



Early Literacy: Building Healthy Brains

For Toddlers: 14 months to 2½ years

Questions about this booklet or the information within it?

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Healthy Brain Development

Experiences

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What is Early Literacy?

Early Literacy refers to the experiences that take place *before* a child can read and write

Expression

Bonding

Singing

Talking

Disconnect to Connect

Limiting Screen Time

Listening

Waiting

Pretending

Phonemic Awareness

Belonging

RHYMING

Taking

Play Dates

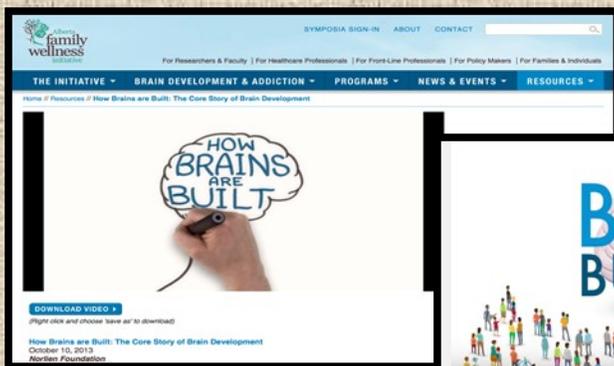
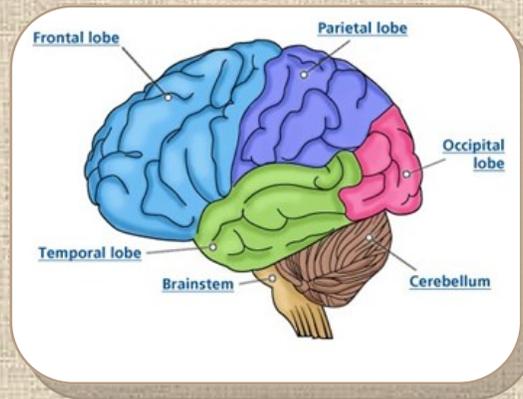
Commenting

Having Fun

Repetition

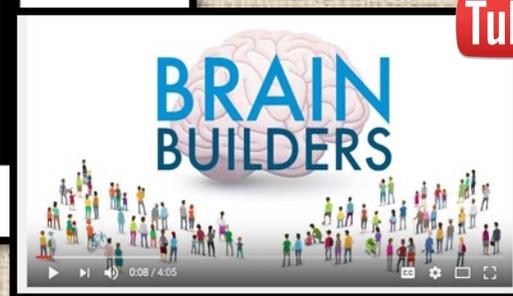
Following Your Child's Lead

To Help Toddlers Be Ready to Learn... We Need to Help them Build Healthy Brains!



YouTube

Go to YouTube, and search “Alberta Family Wellness” for a group of 17 different 3-4 minute video clips.



- ⇒ How Brains are Built: The Core Story of Brain Development
- ⇒ Executive Function
- ⇒ Toxic Stress
- ⇒ Serve & Return
- ⇒ Brain Architecture

“The major difference between brain development in a child versus an adult is a matter of degree: *the brain is far more impressionable* (neuroscientists use the term plastic) in early life than in maturity...”

This plasticity has both a positive and a negative side. On the positive side, it means that young children’s brains are more open to learning and enriching influences. On the negative side, it also means that young children’s brains are more vulnerable to developmental problems...”

(Retrieved from: <https://www.zerotothree.org/resources/series/frequently-asked-questions-about-brain-development> Dec. 7, 2018)

<https://empowersimcoe.ca/early-literacy/>

Read Aloud
15 MINUTES
 Every child. Every parent. Every day.

DOES READING ALOUD REALLY MATTER? YES!

More than one in three children arrive at kindergarten without the skills necessary for lifetime learning.

Research shows that reading aloud is the single most important thing you can do to help a child prepare for reading and learning.

LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT
 The number of words that a child knows on entering kindergarten is a key predictor of his or her future success.

INSTILL A LOVE OF READING
 Your example demonstrates that reading is important, pleasurable and valued.

KNOWLEDGE GAINED & SHARED
 Books are a pleasure, yes, and they are also informative. You and your child can learn something new as you read aloud.

LITERACY SKILL BUILDING
 Vocabulary. Phonics. Familiarity with the printed word. Storytelling. Comprehension. Reading aloud builds literacy skills.

BRAIN DEVELOPMENT
 From birth to age 3 are critical years in the development of language skills.

BONDING
 Is anything better than sharing a good book?

WHY READ ALOUD?

DON'T GOOD PARENTS ALREADY READ ALOUD DAILY? NO

Only 48% of young children in this country are read to each day.

More than 15% of young children, 3.1 million, are read to by family members fewer than three times a week.

Reading 15 minutes every day for 5 years:
27,375 MINUTES

IS 15 MINUTES ENOUGH TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE? YES!

456.25 HOURS

Enjoy the Moment...

Have Fun, Connect and Wonder, Pause and Wait

Help Your Child Start Off On The Right Foot by... Building Early Literacy Skills

Label Things!

- Say the name of the things that your child is looking at, playing with, or pointing to in books.
- Talk about **action words (falling, growing...)**, **location words (up, on...)** and **describing words (big, wet...)**.
- Helping your child learn new and unique words gives them a GREAT head start for kindergarten, and makes learning to read easier.



Take Turns Talking and Pointing!

- Observe what your child is interested in, and add new information about that.
- Take your turn talking, and **wait** with expectation so your child will know to say something back to you.
- Try it! See how many turns you each can take? **“Strive for Five”** turns talking about the same thing.

Get Down and Turn the Book Around!

- Get waaaaaaay down to your child’s eye level, and turn the book around so that it is between you and your child, facing the right way for your child. Now you can see where your child is looking, and make comments about what your child is interested in, rather than what you *think* your child is interested in.
Does your child pay more attention to you this way? Check it out!

Read with your Child Every Day.

- Read a book at different times of the day, especially if you have a little one who isn’t into books yet. Read less, more often. Rather than reading for long period of time, **read for a shorter** time to develop your child’s interest in books
- **Talk about the pictures** and don’t feel you have to read all the words.
- **Ham it up!** Have fun! Make lots of sound effects! Talk about whatever makes sense to you.



November 2019

Put Baskets of Books Everywhere!

- The bedroom, the family room, the living room, the kitchen, the bathroom, and in the CAR!
- **Garage sales, kijiji.ca, and children's used clothing/toy stores are great places to start to build your child's library without breaking your bank account.**
- Visit the **public library** as much as you can.
- Go to www.simcoe.ca/dpt/ccs/early/Printable%20Resources for an excellent set of **booklists**.

Read the same book over and over again!

And use a dramatic pause at the end of a familiar line...

- Repetition helps children to learn more words. The more familiar your child is with a book the more likely he will be to chime in when you pause.
- **Pause** in the same spot when you read a familiar book so that your child can take turns with you (e.g., Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What do you ____? I see a blue horse looking at ____!)

Show your Child how to Pretend!

- Say, "**Let's pretend that...**" and **get down at your child's level and PLAY!** This helps your children learn to say more words, use longer sentences, and take turns.
- It will also make reading chapter books (without pictures) much easier later on.

WAIT with Enthusiasm!

- After asking a question or making a comment, stop talking.
- Look lovingly and enthusiastically at your child, as if you are ready for them to make a comment. Count for 10 seconds before saying anything else.
- Little children need a LOT of time to think about what they want to say, and then to spit it out. Try it! Does giving them lots of time to answer work?

Learn TEN Nursery Rhymes with your Child.

- "Jack & Jill went up the Hill..." "Hickory Dickory Dock..." "Humpty Dumpty..."
- **Nursery rhymes** introduce your child to rhyme and the rhythm of language.
- If your children can say ten nursery rhymes before they enter kindergarten, they will have a much easier time learning to read later on.



Sing Songs (& Do the Actions) with your Child!

- Music makes the words easier to remember, especially when you add actions to the songs.
- Sing lots of songs every day.
- For a great list of words to familiar children's songs, go to www.empowersimcoe.ca/early-literacy/, and click on Early Literacy Booklets for Infants, Toddlers, Preschoolers, and School-Agers.

Put Limits on Screen Time!

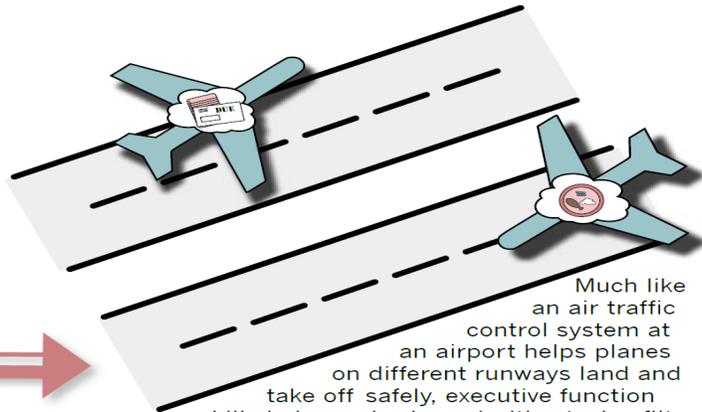
- The Canadian Pediatrics Society in 2017 recommended **NO** screen time for infants under age 2.
- Research has shown that infants learn words **better from people** than from screens!
- Research has also demonstrated that even when the television is on **in the background**, infants and their caregivers are **speaking less**¹.

1. Masur, E.F. Flynn, V. Olson, J. 2015. The Presence of Background Television During Young Children's Play in American Homes.

WHAT IS EXECUTIVE FUNCTION?

AND HOW DOES IT RELATE TO CHILD DEVELOPMENT?

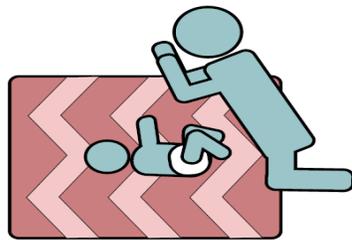
The phrase “executive function” refers to a set of skills. These skills underlie the capacity to plan ahead and meet goals, display self-control, follow multiple-step directions even when interrupted, and stay focused despite distractions, among others.



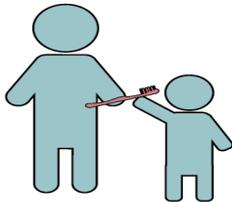
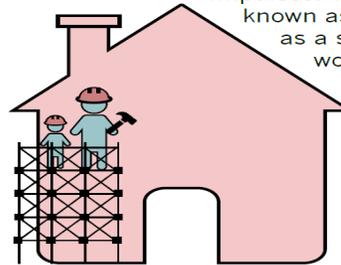
Much like an air traffic control system at an airport helps planes on different runways land and take off safely, executive function skills help our brains prioritize tasks, filter distractions, and control impulses.

NO ONE IS BORN WITH EXECUTIVE FUNCTION SKILLS, BUT NEARLY EVERYONE CAN LEARN THEM.

Our genes provide the blueprint for learning these skills, but they develop through experiences and practice. The foundation is laid in infancy, when babies first learn to pay attention. Relationships with responsive caregivers are particularly important at this stage. Something as simple as playing a game of peekaboo can help build the early foundations of working memory and self-control as a baby anticipates the surprise.

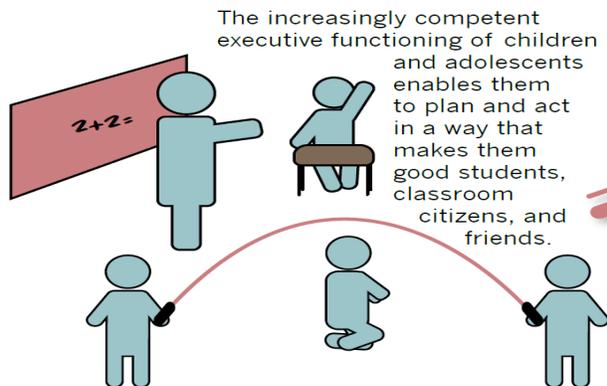


Adults set up the framework for children to learn and practice these skills over time by establishing routines, breaking big tasks into smaller chunks, and encouraging games that promote imagination, role-playing, following rules, and controlling impulses. These techniques are known as “scaffolding.” Just as a scaffold supports workers while a building is being constructed, adults can use these activities to support the emergence of children’s executive function skills until they can perform them on their own.

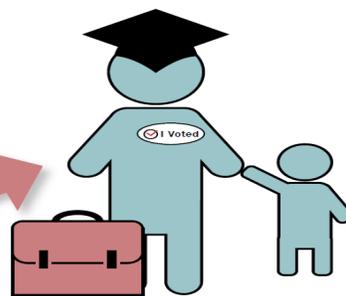


These skills typically develop most rapidly between ages 3-5, followed by another spike in development during the adolescent and early adult years. It takes a long time and a lot of practice to develop them, but, as children’s executive function skills grow, adults can gradually allow children to manage more and more aspects of their environment.

BUILDING CHILDREN’S EXECUTIVE FUNCTION SKILLS BENEFITS EVERYONE.



The increasingly competent executive functioning of children and adolescents enables them to plan and act in a way that makes them good students, classroom citizens, and friends.



In turn, this helps them grow into adults capable of juggling a multitude of commitments, such as parenting, employment, continuing education, and civic involvement. Even health is affected, as strong executive function helps people stick to healthy habits and reduce stress. The more a society invests in building the executive functioning of its children, the greater dividends it will see in the future.

Monitoring your Child's Development

Try CDC's FREE Milestone Tracker app today...

Because milestones matter!

-  Illustrated milestone checklists for 2 months through 5 years
-  Summary of your child's milestones to share
-  Activities to help your child's development
-  Tips for what to do if you become concerned
-  Reminders for appointments and developmental screening



Or refer to the following website to access milestones from your computer:

<https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly/milestones/>



LET'S GO

shop checklist about contact  



**new name.
new look.
same checklist.**

To celebrate 25 years of helping children worldwide reach their developmental potential, we've given our classic easy-to-use checklist a new parent-friendly name and look!

LEARN MORE

- ⇒ **13 checklists ranging from 1 & 2 months to 6 years of age**
- ⇒ **Available in 5 languages: English, French, Spanish, Vietnamese, Chinese**

<https://www.lookseechecklist.com/en/>



<https://empowersimcoe.ca/early-literacy/>

Enjoy the Moment...

Have Fun, Connect and Wonder, Pause and Wait

Help Your Child Communicate by....

Getting Face to Face

- This might mean changing your position so you can look directly into your child's eyes. Being face to face lets you make a **positive connection** by seeing what your child is interested in & noticing any attempts to communicate.

O.W.L. Observe, Wait, Listen

- **Observe** what your child is interested in.
- **Wait** for your child to take a turn by silently counting to 10.
- **Listen** to your child's attempts to communicate.

Following Your Child's Lead

- Once you know what your child is interested in, you can join in by commenting on what it is, or what the child is doing with it, or you can take turns playing with it.
- **Respond** with **warmth & enthusiasm** to your child's attempts to play & communicate

Imitating Your Child's Actions, Sounds & Words

- **Copy** your child's actions. If your child claps his hands, clap *your* hands. If your child says "baba", say "baba". If your child says "ball", say "ball".
- Infants, toddlers and preschoolers love to be copied.
- Copying your child encourages your child to copy you.

Interpreting Your Child's Message

- **Say what your child would say if he could.** If your child runs to the door & looks at you, you could point to the door & say, "outside". If your child points to the cookies, point to the cookies & say "cookie". If your child says "cookie", interpret for him by saying "more cookie" etc.



August, 2019

Commenting

- Use words to describe what your child is looking at or playing with. If your child is playing with blocks & stacking them, you could say, “blocks, blocks on, another block”.
- **Resist the urge** to ask questions that you know the answer to e.g., what colour is it? Turn it into a comment “It’s a red balloon”
- Commenting teaches your child new words and **what he could say**.

Taking turns

- Take a turn and then **WAIT** for your child to take a turn. As soon as your child takes a turn, take another turn and wait again.
- **Strive for five**-that is, aim for at least 5 turns back & forth.



Saying less

- **Saying less** increases the chances that your child can understand & imitate your words.
- **Speak slowly & emphasize** each word.

Playing Repetitive Games, Singing Repetitive Songs & Reading Repetitive Books

- It helps a child know what to say if he can **predict** what words come next. Repetitive games (peek-a-boo), repetitive books (Brown Bear, Brown Bear) & songs (The Wheels on the Bus) repeat the same words over & over and are easier for a child to fill in the blanks.
- If you **pause** in the same spot and **wait**, your child could fill in the blanks once he becomes familiar with the game/song or book.

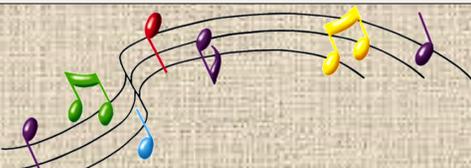
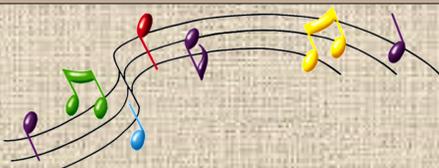
Giving Your Child a Reason to Communicate

- Give your child a reason to communicate by not anticipating his needs. Offer **choices** e.g., at snack time, offer “milk or juice”, “banana or apple.” It’s easier for your child to make a choice when you give him 2 choices.
- Instead of giving your child the entire banana, cut it up into slices, give him **just a few**then wait so that he has a reason to ask for more.
- Think about placing a favorite object **in view** but **out of reach**then wait for him to ask for it.

Limit Screen Time

- Screen time for children younger than 2 years is not recommended. For children 2 to 5 years, limit routine screen time to less than 1 hour per day².
- Infants learn best by interacting with people. Research has demonstrated that even when the television is on in the background, infants and their caregivers speak less³.

1. Jan Pepper and Elaine Weitzman, 2004. It Takes Two to Talk: A Practical Guide for Parents of Children with Language Delays.
2. Canadian Pediatric Society. 2017. Position Statement. Screen time and young children: Promoting health and development in a digital world.
3. Masur, E.F. Flynn, V. Olson, J. 2015. The Presence of Background Television During Young Children’s Play in American Homes.



Action Songs & Rhymes for Toddlers

Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star

Twinkle Twinkle Little Star, *(put hands up, wriggle fingers)*

How I wonder what you are. *(finger to head, thinking)*

Up above the world so high, *(point up)*

Like a diamond in the sky, *(make a diamond up high)*

Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star
(put hands up, wriggle fingers),

How I wonder what you are. *(finger to head, thinking)*

Jack and Jill

(Have baby lie on back while you move your fingers up their legs)

Jack and Jill went up the hill,

To fetch a pail of water.

Jack fell down, and broke his crown, *(move one down)*

And Jill came tumbling after. *(move other finger down)*



Pat-a-cake

Pat-a-cake, pat-a-cake, Baker's Man.

Bake me a cake as fast as you can.

Pat it. And rooooooll it. And mark it with a /r/

(say first sound in child's name)

And put it in the oven for (Christopher) and me.

Row, Row, Row, Your Boat

Row, Row, Row, Your Boat

(Children sit toe-to-toe, holding hands, knees up)

Row, row, row your boat,
Gently down the stream.

Merrily, merrily, merrily, merrily,
Life is but a dream!

*repeat and change first sound in "merrily"

(i.e.: for "Kerri's name", say kerrily, kerrily, kerrily)

Head and Shoulders

(sing VERY slowly...slower than you think...)

give the little ones a chance to be able to do it)

Head and shoulders,

Knees & toes, knees & toes, knees & toes.

Head and shoulders, knees and toes.

Eyes, ears, mouth and nose!

Action Songs & Rhymes for Toddlers

Itsy-Bitsy Spider



The itsy-bitsy spider went up the waterspout.

Down came the rain, and washed the spider out.

Out came the sun and dried up all the rain,

And the itsy-bitsy spider went up the spout again.

(After, do the Great Big Spider using a slow, very deep voice, and big actions. Then, repeat with the Teeny Weeny Spider, using a tiny high-pitched voice, and itty bitty actions)

Here we go 'Round the Mulberry Bush

(Children hold hands and walk in a circle)

Here we go 'round the Mulberry Bush, Mulberry Bush, Mulberry Bush, Here we go 'round the Mulberry Bush, on a cold and frosty morning.

This is the way we wash our hands, wash our hands, wash our hands, This is the way we wash our hands, on a cold and frosty morning.

This is the way we clean the table, put away toys, put on our coats (Use this song while doing daily routines)

I'm A Little Teapot

I'm a little teapot,

Short and stout.

Here is my handle, (put fist on hip)

Here is my spout. (make spout with other hand)

When I get all steamed up, (wiggle)

Here me shout!

Tip me over, (stand on one foot and tip over)

And pour me out.

Hickory Dickory Dock

(Hold elbow on hand, and move arm like a clock)

(Whisper "tick-tock, tick-tock, tick-tock" a few times first)



Hickory dickory dock, (tick tock!)

The mouse ran up the clock (wiggle fingers up moving arm)

The clock struck one, (hold out one finger)

The mouse ran down, (fingers wiggle down moving arm)

Hickory, dickory, dock! (tick tock!)

Here we go Looby Loo

(everyone stands in a circle and walks around)

Here we go Looby Loo!

Here we go Looby Ligh!

Here we go Looby Loo!

All on a Saturday night.

You put your right hand in!

You take your right hand out.

You give your hand a shake shake shake,

And turn yourself about!

Action Songs & Rhymes for Toddlers

If You're Happy and You Know It!

If you're happy and you know it,
clap your hands!



If you're happy and you know it, clap your hands!

If you're happy and you know it,

and you really want to show it,
If you're happy and you know it,
clap your hands!

- ▶ Stamp your feet!
- ▶ Shout hooray!
- ▶ Do all three!

The Wheels on the Bus

The wheels on the bus go 'round and 'round,

'Round and 'round, 'round and 'round,
The wheels on the bus go 'round and 'round,

All through the town.

The wipers on the bus go swish, swish,
swish...

The people on the bus go up and down...

The horn on the bus goes Beep! Beep!
Beep!...

The babies on the bus go wah, wah,
wah...



Roley Poley

Roley Poley, Roley Poley (roll one arm around the other)

Up up up, (push hands up, up, up and say SLOWLY)

Up up up! (repeat - emphasise each word)

Roley Roley, Poley. Roley Roley Poley.

Down Down Down (repeat - emphasise each word)

(Repeat, but push hands OUT and IN)

Hokey Pokey

(stand in a circle)

You put your right hand in,
You put your right hand out,
You put your right hand in,
And you shake it all about.
You do the Hokey Pokey (dance),
And you turn yourself about (turn around),

That's what it's all about! (clap!)

You put your _____ (foot, tongue, arm, etc.) in...

Zoom, Zoom, Zoom!

Zoom, zoom, zoom!

(lift toddler up, up, up - FACING YOU)

We're going to the moon (bring toddler back down)

Zoom, zoom, zoom! (same as above)

We'll be there very soon.

If you'd like to take a trip,

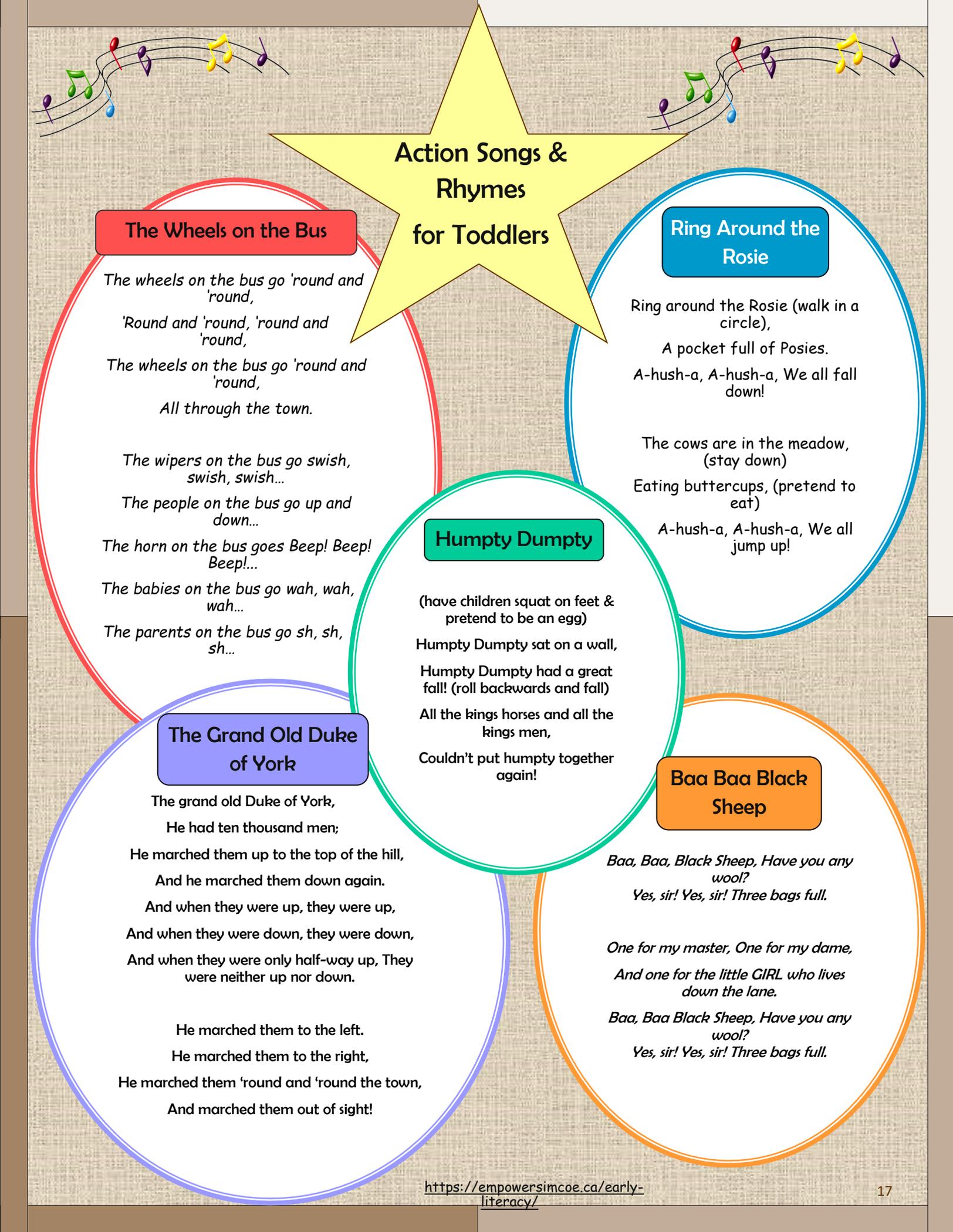
(bounce toddler to the left, then right)

Climb aboard my rocket ship.

(bounce toddler to the left, then right)

Zoom, zoom, zoom! (lift toddler up)





Action Songs & Rhymes for Toddlers

The Wheels on the Bus

The wheels on the bus go 'round and 'round,

'Round and 'round, 'round and 'round,

The wheels on the bus go 'round and 'round,

All through the town.

The wipers on the bus go swish, swish, swish...

The people on the bus go up and down...

The horn on the bus goes Beep! Beep! Beep!...

The babies on the bus go wah, wah, wah...

The parents on the bus go sh, sh, sh...

The Grand Old Duke of York

The grand old Duke of York,

He had ten thousand men;

He marched them up to the top of the hill,

And he marched them down again.

And when they were up, they were up,

And when they were down, they were down,

And when they were only half-way up, They were neither up nor down.

He marched them to the left.

He marched them to the right,

He marched them 'round and 'round the town,

And marched them out of sight!

Ring Around the Rosie

Ring around the Rosie (walk in a circle),

A pocket full of Posies.

A-hush-a, A-hush-a, We all fall down!

The cows are in the meadow, (stay down)

Eating buttercups, (pretend to eat)

A-hush-a, A-hush-a, We all jump up!

Humpty Dumpty

(have children squat on feet & pretend to be an egg)

Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall,

Humpty Dumpty had a great fall! (roll backwards and fall)

All the kings horses and all the kings men,

Couldn't put humpty together again!

Baa Baa Black Sheep

Baa, Baa, Black Sheep, Have you any wool?

Yes, sir! Yes, sir! Three bags full.

One for my master, One for my dame,

And one for the little GIRL who lives down the lane.

Baa, Baa Black Sheep, Have you any wool?

Yes, sir! Yes, sir! Three bags full.

Finger Puppet Songs/Rhymes

(made from a glove & Velcro from the dollar store)

Five Little Gingerbread

Five little gingerbread, lying on a tray.
One jumped up and ran away, saying...
Catch me! Catch me! If you can...
You can't catch me, I'm the Gingerbread Man!
Four little, three little, etc...
No little gingerbread, lying on a tray.
None jumped up and ran away.
OH! How I wish they'd stayed with me to play,
Next time I'll eat them before they run away!



Community Helper Ditty

Fire fighter, fire fighter, where are you?
Here I am, here I am, How do you do?

Police Officer, Police Officer, where are you?
Here I am, here I am, How do you do?

Bus Driver, Bus Driver, where are you?
Here I am, Here I am, How do you do?

Librarian, Librarian, where are you?
Here I am, here I am, How do you do?

Waste Collector, Waste Collector, where are you?
Here I am, here I am, How do you do?



5 Little Ducks

Five little ducks went swimming one day,
Over the pond and far away.
Mother duck said, quack, quack, quack, quack.
But only four little ducks came back.
Four little ducks, etc... (three, two, one)
...AND ALL OF THE FIVE LITTLE DUCKS CAME BACK!

Let YOUR CHILD fill in the QUACKS!
(e.g., "Mother duck said..._____")



Five Little Cookies at the Bakery Shop

Five little cookies in the bakery shop.
Yummy in my tummy with sugar on top!
Along comes _____ with a nickel to pay.
He/She buys a cookie and takes it away.



Health Benefits of Singing!

Singing boosts the immune system!

Scientists tested the blood of people who sang in a professional choir in the city, before and after a 60-minute rehearsal. They found that concentrations of immunoglobulin A - proteins in the immune system which function as antibodies - and hydrocortisone, an anti-stress hormone, increased significantly during the rehearsal. A week later, when they asked members of the choir to listen to a recording of the music without singing, they found the composition of their blood did not change significantly.



Singing Strengthens Emotional Bonds

Singing is a super-charged way of connecting to your baby. It has the element of human interaction that little ones crave and need for their cognitive, language, and emotional development.

(<http://www.psychologytoday.com/experts/kimberly-sena-moore>)



Singing Can Prevent Issues with Language

Sally Goddard Blythe, director of the Institute for Neuro-Physiological Psychology, says that not enough emphasis is put on singing in the early years. In fact, she goes as far as to claim that singing to infants can actually help prevent language issues later in life!

Singing Releases Endorphins and is Good for you in SO many ways!

According to Professor Graham Welch, Director of Educational Research, University of Surrey, Roehampton, UK:

Singing releases endorphins into your system and makes you feel energized and uplifted.

People who sing are healthier than people who don't.

Singing can lift your mood and act as an anti-depressant without side effects.

Singing tones abdominal and intercostal muscles and the diaphragm, and stimulates circulation.

Singing makes us breathe more deeply than many forms of strenuous exercise.

Singing improves your mood. It releases the same feel-good brain chemicals as sex and chocolate!

Singing relieves stress and improves sleep.

Singing releases pain-relieving endorphins.

Singing improves posture.

Singing increases lung capacity.

Singing clears sinuses and respiratory tubes.

Singing improves mental alertness.

Singing tones your facial and stomach muscles.

Singing increases our self-esteem and confidence.



(http://www.singup.org/fileadmin/singupfiles/The_Benefits_of_Singing_for_Adolescents_by_Professor_Graham_Welch.pdf)

Building Blocks for Reading Success



Reading Aloud

Reading aloud brings the whole world to your children! It's not just about reading the books – it's about the conversations you have about the people (and why they feel or behave the way they do), places and things in the books. It's great quality time too – time your children will remember forever.

Singing

Babies sing to themselves when they are happy. Singing releases endorphins & makes you feel energized & uplifted (unless someone teases you about your voice!). Singing makes it easier to remember, and easier to pay attention.

Rhyming

Being able to rhyme is the first skill children will need to be able to sound out words later on. It's the first step in learning that words are made up of individual sounds. Be direct when explaining...“Hey! Cat...Hat! Those words rhyme! They both sound like “at” at the end!”

Drawing & Scribbling

This is the first step toward printing letters. If you print words (or even just the 1st letter of the word) for your children's pictures (and for your own pictures too!), they'll begin to learn that putting our thoughts down on paper makes them permanent! And then they'll want to know more about letters!

Pretending

Pretending helps your children develop their mind's eye – something that they will need to use when reading books without pictures later on. Too much screen time gets in the way of a good imagination!

Building Vocabulary

Children must know a LOT of words to be able to understand what they read later on. Children's books have 50% more rare or unique words in them than does the conversation of most university graduates.

Building Speaking Skills

Having good conversations helps children learn to speak in complete sentences, use more complex grammar, and use more interesting words. All of this makes reading easier later on.

Playing with Syllables, Sounds, & Letters

Children must be able to hear all of the individual sounds in words to be able to sound out words later on. Play sound games like: “I hear with my little ear... the very first sound in __.” Or, “...something that sounds like: /um/brel/la”, & eventually, (by the end of SK), “something that sounds like: /s//t//ar/.”

Read with Me



Ham it Up!

Make your voice go:

HIGH/Low, FAST/slow, and LOUD/Quiet to make reading aloud more fun!

Go to the Library!

Pay close attention to what your children are interested in. What grabs their attention? This will help you focus on what makes your children tick, and then you can help them pick out books that may keep them interested later on.



Talk about It!

We don't always have to read the words in the book. Reading aloud is more about the conversation you have while reading, so just talk about the pictures, the characters, & relate it to your child's life.

Talk about Juicy Words!

Did you know that children's books have 50% more rare or unique words in them than does the conversation between two university graduates? Listen for words that may be new for your children when reading aloud tonight, and explain what they mean.



Read Pattern Books!

Read books that have patterns that repeat over and over again (e.g., Run, run, as fast as you can, you can't catch me I'm the gingerbread man!).

Pattern books are fun for children to read on their own because they can easily memorize parts that repeat.

Point to the WORDS!

Point out words in the story that repeat, are easy to read, or that stand out. Ask your children if they can point to the PICTURE story, and to the WORD story. Help them see the difference!



Read Good Quality Books!

As your children get older, be sure to read stories that are filled with new words, new ideas, different cultures, interesting characters, exciting storylines, and beautiful illustrations. Bring the world to your children by reading books that you can sink your teeth into!

Tell a story without a book!

Children need practice using their mind's eye to picture what you are saying. This will help them imagine what they read when they read chapter books later on.

Toddlers and Tabletops!

Toddlers Love New Materials

Get a basket and/or some plastic drawers. In your basket/drawers, place:



- ⇒ Paintbrushes (paint with water on chalk board, use *all sizes of brushes*)
- ⇒ Chalkboard (paint on it with water, use chalk – *all sizes*)
- ⇒ Masking tape (tape a paper towel tube onto the wall, and let them drop things through it, let them stick the masking tape where they want, make loooong pieces of masking tape go all over the table or chair or wall or floor, and let them have fun peeling it all off, or make a race track!)
- ⇒ Packing tape (again, hours of fun)
- ⇒ Cotton Balls (drop these through the paper towel roll)
- ⇒ Pom poms (drop these through the paper towel roll)
- ⇒ Paint and paint smock (put a dollop of paint on a yogurt container lid and let them paint – the dollar store has really good inexpensive paint, paintbrushes, & canvas)
- ⇒ Newspapers/Flyers (let them *cut* or *rip and scrunch*)
- ⇒ Scissors (toddlers need lots of practice!)
- ⇒ Paper to cut up, or old Magazines (all different kinds of paper!)
- ⇒ Lots of different kinds of paper for cutting and drawing and making art
- ⇒ Markers – all sizes
- ⇒ Crayons/Pencil Crayons - many colours
- ⇒ Window Writers – HOURS of fun!
- ⇒ Clothes Pegs and Stickers (put one sticker on paper, the other on a clothes peg, and let them open clothes peg & place on matching picture)
- ⇒ Muffin tin cup liners (put the muffin cups in a muffin tin)
- ⇒ Play Dough (make nursery rhyme characters and scenes, SING, and PRETEND!)



Toddlers Love to Pour

- ⇒ Fill up the kitchen sink with water and bubbles & let them play with wooden spoons, plastic containers, measuring cups, etc.
- ⇒ Rice, dried beans, peas, pasta (let them scoop with measuring cups and/or yogurt containers)
- ⇒ Fill up a sink and let them bath dolls! They LOVE pouring water on dolls with little cups!



Toddlers Love Cardboard Boxes

- ⇒ Give them lots of boxes & watch them play! Observe what they are doing, copy them, and then wait to see what they will do next.



Toddlers Love to Take Things In and Out

- ⇒ Toddlers love to take things in and out of a container. Fill a COFFEE TIN with juice lids (see picture), or a (large or small) bin/basket with socks, picture cards, plastic containers, lids from jars, etc...



Toddlers Love Books, Books, Books!

Surrounding your toddler in books is the longest lasting and most stimulating thing you can do. Good quality board books are helpful! Talk about the pictures! Turn the book around so that you are facing your child. Talk about what they are looking at/interested in.



Why Make Playdough for Me?

Why Make Play Dough for Me?

- ⇒ Because I LOVE it! It's so much fun!
- ⇒ It's a great way to pretend so that I learn to use symbols, my imagination, and speak in longer and more complex sentences.
- ⇒ It stimulates my imagination.
- ⇒ It develops all of the small muscles in my little hands.
- ⇒ It stimulates all of my senses at the same time, making it easy to learn concepts like colours, textures, shapes, above, below, beside, between.



Put the Cookie Cutters Away!

- ⇒ Use your imagination to create snakes that talk, snowmen that walk, and parks and islands that rock! Help me grow my imagination!
- ⇒ Limit use of cookie cutters so that I focus on imaginative play.
- ⇒ Offer materials such as rocks, popsicle sticks, pipe cleaners, shells, etc. I can then explore these materials with my playdough and CREATE something using my imagination!
- ⇒ Build nursery rhyme settings and characters and sing or say nursery rhymes!



What is a Good Play Dough Recipe?

Mix: 2½ cups flour

½ cup salt

3 tbsp. Cream of Tarter

Then Mix: 2 cups boiling water

3 tbsp. oil

food colouring

Then: Gradually pour the liquid into the dry ingredients. Mix and knead.



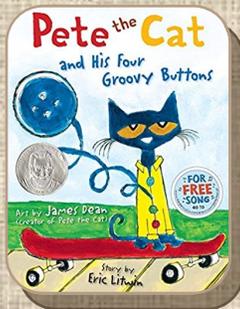
Numeracy

Like early literacy, **early numeracy skills**, are an important element of school readiness. What families do naturally every day, such as sorting laundry, counting fingers and establishing predictable daily routines for bed, bath, meal and play times are preparing your toddler for future math success.

Play, read, sing and talk to help your toddler develop early numeracy skills!

PLAY

- Make a fort out of a cardboard box
- Play a position game – “Put the doll on, in, beside the chair”
- Play matching and sorting games and match socks
- Stack and build with empty boxes and storage containers
- Do puzzles
- Follow your toddlers lead and explore

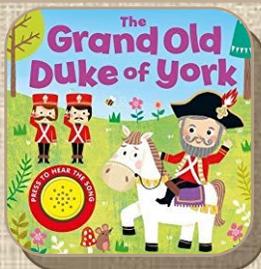


READ

- Rosie's Walk By Pat Hutchins
- Where's Spot By Eric Hill
- Pete the Cat and his Four Groovy Buttons by Eric Litwin
- Goodnight Gorilla By Peggy Rathman
- Traditional Nursery Rhymes

TALK

- Count out loud when climbing the stairs
- Count how many buses you see on the way to the store
- Label positions – up, down, over, under, beside, behind, left, right
- Label giant, tiny, full, empty, wide, light, heavy
- Pause and let your child fill in the blanks
- Ask, “Do you want one or two more crackers?”
- Talk about time—concepts like before, after, later, soon and “in one minute.”



SING

- The Grand Old Duke of York
- Five Little Monkeys
- Zoom, Zoom, Zoom!
- When You're One
- Hickory Dickory Dock
- Roley Poley

Ages & Stages of Numeracy Development

2 years old

- Can learn some number words.
- Knows that number words are important.
- Labels toys with number words.

2–3 years old

- Knows that when one candy is taken away from two candies, one candy is left.
- Knows that when one candy is added to two candies, there should be three candies altogether.
- Tries to count using number names even though the number names are often not in the correct order.
- Uses number words in the same order every time when counting objects, even though the number words are not necessarily in the correct order.
- Can learn to recite the number words 1 to 10.
- Can represent 1 and 2 with finger patterns.
- Can divide up eight toys between two children by using a “one-for-me, one-for-you” strategy.
- Learns to pick out the “first” and “last” person in a line

(www.qualitychildcarecanada.ca. © CCCF 2009)

For playful age specific activities—as well as videos, information, and more go to:

<https://www.zerotothree.org/resources/series/let-s-talk-about-math-early-math-video-series>

Everyday Fun with Addition and Subtraction

Everyday Fun with Counting

Everyday Fun with Spatial Awareness

Have Fun with Math: Playful Parent-Child Shape Activities

Parent-Child Activities That Support Pattern Learning

Everyday Fun with Measurement



Activities for Toddlers: 12-24 Months

- ◇ Let your child put smaller squishy things **in and out** of containers or drawers. But not too small!
- ◇ Roll a ball back and forth with them.
- ◇ **Put rice or water in a large pan and let your child explore with cups, spoons and bowls.**
- ◇ Play with empty **BOXES!** From big huge boxes, to milk cartons or small shoeboxes.
- ◇ **Let them roll balls/large pom-poms through wrapping paper tubes.**



- ◇ **Set your child in front of a mirror. Name body parts. Can they point to parts when asked?**
- ◇ Take your child to a place with other children. They may not play *with* them, but will love playing *near* them.
- ◇ **Give your children a large piece of paper & a thick crayon. Tape it to the floor or wall & let them scribble. When they are finished, cut it out in a shape and hang it up.**
- ◇ Give your children stickers and ask them to put one on different parts of your body.
- ◇ Hide something inside a sock. Can your child guess what it is? Can they take it out and tell you?
- ◇ Talk about things in pictures when you read books aloud. Can they point things out?
- ◇ Put a hole in a plastic dishpan (or box), tie a string to it with a handle, & let them pull toys around.
- ◇ Talk about things by how they feel and look (i.e.: soft, scratchy, rubbery, shiny, red, squishy, etc).
- ◇ **Go on a walk outside and collect things from nature to explore at home.**



<https://empowersimcoe.ca/early-literacy/>

Activities for Toddlers: 12-24 Months

- ◇ Talk with your child in simple, short sentences. Repeat new words often (“mmm... bananas...bananas are yummy”).
- ◇ **Draw different faces on wooden spoons or paper plates. Tell a little story with the puppets.**
- ◇ Ask your child to listen to different sounds. Can they guess the sounds they cannot see?
- ◇ Ask your child to hand you things. Can your child do it? Can they hand you two things?
- ◇ Take your child outside as much as possible and respond to what they see. Explain things.

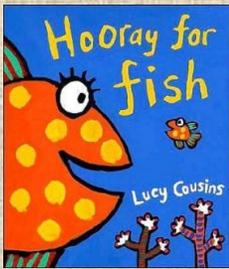


- ◇ Cut out little stars & hide them around the room. Can your child find them by listening to hints? (use the words beside, under, on top of, behind, etc).
- ◇ Help your child sort clothes by starting two piles...one for socks and one for shirts.
- ◇ Make homemade musical instruments. Use them when saying nursery rhymes & when singing.
- ◇ Let your child dress up and pretend as much as possible.
- ◇ Sing **simple songs & nursery rhymes** slowly, over and over again. **Use your child's name** whenever you can.
- ◇ Play “Head & Shoulders, Knees & Toes”, “Ring around the Rosie”, and other simple games. Sing slowly so that they will be able to learn the words and follow along.

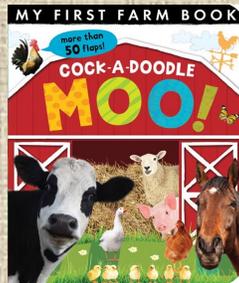


<https://empowersimcoe.ca/early-literacy/>

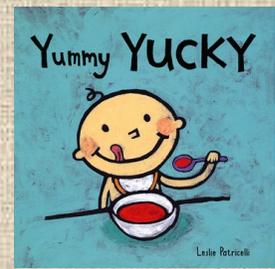
Books for Toddlers!



Hooray for Fish by Lucy Cousins



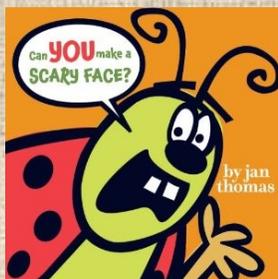
Cock-a-Doodle Moo (Tiger Tales)



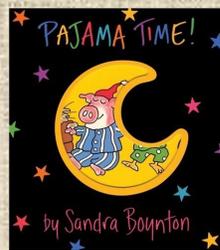
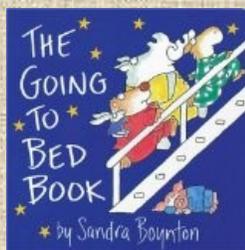
Yummy Yucky by Leslie Patricelli

Toddlers love...

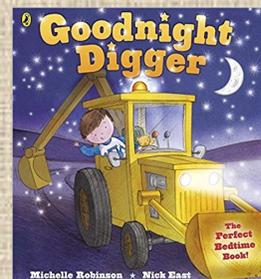
- Toddlers love **sturdy board books** that have **sturdy flaps** they can lift
- Toddlers love **SOUND EFFECTS**
- Toddlers love things they can **touch and feel**
- **Toddlers love books when you use your own words** (not always the words from the book)
- Toddlers love it when you are **enthusiastic with your voice and facial expressions**: Make your voice go **up/down, fast/slow, loud/quiet**
- Toddlers love it when you read books that **repeat the same thing over and over so that they can join in!**
- Toddlers love books about **things that they can relate to** (going to bed, eating), and the conversations you have while reading with them



Can You Make a Scary Face?
(Jan Thomas)



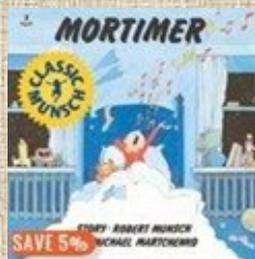
Books by Sandra Boynton



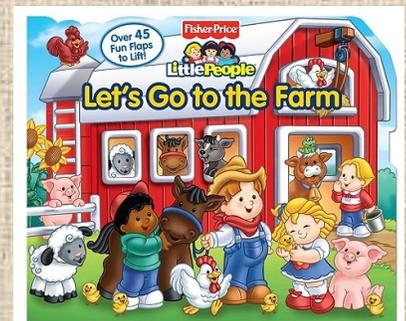
Goodnight Digger By Michelle Robinson
(many others in this series)



Put a basket of books
in every room!



Mortimer By Robert Munsch



Fisher Price "Lift the Flap" books
with LOTS of little flaps to lift
and things for you to talk about
with your toddlers.

Ten Tips for Getting Toddlers Ready to Read!

1

Get **face-to-face** & pay attention to what interests **THEM**. Follow their lead by **copying what they do** and **waiting** (with enthusiasm) to **see if they will take turns with you**.

2

Sing **songs & nursery rhymes** often. Do **actions** for the songs and rhymes. **Leave off last words**.

3

Pretend with your Toddlers! Take your stuffed animals, rubber duckies, etc. and make them talk!

4

Look at books and point to the pictures. **Name** things, or **describe & explain** things.

5

Read aloud with **enthusiasm** in your **voice & facial expressions**. Make your voice go high, low, fast, slow, loud, & quiet.

6

Get excited about learning about the people, places, & things in our world! Wherever you go (places you visit, what you see on TV or on the Internet, and in stories), **TALK** about what you see and read. **Learn some new words!**

7

Have fun with **rhyming**. Say "Hey! That rhymes! Those words sound the same!" **Be silly!**

8

Ask questions & make comments about what the characters in the books you read are **feeling**, or about what may happen **next** when reading aloud. Help them **relate stories to their own experiences**.

9

Make regular trips to the Library. Let your children pick out lots of books, pick out some that **you** think would be fun to read to them, & books you want to read to yourself too!

10

Comfort your toddler. Toddlers have a lot of overwhelming feelings. When we tune in to our toddlers and help them handle these feelings, they will be calm and alert and ready to learn!

Enjoy the Moment...

Have Fun, Connect and Wonder, Pause and Wait



Frequently Asked Questions About Bilingualism



Will speaking two languages with my child cause a language delay?

- No. Research indicates that speaking two languages will **not** cause speech and language problems.
- Research has shown that a child's total vocabulary (when both languages are combined) will be at least the same size as a child who only speaks one language.
- A child's brain can learn more than one language. In many places around the world children grow up learning more than one language at the same time.
- If a bilingual child is delayed in his/her language development, a speech and language assessment is recommended. For more information about when to refer for a speech and language assessment please visit,

<http://www.children.gov.on.ca/htdocs/English/topics/earlychildhood/speechlanguage/index.aspx>

If my child has a speech/language delay, will speaking two languages make the delay worse?

- No. There is **no evidence** that children with a speech and language delay will be more delayed if they hear two languages.
- Research has shown that children with a speech and language delay who hear two languages will have the same difficulties in both languages.

If I don't speak English well, is it okay for me to speak my native language with my child?

- **Yes!** Some parents speak English to their child even when they don't speak it well. They might believe that speaking to their child in English is necessary for their child to learn English. Research however does not support this view.
- Research has highlighted that it is important for parents and caregivers to speak with a child in the language that feels **natural** and **comfortable**. Speaking with a child in a language that is not comfortable may have negative consequences for parent-child connections.
- Maintaining your native language may be important for a number of reasons. There may be family members who only speak that language and there may be a risk of losing your native language if it is not used at home.



April 2016

How can I help my child learn more than one language?

- Research says a child needs **repeated** and **consistent** exposure to each language. Some parents use:
 - “one parent-one language”: one parent speaks one language to the child; the other parent speaks the other language to the child.
 - “one place-one language”: one language is spoken at home; the other at daycare or at school.
 - “two languages mixed throughout the day”: one or both parents speak both languages to the child throughout the day.



It all works! No one approach is best. Parents should speak to their child in a way that feels comfortable. The key is to provide children with many opportunities to hear, speak, play and interact in both languages.

What if my child mixes both languages?

- Mixing languages is **not** a sign of language delay or difficulty in learning two languages.
- Mixing languages is **common** for children learning two languages. It is natural and should be expected.

What about putting my child with a speech and language delay in a French Immersion program?

- There is very limited research in this area. It seems that children with language impairments may do just as well in bilingual education settings as in English only settings. Keep in mind that children with language impairments need **more support** with learning language **both** at home and at school.



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Is Screen Time Okay for Toddlers?



▶ **The Canadian Paediatric Society discourages screen-based activities for children under 2**, and encourages limiting television watching to less than 1–2 hours per day for older children.

▶ **Since 90% of brain development happens in the first three years of life**, we need to focus on helping our toddlers develop healthy brains that are ready to learn. **Time in front of a media screen does not help toddlers become ready to learn.** Warm and engaging interactions with parents and other caregivers are what they need to be ready to learn.

▶ The goal of the first few years of a toddler's life is to help him/her develop **language skills**. Screen time has a negative effect on this development – **even when the TV is on in the background.**

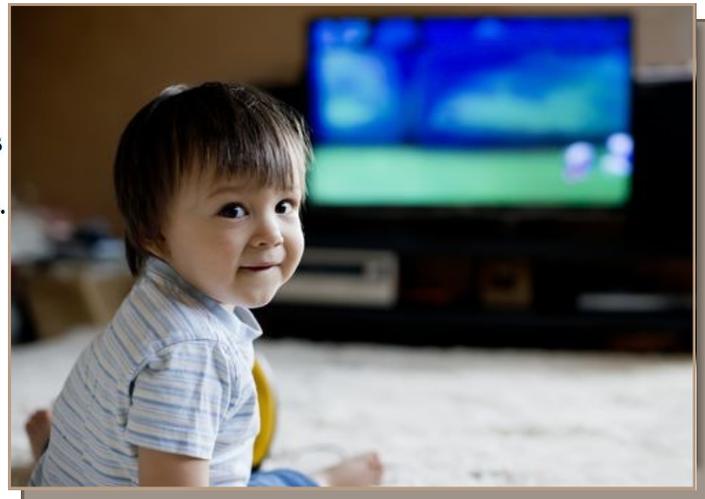
▶ Children learn many of their values and ideas from their parents. **Be aware of your own media habits and change them if necessary.**

▶ **Music in the background** may actually increase language skills as parents are more likely to sing, dance, and interact with their toddlers, & this nurtures their early language & communication skills.

▶ Research has shown that **watching television during meal times can lead to delayed social skills and delayed language skills.** This is mostly because of the conversation that is being missed out on that usually takes place during meal times.

▶ Research shows that children who have televisions in their bedrooms score lower in school, and yet **20% of Simcoe County children in grade one have televisions in their bedrooms.**

▶ Balance screen time with **sports, hobbies, creative and outdoor play**, both on their own and together as a family.



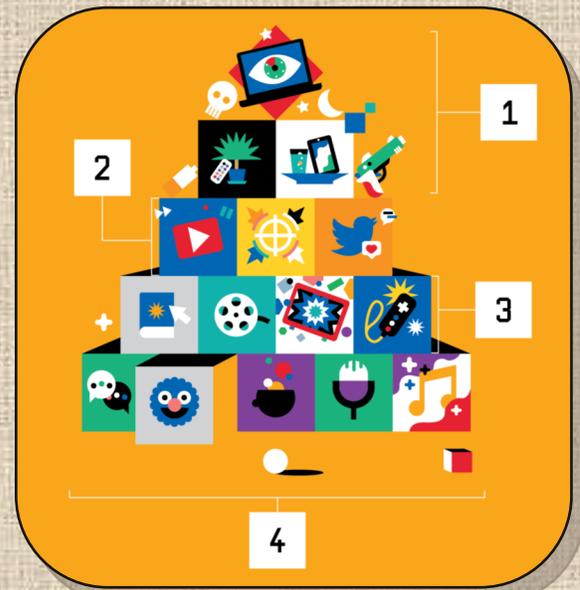
The best toy for your toddler is
YOU!



Food Pyramid for Kids' Media Consumption

<https://www.wired.com/story/kids-screen-time-pyramid/>

Although screen time before the age of 2 is not recommended, take a look at this visual below...it's useful information to keep in mind down the road!



1. USE SPARINGLY

Screens Before Bed

Cortisol-spiking content and melatonin-suppressing blue light impair sleep.

Background TV

This reduces the number of words adults utter, potentially stunting children's language development.

Screens During Mealtime

The habit is linked to overeating as well as delayed social and language skills, due to missing out on family conversations.

2. USE OCCASIONALLY

YouTube

To reduce the risk of children stumbling onto inappropriate content, turn Autoplay off and Restricted Mode on.

First-Person Shooter Videogames

While violent media is linked to aggression, boys who abstain from videogames report more social isolation.

Social Media

Most teens say social media helps them feel more connected to friends, although heavy use has been linked to depression and anxiety. Apps like RescueTime can help kids reflect on their screen use.

3. USE MODERATELY

Interactive Ebooks

Ebooks with lots of bells and whistles tend to reduce comprehension but may help children who would otherwise lose interest.

Movies/TV

For age-appropriate content, consult independent review sites like Common Sense Media.

Active TV/Video

Shows like The Wiggles and YouTube channels like Kidz Bop encourage children to dance.

Active Videogames

Older exergaming consoles like Wii and Kinect, and newer games like Beat Saber and Rec Room, can help children break a sweat.

4. USE FREELY

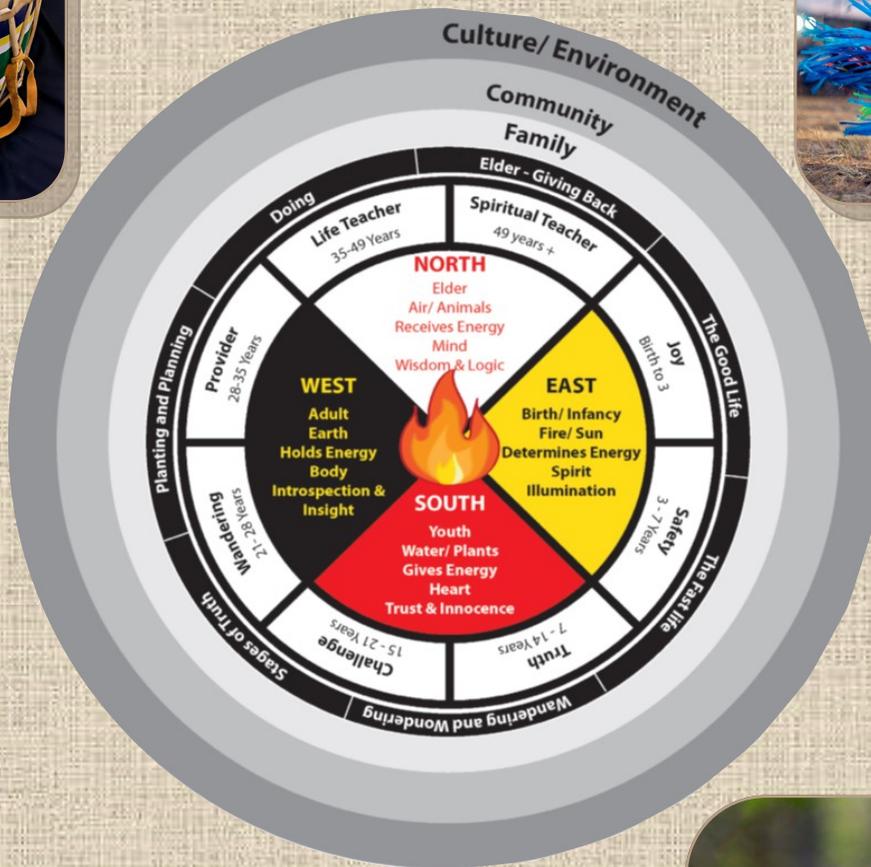
Video Chats With Family

While children age 2 and under have a poor ability to learn from 2D sources, Pediatricians approve of video chats starting at 18 months.

A Bit About Being Indigenous

“There are three categories of Indigenous peoples in Canada: Inuit, Métis and First Nations. The Inuit primarily inhabit the northern regions of Canada. Their homeland, known as Inuit Nunangat, includes much of the land, water and ice contained in the Arctic region. Métis peoples are of mixed European and Indigenous ancestry, and live mostly in the Prairie Provinces and Ontario, but also in other parts of the country. First Nations peoples were the original inhabitants of the land that is now Canada, often occupying territories south of the Arctic.”

(Filice, Michelle; October 12, 2018; <https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/aboriginal-people>)



Key Messages

1 First Nations, Inuit, and Métis cultures have long passed on knowledge from generation to generation through oral traditions, including storytelling. Storytelling is a traditional method used to teach about cultural beliefs, values, customs, rituals, history, practices, relationships, and ways of life. First Nations storytelling is a foundation for holistic learning, relationship building, and experiential learning.

2 “The Medicine Wheel, sometimes known as the Sacred Hoop or Sacred Circle, has been used by generations of various Native American tribes and First Nations in Canada for health and healing and as a tool for learning and teaching.” (Beaulieu, Kelly J.; The Seven Lessons of the Medicine Wheel <https://saymag.com/the-seven-lessons-of-the-medicine-wheel/>)

“As we journey through these seven stages we are also journeying through the life cycle, growing and learning along the way, understanding more about ourselves, and connecting more to our life’s purpose that was given by the Creator before birth. The seven stages of life are often described as:

The Good Life

The Fast Life

The Wandering and Wondering Life

The Stages of Truth

(Nurturing the Seed p.33 © Infant Mental Health Promotion (IMHP), 2017, rev. 2019)



3 “Powwows are celebrations that showcase Indigenous music, dances, regalia, food and crafts. Commonly hosted by First Nations communities (either on reserve or in urban settings), powwows are often open to non-Indigenous and Métis and Inuit peoples alike. Contemporary powwows originated on the Great Plains during the late 19th century and, since the 1950s, have been growing in size, number and popularity. Powwows serve an important role in many Indigenous peoples’ lives as a forum to visit family and friends, and to celebrate their cultural heritage, while also serving as a site for cross-cultural sharing with other attendees and participants. Indeed, powwows provide the opportunity for visitors to learn about, and increase their awareness of, traditional and contemporary Indigenous life and culture.”

(Filice,Michelle; October 15, 2018; <https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/powwows-editorial>)

4 “There are a number of ways in which children may participate in their culture”these are some ways:

- mechanisms of cultural structure such as beliefs, rituals, customs, traditions, and ceremonies which are also “value” based language and communication patterns
- family orientations
- healing beliefs and practices
- religion
- art, dance, and music
- diet and food
- recreation
- clothing – regalia, moss bag
- history
- social status
- social group interactions



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