



**Communication/
Language**

Exploring Sounds

Option 1 (OO) A toddler makes loud and quiet versions of demonstrated sounds made by some zoo animals featured in a book.

Option 2 (IG) Toddlers practice demonstrated sounds of animals as part of a shared book reading.

Option 3 (IG) Toddlers practice making demonstrated sounds of zoo animals as part of a shared book reading with props.



Cognitive

Solving Problems

Option 1 (IG) Toddlers figure out how to make a chain of snap beads get shorter.

Option 2 (IG) Toddlers figure out how to make a chain of snap beads get longer.

Option 3 (IG) Toddlers explore how to pull apart connected star builders.



Self-Regulation

Getting Calm

Option 1 (IG) Toddlers watch how to breathe slowly and deeply as a way to calm their minds and bodies.

Option 2 (IG) Toddlers practice breathing deeply and slowly (with the help of a prop) for the purpose of calming their minds and bodies.

Option 3 (IG) Toddlers practice breathing deeply and slowly (without a prop) for the purpose of calming their minds and bodies.



Social-Emotional

Interacting with Others

Option 1 (IG) Toddlers take turns pretending to be an animal of their choice walking across a pretend bridge.

Option 2 (IG) Toddlers practice taking turns with a peer(s) using a desired item (marker of a chosen color) while creating art.

Option 3 (IG) Toddlers participate in a shared book reading and puppet-led description of how to share a desired item with a peer.



Physical/Health

Moving Our Bodies

Option 1 (IG) Toddlers practice stepping up and down using a stepper as a pretend bridge in a dramatic play activity.

Option 2 (IG) Toddlers pay attention to stepping up and/or stepping down as part of regular gross motor activity.

Option 3 (IG) Toddlers step up and down on a stepper as part of walking through a simple indoor obstacle course.

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

Revision 1/15/20



24–36 Months

Option 1 One-to-One



Skill and Goal
Receptive language
Expressive language
Awareness of differences in sounds

A toddler makes loud and quiet versions of demonstrated sounds made by some zoo animals featured in a book.



Key Concepts

Sounds
 Loud
 Quiet



Materials Needed

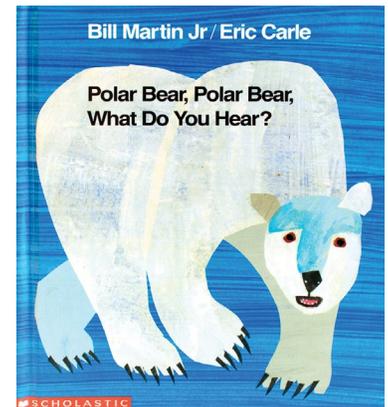
Polar Bear, Polar Bear, What Do You Hear? by Bill Martin Jr. and Eric Carle



Also Promotes

Cognitive

Revisit *Polar Bear, Polar Bear, What Do You Hear?* (introduced in Block 1) to help individual toddlers practice and expand their language skills by (1) talking about the sound each animal makes, including where the sound is made (helping toddlers describe the pictured animal’s mouth), and (2) making the animal sound (after you provide an example), first loudly and then softly. Sit next to the toddler to share the familiar book. Look at and talk about the pictures in the book.



While you share the book, offer as much information as a toddler appears interested in learning. Examples:

“The hippopotamus makes a snorting sound. The hippopotamus can make this sound with its mouth closed. A hippopotamus makes a low grunting sound to call to other hippos. Let’s try making a loud hippopotamus sound. Now let’s make a quiet hippopotamus sound.”

“The boa constrictor is a large snake that makes a hissing sound. Look at the boa constrictor’s mouth. The tongue is sticking out, and it has a lot of small teeth.”

“Elephants make different sounds. An elephant’s big mouth can make loud sounds. Its mouth can also make quiet sounds. Look at the elephant’s mouth and long trunk. The loud sound elephants make is called trumpeting.”

“A walrus can also make different sounds. One sound is a bellowing sound. Let’s make a loud bellowing sound. Now let’s make a quiet bellowing sound.”

👁️ What to Look For—Option 1

Toddlers will enjoy the experience of exploring this book in a one-to-one setting. Their learning experiences are different in a one-to-one situation compared to participation in a group of peers. An obvious advantage of time with an individual child is your opportunity to respond in a more focused way to the child’s reactions and interests. React to a child’s interest in the book with words that expand the child’s understanding of the story. Some toddlers will point to the pictures that they would like you to describe. Describing the child’s actions or utterances is also helpful. Example: “Maya, you are pointing to the picture of a boa constrictor. A boa constrictor is a type of snake.” Some toddlers will look at the pictures and make the animal’s sound. Example: “Ben, you are looking at the lion and making the sound a lion makes! You are using your mouth to make the sound of a lion.”

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

Extra support ■ Pay close attention to how a toddler wants to manage the book, and how much time a toddler wants to spend on each page. Toddlers may want to hold the book and turn the pages. Describe what you observe. Example: “You are turning the page to see which animal is next!” ■ Review the animal sounds, with emphasis on how to make each sound. Example: “The polar bear hears a lion. What kind of sound does a lion make? Let’s try it together.”

Enrichment ■ A toddler may enjoy chanting the repetitive phrases, such as “what do you hear?” Encourage a toddler to join you by pointing to the corresponding text and speaking slowly enough for him/her to follow along. Make this lighthearted and fun! (It is not meant to be an exercise in memorizing or reading specific words.) ■ A toddler may want to talk about other animal characteristics, such as color or size. Repeat and extend a toddler’s comments. Example: “Yes, the elephant is big. The elephant has a big mouth to make sounds!” ■ A toddler may enjoy spending time on the last page of the book, “guessing” which animal a pictured child is pretending to be. Offer hints as appropriate. Example: “This child is wearing a mask with a trunk. Which animal do you think he’s pretending to be?”

24–36 Months

Option 2 Informal Gathering



Skill and Goal

Receptive language

Expressive language

Awareness of differences
in sounds

Toddlers practice demonstrated sounds of animals as part of a shared book reading.



Key Concepts

Sounds

Animal



Materials Needed

Can You Growl Like a Bear?
by John Butler

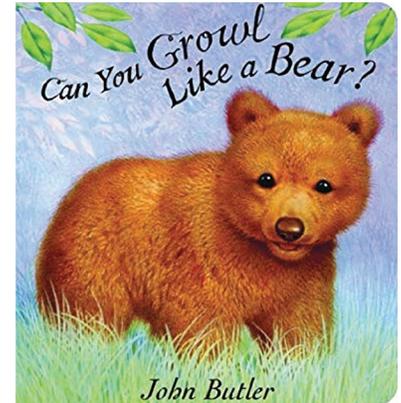


Also Promotes

Cognitive

Be Prepared: Determine and practice the animal sounds featured in the book: growl (bear), chatter (chimp), click (dolphin), buzz (bee), trumpet (elephant), croak (tree frog), roar (leopard), squawk (cockatoo), howl (wolf), snuffle (panda). Use sounds that toddlers could easily repeat. The Internet is a source of some animal sounds.

Invite several toddlers to read a book and learn some animal sounds. Example: “We learned some zoo animal sounds from our book *Polar Bear, Polar Bear, What Do You Hear?* Today we have a different book. Our book today can tell us about some other animal sounds!” If you anticipate one or more children in your group may be familiar with the sound, invite toddlers to share their ideas of what the animal may sound like as each page is read. Some sounds may be unfamiliar to all children and there is limited benefit in asking children to simply guess. After a sound is introduced (by a child or you), repeat the sound and encourage toddlers to try making the sound. Provide a label for the sound, if one exists. Example: “Chatter can sound like this.” Acknowledge each child’s attempt to make a new animal sound. Making a fully correct sound is not the focus of this activity. Encourage toddlers to have fun with the activity by smiling and laughing at some of the silly sounds (such as chatter or snuffle).



👁️ What to Look For—Option 2

Most of the animal sounds made in this activity will be new to toddlers. Some toddlers will enjoy trying to make new sounds, whereas others will want to watch and listen. Acknowledging each attempt at a new sound, including sounds that seem unlike the modeled sound, will encourage greater participation in the activity. Although phonological awareness is not a goal of the activity, there may be some indirect benefit for sound awareness through children’s efforts to make different sounds.

📊 More Scaffolding Tips—Option 2

Extra support ■ Some toddlers may be excited about making animal sounds and need support to calm down at the end of the book. Read the words on the last page about the animals being quiet and falling asleep, and encourage toddlers to act the same. Example: “Let’s be very quiet like the animals and pretend to go to sleep.”

**Option 2 continued**

Enrichment ■ Explore additional sounds some of the animals may make. Example: "In this book the leopard roars. In our other book, *Polar Bear, Polar Bear, What Do You Hear*, the leopard snarls. A leopard can roar and snarl. Do you think some of the animals might make other sounds? What sounds?" ■ Talk with toddlers about the pictures of each animal in their habitat. Example: "The chimpanzee is swinging from trees. Chimpanzees live in trees. I wonder if there are other animals in our book that live in trees."

24–36 Months

Option 3 Informal Gathering



Skill and Goal

Receptive language

Expressive language

Awareness of differences
in sounds

Toddlers practice making demonstrated sounds of zoo animals as part of a shared book reading with props.



Key Concepts

Animals

Sounds

Hear



Materials Needed

Polar Bear, Polar Bear, What Do You Hear? by Bill Martin Jr. and Eric Carle

Felt figure animals in *Polar Bear, Polar Bear, What Do You Hear?*—one figure for each toddler

Flannel board



Also Promotes

Cognitive

Social-Emotional

Self-Regulation

Be Prepared: Determine and practice the animal sounds featured in the book: roaring (lion), snorting or low grunting sound (hippopotamus), fluting (flamingo), braying (zebra), hissing (boa constrictor), trumpeting (elephant), snarling (leopard), yelping (peacock), and bellowing (walrus). Use sounds that toddlers could easily repeat. The internet is a source of some animal sounds.

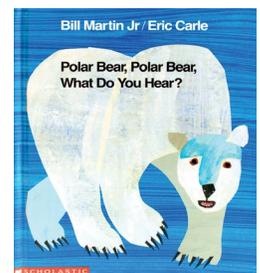
BEGIN: [*Use one of the Informal Gathering Starters suggested in the ELM Curriculum Guide: Birth–36 months to invite toddlers to join.*]

We are going to make the sounds of some zoo animals today!

ASK: [*Show book cover.*]

What do we remember about this book?

[*Repeat and expand toddlers' comments about the book. Remind toddlers that the book tells about the sounds of different animals at the zoo.*]



EXPLAIN: We are going to read this book again. The book is called *Polar Bear, Polar Bear, What Do You Hear?*

[*Show felt figures.*]

Here are pictures of the animals shown in the book. Each of us will get to put one of these pictures on our board.

We can put our picture on our board after we make the animal sound. Our pictures will stick on the board.

[*Use one of the felt figures to briefly describe and demonstrate how the felt figure will stay on the flannel board.*]

Give each child one felt figure.]

ACT: Let's start reading our book. I wonder what sound the polar bear will hear!

[*Toddlers will appreciate a consistent order for the activity. Suggestions are below:*]

Read the book text.

Turn the page to show the animal whose sound is heard. Wait to read the text on this page.

Offer the sound made by the animal (see Be Prepared).

Invite all toddlers to repeat the animal sound.

**Option 3 continued**

Invite the toddler holding the corresponding felt figure to put the figure on the flannel board. Encourage the toddler to say the animal's name. The toddler also might want to repeat the animal sound.

Encourage toddlers to help you describe the pictured animal whose sound was just made. Examples: lion's long tail, flamingo's long neck.

Read the text on the page showing the animal whose sound was just made.]

RECAP: We looked again at pictures of some animals in a zoo. We made sounds of some zoo animals. We took turns putting pictures of the animals on our board.

👁️ What to Look For—Option 3

In addition to promoting language skills, this activity offers practice in taking turns. Sometimes toddlers become excited about sharing what they know. Some toddlers may want to make an animal sound repeatedly. Use a quiet voice to encourage toddlers to use indoor voices and listen to others. If the excitement level is too high, consider singing instructions to toddlers. Example: (sung to the tune of "Mary Had a Little Lamb") "Zoo animals are sitting down, sitting down, sitting down. Zoo animals are sitting down and using quiet voices."

📈 More Scaffolding Tips—Option 3

Extra support ■ To add more physical movement to the activity, ask all toddlers to stand to make the animal sounds. Help toddlers manage their noisemaking by suggesting that an animal sound may be loud one time and quiet another time. Stand with toddlers for loud animal sounds. Bend down toward toddlers to say "Now the animals can make a sound one more time. This time we say the sound quietly." Invite toddlers to sit down. ■ Remind toddlers that "everyone will get a turn" and describe how taking turns works in this activity. You might wish to demonstrate turn taking with another adult, if possible. ■ If it is too challenging for toddlers to hold an animal shape while participating in the book sharing, keep the animal shapes on your lap or on the floor in the middle of the group. Make sure each toddler has a turn to place an animal figure on the board.

Enrichment ■ Encourage toddlers to say some familiar words and/or repetitive phrases in the book. Example: Point to the picture of the lion and encourage toddlers to say "Lion, lion what do you hear?" ■ Some toddlers may enjoy saying the names of animals they know and making the corresponding sound. ■ Talk with toddlers about why animals make sounds. In simple language, explain that animals make sounds to talk to other animals. Animals make sounds to call their babies. Animals make sounds when they play together. Some animals make sounds to tell other animals "go away."



Interest Area

Materials Needed: *At the Zoo* by Roger Priddy (touch and feel book); *Zoo's Who* by Roger Priddy (touch and feel book); *Polar Bear, Polar Bear, What Do You Hear?* by Bill Martin Jr. and Eric Carle; paper; felt figures and flannel board; baskets; soft zoo animals; blocks

Be Prepared: Cut 3"x3" paper shapes to use as animal food in dramatic play area.

Place a copy of the book *Polar Bear, Polar Bear, What Do You Hear?* in a designated area on the floor or low table with felt figures and flannel board. Encourage toddlers to tell the story again. Place paper shapes in baskets in the dramatic play area for toddlers to use as pretend animal food. On another day, display the zoo books. Place soft zoo animals in the block area. Encourage block play by stacking two blocks with a zoo animal on top.

Revised: 6/30/2023



Family Child Care

Toddlers and preschool-age children in your setting may enjoy singing a variation of the "Wheels on the Bus" song that uses animals featured in the book.



24–36 Months

Option 1 Informal Gathering



Skill and Goal

Problem-solving
Object inquiry skills

Toddlers figure out how to make a chain of snap beads get shorter.



Key Concepts

Pull
Shorter
Fewer



Materials Needed

Toddler-size snap beads
Small tub or container



Also Promotes

Physical/Health

Be Prepared: Prepare chains of snap beads with three beads per chain. Prepare at least one chain for each toddler you anticipate will participate in the activity. Place an empty tub in the center of the activity area for collecting beads removed from chains.

Place two chains of snap beads on the floor or table in front of you and the toddlers. Explain these are chains of beads. Point to and name each bead in one of the chains. Example: “Here is a bead. Here is another bead. And here is another bead.” It is not important for toddlers to count the beads or to know how many beads are in a chain.



Ask toddlers what we can do to make a chain of beads get shorter. Put your separated and open hands above a chain of beads, on either end of the chain, and move your hands toward each other to communicate the idea of shorter. Pause for toddlers to think about and maybe respond to the question.

Build on toddler comments or actions. Explain that we can make a chain of beads shorter by taking off a bead. Put the two chains of beads next to each other. Remove one bead from one of the chains. Describe how you pull a bead from the chain. Show and explain that the chain with the removed bead is now shorter than the other chain of beads.



Give each toddler a chain of three beads each. Encourage toddlers to pull apart the beads on their chain. Invite toddlers to put the beads from their chain in the container in the middle of the gathering.

Describe toddlers’ efforts to pull off a bead (make a chain shorter). Use words related to size to describe what happens when toddlers pull apart beads. Examples: shorter, short, fewer.

Offer a playful story about each chain. Example: “Once there was a chain of beads that wanted to be shorter. Jamal pulled one bead from the chain. The chain got shorter. Then Jamal pulled one more bead from the chain. The chain was not a chain any more. It was one bead!” Note that this story example emphasizes how the chain got shorter. Each child will enjoy hearing about his/her chain.

After toddlers pull apart their chains, put together chains of 3–4 beads each to provide each interested toddler with more practice in pulling beads from a chain.

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

Support the problem-solving focus of this activity by clearly stating the opening question—What can we do to make our chain of beads get shorter?—and pausing for toddlers to possibly respond. Look for a puzzled look or other indication that a toddler(s) may not be familiar with the concept of shorter. Consider repeating the hand gestures suggested in the activity description to communicate the idea of the chain getting shorter.

Toddlers will enjoy pulling apart the connected beads. Some children may need a repeated demonstration or other forms of extra support (see Scaffolding Tips). Some children may want to explore characteristics of a bead, or connected beads, with eyes and fingers. Point out key parts of the bead that facilitate a connection, if appropriate. There also may be toddler interest in connecting beads, which is a more challenging skill for most toddlers. Support interest in connecting beads, keeping in mind this is the focus of Option 2 and many children may benefit from continued practice with pulling apart connected beads (the goal of Option 1).

 **More Scaffolding Tips—Option 1**

Extra support ■ If a toddler has difficulty pulling apart beads, hold one of the beads and encourage him/her to pull a connected bead. ■ Remind toddlers to put beads in the bucket.

Enrichment ■ Encourage children to compare the length of their chain to the length of a hand in order to emphasize the idea that the chain gets shorter as beads are removed. It is not necessary to measure a chain.



24–36 Months

Option 2 Informal Gathering



Skill and Goal

Problem-solving
Object inquiry skills

Toddlers figure out how to make a chain of snap beads get longer.



Key Concepts

Put
Longer
Bigger
More



Materials Needed

Toddler-size snap beads
Small tub or container



Also Promotes

Physical/Health

Be Prepared: Prepare chains of snap beads with three beads per chain. Prepare at least one chain for each toddler you anticipate will participate in the activity. Place additional beads in a tub.

Place two chains of snap beads on the floor or table in front of you and the toddlers. Remind toddlers these are chains of beads. You may wish to point out each of the beads in one of the chains. Example: “This is a bead. This is a bead. This is a bead.” It is not important for toddlers to count the beads or to know how many beads are in a chain.



Ask toddlers what we can do to make a chain get longer. Put your separated and open hands above a chain of beads, on either end of the chain, and move your hands slightly away from each other to communicate the idea of longer. Pause for toddlers to think about and maybe respond to the question.

Build on toddler comments or actions. Explain that we can make a chain of beads longer by putting a bead on our chain. Put the two chains of beads next to each other. Add one bead to one of the chains. Describe how you put a bead on a chain. Show and explain that the chain with one more bead is now longer than the other chain of beads. Emphasize the chain is longer when a bead is added.



Give each toddler a chain of three beads. Place the tub of extra snap beads in the center of the work area. Encourage toddlers to put the beads on their chain, one bead at a time.

Describe toddlers’ efforts to make a chain longer. Use words related to size to describe what happens when toddlers add beads. Examples: long, longer, bigger, more.

As with Option 1, toddlers will enjoy hearing a playful story about each chain. Example: “Once there was a colorful chain of beads that wished to be longer. Jamie put one more red bead on the chain. The chain got longer. Jamie added two green beads, and the chain was even longer! Then Jamie added a blue bead to each end of the chain, and it was really long!”

**Option 2 continued**

Note that this story example emphasizes the concepts of longer and more. The story includes the colors of beads to support children's color knowledge. Color knowledge is not an activity goal, however, and color does not need to be mentioned in a story. Even though stories will be similar, each toddler will value a story that features his/her efforts!

👁️ What to Look For—Option 2

During the opening segment of the activity, look for a puzzled look or other sign that a toddler(s) may not be familiar with the concept of longer. If appropriate, repeat the suggested hand gestures aimed at communicating the idea of a longer chain of beads.

In addition to realizing that adding snap beads will make a longer chain, there is the problem-solving task of exploring how to connect two snap beads. A first step is to figure out that the hole of one bead needs to be lined up with the protruding part of another bead. Acting on this understanding involves eye-hand coordination. Look for ways to support each toddler's active participation in each of the problem-solving tasks of making a longer chain of beads. The activity is not intended to follow a "do what I do" format only.

Putting together snap beads is generally a more challenging task than pulling apart connected beads (the focus of Option 1). Some children may need a repeated demonstration or other forms of extra support (see Scaffolding Tips). Provide just enough help for a child to experience success. Some children may want to explore characteristics of a bead with eyes and fingers. Point out key parts of the bead that facilitate a connection, if appropriate. There also may be toddler interest in pulling apart beads, which is an easier skill for most toddlers. This can be a valuable way to understand how snap beads work. Support the effort with words, such as shorter, smaller, or fewer. Toddler interest in pulling apart (vs. putting together) snap beads may indicate that Option 1 is appropriate for now.

📈 More Scaffolding Tips—Option 2

Extra support ■ If a toddler has difficulty adding a bead to his/her chain, hold an end bead in the chain and encourage the toddler to attach another bead by pressing downward. Emphasize how the hole of one bead is lined up with the part of the other bead that goes into the hole. Once the toddler masters the task of attaching one to another, he/she can hold two beads.

Enrichment ■ Ask: "What would happen if we put our chains of beads together?" ■ Demonstrate how to connect a bead chain into a circle and encourage children to also make a circle. ■ Encourage a child to create a chain equal to (as long as) their arm, leg, or height.



24–36 Months

Option 3 Informal Gathering



Skill and Goal

Problem-solving
Object inquiry skills

Toddlers explore how to pull apart connected star builders.



Key Concepts

Pull apart
Bigger
Smaller



Materials Needed

Interlocking star builders—
at least 6 per toddler (see
Be Prepared)



Also Promotes

Communication/Language
Physical/Health

Be Prepared: Assemble different configurations of connected star builders, using at least six builders per configuration. Prepare one configuration for each of the toddlers you anticipate will participate in the activity. Different types of creations will support the excitement and challenge of the activity. Keep nearby one star builder you can show toddlers at the beginning of the activity. The activity begins with one creation. Put other configurations aside so they do not distract toddlers' attention at the beginning of the activity.

BEGIN: *[Place one of the configurations of star builders on the floor or table, in the center of the work area.]*

ASK: What is sitting in front of us?

[Follow-up prompt, if needed: "What are we looking at?"]

Observe and listen as toddlers respond. Repeat and expand on ideas. Example: "Tiana said 'star.' The neat thing sitting in front of us is a star. Does our special creation have one star or many stars?"]



EXPLAIN: Our special creation is made with star builders. Here is a star builder.

[Show one star builder.]

There are many star builders in our neat creation.

ASK: Do you think it would be hard to pull apart all of the star builders in a creation like the one we are looking at?

ACT: Let's try to pull apart the star builders in a creation.

There is one special creation for each of us. Each creation is different.

[Give each toddler one creation. Invite toddlers to remove one star builder at a time from their creation. Encourage toddlers to take their time.]



**Option 3 continued**

Encourage each toddler to put the removed star builders near his/her work area.

Watch how toddlers approach the task. Offer assistance as needed (see Extra Support tip).

Encourage toddlers to tell how they are pulling apart their creations. Describe their actions.]

ASK: *[After several builders have been removed from each creation:]*

- Look at what is happening to the neat creations! Are the creations getting bigger or smaller?

[Pause for toddler response. Restate the question, if appropriate.]

- Why are the creations getting smaller?

ACT: *[Continue to talk with toddlers about their efforts.]*

After all or most toddlers have finished pulling apart the star builders in their creations, draw their attention to the pile of star builders each has put in his/her work area. Example: "Look at the star builders sitting next to each of us. What happened?"

RECAP: The star builders used to be part of neat creations. We pulled apart the creations. We figured out how to take apart the creations. The creations got smaller. Now we have small piles of star builders. The star builders are no longer connected.

What to Look For—Option 3

For many toddlers, star builders are a more complex material to work with than the snap beads featured in Options 1 and 2. Provide time for toddlers to look at the star builder creations offered at the beginning of the session. It is valuable for each toddler to own and solve the problem of how to pull apart a configuration of star builders. An important transition occurs when a toddler realizes the larger creation is made up of individual star builders. Offer just enough assistance for a toddler to succeed on his/her own. If assistance is needed, begin with verbal support and then a demonstration if verbal support is insufficient.

Be sensitive to the possibility of a "race" to see who can pull apart his/her creation the fastest. A race orientation defeats the goal of careful exploration of star builders and how they are connected. Monitor your comments so toddlers who readily pull star builders from their creation do not receive more enthusiastic praise than toddlers who are at a beginning level of skill in manipulating the builders.

More Scaffolding Tips—Option 3

Extra support ■ When you present the single star builder in the opening segment of the activity, encourage toddlers to touch and pass it around if they have limited or no familiarity with star builders. ■ Offer verbal support for pulling apart star builders by encouraging a toddler to hold a star with one hand and pull with the other hand. The key actions here are "hold" and "pull."

Option 3 continued

Enrichment ■ If one or more toddlers show interest in connecting star builders, ask how two star builders could be put together. Approach their interest as a problem for a toddler(s) to solve. If assistance in connecting star builders is needed, show and explain that each star has balls. We can feel the balls with our fingers. There is an open space between the balls. We can turn one star and put its open space as close as we can to an open space on another star. Then we push the stars together. The stars go together when we push.

**Interest Area**

Materials Needed: star builders, snap beads, warm water, sensory table

Place a basket of star builders in the play area or on a low table. Encourage toddlers to create star chains. Place a range of shapes made from star builders—from simple to three-dimensional—on low tables for toddlers to discover. On another day, toddlers may enjoy connecting star builders or other materials that connect (such as snap beads) in the sensory table with warm water.

**Family Child Care**

Materials Needed: star builders, snap cubes, pop tubes

Comment on the types of shapes made by toddlers. Example: “I see Kennedy and Mateo connected their stars. Wow, it is like a long friendly snake.” Encourage star connector work with questions, such as “Does your friendly snake need more stars?” Other children in your setting may be interested in star builders. Infants often enjoy putting stars into containers and taking them out. Older children may enjoy connecting other play materials, such as snap-together cubes or pop tubes.



24–36 Months

Option 1 Informal Gathering



Skill and Goal Self-control

Toddlers watch how to breathe slowly and deeply as a way to calm their minds and bodies.



Key Concepts

Breathe in
Breathe out



Materials Needed

Flower (real or artificial)



Also Promotes

Social-Emotional
Physical/Health

BEGIN: *[Invite several toddlers to join you in sitting on the floor to do something that will help us get calm.]*

Today we are going to learn a new way to get calm. We are going to breathe slowly so we can help calm our minds and bodies. We are not upset or anxious when we are calm.

ASK: Let's all take a breath. What happens when we breathe?

[Build on toddler responses to emphasize that air goes in and out of our bodies when we breathe.]

EXPLAIN: *[Demonstrate breathing in and out deeply and slowly.]*

I am taking a deep breath. I am breathing slowly. I can help my mind and body feel calm when I breathe slowly and breathe deeply.

[Display the flower.]

Please look at this beautiful flower. I am going to pretend this beautiful flower smells wonderful. I want to smell the flower! I want to take a really deep breath so I can smell this beautiful flower.

ASK: What do we use to smell with?

[Repeat toddlers' responses. Point to your nose.]

We smell with our nose. We also breathe with our nose!

ACT: I am going to breathe in slowly with my nose. I am pretending to smell the beautiful flower.

[Demonstrate breathing in slowly through your nose. You may wish to briefly close your eyes and smile as you "smell" the flower.]

Now I am going to practice breathing out slowly. Breathing out slowly can also help my mind and body feel calm.

[Demonstrate breathing out slowly.]

Now I am going to try both! I am going to take a deep and slow breath while I pretend to smell a beautiful flower. Then I am going to breathe out slowly. Please watch me!



Option 1 continued

[Demonstrate slowly breathing in and out. Take a deep breath when you breathe in. You may wish to repeat the breaths several times. Show feelings of calm and relaxation as you demonstrate the breathing.]

RECAP: We learned a way to get calm by using our breathing. You watched me take a deep and slow breath in. You also watched me slowly breathe air out of my body. Breathing in and out slowly can help our minds and bodies get calm.



24–36 Months

Option 2 Informal Gathering



Skill and Goal

Self-control

Toddlers practice breathing deeply and slowly with the help of a prop for the purpose of calming their minds and bodies.



Key Concepts

Breathe in
Breathe out



Materials Needed

Flower (real or artificial)—1 per child and adult



Also Promotes

Social-Emotional
Physical/Health

Invite several toddlers to join you in sitting on the floor to breathe deeply and slowly. Remind toddlers that breathing slowly and deeply can help us calm our bodies and minds. Provide a breathing demonstration based on the Option 1 information.

Provide each toddler with a flower that he/she can pretend has a wonderful smell. Demonstrate again breathing in slowly through your nose in a calm manner. Lead toddlers in breathing in slowly several times. Example: “Let’s all smell our beautiful flowers by using our noses to breathe in slowly.” Emphasize taking a deep breath of air and breathing slowly. Use a calm voice as you guide the process of breathing in.

Next give attention to breathing out slowly. Offer a demonstration and then lead children in breathing out slowly after they slowly take a deep breath. Repeat several times. Relax your facial muscles as you breathe out.

Lastly, demonstrate and lead toddlers in breathing in (with a deep breath) and out slowly.



24–36 Months

Option 3 Informal Gathering



Skill and Goal

Self-control

Toddlers practice breathing deeply and slowly (without a prop) for the purpose of calming their minds and bodies.



Key Concepts

Breathe in
Breathe out



Materials Needed

none



Also Promotes

Social-Emotional
Physical/Health

Invite several toddlers to join you in breathing deeply and slowly. You may wish to suggest that toddlers lie on the floor, with sufficient personal space for each, to practice breathing. Lying on their backs (versus sitting) may help toddlers focus more on their body while breathing. Remind toddlers how to breathe in deeply and slowly, and how to breathe out slowly. If appropriate, provide a breathing demonstration based on the Option 1 information. In keeping with the goal of Option 3, do not provide a flower as a prop for breathing.

Support children in breathing in and out with a soft, gentle voice that says “in, out, in, out.” Stay in tune with toddlers’ actual breathing so you are not rushing their efforts with your words. Stop offering “in, out, in, out” guidance if it appears toddlers are not together with their breathing. The goal is to support deep and slow breathing, not uniformity in breathing.

After several minutes of practice, invite toddlers to talk about whether they feel more relaxed.

What to Look For—Options 1–3

The three options in this activity plan move from demonstration (Option 1) to practice with a prop (Option 2) to practice without a prop in a potentially different body position (Option 3). Some toddlers may be ready for Option 3 without the preparation of Options 1 and/or 2. In contrast, some toddlers may find it challenging to focus on their breathing in an intentional way and struggle with the limited supports of Option 3. There may be a tendency among some toddlers to breathe out quickly and maybe forcefully, as if blowing out birthday candles. Positively acknowledge this tendency (it has a basis in most children’s experiences) while at the same time encouraging toddlers to breathe slowly. In some sessions, it may be helpful to focus more on breathing out than on breathing in.

Slowing down the pace of the activity and talking in a quiet, soothing voice will help to foster a positive, calming experience for toddlers. You may wish to provide additional time for toddlers to observe, imitate, and practice breathing throughout the week (See Extra Support tip). Also, talking with toddlers about how breathing makes them feel can add conceptual understanding to intentional breathing practices.

If toddlers show difficulty in focusing on breathing slowly, it would be better to politely stop the activity and try again at a later time than to continue to practice breathing in an unproductive way.



As toddlers show improved skill in calming their minds and bodies through deep and slow breathing, encourage them to use breathing at relevant times during the day. (See Enrichment tip below.)

More Scaffolding Tips—Options 1–3

Extra support ■ Repeat Option 1 with toddlers who find it hard to focus on their breathing. It can be helpful to watch you breathe or maybe another toddler who is mastering the practice of intentional breathing. Ensure each toddler has the opportunity to be successful with one of the options (or parts of an option) in this activity plan. ■ Provide opportunities for toddlers to focus on breathing in through their nose. Examples: Encourage children to smell flowers or plants outdoors, a food item at mealtime, or a pine cone in the science area. Talk with toddlers about how it feels to breathe through their nose in comparison to their mouth.

Enrichment ■ Encourage toddlers to use this breathing exercise at other times during the day when they would like to feel calm. Example: “I can see you are frustrated with your puzzle, Iona. Remember how we learned to breathe in deeply and slowly? Let’s try that breathing now to see if it helps you get calm.”



Interest Area

Materials Needed: flower (real or artificial), pillows/cushions, richly illustrated books, stuffed animals

Use items in the Materials Needed list to create a protected area in the room that toddlers can visit to calm down. Invite toddlers to interact with the materials, including use of the flower as a beautiful thing to smell by taking deep and slow breaths.



Family Child Care

Materials Needed: see Interest Area items

Invite toddlers to help you select and arrange items for a cozy quiet area in your setting that toddlers can use for calming down (see Interest Area suggestion). An older child in your setting who is skilled in focused breathing may be interested in helping younger children practice deep and slow breathing.



24–36 Months

Option 1 Informal Gathering



Skill and Goal

Social interaction skills

Toddlers take turns pretending to be an animal of their choice walking across a pretend bridge.



Key Concepts

Pretend
Taking turns



Materials Needed

Balance beam



Also Promotes

Physical/Health
Self-Regulation
Communication/Language

BEGIN: *[Invite two or three toddlers to join you at the balance beam placed in an open space on a mat or rug. Welcome the toddlers and ask them to sit with you.]*

EXPLAIN: Today we are going to play on our balance beam.

ASK: I think our balance beam looks like a small bridge. What do you think?

[Wait for toddlers to respond. Encourage toddlers to describe how the balance beam looks like a bridge.]

EXPLAIN: We use a bridge to get from one side to the other side of something. Bridges can go over different things. A bridge can go over a river or a railroad track or a road. People can walk on a bridge. Cars and trucks can drive on a bridge. Some bridges are for animals to walk on.

Today we are going to pretend to be animals walking across a bridge that goes over water!

ASK: Let's think about what kind of animals we would like to pretend to be when we walk on our bridge.

[Pause for toddlers to think about what animal they would like to be. Give each toddler a turn to share their idea. Repeat and extend each toddler's response. Example: "Gina will pretend she is a dinosaur going over our bridge!"]

EXPLAIN: We will take turns walking on our bridge. Taking turns with our balance beam means only one person can be on the bridge. We will take our turn when the bridge is empty.

I will help you take turns on the bridge. Each of you will have a turn to be your pretend animal on the bridge! We will have fun taking turns!

ACT: *[Select a toddler to go first. Remind the other toddlers that they will have a turn soon. Examples: "Gina is going to be a dinosaur on our bridge first. You are going to sit on the carpet and I will tell you when the bridge is empty and it's your turn. Let's all watch Gina be a dinosaur!" "Jamal, your turn is next. You will be a dog on the bridge after Gina."]*

Kneel next to one end of the balance beam. If toddlers need help with balance, walk along with them offering your finger or hand to hold.



Option 1 continued

Make the activity fun for the toddlers as you announce each toddler's turn. Examples: "Next is Doggy Jamal!" "Jordan, now it is your turn!"

Celebrate good turn taking. Example: "Jamal, you waited patiently for your turn." Give little attention to errors.

Put the balance beam away when the activity is over.]

RECAP: We pretended our balance beam was a bridge. You pretended to be an animal and took turns going from one end to the other. Taking turns helped each of us be the only animal on the bridge!

What to Look For—Option 1

Toddlers are learning about many aspects of social interactions. Learning to take turns requires intentional behavior with adult guidance and repeated experiences. This activity will be most successful when presented to two or three toddlers at a time. You are likely to see differences in abilities to control behavior while waiting, and maybe in navigating the balance beam. (See Extra Support tips.)

Toddlers understand directions better when there is guidance on what to do, rather than what not to do. Waiting for one or two friends to cross the bridge is manageable for a toddler when a caring adult provides guidance. Some toddlers will benefit from your verbalizing the order of turn taking. Example: "Now it is Rian's turn. Next it will be Katy's turn."

More Scaffolding Tips—Option 1

Extra support ■ If a toddler needs help with balance, walk along with him/her, offering your finger or hand to hold. ■ Provide a favorite toy for each toddler to hold while waiting for a turn. Some toddlers may prefer to sit in a nearby chair to wait for their turn.

Enrichment ■ Talk with toddlers about the animals they selected. Invite them to make the animal noise as they walk on the bridge or reach the other side of the bridge. ■ Invite toddlers to stand up and wait in line for their turn on the balance beam. Help toddlers understand the word and concept of waiting behind another person. Example: "You can stand behind Gina. You can see Gina's back when you are behind her."



24–36 Months

Option 2 Informal Gathering



Skill and Goal

Social interaction skills

Toddlers practice taking turns with a peer(s) using a desired item (marker of a chosen color) while creating art.



Key Concepts

Taking turns
Colors



Materials Needed

Washable dot markers (see Be Prepared)
Paper—1 sheet per toddler



Also Promotes

Physical/Health
Self-Regulation
Communication/Language

Be Prepared: Select marker colors of strong interest to toddlers in your room. Limit the number of markers you provide, especially favorite colors, to facilitate the activity's focus on sharing desired items.

Invite several toddlers to create pictures with dot markers. Encourage each toddler to select a marker to make dots or other markings on his/her paper. Describe the actions of the toddlers as they create with the markers. Example: "Cora is making blue dots in a row on her paper."



As toddlers use the dot markers to create their pictures, encourage turn taking with the different colors of markers. Examples: "Cole, you are taking a turn with the purple dot marker. Brook said she wants purple dots, too. When you finish making purple dots, please give Brook a turn with the purple marker." "Cora, you said you want yellow dots. You can use your words to ask Jaime to share the yellow dot marker with you when he is finished."

Act as a coach for a child who is learning to ask for a turn. Example: "I see you are watching Nicholas using the green dot marker. Do you want to make green dots on your paper? You can say to Nicholas, 'I want the green marker, please.'" Recognize and affirm each type of positive communication and cooperation during the activity.

👁️ What to Look For—Option 2

Toddlers enjoy creating their own art, and this activity provides opportunities to practice taking turns with desired materials. Some toddlers may enjoy making dots on their paper and have ideas for what they wish to create. Others may prefer to make just a few dots and move on to other activities. Acknowledge each level of participation while encouraging toddlers to take turns with the provided materials.

📈 More Scaffolding Tips—Option 2

Extra support ■ Some toddlers have less interest in creating art than other toddlers. You may be able to gently sustain activity with the art work by inviting a toddler to choose a second color to add to his/her picture before moving on to another activity. Example: "You made some red dots on your paper, Avery. What color dots would you like to make next?"

Enrichment ■ Encourage toddlers to think about what they would like to create with the dot markers. Ask what colors a toddler wants to use to create his/her picture and, if appropriate, suggest words the toddler can use to secure and share the desired colors.



24–36 Months

Option 3 Informal Gathering



Skill and Goal

Social interaction skills

Toddlers participate in a shared book reading and puppet-led description of how to share a desired item with a peer.



Key Concepts

Play together
Sharing
Taking turns



Materials Needed

Sharing Time by Elizabeth Verdick
2 hand puppets
2 small farm-related toys
Toy barn



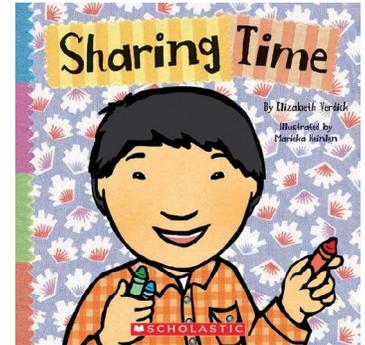
Also Promotes

Self-Regulation
Communication/Language
Cognitive

Be Prepared: Notice this activity involves your making up and offering a brief interactive story told by puppets and focused on sharing a farm-related toy.

Invite several toddlers to join you in a space where each toddler has a carpet square or spot to sit on. Read the book, talking with toddlers about what the boy and girl on each page are thinking and feeling. Example: “They both want to play with the robot. Their faces look frustrated and angry.” Emphasize how the two friends work it out together and share smiles at the end. Talk about the three “solutions” provided in the story:

- Play together and share the toy(s)
- Take turns
- Put the toy(s) away for later



Explain that you invited two puppet friends to tell a story. Ask the toddlers to stay on the carpet squares, watch with their eyes, and listen with their ears. Put the puppets on your hands and use your normal voice to introduce them to the toddlers. The puppets can say “hello” to the toddlers. Use the puppets to tell a short farm-based story you make up about how to find a solution to a situation where both puppets want to play with the same toy. The small farm-related toys and barn are visual props for the story. Emphasize the following in the story:

Each puppet wants to play with the barn and farm toys. The puppets cannot agree on who gets to play with the barn.

Puppets say “We have a problem.”

Puppets ask toddlers for ideas to help them solve their problem. Repeat and extend each response. Emphasize sharing and playing together with the barn or taking turns with the barn. Example: “Rhianna says we should play together with the barn. That’s a good idea! [*to other puppet:*] Do you want to play with me?”

Together, puppets agree to share or to take turns.

Toddlers will be delighted to hear a story by the puppets and may not be aware you are talking for each of the characters. In your own voice, thank the puppets for coming to tell the story about sharing and taking turns. If toddlers seem interested, take the puppets around to each toddler to say “hello.”



Option 3 continued

What to Look For—Option 3

This two-part activity reinforces the use of shared problem-solving to address conflicts over wanting to use the same toy. Toddlers are likely to identify with the characters in the story who have a conflict over a toy. Some toddlers will readily understand the connection between the puppets and their own play. In your discussion of the puppet story, emphasize cooperation, such as playing together or taking turns.

More Scaffolding Tips—Option 3

Extra support ■ Some toddlers may have difficulty watching and listening throughout this activity. Some toddlers may prefer to revisit the book or the puppets on their own at a later time. Another option is to separate the book and puppet segments by offering the puppet activity at a later time during the day.

Enrichment ■ Invite two toddlers to use the puppets to act out a scenario of their creation about sharing and taking turns. Encourage toddlers to consider options offered in the book or puppet story.

■ Toddlers who experience conflict over toys in the future may benefit from a reminder of how the puppets solved their problem in this activity. Example: “You both want to play with the blocks. Do you remember when the puppets both wanted to play with the toy barn? How did they decide to work out their problem?”



Interest Area

Materials Needed: blocks, toy animal and people figures

Display several animal and people figures near small bridges you make with blocks. Invite toddlers to play with the blocks and figures. Talk with toddlers about how they can help the animals and people take turns walking across the bridges.



Family Child Care

Materials Needed: *Sharing Time* by Elizabeth Verdick, two hand puppets

Children of all ages enjoy puppets. After reading the book, invite two older children to use the puppets to act out a story about sharing or taking turns. Toddlers may enjoy having a turn to act out a story with the puppets also. Talk with the children about their ideas for solving the problem of two or more children wanting to play with the same toy. Acknowledge and repeat each idea shared.



24–36 Months

Option 1 Informal Gathering



Skill and Goal

Gross motor development

Toddlers practice stepping up and down using a stepper as a pretend bridge in a dramatic play activity.



Key Concepts

Step up
Step down



Materials Needed

4-inch step
Pretend tickets—several per toddler
Small basket



Also Promotes

Communication/Language
Cognitive
Self-Regulation

Be Prepared: Add several materials to the dramatic play area to stimulate toddlers' interest in going somewhere, such as a beach, park, or movie. Examples: toy cameras and traveling bags. Select items that build on a current interest among children. Place the stepper close to the area where toddlers will play. The stepper will serve as a pretend bridge for children to cross as they go to and return from their place of interest. Place a basket of pretend tickets in the play area for toddlers to give to the bridge helper (you or another adult) when they cross the pretend bridge.

BEGIN: *[Invite several toddlers to join you in the dramatic play center. Sit or kneel at eye level with the toddlers and talk with them about the play materials they are discovering. Encourage discussion of going to a pretend place. Offer suggestions if toddlers do not offer ideas. It is fine if toddlers wish to go to different imaginary places.]*

EXPLAIN: There is a pretend bridge for us to walk across when we go to the place we want to go to. We will give a ticket to the bridge helper when we walk across the bridge. I will stay by the bridge as a helper. I can collect your tickets when you walk across the bridge. Each of us needs to wait for our turn to walk across our pretend bridge. I will help you get your things to the other side of the bridge.

[Point to and describe the imaginary bridge. Emphasize that we step up, walk across, and step down. Connect the idea of using the bridge to walking to an imaginary destination. Explain that you can help people step up on the bridge and step down from the bridge.]

ACT: *[Distribute two tickets to each toddler. One ticket is for going to the destination, one ticket is for returning.]*

Kneel next to the bridge to assist toddlers who need reassurance or assistance. Take the role of a Bridge Helper in the pretend play. Take a ticket from each toddler. Help toddlers who need assistance stepping up or stepping down (see Extra Support tip). Help toddlers with turn taking.

Toddlers will be delighted to give you a ticket and step up to cross the bridge.

Observe and describe toddlers' movements as they step up and down.

Saying each child's name will help with turn taking. Example: "Elias, it is your turn to step up on the bridge."

Facilitate each toddler's return across the bridge (after spending time at the imaginary destination).]

**Option 1 continued**

ASK: *[After each toddler has returned from their pretend destination, ask an individualized question to prompt a brief conversation about their time away. Some toddlers may give a short response, such as “park,” or a longer description, such as “I go to park with Mommy. I swing.” Repeat and extend the response. Example: “Great. You went to the park with Mommy. You played on a swing.”]*

RECAP: *[Remind toddlers how we used our pretend bridge to go somewhere today. We waited for a turn to step up. We also stepped down from the bridge. We stepped up and down with one foot at a time.]*

👁️ What to Look For—Option 1

Provide time that supports toddlers’ decision-making about their imaginary destination. It may be appropriate to offer several suggestions. Refrain from imposing a destination. Toddlers may opt for different places, as noted in the activity plan.

Toddlers will likely enjoy holding a ticket and giving it to you before crossing the bridge. Some toddlers may be familiar with the use of tickets. Remember that the main goal of the activity is to provide practice in stepping up and stepping down, including the process of maintaining balance during and after stepping. Your encouragement and physical help, if appropriate, are important. Avoid letting other parts of the activity, such as ticket giving, become more important than paying attention to stepping up and down.

In general, stepping down from a step is more challenging than stepping up. Some toddlers may need assistance for stepping down, but not stepping up.

Some toddlers may prefer to watch several other toddlers navigate the bridge before doing so themselves.

Toddlers enjoy carrying objects around a room, but holding play materials while stepping up and down may interfere with a toddler’s balance and obstruct his/her vision. Let toddlers know you will transfer their toys to the other side. Example: “You will want to see your feet when you are taking a step. Holding the toy dog makes it too hard to see where your feet are stepping. I will hold your toy and give it to you after you cross our bridge.”

Discourage toddlers from jumping on and off the bridge. Remind toddlers that we are practicing how to step up on, and down from, a pretend bridge. We use one foot at a time.

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

Extra support ■ Offer the following guidance to a toddler for stepping up on, and down from, the bridge: (1) stand very close to the bridge; (2) look at where you are going to put your foot when you step up; (3) step up, one foot at a time (and hold my hand if you would like); (4) walk across the bridge and stop before you step down; (5) look at where you are going to put your foot when you step down; and (6) step down, one foot at a time (and hold my hand if you would like). ■ Help a toddler regain balance by offering your hand as a support. ■ Remind toddlers to take their time. They do not need to hurry. ■ You may wish to distribute the second ticket just prior to a toddler's return across the bridge, rather than distribute two tickets at the same time.

Enrichment ■ Ask each toddler where he/she is going when presenting a ticket to you. You can extend the conversation by asking what the toddler plans to do at the destination and whether he/she will return during the day or at night. Remember the destination so you can ask about the place when the toddler returns.



24–36 Months

Option 2 Informal Gathering



Skill and Goal

Gross motor development

Toddlers pay attention to stepping up and/or stepping down as part of regular gross motor activity.



Key Concepts

Step up
Step down



Materials Needed

Step to climber or slide



Also Promotes

Self-Regulation
Cognitive

Position yourself next to steps, such as a climber, that are part of an outdoor or indoor large motor play area. Your task is to help toddlers focus on stepping up and/or stepping down by talking with each toddler about what he/she plans to do in stepping and describing the toddler's actions. Hearing the words associated with each small action in stepping up and/or down may enhance a toddler's understanding and awareness of movements involved in stepping up and/or down. Offer a hand if toddlers seem to need balance support. Emphasize:

- Look at where you plan to step
- Step up (or down) with one foot
- Step up (or down) with your other foot

Remember that stepping down is often more challenging than stepping up.

👁️ What to Look For—Option 2

It is common for toddlers who are learning to manage stairs to lead with the same foot on each step. Going up and down steps, toddlers generally bring both feet to the same step before moving to the next step. Many toddlers will need a railing or adult hand for support.

There is no need to urge a toddler to hurry to the next developmental level of walking on stairs. Discourage other toddlers from urging a child to “hurry up” on steps. Positively emphasize the importance of taking time and waiting for our turn. See the Scaffolding Tips. New skills will emerge as the toddler gains experience and confidence with steps.

Refrain from placing a child onto play equipment. Observe the toddler's efforts and help the toddler learn the individual movements for climbing up or down. Once a toddler has mastered going up steps, he/she is likely prepared to learn skills in stepping down.

📊 More Scaffolding Tips—Option 2

Extra support ■ Kneel next to a toddler who wants to watch other toddlers manage steps. Describe how other children are going up and down. ■ Offer a simple phrase to help toddlers wait for their turn on the steps. Examples: “Nora goes up. Friends watch and wait.” “One friend can go up the steps. Nora is next.”

BLOCK
2

Moving Our Bodies *(continued)*



Option 2 continued

Enrichment ■ Create and sing a little song about how to help toddlers take turns. See the following example. (Tune: "Jack and Jill")

Nora climbs steps, and now you see
Nora steps up, one, two, three
Nora slides down, one, two, three
Now it is time for the next friend please.



24–36 Months

Option 3 Informal Gathering



Skill and Goal

Gross motor development

Toddlers step up and down on a stepper as part of walking through a simple indoor obstacle course.



Key Concepts

Step up
Step down



Materials Needed

Flat stepping stones (see Be Prepared)
Aerobic stepper
Rug
Masking or duct tape



Also Promotes

Communication/Language
Cognitive
Self-Regulation

Be Prepared: Create a simple indoor obstacle course using the aerobic step and stepping stones (pretend rocks), based on your understanding of toddlers' locomotor skills. Use non-slip place mats, laminated pieces of paper, or hardy construction paper that is securely taped to the floor for stepping stones (rocks). Vary the distance between rocks (stepping stones). Include the stepper as a key feature of the course. Avoid placing a pretend rock next to the stepper if you anticipate this may cause confusion or distraction. The rug is to serve as pretend tall grass.

Invite a 3–4 toddlers to follow you on an “adventure walk” in your room that includes a river and steps. Describe parts of the path before taking a walk. Vary the path you pursue according to the stepping skills of toddlers who are following you. Parts of the course to include are:

- Lead toddlers in stepping up on, and stepping down from, the bridge (stepper).
- Support toddlers as they step from rock to rock.
- Take big steps across the tall grass (rug).
- Repeat the sequence or part of the sequence or lead toddlers to a stopping place for a brief time together.

At the conclusion of the adventure walk, sit on the floor facing toddlers and remind them that we stepped up and stepped down as part of our adventure walk. Invite them to watch you and listen with their ears. Speak in rhythm and pat your legs as you say a rhyme like the following example:

**We-stepped-on-river-rocks
A-bridge-we-crossed.
Walked-through-tall-grass
And-didn't-get-lost!**

👁️ What to Look For—Option 3

Staying close to the small group of toddlers who are following your lead will facilitate interactions and make you fully available to help a toddler use the stepper. Toddlers are not expected to manage the activity without a staff member. Arrange for another adult to wait with toddlers who take a turn for going on the adventure walk.

Again, discourage toddlers from jumping. We are practicing how to walk on things and how to step up and step down.

**Option 3 continued**

More Scaffolding Tips—Option 3

Extra support ■ Offer to hold a toddler's hand. ■ Describe the process of stepping up on, and down from, the stepper. Wait at the stepper until all toddlers have navigated the step.

Enrichment ■ Add another element to the obstacle course, such as placing soft animals along the path. Encourage toddlers to imagine the items are forest animals, such as deer, that are you watching you move along the path.



Interest Area

Materials Needed: stepping stones for toddlers

Create another kind of path for toddlers to follow with distinct steps to encourage taking a broader step than usual. In the building area, provide people figures that toddlers can use to reenact moving along the adventure walk. Provide toy cameras for toddlers to use on their own pretend adventures.

Create an outdoor course (without steps) by making circles with chalk on the pavement. Encourage toddlers to step from one circle to another.

To foster fine motor skills, provide small balls of play dough for toddlers to flatten into little stepping stones for animal figures.



Family Child Care

Materials Needed: step or wooden platform, stepping stones

Some young children in your setting may go down a step by crawling backwards or scooting down a step. Crawling infants will enjoy pulling themselves up onto the stepper or using it as a surface for play materials. Outdoors there may be a short, safe curb or small wooden platform (4–6 inches in height) where toddlers can practice stepping.