



Move with
me from birth
to three





LEAP BC™ is an initiative of Decoda Literacy Solutions, developed by 2010 Legacies Now, in partnership with the Province of British Columbia and the University of Victoria

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"Parents are a child's first teachers, and the movement and language skills a child learns in the early years create a strong foundation for future learning. Our government is committed to making British Columbia the most literate jurisdiction on the continent, and a leader in healthy living and physical fitness. Resources like *Move with Me from Birth to Three* are helping us achieve those goals. By engaging infants and toddlers in active learning, parents are ensuring children will have the skills they need to succeed in school and in life."

Hon. Gordon Campbell
Premier of British Columbia

"Through programs like LEAP BC, 2010 Legacies Now encourages early literacy and lifelong learning for all British Columbians. *Move with Me from Birth to Three* is about spending time together as a family. Through fun activities and play, infants and toddlers will develop movement and early language skills, as well as healthy eating habits and a love of learning that will last a lifetime."

Bruce Dewar
CEO, 2010 Legacies Now

Introduction

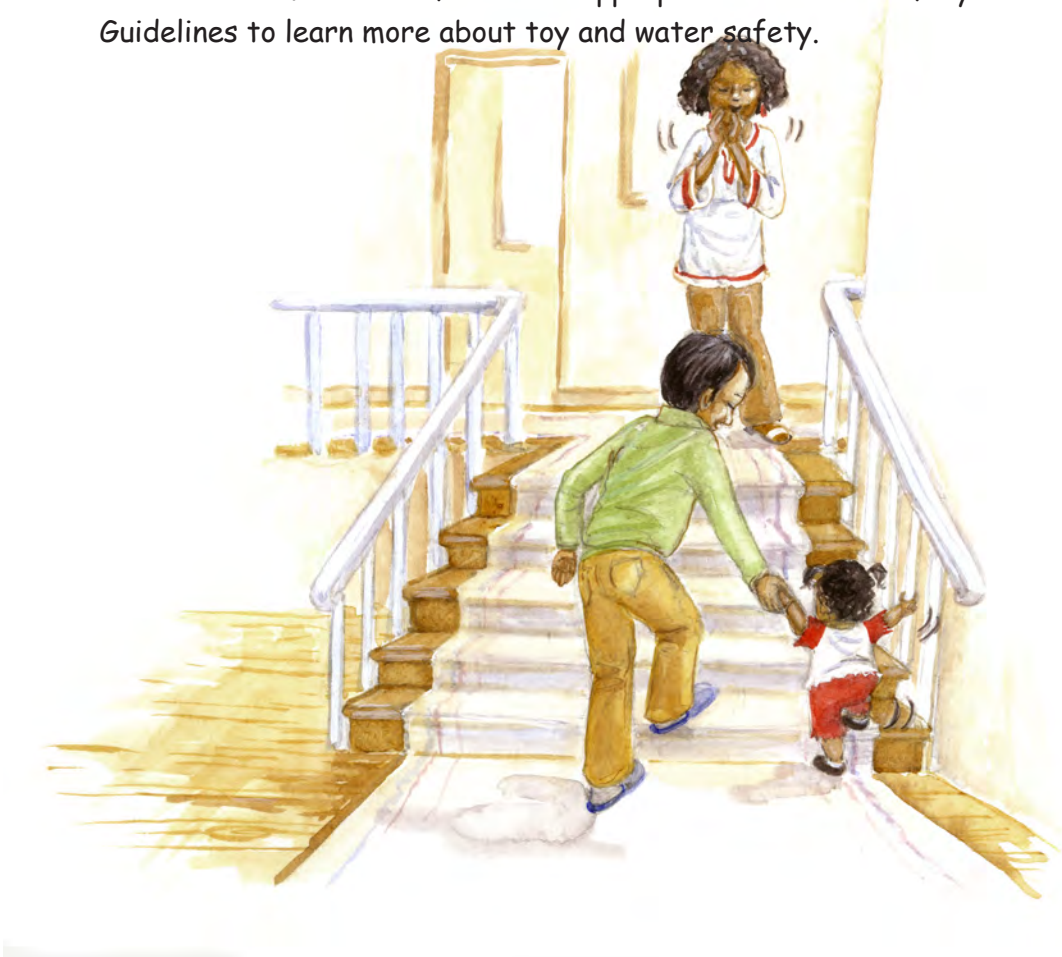
The activities in this guide are designed to provide new opportunities for infants and toddlers to move their bodies in various ways while learning new movement skills. The activities also focus on helping your child develop some important early language and communication skills, as well as healthy eating habits. The MOVE with Me from Birth to Three resource is part of the LEAP BC™ set of resources, an initiative of Decoda Literacy Solutions, developed by 2010 Legacies Now in partnership with the Province of British Columbia and the University of Victoria. LEAP BC™ provides children from birth to age five with a strong foundation in literacy, physical activity and healthy eating. The program offers resources and training to support parents and caregivers as they actively participate in children's learning.

Here are some useful notes about the resource:

1. **Both the infant and toddler sets of activities are presented in the natural order of child growth and development.** The activities in the toddler section require more physical skill, coordination and language development. The suggested age ranges for the two sections are to be used only as guidelines. You can best decide which activities are appropriate for your child as he or she grows. If you have questions about the healthy development of children, please contact your local health authority for information.
2. **The 5-15 minute recommended time range for each activity is only a guideline.** Spend more time on an activity if your child is enjoying it. Your child will also give signals to you indicating that they are done with an activity. Such signals could include looking away or becoming fussy.
3. **For best results, try to complete only 1 or 2 activities each day when your child is energetic and in a playful mood.** Repeat

favourite activities as often as your child wishes.

4. **Book links, poems and chants are provided throughout the guide to help develop your child's movement, healthy eating and language skills.** Many of the books listed are available at your local library.
5. **Most of the activities require minimal or no equipment/toys to get started.**
6. **Safety for your child is most important while participating in the activities.** Please refer to the appropriate Canadian Safety Guidelines to learn more about toy and water safety.



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Infant & toddler facts

1. All children will develop movement patterns, eating habits and language and literacy skills at their own rate. By creating environments that are fun and encourage learning, you are supporting your child's individual growth and development.
2. An early start is the best start. The sooner a parent involves their child in activities that support movement, early communication and healthy eating, the more likely the child is to reach his or her developmental potential.
3. Infants and toddlers learn to communicate in many ways through gestures, sounds and playing together. You can encourage children to communicate with you by talking, humming and singing with them often during each day.
4. The "alert and happy" times are the best times each day for infants and toddlers to learn something new. If you try an activity that your child is not responding to or not enjoying, try it again at a better time.



Key ideas

Every activity in this guide has important links to physical development and language and literacy development, while many of the activities also link to the importance of developing healthy eating habits. The ideas in the activities are consistent with current professional knowledge on growth and development of children. They remind us of just how much learning can be built into simple and enjoyable play activities. Engaging in this type of play lays a foundation of attitudes, habits, skills, and values that will last a lifetime.

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY



1. Physical activity includes any activity where most of the body is moving.
2. Physical activity is a natural part of every day and can easily fit into daily routines.
3. Infants need opportunities every day to learn to move in different ways and across different environments.
4. Toddlers need opportunities every day to expend energy using the large muscle groups of the body.
5. Both infants and toddlers need to develop confidence with basic movement skills like walking, climbing and balancing.
6. Children need active role models.
7. Children learn new skills and try new physical activities especially when they are encouraged and praised for their efforts.



EARLY LITERACY



1. Communication begins at birth with parent and child interaction.
2. Infants like to hear different tones in a voice.
3. Infants usually begin babbling at around 6 or 7 months.
4. Infants will begin to imitate sounds of speech.
5. By communicating with your child (both through talk and sign language), many new words can be learned during the toddler stage (1-3 years).
6. Language development and literacy skills can be taught during movement activities.
7. Reading, talking, chanting, singing and having conversations with children are the best ways to build early language and literacy skills.



HEALTHY EATING



1. Infants and toddlers need nutritious food to grow, to learn and to be active.
2. Make time to eat together as a family.
3. Try to schedule meal times (breakfast, lunch, dinner and snacks) the same time each day but vary the foods.
4. Offer new foods often.
5. Let children choose how much to eat.
6. Involve children in food-based activities.





Physical activity

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY



1. Physical activity includes any activity where most of the body is moving.
2. Physical activity is a natural part of every day and can easily fit into daily routines.
3. Infants need opportunities every day to learn to move in different ways and across different environments.
4. Toddlers need opportunities every day to expend energy using the large muscle groups of the body.
5. Both infants and toddlers need to develop confidence with basic movement skills like walking, climbing and balancing.
6. Children need active role models.
7. Children learn new skills and try new physical activities especially when they are encouraged and praised for their efforts.

1. **Physical activity includes any activity where most of the body is moving most of the time.** It does not include activities like being pushed in a stroller or drawing with sidewalk chalk.
2. **Physical activity is a natural part of every day and can easily fit into daily routines.** Learning to sit is quite physically challenging for your child as an infant. But once your child has learned how to sit, try



to limit the amount of time spent in front the television or computer and more time spending time being physically active together. This is a great way to help your child enjoy a healthy and active lifestyle.

3. **Infants need to be given opportunities every day to learn to move in different ways and in different environments.** Parents can help to provide such opportunities.
4. **Toddlers need opportunities every day to expend energy using the large muscle groups of the body.** Various physical activities will help to develop different muscles and improve coordination.
5. **Both infants and toddlers need to develop confidence with basic movement skills like walking, climbing and balancing.** Skills like these are the building blocks of more advanced movements like running and going on a hike. Providing your child with “active” toys or games can help your child fully develop movement skills and patterns. Also, taking children to places that support active play will help build a child's confidence with movement skills.
6. **Children need active role models.** Participating in play with children motivates them to move more often and in different ways — and you can become healthier too! Your child is more likely to lead an active lifestyle if you are active yourself.
7. **Encourage and praise your child when he or she participates in a physical activity.** Once children are physically active and having fun, support them in trying new activities as well. If the activity is fun and safe, the child will likely keep participating.



Early literacy

EARLY LITERACY



1. Communication begins at birth with parent and child interaction.
2. Infants like to hear different tones in a voice.
3. Infants usually begin babbling at around 6 or 7 months.
4. Infants will begin to imitate sounds of speech.
5. During the toddler stage (1-3 years), many new words can be learned as long as the child hears them first.
6. Language development and literacy skills can be taught during movement activities.
7. Reading, talking, chanting, singing and having conversations with children are the best ways to build early language and literacy skills.

1. **Communication begins at birth with parent and child interaction.** Infants begin to communicate through sounds, gaze, facial expressions and body language. Responding to these early communication efforts helps to encourage your baby to continue trying new ways to communicate with you.
2. **Infants like to hear different tones in a voice.** Asking questions, using excited tones, talking quietly and singing all send different messages to your baby.



3. **Infants usually begin babbling at around 6 or 7 months.** Listen closely at this time for similar rhythms and sounds of your language.
4. **Infants will begin to imitate sounds of speech.** The more often they are exposed to others talking, the more they will try to imitate some sounds. It won't be long before you can interpret what your child is trying to say.
5. **During the toddler stage (1-3 years), many new words will be learned if the child hears them first.** The more words your toddler hears each day, the larger the vocabulary becomes.
6. **Language development and literacy skills can be taught during movement activities.** These skills include learning new words, word phrases, opposites, rhymes, sign language, and colours, shapes and numbers.
7. **Reading, talking, chanting, singing and having conversations with children are the best ways to build early language and literacy skills.**



Healthy eating

HEALTHY EATING



1. Infants and toddlers need nutritious food to grow, to learn and to be active.
2. Make time to eat together as a family.
3. Try to schedule meal times (breakfast, lunch, dinner and snacks) the same time each day but vary the foods.
4. Offer new foods often.
5. Let children choose how much to eat.
6. Involve children in food-based activities.

1. **Infants and toddlers need nutritious food to grow, to learn and to be active.**
2. **Make time to eat together as a family.** Infants progress from breast feeding to alternate milks, other fluids and solid foods. It won't be long before your child can eat most of the same foods as the rest of your family. Help children shift from play time to mealtime with a 5 minute warning before a meal. During mealtimes, shift the focus to positive eating habits and communication skills while eating by removing distractions such as the television.
3. **Keep eating scheduled and foods varied.** Offer food and drink during regular meal and snack times — every 2 to 3 hours. Water can be offered more often. Serve a variety of healthy foods from *Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide*.



4. **Offer new foods often.** Offer small amounts of new foods that are the size for the child. Allow children to taste a new food without having to eat all of it. Repeat new offerings many times because it may take as many as 15-20 tastes before children will learn to like a new food. Parents can also be role models by trying new foods or foods that are prepared in new ways.
5. **Let children choose how much to eat.**
 - Offer small portions of foods since children have small stomachs.
 - Some days children eat a lot while other days they won't eat as much — this is normal.
 - Children know best when they are hungry and when they are full. Refer to *Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide*.
6. **Involve children in food-based activities.** Children often love to help with food preparation like mixing ingredients, picking fruits and vegetables and using cookie cutters. Take a little extra time to involve your child in the fun of preparing food.



How to enjoy this book with your child

Move with Me from Birth to Three is intended for families with children under 3 years, and it is presented in an easy-to-follow format. You are encouraged to fully participate in these activities to enjoy bonding time with your child and share in the fun.

Identifies key benefits and skills.

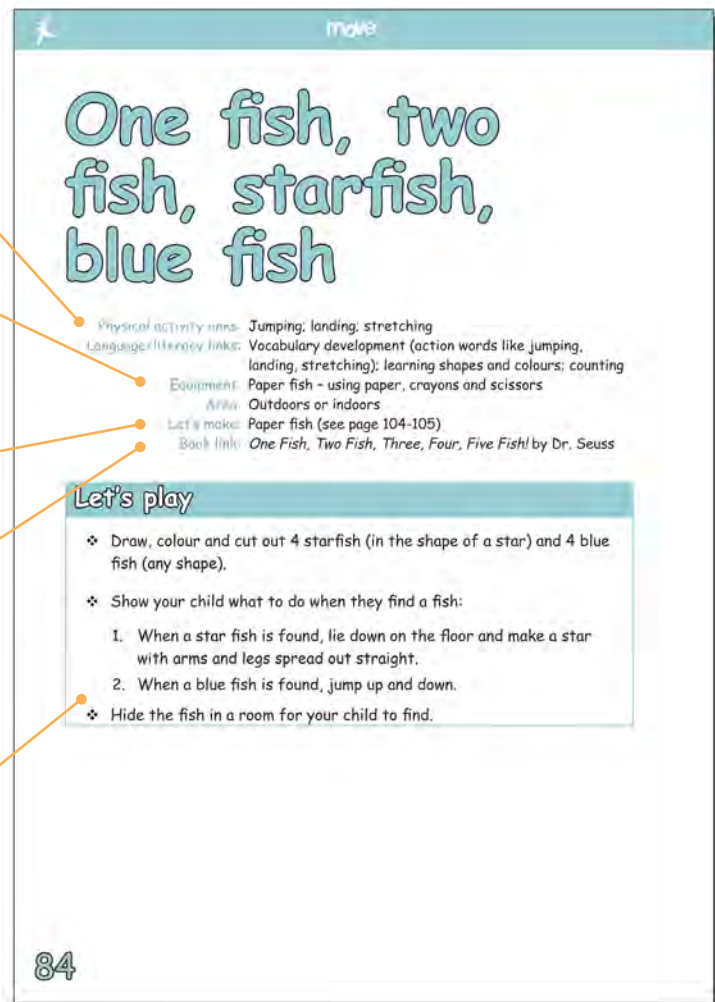
Recommended equipment that is low cost, easily made or accessible.

The page number directs you to the "Let's make" section for equipment and recipes.

Suggests books, often found in your local library, to extend the activities.

"Let's play" offers information on how to complete the different parts of the activity.

Some words may be new to your child. These are included to help expand vocabulary. Have fun exploring and explaining these new words.





Including books, poems, songs, and stories in other languages that you know will add rich language experience to the activities.

If you find you don't have some of the equipment or ingredients, or your library doesn't have the particular book, feel free and substitute, modify, or invent your own way.



You'll find tips on how to help your child with a skill or activity where you see the MOVE rabbit.



On some pages you'll see dotted pictures like this bear. This shows that pretend play is encouraged.

TODDLERS: 1-3 YEARS

Try this way

- ❖ Add more fish to the game, using different colours and different actions when your child finds them — finding an orange jellyfish might mean that she lies on her back and wiggles her legs and arms in the air.
- ❖ Practice counting the fish in the Dr. Seuss book, *One Fish, Two Fish, Three, Four, Five Fish!*
- ❖ Be creative and try swimming around the room like a fish. You can wiggle and squirm on the floor like a jellyfish!

Twinkle, twinkle, little starfish,
How I wonder what you arefish:
On the coral rocks you creep,
Underneath the sea so deep,
Twinkle, twinkle, little starfish,
How I wonder what you arefish.
- Michael Hartley

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"Try this way" offers variations in activities including links to books to support language and literacy development.

Illustrations show the main activity ideas.

Poems are included to encourage movement and imagination while adding fun with language.



Lift and look

Physical activity links: Muscle development to gain control of neck, shoulders, arms and back

Language/literacy links: Locating sound

Equipment: Anything that makes a sound, like a toy, or your voice

Area: A blanket on the floor

Let's play

- ❖ In this activity, your baby will search for the sound of either your voice or a toy.
- ❖ Watch for her head and shoulders to lift and look to discover where the sound is coming from.





Try this way

- ❖ At a later stage, your baby will use his arms to help push his body up to look around and locate a sound. This motion looks like a mini push-up.

Safety tips

- ❖ If your baby looks tired try the activity at another time.
- ❖ Each baby will grow at a different rate, so make sure your baby is strong enough for this activity (usually after a few months old).



GOOD MORNING (to the tune of "Happy Birthday")

*Good morning to you,
Good morning to you,
Good morning, good morning
And how do you do?*

- Author unknown



Do you see what I see?

Physical activity links: Vision development; head movement; neck and shoulder muscle strengthening

Equipment: A black and white or brightly coloured infant toy/object

Area: Indoors on the floor

Book link: *Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What do You See?* by Bill Martin Jr.

Let's play

- ❖ Since babies enjoy seeing both contrast (black and white) and bright colors (red, green, yellow and blue) on toys, try to pick a toy you think is suitable for this activity.
- ❖ Slowly move the object from one side to the other side while your baby is lying on his back.
- ❖ Your baby's eyes and head will try to follow the object as it moves. As vision is not fully developed in infants, try to keep the moving objects a few inches from your baby's face to help him focus better on the object.



Try this way

- ❖ Using a car seat (or other type of infant seat), move your body from one side of your baby to the other. Make sounds while you move and watch his eyes follow you.
- ❖ Read *Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What do You See?* and point to pictures in the book for your child to observe.



Indoor playground

Physical activity links: Eye, hand and foot movement patterns; self-discovery; creative play

Language/literacy links: Making sounds and listening to sounds

Equipment: An activity mat or a blanket and 5 or 6 toys/objects

Area: Open floor space

Let's play

- ❖ When your baby is well-rested, place the activity mat or a blanket on the floor and place the toys/objects on the blanket to create the "playground" area.
- ❖ Lay your baby on her front or back to reach, kick or touch the toys on the "indoor playground."
- ❖ Choosing objects with different colours, sounds, textures and sizes will keep your baby interested in learning and playing.
- ❖ Change the toys/objects each time to keep the activity exciting and creative.

Note: Your baby's focus should be on the "playground." If she focuses on you instead, stand back and observe from a distance.





Try this way

- ❖ If the toys do not play music or make sounds, play some quiet background music to get your baby moving during this activity.



THE PLAYGROUND

*With my hands and with my feet,
I want to touch, I want to meet
Everything in my surround
As I wiggle on the ground.*

*With my eyes and with my ears,
I want to see, I want to hear
Everything in my surround
As I wiggle on the ground.*



Tummy time

Physical activity links: Neck, back and arm muscle development

Language/literacy links: Talking with your baby; sound development

Equipment: Books that your baby seems to like — try books with different textures or soft pages to touch

Area: A soft, flat surface or a blanket on the floor

Book link: *Hello! Peter Rabbit* (based on the works of Beatrix Potter)

Let's play

- ❖ Talk to your baby about what you are doing with the book and seeing in the book as you read.
- ❖ With both you and your baby lying on your tummies, enjoy sharing a book like *Hello! Peter Rabbit*.
- ❖ Point to pictures in the book to excite him into reaching forward and touching the book.





Safety tips

- ❖ Since it is recommended by the Public Health Agency of Canada that babies sleep on their backs, it is important to have "tummy time" to help with overall physical development.
- ❖ Place a blanket on the floor and lay our baby on her stomach. The floor is the safest place to lay your baby when awake.



ITSY-BITSY FINGERS

*Itsy - Bitsy fingers,
Wiggly little toes,
Teeny - tiny tummy,
Baby button nose —
Lullabies & Laughter,
Lots of "baby things,"
And then to fill your heart,
The Love a baby brings.*

- Author unknown



Love me, touch me

Physical activity links: A sense of warm touch and bonding (skin on skin).

Language/literacy links: Songs; rhymes

Equipment: A bath, one or two towels, music (optional) and baby lotion (optional)

Area: A quiet room to bathe and massage your baby

Book link: *Guess How Much I Love You* by Sam McBratney

Let's play

- ❖ Bathe, dry and massage your baby while you sing, hum or play quiet music.
- ❖ Sing about how much you love her while offering a warm touch.
- ❖ Dry her in a soft towel.
- ❖ To massage, you can either lay her across your lap or you can sit with your legs apart on the floor with her feet facing you.

Massage techniques

Hands:

- ❖ Massage your baby's palms by using your thumbs to massage from the wrist to the fingers.
- ❖ Then massage the back of her hand from the wrist to the fingers using your whole hand.

Feet:

- ❖ Massage the bottom of her feet by using your thumbs to massage from the ankle to the toes.
- ❖ Massage the top of her foot from the ankle to the toes using your whole hand.



Let's play (continued)

Face:

- ✧ Gently massage your baby's ears between your thumb and index finger.
- ✧ Starting between the eyebrows, trace a heart shape on her face, then bring your hands together at the chin.

Note: Massage strokes should be gentle and firm, avoid strokes that might feel like tickling.

Try this way

- ✧ If your baby is still awake after the massage, cuddle in a comfortable chair together and read *Guess How Much I Love You*.

Safety tips

- ✧ Always be within one arms reach of your baby when in or near water.





Dance with me

Physical activity links: Movement expression; rhythm development; physical bonding

Language/literacy links: Songs; rhymes

Equipment: Music or your voice

Area: An open space

Let's play

- ❖ Enjoy precious time holding, cuddling and kissing your baby while dancing in circles and changing directions.
- ❖ During his awake and active time, keep the room bright and play fast tempo, fun music (music with many words and rhymes is especially good).
- ❖ If he is sleepy, dim the lights or close the curtains and find a soothing lullaby or a relaxing song to play while dancing and cuddling.

THE BABY'S DANCE

*Dance, little baby, dance up high:
Never mind, baby, mother is by;
Crow and caper, caper and crow,
There, little baby, there you go;
Up to the ceiling, down to the ground,
Backwards and forwards, round and round:
Then dance, little baby, and mother shall sing,
While the gay merry coral goes ding-a-ding, ding.*

- Ann Taylor



Safety tips

- ❖ If your baby is only a few months old, dance slowly and make sure that his neck is supported (especially in circle movements).





A whole new world

Physical activity links: Core strength development; balance while sitting

Language/literacy links: Locating sound; vocabulary development; learning the names of new objects

Equipment: Your lap, a sitting support (infant seat or stroller) and pillows

Area: Anywhere that your baby can safely be seated

Let's play

- ❖ Sit and cuddle outside:
 - While sitting outside (maybe on a park bench), hold your baby on your lap facing outward.
 - Point and describe what you see, like other children sliding down a slide or swinging on a swing.
- ❖ Sit and chat:
 - Hold your baby on your lap while talking with a friend — your baby will watch the expressions and listen to the tones of other people talking, and might try to join in the conversation by babbling!
- ❖ Sit and watch:
 - Your baby can sit upright on your lap while you both look out a window and enjoy the view or the action of people, cars or animals.
- ❖ Sit in a stroller:
 - Your baby's sitting muscles will get stronger when sitting up "tall" without leaning on the back of the stroller — toys on a stroller bar might encourage sitting forward.





Try this way

- ❖ If your baby is not quite ready to sit, try securing her in an infant car seat (or car seat) on a table to help her sit up high while being close enough to watch you.
- ❖ When your baby is ready to sit on the floor alone, begin with a pillow behind and beside her for support and safety. Once the pillows are not needed, place a toy/object in front of her to keep her focus forward.

Safety tips

- ❖ Keep padding/protection around your baby while she is learning to sit.



A WHOLE NEW WORLD

*In this world so big and bright,
I coo and move from day 'til night.
So much to see, so much to do,
Each day I discover something new.*



Roll over, little one

Physical activity links: Rolling from front to back and back to front

Language/literacy links: Sound recognition

Equipment: Your voice; a toy that makes a sound; a blanket.

Area: A carpet or blanket on the floor

Book link: *There Were Ten in the Bed* by Audrey Wood

Let's play

- ❖ Lie your baby tummy down while you lie beside him, just out of reach.
- ❖ Encourage your baby to roll over onto his back to get close to you by calling your baby's name out loud, or using phrases like "roll over to mommy" or "look over here."
- ❖ Repeat the activity using a toy that makes a sound to encourage your baby to roll.
- ❖ Try the same activity with your baby rolling from back to front (once he shows signs of being ready).

Note: Signs of readiness to roll include rocking side to side while lying on the tummy and curling and kicking the legs. While it is more common for babies to start rolling over from front to back, over time, babies will learn to roll over both ways.



Try this way

- ❖ With your baby on his tummy, enjoy some tummy time together while reading *There Were Ten in the Bed*.

Safety tips

- ❖ Rolling over requires some head and neck strength and control.
- ❖ Try the activity at another time if your baby seems tired.





Ride with me

Physical activity links: Moving through space; balancing; core strengthening of muscles in the trunk of the body

Language/literacy links: For the first exercise, try singing a song about flying or about birds while exercising, and for the second exercise, use phrases like "up we go" and "down we go" while exercising

Equipment: A pillow (optional); a blanket (optional)

Area: Indoors on a soft surface or outdoors on a blanket on the grass

Book link: *Little Plane* by Opal Dunn.

Let's play

- ❖ **Airplane Ride:** Lie on your back and bring your knees close to your chest. Place your baby tummy-down on your shins. Holding your baby's hands, lift and lower your feet away from your bottom — be sure to keep your knees still.
- ❖ **Baby Push Ups:** Lie on your back and hold your baby by the trunk with your thumbs supporting the chest. In a slow and controlled manner, lift/push her up in the air, then down to your chest. When she is near your chest, try adding a kiss or rubbing noses for extra fun!





Try this way

- ❖ After you have enjoyed at least one of the activities, find a quiet spot to sit and cuddle together and read *Little Plane*.

Safety tips

- ❖ This activity is designed for infants who have good head and neck control.
- ❖ Make sure you are strong enough to control your baby's movements during these activities.



WINGS

*Bees have four wings,
birds have two,
I haven't any
and that's too few.*

- Aileen Fisher



Reaching and crawling

Physical activity links: Reaching; hand and knee positioning; pre-crawling movements

Language/literacy links: Sound recognition; name recognition

Equipment: Toys or other objects that interest your baby

Area: Indoors on the floor or on a blanket

Let's play

- ❖ Shake or squish the toy or object and place it in front of your baby to encourage reaching out.
- ❖ Place a toy or object beside your baby to encourage reaching to the sides — make sure objects are placed close for him to reach and touch/grasp with one hand.
- ❖ By placing objects a little further away, your baby will progress to crawling to touch objects — if he pushes up on his hands, you can gently bend his knees under his body to prepare for the crawling position.





Try this way

- ❖ Each day, try placing a different toy a little further away from your baby to keep the activity exciting and to encourage him to reach, then crawl.



REACH A LITTLE FURTHER

*I reach, reach, reach my tiny hand out oh so far,
But no, no, no, I cannot touch my purple car.
I try, try, try to stretch as far out as I can,
And now, now, now, I have my purple car in hand!*





Up and down

Physical activity links: Pulling to a standing position; sitting from a standing position

Language/literacy links: Sound recognition; name recognition

Equipment: A table or a chair and a hand puppet

Area: A soft surface

Let's make: Hand puppet (see page 102)

Let's play

- ❖ Lift your baby by placing your hands under your baby's armpits. This will protect the shoulder and elbow joints.
- ❖ Hold your baby's hands and gently help raise her from a sitting to a standing position, hold for a few seconds, and then help her return to a seated position.
- ❖ Sing phrases like "let's stand up" and "now sit down" during the activity.
- ❖ While your baby is standing, you can sing a song or hum along, moving your baby from side to side for a different movement experience.





Try this way

- ❖ Create a hand puppet and have the puppet talk and sing to your baby from a table top (without sharp corners) or a chair.
- ❖ Your baby can hold onto the table or chair, pull herself up and stand to see the puppet talking and singing!

Safety tips

- ❖ Your baby's legs need to be strong enough to help her push up to do this activity — if you are having to help pull your baby up, try this activity at a later date.

PUPPET SONG (to the tune of "Frère Jacques")

*Where is baby, where is baby,
Stand up tall, stand up tall;
Now I see you standing, yes you're really standing,
Please don't fall, please don't fall.*





Cruise around town

Physical activity links: Cruising; walking (with support)

Language/literacy links: Action phrases like "hold on" and "walk over here"

Equipment: A couch, table and/or a walking toy

Area: An open space with an even floor

Book links: *Walk On: A Guide for Babies of All Ages* by Marla Frazee;
Rosie's Walk by Pat Hutchins

Let's play

1. Step 1:

- Play a game of follow the leader — get down on your knees and move sideways around a table or along a couch while your baby follows.

2. Step 2:

- Sit on the floor at the end of a couch/table and ask your baby to come to you by using the furniture for help.

3. Step 3:

- Once your baby can step while holding onto furniture, encourage her to go from one object to another, like from a table to a couch (which means taking 1 or 2 steps without holding on to anything).

Note: This activity helps to reduce the amount of time babies spend in a car seat or stroller while preparing them to learn to walk on their own.





Try this way

- ❖ Hold your baby's hands and walk behind her while she practices taking steps.

Safety tips

- ❖ Remember to lift your baby by placing your hands under the baby's armpit. This will protect the shoulder and elbow joints.
- ❖ Make sure the cruising area is clear of objects and not near stairs or uneven surfaces.
- ❖ Always be within one arm's reach while your baby is learning to cruise and walk.





Taste time

Physical activity links: Eye-hand coordination; grasping; tasting

Language/literacy links: Learning food names; learning to share and take turns

Equipment: Finger foods

Area: A clean eating surface either outdoors or indoors

Book links: *Food to Grow and Learn on* by Grace E. Bickert; *Eat!* by Roberta Grobal Intrater

Let's play

- ❖ Place food pieces on your plate and eat 1 piece at a time — tell your baby how much you like it, "mmmmm, this banana is yummy."
- ❖ Place 1 piece of a new food on a plate or high chair tray for your baby to taste.
- ❖ Once your baby has been eating soft foods for a while, offer a "chewing challenge" with foods like chunky mashed vegetables, infant cereal, cooked rice, pasta noodles and minced meats.



HEALTHY EATING TIPS:

- ❖ Offer a new food when your baby wants to eat — usually early in the day.
- ❖ Offer 1 new vegetable or fruit at a time and wait 3-5 days before trying another.
- ❖ Start with vegetables like sweet potatoes, squash, carrots, peas, and green or yellow beans without adding salt, sugar or butter.
- ❖ Offer soft pieces of fruit like banana, pear, peach, kiwi, plum or melon.
- ❖ If your baby is not interested in the new food, try again another time.
- ❖ Offer vegetables that are bright in colour and lightly steamed or baked.





Safety tips

- ❖ Do not offer foods that could cause choking, such as raw carrots or whole grapes — either shred or cut them into narrow pieces.

APPLESAUCE

Peel an apple,
cut it up,
cook it in a pot.
When you taste it
you will find
it's applesauce you've got.

- Author unknown



SIGN LANGUAGE:

To sign for "more," bring all fingers from both hands together in a point and tap together twice (see picture).





Hands on

Physical activity links: Grasping objects like pages in a book and food pieces; strengthening chewing muscles

Language/literacy links: Learning about books; learning sounds and cues

Equipment: A board book (with thick and solid pages) and small pieces of fruit and/or cereal

Book link: *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* by Eric Carle

Let's play

❖ Reading and grasping:

- Read a story from a board book and have your toddler turn the pages — say "turn the page" to let her know when it is time to turn. Your child might want you to read the whole book, or she might focus on turning pages quickly and the story will be shortened — either way, she is still learning something new.





Try this way

- ❖ Grasping and chewing:
 - Have snack time after story time. Place small pieces of fruit or cereal on a clean surface for your toddler to pick up and eat.





Empty, full

Physical activity links: Lifting; grasping; hugging and dropping objects into a target

Language/literacy links: Narrating the activity, including your child's actions

Equipment: Two large toy boxes/buckets and stuffed animals or other soft objects of various shapes and sizes

Area: An open space

Book link: *Empty to Full, Full to Empty* by Harriet Ziefert

Let's play

- ❖ Fill one box with soft toys or objects.
- ❖ Place the box containing the soft toys on one side of the room and the empty box on the other side of the room.
- ❖ Begin by showing your child how to play by taking a toy from the full box, hugging it, walking with it and dropping it in the empty box.
- ❖ Once your child starts to play, ask questions like "Can you hug fluffy, brown bunny?" or "Where are you going to put the toy?"
- ❖ Continue the activity until the full box is empty. Repeat the activity.

E Egg shells are empty after a chick is born.

M Mouths are empty after we swallow.

P Planes are empty after passengers get off.

T Trains are empty after they unload their freight.

Y Yards are empty after children go indoors.

F Fountains are full of water.

U Upside-down umbrellas can be full of water.

L Lemons are full of juice.

L Lanterns of full of light.



Try this way

- ❖ Join in the fun by taking turns with your child!
- ❖ Encourage other ways to move from one box to the other, like crawling, walking sideways or skipping.
- ❖ For more examples of "empty" and "full," read *Empty to Full, Full to Empty* with your child.





Peek-a-boo, I see you!

Physical activity links: Moving eyes, head and body in different directions; exploring the environment

Language/literacy links: Listening and locating sounds; listening for words ("peek-a-boo")

Equipment: Your hands and some furniture/objects to hide behind.

Area: Outdoors or indoors

Book links: *Where's Spot?* by Eric Hill; *Peekaboo Morning* by Rachel Isadora

Let's play

❖ Face Peek:

- For younger toddlers, play peek-a-boo while directly facing your child — place your hands over your face, then open them up to show your face and say "peek-a-boo."
- Another face peek game is to put a small blanket over your head and have your child lift it up to find you.

❖ Body Peek:

- With your toddler watching you, slowly lower your body behind a chair or a bed and then pop up and say "peek-a-boo!" If you are outside, you can hide behind a tree for this game.

❖ Hide and Seek:

- For toddlers who want to move, hide a distance away, and have your toddler cover his eyes and then find/seek you — make a sound to help them find where you are hiding.



Try this way

- ❖ Toddlers might want to be the ones to hide and then surprise you! Encourage him to take a turn by saying, "now you hide."
- ❖ Place a blanket down on the floor or on the grass outside and discover more peek-a-boo places while reading the books *Peekaboo Morning* and *Where's Spot?*





Step up, step down

Physical activity links: Climbing up and down; leg strengthening development

Language/literacy links: Saying words like "up" or "down" on each step and/or count the steps out loud for your child to hear

Equipment: Shoes for safe climbing

Area: Stairs

Let's play

- ❖ Step with me:
 - Hold onto your toddler's hands as she climbs up the steps (in a step-together, step-together pattern). Repeat the same pattern going back down the steps.
- ❖ Step alone:
 - With one hand holding onto a railing, your toddler climbs up the steps (in a step-together, step-together pattern) — be sure to follow behind for safety. Repeat this pattern going down the steps with you in front for safety.



Safety tips

- ❖ A staircase with a railing is safest.
- ❖ It is safer to step slowly and to place the whole foot on each step.
- ❖ Your child should be able to crawl up and down stairs before trying this activity, although some children skip over the crawling stage and move right to walking/climbing.

UP AND DOWN (to the beat of "One Potato, two potato..." chant)

One step, two steps, three steps, four;

Five steps, six steps, seven steps more.

(repeat this chant while climbing up and down the stairs)





Round things roll

Physical activity links: Rolling a ball; stopping a ball

Language/literacy links: Learning words like "roll" and "round" and hearing rhymes.

Equipment: A medium or large-sized ball and plastic bottles or cups

Area: Outdoors or indoors on a flat surface

Book link: *Wheels on the Bus* by Raffi

Let's play

- ❖ With your toddler, sit close on the floor facing each other with both of your legs apart in a "V" shape — roll the ball back and forth to each other, trying to keep it in between your legs and on the ground.





Try this way

- ❖ Set up 4-8 plastic objects (water bottles or plastic cups) and give your child a soft ball. Have him stand a little distance away and try to roll the ball to knock over the plastic objects. If you use plastic cups, you can make a pyramid shape for extra fun!
- ❖ During the activity, you can sing "The Wheels on the Bus" song, including the verse about the ball on the floor.
- ❖ Have fun reading the *Wheels on the Bus* book with your toddler during quiet time.



THE WHEELS ON THE BUS

*The wheels on the bus go round and round,
Round and round, round and round;
the wheels on the bus go round and round,
All through the town.*

*The ball on the floor goes round and round,
Round and round, round and round;
The ball on the floor goes round and round,
When rolled across the ground.*





Twist & turn

Physical activity links: Body awareness; space awareness; stretching muscles and joints

Language/literacy links: Vocabulary (action and rhyming words); different sounds and tones of speech

Equipment: None

Area: Outdoors or indoors

Book link: *How Can You Dance?* by Rick Walton

Let's play

- ❖ Practice *slowly* singing "Twist and Turn".
- ❖ Sing it again *slowly* with your toddler copying your actions.





Try this way

- ❖ Try moving your body in other ways (e.g. make your body small, have your body take up a big space, bend your body in different ways to make shapes or objects).
- ❖ Enjoy time together reading *How Can you Dance?* by Rick Walton with your toddler.

TWIST AND TURN (to the tune of "I'm a Little Teapot")

*I'm a little toddler, short and neat,
Here are my hands and here are my feet; (shake hands, then touch feet)
When I get excited, watch me turn, (turn around in a circle)
This is how I move and learn.*

*I'm a little toddler, moving all around, (walk around)
I can twist my body right to the ground; (make fists with hands, then twist
arms & hips while bending low)
When I get excited, help me out,
I want to learn to move and shout! (run around and shout "wooo hooooo!")*





Outdoor discovery

Physical activity links: Reaching; crouching; crawling; running

Language/literacy links: Vocabulary (action and nature words, rhyming words).

Equipment: Shoes or sandals

Area: Outdoors on the grass (either at home or at a park)

Book links: *Little Cloud* by Eric Carle; *I Heard a Little Baa* by Elizabeth MacLeod

Let's play

- ❖ Read the "Exploring Outdoors" action rhyme and, with your toddler, act out each instruction. Stop after each line to give you and your toddler time to perform the action.

EXPLORING OUTDOORS

Reach up high to touch the sky. (reach up)

Crouch down low to watch grass grow. (crouch down)

Crawl around to feel the ground. (crawl and touch)

Run so fast across the grass. (run)

Look for planes, but watch for rain! (lie down on the grass and gaze into the sky)





Try this way

- ❖ Create your own outdoor discovery rhymes — the sky is the limit!
- ❖ While outside, have a healthy snack (e.g. cut up grapes or banana pieces) and share the book *Little Cloud* with your child.
- ❖ Your child can also have fun participating while you read the interactive book called *I Heard a Little Baa*.



RAINDROPS

*How brave a ladybug must be!
Each drop of rain as big as she.
Can you imagine what you'd do
if raindrops fell as big as you?*

- Aileen Fisher



What's up there?

Physical activity links: Safe climbing; life living skill development

Language/literacy links: Use words like climb, stand, brush, wash, eat and read during the activity

Equipment: A book, fruit or vegetable pieces, a toothbrush, toothpaste (optional), soap, a stool and a chair

Area: An eating area, a bathroom and a reading area

Book link: *Brave Bear* by Kathy Mallat

Let's play

❖ Kitchen/eating area:

- Place fruit or vegetable pieces on a plate on the kitchen table and encourage your toddler to climb safely onto a chair.
- Once your child is sitting on the chair, he will discover the pieces of food and enjoy feeding himself.

❖ Bathroom:

- Place a toothbrush and some soap on the counter in the bathroom.
- Your toddler can then climb onto a foot stool and use the toothbrush and soap while learning to clean himself.

❖ Reading area:

- Place a book like *Brave Bear* on a couch or a chair.
- Show your child how to climb up onto the couch or chair and sit to read the book with you.



Try this way

- ❖ If your toddler is not ready to climb upwards, place pillows on the floor to climb over. Place a favourite toy or food on the other side of the pillows to encourage climbing.

Safety tips

- ❖ Stay close to your child and be sure that climbing surfaces are stable.
- ❖ Show your child safe ways to climb (for example, it is important to balance and stay close to the climbing surface at all times).

JUST WATCH

*Watch how high I'm jumping,
Watch how far I hop,
Watch how long I'm skipping,
Watch how fast I stop!*

- Myra Cohn Livingston





Water wonder

Physical activity links: Blowing bubbles in water; pouring/filling skills; floating/sinking concepts

Language/literacy links: Use opposites like float/sink and big/small

Equipment: A bathtub, sink or kid's pool, a plastic container to pour and a plastic bowl or bucket to fill, and water-friendly objects that either sink or float (like a face-cloth and a plastic boat)

Area: Outdoors or indoors

Let's play

- ❖ Collect some household objects or toys that will either sink or float in water.
- ❖ Fill a tub, a sink or a child's water table with water.
- ❖ Using clean water, show your child how to blow bubbles in the water — you can scoop water into her hand to practice blowing bubbles at the start.
- ❖ Show your child how to pour water from one container to another and watch her practice this skill.
- ❖ Encourage your toddler to take objects one-by-one and discover if they sink or float when placed in water.
- ❖ Enjoy drinking a fresh glass of water from a cup afterwards — explain that water can be around our body and water can also go inside our body to keep us healthy.



Try this way

- ❖ Read the action rhyme "Wet, Wet, Wet" with your toddler while practicing the actions.

Safety tips

- ❖ Always be within one arm's reach when your toddler is in or near water.

WET, WET, WET

Water, water everywhere, (touch water with hands)

On my hands and in my hair. (shake hands around, then touch hair)

Water, water, wet, wet, wet. (make 3 little splashes - one for each "wet")

I love to play in it - I'm not done yet! (make "no" gesture by turning your head)





Time to go

Physical activity links: Marching; sign language development

Language/literacy links: Word recognition and sign language development

Equipment: None

Area: Outdoors or indoors

Let's play

- ❖ Read the action rhyme "Time to Go" while showing the actions to your child.
- ❖ Read the action rhyme again and complete the actions with your toddler. This poem can teach your child the importance of saying "thank you" and "good-bye" (or waving good-bye) when it's time to leave a friend's or relative's house.



SIGN LANGUAGE:

To say "thank you" using sign language, touch your right hand to your mouth, then move your fingers down from your mouth with your palm facing upwards





TIME TO GO

Time, time, time to go, (march on the spot)

Time to wave good-bye; (wave with hand)

I had lots of fun with you, (point to yourself, then point to other person)

When we played outside.

Time, time, time to go, (march on the spot)

Time to wave good-bye; (wave with hand)

Thank you for inviting me, (sign for "thank you")

We'll play another time.





Fingers & spoons

Physical activity links: Grasping and holding an object; bringing food to the mouth

Language/literacy links: Use words like your spoon/my spoon, and one bite, two bites

Equipment: A table, food and a spoon

Area: A high chair or another eating area

Book link: *Food for Thought* by Saxton Freymann

Let's play

❖ Fingers:

- When toddlers can use their hands to grasp small pieces of food and bring them to their mouth, offer soft, easy-to-grasp foods that are easily swallowed, like pieces of cooked vegetables or soft fruit (note: place food on a high chair tray or table tray without dishes).
- Offer small pieces of food to your child to encourage self-feeding.
- Over time, your toddler will refine her motor skills and be able to grasp foods using only the thumb and index finger.

❖ Spoons:

- Start with spoon feeding at mealtime when your toddler is interested and most hungry.
- Start with foods that stick to the spoon like applesauce, mashed potatoes, cooked cereal, cottage cheese and mashed, cooked beans.
- Your toddler can experiment with dipping the spoon into food and trying to get it into her mouth.



Let's play (continued)

- Alternate bites from your spoon and your child's spoon — feeding this way is often more efficient and less frustrating for your child.
- When interest in spoon feeding is lost, give your toddler finger foods to complete the meal.

Try this way

- ❖ Find a comfortable place to read *Food for Thought* with your child to learn more about foods.

Safety tips

- ❖ Avoid foods that could cause choking, such as raw carrots or whole grapes — either shred or cut them into narrow pieces.





Cat & mouse

Physical activity links: Running; grasping; eye-hand coordination

Language/literacy links: Language sounds (e.g. making "MEOW" sounds while chasing the mouse); rhyming sounds

Equipment: A scarf, nylon or a long sock (to use as an animal tail) for each person

Area: Outdoors or indoors in an open space

Let's play

- ❖ Tuck a scarf into the back of your pants and your child's pants.
- ❖ Start the game as the cat while your toddler starts as the mouse.
- ❖ Say "GO," and your toddler (the mouse) must try to run away from you (the cat) while you try to remove his tail — Then switch roles so your toddler is the cat.

Note: Keep the chase slow enough to make sure your toddler can catch you and remove your tail.

- ❖ Other children might want to join in the game if the space is large enough outdoors.





Try this way

- ❖ Add lively music in the background of the activity.
- ❖ Share the "Pussy Cat, Pussy Cat" poem with your child.



PUSSY CAT, PUSSY CAT

*Pussy cat, pussy cat, where have you been?
I've been to London to visit the Queen.
Pussy cat, pussy cat, what did you do there?
I frightened a little mouse under her chair.*

- Mother Goose



Legs are heavy, legs are light

Physical activity links: Walking in different ways

Language/literacy links: Vocabulary development (action words, rhyming sounds)

Equipment: Just you and your child!

Area: Outdoors or indoors

Book link: *Giraffes Can't Dance* by Giles Andreae

Let's play

- ❖ Play follow-the-leader while you chant and your toddler follows your actions around the room or outside.



WALK ON

Marching, marching, stomp your feet, (march with high knees and heavy feet)

Swing your arms right to the beat; (swing arms)

Tippy-toe, tippy-toe, light as air, (light and fast on tippy-toes)

Don't wake the baby sleeping upstairs. (put index finger over mouth to show being quiet)



Try this way

- ❖ Your toddler can be the leader while you follow her actions.
- ❖ Play music with a low-pitched tone and slow tempo for heavy marching, then a high-pitched tone and fast tempo for tippy-toe movements.
- ❖ Read *Giraffes Can't Dance* to your child while she looks and points at the pictures.





1, 2, 3, Jump

Physical activity links: Jumping; landing; creative play

Language/literacy links: Vocabulary development (e.g. jump, swim, lake); pretend play using your imagination; counting; rhyming sounds

Equipment: Shoes, and small step (optional - see Let's Make section)

Area: The bottom step of a staircase

Let's make: Homemade step using a telephone book, newspaper and tape (see page 103)

Let's play

- ❖ If you have a blue mat or non-slippery rug, place it below the step to represent the lake.
- ❖ Stand or kneel on the floor and hold hands with your child, who is on the first step.
- ❖ Read the action rhyme "Jump" to your child.
 - After you say "1-2-3 jump," your child can jump down from the step — knees should be bent at the start of the jump and on the landing.
 - After jumping down into the "lake", pretend you are swimming — move your arms in forward circles.





Try this way

- ❖ To make it more challenging, try jumping beside your toddler while holding one hand only or no hands.
- ❖ To make it easier, use a lower step like a telephone book (wrapped in newspaper for safety) instead of using the step to jump from.

Safety tips

- ❖ Make sure the landing surface is not slippery.



JUMP

Jumping, jumping 1-2-3, (parent can show fingers to count)

Don't forget to bend your knees.

Jumping, jumping 1-2-3,

You can do it, now let's see!

1-2-3 JUMP! (toddler jumps from the step)



Bicycle, bicycle

Physical activity links: Alternate leg patterns; pedaling motion; running motion

Language/literacy links: Language development; rhyming sounds

Equipment: A soft mat, the carpet, or the grass

Area: Outdoors or indoors

Book link: *Miffy Rides a Bike* by Dick Bruna

Let's play

- ❖ Have your toddler lie down with her legs in the air.
- ❖ While sitting, hold onto your toddler's feet and move the legs in a circular pedaling pattern.

Note: remember to move your arms backwards while teaching her to pedal forward.

- ❖ Use your arms to help control your child's leg movement patterns.

Try this way

- ❖ Try reading the "Runner, Runner" rhyme while performing the actions with your child.
- ❖ Have fun reading *Miffy Rides a Bike* together.



BICYCLE, BICYCLE

Bicycle, bicycle, pedal slow, (pedal slow)
Bicycle, bicycle, where will you go? (keep pedaling)
Bicycle, bicycle, pedal fast, (pedal a little faster)
Bicycle, bicycle step on the gas! (pedal as fast as you can!)

RUNNER, RUNNER

Runner, runner, run so slow, (run slowly using your arms and legs while lying on your back)
Runner, runner, where will you go? (keep running)
Runner, runner, run so fast. (run a little faster)
Runner, runner, step on the gas! (run as fast as you can)



Rhyme time

Physical activity links: Turning; bending; clapping; jumping; hand movement patterns

Language/literacy links: Action words; visual cues; rhyming sounds; pretend play

Equipment: None

Area: Outdoors or indoors

Book link: *My First Action Rhymes* by Lynne Cravath

Let's play

- ❖ Practice the words and actions to "Teddy Bear, Teddy Bear" and "Snowflakes, Snowflakes" and encourage your child to follow along. You might have to repeat each action rhyme several times with your child before they can follow along.



TEDDY BEAR, TEDDY BEAR

Teddy bear, teddy bear, turn around. (turn around)

Teddy bear, teddy bear, touch the ground. (bend and touch ground)

Teddy bear, teddy bear, jump on the floor. (jump up and down)

Teddy bear, teddy bear, sing once more! (clap hands 3 times)



Try this way

- ❖ Look through the book, *My First Action Rhymes*, and share new action rhymes with your child.

SNOWFLAKES, SNOWFLAKES (to the tune of "Are You Sleeping?")

Snowflakes, snowflakes, (wiggle fingers like falling snowflakes)

Snowflakes, snowflakes,

All around, (move arms and body around while wiggling fingers)

All around--

Whirling, twirling snowflakes, (twirl in a circle)

Whirling, twirling snowflakes,

Hit the ground, (fall down gently to the ground)

Hit the ground.

- Julie Vickery-Smith





I won't fall

Physical activity links: Strength; balance; coordination

Language/literacy links: Support the activity with talk; teach the activity through simple verbal and visual instruction

Equipment: A paper-bound phone book and either a ribbon or a scarf (or chalk if you're outside)

Area: Outdoors or indoors

Let's make: A small step (see page 103)

Let's play

- ❖ Create a straight line using a ribbon or a scarf (or a piece of chalk on pavement if outside).
- ❖ First, show your child how to walk on the straight line (with arms straight out at the sides of the body for balance and eyes forward instead of looking down at your feet). Step up onto the step, turn half-way around, step down and walk back to the start position along the same line.
- ❖ Your child can then try this by herself, or while holding one of your hands for guidance.



Try this way

- ❖ To make the activity more challenging, try keeping your legs straight and toes pointed, with arms out to the side (this will require more balance and strength).
- ❖ Once your child finds this activity very easy, you can challenge her by helping her walk on curbs at a playground or on stepping stones for balance.



LITTLE FEET

*These little feet have learned to walk,
And now they've learned to run...
These little feet just love to dance,
They climb and have some fun...
These little feet don't want to rest,
They only want to play...
These little feet are busy feet,
They're on the go all day...*



Little swimmer

Physical activity links: Floating; kicking movements in the water

Language/literacy links: Vocabulary; describing words (floating, kicking, splashing); pretend play

Equipment: A swimsuit

Area: A bathtub, pool or lake

Book link: *Let's Jump In* by Susan Hood

Let's play

- ❖ If you are using a bathtub or kiddie pool for this activity, fill only half-full with water. If you are at a lake, stay in very shallow water for this activity.

- ❖ Back float skill — have your toddler lie back in the water with his head back, while you support the lower back using your hands and arms.

Note: Make sure the head is kept back and the belly-button is pushed upwards towards the water surface.

- ❖ Kicking skill (while on stomach) — have your toddler lie on her stomach while you support the belly.

Note: Your toddler can keep his hands on the bottom of the tub or kiddie pool to keep safe.

- ❖ Kicking skill (while on back) — have him lie on his back and practice kicking.

Note: Knees should not come out of the water.



Try this way

- ❖ If your child is having fun in the water, try lifting him up and down in the water to experience a new movement.
- ❖ Reading the book, *Let's Jump In* with your toddler might help him understand that it sometimes takes a little while to get comfortable in the water.

Safety tips

- ❖ Always be within one arm's reach of your toddler when in or near water.





One fish, two fish, starfish, blue fish

Physical activity links: Jumping; landing; stretching

Language/literacy links: Vocabulary development (action words like jumping, landing, stretching); learning shapes and colours; counting

Equipment: Paper fish

Area: Outdoors or indoors

Let's make: Paper fish (see page 104-105)

Book link: *One Fish, Two Fish, Three, Four, Five Fish!* by Dr. Seuss

Let's play

- ❖ Draw, colour and cut out 4 starfish (in the shape of a star) and 4 blue fish (any shape).
- ❖ Show your child what to do when they find a fish:
 1. When a star fish is found, lie down on the floor and make a star with arms and legs spread out straight.
 2. When a blue fish is found, jump up and down.
- ❖ Hide the fish in a room for your child to find.



Try this way

- ❖ Add more fish to the game, using different colours and different actions when your child finds them — finding an orange jellyfish might mean that she lies on her back and wiggles her legs and arms in the air.
- ❖ Practice counting the fish in the Dr. Seuss book, *One Fish, Two Fish, Three, Four, Five Fish!*
- ❖ Turn this hide and seek fish game into a whole family activity!



TWINKLE, TWINKLE LITTLE STAR

*Twinkle, twinkle, little starfish,
How I wonder what you are fish;
On the coral rocks you creep,
Underneath the sea so deep,
Twinkle, twinkle, little starfish,
How I wonder what you are fish.*

- Michael Hartley



Kicking balls, big and small

Physical activity links: Kicking; eye-foot coordination

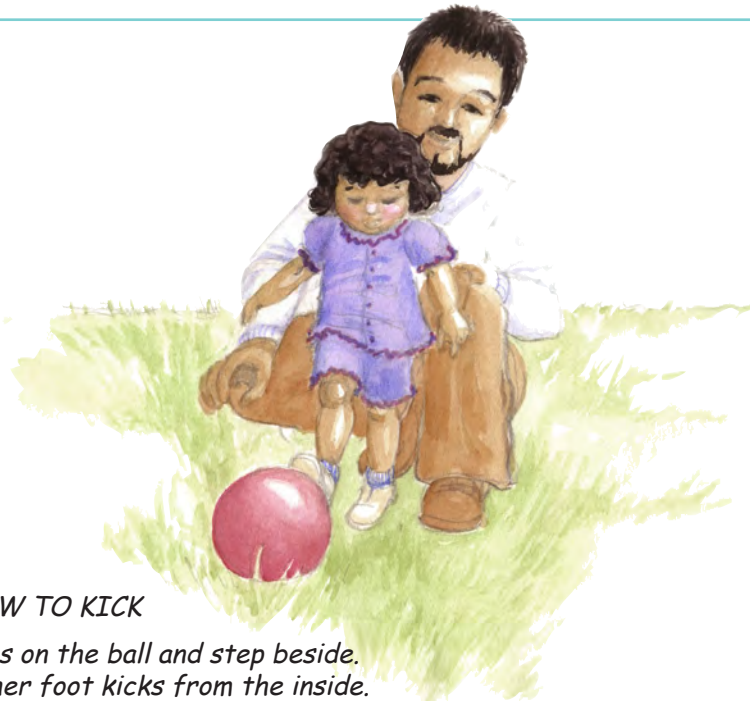
Language/literacy links: Support play with talk; verbal cues

Equipment: Shoes, 1 large ball and 1 smaller ball

Area: Outdoors in an open space

Let's play

- ❖ Place the large ball on the ground and show your child how to kick it. Then have your child try to kick the ball. She might want to also chase the ball once it is kicked, which is great!
- ❖ Using a smaller ball, repeat the same kicking game stated above.



HOW TO KICK

Eyes on the ball and step beside.

Other foot kicks from the inside.

Practice one rule — to follow through;

Don't stop at the ball, it won't know what to do!



Try this way

- ❖ Ask your child to choose her favourite ball, and practice kicking the ball at a target. Set the target up at a close distance to ensure your child has success hitting the target. The target can be you, a net, a box turned on its side or anything you wish.

Note: this skill might take some time to develop.



Country adventure

Physical activity links: Bending; crawling; leaping; running

Language/literacy links: Vocabulary development (bend, creep, leap and run); support play with talk (e.g. listening to instructions); pretend play

Equipment: Toy bugs and critters, a pretend log, a bowl of fresh water and a small cup

Area: Outside

Let's make: A pretend log (see page 106)

Book link: *What Can You Do?* by Jill Tushington

Let's play

- ❖ Create a pretend adventure in your backyard or at a park.
 - Step 1: Bend for bugs. Bend down low and look in the grass for bugs (place toy bugs in the grass to find).
 - Step 2: Creep and crawl for critters. On your hands and knees, move through the grass looking for critters (place toy critters in the grass to find).
 - Step 3: Leap over a log, like a frog (use a paper towel roll as the pretend log and paint it brown if you wish).
 - Step 4: Run to the river and take a drink (the river is made using a bowl of fresh drinking water — scoop a drink from it with a small cup).
- ❖ Show your child how to move through the 4 steps.
- ❖ Practice going through the steps with your child.
- ❖ Have your child try the activity all by himself. You can have other children or family members join in the fun and take turns on the adventure.



Try this way

- ❖ Read the book, *What Can You Do?* and then ask your child to tell you things he can do with his body.

Safety tips

- ❖ Make sure the adventure area is free of any rocks and sticks.
- ❖ Make sure that all toys used as bugs and critters in the activity are safe and not choking hazards.





Choo-choo clean-up

Physical activity links: Moving and stopping together (coordinating movements as a unit)

Language/literacy links: Support play with talk (describing the train, acting like the train, storytelling); sound and word development (learning and singing the clean-up song)

Equipment: A bucket or a basket

Area: Outdoors or indoors

Book link: *Freight Train* by Donald Crews

Let's play

- ❖ The "clean-up train" is made up of at least 1 adult and 1 toddler, with no more than 4 people in total.
- ❖ Each person holds on to the shirt or waist of the person in front of them to hold the train together.
- ❖ The front person acts like the engine while holding a small bucket or basket.
- ❖ The train chugs along through a room (or outdoors) looking for toys to put away.
- ❖ The front person stops and picks up the toys, and then places them in the bucket.
- ❖ The whole train moves to put the toys away where they belong.
- ❖ Let everyone have a turn being the "engine."



Try this way

- ❖ Play a train song or make train sounds while you play the game.
- ❖ Enjoy the "Clean-up" rhyme together.
- ❖ Pretend that you are a real train moving down the track, making stops, starts, turns and sounds along the way.

Safety tips

- ❖ Keep the train on one level (avoid going up or down stairs).





Opposite day

Physical activity links: Large muscle movement patterns

Language/literacy links: Vocabulary expansion (learning opposite action words)

Equipment: None

Area: Outdoors or indoors

Book links: *Opposites* by Sandra Boynton; *Good for You: Toddler Rhymes for Toddler Times* by Stephanie Calmenson

Let's play

- ❖ Teach your child the pairs of opposites used in the "Active Opposites" Rhyme.
- ❖ Repeat the "Active Opposites" rhyme with your toddler following the actions.

in



high

fast

low

down

out

slow



Try this way

- ❖ Create your own action rhyme using different opposites.
- ❖ Turn the whole day into opposite day by finding opposite things to do either in or outside of your home — like turning lights on and off, walking up and down the stairs, and opening and closing your eye.
- ❖ Learn more opposites while reading *Opposites* and *Good for You: Toddler Rhymes for Toddler Times*.



ACTIVE OPPOSITES

Rise **up** like the sun, fall **down** like the rain.

Reach far **in** a box, and pull **out** some socks.

Stretch **high** in the sky, scrunch **low** — who knows why?

Move like popcorn popping **fast**, then **slow** like a snowman melting in the grass.



Blow and pop

Physical activity links: Chasing; eye-hand coordination; blowing; grasping and poking

Language/literacy links: Supporting the activity with talk (e.g. explain and demonstrate the different ways to blow); counting

Equipment: 1 container of soap bubbles and 1 plastic wand

Area: Outdoors

Let's make: Bubble stuff (see page 107)

Book link: *Benny's Big Bubble* (Picture Reader) by Jane O'Connor

Let's play

- ❖ Feel air being blown — the air can be blown from the caregiver's mouth onto the toddler's hand, or it can be blown from a fan for him to feel.
- ❖ Blowing bubbles — with a straw in a glass of water, teach your child to blow through the straw to make water bubbles. She can also take a sip of water from the straw.
- ❖ Popping bubbles — blow bubbles into the air (or wave a bubble wand) and ask your child to try and pop the bubbles.



HEALTHY EATING TIP:

When your child is done blowing bubbles in the glass of water, add a slice of lemon to make a refreshing drink for her.





Try this way

- ❖ Add music for fun.
- ❖ Count the bubbles as they pop.
- ❖ Enjoy looking at the pictures while reading *Benny's Big Bubble*.

Safety tips

- ❖ Watch for signs of dizziness if your toddler has been blowing for too long.





Look at me, I'm almost 3!

Physical activity links: Creative movement

Language/literacy links: Pretend play; vocabulary (motion words)

Equipment: None

Area: Outdoors or indoors

Book links: *I'm Growing!* by Alikì; *Up!* by Kristine O'Connell George

Let's play

- ❖ Find your own personal space.
- ❖ Using a nature theme, ask your child to try acting out the following phrases:
 - Rain falling.
 - Wind gusting.
 - Snow flakes dancing.
 - Waves rolling.
 - Clouds floating.
 - Leaves swaying.
 - A flower growing.



Note: If your child does not want to create her own movements, ask her to copy you while you demonstrate the action phrases.





Try this way

- ❖ Choose a new theme like animals or sports that your child might enjoy acting out.
- ❖ Share time with your child reading the books *I'm Growing!* and *Up!* to discover many things that children can do.



WOULDN'T YOU

If I
Could go
As high
And low
As the wind
As the wind
As the wind
Can blow -
I'd go!

- John Ciardi





Kitchen fun

Physical activity links: Eye-hand coordination; various hand movements like pouring, mixing and shaping

Language/literacy links: Support the activity through explaining and demonstrating how to complete the actions

Equipment: A spoon, a fork, a spreader, a masher, a bowl and baking/cooking ingredients

Area: Kitchen/eating area

Book link: *Let's Cook!* by Robert Crowther

Let's play

- ❖ Choose some of the kitchen tasks below that match your toddler's skill level:
 - Prepare fruit and vegetables to eat. Here are some examples:
 - ✧ Scrub the vegetables and fruit with a brush under running water.
 - ✧ Tear lettuce and place in a bowl.
 - ✧ Break the ends off of green beans.
 - Prepare other foods to eat. Here are some examples:
 - ✧ Stir pancake batter or cake batter in a bowl (use a large spoon).
 - ✧ Mash soft foods such as boiled foods or bananas (use a fork or masher).
 - ✧ Spread nut butter or cream cheese on celery sticks, toast or crackers.
 - ✧ Knead and roll dough to make tortillas, bread, pizza or cookies.
- ❖ Enjoy eating the foods that you and your child have prepared.



Try this way

- ❖ Provide space on a counter or table at the right height for your toddler to copy what you are doing (your toddler can use play dough or clay instead of real food).
- ❖ Have fun reading the book *Let's Cook!* with your child.

Safety tips

- ❖ Inform your child of sources of danger, like objects that are sharp or hot.
- ❖ Always be with your toddler while a stove is turned on.
- ❖ Turn pot handles inwards so they are not over the edges of the stove.





Fresh veggies

Physical activity links: Digging (if outside); fine motor skills like pouring and placing seeds

Language/literacy links: Support activity with talk about how to grow food

Equipment: Seeds, soil, and containers (if growing indoors)

Area: Outdoors or indoors

Book link: *Muncha! Muncha! Muncha!* by Candace Fleming

Song link: *Oats and Beans and Barley Grow* by Raffi

Let's play

❖ Planting in Pots:

- Select one or two types of vegetable seeds that are easy to grow in pots — zucchini, carrots, peas, beans, radishes and cherry tomatoes.
- Find containers around your home to use, like empty margarine or yogurt tubs, and poke small drainage holes through the bottom of the container.
- Add soil to each container, and plant seeds.
- Teach your child how to pick the vegetables once they are ready.

❖ Planting in the Ground:

- Have your child help to dig a hole in the soil.
- Plant either seeds or small plants in the hole and cover the area with soil.
- ❖ Water the seeds/plants when they are thirsty. Your child can use a spray bottle or small watering can to help.
- ❖ Have this activity become a family tradition every spring!



Try this way

- ❖ Your child can learn how animals also like to eat vegetables by reading *Muncha! Muncha! Muncha!*
- ❖ Play the song, "Oats and Beans and Barley Grow" for you and your child to enjoy.
- ❖ Share the poem "A Spike of Green" with your child while snacking on a vegetable.



A SPIKE OF GREEN

*When I went out
The sun was hot
It shone upon
My flower pot.*

*And there I saw
A spike of green
That no one else
Had ever seen!*

*On other days
The things I see
Are mostly old
Except for me.*

*But this green spike
So new and small
Had never yet
Been seen at all!*

- Barbara Baker



Let's make

Hand puppets



You will need:

- ❖ A clean sock that fits your hand - any colour
- ❖ Felt pieces for eyes and mouth
- ❖ A small piece of cardboard (perhaps from a cereal box) for the mouth
- ❖ Scissors
- ❖ Glue

How to:

1. Place your hand in the sock to see where you would like the mouth (in between your fingers and thumb).
2. Cut a slit in the sock where you want the mouth to be (be careful!).
3. Cut an oval shape from the cardboard piece and fold it in half.
4. Cut a piece of felt and glue it onto the bottom part of the oval for the tongue.
5. Insert the cardboard piece into the mouth space and glue it in place.
6. Cut eyes out of felt and glue them on (you could also use the black and white eyes from a craft store).
7. Add yarn pieces for hair (optional).
8. Draw a nose using a felt marker (optional).



A small step

You will need:

- ❖ A phone book
- ❖ Newspaper, wrapping paper or other paper
- ❖ Tape

How to:

1. Wrap the phone book in the paper so it will not wiggle if stepped on.
2. Tape the wrapping together firmly until the phone book is sturdy like a small step.



Paper starfish

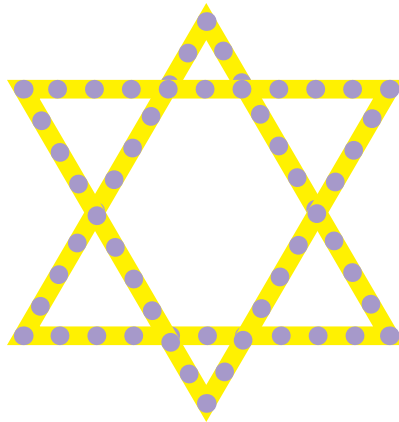


You will need:

- ❖ White paper (and crayons) or coloured paper
- ❖ A pencil
- ❖ Scissors
- ❖ Black and white eyes from a craft store (optional)

How to:

1. With your pencil, draw the shape of a star on the paper (hint: you can draw 2 triangles, one (pointing up) on top of the other (pointing down)).
2. Repeat 3 times.
3. Cut out the starfish and colour them orange, brown or yellowish, as they are known to change colours.
4. With your pencil, follow the guidelines on the next page to draw the blue fish.
5. Repeat 3 times.



Note: The most common starfish only have 5 points!



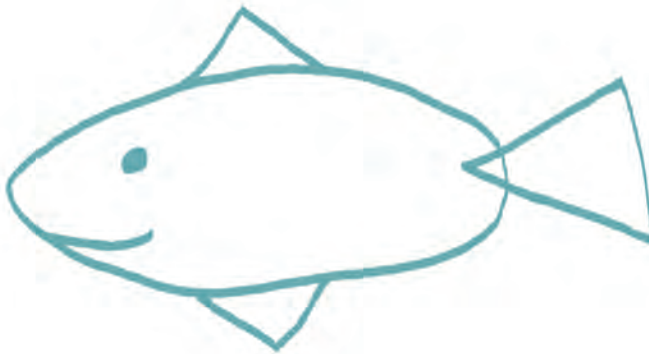
Blue fish

You will need:

- ❖ White or coloured paper
- ❖ Crayons
- ❖ Scissors

How to:

1. Draw an oval shape.
2. Add a triangle at one end.
3. Add two small triangles on opposite sides of the oval.
4. Draw eyes and a mouth with a crayon.
5. Cut out the fish using scissors.





A pretend log

You will need:

- ❖ A paper towel roll
- ❖ A crayon
- ❖ Brown paint or brown-coloured construction paper

Note: If you don't have a paper towel roll, you can roll up a brown towel or a brown shirt to make the pretend log.

How to:

1. Colour or paint the paper towel roll brown like a log. If you have brown construction paper, you can tape it to the paper towel roll.



Bubble stuff

To make bubbles you will need:

- ❖ 5 cups of water
- ❖ $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of liquid soap (either Dawn or Joy work best)
- ❖ 1 tablespoon of glycerine (purchase at a pharmacy)

How to:

1. Pour the water into a bowl and add the soap and the glycerine.
2. Stir the mixture slowly.
3. Let it sit for a while before using.

To make a bubble wand you will need:

- ❖ A pipe cleaner or a fly swatter

How to:

1. Take the pipe cleaner and bend it into any shape you wish (make sure a grown-up is holding the wand at all times).
2. If you use a fly swatter as your bubble wand, make sure it is clean, and make sure your bowl is big enough to dip the fly swatter into.



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