

# Let's Clean Up

*You're putting the rattle in your basket.*

Make clean-up time a game by naming the toys your child chooses to put in the clean-up basket.

Having choices during clean-up time may make it easier for your child to learn about taking care of his belongings.





## Why this is important

Giving your child a chance to make choices during play and cleanup helps him learn about taking care of his things. When the choices he makes during simple tasks bring a positive result, such as helping you, he gains trust in his own ability to make decisions. As he has opportunities to make more choices, he builds confidence and independence.

## What you do

- Invite your child to help you clean up toys after playing. At this age, don't expect him to really clean up things by himself. Sit beside him, show him a container such as a toy box or basket, and drop in one of his toys. Talk about what you are doing. *It's time to put the toys away. Mommy put the car in the basket.*
- Hand him a toy and ask him to put it in the basket. If he does not drop it, help him release it into the basket. Then, hand him the toy again and let him have another try.
- Repeat the game until he understands what you want him to do. Offer encouraging words when he drops the toy in the basket. *You put the ball away!*
- Invite him to choose a toy to put in the basket. If he chooses an object not intended for the basket, give him another place to put it. *Only toys go in the basket. You can put the magazine on the table.*
- Talk about each toy as it goes in the basket. As he has more practice with cleaning up, count the toys as he puts them away. *One, two, three. You put three green cars in the basket!*

## Another idea

Use different containers for storage to give your child more choices. Try putting toys away in a large plastic bowl, a shopping bag, an egg carton, or a backpack.

### Let's read together!

*I'm Dirty!*  
by Kate and Jim McMullan

# Pointing and Naming

*Look at that big dog over there.*



Point to things as you name them for your child, and name the things your child points to.

Purposely pointing out objects, both near and far, helps your child to notice those things and gradually learn their names.



## Why this is important

You can guide your child's attention by pointing to objects he may not notice. Pointing and gesturing help him begin to understand direction. Starting now and continuing throughout his life, body language and pointing will help him communicate.

## What you do

- Point out interesting and useful objects during the time you spend with your child. For example, when he is looking for his toy truck, point to the truck and say *Truck. There is your truck.* Wait to see if he notices the truck before you walk over and touch it to get his attention.
- Show him everyday objects outside his home such as birds at a birdfeeder or cars driving by. Point to high clouds, airplanes, or blowing leaves. Point to faraway lights, signs, or people walking.
- Always name the objects as you point to them.
- If your child makes any attempt to point, smile and talk about what he sees. *Kitty. You're showing me the kitty!*

## Ready to move on?

As you point to something say, *Look at that.* Do not immediately name it. Instead, ask a question. *What do you think it is?* Pause before giving the answer. *That's a butterfly.*

### Let's read together!

*Bright Baby Trucks*  
by Roger Priddy

# Animal Sounds

*The dog says  
woof, woof!*



Make a sound for an animal toy and see if your child can imitate the sound or point to a picture of that animal.

Your child will begin to connect animals with their sounds and their pictures.



## Why this is important

Animal names and sounds are useful information in your child's expanding world, and imitating those sounds can be fun. Playing the game with a toy animal and a picture of that same animal helps your child understand that a picture can represent an object. Later, seeing letters next to the animal pictures will help your child to understand that letters stand for sounds.

## What you do

- Name one of your child's animal toys and make the sound that animal makes. *This is a dog. The dog says woof!* Repeat the sound and encourage your child to make dog sounds.
- Add a new animal to the game periodically until he knows several animals and their sounds.
- Show him a picture of an animal he knows while also showing him the toy. Remove the toy and point to the picture. Ask him what sound it makes. He may not immediately connect the sound with the picture. *This is the cat. What does a cat say?*

## Ready to move on?

Help your child learn the word for the animal as well as the sound the animal makes by repeating the name a couple of times and making the sound. *Dog. Dog. A dog says woof, woof!* Acknowledge any attempts your child makes to say the word. For example, if your child said *Doh, doh*, you might say, *Dog! You are saying dog!*

### Let's read together!

*Old MacDonald*  
by Rosemary Wells

# Making Lines

*You made a long,  
straight line!*



Describe the marks your child makes with his fingers or a stick.

This encourages your child's awareness of the many kinds of marks that he can later use in drawing or writing.



## Why this is important

Children enjoy making marks. With practice, he will become aware of the feeling of his hands and arms as they draw lines. He will begin to notice and feel the differences among the marks he makes. Pointing out the shapes of lines helps him see the variations he has accidentally made happen. These steps will help him when he begins to use his hands for more complex tasks such as controlled scribbling, drawing, or writing.

## What you do

- Talk about what your child is doing when you notice him tracing his finger over a flat surface. *You are making a wiggly line.* Trace your finger beside his line and tell him you are making a wiggly line like his.
- Look for interesting places around the house to practice making lines. Trace lines with your child on a steamy window or mirror. Talk about what he makes. *That is a straight line. That line is curved.*
- Show him how to spread his fingers apart and make a series of lines or make a fist and create a wide stroke. When playing outside, show him how to use a stick to draw in the sandbox, dirt, or mud.

## Another idea

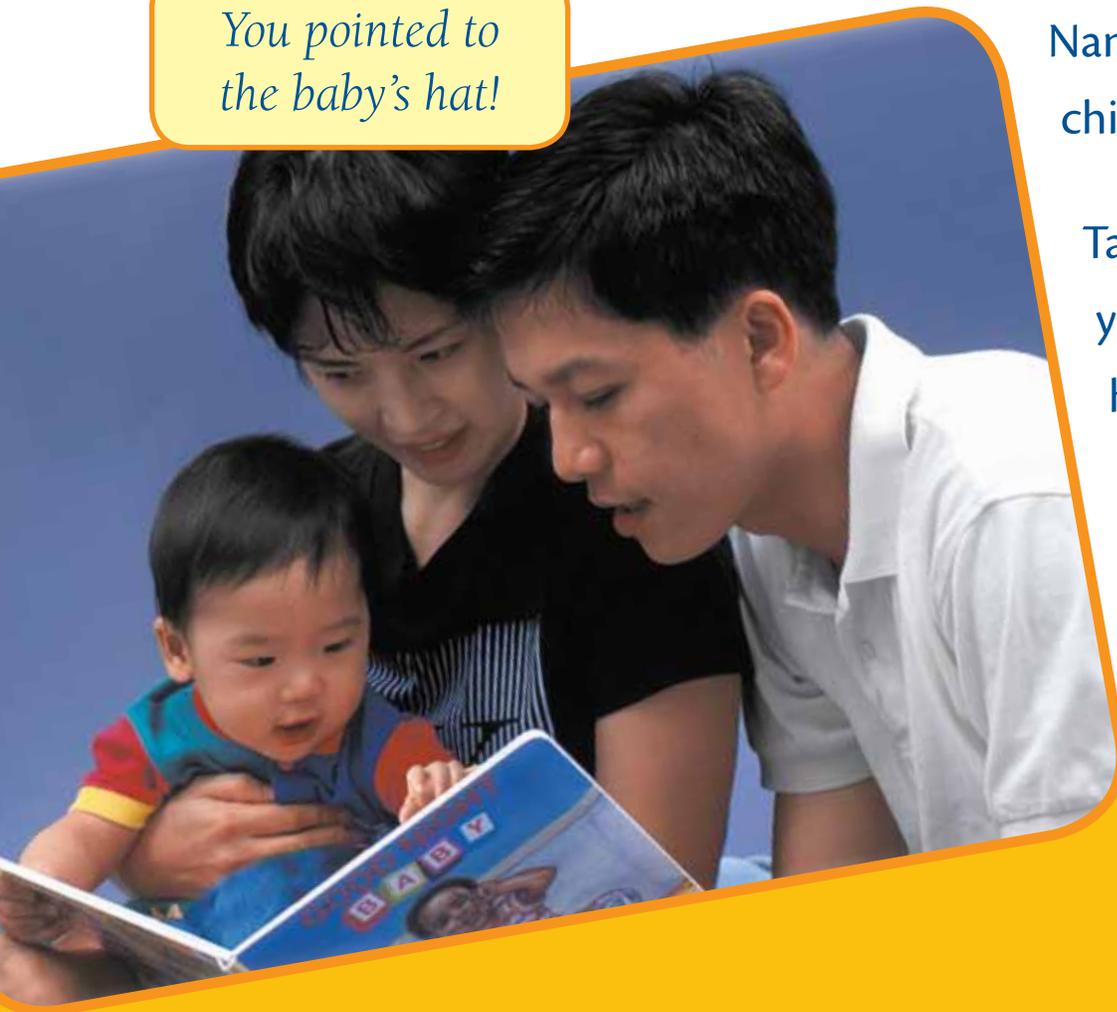
Put a few cups of sand in a baking dish. Encourage your child to use his fingers to make lines in the sand.

### Let's read together!

*When a Line Bends...A Shape Begins*  
by Rhonda Gowler Greene

# Touch and Name With Books

*You pointed to  
the baby's hat!*



Name any picture your child touches in a book.

Talking about the things your child touches helps him learn the names of things he finds interesting.



## Why this is important

You can follow your child's lead and give him information about the pictures he notices in a book. By naming the things he touches or points to, you are talking about something that already has his interest. Later he can show you he knows the names of pictures by pointing to them when you ask him to.

## What you do

- Point to the pictures as you name them when sharing a book with your child. Keep the activity simple by pointing to one object per page, slowly naming each one.
- Wait until your child touches something on the page. Then name and talk about that thing. *You're touching the pig.*
- Listen to hear if your child says something that sounds a little like *What's that?* as he points. Repeat his attempted words and immediately answer. *What's that? It's an airplane.*
- Ask him a question to encourage him to point to something, if he does not touch anything on the page. *What do you like on this page?*

## Ready to move on?

When your child becomes familiar with the book, encourage him to point to things you name in the pictures. *Can you show me the puppy? There it is!* You can also play the game with picture cards or with posters on the wall.

### Let's read together!

*Good Night, Baby*  
by Cheryl Willis Hudson  
and George Ford

# Roll the Ball

Roll a soft ball back and forth with your child and tell him he is taking turns.

You will be introducing your child to a simple game that requires cooperation and turn-taking.

*Can you roll the ball to me?*





## Why this is important

With this game, you help your child understand that some things work better with a partner. He will learn that being a partner means you must give sometimes (roll) in order to get back (catch). Rolling a ball back and forth teaches a very easy form of cooperation. Knowing how to cooperate will prepare your child to enter into more complex kinds of play with other children later on.

## What you do

- Sit with your toddler on the floor facing each other with your legs spread and your legs close to his so that the ball cannot escape.
- Roll the ball slowly so that he is sure to catch it.
- Talk to him about rolling it back. He may not want to roll the ball back to you. *Roll the ball to me so I can roll it to you again!* If he still refuses, gently take the ball and quickly roll it to him. You may have to repeat this process several times before he understands that he is not losing the ball when he rolls it away.
- Respond positively about the game you are now playing together when he rolls the ball back to you. *You rolled the ball to me and I rolled it back to you. We're taking turns!*

## Ready to move on?

As he gains better control of the ball, sit farther apart to challenge him. If your child stands up and throws the ball toward you, he may be ready to try an easy throwing game.

### Let's read together!

*Ten Black Dots*  
by Donald Crews