

Gross Motor

Activities to Help Your Toddler Grow and Learn



The word *active* still best describes your toddler. His muscles are getting stronger. He is more confident with his abilities. Let your toddler continue physical activities he enjoys, such as kicking balls, riding toys, climbing jungle gyms, swinging, running, jumping, and balancing.

Can You Do This?

Stand on one foot. Ask your child, "Can you do this?" Even if your child stands only for 1 second, praise her. Pretend to be an airplane flying with your arms out across the room. Jump, crawl, gallop, and tiptoe around the house. Let your child be the leader and copy her. Play with the whole family.

Jumping Frog Contest

Pretend you and your child are frogs or rabbits, and show your child how to jump with both feet together. Then jump over a chalk line, crack in the sidewalk, or small object. Make marks with chalk to measure how far he can jump with both feet together: "Wow, look how far the frog jumped that time!"

Soccer Star

Use a medium-size ball (8–10 inches) to play soccer with your child. Set up a goal with two empty milk cartons or turn a large cardboard box on its side. Encourage your child to kick the ball through the cartons or into the box. Great goal!

Playground Fun

Just about every day is a good day to spend time outside in the yard or on a playground. Encourage your child to run, swing, and climb up play structures and slide down slides. Join your child in these activities. Jump over cracks or sticks on the way to the playground. Help your child practice stepping up and down stairs or jumping down from short steps. Meet other children and parents. Have a great time!

Basketball Hoops

Stand in front of your child and hold out your arms in a circle. You are the "hoop." Encourage your child to toss a soft ball into your "basket." You can also use a clean garbage can or laundry basket for a target. Celebrate when your child makes a basket!

Horsing Around

Bounce your toddler on your knees or hold his hands and let him straddle and ride your foot. If you cross your legs, it is less tiring to bounce him. Stop bouncing and wait for him to bounce or ask for more. Ask your child, "More? Do you want to ride some more?"

Stair-Stepping Solo

When you climb stairs, let your toddler hold on to only one of your fingers. You may have to slow down, but let her climb the stairs with little support or all by herself. Show her the stair rail and encourage her to hold it for support. When your child climbs all by herself, give her a big hug!

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.