddler actively explore his world and practise the skills that will be useful throughout life.

Some exercises you can do with your toddler:

Wash the dishes

Aim: To stretch the shoulder muscles.

Stand facing your child, holding his hands. Swing your arms side to side while singing the rhyme 'Wash the dishes, dry the dishes, turn the dishes over'.

On the word 'over', swing your arms up overhead and turn your child around in a full circle so your arms are crossed. Repeat arm swings and rhyme and on word 'over', return your child to original position (arms uncrossed). Repeat several times.

Small ball

Aim: To relax the body and stretch muscles.

Kneel on the floor with your legs together, rest your bottom on your legs, lower your head to the floor and tuck your hands to your side on floor, pointing backward. Take two or three deep breaths and blow it out. Relax.

Rocking chair

Aim: To strengthen abdomen, legs and arms and increase balance.

Sit on the floor with your legs bent and your hands out to the side for balance. Tuck your legs into your bodies, wrap your arms around them, feet off the floor and rock forwards, backwards and side-to-side.

(Child & Family Canada, 2003:3)

Up and down

Play a game of sitting and standing (without using hands) from chairs and stools of different heights.

Head and neck exercises

Gently turn your head from side-to-side and down and up. Do this exercise while standing, sitting and lying on your back and tummy.

Row, row, row

Sit on the floor facing your toddler, hold your toddler's hands and rock back and forth gently.

(Child Development Institute, 2002)



Put a child-size full length mirror in your playroom so that your toddler can watch himself moving different parts of his body.



Yy

yell yawn yodel yo-yo

I want to yell at a yellow yak.

Yelling

Yes, we all know toddlers can yell and sometimes parents feel like yelling too! Your toddler might yell when she's excited, overtired, wants something she can't have or when you want her to come and she doesn't want to go. What can you do? Try doing the opposite:

- If you're inside – go out.
- If it's become a bit of a loud confrontation – go quiet and sing something soft (if you can).
- If you're shopping and she just has to walk (even though you're in a hurry and want to put her in her stroller) let her push the stroller to the next shop and then try again.

If all else fails a bit of humour might save the day... *'Jessica are you yelling at a yak again!'* (see *Toddler book – Y*).

Sanity savers – places to go

When you've had enough indoors, why don't you and your toddler head for the great outdoors:

- check out your local parks and playgrounds
- join a local playgroup
- plan a family picnic for the weekend
- go for a walk with your toddler as she rides her tricycle
- go to the beach
- explore the backyard and collect leaves or flowers.

Yes – just do it!

You don't have to be an 'expert' to help your toddler be active. Just reading the activities in this book and then being prepared to have-a-go is all you need. Even better, try and find the child in yourself and enjoy the activities as well.

Sometimes being active with your toddler is not only good for them but great therapy for you. There is nothing like the sound of children's laughter and their sense of achievement to make us all feel better.

And don't let bad weather, small spaces or lack of equipment stop you doing the activities. Look for other activities or ways of doing things. It's a lot easier than you think – just do it!

Zz

zig zag zip zoom

I want to zig and zag like a zippy zebra.

Zig, zag and zip

Children typically start to run about six to seven months after they begin to walk. They begin by running in a straight line which is the easiest use of the new skill.

(Haywood & Ketchell, 2001:125)

Ideas for everyday games

Remember to start games with very simple directions. Here are few ideas.

- Play this game inside or out and with music or just your voice. Tell your toddler to crawl, walk or run depending on her ability. During the game call out 'change' (or stop the music) and ask her to move in a different way. Change the game to suit your toddler and the situation.
- Play a freezing game and call out 'freeze' and your toddler has to stop. When you call 'go' she has to change directions and go left, right, forwards or backwards.

Zoo loo

Animal games

Encourage your toddler to move like different animals:

- zig, zag and zip like a zebra *(see Toddler book – Z)*
- slither along the ground like a snake
- stomp like a big black bear
- hop like a kangaroo that never stops
- crawl like a slow old turtle carrying his heavy house on his back
- fly like a bird high in the sky
- climb like a monkey up a tree
- gallop like a horse crossing a field.

(Child & Family Canada, 2003:2)

(see A – Arching for more animal games)



Where do I find more information?

CHILD AND FAMILY HEALTH

COMMUNITY CHILD HEALTH SERVICE

 www.parentline.com.au

For child health information or contact details for your local community health centre where parents could be referred to for development screening by child health nurse.

CHILD HEALTH INFORMATION

A 24 hour telephone service for families from across Queensland. Information about a range of child and youth health issues.

 13 HEALTH (13 43 25 84)

or contact your **LOCAL DOCTOR**


AUSTRALIAN BREASTFEEDING ASSOCIATION

Provides counselling, group meetings and support for mothers who wish to breastfeed their babies.

For *support* with breastfeeding contact Breastfeeding Helpline

 1800 MUM 2 MUM (1800 686 2 686)

For *information* about breastfeeding Queensland Branch Office

 3324 0577

 www.breastfeeding.asn.au

CHILD DEVELOPMENT

QUEENSLAND HEALTH has online information on child development 0-3 months, 3-6 months, 6-9 months, 9-12months and 1-2years. Go to the "*Resources*" section, click on "*Health Topics*", click on the letter "*C*" and scroll down to: "*Child Development Milestones*".

 www.health.qld.gov.au/

THE PARENTING AND CHILD HEALTH site of Child and Youth Health, South Australia has information on child development from 0-3months, 6-9months, 9-12months and 1-2 years. Go to "*Parenting and Child Health*", click on "*Growth and Development*" and scroll down to "*Child Development*".

 www.cyh.com

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITIES

Queensland Government site providing practical information for parents and families on a number of topics including nutrition, safety, development, health and parenting. Go to the Department of Communities' website and select "*Community Services*" then "*Children*".

 www.communities.qld.gov.au

ZERO TO THREE

Offers information on a range of topics to do with children from birth to three. Click on "*Parents*" to access parent handouts.

 www.zerotothree.org

OTHER RESOURCE AGENCIES

PLAYGROUP QLD INC

86 Orchid Street, Enoggera 4051 -
PO Box 339, Alderley 4051

A playgroup is a regular gathering of parents and their children (birth to school age). To join a playgroup or if you are interested in starting a new playgroup contact Playgroup Qld Inc.

☎ 1800 171 882

✉ info@playgroupqld.com.au

🌐 www.playgroupaustralia.com.au

NOAH'S ARK RESOURCE CENTRE (QLD) INC

20 Norman Street, East Brisbane 4159

Toys and equipment are available for loan to all families, with mail services available for rural and regional members. Some toys are specially adapted to target special needs areas. (Membership fees apply.)

☎ 3391 2166

🌐 www.noahsark.net.au

NUTRITION

NUTRITION AUSTRALIA

Features a range of fact sheets and recipes for parents of young children. Click on "*Food and Nutrition*".

🌐 www.zerotothree.org

🌐 www.nutritionaustralia.org

SAFETY

KIDSAFE QLD

50 Bramston Terrace, Herston 4029

Visit Kidsafe Qld for information on all aspects of child safety in the home, outdoors, in the car etc, including information on safety equipment and

devices. Open to the public the centre features many helpful displays. Kidsafe Qld can also help you with car restraints – a car restraint hire, fitting and checking service is available.

☎ 3854 1829 Fax: 3252 7900

✉ qld@kidsafe.org.au

🌐 www.kidsafeqld.com.au

THE PARENTING AND CHILD HEALTH site of Child and Youth Health, South Australia has very detailed information on safety around the home. Search for "*Home Safety*".

🌐 www.cyh.com/

SUN SAFETY & INFANTS

Information is available from the **THE CANCER COUNCIL QUEENSLAND**, Cancer Council Helpline

☎ 13 11 20

✉ helpline@cancerqld.org.au

🌐 www.cancerqld.org.au

Online information is available from the **SUNSMART** site,

🌐 www.sunsmart.com.au

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITIES

For more information on other services visit

🌐 www.communities.qld.gov

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A complete list of references is available on the Sport and Recreation website

🌐 www.sportrec.qld.gov.au

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Enquiries should be addressed to the Deputy Director-General, the Department of Communities, PO Box 15187 City East, Brisbane Queensland 4002

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Disclaimer

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W H X
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The Department of Communities

Level 14 Mineral House
41 George Street
Brisbane Qld 4000

PO Box 15187 City East,
Brisbane Queensland 4002

Telephone (07) 3237 0098

Facsimile (07) 3247 3611

Email info@communities.qld.gov.au

Website www.sportrec.qld.gov.au

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