



## Age Appropriate Activities and Play

### 15 Months

#### General

Once is never enough for an older infant or toddler. Feel comfortable repeating activities over and over and allowing your child to be the guide.

Your voice is important to any activity. Be sure to narrate what your child is doing, name the things they are touching, and give positive reinforcement for the process (not the outcome). At this age, your child might not be able to participate in an activity for very long. Don't worry, they will learn to spend more time on things as they get older. For now, never force an activity. If your child isn't interested or wants to do something else, let them lead the way!

#### Arts and Crafts

Safe art materials include: tape, crayons, cotton balls, feathers, paper plates, stickers, paint, yarn, sandpaper

- Creating space for art:
  - Tape a piece of construction paper to a tabletop or the floor for your child to paint, draw, or tape the above materials onto
- Water painting:
  - Give your child small cups of water and a variety of paint brushes
  - Model dipping the paint brush in the water and "paint" a piece of paper
  - Point out how the water dries
  - Explain what is happening to the paper when it gets wet
  - Try out different strokes, some thick and some thin, some long and some short. Label these for your child.
- You can introduce other painting tools such as old sponges, feather dusters, fingers, etc.

**Tip:** Toddlers usually work best kneeling or standing. If they are seated, make sure their feet touch the floor.

## Developmental Skills and Play

### Fine motor skills

- Writing: Find places in the sand, dirt, a steamy shower or on paper and make lines with your finger or a stick. Label the kinds of lines you are making, “Mommy made a wiggly line” and “Mommy made a straight line.” Label the lines your child makes as well, “You’re drawing a circle.”
- Drawing/scribbling: Tape a piece of paper to the floor or table. Under a watchful eye, give your baby a crayon (let them choose the color and be sure to label it) to scribble with. If the crayon is long, break it in half to help your child master the tripod grip (this will be useful when learning to write). Make sure to watch because he or she may try and eat the crayon. Your child can also do this on his high chair tray while waiting for meals. Talk to your child about the specific lines they are scribbling. Once the scribbles seem more deliberate, ask your child to repeat similar patterns on the page again!
- Pincer grasp: Practice giving your child one cheerio at a time and having them pick it up and use it for a design!

### Pretend play

- Dolls
- Telephone
- Stuffed animals
- Baby stroller

### Social-emotional

- Clean up game: sing a song (clean up, clean up, everybody everywhere; clean up, clean up, everybody do your share) and make toy pickup time a fun opportunity to put toys away. Model putting a toy in a basket or box and tell your child what you are doing, “I dropped the red block in the bucket, now you try!” Be sure to give specific praise when your child completes each task (for example, you’re putting your truck in the basket, thank you!)
- Ball games: Sit close together and roll the ball to your child. Get them to send it back to you (this is harder than it may seem). As your child gets better, move further and further apart.
- Peek-a-Boo: Keep playing peek-a-boo for another year. You can make the game more complex but it is still highly entertaining and beneficial.

- Hide and seek: You can play hide and seek with a doll or with each other. Be sure to give him clues. When you hide, let your child know where you are by using your voice. When your child finds you, be sure to get excited.
- Feelings: Make faces expressing different feelings and share them with your child. Tell him or her what the feelings are and see if they can imitate you. Also be sure to use everyday opportunities to label his feelings (for example, “Leaving the playground made you feel sad”) so your child becomes familiar with them.

### Language and literacy:

Tip: Be specific and clear when you speak to your child. Make sure you don’t use too many words or complex sentences all the time. Try to speak to them when they can see your lips move.

- *Animal sounds*: Use your baby’s favorite animals as a chance to teach animals sounds that your child can imitate back. Put a group of different stuffed animals in a bucket and pick each one up and say what it is and the sound it makes. Then, once your child seems familiar with a few animals and their sounds, read a story with animals and ask what each animal in the picture says. Set your child up for success. Once your child has it down you can remove the toy and just show the book and say, “Do you remember what this is? It’s a cat! What sound does a cat make?”
- *Touch and name game*: Touch a body part and say, “I’m touching my ears, can you touch your ears?” Give a long pause before helping your child touch their ears – it takes a while to process. Once you get the simpler body parts down, you can begin with more obscure body parts such as knee caps and eyelashes.
- *Saying and doing*: Think of this as pre Simon Says and perform an action and say what you are doing (“I’m stretching my arms out”). Tell your child to do what you are doing and label it.

### Pre-Math:

- Blocks: Make a tower of blocks. Ask your child to help you place each block. Tell your child to knock the blocks down. Do this repeatedly. This next developmental period will be more about knocking down than building. Make some taller towers and some shorter ones and label them. Talk about size, color and numbers.
- Matching sizes and shapes: Start with shapes and then move on to size. Use two different shapes but all the same colors (blocks and balls). Tell your child the features of

each shape. Ask which shapes are the same. Do the same with colors. Eventually you can move on to shape sorting and color matching.

- Nesting: Put out lots of sizes of containers. Let your child lead the way. When he or she fits a smaller container into a larger one, let them know why it fit. If he or she picks a larger one, let them know why it didn't fit and gently suggest they try a smaller size (show them what that means).