

Games And Activities For Toddlers

General Guidelines For Play:

"Play is the work of children."

- Set up safe and developmentally appropriate play areas for your child
- Follow the child's lead; be a facilitator rather than an initiator
- The process of play is most important at this stage, rather than a particular product or outcome
- Remember that toddlers can't share yet and can have a hard time with taking turns
- When doing art projects, avoid making models for children, let them experiment
- Avoid teasing as it can lead to embarrassment, hurt feelings and frustration
- Help young children make the transition from one activity to the next

Toys:

- **Balls of all shapes and varieties:** crumpled newspaper balls, beach balls, extra large beach balls, gertie balls, tennis balls, nerf balls
- **Bubbles,** make your own with *Dawn* liquid detergent and water. Use different bubble wands like plastic strawberry baskets, large wands, and small wands. Lay out a plastic garbage bag on a smooth surface and then spread some bubble mixture around, with a straw blow a bubble on the surface of the plastic; you can then drive a small toy car into the bubble..... MAGIC!
- **Blocks and building materials**-- cardboard boxes of all sizes, wooden blocks, large legos, foam squares, milk carton blocks, home made blocks cut from tree branches -large boxes can be painted for a "house" or a train
- **Sand and Water Play**- Use wet or dry sand in a play box area, provide scoops, buckets, cars, spoons, sand molds, sieves etc.
-If you do not have a sand box you can purchase a large plastic tub from OSH and fill with sand for sand play
_ for water play provide buckets, spoons, spray bottles, droppers, turkey basters, and small plastic tubs
- large paint brushes and buckets with water for "painting"
- let children wash doll clothes or give a doll a bath
- sea shells and stones can "washed" as they are very beautiful when wet
- let children put water in a sand box area so they can make rivers and oceans and lakes
- the beach or bank of river is an excellent water, sand, and mud play area (Wadel Creek, Seabright Beach, Cowell's Beach, San Lorenzo River in Henry Cowell)
- for older children you can give them a container with water and different objects which they can experiment with to see if they will float or not.

-plastic tubes and pipes and funnels are wonderful water toys or pouring.

Dolls: wash them, feed them, take them out to play, put them to bed, change diapers, dress them, brush their teeth etc...

Cars and Trucks- small cars, trucks or other wheeled objects are fun for toddlers
Large cars are fun for them to ride on. Take cars to the beach for sand play.

Fine Motor Development:

Leggos or Duplos

Puzzles

Stacking cubes/cups

Shape Sorters

Stringing Beads, wooden ones or large macaroni

Lacing Cards

Play dough: Home made smells best and is soft and warm when first made

Open ended materials with many uses inspire more imagination and are used over a longer span of time. You can add to these open ended toys to enhance play. For example, you can add a garage to park cars and trucks, or give a child a basket for tossing balls or bean bags into.

Fantasy Play

Dolls

Stuffed Animals

Hats

Dress up Clothes- old night gowns, aprons, shoes, skirts, Dad's shirts, bead necklaces
purses, garage sale "fancy" clothes

Dishes and Food boxes or cans; save you cardboard tea boxes, cereal boxes, and spice jars for fantasy play

Tents

Large Cardboard Boxes

Small Table

Basin for "washing" dishes or dolls

Brooms and dust pan (can use a whisk broom)

Children need your presence and ideas when starting fantasy play but may be able to transfer focus to their dolls and toys. When children are successfully playing by themselves, refrain from interfering by making comments or suggestions that will draw the focus back to you.

Fantasy play can be a very rich element, helping to develop a child's imagination, as well as helping children work through the complex emotions they experience in their every day growth.

It is fun to go to the fleas market or garage sales and look for dress up clothes or fantasy play props.