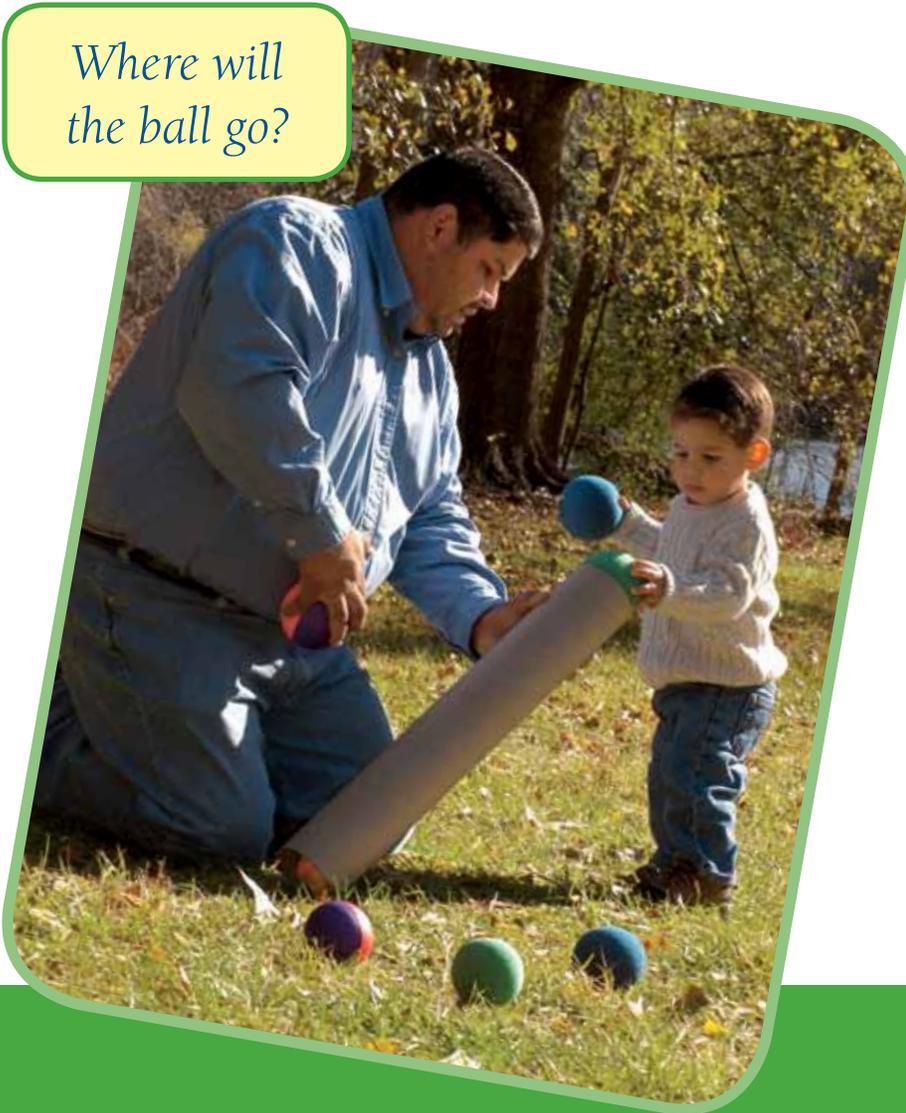


Learning to Predict

*Where will
the ball go?*



Toss a ball into a big box or roll it through a tube and then invite your child to look for the ball.

Repeating the game gives your child experience in predicting the outcome of his actions.



Why this is important

When you repeat a simple activity, your child will begin to anticipate what will happen because he has seen it happen before. Repeating the process of throwing a ball into a box helps your child learn to predict where to find an object that has gone from sight. Doing the game again and again helps him learn that he can act in a particular way with an expected result. This builds your child's self-confidence.

What you do

- Find a soft ball and a big box. Stand with your child several feet from the box and throw the ball into it. Ask, *Where did the ball go? Do you see it?*
- Encourage him to look into the box if he does not understand what you are asking.
- Wait for him to notice the ball, and respond with pleasure at his discovery. Repeat this process several times.
- Next, give the child a chance to throw the ball into the box from a few feet away. Respond with enthusiasm each time the ball is found.

Another idea

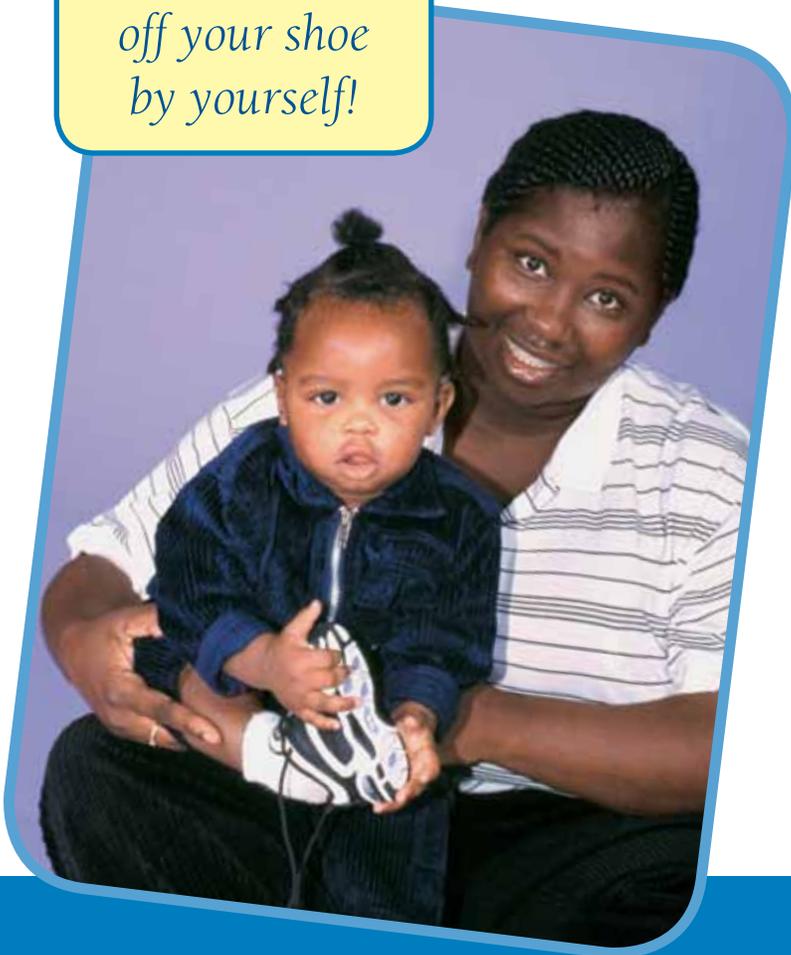
Try the game using a smaller ball and a tube. Hold the tube higher at one end. Invite your toddler to put the ball in the higher end of the tube. Guide his attention as you play. *There goes the ball! It's coming through the tube.* At first, he may look into the tube to find the ball. After a few times, he will begin to expect the ball to appear at the other end. Hold the tube in different ways to make the ball move fast or slow.

Let's read together!

Peek-a-Who?
by Nina Laden

Make Undressing Easy

*You're taking
off your shoe
by yourself!*



Loosen your child's shoes, unzip his coat, or pull his shirt partly over his head so he can do the last part of the action.

Your child will have the satisfaction of successfully completing the job of removing clothes.



Why this is important

Undressing is a basic part of caring for one's own needs and moving toward independence. Your child may want to undress himself before he has the skills and he may not want you to help him. As he practices this new type of independence, he will be more willing to accept help if he feels he is accomplishing part of it on his own.

- Choose a part of the day when you have plenty of time for your child to practice undressing. It is best if you can make time to practice during a natural undressing transition, such as before a bath or taking off shoes when he comes inside.
- Start with his shoes, because most children are interested first in removing those. Untie the laces and loosen the shoe at his heel so that he only needs to pull it off his toes. Prepare the socks the same way by removing them from most of his foot before he pulls them off.
- Offer positive feedback after each item of clothing is removed. *You took off your shoe! I think you can pull off your sock, too!*
- Undo any buttons or zippers and show him how to pull his arm through the sleeve, when your child is ready to try more difficult pieces of clothing such as a coat or shirt.
- Help with pants by having your child stand and push his pants down to his knees. Then have him sit and invite him to pull them over his feet by himself.

Another idea

Talk about the patterns and colors on his clothes. As he takes off each item, use their names to help teach him the words to describe his clothing. *Red shirt. You are taking off your red shirt.*

Let's read together!

All By Myself
by Mercer Mayer

Touch Your Toes

Touch your toes.



Invite your child to touch parts of her body while you touch and name yours.

Your child will learn about herself and better understand the name that goes with each body part.



Why this is important

When your child learns the names of her body parts she is getting to know herself better. By repeating the name several times, you encourage her to try to say the name. In naming and locating the various parts of her body, your child becomes more aware of herself as an individual.

What you do

- Touch your ears while saying: *I'm touching my ears. Can you touch your ears?* In the beginning, choose familiar parts such as ears, tummy, or toes.
- Give her plenty of time to respond, and repeat the word if needed. She will follow your lead but may be slower in touching the right spot because she has to see where it is first. If she needs help, gently guide her hands to the body part.
- Invite her to lead the game as you name the parts after she points to them. This gives her a chance to hear the words for those parts she may not know the names of yet.
- Encourage her to repeat the word as she points to that part of her body. *Tummy. You are pointing to your tummy. Can you say tummy?*

Another idea

Turn the game into a song that involves body movement. Try a simple version of "Looby-Loo" or "Hokey Pokey." You can add new verses as she learns the words for more body parts.

Let's read together!

From Head to Toe
by Eric Carle

Talking About Feelings



You're smiling. I can tell you feel happy.

Watch your child's facial expressions and body language and then describe her feelings for her.



You're sad. You really want your blanket.

Your child may begin to learn that words, as well as actions, can help explain what she feels.



Why this is important

When your baby was very young, you made a point of letting her see feelings expressed on your face. Now you can help her by giving her words as well as facial expressions. It may take time for her to know the correct words for each emotion. When she has words for her feelings, she will have a choice between words and actions for expression. Both will help her in making her feelings known to others.

What you do

- Watch for moments when your child feels strongly about something, and then describe her emotions for her. For example, when she jumps up and down at the sight of a bunch of balloons you might say, *You're so excited to see those balloons!*
- Help her calm down when she feels very sad, annoyed, or angry by describing her intense emotions and showing her with your facial expressions and tone of voice that you understand what she is feeling. *You are really sad that Daddy just left. You love him so much.*
- Describe her emotions in calmer times too. *I see your little smile. You are happy to see your teddy.*

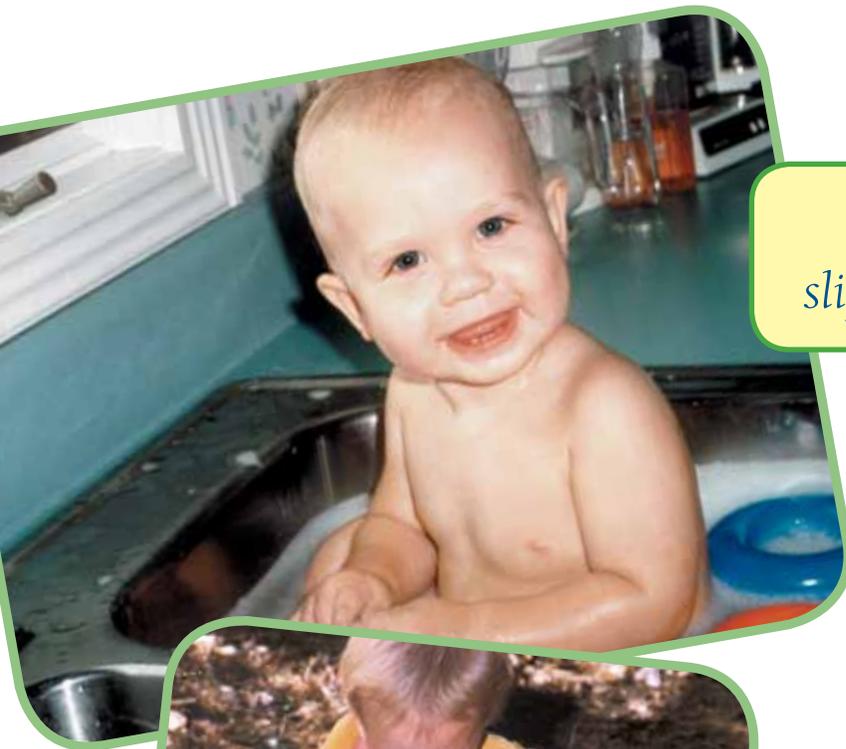
Another idea

Use many words to describe her feelings such as *frustrated, annoyed, disappointed, bored, amazed, calm, and relaxed*. Hearing many feeling words will help her be able to identify and name her specific feelings as she gets older.

Let's read together!

Llama, Llama Red Pajama
by Anna Dewdney

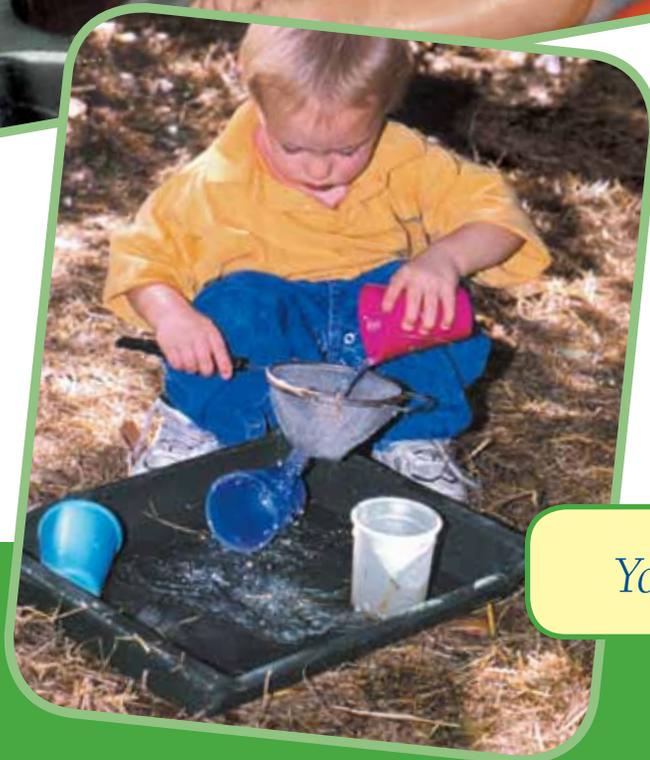
Water Play



The soap feels slippery, doesn't it?

Without directing him, invite your child to play with water while you say what is happening.

Your child may understand the meaning of most of your words when they describe exactly what he is doing as he does it.



You're good at pouring water.



Why this is important

Young children enjoy water because it moves in unexpected ways. Talking about your child's actions as he plays with water can help him understand the meaning of your words because he can relate them to what he is doing.

What you do

- During bath time, give your child a few toys and talk about everything he sees and touches. *The duck makes a splash when you drop him. The soap is making bubbles on your tummy! See how the warm water goes drip-drip-drip from the faucet?*
- When playing outside, give him a dishpan partly filled with water. Offer him a few toys and plastic cups to play with. Talk about his actions. *You poured water into that cup until it overflowed. You have two hands in the water. You're smiling. I think playing in the water makes you happy.*

Another idea

Find other opportunities for water play. Let him play with water in the sink as you wash dishes, or let him linger for a moment in the soapy water after washing his hands. Talk about what he is doing.

Let's read together!

Splash!
by Sarah Garland

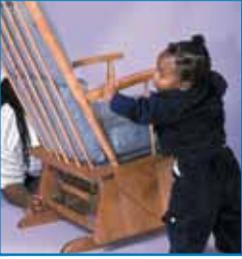
Hide-and-Seek

Oh! You found me!

Move partly out of sight and let your child find you.

Hide-and-seek encourages your child to move around and rely on her own ability to find something that is hidden.





Why this is important

Learning to look for objects she cannot see gives your child a new tool for problem solving. Playing hide-and-seek helps her independently find something out of sight and introduces her to a simple game that she will be able to play later on with other children.

What you do

- Tell your toddler you are going to hide, and then duck down behind a chair or move to another part of the room so that you are almost out of sight. Let her see you go.
- Call, *Can you find me? Where am I?* Offer positive feedback when she finds you and give her a big hug. *You are so smart! You found me!*
- Play together for as long as she is interested. Hide in new places to keep her attention.
- Offer her a chance to hide, and ask loudly, *Where's Carla? Where did she go?* She may hide in the same place you hid. When you find her, act surprised and hug her close.

Ready to move on?

When she is a little older, try playing the game by hiding a stuffed animal in another room. Do not let her see you hide it, but place the toy where she will easily see it. Go back to her and ask, *Where is teddy? Can you help me find him?* Point or give any help your child needs. Show surprise when she finds the toy. *Wow! You found him in the kitchen!*

Let's read together!

Open the Barn Door, Find a Cow
by Christopher Santoro

Action Words



Spread your arms wide!

Describe what is happening while you and your child move in interesting ways.

By hearing or saying the words while doing the movement, your child will be likely to learn action words.



We can stand on our heads.



Why this is important

Attaching labels to your child's actions helps her begin to recognize the words for what she is doing. Learning the words takes longer than learning the motions, but she will enjoy practicing. In the early stages of using words, your child may have difficulty understanding what the words mean. Acting them out helps her learn their meanings.

What you do

- Imitate your child's movements and talk about the action as she tumbles or rolls around on the floor. *We're rolling over. You're standing on your head.*
- Suggest new actions to try, and remember to give her words for what you are doing. *Move your hands up and down. Bend over. Spread your arms wide.*
- Try these movements with your child:

Stand on your toes with your arms stretched high and say: *Reach high.*

Squat, tuck in your head, hold your knees, and say: *Make a ball.*

Lie on your back with your feet in the air and say: *Feet up.*

Turn around quickly and say: *Spin.*

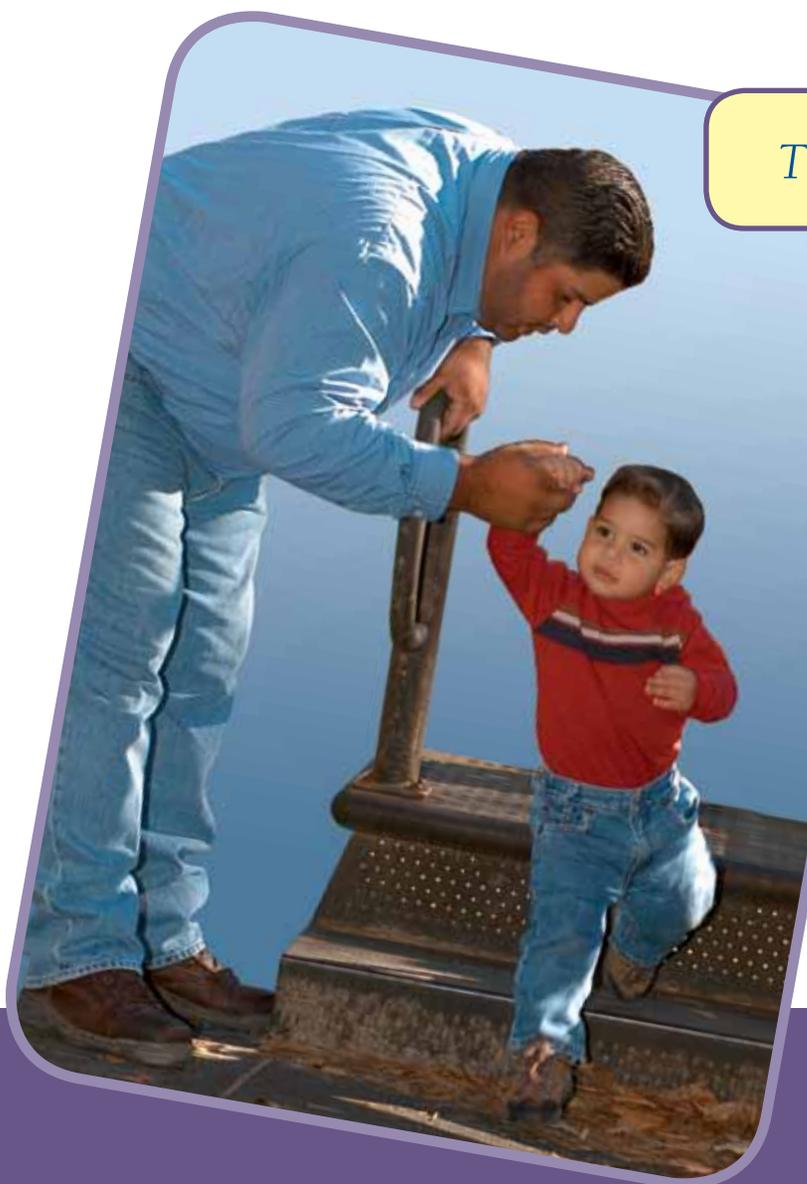
Ready to move on?

As your child gains more control of her body, add more challenging motions such as jumping and standing on one foot.

Let's read together!

All Fall Down
by Helen Oxenbury

Low Jump



That's a big jump!

Invite your child to jump from a low place while you hold on to him.

Your child will have a safe way to try a new skill and feel confident about moving his body.



Why this is important

Now that your child walks well, he will enjoy learning new ways to move. Some children take longer to feel comfortable jumping, but if your child is allowed to progress at his own pace, he will be more willing to practice. If you plan for his safety and success, your child will gain confidence about moving his body in new ways.

What you do

- Help your child stand on a low stool or bottom step. **Only choose low places for your child to jump from. Remain with your child while he practices.**
- Hold him under his arms, help him jump to the floor, and say *Jump!* Lift him higher than necessary to help him feel the motion.
- Repeat this activity until he feels comfortable and confident with jumping.
- Give him the chance to jump while only holding onto your hands. Let him maintain his balance, but use your hands to help support him.
- Talk to him about safety during the activity: *We only jump from low places.*

Another idea

Use a board to set up a small ramp that your child can walk up and down. Help him jump down at the end. Lay the board on the floor and show him how to jump over it. Use the words *up*, *down*, and *over* to talk about the movements. Also, you can hold hands and jump around the room, or imitate animals such as frogs, rabbits, or kangaroos.

Let's read together!

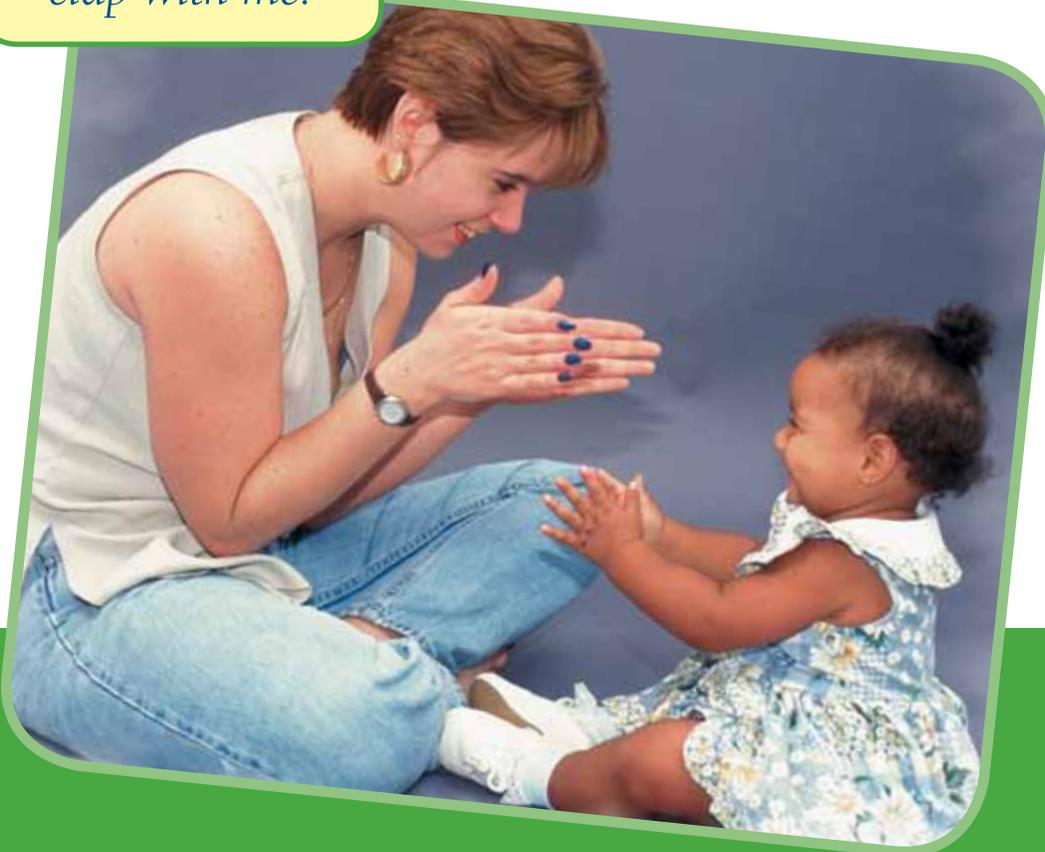
Baby Dance
by Ann Taylor

Sing Together

Sing songs with your child, especially ones that she can clap to or that have her name in them.

Singing provides a fun and interesting way to teach your child words and sound patterns.

*Clap, clap,
clap with me!*





Why this is important

Your child will become familiar with words, especially rhyming words, through the rhythm and repetition of singing. By hearing the repeated sounds in songs like “Row, Row, Row Your Boat,” she will become familiar with the patterns of sounds that occur in language. Singing crosses all language barriers, and when done in a group, singing provides your child with social experiences.

What you do

- Sing with your child when feeding, dressing, walking, or riding. Sometimes use traditional songs and sometimes make up your own. Remember that your child does not care if you sing well. She will enjoy hearing your voice in songs about her and her activities.
- Clap and invite your child to clap with you. Choose a simple, repetitious tune that your child can sing with you and clap to the rhythm. *Row, row, row your boat, gently down the stream. Merrily, merrily, merrily, life is but a dream.* Your child will first listen, and then begin to imitate the sounds she hears. She may clap and move to the tune before she tries to sing.
- Make up a song with your child’s name in it. *Lucy, Lucy, Lucy Ann. I really love you. Lucy, Lucy, Lucy Ann. I really love you* (sung to the tune of “Row, Row, Row Your Boat”).
- Try to remember songs your parents sang to you and share them with your child. If your family speaks more than one language, this can be a great way to pass on family traditions.

Another idea

Look for picture books at the library that are based on the words to your child’s favorite songs. Sing the song and then read the book together.

Let’s read together!

Skip To My Lou
by Nadine Bernard Westcott

Nesting Objects

You're putting the small cup in the big one!

While your child plays with objects that fit together, ask questions and talk about what she is doing.

Your child may begin to recognize differences in size and will become familiar with size words.





Why this is important

By offering her materials of different sizes, you draw her attention to some of the ways objects may fit together. Hearing you describe her actions, she learns words such as big, bigger, small, and smaller. Putting things in order and understanding sizes prepares your child for certain kinds of math learning later in life. As she grows she will use this knowledge to understand ideas such as first, second, and third.

What you do

- Offer your child various household containers in graduated sizes such as juice cans, measuring cups, or plastic storage dishes. Set them in front of her, and then step back and watch her explore them. She may roll, bang, or hide them.
- Give positive feedback when she nests two or more objects. *Look! You put one cup inside the other.*
- Ask her questions about a set of cups by holding the largest one and asking her which one goes in next. Do not correct her if she chooses the wrong cup. Let her experiment with the different sizes.
- Use words to describe the various containers. *That cup is big and this one is small. The small cup is green. The big cup is red.*
- If she appears frustrated, make the game simple by only offering the largest and smallest containers.

Another idea

Look around the house for objects that nest together such as cardboard boxes and plastic bowls. Watch her as she figures out the best way to put items together.

Let's read together!

Blueberry Shoe
by Ann Dixon