
UNIT 14 STIMULATION AND PLAY ACTIVITIES DURING TODDLERHOOD (1-3 Years)

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14.1 INTRODUCTION

In this Unit, we have described the activities that can be carried out with children between one year and three years of age.

In the first two units, the framework we used for organizing our write-up was based on the ‘domains of development’. For each domain of development, we described some activities which would promote development primarily in that domain. Of course, we have also emphasized that most activities will promote development in more than one domain. In this Unit, the organization of our write-up is different. We have described activities and, within the description of each, explained in which domain/domains it fosters development. In this way, by the end of studying this Block, you will be able to use both ways of classification — taking a domain and identifying activities that foster the development of the domain; and taking activity and identifying the domains which are fostered.

Unlike in the earlier two Units, where we took a narrow age range of six months while describing the activities (birth to six months and seven months to one year), in this Unit, we are covering a span of two years – from the beginning of the first birthday to the third birthday. Within the description of the activities, we have delineated the activities that may be more appropriate for the younger toddler and those which may be more appropriate for the older toddler. However, finally, you have to see what the developmental stage of the child is and modify and adapt the activities as required. The activities for a one-year-old will be simpler than those for a two-year-old.

Objectives

After studying this Unit, you should be able to:

- plan and organize early stimulation and play activities that will interest toddlers;
- explain how these activities foster the development; and
- make some toys using low-cost materials.

14.2 EARLY STIMULATION AND PLAY ACTIVITIES FOR TODDLERS (1 to 3 Years)

Remember that the early stimulation and play activities are not intended as a test of the child’s abilities. The child must not be forced to master any activity. A relaxed and playful approach while conducting the activities will help in learning.

You have to be careful to choose those play activities that are suited to the individual child’s ability and maturity. Forcing a child to participate in activities for which she is not ready will cause frustration, anger and disappointment.

14.2.1 Walking and Running Activities

Most children walk between 11 and 15 months of age. Being able to walk allows the toddler to explore her surroundings and seek out objects to play with. It also increases her range of vision as she can see things that are further away. The pleasure of being able to move from one place to another is immense. The toddler walks for the sheer pleasure of it. The act of walking becomes play for the child. Ask an eighteen-month-old to stand still. What response do you think you will get? Let us understand with the help of an example.

When Somu was asked to stand at one place, he stood at one place for a couple of seconds and then began to move. When his father said playfully: “Where are you going Somul? Don’t move”, he smiled and stood still for a few seconds before moving on again. This, then, became a game for them. As soon as Somu would move, his father would ask him not to. Somu would stop, laugh, and then move again.

By 2 years of age, most toddlers can walk steadily. They will enjoy the following activity:

Draw about 10 footprints /circles on the floor in the same formation as would be made if a child was to actually walk that path. Now ask the child to walk by stepping on the footprints alternating her feet. Remember, there should be no compulsion on the child to place her foot on the footprints. The child’s motor coordination is just developing and her footsteps may not coincide with the footprints that you have drawn. The important point is to stimulate the child and encourage and support her to do the activity. The given example will further help you to understand this.

A crèche worker, Madhu organized the footprints activity described above and the children’s response to it brought out the concept of the zone of proximal development very well.

Madhu’s group of toddlers was busy playing with the ball and no one was engaged in the footprint activity. Madhu called out to the children and asked if they would like to participate in this activity. A few children ran towards her. The first child, who seemed to be around two years of age, quickly walked over the footprints by placing each foot exactly over each footprint. Having completed the activity, she quickly ran back to the earlier activity. Madhu, then, invited the second child. This toddler seemed reluctant to begin the activity, so Madhu asked the child to hold her hand and try stepping on the footprints. The child held Madhu’s hand and then stepped over the footprints placing a one-foot step over each footprint. This child appeared to be a couple of months younger than the first one around 22 months old. Madhu, then, asked the third child to try the activity. He came forward but refused to try walking in the footsteps even after Madhu offered him her hand. He stood there for a while and then went away. This child appeared to be around 18 months of age.

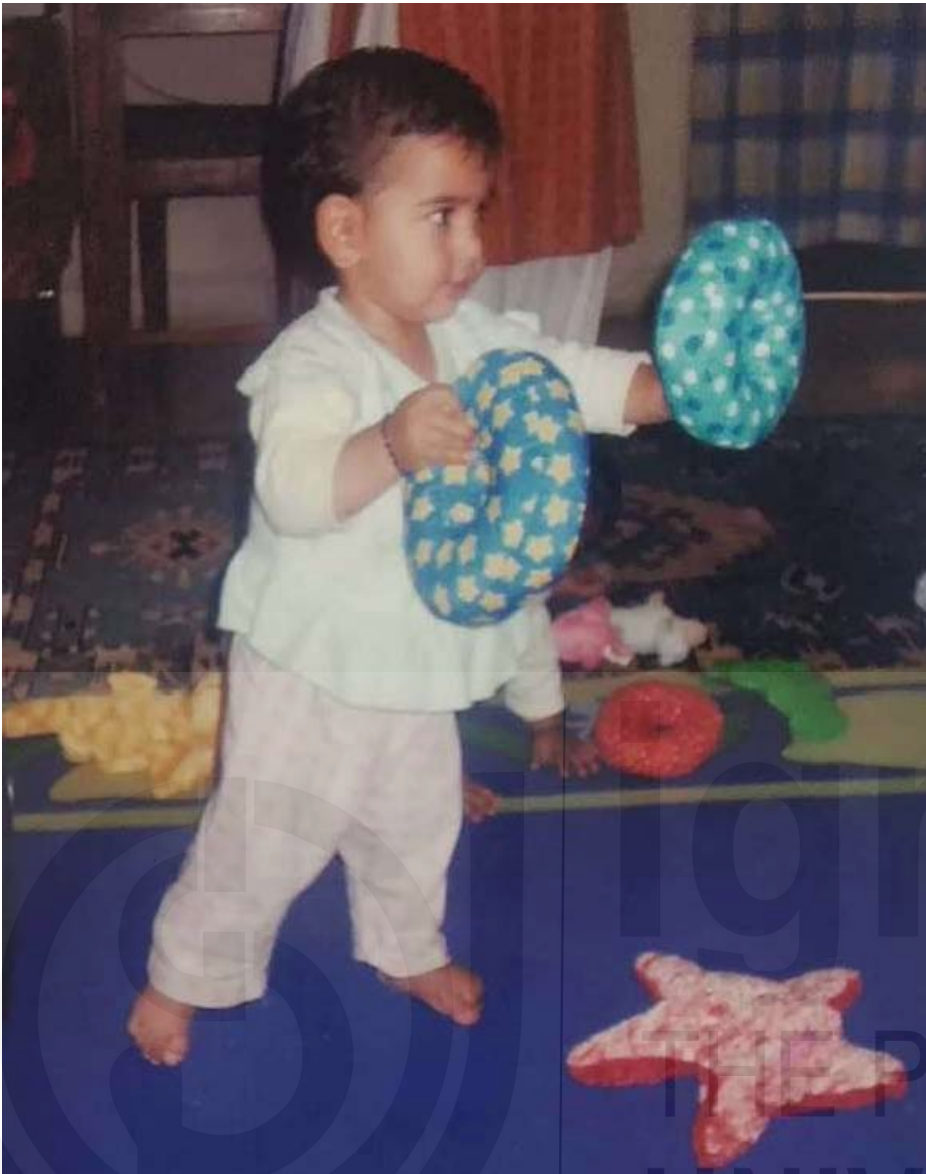
Linking Theory to Practice: Zone of Proximal Development in Evidence

This interaction in the example above showed the concept of Zone of Proximal Development very effectively. For the first child, the activity was no challenge at all. She had already mastered the task and, in that sense, the task held no novelty for her. Thus, it was not a new learning experience. For the second child, the task was right in her zone of proximal development. She wanted to try out the activity but was hesitant to do so alone, but readily accepted adult help and completed the activity effectively. The third child was hesitant to even in the adult's presence. It seemed that the activity was too challenging for her as it was not within her zone of proximal development.

The age of the children was a crucial factor in their willingness to try out the activity.

Once the toddler has mastered walking independently around two years of age, you can play many games with her, which involve variations in walking. They will find walking around obstacles, walking backward or sideways a challenge, and will enjoy such games. Some games could be as follows:

- a) When the child becomes a confident walker, place obstacles like toys, a few chairs, or plastic boxes in the path of the toddler. Now encourage the child to walk in the path while avoiding touching these roadblocks (obstacles) you have placed.
- b) Stand facing the child and take the child's hands in yours. Pretend you are an engine pulling a railway carriage or a horse pulling a cart and walking backward, making the child walk with you. So the child will be walking in the forward direction like we normally do when walking. After some time, change roles and let the child be the engine, walk backward and pull you. This helps them to develop balance as well as trust in adults who will prevent them from falling as they walk backward. Can you plan an activity where the child has to walk sideways?



Holding the two cushions in her hands, helps the toddler to balance while walking

Walking soon leads to running. Encourage the child to run. As the child is running, praise and encourage her. You can also plan the activity of chasing and catching one another in turns. Remember, at this age, the child cannot control her running effectively — she will not be able to stop running at once. So ensure that there is wide, open and clear space for these activities so that the child does not run into something and hurt herself.

All of these activities foster physical and motor development, specifically the development of gross muscles and a sense of balance and coordination. As walking increases the child's range of vision, it provides visual sensory stimulation. Walking around obstacles develops the child's sense of space, which is an aspect of cognitive development.

14.2.2 Pushing and Pulling Activities

When toddlers can balance themselves while walking, you may see them pushing chairs, walkers and small tables that come in their path, and they enjoy this a great deal. At this stage, they enjoy toys with wheels that can be pulled along with a string. They will drag the toy with them wherever they

go. If the toy makes some sound, they will like it even more. For instance, a toddler would insist on holding the chain of her pet dog and having him walk after her. In the latter part of the Unit, we have described how to make toys that can be pushed and pulled, from low-cost materials at home.



Photo by DICSON on Unsplash; dicson-crlpbtb1kdc-unsplash; retrieved 27th Aug, 2021

A child who is learning to walk, or has just become independent in walking, enjoys pushing a walker

As the child manoeuvres/moves the toy around corners, up the stairs and between objects, her balance and coordination improve and gross motor development is fostered. This activity also fosters cognitive development. Can you say how? When the child moves the toy between objects, she develops an idea about the size of the object and the space needed to manoeuvre it. Concepts of space and size are important aspects of cognitive development.

14.2.3 Stepping and Climbing Activities

Two-and-a-half-year-old Mira, whenever she got a chance, would hold on to the railing and climb up the stairs. Her mother would bring her down, scared that she would fall.

You may have noticed that often a two-year-old child walks in the direction of an obstacle, such as a small box, and rather than avoiding it steps on it, the child steps down, or jumps down on it. Stepping and climbing activities are challenging for the child. Keeping this inclination of the child for stepping and climbing activities in mind, you can devise the given play activity.

Take a long piece of rope and drape it over two objects such as chairs, stools, boxes or bricks, so that the rope is about two inches off the floor. The toddler will enjoy stepping over the rope or jumping across it with both feet together, depending upon her ability. As she becomes skilled at this, you then raise the level of the rope gradually to a maximum of about six inches from the floor. Do not tie the rope at the ends because the child could trip if her feet get caught in it. This activity, besides being an interesting game that improves

her gross motor skills and balance, will give her a sense of mastery and confidence and contributes to a positive sense of self. In this way, the child's socio-emotional development is fostered.

14.2.4 Jumping Activities

Toddlers love to jump. Jumping follows toddlers' experiments with stepping down stairs or boxes. By two years, most toddlers can jump from a small height with both feet.

- a) Ask a 2-year-old to jump to the beat of a tambourine. Once they have attained greater balance during jumping, you can also ask them to jump with their hands on their waist.
- b) As their motor control develops, toddlers enjoy jumping from a small height (around 6 inches for 1-2 years olds and 12 inches for 2-3-year-olds). Initially, the two-year-olds may simply step off the stool or platform, instead of jumping. Gradually, they will jump.
- c) Once the toddler can jump, you can convert the stepping activity with a rope described earlier to a jumping activity. Place the rope on the floor and ask the child to jump over it with both feet together, instead of stepping over it. After some days, you can raise the rope about an inch from the ground. You have to be careful about the height to which you raise the rope, as the child may trip over the rope if it is too high.

These activities can also be carried out in the crèche/ centre with a group of children. Children can stand in a line as they wait for their chance to jump. In this way, along with physical and gross motor development, children also learn the skill of waiting for their turn, an important aspect of social interaction.

14.2.5 Activities with the Ball

Toddlers' ball play is more advanced than infants' play with the ball (about which you read in the previous Unit). Toddlers will chase the ball, pick it up, kick, throw and roll it. Of course, the kicking and throwing will not be accurate yet, but nonetheless, you can plan many activities using the ball. Can you think of some? Some games can be played in the following manner:

- a) The toddler and the caregiver sit facing each other. The caregiver gently rolls the ball towards the child and asks her to roll it back. To add novelty to the game, a tunnel can be made using chairs or boxes. The child and the caregiver then sit at the two ends of the tunnel and roll the ball to each other through it. Such activity develops gross motor abilities and eye-hand coordination and also promotes cognitive and language development. Can you explain how? It fosters the child's understanding of space and gives her a chance to understand the concepts of 'under', 'through' and 'side' as the ball rolls. In such a way, cognitive and language development are fostered. The close interaction with the caregiver and taking turns to roll the ball promotes social development and also helps to continue the game.

- b) As the child nears her third birthday, she likes to participate in a game of catching the ball. You can use a big and light ball for this. Stand close to the toddler and throw the ball slowly to her. She will extend her arms and try to catch it, by holding the ball close to her body. It does not matter if she cannot catch the ball. As she throws the ball back to you, it may sometimes fall behind her or in front of her and not reach you at all. It does not matter, she still finds the game interesting.
- c) Another throwing game you can organize is to ask the child to throw the ball in a bucket which is placed at a distance of around five steps from her. You can also make a pyramid with wooden blocks or with small containers made of plastic or steel a little distance from the child. Then, ask the child to topple this pyramid by throwing a ball at it.
- d) For 2-3-years-olds in a crèche, you can conduct group activities like standing and passing the ball from one child to another by hand or passing it by kicking it.

These games of catching and throwing strengthen gross motor abilities, eye-hand coordination, allowing the child to develop ideas of distance, space, speed and force, and so promote cognitive development. Remember, the child will not understand these concepts as we do. At this stage, she understands these ideas through her actions and experience. When the ball does not reach the bucket, the adult will most likely say, "Throw it with greater force!" Or if the ball does not land in the bucket, the adult may say, "Come closer to the bucket and now throw the ball." Many such playful experiences will gradually build a base on which will develop a more formal understanding of concepts of 'distance', 'speed' and 'force' during later years of childhood. Whenever children play in a group, social and emotional development is also fostered.

Check Your Progress Exercise 1

- 1) If you were to carry out the following activities with toddlers, in which areas would you be fostering development primarily? Answer briefly in the space provided below.
 - a) Playing a game of passing the ball through a tunnel made by keeping chairs side to side.
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 - b) Singing a rhyme and involving the toddler by asking her to perform the actions, along with you.
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 - c) Giving the toddler articles to put in a box.
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 - d) Playing a game of pretending to be boats and moving down the river.
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2) Of the four play activities written below, which would not be appropriate for the toddler and why?

a) Giving the toddler stuffed toys to play with and toys to pull.

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b) Asking the toddler to complete a ten-piece jigsaw puzzle.

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c) Narrating a story.

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d) Asking the toddler to arrange a collection of five twigs according to size.

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14.2.6 Untangling the Web

You would remember reading about the activity in the previous Unit about wrapping a piece of wool around the infant's leg and encouraging her to untangle the thread. You can make this activity more complex for the toddler. Wrap the colourful woollen thread somewhat more intricately around the child's hand or leg in the manner of a web. Then encourage the child to untangle the wool and remove it. This activity fosters both motor and cognitive development. Can you say how?

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As the child opens out the thread, her fine motor muscles are strengthened and eye-hand coordination improves. Untangling the wool is an act of problem-solving which is an aspect of cognitive development.

14.2.7 Putting Objects into Containers

Toddlers like to repeatedly empty a box and put the objects back into it. You can plan many activities around the interest of the child.

a) Give the child articles like big bottle caps, smooth medium-sized stones, small plastic blocks and ask her to put these into a bigger container. The toddler will be absorbed for long periods in this activity which fosters her fine motor development and eye-hand coordination. As the objects strike the bottom, they make a sound that keeps her happily entertained. As the toddler gets to practice with this, you can increase the complexity of the game in the following manner.

Cut holes of various sizes in the lid of the box and put it back on the box. Then take articles of different sizes and ask the toddler to put these through the holes. Talk to the child as she puts the objects in.

Apart from fine motor development and eye-hand coordination, in which other domains is development fostered through this activity? Write your answer in the space below and compare it with ours, which is written further ahead.

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As the child sees that some articles go through some holes and not through others, she will form an idea of shape and size and the understanding that objects occupy some space. If the adult is present during this activity, she may make comments such as, “Oh! This did not go in! It is a big stone. Try this one!” Through such interactions, the child comes to know about the properties of objects and forms the idea of size as she understands the meaning of the terms ‘big’ and ‘small’. In this way, her cognitive and language development will also advance.

14.2.8 Nesting and Seriation Activities

Have you seen a set of boxes where one fits into the other, from the smallest to the biggest? These are nested boxes. As you know, seriation means putting objects according to size, from smallest to biggest. This is an important cognitive ability and it develops towards the end of preschool years, around 5-7 years of age. Nevertheless, toddlers too enjoy exploring such nested boxes and other play material based on the concept of seriation. You can introduce such material to them but do not force them to fit and place the nested objects according to size. This is learning that the child has to construct on her own through repeated handling of the material. It is not likely to happen now but it is good to stimulate the child to think by giving her such play material to handle. Some nesting and seriation activities are described further.

- a) Take three boxes or containers of three sizes so that the second box is slightly bigger than the first, and the third slightly bigger than the second. Nest them one inside the other so that the largest box would contain in it the medium-sized box and inside the medium-sized box would be the box of the smallest size. Furthermore, inside the smallest box, keep a small, colourful toy. Present these nested boxes to the toddler, ensuring that the lid of the outermost box is slightly loose so that the child can open it. Give the child time to explore the box. Talk to the child as she explores this mystery box.



- b) You will find that children generally like to explore by opening things and seeing how they work or open. The child plays games where she has to unscrew caps from bottles and pens, and open and shut the lids of boxes.
- c) A play item based on the concept of seriation commonly found in the market is a cylindrical vertical pole with rings from the widest to the narrowest which fit into it. Toddlers love to take out the rings from the vertical stand and put them back into it. At this stage, they will not consider the size of the rings and will not place them from widest to narrowest. This does not matter. Sometimes while putting the rings they may accidentally place them in order. You can then draw their attention that all the rings have now been able to fit into the pole.

14.2.9 Play with Sand, Clay and Water

Young children are very attracted to sand, water and clay. You can conduct given activities with them.

- a) Toddlers like to move their fingers through the sand. They may draw different shapes in it. Allow them to play with sand, though you must be careful that they do not try to taste the sand. If you make available plastic bottles or cups of different sizes and sieves, they will fill these with sand, empty them and fill them again. They can remain engaged in this activity

for long periods. They enjoy playing with clay as well, feeling it in their hands, pounding it flat, squeezing it, and rolling it into balls. They will roll the balls into 'snakes' if you show them how. Do not expect them to make elaborate figures. At this age, playing with sand or clay is more of a sensory experience than an attempt to create something— they enjoy the feel of these materials. Sand play promotes fine motor development, as well as sensory, cognitive and emotional development. Let us understand how this happens.

Sand-play stimulates the child's sense of touch— she enjoys its texture. Sand play leads the child to discover many concepts. When they fill containers with sand and hold them, they experience their weight; when they empty out sand from different containers, they may notice that the containers hold different amounts of sand in them. If you have given them containers of different shapes, they may notice that sand takes the shape of the containers. Such experiences will help them to develop concepts of weight ('heavy' and 'light'), quantity ('more' and 'less') and shape. Remember that during toddlerhood we do not have to focus on introducing these terms 'heavy', 'light', 'more' or 'less'. The experience is enough. These terms related to the concepts are more appropriate to be introduced during preschool years. At this stage, it is enough that children are getting a chance to explore these materials, experience them and make observations. Such exposure will form the foundation on which they will develop and refine their understanding during the preschool stage. It is then that you can introduce them to vocabulary related to weight, size and shape in a more direct way.

Very importantly, sand and clay are good mediums for the expression of emotions and release of feelings. Young children cannot articulate all that they are feeling. Working with sand and clay provides an avenue for the indirect expression of emotions as they squeeze it, pound it or roll it.

- b) Playing with water is spontaneous and toddlers find it fun. Water-play provides opportunities for various activities. Children will enjoy floating rubber and plastic animals in the water. You can make paper boats for the child and also give the child a sponge which the child can see floating on water and sink as it soaks up water. Children enjoy squeezing the water from the sponge. They remain involved in pouring water from one bucket to another, from one mug to the other, over themselves and all around them. If the weather is hot, children will enjoy splashing water over themselves.

Such activities are precursors to understand the concept of conservation during later years of childhood. You would remember reading about the child's ability to conserve in Piaget's theory of cognitive development in MCD-001. Remember that the ability to conserve will develop towards the end of preschool years. We do not have to push the child to develop this understanding during toddlerhood. But such experiences of water-play will stimulate the child to move towards developing an understanding of conservation in later years through her own activity and experiences. As in the case of sand-play, play with water is a sensory experience at this stage rather than an activity to introduce concepts. It is during preschool years that water play can be used to introduce concepts of weight (heavy-light); floating-sinking; colours; quantity (more-less). Experiences of playing with

water during toddlerhood provide the foundation for developing these concepts during the preschool years.

Thus, play with sand, clay and water provides opportunities for fine motor, sensory, cognitive and emotional development.

Note about planning activities with clay/ sand/ water: When children play with sand and water, we tend to get concerned about their clothes, and they themselves getting dirty. In this concern, if we prevent children from playing, we would be curtailing a major source of discovery. Once they finish playing, wash them, and if needed, change their clothes. In the crèche, the caregiver can manage activities of sand and water play by creating a special space for such activities. This space should have flooring which is easy to clean. Prepare the space by placing towels or newspapers in a way that prevents the spreading of water and sand. This space should also have a water tap and dustbin/cloth placed nearby which the children can use. These activities can also be carried on outdoors.

14.2.10 Scribbling and Drawing

When the toddler can hold a pencil, chalk or a stick in her hand, she begins to make marks on paper, walls, floor or mud. Soon she begins to assign some meaning to her scribbles. By ‘assigning meaning’, we mean that she gives the marks a name — she may say she has drawn an animal or a person or an object. Scribbling on the floor with a piece of brick or chalk is as much fun as scribbling on paper with crayons. In fact, the floor provides a large area. Seeing their chalk marks on a surface gives children the confidence of having produced something. Toddlers are likely to be interested in the material you give them to scribble with. They will feel, smell and try to put the chalk in their mouth to taste it -so you must be careful.

By the time the child nears her third birthday, you may begin to see some distinct shapes and forms in the child’s scribble. The adult may or may not be able to understand the child’s drawings and pictures but the child has a clear idea in her mind about what she has represented through her drawing.

As you have read in Block 6 in MCD-001, scribbling and drawing are the first stages of writing and you must encourage the child’s natural desire to scribble and draw. The best way to encourage scribbling is to talk to the child about what she has drawn. If the child has scribbled on paper and if you can write down, in a word or two, what the child has drawn after asking her about it, this will motivate her greatly, give her a sense of confidence and promote language development as she sees her thoughts being put into words. Of course, at this stage, the child cannot read and may not even understand the words, but the activity is a beginning in introducing the child to a script. Can you recall why scribbling is considered the first stage of writing? Writing is a way of representing our thoughts in words. Similarly, when the child is scribbling she has some idea in her mind which she is expressing through the marks (scribbles). The difference is that we all understand each other’s writing because we are familiar with the script; we do not understand the toddler’s scribble because it does not resemble a script.



The scribbles made by a 2 ½ year-old child are more controlled and reflect better muscular coordination

You can see how scribbling and drawing promote development in all domains. Fine motor development, eye-hand coordination, language, cognitive, and socio-emotional development (as the child experiences a sense of confidence and mastery) are nurtured by encouraging the child's interest in scribbling. If you are worried about the walls of the house getting dirty with the child's scribbling and drawing, then cover the walls up to the child's height with paper. The child will be free to scribble on the papers and these can be removed later. Do not discourage the child from scribbling and drawing by scolding her.

Check Your Progress Exercise 2

- 1) As a child grows, she gains an understanding of different concepts such as shape, size, colour, number, distance, space, sound, height, etc. Given is a list of some stimulation and play activities for 2 to 3-year-old toddlers. Identify the specific concepts which these activities are likely to foster.

Activity	Concepts
a) Giving plastic blocks to the child to make different structures.	
b) Making a child sit on the bed and calling him out by his name to catch him while you are sitting on the floor	
c) Playing hide and seek with the child in a two-room house	
d) Playing a tug of war with the child using a soft rope	
e) Giving a toy car to the child to play with it in a room with furniture items such as a table, chair and bed.	

- 2) You have read that the stimulation and play activities for children should be age-appropriate. It should neither underestimate the child's ability nor pressurize him for something he is not prepared for. From the given activities identify which of the activities are 'too easy', 'appropriate for' and 'beyond' the developmental capabilities of a two-year-old-toddler.

Activity	Level
a) Asking the child to separate fruits of the same type from a collection of fruits	
b) Giving a bicycle to ride without any adult support	
c) Giving a pencil and paper to scribble	
d) Giving a small container with some sand in it to be pulled with the string attached to the cart	
e) Giving support to walk	
f) Asking the child to colour within the given figure	
g) Making footsteps in the sand and asking the child to follow the footprint	
h) Passing the ball to the child to kick/pass it back to the adult	

14.2.11 Paper Tearing and Crushing

Give the toddler pieces of old newspapers to crush into a ball or tear into smaller pieces. You can make a ball using these crushed papers by pasting cloth pieces on it. However, be careful that the child does not put any paper in her mouth. This activity fosters fine motor control and children find it fun. It also provides an emotional release.

14.2.12 Stringing Activities

By eight and a half months, most children can pick small objects by having coordination between the thumb and the forefinger. This is known as the 'pincer grasp'. All stringing activities allow children to practice their pincer grasp and thus, fine motor development and also foster the development of eye-hand coordination.

- a) Two-year-olds can be given straws that we use for sipping liquids and big beads with big holes. They will enjoy putting the straw through the beads. You can also use a thick string instead of a straw.
- b) For the older toddler, you can name the colour of the beads the child is stringing. Name only one colour at a time.
- c) For children nearing their third birthday, you can show them how to string the beads in a particular pattern — for example, stringing only green beads or stringing a green bead and a red bead followed by the green bead again. Some children may follow the pattern; others may be happily stringing the beads anyway. Do not force the child to follow a pattern. The child will develop the ability to copy and create patterns during preschool years. Identifying patterns is an important cognitive ability linked to the development of spatial understanding and a sense of shape.

14.2.13 Getting to Know Each Other

In a crèche, the crèche worker can get to know each child and also help the children to get to know each other.

- a) The children in the crèche and the caregiver sit in a circle. The caregiver asks the children in the circle to say their names by turn. When a child says her/his name, the caregiver repeats it and asks other children to repeat the name as well. In this way, the names of all the children in the circle are spoken. When the children are older, the caregiver can ask them to say their name in a sentence form, like, “My name is Geeta”. After each child says their name in a sentence, everybody can clap for the child.
- b) After some days, the caregiver can ask the children to say something about themselves along with their names — such as what they like to eat. To stimulate the children to say something, the caregiver should ask small questions, such as “what is your name”, “what are you wearing?”, and so on.

These activities are not only a good way of introducing children to each other in the crèche, thus, promoting social development but they also promote the development of the self and language development.

14.2.14 Sound, Music, Rhythm and Movement Activities

Toddlers enjoy rhythmic movements. They love to be rocked and bounced, enjoying the swinging motion. Movement activities strengthen the child’s kinaesthetic sensory development. There are many such activities you can plan.

- a) Place a mat on the floor and help the child lie down and roll over on the mat. Children of all ages love to do this.
- b) Another game that most toddlers enjoy is riding on a person’s back, pretending that they are riding a horse, a camel or an elephant. If the caregiver varies the manner of her walk — making it fast for the horse, slow for the elephant and swaying for the camel; the child will laugh with delight. Later on, the caregiver can ask the toddler to walk as these

animals do. Such activity allows talking about the animals and their features. Children develop vocabulary as well as ideas and concepts related to the animals. It would be ideal if the child has had the opportunity to see the animal first, but this is not always possible.

- c) Children enjoy music and it stimulates them to make rhythmic movements. On hearing music, most toddlers clap, tap or dance spontaneously. Soft music has a soothing effect on everyone. There are many ways in which you can introduce music in your centre.
 - i) If you have the facility to play soothing music for some part of the day in your home or at the centre, it will provide a pleasant atmosphere.
 - ii) You can play music and leave children free to make what movements they want to. Alternatively, you could ask children to make specific movements to a specific kind of music. For example, when the music is slow, ask them to sway gently like the leaves of a tree.
- d) Musical instruments (tambourine, *ghungroos*, small drum, etc.) and other sound-making objects (rattle, bells, sound-making toys, etc.) are very useful in the development of auditory abilities. Make available a variety of such objects and let the children touch and play with them. The following are some suggested activities:
 - i) Tell the children the name of a musical instrument or object and help them associate the sound of the instrument/object with its name. In Block 4, we have described how to make musical instruments and toys from common materials at home, if you cannot buy them from the market.
 - ii) A game that you can play which promotes the child's auditory sensory development the idea of object permanence, as well as problem-solving skills, is as follows. Hide a sound-making toy (like a wind-up musical toy, or a music box) under a piece of cloth and then play it so that the child can hear its sound or music. Now observe the child's reaction. Does she search for the source of the music? Encourage her to find the hidden toy.

Music and movement when accompanied by the singing of rhymes are powerful means of language and cognitive development, as described in the next section.

- e) Involve the older toddlers in movement activities like swaying their arms, rolling their forearms, shaking their hands, clapping, snapping their fingers, shaking their legs or ankles, tapping their feet. You can play a game with 2-3-year-olds, where the children would thump their feet if you clap once and flap their arms if you clap twice. You too must be involved in the activity and make movements— then the children will enjoy it even more and those who may be initially hesitant will join in.

14.2.15 Rhymes and Stories

As the child's vocabulary and thoughts develop, rhymes and stories become more meaningful for them, and therefore more enjoyable, as they now begin to understand their content. Rhymes include repeated phrases and sounds which make it easy for children to remember them. Some rhymes have sounds that have no meaning but are interesting for children. Each region in our country has a rich tradition of such rhymes. Are you aware of some children's songs and rhymes in your part of the country?

- a) A child of two years repeats a few words of a rhyme and by three years of age, will be able to sing a short rhyme, along with you and independently as well. If you clap or play an instrument along with the rhyme, the child is sure to enjoy it even more.
- b) It is important to ensure that the child understands the meaning of the rhyme she is singing. This will happen if you talk about the rhyme and explain it to the child, as you sing each line or before/after singing the full rhyme. Sometimes, children are simply made to memorize the rhyme and they do not know what they are singing. The act of singing and the praise by the adult may be motivating for the child, but the point is that if the child sings without knowing the meaning, it would not contribute to the development of the child's thinking.

Toddlers listen to short and simple stories attentively. The stories and rhymes you select should be about events, people or animals the child is familiar with.

- c) Before introducing a story, it is important to talk about the characters that will appear in the story so that children are familiar with them. A story of an elephant, for example, can be preceded by a discussion on what the elephant looks like, where it lives, what it eats, and so forth. This discussion should be guided by what the children are interested in and what they ask. It would be best if the children have seen an elephant and then you introduce a story.
- d) It is important to narrate the story interestingly by modulating your voice and making varied facial expressions. Using picture cards that depict scenes of the story, puppets or masks will make your narration even more interesting. They will pay special attention to the pictures that you show them while narrating stories. A child of three will be able to name the characters of a story she is familiar with and identifies them in the picture. She will also remember the sequence of a story she has heard often and will correct you if miss out on an event. If you use gestures and movements, it makes the story even more alive. Toddlers will enjoy jumping like a monkey or a frog or moving their hands like the elephant's trunk in keeping with the characters and events of the story. They will mew like a cat and roar like a lion if you ask them to.

After the narration, allow toddlers to use puppets or masks or picture cards. With improved finger dexterity, the toddler will be able to wear the puppets on her hands and will enjoy moving them. Allow her to use them as you tell a story. In the latter part of this Unit, we have explained how to make these puppets.

Stories and rhymes are very potent activities as they are highly appealing to children and foster development in multiple domains. Rhymes sensitize children to different sounds, which helps in language development. Stories and rhymes are ways through which you can introduce new words and concepts to toddlers. The logic of the events in the story fosters sequential thinking abilities. Stories also enable the expression of emotions. In Unit 20 and 21 of Block 5 of this Course, we have described its importance and aids you can use while story narration in detail. You will read more about storytelling and dramatization in these units.

14.2.16 Book Corner

As you have read in MCD-001, one of the factors that predispose a child to acquire literacy during school years is the exposure to print in the environment from the early days. Exposure to age-appropriate books is a good way to develop children's interest in reading. There are many infant and toddler books available in the market but you must select the right ones. Toddlers' books should have colourful pictures. They are often made of thick paper so that they do not tear. These books may have written text, but keep in mind that the text should be minimal and that the picture takes up most of the space on the book page. Identify those picture books which have pictures of animals, birds, objects or events which would be familiar to the children. Help the child to make a connection between the real object and its picture in the book by showing the real object and its picture together. If selecting story books, choose those with a simple story line, with minimal written text on each page preferably list a line of text. The story book should not have more than 5-6 pages.

- a) Create a book corner in the room where you can display age-appropriate books for children. Give children the opportunity to spend time in the book corner and handle books on their own. Children should be free to choose the book they want.
- b) Give children time to engage with the book. They may ask you questions about the picture or point out something which interests them. You must respond to them.
- c) You too must take initiative to show these books to the children during the course of the day's activities. You can carry out a group book reading activity. With the children sitting around you in a semi-circle, hold the book in front of your chest so that the picture faces the children. Talk about the picture to the children, describing it and asking them to add to the description. If the picture depicts a scene, then ask them questions related to the scene. This will require them to think about what could have happened before or after the scene depicted on the page. You do not have to complete the whole book in one day. You can introduce a few pages or show them one page at a time.
- d) If there is text on the page, read it out aloud by running your finger under it. Help the children to make the connection between the text and the picture by explaining what is written and relating it to the picture on the page. This helps the children to understand the link between the spoken language and the text, between the concrete object and its pictorial form or the word and develops an interest in reading and writing.

14.2.17 Identifying Common Animals and Birds

Young children show a lot of curiosity about the living creatures they see around them.

- a) Direct the child's attention towards these common animals and birds, tell the child their names, and point out a salient feature. For example, "See! That is a dog! See how it is wagging its tail!" You can make the sounds that the animal makes and encourage the toddler to do the same. For example, on seeing a cat you can say, "You know what this is? Yes!! It's a cat... What does the cat say? Meeooooow... Meeooooow... Say meooooow..."
- b) Once children become familiar with an animal, you can show its picture. When the child recognizes two or three animals you can play a game. Place pictures of three animals in front of the child and ask the child to point, for example, to the dog. You can also say, "Give me the picture of the dog."
- c) Once the child becomes familiar with some animals and their sounds, you can play a guessing game — make a sound and ask the child to name the animal whose sound it is.

Such activities help to increase toddlers' awareness of the environment and foster cognitive and language development.

Linking Theory to Practice:

Learning Moves from Concrete to Pictorial to Abstract

Do you remember Bruner's principle that "learning moves from concrete to pictorial to abstract." So the activities described here will not only help the child to become familiar with living things in the environment but also help her to move from learning based on concrete experiences to learning involving pictorial representation. Gradually, the child will not need the pictorial representation and will be able to talk about the 'cat' on hearing the word itself. The child has been able to move to abstract representation in her mind. Thus, as stated in the principle, it is important to first show the concrete objects to children before we show their pictures.

14.2.18 Activities Based on Use of Senses

Through the following activities, you can promote the development of sensory abilities.

- a) Visual sensory development in toddlers can be promoted by playing a simple game with a torch. Shikha's grandmother showed her a torch which caught Shikha's interest as it was covered with a shiny red paper. Shikha looked on curiously as her grandmother turned on the torch and pointed the light at one wall. Then she moved the light to another wall in the room. Grandmother said, "Oh! Is the light running away? Where is the light? Has it jumped on the cupboard? Oh! There it is." Grandmother moved the light from one wall to the next sometimes very quickly and other times slowly. Shikha actively participated in this game by pointing at the light, turning her head to look for it, and by carefully following the light's movement with her eyes.

- b) Take three boxes that have lids of different colours. In one of these boxes, put beads/ seeds so that when you shake the box it makes a sound. Present all three boxes to the child. Shake the box which has the seeds and then again put it next to the other two boxes. After this, ask the child, “Can you tell me which one of these boxes makes a sound?” Encourage the child to touch, shake and look inside all three boxes. When she identifies the box with the seeds as the one making the sound, clap for her. This activity promotes both visual and auditory sensory development.
- c) During toddlerhood, children become better at telling the difference between different tactile (touch) experiences. To promote children’s tactile sensory development, allow children to touch different textures. Try to ensure that their play material is of different types — smooth, soft, hard, serrated. You can also carry out specific activities based on the sense of touch. For example, give the child two bowls filled with water — one with cold water and the other with lukewarm water. Ask the child to touch the water in both the bowls, discuss how it feels, and introduce the words ‘hot’ and ‘cold’ to describe the experience. Similarly, for children to understand the concept of ‘wet’ and ‘dry’, give children a wet towel and a dry towel to touch. In fact, this idea would be best introduced at bath time.
- d) Toddlers also have a more enhanced sense of smell than infants. To promote the toddler’s sense of smell, encourage her to notice the smell of common items around her like a flower or a fruit, or any other food. While eating, tell her the name of the food she is eating, allow her to handle it, and smell it. With a child around three years of age, you can play a guessing game where you ask the child to close her eyes, smell the fruit/food and guess its name.
- e) Children can make out a difference in the taste of the foods they eat. The purpose of this activity is to help them relate the taste to its name and become more aware of the experience. When you direct the child’s attention to an experience, she focuses on it and learning takes place. To promote toddlers’ sense of taste and also increase their taste-related vocabulary, you can also carry out the given activity.

Show the child some sugar, ask her if she knows what it is called, and talk to her about it. Ask if she has seen it before, if she has eaten it before and how it tastes. Then allow the child to taste the sugar. Ask the child what it tasted like. Introduce the word ‘sweet’ and help the child associate the word with the taste. You could ask the child to recall if she has eaten foods with this taste. The child may be able to recall only one item — that is fine. Some days later, you can similarly show the child some salt and introduce the word ‘salty’. For older toddlers, you can also introduce the ‘sour’ taste, using a lemon. Once the child becomes familiar with these terms you can ask her during meal time, “Does your food taste sweet or salty?”

14.2.19 Block Play

You would remember reading in the previous Unit about how infants play with blocks— they will bang the blocks on the floor or knock down a ‘tower’ made of the blocks. By the time, the child is two years old, the complexity of her play increases, and she starts building with blocks. The toddler will build

simple structures like a tower by balancing one block on top of another or a train by placing blocks one after the other. She will push them down and start all over again. Talk to the toddler during this activity. Ask her what she is making and point out the colour of the blocks. Remember that the blocks should be light—made of plastic or light wood. You can also make blocks at home using small cardboard boxes.

Block play enables fine motor development and tactile sensory development. It stimulates the imagination as children think of ideas to make different structures. When children build with blocks, their attention will be drawn to their shape and size as they try to balance blocks one on top of the other or build some structure. In this way, cognitive development is fostered. Remember, they may or may not use words like ‘big’, ‘small’, ‘round’ or ‘square’. At this age, it is the experience of handling the blocks which is important. They are developing the ideas at the sensory or experiential level. The concepts of size, shape and colour, and the related vocabulary will emerge during preschool years, through activities of preschool education.

An involved adult can introduce many concepts to the child during such block play, without being unduly concerned if the child does not grasp the concept immediately, like Vaibhav’s mother did in the following example:

Three-year-old Vaibhav was playing with red and blue blocks. His mother joined him and placed five blocks in front of the child in a red-blue-red-blue-red pattern. She then waited to observe what Vaibhav would do next. The child did not pay attention to the colour of the blocks and placed a red block in continuation and looked at the mother with excitement! The mother expressed delight and clapped, even though Vaibhav did not place the blue block next to the red one, as she had expected. She knew there would be many opportunities to point out to Vaibhav the pattern in the colour blocks. She knew that while it was important to stimulate the child, there was nothing to be gained by forcing the child to do things he was not ready for. She decided to point out the pattern in the chain of blocks next time and see how Vaibhav would respond.

Linking Theory to Practice: Gauging the Child’s Zone of Proximal Development

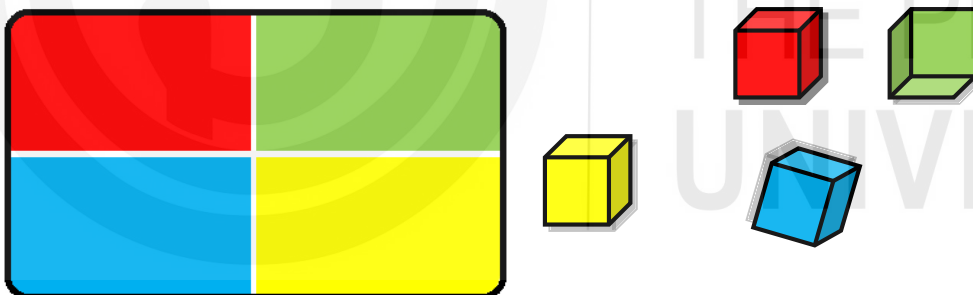
Remember, we have been saying that the various activities we have described in this Unit must be carried out with a sense of enjoyment and fun. There should not be pressure on the child to perform. Vaibhav’s mother, described in the example above, reflected this attitude. She did not become anxious that Vaibhav did not notice the pattern of the blocks and pick up the blue block. She did not insist on explaining to Vaibhav why he must pick up the blue block. She knew that repeated exposure would help Vaibhav to notice the pattern and that this ability to recognize patterns begins to develop during preschool years. She had an understanding of developmental milestones and was using Vygotsky’s principle of the zone of proximal development to provide stimulating experiences to the child. Having provided a challenging experience, she waited for the child’s response. Then, she accepted the child’s response and praised him for what he was able to do presently.

14.2.20 Matching Activities

Being able to match objects or things that are identical is an important cognitive ability and the basis of many of our day-to-day activities. When toddlers are around three years of age, they can be given simple activities which require them to do simple matching. There will be many day-to-day situations that present an opportunity for matching activities, as in the following case:

When Zoya's father was folding clothes for keeping them in the cupboard, he thought of a game to keep Zoya occupied while he did his work. He took three pairs of socks of different colours, mixed them, and then pulled out one sock from the group and asked three old Zoya to find the other matching sock. When Zoya picked out the matching sock from the group, her father clapped and praised her, saying, "Ah...ha... Zoya found the red sock...". Zoya's father then picked out another sock from the group so that Zoya could locate the second matching sock and continued the game.

- a) A simple board game for matching is as follows. Give the child a board that is divided into two parts, of two different colours (like red and blue). Now give the child two blocks of the same colours as the ones on the board (see figure below). Take a block and place it on the part of the board with which it matches. Say the name of the colour. In the same way, match the block of the second colour with the relevant portion of the board. If you do not have such a board game, you can ask children to match two pieces of paper or cloth of the same colour. This activity helps to develop the ability to match and the concept of the colours.



Remember that these activities should not become a test for the child. Our intention is not to force the child to match or memorize the names of the colours. We intend to expose the child to a challenging experience and observe how the child responds to it. We need to follow the child's response; if the activity is within the child's zone of proximal development, the child will show an interest in carrying out the activity with adult guidance. But if the activity is too difficult, the child may not continue to show an interest in it. In such situations, do not force the child to do the activity. The play situation must not become a task for the child.

14.2.21 Jigsaw Puzzles

Older toddlers can be given a simple two-piece puzzle to join. Some examples are as follows:

- a) Any picture of a familiar bird or animal or vegetable can be cut into two

pieces and the child may be asked to join the two pieces to make the picture complete. Show the child the complete picture first, then remove the pieces and encourage her to join the two pieces.

- b) Give the child a board with two shapes cut out from it. The child has to match which cut-out shape will fit into which space on the board and place it back on the board.

These activities foster fine motor coordination and also the idea of shape. If these are animal or object jigsaw puzzles, she will learn the names of animals or objects and learn to identify them. Remember to use those pictures to create jigsaw puzzles that are familiar to the child.

14.2.22 Imitation and Pretend Play

Children learn to imitate from a very young age. Read the example below.

One and a half-year-old Niti's mother observed that when she made faces with different expressions in front of Niti, such as smiling, pouting, with her mouth open, sticking a tongue out, or scrunching her eyebrows; the toddler would imitate her. Niti's imitations would make her mother laugh which in turn would make Niti laugh.

Such games promote bonding and attachment between the child and the caregiver.

Sometime between their second and third day, toddlers begin to participate in simple pretend or make-believe games, where they enact imaginary situations. Let us read about one such game which Sonia plays very often with her elder sister.

Sonia holds on to her sister's waist and they pretend that they are a train. Her sister says: "Coo chuk, chuk, chuk, chuk... Now we reach the river. We have to go slow, over the bridge. Around the trees now. Be careful of the branches. Bend your head, Sonia. Chuk, chuk ...Oh. What a big stone. Jump over it. Jump! Jump! Chuk, chuk, chuk. So many stones! Jump, jump... Now we are out of the jungle. We will go fast now. The station is going to come, go slow. Slow down chuk, chuk, chuk Stop! Now the train will rest and drink water." After a rest, this game continues.

In this game, the child learns and understands concepts of slow-fast, in-out, over-under as they 'go in a tunnel' and 'come out of it', 'go slow over the hill' and 'fast down the slope'.



“I am your Mummy!”

Imitation is an indication of the child’s ability to represent events in her mind.

Children also enjoy playing make-believe games with dolls and stuffed toys. They may pretend the doll is a small child who is hurt or that the stuffed toy animal is real and give it food and water to drink. Such games stimulate the toddler’s imagination.

Linking Theory to Practice: Why Younger Toddlers do not Pretend Play

Can you explain why toddlers below two years find it difficult to participate in pretend games? As you would remember from your reading of Piaget’s theory of cognitive development, pretend-play requires the ability to think symbolically and this happens only after the child completes the second birthday. Pretend play is not very elaborate during toddlerhood. During preschool years, as the child’s thinking grows and her ability to imagine increases, pretend-play becomes more detailed and richer.

14.2.23 Hide and Seek

The one-year-old is developing an idea of object permanence and delights in different kinds of ‘hide and seek’ games. Can you recall the hide and seek games that are described for the 6-12-month-old infant? You can make the games a bit more difficult now. Some examples are the following:

- a) Hide a toy by holding it behind you and ask the child, “Where is your toy?” When the child comes to look for it and comes close to finding it, change the position of the toy in a way that the child cannot see the toy. She will follow your movement and continue the game with excitement.
- b) Take a few paper balls made of crumpled paper and put them in a big container. As a separate activity on a previous day, you can involve the child in crumpling paper into balls. As the child watches, hide a toy in the heap of crumpled paper balls and ask her to search for it.

- c) For the 3-years-old, you can play a game in which you present three familiar toys/objects to the child, like a toy monkey, a plastic cup and a ball. Ask the children to say the name of each of the objects. Then hide one of these things under a piece of cloth while the others remain in the child's view and ask her, "What is under the cloth?" This game develops the child's vocabulary and also promotes the child's memory.

Sometimes, the child may not name the object you have hidden but simply remove the cloth and look at you in excitement at having made the discovery. This is alright. You do not have to force the child to name the hidden object. You name it for the child instead.

- d) With a group of three-years-olds who are familiar with each other, you can encourage one child to hide and have the other child/children to look for the hidden child within a safe and limited space. When they find the hidden child, everybody can clap. Three-years-olds do not have the social skills of relating with each other and cooperating during play. You will have to supervise the activity to quite an extent. However, the children will enjoy the game. Such games develop the child's understanding of space, as the child tries to identify spaces where she would not be seen by others. Of course, sometimes children may hide in a place where they are actually in full view of the child who has to look for them. They think they are not visible to others but they are. Again, this does not matter. You continue with the game, gently pointing out to the child, that she can be seen by the child who has to look for her and should look for another place to hide. Can you explain why the three-year-olds may not be able to locate a suitable place to hide? Read the box below.

Linking Theory to Practice: Taking Another's Perspective

'Being able to hide in a suitable place' means that the child can see her location of hiding from the perspective of the 'den' or the child seeking out the others. You would remember from your reading of Piaget's theory of cognitive development that this ability to take another's perspective starts to develop during preschool years, initially in those cases, where the child is familiar with the situation or event. It is during middle childhood years that this ability develops fully. So when playing hide and seek with the toddler, do not take it too seriously that the child must hide in appropriate places.

14.2.24 Knowing Your Body

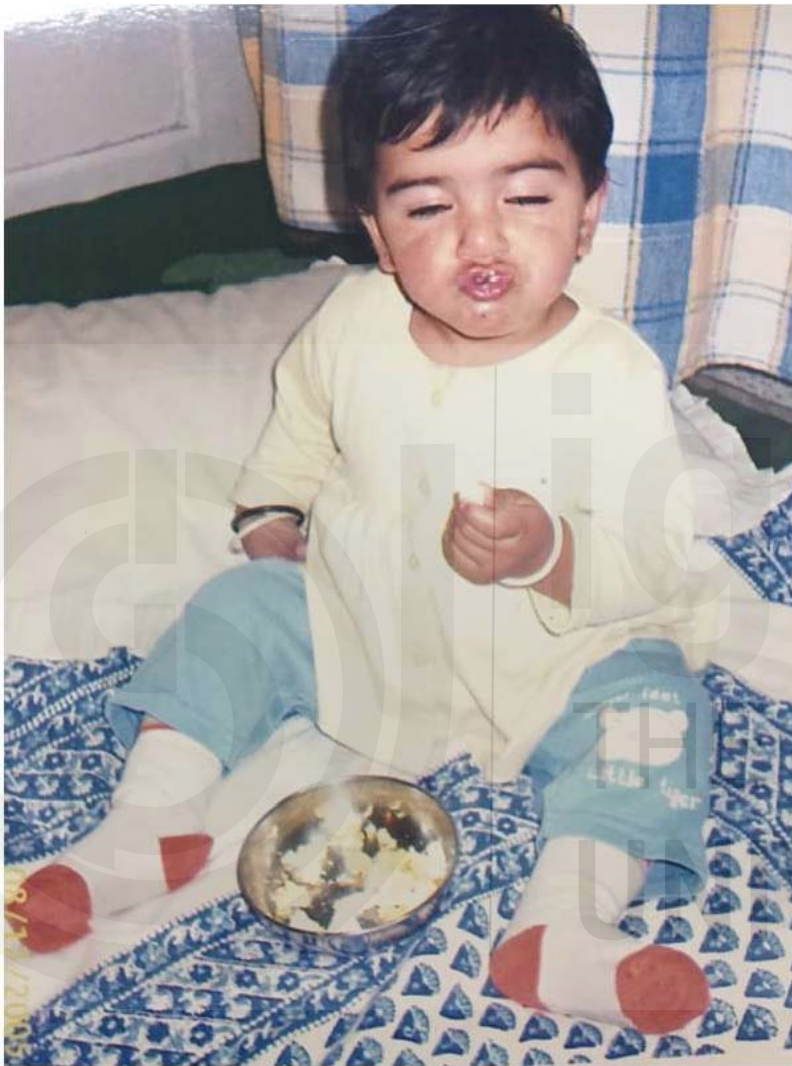
Helping the child identify parts of the body can be made into a game. The child and you can stand in front of the mirror. As you point to your nose, eyes and ears, ask the child to point to hers in the image. Through such interactions, the child learns about her body and understands that she is like other people. The naming of body parts can be done during daily routine activities of bathing and dressing.

14.2.25 Promoting Social and Emotional Development

Having read the description of the various activities till now, you must have understood that everyday situations, as well as specifically planned activities, provide many opportunities to help the toddler understand concepts and develop vocabulary, sensory abilities as well as fine and gross motor skills.

These interactions also provide opportunities for social and emotional development. Let us understand how this happens.

- a) **Encouragement and Positive Feedback:** Any opportunity for social interaction is an opportunity to foster social and emotional development in children. You would notice that children often naturally enjoy social interaction with adults and other children. It is important that the child has positive experiences and is praised for what she does.



Insisting on eating by self is one of the earliest steps towards autonomy

- b) **Developing Autonomy and Confidence:** You would remember reading in Unit 11 of Block 3 in MCD-001 that the period of 1 year to 3 years is the time when the toddler is developing a sense of autonomy (independence). Various activities that we have described help the child to develop a sense of mastery and confidence in herself and contribute to her sense of autonomy.
- c) **Giving Choices:** Give children opportunities to choose what they want to play. This gives them self-confidence as they will choose activities that are challenging enough for them to master. This also fosters their ability to make choices and nurtures their sense of agency and autonomy. Toddlers' developing sense of competence is also reflected in their desire to do errands. Look at the given example to understand this well.

When Sabina's mother asked Sabina's elder brother to bring her purse from inside the house, Sabina ran ahead saying: "No, I will get it!", and cried when her brother did not let her do the task.

Most children feel happy if they are involved in small tasks and given responsibility like picking up things and handing them over or putting them in a different place. They follow instructions like: "Give me the book!" and "Put your toys in the box." There are many opportunities in the home and the daycare centre to involve the children in the task that they may be doing. Such experiences help the toddler to develop confidence in her abilities. Done playfully, such activities become a game for children. Sometimes, in their zeal, they may not heed the instructions. Take the example of Chandu.

Chandu was getting irritable and, in an attempt to soothe him, his grandmother tried to amuse him with sea shells. She asked him to pick up some from a basket and bring them to her. He picked up a few and gave them to her. She asked him for more sea shells and he went back to pick some again. After the third time, she said: "Now don't get any more. Let's play with these." He acknowledged her instruction with "Hmm", but went back nonetheless to get some more and gave them to her. He made several such trips despite his grandmother's repeated requests not to bring any more, till he himself tired of this activity.

d) Developing Altruism and Empathy: Altruistic and empathetic behaviour requires that the child sees the situation from another person's perspective. While this ability develops during the preschool and the middle childhood years, experiences during toddlerhood can help to orient the child's thinking towards the feelings and emotions of others.

- i) One of the ways you can encourage the development of empathy in children is through storytelling. During and after narrating the story, talk about the emotions experienced by the characters of the story. If in the story, one of the characters loses something, ask the children to describe how the character must be feeling, and how they themselves feel when they lose something.
- ii) Another way to develop altruism and empathy is to give reasons and explanations to children which will help them to see the perspective of others. For example, young children tend to get into an argument about playing with the same toy. Discuss with both the children how the other would feel unhappy if she did not get to play with the toy. In such situations, instead of getting angry with the children or taking the toy away from both of them, discuss how the situation can be resolved so that both get to play with the toy. The adult needs to be patient with herself interacting in such ways.

Some points to remember while organizing play activities for toddlers

- The surroundings should be clean, attractive and stimulating.
- Toddlers have just become mobile and enjoy the activity. Allow them to be active and explore their surroundings. Do not restrict their movement unnecessarily, unless there is a risk.
- Keep the environment safe. Remove the things which you do not want the child to touch.

- Provide a choice in the play activities and play materials so that the child has the freedom to select an activity or material.
- Repeat an activity after a gap of some time as children like repetition and they feel happy when they master an activity.
- Participate in the play activities with the toddler. Interacting with the caregiver provides the child with immense learning opportunities.
- Observe toddlers as they play as this will help you to understand them better.

14.3 THINGS TO MAKE

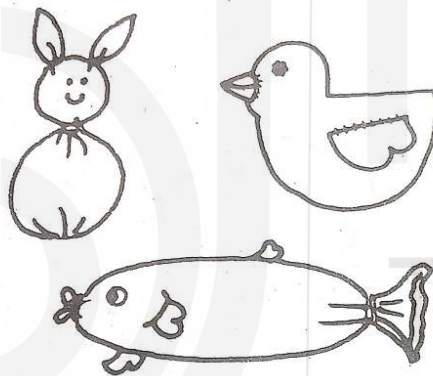
You can make some of the toys described in the text below.

- **Stuffed Toys**

The ones described in Unit 13 can be made for toddlers as well.

- **Soft Bags to Feel and Play with**

You will need the following materials: about 10-12 pieces of cloth about 7" × 7", cotton, thread and needle, sawdust, pebbles, seeds, beads, leaves.

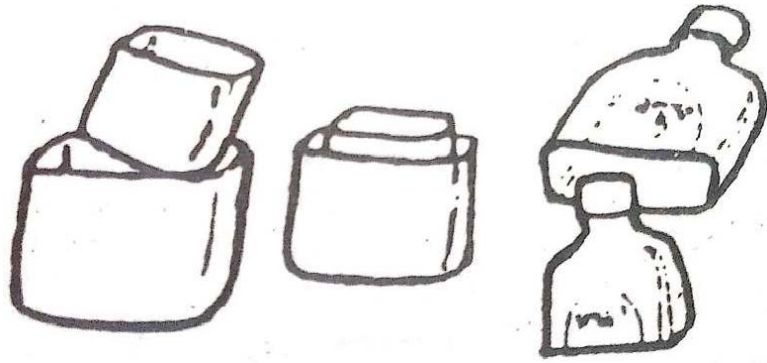


Stitch two pieces of cloth together to make a bag. Leave a small opening in the bag. In this way, make five to six bags. Turn the bags inside out. Fill them partially with sawdust, pebbles, seeds, beads and leaves. Put different things in each bag. Stitch the open ends of the bags. As the child plays with and squeezes the bags, each one will feel different. These bags can be used to play games of throw and catch as well as help the child develop her sense of touch.

- **Toys to Fit into Each Other**

To make these, you will require plastic bottles, cardboard boxes and similar cartons of various sizes, and an instrument to cut them.

Take plastic bottles of different sizes and cut them from the middle. These containers — some big, some small—can be fitted into each other. You can make similar play materials from cardboard boxes and toothpaste cartons. The cartons and boxes should be of safe material so that when you cut them from the middle, the cut edge does not hurt the child. Using a box made of tin will be harmful since its cut edge will be sharp and may hurt the child.



- **Toys to Pull**

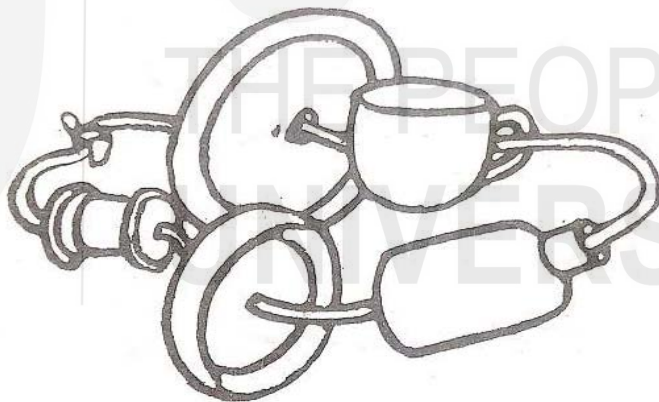
Collect match boxes, lids of boxes, plastic cups, bottle caps, beads and similar materials to make this.

Take a matchbox. Pierce one end and attach a long string to it. The toddler will enjoy pulling it along as she walks. The strings should be strong so that it does not break when the child pulls them.

In the same way you can string together the lids of boxes, plastic cups, bottle caps and beads. As the child pulls them along, they will make a sound she will like.

Take a big cardboard box and attach a string to it. The child can use it as a cart to carry things from one place to another.

Tie a piece of paper to a string. As the toddler runs with the string in her hand, the paper will flap and make a sound.



- **A Toy to Push**

To make this toy, you will need a cylindrical tin, a strong stick about 12 inches long, some pebbles, a wire about 30 inches long, and a sharp instrument to pierce the tin.

Take an empty cylindrical tin. Put a few pebbles/seeds/marbles in it and then put the lid back. Pierce a hole in the bottom as well as in the lid of the tin. It should be large enough so that a stick can pass through it. The stick should protrude from both ends.

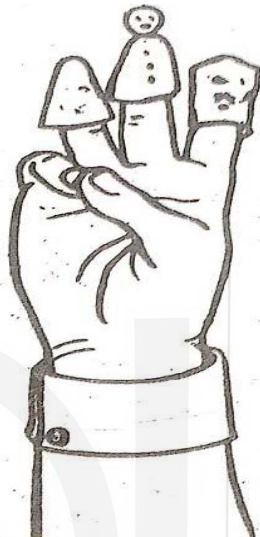
Take the wire and curve it in the shape of a 'c'. Attach the two ends of the wire to the two ends of the stick so that the child can hold it and roll the tin on the ground.

- **Puppets**

Finger puppets are easy to make and are great fun. Take a piece of paper. Cut a semi-circle of diameter four inches. Roll it into a cone and paste the two ends together. Draw the face of the character you want to depict. Depending on the character, you can add a cap, a beak, ears, horns, etc. This cone can be worn on the finger and you have a puppet ready.

You can follow some shapes drawn here to make the puppets.

You can draw the characters of the story on your fingers and use them as finger puppets.



- **Toy Box**

Take a cardboard box. Paste a bright coloured paper on the inside of the box to make it attractive for the child. Then place some toys and objects (like stuffed toys, rattles, balls, cups, etc.) inside the box. Children like to explore the toy box; take things in and out of it and also throw their toys inside the box from a distance.

Check Your Progress Exercise 3

1) Rakesh observed her one and a half year daughter often reach out to the full-length mirror in the room and stare at herself. What kind of activities can Rakesh do with his daughter using the mirror to help his daughter develop the sense of self?

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2) Write down the developmental domain that the given toys are likely to foster in the child:

a) Puppets

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b) Stuffed Toys

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c) Toys to Push

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14.4 SUMMING UP

In this Unit, you read about the play activities that can be planned for toddlers. The activities described take into account the interest and abilities of toddlers. As the toddler is more mobile than the infant, you can now organize activities that help her to walk, run, jump and climb. Other activities for motor development would be to give the child play material to pull, push, put into each other, throw and catch. Toddlers enjoy listening to stories and rhymes. They will be able to repeat a few lines from the rhymes and name the characters of the stories and rhymes. In these interactions, children learn new words and concepts. They learn about their environment as they go to the market, to the railway station or travel by bus.

Some points that you need to remember while planning activities have been highlighted in this Unit. Along with these, some ways of making toys have also been described.

14.5 REFERENCES AND FURTHER READINGS

1. Friedman, S., Masterson, M.L., Wright, B.L., Bredekamp, S., & Willer, B.A. (2021). *Developmentally appropriate practice in early childhood programs serving children from birth through age 8*. Washington, DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children.
2. Holt, J. (2017). *How children learn*. Da Capo Lifelong Books.

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4. Pennsylvania Office of Child Development and Early Learning (1st Ed.) (n.d.). *Everyday I learn through play: Activities to do with your infant and toddler*.
https://www.gov.nl.ca/education/files/earlychildhood_everyday_i_learn_th_rough_play.pdf

14.6 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

Check Your Progress Exercise 1

- 1) a) You will be primarily fostering Motor development—as the child pushes the ball through the tunnel, it will improve her motor coordination.

Cognitive development will also be fostered - her awareness of space develops and she comprehends concepts of 'through', 'outside', and so forth.

- b) This activity fosters:

Language development — as she sings the rhyme.

Cognitive development — as she learns new concepts and words.

- c) This activity fosters:

Motor development — as she puts things in the box.

Cognitive development – child observes the objects as they fall and develops an understanding of size as some objects fit into the box and others do not.

- d) This activity fosters:

Social development — as the child interacts with the caregiver.

Cognitive and language development - the toddler participates in make-believe play and learns new words.

- 2) b) and d) would not be appropriate for a toddler because:

- b) She does not have the cognitive ability needed to work out which pieces will fit where. This will develop during the preschool years.

- d) She does not have the cognitive competence to put things in order of size. This develops during the preschool years.

Check Your Progress Exercise 2

- 1) a) Colour, shape, size
 - b) Space
 - c) Force
 - d) Distance, speed, space
- 2) a) Beyond

**Early Stimulation and
Play Activities for
Children Up to Three
Years**

- b) Beyond
- c) Appropriate
- d) Appropriate
- e) Too easy
- f) Beyond
- g) Appropriate
- h) Appropriate

Check Your Progress Exercise 3

- 1) Naming of body parts
Naming facial expressions
- 2) a) Fine motor skills development, language development, emotional development, cognitive development
- b) Fine and gross motor skills development, emotional development, language development, cognitive development
- c) Fine and gross motor skills development



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