

Problem Solving

Activities to Help Your Toddler Grow and Learn



Doing things all by herself is very important for your toddler. Be patient and enjoy this time of growing independence, even though it may sometimes be frustrating. Give your child plenty of time and chances to figure out and do things by herself. Although make-believe is an important part of your toddler's growth, real and make-believe can be confusing. Help your child learn the difference especially if she sees something on television or in a movie.

Paper Bag Matching Game

Gather two of several household objects. Use two paper bags with the same things in each bag. Pull one item out and ask your child to reach in and find one in his bag. Remind your child, "No peeking, just feeling!"

Helping Around the House

Ask your toddler to help with the laundry. Sort by color or put similar things in one place. Let your child help you put all of the socks in one pile and all of the shirts in another. She can line up shoes and boots in the right place, and you can help her make sure they are in pairs.

Snack-Time Roundup

Give your child a snack with many pieces, such as cut-up fruit, small crackers, or cereal loops. Make a line of four things and count them as you put them in front of him. Give him four pieces and see if he can make a line, too. You can help your toddler count the food pieces and then eat them up.

Building with Boxes

Gather up several small- and medium-size boxes to use as building blocks. You can use shoe boxes, cereal boxes, clean milk cartons, and so forth. Encourage your child to build with the boxes. Make comments or ask questions: "You are making that so tall. Is that a house? Is it a wall?" Add toy cars or animals for more fun.

Where Is It?

Using any object in your house, play a hiding game with your toddler. For example, hide a teddy bear under a pillow. Give your toddler clues to find the bear: "Where's bear? Can you find her? She's under something green" or "She is behind something soft." Give your toddler help as needed. Then let him hide things and give you some clues.

Bring Me Something

Make a game of asking your child to bring you certain types of objects. Teach her about texture by asking her to bring soft or hard things. Help your child learn colors by asking for items of a certain shade. Talk about what she brings you: "Is your toy train hard or soft?"

Notes:



Don't Forget! Activities should be supervised at all times by an adult. Any material, food, or toy given to a young child should be reviewed for safety. Always watch your toddler during mealtime.