



**Communication/  
Language**

**Exploring Words**

- Option 1** (IG) Toddlers participate in a book sharing about monkeys jumping on the bed.
- Option 2** (IG) Toddlers participate in a book sharing that includes opportunities to act out parts of the story with a toy monkey.
- Option 3** (IG) Toddlers act out parts of a story during a book sharing.



**Cognitive**

**Exploring Objects**

- Option 1** (IG) Toddlers explore what happens to water when they put their foot in a small water puddle and pour water from a small pail.
- Option 2** (OO) A toddler explores what happens to water when different small animal figures are dropped into water and water is poured into a tub of water.
- Option 3** (IG) Toddlers begin washing dolls.



**Self-Regulation**

**Getting Calm**

- Option 1** (IG) Toddlers observe how a caregiver calms down after doing a mildly stimulating activity.
- Option 2** (IG) Toddlers practice calming down with caregiver support after engaging in an exciting activity.
- Option 3** (IG) Toddlers describe and demonstrate how to calm down after independently engaging in an exciting activity.



**Social-Emotional**

**Interacting with Others**

- Option 1** (IG) Toddlers participate in open-ended water play with opportunities to notice what peers are doing.
- Option 2** (IG) Toddlers work together to wash dirty toys in the water table, with opportunities to share items.
- Option 3** (IG) Toddlers engage in open-ended conversations with play telephones.



**Physical/Health**

**Moving Our Bodies**

- Option 1** (IG) Toddlers practice walking by participating in an animal parade.
- Option 2** (IG) Toddlers practice walking on a simple path in their room.
- Option 3** (IG) Toddlers practice walking and another gross motor movement of their choice.

(OO)=One-to-One, (IG)=Informal Gathering



## 12–24 Months

### Option 1 Informal Gathering



#### Skill and Goal

Receptive language  
Expressive language

Toddlers participate in a book sharing about monkeys jumping on the bed.



#### Key Concepts

Monkeys  
Jump



#### Materials Needed

*Five Little Monkeys Jumping on the Bed* by Eileen Christelow



#### Also Promotes

Cognitive

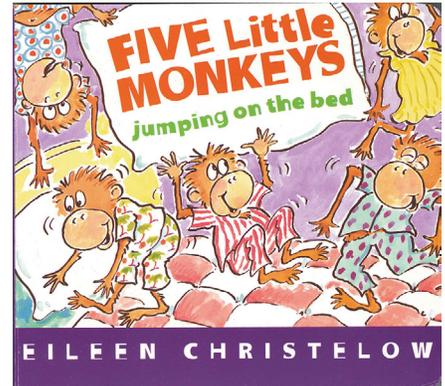
**BEGIN:** [Invite several toddlers to join you to read a book. Show the cover of the book and point to the monkeys.]

**ASK:** There are monkeys on the cover of our book. What are they doing?

**EXPLAIN:** Yes, the monkeys are jumping on the bed. This is a silly picture! Let's learn more about what the monkeys do in our story.

**ACT:** [Open the book and hold it for each toddler to see. Use strategies, such as the following, to engage toddlers in the book:

- Point to and use your own words to describe pictures. Example: "Oh no! The little monkey fell off the bed! He bumped his head."
- Invite toddlers to describe what is happening in a picture.
- Ask questions that encourage toddlers to anticipate what will happen next. Examples: "What do you think the mama is going to do?" "What do you think the doctor is going to say?"
- Respond to toddlers' comments and pointing by repeating and extending their responses and words. Example: "Wyatt, you are patting your head. The little monkey in our story bumped her head. She is crying."
- Emphasize repeated words. Use a rhythmic "sing-song" voice to add interest.]



**RECAP:** The little monkeys in our book got ready for bed and said goodnight to their mama. Then they jumped on the bed! The little monkeys fell off the bed and bumped their heads. The doctor said no more jumping! What did the little monkeys do?

### 👁️ What to Look For—Option 1

Toddlers will likely enjoy the book's rhyming and repetitive text. Some toddlers may say a few of the words with you. Others may want to look at the pictures and listen to the story as you read. Many toddlers will relate to the beginning part of the book when the monkeys are going through a bedtime routine. Some toddlers may be interested in talking about the pictures of the monkeys getting ready for bed.

**Option 1 continued**

As the rhyme starts, pay close attention to the toddlers' reactions. This is a good time to invite toddlers to say repetitive phrases with you. (See Enrichment tip.) Toddlers may say one or more words or nod their heads with the rhythm of the words. Some may look closely at the pictures of the injured and crying monkeys. Others may enjoy the repetitive rhyme and be eager for you to turn each page to keep reading the words. You may wish to revisit the book later in a one-to-one setting with toddlers who would like more or less time on each page. (See Extra support tip below.)

The book uses number words that are important for children to eventually know, but the intent of the book sharing is to emphasize the basic story and repetitive rhyme. Toddlers are not expected to count the monkeys.

 More Scaffolding Tips—Option 1

**Extra support** ■ Point to pictures that connect with what is described in the story text. ■ Use a reading and discussion pace that seems to work for most toddlers. If a toddler wants to explore pictures longer than others, offer to look at the book with him/her again. ■ Spend more time on pictures and story events that seem to be of particular interest to toddlers. ■ Remember that toddlers may not know words to describe their interests, including asking questions. Encourage toddlers to point to images of interest in addition to saying what they are thinking. Example: "Muhammad is pointing to the bandage on the little monkey's head. A bandage is like a big band-aid."

**Enrichment** ■ Encourage toddlers to say some of the repetitive phrases with you, such as "mama called the doctor," and "no more monkeys."

## 12–24 Months

### Option 2 Informal Gathering



#### Skill and Goal

**Receptive language**  
**Expressive language**

Toddlers participate in a book sharing that includes opportunities to act out parts of the story with a toy monkey.



#### Key Concepts

Monkeys  
Jump



#### Materials Needed

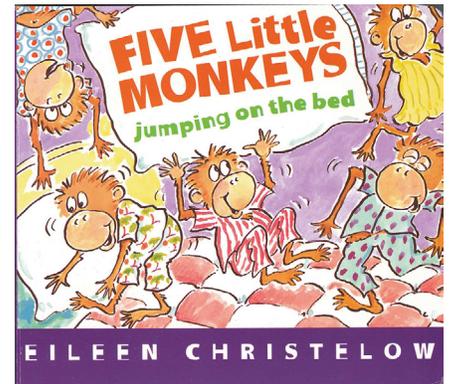
*Five Little Monkeys Jumping on the Bed* by Eileen Christelow  
Small plush monkeys—1 per toddler



#### Also Promotes

Cognitive  
Physical/Health  
Self-Regulation

Invite several toddlers to join you to share a book about monkeys jumping on the bed. Give each toddler a monkey to hold during the story. Show the book cover and ask what is shown on the cover that we are holding in our hands. Point out one or more similarities between monkeys pictured on the cover and monkeys held by toddlers. Example: The monkeys you provide may also be wearing pajamas.



Invite toddlers to describe what the monkeys on the book cover are doing. (jumping) Encourage toddlers to move their monkeys like they also are jumping on the bed. Example: “The monkeys on the cover of our book are jumping on the bed. We can make our monkeys jump, too!”

Read the book and encourage toddlers to make their monkeys jump when monkeys in the story jump. At the end of the book when the monkeys go to sleep, encourage toddlers to put their monkeys in their lap or on the floor to sleep like the monkeys in the story.

Conclude by describing each toddler’s actions during the activity. Examples: “Alexander’s monkey made really high jumps!” “David, you had fun holding your monkey and listening to the story.”



### What to Look For—Option 2

Many toddlers will be familiar with this popular story and will welcome the opportunity to hold, and maybe manipulate, a toy monkey. Some toddlers will be content to simply hold a toy, listen to the words, and watch others move their toy monkey. Toddlers who move their toy monkey are likely to differ in whether they make the monkey jump continuously (through all or most of the story) or only when the story describes the monkeys jumping. Accept different forms of participation at this age while also drawing attention to monkeys in our hands and monkeys in the book jumping at the same time. Toddlers are not expected to count and it is not necessary to emphasize the number of monkeys that are on each page.

**Option 2 continued****More Scaffolding Tips—Option 2**

**Extra support** ■ Some toddlers may enjoy time to explore their monkey before participating in the story. ■ Demonstrate how to make a toy monkey jump when you invite toddlers to move their monkeys in the opening segment of the activity. ■ If toddlers have difficulty calming down at the conclusion of the book sharing, encourage them to place their monkeys in a basket to “go to sleep.”

**Enrichment** ■ Read the text slowly and invite the toddlers to recite some of the words with you. ■ As you repeat the story lines, leave out a word and encourage toddlers to fill in the missing word. This works best with repeated words, including “head,” “bed,” and “doctor.”

## 12–24 Months

### Option 3 Informal Gathering



#### Skill and Goal

Receptive language  
Expressive language

Toddlers act out parts of a story during a book sharing.



#### Key Concepts

Monkeys  
Jump



#### Materials Needed

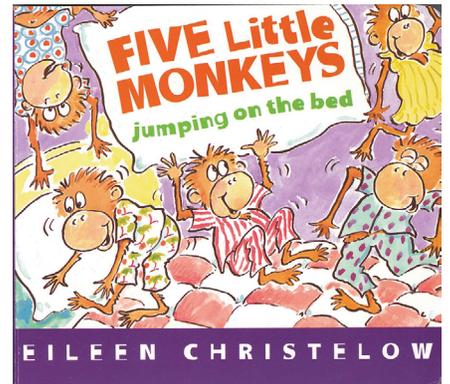
*Five Little Monkeys Jumping on the Bed* by Eileen Christelow  
Carpet squares—1 per toddler



#### Also Promotes

Cognitive  
Self-Regulation  
Physical/Health

This option is for toddlers who are familiar with the book, *Five Little Monkeys Jumping on the Bed*. Invite several toddlers to pretend to be the little monkeys in the book as you read the story. Explain that we can pretend we are jumping on the bed. Emphasize that we want to stay on our carpet square and keep safe.



Read the story with enthusiasm, encouraging toddlers to jump on their squares when the monkeys in the book jump. In addition to jumping, support active participation in the book sharing with strategies, such as the following:

- Invite toddlers to help you recite some of the repetitive phrases. Use questions to prompt their words. Example: “What does the doctor say?”
- Leave out a word in a repetitive phrase and encourage the toddlers to fill in the missing word.
- Ask questions that encourage toddlers to anticipate. Example: “What are the monkeys going to do next?”

### 👁️ What to Look For—Option 3

This option provides the opportunity to enjoy the gross motor act of jumping as well as cognitive tasks of listening and reciting parts of the rhyme. The repetitive, rhyming text of this book encourages toddlers to remember and be able to repeat some of the words. Some toddlers may enjoy filling in a missing word in a familiar line of the story. While some toddlers may focus mostly on the story, many will simply enjoy the act of jumping while you read the text. Toddlers are not expected to jump during specific parts of the story only. You may wish to wrap up the activity with the toddlers pretending to go to sleep like the monkeys in the end of the book. (See Extra support tip below.)

### 📊 More Scaffolding Tips—Option 3

**Extra support** ■ If toddlers become overly excited during the activity, invite them to lay down on their carpet squares and pretend to sleep when the monkeys at the end of the book go to sleep.

**Enrichment** ■ Add story-related movements, such as rubbing your head, making a crying face, “calling” the doctor, and pointing a finger while telling monkeys to no longer jump on the bed. Toddlers will enjoy watching your enhanced actions and some may imitate you.



### Interest Area

**Materials Needed:** *Five Little Monkeys Jumping on the Bed* by Eileen Christelow, small plush monkeys, dollhouse with furniture

Place the book and toy monkeys on a low table with a dollhouse and furniture. Invite toddlers to play with the monkeys in the dollhouse. Toddlers may enjoy acting out parts of the story, such as the monkeys jumping on a bed. Some toddlers may want to interact with the toy monkeys in different ways. Toddlers may enjoy hearing you read the book while they play with the materials. Talk with toddlers about their ideas and actions as they interact with the materials.



### Family Child Care

**Materials Needed:** *Five Little Monkeys Jumping on the Bed* by Eileen Christelow (optional: small plush monkeys, two toy telephones)

This book can be enjoyed by all young children in your setting. Encourage older children to recite the rhyme with you as you read the book. Invite an older child to lead younger children in acting out the story by holding the plush monkeys (Option 2) or pretending to be jumping monkeys (Option 3). Also, older children may enjoy pretending to be the mama and doctor, talking to each other on the phone. Babies may enjoy holding a monkey or toy phone while they watch the children participate. At the end of the story, invite children to lay down and pretend to be sleeping monkeys.



## 12–24 Months

Option 1  
Informal Gathering

## Skill and Goal

## Object inquiry skills

Toddlers explore what happens to water when they put their foot in a small water puddle and pour water from a small pail.



## Key Concepts

Water  
Moves  
Splash  
More



## Materials Needed

Water hose  
Small pails—1 per toddler



## Also Promotes

Communication/Language



## Optional Reading

*Splish, Splash, Ducky!* by  
Lucy Cousins

**Be Prepared:** This is an outdoor activity for warm weather.

Toddlers will get wet during the activity. If outdoor play is not an option, create an indoor water activity by adding water to the sensory table or putting trays on a low surface with one-half cup of water in each to create small puddles. Arrange for another adult to help with the activity.

**BEGIN:** *[Make sure the widest available walkway in your outdoor space is clean. Turn the water hose on very low and run water onto the walkway. The water will create small puddles for toddler exploration. Maintain your firm hold on the hose at all times during the activity.*

*Invite toddlers to do some fun things with the water.]*

**EXPLAIN:** The water makes little puddles for our hands and feet. We can walk through a puddle and look at what happens to the water when we step on it.

*[If a child is concerned about clothing, assure him/her it is okay to get wet.]*

**ACT:** *[Encourage toddlers to notice how the water looks on the walkway, especially when the sun is shining on it.*

*Invite toddlers to put a foot in the water or walk in the water and notice what happens to the water. Explain that the water moves when we step on it. Putting our foot into the water can make a little (or big!) splash.*

*After several minutes of exploring the water on the walkway, introduce small pails that toddlers may wish to use. Put a small amount of water in each pail for toddlers to carry around and pour. Invite toddlers to pour the water from their pail onto the walkway or another hard surface. Encourage toddlers to watch the water as it hits the walkway or other hard surface. Explain that the water makes a splash when it hits the walkway.*

*Explain that toddlers can come to you (or the other adult) if they want more water in their pail. Emphasize the word more.*

*Add language to the task of providing more water for a toddler's pail. If a toddler simply holds out his/her pail, verbalize the non-verbal request. Example: "Lucy, I see you are holding your pail for more water." Emphasize more water. As you add water to a toddler's pail, say "This is more water for Lucy's pail."*

**Option 1 continued**

*Describe toddlers' actions and the results, especially how water moves when they step in a puddle and how water can make a splash when it is poured out of a pail.*

*Respond to all verbal requests. Example: If a toddler requests more water, ask "Do you want a little bit of water or a lot of water?" Emphasize little and a lot.*

*If a child wishes to touch the water, it is fine for him/her to put hands into the slowly flowing water from the hose in your hand. Discourage toddlers from drinking the water from the hose or any other source. Do not spray water on children, even if they ask.*

*Provide a five-minute warning before water exploration ends.*

*At the conclusion of the activity, encourage toddlers to put away the pails.]*

**RECAP:** *[Offer highlights of how toddlers explored the water. Example: "The water made little puddles on our walkway. The water puddles looked pretty in the sunshine. The water moved when we stepped in it. The water made a splash. What did the water do when we poured it out of our pails?"]*

**👁️ What to Look For—Option 1**

The water play may consist of touching the water, pouring water from the pail, and/or stepping in the water. Some toddlers will really enjoy the sensory experience of splashing and getting wet, whereas other children wish to touch the water with their hands only. Allow each toddler to manage his/her experience, and avoid showing more enthusiasm for one type of approach to the water than others. Also, positively acknowledge a toddler who wishes to observe rather than touch or play in the water. Example: "I think you are having fun watching our friends play in the water." You might offer a toddler who prefers to watch the water and opportunity to play with a pail with a small amount of water plus a scoop for manipulating the water in ways he/she wishes.

Look for opportunities to help toddlers notice how the water moves when we step into a puddle of water. Emphasize the word splash when toddlers walk through a puddle and when water hits a hard surface. Toddlers may explore how stepping softly versus stomping their foot in a puddle of water will produce bigger and smaller splashes. Point out big and small splashes without suggesting that a big splash is more interesting than a small splash. Some toddlers may want to explore bigger and smaller splashes by varying the speed with which they pour water from a pail. (See Enrichment tip.) Pouring water at different speeds (quickly or slowly) taps motor control skills that are likely to vary considerably among toddlers in your group.

Some toddlers may wish to put the water into the sand area. If you want the sand to stay dry, provide the water activity away from the sand, or tell and show the toddlers a specific place to pour the water.

**Option 1 continued** More Scaffolding Tips—Option 1

**Extra support** ■ If a toddler is uneasy about water play, assure him/her that you will not spray him/her (or others) with the hose. ■ If a toddler asks for a pail but does not ask you to put some water in it, ask the toddler if he/she wants some water. ■ Draw attention to how colors reflect in the water.

**Enrichment** ■ Encourage toddlers to pour water slowly and then quickly from a pail and watch for differences in how the water splashes. ■ Draw several shapes on the walk with colored chalk. Toddlers will enjoy watching the way the chalk shapes change when they get wet. ■ After water play, toddlers may enjoy the book, *Splish, Splash, Ducky!* listed in Optional Reading.



## 12–24 Months

### Option 2 One-to-One



#### Skill and Goal

##### Object inquiry skills

A toddler explores what happens to water when different small animal figures are dropped into water and water is poured into a tub of water.



#### Key Concepts

Water  
Splash  
Moves



#### Materials Needed

Warm water  
Sensory table or tub  
4–5 small animal figures  
Small cup  
Water smock



#### Also Promotes

Communication/Language  
Self-Regulation  
Physical/Health

Put a few inches of warm water into the sensory table or tub. Invite a toddler to join you in seeing what happens to water when different things are dropped into the water. Kneel or sit next to the toddler so you can easily see the water exploration and talk with the toddler about what happens. Give the toddler one animal figure and encourage him/her to drop it into the water. Draw attention to what happens to the water. Explain that the water moves when the toy animal hits the water. The water makes a little splash. Invite the toddler to repeat this action with the same or a different animal figure. Continue to draw attention to how the water moves, how the water splashes. Encourage the toddler to describe what happens to the water. Example: In one or more of the repeated dropping actions, invite the toddler to tell what will happen to the water when our animal hits it.

If the toddler shows interest in the splash, invite him/her to hold the animal figure higher above the water and see what happens to the water. Other possibilities are to drop two animal figures at the same time or drop animal figures of different weight (one at a time) and watch how the water moves. Point out how we can do different things to make a bigger or smaller splash.

Introduce the cup and invite the toddler to scoop up water and then pour it back into the sensory table. Draw attention to how the water in the table moves when other water hits it. Depending on the toddler's interests, you may wish to encourage the toddler to pour water slowly and then quickly from the cup to see what happens. A slow trickle of water from the cup and a quick "dump" of water from the cup offer high contrasts for the toddler to explore.

Conclude the activity by describing what the toddler did. Emphasize that water in our table moved when the toddler dropped animal figures into the water and when the toddler poured water from a cup. Describe what happened to make the water splash.

### What to Look For—Option 2

This activity provides an individualized approach to exploring how water moves and splashes when things are dropped or poured into the water. A toddler benefits by your staying present and talking about what the toddler does and how the water reacts. At this age, it is not appropriate to formally teach cause and effect relations or expect a toddler to understand differences in height and weight in relation to water movement. Still, an early awareness of cause and effect can be promoted by simply describing what happens (water moves or splashes) when a specific action occurs (dropping an animal figure into water). Of course, older infants and toddlers commonly explore water splashes with their hands or kicking feet during a bath. This activity plan provides some words for what happens (moves, splash) and may help a

**Option 2 continued**

toddler become aware of differences in the amount of water movement or splash when different actions occur, such as pouring water slowly versus quickly. Pay close attention to whether a toddler seems interested in and ready for exploring this level of attention to water actions.

Actively support a toddler's interests in exploring the water with the animal figures and cup. Refrain from doing actions with the water that a toddler watches, except as a possible demonstration. (see Extra Support tip)

 **More Scaffolding Tips—Option 2**

**Extra support** ■ If a toddler seems uncertain about dropping an animal figure or pouring water from a cup, provide a demonstration and then give the item to the toddler. ■ Encourage a toddler to position his/her head for a sideways look at what happens to the water when an object or other water hits it. ■ If differences in the types of animal figures are of interest to the toddler, provide the names of animal types and encourage the toddler to say the name. Example: "This is a giraffe. Let's say the word giraffe together. Giraffe."

**Enrichment** ■ Make up a simple game of naming the animals if the different types of animal figures are of interest to the toddler. Examples: George the Giraffe. Caleb the Cat. The names could be used to draw attention to the effects of different actions. Example: "Caleb made a bigger splash than George!"



## 12–24 Months

### Option 3 Informal Gathering



#### Skill and Goal

##### Object inquiry skills

Toddlers begin washing dolls.



#### Key Concepts

Wash

Moves

Splash



#### Materials Needed

Baby doll—1 per toddler

Water smock—1 per toddler

Small cloth or sponge

Warm water in individual tubs or sensory table

Floor mat

Tear-free shampoo



#### Also Promotes

Communication/Language

Self-Regulation

Physical/Health



#### Optional Reading

*Time for a Bath* by Phillis Gershator

*Bath Time!* by Sandra Boynton

Invite toddlers to wash baby dolls in warm water. Toddlers can relate to bathing and getting their hair washed and will enjoy washing dolls. Kneel or sit next to the water table and talk with each toddler about the water and baby dolls. Draw attention to how the water moves when a doll is put in the water and when a toddler moves his/her hand in the water with a cloth or sponge. The water may make a little splash when a baby doll is put in the water. Point out how water is in the cloth or sponge.

Playfully encourage toddlers to point to the doll's arms, legs, head, eyes, etc., and say the names of body parts. Repeat words a toddler says and extend the word(s) into sentences. Example: If a toddler says "baby clean," respond by saying "Yes, you are getting your baby clean. You washed the baby's face and the baby's hair."

### What to Look For—Option 3

The activity promotes awareness of what happens to water when it is manipulated or things are put into it. It also supports toddlers' understanding of body parts. Toddlers are generally interested in naming parts of their body. Naming (and pointing to, if appropriate) body parts on the baby doll fosters vocabulary knowledge.

If a toddler is new to water play, simple sensory experiences may be more interesting than washing a doll. Each toddler may focus on a different element of the activity, such as touching or moving the water around, or squeezing the cloth or sponge. Talk with each toddler about how he/she is using the water. Some toddlers may engage for a few minutes and others may remain at the water tub for as long as possible.

If a toddler wishes to carry the wet baby doll to another area, encourage him/her to exchange the wet doll for one that is dry.

### More Scaffolding Tips—Option 3

**Extra support** ■ Give each toddler ample time at the water table and limit the number of toddlers at the sensory table at any one time. ■ Encourage a toddler to squeeze a washcloth or sponge and watch the water move out of it. ■ If a toddler seems uncertain about what to do, suggest specific parts of the doll (toes, ears, fingers, tummy) to wash. ■ If a toddler is splashing too much, demonstrate slow hand movements in the water and remind the toddler that we are here to wash a baby doll.

**Option 3 continued**

**Enrichment** ■ Encourage a toddler to remove a doll from the water tub and watch the water on the doll drip into the tub. Emphasize the water is moving off the doll. Water moves when we do things with it. ■ Add tear-free shampoo to the water to create bubbles. ■ As the toddlers get accustomed to the activity, add hand towels for drying the dolls.

**Interest Area**

**Materials:** 2–3 tubs, 2–3 dolls, washcloths, sponges

Invite several toddlers to pretend to wash a baby doll without water. Provide each interested toddler with one doll and one tub (without water) with a cloth and sponge. This activity will be more meaningful to toddlers who have used water to wash a baby doll (such as Option 3) because it highlights the absence of water. Remind toddlers of the parts of a baby doll that can be washed (toes, ears, fingers, tummy, etc.) and suggest that toddlers pretend to squeeze water from a cloth or sponge. Talk with toddlers about what it's like to pretend to wash a baby doll without water.

**Family Child Care**

**Materials needed:** *Max's Bath* by Rosemary Wells, *When Your Lion Needs a Bath* by Susanna Leonard Hill, *Bath Time!* by Sandra Boynton

As a supplement to Option 2 or 3, share one or more of the listed books with toddlers. Older children also will enjoy the books and may also like to participate in any of the three options.



## 12–24 Months

### Option 1 Informal Gathering



#### Skill and Goal Self-control

Toddlers observe how a caregiver calms down after doing a mildly stimulating activity.



#### Key Concepts

Calm down  
Open  
Shut



#### Materials Needed

None



#### Also Promotes

Communication/Language  
Physical/Health

**Be Prepared:** Become familiar with the “Open Shut Them” rhyme with motions. Examples are available on the Internet. For this option, use the first verse only; omit the “creep them, crawl them” verse.

**BEGIN:** *[Invite several toddlers to join you to learn a song.]*

**ASK:** What does our hand look like when it is open?

*[Pause for toddlers to respond. Recognize verbal and nonverbal responses. Demonstrate an open hand.]*

What does our hand look like when it is shut (closed)?

*[Pause for toddlers to respond. Recognize verbal and nonverbal responses. Demonstrate a closed hand.]*

**ACT:** I would like to show you how we can open and shut our hands during a song.

*[Enthusiastically and slowly recite the words of the rhyme while demonstrating the corresponding actions. Smile and make eye contact with each toddler while singing the rhyme.]*

**ASK:** Would you like me to move my hands again while I sing the song?

**ACT:** *[If the toddlers respond positively, repeat the rhyme enthusiastically with hand actions.]*

I have fun moving my hands with this song!

**EXPLAIN:** I can get excited moving my hands to a song. I am going to take a break to calm down. Please watch me calm down.

I am going to keep my hands in my lap.

I am going to close my eyes.

I am going to breathe slowly and deeply.

**ACT:** *[Demonstrate the actions described above: put hands in lap, close eyes, take deep and slow breaths.]*

**RECAP:** I had fun moving my hands with this a song! I opened and shut and clapped my hands. I got excited doing these things! Then I did some things to calm down. I kept my hands in my lap. I closed my eyes. And I breathed deeply and slowly. Now I feel calm.



## 12–24 Months

### Option 2 Informal Gathering



#### Skill and Goal

##### Self-control

Toddlers practice calming down with caregiver support after engaging in an exciting activity.



#### Key Concepts

Calm down

Open

Shut



#### Materials Needed

None



#### Also Promotes

Communication/Language

Physical/Health

**Be Prepared:** Become familiar with the “Open Shut Them” rhyme with motions. Examples are available on the Internet. Offer the first and second verses in this option.

Invite several toddlers to join you in moving our hands with a fun song. Describe and demonstrate the hand actions for the first verse. Example: “We open our hands, like this. Then we shut (close) our hands, like this. And then we clap, clap, clap!” Lead toddlers in practicing the actions as you sing the first verse.

Then explain there is more to the song. We move our fingers down our sides and up our tummy to our mouth. Our song calls this creep and crawl. Describe and demonstrate the actions. Emphasize that our fingers do the creeping and crawling. Then lead toddlers in practicing the actions as you sing the second verse.

Next, lead toddlers in doing the actions for both verses as you sing the song. Offer a second round of both verses if toddlers are interested.

Then explain that moving our hands and fingers to this fun song can make us feel excited. It is time to calm down. Example: “Let’s take a break and do some things to help us calm down.” Encourage toddlers to watch how you calm down. Demonstrate and describe each of the following:

- keep our hands in our lap
- breathe slowly and deeply
- close our eyes (or try to look at one thing in our room)

Lead toddlers in the calming down actions described above. After a brief period of quiet, acknowledge toddlers’ efforts. Example: “We had fun moving our hands to a song. Then we did things with our bodies to calm down. Our bodies can rest when we calm down.”



## 12-24 Months

### Option 3 Informal Gathering



#### Skill and Goal

##### Self-control

Toddlers describe and demonstrate how to calm down after independently engaging in an exciting activity.



#### Key Concepts

Calm down



#### Materials Needed

None



#### Also Promotes

Communication/Language  
Physical/Health

**Be Prepared:** This option is for toddlers who are familiar with calming down strategies, such as those offered in Option 1 or 2. Become familiar with the “Open Shut Them” rhyme with motions. Examples are available on the Internet. Offer the first and second verses in this option.

Invite several toddlers to join you in moving our hands with a fun song. Explain that moving our hands to the song may make us excited. We will want to calm down after we move our hands and sing the song. Remind toddlers that we know how to calm down our bodies after doing something that makes us excited. Invite toddlers to describe and demonstrate how we calm down. Briefly affirm each calming down strategy after toddlers describe and demonstrate it. Example: “We know that keeping our hands in our laps helps us calm down.”

Engage toddlers in doing hand actions for the first two verses of “Open Shut Them” as you sing the song and demonstrate. If toddlers are not familiar with the actions, demonstrate actions for each verse and then lead toddlers in doing the actions. Offer a second round of the song, with both verses. This time, sing but do not demonstrate so toddlers have the experience of doing the actions independently. Demonstrate only if toddlers seem unclear about what to do.

Explain that we had fun doing the actions with the song. We got excited. Now it is time to calm down. Example: “Let’s all calm our bodies. Remember, we talked earlier about what we can do to calm our bodies.” Quietly provide verbal guidance if toddlers seem unclear about what to do. Emphasize the importance of being quiet.

Acknowledge toddlers’ efforts with the hand motions and then calming down. Emphasize that we are learning how to calm down.

### What to Look For—Option 3

The three options differ significantly in how much support is offered for calming down. Option 3 should be pursued with toddlers who have a good understanding of calming down strategies. This option is an opportunity for toddlers to describe and show what they know about calming down. We learn a lot by describing and showing how to do something! If it turns out that toddlers know less than you anticipated about calming down, promptly incorporate parts of Option 2 so toddlers can be successful and not view the activity as a test.

As suggested in an Extra Support tip, omit the “creep them, crawl them” verse in Option 2 or 3 if you expect this will be too challenging to do or may lead to higher levels of excitement than desired.

Toddlers are not expected to memorize or say the rhyme, although some may enjoy reciting some of the words, such as “clap.” Some toddlers may need repeated demonstrations and/or practice to do the open and shut actions. (See Extra Support tip below.) Some toddlers may find it challenging to stop the activity and calm down (see Extra Support tip). The “creep them, crawl them” verse may be particularly exciting for some toddlers.

### More Scaffolding Tips—Options 1–3

**Extra support** ■ Include humming or singing a quiet song as part of calming down. ■ Omit the second verse in Options 2 and 3 if you anticipate it will be too challenging for toddlers. ■ Repeat your description and demonstration of hand actions and/or repeat toddlers’ practice. ■ Sit next to a toddler who finds it challenging to calm down. Provide quiet coaching on what to do.

**Enrichment** ■ Add excitement by singing the song faster and then slower or louder and softer. ■ Encourage toddlers to say or sing some of the words with you. ■ Intentionally skip a key word in the rhyme, such as clap, but do the motion. Invite toddlers to say what word was missed.

### Interest Area

**Materials Needed:** assorted nursery rhyme books, blanket on the floor

Place the books in a basket on a blanket in a quiet area of the room. Invite toddlers to explore the books and select rhymes that they would like you to read. You may wish to make up hand motions and encourage toddlers to copy them as you say the rhymes. After the rhymes/finger plays, invite the toddlers to sit quietly with you and practice calming down before moving on to another activity.

### Family Child Care

**Materials Needed:** none

Children of all ages enjoy rhymes and finger plays. In addition to “Open Shut Them,” introduce classic rhymes like “Where is Thumbkin?” Many rhymes have additional verses that older children will enjoy reciting and doing the corresponding actions. Revisit favorite rhymes and finger plays on a regular basis. Children will be more likely to actively participate in rhymes and finger plays when they are familiar with the words and actions.



## 12–24 Months

Option 1  
Informal Gathering

## Skill and Goal

## Social interaction skills

Toddlers participate in open-ended water play with opportunities to notice what peers are doing.



## Key Concepts

Play together



## Materials Needed

Sensory table with water (see Be Prepared)

Assortment of toys for water play (see Be Prepared)

Water smock—1 per toddler



## Also Promotes

Communication/Language

Physical/Health

Self-Regulation

Cognitive

**Be Prepared:** Put 2–3 inches of warm water in the sensory table. Gather toys like cups, funnels, sea animal figures, a waterwheel—and place them in the water.

**BEGIN:** [*Invite several toddlers to join you at the water table.*]

We can play together with toys in the water table today! Here are smocks for us to wear. The smocks will keep us dry.

[*Help each toddler put on a water smock.*]

**ASK:** How could we play with some of the toys in the water table?

[*Follow-up prompt, if needed: “How could we play with this toy?”*]

**ACT:** [*Invite toddlers to play with the water toys in their own way. Use strategies, such as the following, to support toddlers’ play and create awareness of what others are doing:*

- *Draw attention to toddlers’ play actions. Example: “David is scooping and pouring water with a cup.”*
- *Acknowledge toddlers’ gestures and apparent interests. Example: “David, you are pointing to the toy shark that Ella is playing with. I think you would like to play with a toy shark.”*
- *Offer guidance on how to ask for a toy. Example: “You can tell Ella that you would like a turn to play with the shark when she is done with it. You can say ‘shark, please!’”*
- *Recognize instances of a toddler watching another toddler’s play and promote imitation if appropriate. Example: “Luciana, you are watching David scoop and pour with a cup. Would you like to do what David is doing? You could look around to see if there is another cup no one is using.”*
- *Draw attention to a toddler who wishes to join the gathering. Help toddlers make a space for a new person. Example: “Ella wants to play, too! Let’s move over to make room for Ella. Who can help Ella find a water toy to play with?”*
- *Use toddlers’ names during the activity to increase awareness of one another.*]

**RECAP:** [*Describe the time together, focusing on specific ways toddlers played together. Example: “We had fun playing together with toys in the water! We watched what our friends did with the toys. Luciana and Sam scooped and poured water with cups. Ella gave the shark to David to play with.”*]

**Option 1 continued****👁️ What to Look For—Option 1**

Playing side by side with fun and engaging materials encourages toddlers to watch what others are doing and to sometimes initiate interactions with peers. This activity combines a sensory experience with opportunities for social interaction. Describe each toddler's actions during the activity. Point out instances of imitating and/or sharing toys. Example: "David is swimming his shark under the water. Now Ella is swimming her dolphin under the water too! Ella is doing the same as David." Support toddlers in leading the play while also facilitating positive social interactions. At this age, toddlers are not expected to know how to share toys, including how to ask to use a toy.

**📊 More Scaffolding Tips—Option 1**

**Extra support** ■ Limiting the activity to three toddlers at a time will decrease the likelihood of conflict over space or materials. ■ In the opening segment when toys are discussed, point to a specific toy and invite a toddler to hold it or show how it can be used. Example: "James, what could we do with the toy that's right in front of you? How does it work?" ■ Kneel or sit close to a toddler who may need your coaching on how to share materials and interact with others. ■ Remind toddlers that "the water stays inside our table. We want water to play with!"

**Enrichment** ■ Provide 1–2 more complex items to play with (such as floating objects) without crowding the water table.

## 12–24 Months

### Option 2 Informal Gathering



#### Skill and Goal

##### Social interaction skills

Toddlers work together to wash dirty toys in the water table, with opportunities to share items.



#### Key Concepts

Sharing  
Taking turns



#### Materials Needed

Sensory table with water (see Be Prepared)  
Assortment of small toy vehicles  
Water smock—1 per toddler  
Tear-free shampoo  
2 kitchen sponges  
2 washcloths  
2 small towels



#### Also Promotes

Communication/Language  
Physical/Health  
Self-Regulation  
Cognitive

**Be Prepared:** Put 2–3 inches of warm water in the sensory table with a few drops of tear-free soap or shampoo to create bubbles. Add the sponges and washcloths to the soapy water. Limit the number of sponges and washcloths so toddlers have an opportunity to share these items. Place the assortment of water-safe vehicles on a tray nearby. Keep the small towels nearby for toddlers who want to dry the vehicles.



Invite up to three toddlers to work at the sensory table, washing toys that are dirty. Demonstrate washing a vehicle with a washcloth or sponge. Example: “This car is really dirty. I am going to use a washcloth to get it clean. Michael, would you please hand me a washcloth?” Describe how you wash the toy. Draw attention to using your fingers to move the washcloth or sponge on smaller parts of the toy, such as the wheels.

Invite each toddler to select a vehicle to wash. Encourage toddlers to wash their vehicles using the sponges and washcloths. Encourage toddlers to share the cleaning materials by taking turns with the sponges and washcloths. Ensure each toddler has one cleaning item to use during the activity. Toddlers may want to dry their vehicles with the small towels when they are done at the sensory table.

Help toddlers become aware of what a peer is doing by describing toddlers’ actions. Examples: “Joaquin is scrubbing his truck with a sponge.” “Michael is putting water on the car to rinse off all the bubbles.”

Describe positive social interactions that you observe. Example: “Joaquin gave Avery a sponge. Avery needed a sponge to clean her bus. Now Avery’s bus will be clean!”

### 👁️ What to Look For—Option 2

This option offers more possibilities for sharing and taking turns than Option 1 by focusing on a specific task and offering a limited number of items (sponges and washcloths) for the task. While some toddlers will fully engage in the purpose of the activity (washing dirty toys), others may want to engage in water play only. Emphasize social interactions more than the act of getting toys properly washed.

Pay attention to your contributions to the activity. Most toddlers will interact with you and other caregivers before they confidently engage with peers.

**Option 2 continued**

Model positive social interactions while also encouraging toddlers to play near and with one another. At this age, toddlers may have play ideas they are unable to express with words. This situation provides opportunities for you to provide verbal support, such as coaching a toddler on how to communicate interest in playing with an item. Example: “Joaquin, I see you are looking at the sponge that is next to Michael. Would you like to use the sponge to clean your car? You can ask Michael to please hand the sponge to you. You can say ‘sponge, please’ to Michael.” Remember that toddlers will be affected by your tone of voice and the caring manner in which you speak.

**More Scaffolding Tips—Option 2**

**Extra support** ■ Limiting this activity to no more than three toddlers at a time will decrease the likelihood of conflict over space or materials. Some toddlers may prefer to play next to one other toddler only at a time. ■ As suggested in *What to Look For*, provide words for a toddler to communicate with a peer, such as asking for an item. ■ Remind toddlers frequently that the water needs to stay inside the water table so that the vehicles can get clean. Spills are likely, of course. Toddlers can clean up splashed or spilled water using paper towels.

**Enrichment** ■ Encourage toddlers to compare characteristics of vehicles. Example: “Avery and Michael are both washing trucks. Avery’s truck has big wheels. What are the wheels like on your truck, Michael?” ■ If washing the toy vehicles runs its course before toddlers lose interest, add other items for toddlers to wash, such as people figures, dishes, toy animals, or toy food items.



## 12–24 Months

### Option 3 Informal Gathering



#### Skill and Goal

##### Social interaction skills

Toddlers engage in open-ended conversations with play telephones.



#### Key Concepts

Play together  
Take turns



#### Materials Needed

Several toy telephones



#### Also Promotes

Cognitive  
Communication/Language

**Be Prepared:** Place several toy telephones in the housekeeping area.

Invite several toddlers to play together with toy telephones in the housekeeping area. Initiate a pretend phone conversation by using another telephone. Support communication and language by sitting or kneeling on the floor so you are positioned at eye level with the toddlers. Select a topic that is familiar to toddlers, such as cooking/eating, morning routine of getting ready for work, or bedtime routine with a baby. Some toddlers may use the phone to talk with an imaginary person or a parent (who is not present). Give your phone to another toddler to join in. Encourage toddlers to take turns using a telephone. The phone talk is likely to move into another activity related to items in the housekeeping area, such as dishes or baby dolls.



Describe toddlers' actions as they interact with the phones. Example: "Emilia and Jacob are talking about what they like to eat. Emilia said 'cake' and Jacob said 'spaghetti!'" Recognize and acknowledge positive social interactions. Example: "Your friend looked happy when you asked her to play! Now you are having fun cooking together." Suggest ways toddlers could initiate play. Example: "Kyra, Jacob is watching you cook. Maybe you would like to ask him to help you cook. Here is another big spoon Jacob could use." Conclude the activity by affirming toddlers' efforts to play together. Example: "We had fun playing together today. We took turns using the telephones. We talked about what we like to eat!"

### What to Look For—Option 3

Pay attention to how toddlers use the telephones and offer topic suggestions, if necessary. The telephones are a springboard to peer interactions that eventually may lead to activities or exchanges that do not involve the telephones. Pretend play in a group can be particularly challenging for some toddlers. Help toddlers understand the intentions of other children and repeat what toddlers say as they play. Toddlers may imitate their parents, who they frequently observe, while talking on the phone. Toddlers may repeat words or use a pretend but enthusiastic "babble" as if they are talking like an adult. Some toddlers may prefer to sit nearby and watch. Acknowledge each type of participation in the activity.



## Option 3 continued

### More Scaffolding Tips—Option 3

**Extra support** ■ A toddler who shows interest in the telephone actions but seems reluctant to join with peers may be more comfortable interacting with you on toy telephones as a launch into the peer play. Example: You could initiate a telephone conversation and then hand your phone to another toddler to continue the conversation. ■ Limit the activity to two toddlers at a time if you anticipate a larger number of participants may be too challenging.

**Enrichment** ■ Extend toddlers’ ideas with a simple suggestion that does not lead the play. Example: If toddlers are interested in food or a meal, suggest ordering a pizza on the phone. Remind toddlers that the pizza place will ask what they want on their pizza.



### Interest Area

**Materials Needed:** sensory table with water; assortment of toys to wash; water smock for each child; tear-free shampoo; several kitchen sponges, washcloths, and small towels

Invite several toddlers at a time to wash new toys at the sensory table. Encourage the toddlers to work together to wash and then dry the clean toys. Toddlers may have ideas of other items or toys to wash. Talk with toddlers about their actions with the materials. Recognize and acknowledge positive social interactions.



### Family Child Care

**Materials Needed:** sensory table with water; assortment of kitchen items to wash, such as plates, cups, pots and pans; water smock—1 per child; tear-free shampoo; several kitchen sponges, washcloths, and small towels

Children of all ages enjoy sensory play with water. Preschool-age children may enjoy washing toy dishes while pretending to work at a restaurant. The pretend restaurant theme can be extended to older children who are beginning to write. They may want to write menus on paper attached to clipboards. Toddlers will enjoy interacting with older children during pretend restaurant play. Babies may like to play with a damp washcloth and toy cup or dish during the activity.



## 12–24 Months

### Option 1 Informal Gathering



#### Skill and Goal

##### Gross motor development

Toddlers practice walking by participating in an animal parade.



#### Key Concepts

Parade  
Walk  
Follow  
Stand



#### Materials Needed

Small toy animal—1 per toddler and caregiver



#### Also Promotes

Cognitive  
Communication/Language  
Self-Regulation

**BEGIN:** [Invite mobile toddlers to gather for songs. Sing two familiar songs about animals. Examples: “Itsy Bitsy Spider,” “Baa Baa Black Sheep,” “Five Little Ducks.” Encourage toddlers to move their hands or clap along.]

**EXPLAIN:** Our songs are about animals. Today we will walk with animals for an animal parade. A parade is like walking together.

**ACT:** [Give each toddler one small toy animal to carry in the parade. Say the name of the animal as you give the toy to a toddler. Example: “Here is a little duck for you to carry in our animal parade.”]

Now we all stand up and hold our animals. Let’s walk together. Please follow me with your animal!

[Sing a little song as you walk. You may wish to sing one of the animal-focused songs used at the beginning of the activity.]

Encourage toddlers to follow you around the room. Walk slowly in a large circle that is free of obstructions, keeping in mind that toddlers are not expected to follow you in single-file fashion.

About mid-way through the walk, explain that it is time to return to our gathering place. Example: “Now we all walk back to our \_\_\_\_\_ area with our animals.”

If a toddler stops walking in the parade, invite him/her to watch the parade and move his/her animal to the song or walk while holding your hand.]

**RECAP:** [Briefly describe the activity. Include actions, such as how toddlers held their animals as they walked. Example: “Jailynn held her tiger up high while she walked in our animal parade. Richie gave his sheep a big hug while he walked in our animal parade. We had fun walking in our animal parade!”]

### 👁️ What to Look For—Option 1

Although this activity is primarily for toddlers who are able to walk independently, there is likely to be a range of walking skills across participants in the parade. Move slowly in a predictable pattern and do not offer embellishments, such as swaying your body from side to side, unless all participants are able to imitate your pattern without risk of falling. Many motor skills are involved in walking. A parade adds the challenge of paying attention to the route and avoiding bumping into others.

**Option 1 continued**

Toddlers who do not join the gathering may wish to play in another area of the room or watch the parade. Offer a toy animal to the parade observers. Observers could move their animal to the song as they watch. Consider them to be parade participants as suggested in the Extra Support tip.

Remember that at this age toddlers are not expected to understand the concept of lining up. The intent is to provide a fun and safe setting for toddlers to practice walking that also supports the development of attention skills.

## More Scaffolding Tips—Option 1

**Extra support** ■ Consider the use of push toys toddlers can use for added support. ■ Non-walkers may wish to ride in a wagon pulled by another caregiver. ■ If a toddler wishes to stay on the floor with his/her animal, encourage continued involvement. Example: “You are holding your giraffe in our animal parade!” ■ If a child falls, acknowledge “that’s okay” in addition to making sure the toddler is not hurt.

**Enrichment** ■ If all participants’ walking skills are strong, add an irregular pattern to your parade route while continuing to move slowly.



## 12–24 Months

### Option 2 Informal Gathering



#### Skill and Goal

##### Gross motor development

Toddlers practice walking on a simple path in their room.



#### Key Concepts

Walk



#### Materials Needed

Nonslip place mats (see Be Prepared)

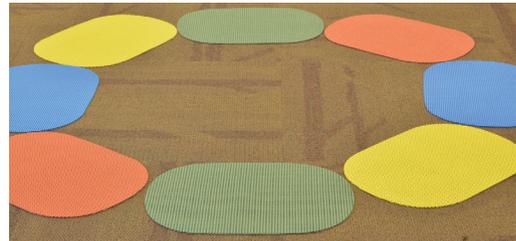


#### Also Promotes

Cognitive  
Communication/Language  
Self-Regulation

**Be Prepared:** Form a large circle with nonslip place mats, or 12-inch squares made of nonslip materials, preferably in different colors.

Invite toddlers to join you for a fun time of walking around. Explain the plan to follow the colored mats. Example: “We are going to walk on our colored mats. Let’s go this way.” Point and begin moving in the direction you want to walk.



Encourage toddlers to walk with you, recognizing toddlers are not expected to form a line. Offer a song as you walk. See the following possibility. Walk slowly.

**Walk, walk, walk around.  
Walk around together.  
Here we are, happy today,  
Walking ‘round together.**

After several walks around the circle, invite toddlers to sit down near you. Ask toddlers what we just did together. Acknowledge and expand on their comments. Example: “Tanya said ‘walk.’ We walked around together on mats.”

### 👁️ What to Look For—Option 2

The path provides focused practice in walking and slightly more challenge than the more open-ended follow-the-leader approach in Option 1. Toddlers will generally take two steps on each mat. If you provide spaces between mats (see Enrichment tip), do not expect or encourage toddlers to step over the space. The lyrics of the suggested song for you to sing offer a description of what toddlers are doing (“walk around together”) that would not be available on CD music. Singing a song also helps you align the tempo of the tune and lyrics with toddlers’ walking pace.

Some toddlers may become excited and wish to run. Help toddlers understand the walking expectation by saying what to do, rather than saying no to running. Examples: “Let’s make our feet go slowly. This is fun.” “Our feet go walk, walk, and walk.” Demonstrate a walking step.



## ***Option 2 continued***

### More Scaffolding Tips—Option 2

**Extra support** ■ Point out the path by walking the circle by yourself when you describe the activity.  
■ Invite a toddler to walk next to you. Offer your hand for the toddler to hold.

**Enrichment** ■ Expand the circle by moving the mats farther apart. ■ Mention that we are walking in a circle (without teaching the shape of a circle).



## 12–24 Months

### Option 3 Informal Gathering



#### Skill and Goal

##### Gross motor development

Toddlers practice walking and another gross motor movement of their choice.



#### Key Concepts

Walk



#### Materials Needed

6 nonslip place mats (see Be Prepared)  
1 tumble play mat



#### Also Promotes

Cognitive  
Communication/Language  
Self-Regulation

**Be Prepared:** In an open activity area in your room, arrange three place mats in a straight path that ends at the tumble mat. Arrange the other three place mats in a straight path on the other side of the tumble mat.

Invite 1–2 toddlers at a time to walk along the place mat path to the tumble play mat. Point out the path by walking it alone. Draw attention to the tumble mat that is in the middle of the path. Explain that we will take turns walking to the tumble mat. We can do whatever we want to do on the tumble mat. We could jump, hop, crawl, turn around, or whatever else we like to do. We can do different things; we do not need to do the same thing. Then we walk on the path that is on the other side of the tumble mat.

Encourage toddlers to think about what they would like to do on the mat before they start walking. Also, encourage toddlers to stop when they get to the tumble mat and then do what they want to do on the mat. Remind toddlers to do one movement on the tumble mat. Describe each toddler’s movement on the tumble mat.

Provide guidance in turn-taking and expected actions. Example: “Noah, it is your turn. You can walk to the tumble mat.” Make sure the tumble mat is clear before you invite a toddler to start walking, and that there is only one toddler at a time on the tumble mat.

Provide another set of turns for interested toddlers, if time permits.

### What to Look For—Option 3

The activity promotes advanced thinking about a physical movement (also called “motor planning”). In addition to your encouragement about thinking ahead, some toddlers may reflect on their actions on the mat and consider a different way to do something the next time. This may prompt interest in repeating the activity. Also, some toddlers may enjoy the feeling of adjusting their walking steps to the surface of the tumble mat. These gross motor actions foster strength and coordination and also provide sensory stimulation. Encouraging toddlers to stop when they reach the tumble mat before engaging in a different physical movement supports the development of self-control, an important dimension of self-regulation. Waiting for a turn also promotes self-control.

**Option 3 continued** More Scaffolding Tips—Option 3

**Extra support** ■ Offer two movement choices to a toddler who seems uncertain of what to do on the tumble mat. Example: “Would you like to jump or crawl on the mat?” ■ For a toddler new to walking, offer your hand to hold. ■ Encourage toddlers to watch if they do not want to walk or use the tumble mat. ■ Offer the option of walking across the tumble mat.

**Enrichment** ■ Connect different actions on the tumble mat to familiar animals. Examples: crawl like a turtle, hop like a bunny, jump like a cat. ■ When a toddler reaches the tumble mat, invite him/her to say what he/she plans to do before doing the movement.



## Interest Area

**Materials needed:** basket, small stuffed animals, tape, chalk, books, and push toys

Place a basket of small stuffed animals on a low surface. Encourage toddlers to choose an animal and continue a smaller version of a parade. For skilled walkers, tape a path to the floor with lines four inches apart. For outdoor activity, draw parallel chalk lines toddlers can follow. At this age, toddlers are not expected to walk on a narrow line. Provide books that show children moving their bodies. Provide push toys for toddlers to move around indoors.



## Family Child Care

**Materials needed:** push toy, pull toys

Foster walking skills by walking with toddlers on grass, sand, and other surfaces. Encourage preschool-age children to pretend to walk like various animals, or to take giant steps. “Let’s take giant steps to the bathroom.” Also, engage preschool-age children in a follow-the-leader game, using different types of walking, such as fast-slow, little-big, and maybe forward-backwards.

Infants who are beginning to take steps will set their own learning schedule. There is a lot of variation in how infants approach walking. Paying attention to infants’ walking and celebrating their accomplishments are good supports. Example: “Mateo, you are walking by yourself. I see your big smile!” ELM’s activity plans for birth to 12 months offer numerous supports for early mobility.

An outdoor parade can add extra fun for toddlers and preschool-age children. Encourage children to use pull toys to carry their animals. They may wish for you to sing a song as they walk. In the outdoor play area, infants will enjoy being part of the parade while riding in a stroller. Older children may enjoy making paper streamer flags or noisemakers for the parade.