



**Communication/  
Language**

**Exploring Words**

- Option 1** (OO) A toddler participates in singing a familiar song, with the opportunity to add key words.
- Option 2** (IG) Toddlers participate in saying a traditional rhyme together, with the opportunity to add missing words.



**Cognitive**

**Solving Problems**

- Option 1** (IG) Toddlers participate in a humorous book sharing on the sizes and uses of familiar clothing for people worn by animals.
- Option 2** (IG) Toddlers talk about how and why pictured clothing is worn by people and by animals.



**Self-Regulation**

**Getting Calm**

- Option 1** (IG) Toddlers watch a caregiver (or older child) engage in a downward dog pose (yoga).
- Option 2** (IG) Toddlers practice moving into a downward dog pose (yoga).
- Option 3** (IG) Toddlers practice holding a downward dog pose (yoga) while breathing slowly and deeply.



**Social-Emotional**

**Interacting with Others**

- Option 1** (IG) Toddlers help wash items in the room.
- Option 2** (OO) A toddler helps care for nontoxic indoor plants.



**Physical/Health**

**Using Our Hands**

- Option 1** (IG) Toddlers string beads onto tubing.
- Option 2** (IG) Toddlers create chains by putting together links.
- Option 3** (IG) Toddlers put together plastic nuts and bolts.

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



## 24–36 Months

### Option 1 One-to-One



#### Skill and Goal

Receptive language

Expressive language

Awareness of differences  
in sounds

A toddler participates in singing a familiar song, with the opportunity to add key words.



#### Key Concepts

Word

Remember



#### Materials Needed

*Wheels on the Bus* by Raffi  
(see Be Prepared)



#### Also Promotes

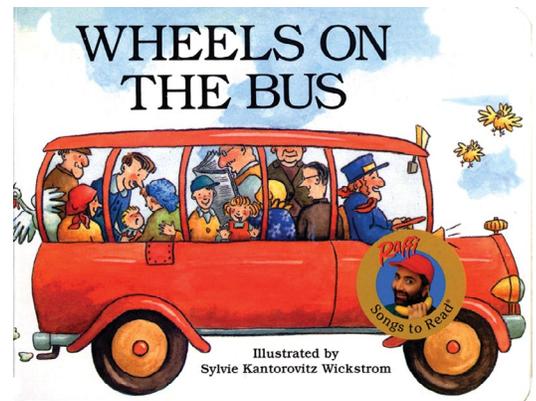
Cognitive

Physical/Health

Self-Regulation

**Be Prepared:** Learn the tune and words for the “Wheels on the Bus” song. If the book by Raffi is not available, secure a different richly illustrated *Wheels on the Bus* book, such as the book by Scarlett Wing or Jerry Smath. Avoid using a recording of the song for this activity. You can vary the pace of the song, emphasize key words, and leave a space for the toddler to add a word when you talk and sing. Also, your voice will be meaningful to the toddler.

This activity has two segments. For the first segment, invite a toddler to sit with you to look at the *Wheels on the Bus* book. Point to pictures that correspond to the book text you read. Emphasize key words plus their images in pictures that you plan to invite the toddler to say in the second segment of the activity. If the toddler is familiar with the book or song, he/she may wish to tell you about some of the pictures, such as the wheels, horn, and wipers. Invite the toddler to hold the book and turn the pages.



For the second segment of the activity, sing the first verse with corresponding hand actions. Invite the toddler to sing with you. Repeat the first verse. This time, invite the toddler to help you remember a word or sound that you leave out. Leave out a key word or phrase that you anticipate the toddler knows and will be eager to provide. Example: ...all through the (town). Provide support by whispering the missing word.

Continue this process with additional verses of the song, as time and toddler interest permit. Provide a pause for the toddler to fill in words and sounds, such as “swish, swish, swish,” “waa, waa, waa,” and “beep, beep, beep.” Point to the image of the missing word or sound in a book picture.

Conclude the session by repeating the words or sounds the toddler contributed to the song. Example: “Jamie, you helped us sing the “Wheels on the Bus” song. You remembered the words ‘town’ and ‘round and round!’”

### 👁️ What to Look For—Option 1

Leaving out a word from the song is intended as a fun challenge, not a test. Be generous in providing hints, including whispers and pointing to an image of the word in a book picture. Choose verses of the song that will be of greatest interest to the toddler. Omit only words that you are confident the toddler knows. Use up to three verses for a toddler who is new to the song.

**Option 1 continued**

A toddler may sing or say some or none of the words with you. If it appears the toddler is not comfortable providing a missing word, omit this part of the activity and emphasize connections between key words and their images in book pictures.

The invitation to fill in a missing word or sound supports a child's memory skills and provides valuable practice in using spoken language. It also supports a toddler's understanding of how a word or sound is represented in a picture.

 A small icon of a staircase with three steps, positioned to the left of the section header.**More Scaffolding Tips—Option 1**

**Extra support** ■ It is sometimes challenging for toddlers to do the two-handed motion for “round and round.” Go slowly with your demonstration and provide supportive practice if the toddler shows interest.  
■ Demonstrate how the driver signals passengers to “move on back” and talk about what it means to “move on back.” A toddler may have little or no experience on a bus.

**Enrichment** ■ If a toddler shows good familiarity with the words, encourage him/her to use a louder voice for some phrases, such as “waa, waa, waa” and “beep, beep, beep.”

## 24–36 Months

### Option 2 Informal Gathering



#### Skill and Goal

Receptive language

Expressive language

Awareness of differences  
in sounds

Toddlers participate in saying a traditional rhyme together, with the opportunity to add missing words.



#### Key Concepts

Remember

Word

Up

Down

Clock



#### Materials Needed

\*1 picture as shown

Mouse puppet or figure



#### Also Promotes

Cognitive

Physical/Health

Self-Regulation

\*Printables provided



#### Optional Reading

*Hickory Dickory Dock* by  
Keith Baker

Revised: 6/30/2023

**Be Prepared:** Be familiar with the first verse of the rhyme “Hickory Dickory Dock.” The rhyme may be said aloud or sung as a simple song in this activity.

**BEGIN:** [*Invite 3–4 toddlers to join you for a fun rhyme about a clock and a mouse. Show the picture of a clock.*]

**EXPLAIN:** Our rhyme is about a tall clock like the clock shown in our picture.

A mouse runs up the clock and down the clock in our rhyme.

Let’s all move our hand up and then move our hand down.

[*Lead toddlers in moving hands up and down several times. Then show mouse puppet or figure when you describe it.*]

This is a toy mouse. I am going to move our toy mouse up and down when I say our rhyme.

Our rhyme is called “Hickory Dickory Dock.” Those are silly words. Hickory Dickory Dock. Hickory and Dickory sound alike. Let’s say the words Hickory and Dickory together.

[*Say Hickory and Dickory slowly and encourage toddlers to repeat the words with you.*]

**ACT:** [*Say the first verse of “Hickory Dickory Dock” slowly. Emphasize the word clock. Move your hand with the toy mouse up and down at appropriate times in the rhyme. Emphasize the words up and down.*]

*Repeat the rhyme, this time encouraging toddlers to move their hands up and down when the mouse runs up and comes down the clock. Invite toddlers to say the rhyme with you. Continue to emphasize the words clock, up, and down.*]



**Option 2 continued**

**EXPLAIN:** I am going to say our rhyme again. This time, I might need help to remember a word. I might forget a word. Will you tell me what word is missing?

**ACT:** [*Say the first part of the rhyme. Leave out the word clock. Use a gesture and surprised facial expression to show toddlers you have forgotten a word. Show enthusiasm when toddlers fill in the missing word!*

*Say more of the rhyme. Leave out the words up and down. Again, use a gesture and facial expression to show you have forgotten a word. Move your hand with the toy mouse up and down at appropriate times in the rhyme.]*

**RECAP:** We had fun saying a rhyme. Our rhyme is called “Hickory Dickory Dock.” You helped me remember some of the words in our rhyme. What words did you help me remember? (clock, up, down)

 **What to Look For—Option 2**

This “help me remember a word” activity is intended as a fun challenge, not a test, similar to Option 1. The current activity option is more challenging than Option 1 because the visual supports are limited to the picture of a clock and the toy mouse. Toddlers are encouraged to imagine a mouse running up and coming down a big clock as part of the rhyme. Filling in a missing word supports a child’s memory skills and practice in using spoken language. Toddlers are unlikely to say the entire rhyme with you, particularly the challenging “Hickory Dickory Dock” words, but will enjoy providing a word you pretend to forget.

 **More Scaffolding Tips—Option 2**

**Extra support** ■ Remind toddlers that we (and the mouse) move fast when we run. ■ Use slow motions the first several times you move the toy mouse up and down. ■ Show the provided picture of a tall clock when you say the rhyme.

**Enrichment** ■ Explain that the phrase “strikes one” in the rhyme means the clock made a loud chime noise when the time was one o’clock. Point to the part of the clock (called a hand) that points to the time. ■ Repeat the first verse, leaving out the three target words (clock, up, down) for toddlers to fill in.



### Interest Area

**Materials Needed:** *Wheels on the Bus* by Raffi, \*picture of big clock (Option 2), mouse puppet or figure

In addition to providing the *Wheels on the Bus* book, make another *Wheels on the Bus* book available. Toddlers may wish to compare pictures that show similar images in the song, such as wheels, horn, and wipers. As a follow-up to Option 2, encourage toddlers to move the toy mouse up and down the picture of the clock as they say as much of the rhyme as they remember. Invite toddlers to compare the face of the clock shown in the activity's provided picture to the face of a traditional (analog) clock in your room, if available. Encourage toddlers to point to the hands of the clock in your room and notice how the hands move across the day.

\*Printables provided



### Family Child Care

**Materials Needed:** books of rhymes

Complement the Option 2 rhyme for toddlers by saying short rhymes for infants during care routines and sharing books that include rhyming words. Infants will be interested in the sound of the words, even though a word meaning is not understood.

Preschool-age children enjoy songs and books with rhymes. Draw attention to words in songs that rhyme. Playfully say each child's name with the same consonant sound. Examples: Jackson becomes "Backson." Mari becomes "Bari." Or add a second word that rhymes with a child's first name, such as "Isaac Misaac."



## 24–36 Months

### Option 1 Informal Gathering



#### Skill and Goal

##### Problem-solving Object inquiry skills

Toddlers participate in a humorous book sharing on the sizes and uses of familiar clothing for people worn by animals.



#### Key Concepts

Clothes  
Too big



#### Materials Needed

*Animals Should Definitely Not Wear Clothing* by Judi Barrett



#### Also Promotes

Communication/Language  
Social-Emotional

**BEGIN:** [*Invite 3–4 toddlers to join you in talking about pictures of animals wearing clothes.*]

**EXPLAIN:** Our book shows animals wearing clothes.

[*Show book cover. Point to the porcupine and its quills as you describe each.*]

This is a picture of a porcupine. The porcupine is wearing pajamas! A porcupine has sharp things on its body called quills. The quills (sharp things) are poking through the pajamas.

[*Point to words in the book title as you say each.*]

The title of our book says animals should definitely not wear clothing.

**ASK:** Why should the porcupine on the cover of our book not wear pajamas?

[*Follow-up probes, if needed: Does a porcupine need to wear pajamas? What is happening to the pajamas? How could the porcupine take off the pajamas?*]

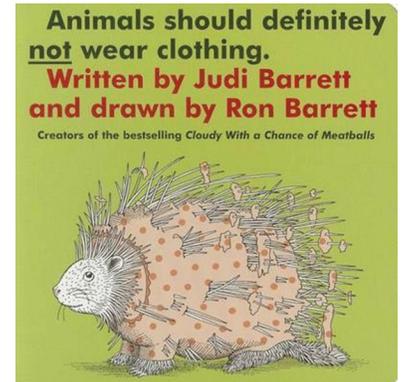
**EXPLAIN:** [*Turn to the page that says it would be disastrous for a porcupine to wear clothing.*]

This page says it would be disastrous for a porcupine to wear clothing. The word disastrous means terrible or awful.

I think this will be a silly book. Let's look at some other animals and the clothes they are wearing.

**ACT:** [*Read book text and use your own words to describe details of illustrations, including animals that may be unfamiliar to toddlers, and where some clothing items are usually worn. Point to aspects of animals and clothing you describe and toddlers talk about. Focus on pictures of interest to toddlers. Emphasize the following:*

- *A camel has humps. Hats are on the camel's humps. Where do we wear a hat?*
- *The pants were too big for the snake to wear!*



**Option 1 continued**

- *Why did the mouse get lost in the hat? (hat is too big for the small mouse)*
- *Sheep are covered in wool. Wool keeps a sheep warm. Clothes help us keep warm. Does the sheep need to wear clothes to keep warm?*
- *Pigs are messy when they eat. What is happening to the tie worn by the pig?*
- *We wear a tie around our neck. Why is the giraffe wearing so many ties? (long neck)*
- *Goats usually eat parts of trees and plants. But sometimes a hungry goat will eat anything it can find. What will happen to the clothes on the goat if the goat keeps eating pieces of the clothes?*
- *A walrus lives in an ocean. Does an animal need to wear clothes to live in water?*
- *We can wear suspenders to hold up our pants. A moose has something called antlers. What is happening to the suspenders worn by the moose?*
- *An opossum can wrap its tail around branches and hang upside down. How are the opossums shown in our book wearing their clothes? (upside down)*
- *Our book says it can be embarrassing for an animal to wear clothes. We can feel embarrassed when we look silly. Why does the elephant look silly?]*

**RECAP:** Our book says that animals should definitely not wear clothing. What happens when animals try to wear clothes made for people?

*[Encourage toddlers to recall some specific animals and clothing. Return to pages they discuss.]*

** What to Look For—Option 1**

Each picture in the book offers a problem for toddlers to solve: why should the pictured animal not wear clothes? Look carefully for reactions that suggest a toddler(s) may not fully understand the animal or the clothing shown in the picture. The activity is an opportunity to briefly introduce some animals and clothing that toddlers may not know. Appreciating the silliness of the pictures depends on a basic understanding of the animal and how a clothing item is typically worn.

Help toddlers focus on what is silly about a picture, such as a clothing item being too big for the animal. Example: "This snake is trying to wear pants. Pants go on legs. Does the snake have legs? What happens when the snake tries to wear pants?"

Look for signs that a toddler(s) may be unfamiliar with a word used in the book text. The activity is an opportunity to introduce some words toddlers may not know. Note the activity description suggests ways to define disastrous and embarrassing.

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

**Extra support** ■ Take time on each page to point to and describe the animal and the clothing item. Most toddlers will need time to look closely at how an animal is trying to wear clothing. Toddlers may also need time to focus on the clothing item. ■ Pictures may be skipped if time or toddler interest is limited. This is a good book to return to later.

**Enrichment** ■ Draw attention to some of the details of clothing items. Examples: the flowers on the fancy hat, the colors and patterns of the giraffe's neckties, the pocket on the kangaroo's jacket.



## 24–36 Months

### Option 2 Informal Gathering



#### Skill and Goal

**Problem-solving**  
**Object inquiry skills**

Toddlers talk about how and why pictured clothing is worn by people and by animals.



#### Key Concepts

Clothes  
Too big



#### Materials Needed

Clothing items shown in book (see Be Prepared)  
*Animals Should Definitely Not Wear Clothing* by Judi Barrett  
\*2 pictures as shown



#### Also Promotes

Physical/Health  
Communication/Language

\*Printables provided

**Be Prepared:** This activity option is for toddlers who are familiar with the book *Animals Should Definitely Not Wear Clothing* through participation in Option 1 or a similar book sharing. Secure clothes shown in the book, such as hats, ties, pair of pants, pajamas, suspenders, shirt, coat/jacket, belt, scarf. Toddler-size clothing is preferable but not necessary.

Invite 3–4 toddlers to talk about pictures of animals wearing clothes.

The activity has two segments. For the first segment, use strategies suggested in Option 1 to talk with toddlers about why it is a problem for animals shown in the book to wear the clothes shown in the picture. Select book pictures that show clothing items you have secured for the activity. Introduce the clothing items one at a time.

Invite 1–2 toddlers to show how the clothing is usually worn by a person. Encourage toddlers to hold up a clothing item next to their body where typically it would be worn. It is not necessary for toddlers to put on a clothing item. The intent is to strengthen comparison to how the clothing is being worn by the pictured animal. Encourage toddlers to tell how the pictured animal is trying to wear the clothing. What is the problem?

As a second segment of the activity, explain that some clothes are made for some animals. Show the provided picture of a small dog wearing a sweater. Talk about how the sweater fits the dog. It is not too big, like some of the clothes on animals shown in our book. The sweater helps keep the dog warm in cold weather; draw attention to the snow.

Then show the picture of the horse wearing a blanket and a fly mask. A blanket is not clothing, but this blanket is made for a horse. It helps keep flies off the horse. The blanket also helps the horse stay clean and keeps sun from shining directly on the horse. Explain or remind toddlers that we wear clothing to keep sun from shining on parts of our bodies. Also, point to and describe the fly mask. The fly mask helps keep flies from sitting near the

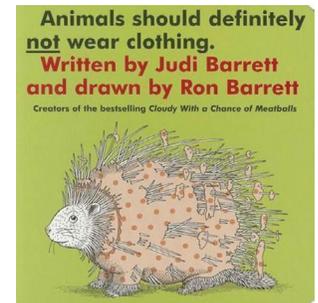


Image by Pezibear from Pixabay



Image by Ulrike Leone from Pixabay

**Option 2 continued**

horse's head and eyes. Flies like to sit on horses. Flies bother horses a lot. Ask toddlers to tell how clothes they wear keep flies from sitting on their bodies.

 **What to Look For—Option 2**

This activity option extends Option 1 by providing actual clothing for toddlers to compare in relation to pictured clothing worn by animals. Encourage toddlers who demonstrate how an article of clothing is usually worn to hold the clothing in place long enough for the group to talk about the clothing in relation to the pictured animal's attempt to wear a similar item. Point and encourage toddlers to point to aspects of the clothing or picture being discussed. The discussion of clothing may prompt some toddlers to be interested in repeating parts of the Block 9 activity plan focused on different types of clothing.

The second segment shifts from the silly focus of the book to actual uses of clothing made for an animal. Look for opportunities to talk with toddlers about the uses of the clothing made for an animal and how people can wear clothes for a similar purpose. Emphasize how the clothing can solve problems of being cold (sweater worn by dog) and having too much sun and flies (horse).

 **More Scaffolding Tips—Option 2**

**Extra support** ■ In addition to talking about book pictures for which similar clothing items are available, talk about pictures of interest to toddlers in your gathering. ■ In the second segment, invite toddlers to tell about dogs or horses they have seen wearing clothing similar to clothing shown in the provided pictures.

**Enrichment** ■ In the discussion of how flies like to sit on a horse, describe how flies can spread germs that cause a horse (and people) to get sick.

**Interest Area**

**Materials Needed:** books about clothes and getting dressed, such as *Jesse Bear, What Will You Wear?* by Nancy White Carlstrom or *Froggy Gets Dressed* by Jonathan London, Wooden Dress-Up Puzzle Box, markers or crayons, simple figures to color

Set up a special display of books about clothes and getting dressed. Place the Wooden Dress-Up Puzzle Box (see Block 9 Cognitive activity plan) on a low table along with other getting-dressed puzzles. Sit with toddlers to share the suggested books. On another day, place markers or crayons on the table with simple figures toddlers can color.



### Family Child Care

**Materials Needed:** infant and toddler clothing items, *I Get Dressed* by David McPhail, drawing tools, paper, pictures of infant and toddler clothing items

Show, name, and discuss with toddlers and preschool-age children a collection of small infant clothes. Compare some clothing items to similar items for an older child, such as infant shoes and toddler shoes. Use the clothing comparisons as an opportunity to talk with toddlers and preschool-age children about what they can do now that they could not do as a baby (talk, walk, brush teeth).

Share the suggested book with all children in your setting. Encourage older children to draw something they would like to wear some day or a picture of an activity they enjoy that was not possible to do as an infant. While other children draw, sit on the floor with toddlers to show pictures of clothing items from infancy and toddlerhood. Invite toddlers to name the item and tell where or how it is worn.



## 24–36 Months

### Option 1 Informal Gathering



#### Skill and Goal Self-control

Toddlers watch a caregiver (or older child) engage in a downward dog pose (yoga).



#### Key Concepts

Pose  
Breathe  
Dog



#### Materials Needed

\*2 pictures as shown



#### Also Promotes

Social-Emotional  
Physical/Health

\*Printables provided



#### Optional Reading

*The ABCs of Yoga for Kids* by  
Teresa Power

**Be Prepared:** Be familiar with the pose. Arrange for another adult or preschool-age child in your center to demonstrate the downward dog pose if you do not wish to do so. Adapt the pose if you anticipate it will be too challenging for toddlers in your room.

**BEGIN:** *[Invite toddlers to watch a yoga pose.]*

We are learning how to do yoga. Do you remember holding our body still while pretending to be a tree and a frog?

Today we will learn a new pose. Remember, a pose is a way of holding our body. Doing a yoga pose can help us feel calm and relaxed.

**EXPLAIN:** I am going to show you how to make a downward dog pose.

*[Display pictures when you describe each.]*

This is a picture of a dog that is stretching its legs and wanting to play. Look at how the dog's legs are stretched. Dogs stretch their bodies like this when they want to play with another dog or a person.



Image by IreneSommerfeld-Stur from Pixabay

This is a picture of a child doing the pose I will show you today.

**ACT:** *[Move your body into a downward dog pose. Describe the position of each body part, as suggested below.]*

I get on my hands and knees like a dog. Then I put my arms out and my hands flat on the floor. I lift up my hips and straighten my legs.



I am stretching my body to look like a dog that wants to play. Do you think my body looks like a dog?

*[Pause for and acknowledge toddlers' responses.]*

Now I am going to hold my body still and breathe slowly, in and out. We know that breathing slowly can help us to feel calm.



## ***Option 1 continued***

[Demonstrate breathing in and out two times while holding the pose.

Move out of the pose and into a normal stance. If time and toddler interest permit, demonstrate again moving into the downward dog pose and breathing slowly.]

**RECAP:** We learned how to do a downward dog pose. I breathed slowly while holding my body still. Yoga can help us feel calm and relaxed.



## 24–36 Months

### Option 2 Informal Gathering



#### Skill and Goal

##### Self-control

Toddlers practice moving into a downward dog pose (yoga).



#### Key Concepts

Pose  
Dog



#### Materials Needed

\*2 pictures as shown



#### Also Promotes

Social-Emotional  
Physical/Health

\*Printables provided



#### Optional Reading

*The ABCs of Yoga for Kids* by  
Teresa Power

**Be Prepared:** Be familiar with the downward dog pose. Arrange for another adult or preschool-age child in your center to demonstrate the downward dog pose if you do not wish to do so. Adapt the pose if you anticipate it will be too challenging for toddlers in your room.

Invite several toddlers to join you in making a downward dog pose with our bodies. Explain (or remind) toddlers that a pose is a way of holding our body. Holding a pose with our body can help us get calm. Today we will practice a downward dog pose. Show and describe the picture of a dog stretching its legs. Draw attention to how the dog's legs are stretched. Also show the picture of the child engaged in the pose.

Demonstrate a downward dog pose as described in Option 1. Then invite toddlers to make a pretend downward dog with their bodies. Describe each action with legs and arms. Use a calm voice. Emphasize that it is okay for each of our poses to look different. Encourage toddlers to hold the pose as long as they can without losing their balance. Invite several attempts. Talk with toddlers about how their body felt while doing the pose.



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## 24–36 Months

### Option 3 Informal Gathering



#### Skill and Goal

##### Self-control

Toddlers practice holding a downward dog pose (yoga) while breathing slowly and deeply.



#### Key Concepts

Pose  
Breathe  
Dog



#### Materials Needed

\*2 pictures as shown



#### Also Promotes

Social-Emotional  
Physical/Health

\*Printables provided



#### Optional Reading

*The ABCs of Yoga for Kids* by  
Teresa Power

**Be Prepared:** This activity is for toddlers who have recently participated in Option 2 (and possibly Option 1). Be familiar with the downward dog pose. Arrange for another adult or preschool-age child in your center to demonstrate the downward dog pose if you do not wish to do so. Adapt the pose if you anticipate it will be too challenging for toddlers in your room.

Invite several toddlers to join you in doing a downward dog pose. Show the provided pictures as a reminder of the pose. Explain that we will practice breathing slowly and deeply when we hold our body in a dog pose. Offer a demonstration that emphasizes the two important parts: slow and deep breaths. Quietly say “in” and “out” to describe your breathing. Then engage toddlers in practicing how to breathe slowly and deeply while standing in a relaxed position. It is not necessary for toddlers’ breathing to be uniform.



Image by IreneSommerfeld-Stur from Pixabay

Next, move into a downward dog pose. Use the strategies suggested in Options 1 and 2 to describe your body. Encourage toddlers to also move into a dog pose. Support toddlers’ efforts with strategies suggested in Option 2. Remind toddlers that each of our poses can look different.



After toddlers are in a downward dog pose, use a gentle voice to encourage breathing slowly and deeply while holding the pose. Invite several attempts. Talk with toddlers about how their bodies felt while doing the pose and breathing slowly and deeply.

### 👁️ What to Look For—Options 1–3

Yoga is a popular activity among young children and a demonstrated way to promote self-regulation skills. The benefits of yoga for very young children are described in the *ELM Curriculum User Guide: Birth–36 Months*.

This is the third yoga pose introduced to children 24–36 months of age in the ELM Curriculum. A tree pose was introduced in Block 8, and a frog pose was introduced in Block 11. Prior practice in breathing slowly and deeply is offered in Blocks 2 and 5 as well as part of calming-down practices in ELM Curriculum activities for children 12–24 months of age.



Some toddlers may find it challenging to hold their body in a pose while also focusing on breathing (Option 3). A slow pace with a quiet, soothing voice can be helpful to toddlers. It also is highly appropriate to focus on Option 2 with toddlers who need more time and practice in holding a yoga pose.

## More Scaffolding Tips—Options 1–3

**Extra support** ■ Point to your hip (or the hip of the person who is demonstrating the pose) when you say this body part. ■ In Option 1, display again the picture of a child engaged in the pose and ask toddlers whether your pose looks like the pose shown in the picture. ■ In Options 2 and 3, offer individualized feedback and verbal support as appropriate. Example: “Elijah, you have your arms stretched in front of your body like I do. Now can you try to lift your hips and stretch your legs? That’s it! You are holding your body like a dog that wants to play!”

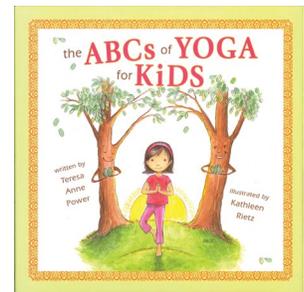
**Enrichment** ■ Invite toddlers to try taking 3–4 slow, deep breaths before moving out of the pose.

### Interest Area

**Materials Needed:** *The ABCs of Yoga for Kids* by Teresa Power, \*picture of child engaged in downward dog pose

Display the book in a calm area of the room with a blanket or yoga mat. Invite toddlers to practice one of the poses introduced to date: the tree, the frog pose, or the downward dog pose. Some toddlers may enjoy looking at the yoga book and talking with you about other yoga poses. Encourage toddlers to compare the provided picture of a child engaged in the downward dog pose to the picture of the pose in *The ABCs of Yoga for Kids* book.

\*Printables provided



### Family Child Care

**Materials Needed:** \*pictures of a child and a dog used in Options 1–3

Preschool-age children may enjoy participating in Options 1–3 as well as the Interest Area activity. Older infants will enjoy watching toddlers and others try a downward dog pose.

\*Printables provided





## 24–36 Months

### Option 1 Informal Gathering



#### Skill and Goal

##### Social interaction skills

Toddlers help wash items in the room.



#### Key Concepts

Help  
Washing



#### Materials Needed

Damp sponges—1 per toddler and caregiver  
Dishpan or tub with 2 inches of warm water  
Paper towels (for scaffolding tips)



#### Also Promotes

Communication/Language  
Physical/Health

**BEGIN:** *[Ask several toddlers to join you at a low table.]*

I am looking for some helpers to wash our table and chairs. I have a sponge for each helper. We will wet the sponges and then use them to clean!

**ASK:** Who would like to help clean our table and chairs? It is great to have helpers!

**ACT:** *[Give each interested toddler a damp sponge.]*

Would you like to begin washing the table or a chair?

*[Help each child find an area of the table or a nearby chair to wash.]*

**EXPLAIN:** You can push your sponge down and move it back and forth like this.

*[Demonstrate how to move the sponge from side to side.]*

Point to areas of the table or chairs a toddler may wash. Example: This part of the chair is called the leg. Let's wash the legs together.]

**ASK:** Would you like to wet your sponge in the water? I will bring the water tub to the table. You can place your sponge into the water and squeeze it with your hand.

*[Demonstrate the squeeze motion.]*

**EXPLAIN:** Sometimes it is not easy to wait for a turn. I will sing a song to help us wait.

*[Sing a song for the toddlers. (Tune: "London Bridges Falling Down")]*

**Becca's sponge is in the water,  
In the water, in the water.  
She gives the little sponge a squeeze.  
Now it's Daniel's turn.**

**ACT:** *[Continue to encourage toddlers to wash the table and chairs, acknowledging each of their efforts. Example: "Becca is scrubbing the chair seat. She is using her sponge to make the chair clean!" As the activity wraps up, thank toddlers for being good helpers. Ask them to put the sponges into the tub. Dry any wet spots on the floor.]*

**RECAP:** You washed the table and the chairs. They are really clean now! We all take care of things in our room.

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

Learning to help is an important prosocial behavior. Providing opportunities for toddlers to help others supports the development of this social skill. This activity is a simple and enjoyable way for toddlers to help and be a part of your room's community. Some toddlers may not wish to join the activity initially, but after seeing the fun may change their mind! Be prepared with extra sponges for toddlers who join after you start.

Some toddlers may be interested in cleaning a small section, whereas others may want to clean everything! Emphasize the effort each toddler makes to help, rather than the amount of participation. Allow toddlers to come and go from this activity. Example: "Maya washed the tabletop with her sponge. Now she is going to find another activity. Thank you, Maya, for being a good helper!"

**📈 More Scaffolding Tips—Option 1**

**Extra support** ■ Toddlers love to play with water and may become excited about playing with the wet sponges. If the activity strays from its focus on washing, you may wish to remove the water and provide sponges that are damp rather than wet. Alternatively, you may wish to use a spray bottle to put some water on the table and invite toddlers to use dry sponges to wipe up the water. ■ Toddlers who do not enjoy getting their hands wet may prefer to help another way. Invite them to dust a shelf or other area of the room with a paper towel.

**Enrichment** ■ Invite toddlers to clean up as the activity ends. Provide paper towels and encourage toddlers to wipe up any excess water, particularly on the floor. ■ Invite toddlers to think about other areas of the room that may need washing at a later time. This may include a plastic dollhouse, kitchen play set, or mirror. Smaller items could be placed in a water table with a small amount of baby shampoo.

## 24–36 Months

### Option 2 One-to-One



#### Skill and Goal

##### Social interaction skills

A toddler helps care for nontoxic indoor plants.



#### Key Concepts

Help



#### Materials Needed

- Several non-toxic indoor plants
- 2 small watering cans



#### Also Promotes

- Communication/Language
- Physical/Health



#### Optional Reading

- In My Garden (Look and Learn)* by National Geographic Kids
- Planting a Rainbow* by Lois Ehlert

**Be Prepared:** Place several nontoxic indoor plants in the room, if not already available.

Invite a toddler to help you with an important job. Explain that the plants in the room need special care to stay healthy and to grow. Talk with the toddler about how plants need sunlight and water to grow. Invite the toddler to visit each of the plants with you. Example: “Let’s use our eyes to see if this plant has sunlight. Yes, there is sun coming in the window! Please watch me feel the dirt and see if the plant needs water.” Describe your actions.



Invite the toddler to help water a plant. Demonstrate how to fill one watering can with water. Encourage the toddler to fill the second watering can, providing support if needed. (Using smaller amounts of water will make the watering can easier for the toddler to carry, as well as discourage overwatering.) Visit the first plant and demonstrate how to slowly pour a small amount into the pot. Visit the other plants and encourage the toddler to water the plants on his/her own, providing support only if needed. Affirm the toddler’s efforts to help the plants stay healthy and grow. Example: “Today you had a special job. You gave our plants water and helped them to grow! You are a good helper.”

### 👁️ What to Look For—Option 2

This activity provides the opportunity for a toddler to help care for parts of a room in a meaningful way. Repeat the activity on separate days with interested toddlers so each can take part in the important job of caring for the plants. Some toddlers will need more guidance than others. Provide needed support, while encouraging the toddler to do as much as he/she can on his/her own. (See Extra support tip below.) Spills can easily be cleaned up, and overwatering can be avoided if small amounts of water are in the watering cans. Emphasize and acknowledge the toddler’s efforts to help the plants rather than success in completing the job correctly.

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

**Extra support** ■ Some toddlers may be more successful watering the plants with cooperative, hand-over-hand assistance. Offer to help the toddler hold the watering can and ensure the spout is over the pot. Example: “I can hold the watering can over the pot, and you can tip it forward to make the water come out.” ■ Toddlers who are not interested in helping to care for the plants may wish to contribute to your room’s upkeep in another way, such as using a small brush and dustpan to sweep under the sensory table.

**Enrichment** ■ Toddlers may enjoy more supervised activities related to helping take care of plants or flowers. Provide pots, soil, and seeds of fast-growing plants/flowers for toddlers to plant with adult guidance. ■ Encourage toddlers to share some responsibility in remembering our plants need to be watered each day. Example: “We have picked up our toys and our room is clean! Are there any other jobs in our room we need to remember before we go outside?”

**Interest Area**

**Materials Needed:** sensory table with water, baby shampoo, sponges—1 per toddler, toy dishes, pots and pans, eating utensils, towel or paper towels

Place the toy kitchen items in the water, along with a small amount of baby shampoo. Invite toddlers to use the sponges to wash the items. Talk with the toddlers about how an adult(s) washes dishes at their house. (Do they use soap? A sponge or washcloth? Dishwasher or in the sink?) If water spills, encourage toddlers to help by using the towel/paper towels to wipe it up.

**Family Child Care**

**Materials Needed:** damp sponges—1 per toddler and caregiver, dishpan or tub with 2 inches of warm water

Invite preschool-age children to participate with toddlers in Option 1. Talk with children about taking care of the toys and play space, emphasizing that it is a task for everyone to share. Invite children to wash items of your choice, such as tables, chairs, or plastic toys. Outdoors, children can help wash sand toys or tricycles.

## 24–36 Months

Option 1  
Informal Gathering

## Skill and Goal

## Fine motor development

Toddlers string beads onto tubing.



## Key Concepts

Stringing



## Materials Needed

Chubby wooden beads  
Tubing—1 per toddler and caregiver  
Tray



## Also Promotes

Cognitive  
Self-Regulation  
Communication/Language

**Be Prepared:** Be sure all of the beads fit onto the plastic tubing before you begin. By 24 months of age, many toddlers will find stringing beads to be a challenging and satisfying task. Arrange beads in random order on the tray. This activity may be offered as a one-to-one activity.

**BEGIN:** [*Sit on the floor with the stringing bead set and invite 2–3 toddlers to join you. Place the tray of beads between you and toddlers.*]

**EXPLAIN:** [*Demonstrate holding a tube with one hand and placing the bead onto the tube with the opposite hand. Hold a section of the tubing in an upright position where the toddler can easily watch.*]

Every bead will fit onto this tube. I hold the tube with one hand. My other hand moves the bead. The tube goes through the hole in the bead. We call this stringing beads onto a tube.

**ACT:** Here is a tube for each of you. We have lots of beads.

[*Encourage each toddler to fit one bead on his/her tube at a time. Aligning the bead hole and the tube may take a couple of tries. Hold the tubing for a toddler until he/she has mastered putting on a bead. Ask a toddler when he/she would like to hold the tube by himself/herself.*]

*Describe each toddler's actions. Examples: "You are looking with your eyes and using one hand to fit the bead onto the tubing." "Your hands are working together." "One slipped off. It is okay. You can put it on again."*

*Acknowledge persistence and encourage each toddler to place another bead onto the tube.*



**Option 1 continued**

*You may wish to string beads onto your tubing as you sit next to participating toddlers. Do not add more beads than each toddler adds. It may be discouraging for a toddler who is working hard to string the beads to see you have more.*

*Acknowledge a toddler's verbal or nonverbal wish to end the activity. Examples: "You said 'all done.' Let's put the beads on the tray. I will help you." "I see you want to be 'all done.' I will help you put the beads on the tray."]*

**RECAP:** *[Describe each toddler's efforts with the beads. Emphasize the steps each toddler used to string the beads and use of fingers/hands to hold the tube and string the beads.]*

**👁️ What to Look For—Option 1**

Observe and support each toddler's approach to the beads and tubing. Toddlers may experiment by changing the angle of the tube, and may switch the tubing from one hand to another hand. It is not necessary to instruct the child to use one hand or the other.

Give individualized attention to each toddler, as suggested in the activity description, and avoid comparing their efforts or counting the number of beads they string.

Some toddlers will enjoy lifting the tube and watching all of the beads slide onto the floor. Support this exploration by cheerfully exclaiming, for example, "All the beads came off your tube!"

Some toddlers will begin to see that the more beads he/she adds to the tube the longer the bead string becomes. Some toddlers will recognize colors and will put all of one color beads onto the tubing.

Stringing large beads onto a tube involves coordination of both hands, called bilateral coordination. Rooted in this activity is the toddler's motor planning, which involves the ability to think about an action and then do it.

**📈 More Scaffolding Tips—Option 1**

**Extra support** ■ Do one step of the stringing bead action for a toddler. Hold a bead or the tubing still to allow a toddler to perform the next step. Encourage a toddler to hold the bead in the opposite hand.

■ Some toddlers may benefit from a repeated verbal reminder for the steps: Hold the tube. Hold one bead. Look at the hole. Put a bead on.

**Enrichment** ■ For toddlers who are interested in additional play, cut 12–16 4" x 4" cardboard squares with a hole in the center. Encourage toddlers to combine the squares and tubing for an interesting structure. ■ Provide lacing cards with shoelaces for a caregiver-led activity. Put shoelaces and cards away out of toddlers' reach when finished.



## 24–36 Months

### Option 2 Informal Gathering



#### Skill and Goal

##### Fine motor development

Toddlers create chains by putting together links.



#### Key Concepts

Link  
Chain  
Longer  
Put together



#### Materials Needed

Links for making chains  
(see Be Prepared)  
Containers—1 per toddler  
(see Be Prepared)



#### Also Promotes

Cognitive  
Communication/Language

**Be Prepared:** Provide 10–15 links per toddler that can be put together into a chain. Use larger links if you anticipate smaller ones may be too challenging for existing fine motor skills. If you use two (or more) different sizes of links, organize them by size into containers, with one container per toddler. If all links for the activity are the same size, place them in the center of the activity, within easy reach of participants.

Sit on the floor near the links and invite 2–3 toddlers to join you in making a chain by putting together links.

Demonstrate and describe how to hold a link with one hand and move the second link with the other hand so it connects. Point to the opening (space) in a link that allows a link to be connected to another link. Emphasize that we use our fingers on both hands to put together the links. Describe what your fingers do when you put together two links.



Draw attention to how a chain gets longer when links are added. Example: “Kalyn, you put together more links. Your chain is getting longer.” Avoid comparing the lengths of toddlers’ chains.

Make the activity fun by enthusiastically acknowledging toddlers’ skills in creating chains.

### 👁️ What to Look For—Option 2

Offer your demonstration slowly and ensure all toddlers can see your finger and hand actions. You may wish to offer second and third demonstrations, tailored to each child. Watch each toddler’s initial work with links to determine whether additional assistance is needed. Provide sufficient time for a toddler to explore the links on his/her own. Pay attention to possible frustration and promptly offer help if it appears a toddler is going to give up. See the Extra Support tip below for how to help.

Toddlers who readily put together the links may be interested in the color of links. Although color identification is not a goal of the activity, you can support color interests by commenting on color. Example: “Ria, you put two red links together.” You also may wish to assemble groups of links by color. Some toddlers may enjoy asking for or pointing to what color they want next, or simply selecting the color of interest.

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

**Extra support** ■ Encourage toddlers to use 1–2 fingers to feel the opening (space) in a link. ■ Offer assistance to a toddler who seems uncertain about how to put two links together by suggesting “Let’s do it together.” Then hold one link and encourage the toddler to connect a second link at the opening (space). Another approach is to suggest a toddler place his/her opposite hand on top of your hand. This will help the toddler learn to manage the skill on his/her own.

**Enrichment** ■ Suggest that all of the chains be put together to form a large chain (circle). Assist if necessary. ■ To emphasize how a chain gets longer when more links are added, encourage a toddler to lie down on the floor. Lay his/her chain of links next to the toddler’s body to compare which is longer or to compare lengths after more links are added.



## 24–36 Months

### Option 3 Informal Gathering



#### Skill and Goal

##### Fine motor development

Toddlers put together plastic nuts and bolts.



#### Key Concepts

Turn

Hold

Nut

Bolt



#### Materials Needed

Plastic nuts and bolts—up to 4 pairs per toddler  
3 trays



#### Also Promotes

Cognitive

Communication/Language

**Be Prepared:** This activity is aimed at toddlers who readily put together links (Option 2) and are ready for the additional fine motor challenge of putting together a nut and bolt. Use nuts and bolts of the same size. (You may wish to provide different sizes as a follow-up activity. See Enrichment tip.) Put nuts on one tray and bolts on the other tray. Use a table for the activity. Prepare a third tray of alternative small manipulatives, such as snap beads and stacking cups, for possible use as suggested in an Extra Support tip.

Place the two trays of materials on a low table. Invite 2–3 toddlers to join you at the table to play with nuts and bolts. Sit or kneel at the table so you are at eye level with the children.

Explain that we can put a nut and a bolt together. Point to and say the name of each. Explain that a nut has a hole and a bolt has a part that can go into the hole. Encourage toddlers to feel a nut and a bolt. Then demonstrate putting together a nut and bolt. Describe how you move your fingers to hold and turn the items. Make sure each toddler can see your finger actions. Provide multiple demonstrations, if needed, each one directed to a specific toddler.

After toddlers' exploratory manipulation of the items and your demonstration, encourage toddlers to put together a nut and a bolt. Observe each toddler's approach to determine whether your assistance is needed. If support seems appropriate, offer verbal help first, such as "turn it again." A higher level of support is to hold a bolt steady while the toddler turns the nut onto the bolt. This is more challenging for a toddler than holding the bolt while you turn the nut.

Give each toddler just enough assistance to complete the task. As a toddler develops the needed skill, your help and support will shift to observing, encouraging, and describing actions.



### 👁️ What to Look For—Option 3

If you notice toddlers using the nuts and bolts inappropriately, it may indicate the materials present a challenge which is too great and seems unattainable or the materials do not offer enough challenge. The third tray of alternative items is appropriate to offer if you determine the nuts and bolts are too challenging. These materials provide support for using both hands together, technically known as bilateral coordination. It is fine for several toddlers to work with different play materials at the same gathering. If putting together the nuts and bolts appears insufficiently challenging, offer an enhancement, such as

**Option 3 continued**

matching colors or offering materials of different sizes that first need to be sorted (see Enrichment tip). Anticipate that some toddlers may come and go from the activity.

 A small icon of a staircase with three steps, representing scaffolding. **More Scaffolding Tips—Option 3**

**Extra support** ■ When you provide hands-on support, hold the bolt in a position that seems best for a toddler, such as upright or at a 90 degree angle. ■ If the nuts and bolts seem too challenging, offer the tray of other appealing materials a toddler can manipulate with fingers (see Be Prepared). Be sure the tray is close at hand so it is not necessary for you to secure the items during the activity.

**Enrichment** ■ Offer nuts and bolts of different sizes. This requires a toddler to first sort the items by size. Another sorting challenge is to place nuts and bolts randomly on the same, larger tray.

**Interest Area**

**Materials Needed:** manipulative toys, pegboards, stacking toys, soapy water in sensory table, sheet of heavy paper, colored tape

Select manipulative toys based on the range of the toddlers' existing motor skills. Arrange play materials on low shelves or surfaces with spaces between each so toddlers can clearly see what is available. Provide a variety of toys that foster fine motor skills and gross motor skills.

Place two toddler pegboards on a low table for toddlers to use when they wish. In another area arrange several stacking toys to encourage toddlers to coordinate hand movements. Toddlers will enjoy manipulating linking play materials when they are placed in a small amount of soapy water in the sensory table. Tear-free shampoo works well for toddler water play.

A creative way to encourage using two hands is to give each toddler a sheet of heavy paper and lots of two-inch pieces of colored tape, such as painter's tape. Each toddler can apply the tape in his/her own design. You may wish to tear the tape off the roll and stick two-inch pieces along the edge of a low table.

A small brown icon of a house with a chimney, positioned to the left of the text "Family Child Care".

### Family Child Care

**Materials Needed:** large pop beads, muffin pan, nuts and bolts, building materials (Legos®)

Mobile infants will enjoy taking apart large pop beads. Place six connected pop beads next to a muffin pan. Encourage a mobile infant to pull the beads apart and put one bead in each opening of the muffin pan. Emphasize pull off and put in. Reconnect the beads so the infant can repeat. For a younger infant who is alert, set up a baby gym with a few toys the infant can swipe with two hands.

Preschool-age children will likely enjoy Option 3. Older children may use other building materials, such as Lego®-type builders. Play with building materials fosters motor planning as well as eye-hand coordination and dexterity of both hands.