



## INTRODUCTION

What can you do with a toddler, that mighty bundle of energy that has suddenly moved from the stage of dependency to independency, and for the most part still prefers solitary play?

*Toddler Time: Creative Experiences for Toddlers* contains over 180 developmentally appropriate activities geared specifically to children from the ages of eighteen months to three years of age. However, many older and younger children will both enjoy and profit from the experiences and activities within this book.

Each chapter contains a short introduction, a list of inexpensive materials, several activities, and some of the experiences toddlers will gain by interacting with the materials.

The central goal of all learning for toddlers is to expand their understanding about themselves in relation to their world. Cognitive concepts develop from the toddler's repeated exposure to and interaction with a variety of readily accessible and stimulating materials. The importance of play must never be underestimated, for toddlers learn through play and fantasy. Play and imitation are, for toddlers, the major vehicles for learning about their world. They also learn through creative play, practice and repetition.

As caregivers, we should not be too anxious to teach, show the child how to do something or make models. If we allow young children the time and the freedom to explore, examine and investigate, and provide stimulating materials and a safe, yet inviting environment, they will exhibit creativity in a variety of ways.



Taking time to observe and record your observations of the examples of creativity expressed in toddlers as they interact with simple materials, will surprise both teachers and parents.



Teachers, parents, students and other caregivers will find *Toddler Time: Creative Experiences for Toddlers*, which is written in non-technical terms, to be a valuable resource guide to use in working with toddler age children.



By fostering the natural creative desires within the toddler, the child will grow up to be a happier, more creative individual.





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# Chapter One

## SENSORIMOTOR EXPERIENCES

Toddlers have a natural desire to move and explore. The activities in this chapter will provide these opportunities as well as encourage gross motor development, promote body awareness and stimulate creativity through movement.

As they become aware of their bodies, children will discover they control how their bodies move. The activities will help children learn basic movement concepts, the name and location of body parts and how the parts move. Music can be used with most of the activities and a large full-length mirror will provide an added dimension to your movement program.

Since we can never separate motion from the mind, creative movement and motor skills should be an integral part of the young child's development.

### Activities

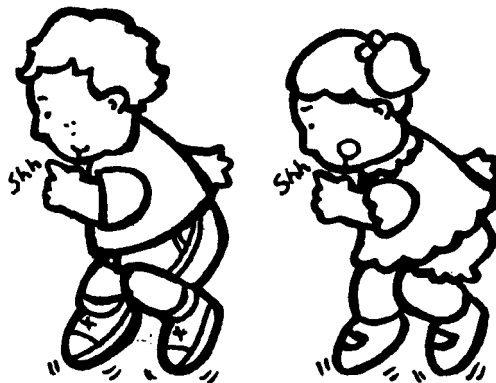
#### *I CAN MOVE*

##### ***What you need:***

- Space for movement
- Music – short pieces, both lively and slow.

##### ***What you do:***

1. Play music and encourage children to move about to the music.
2. Suggest big steps, little steps; moving slowly, moving fast, but let them 'move' the way they feel.
3. Introduce movement concepts such as tip-toeing, jumping, spinning and twirling.



##### ***What toddlers experience:***

Through free movement and minimal directions, toddlers will learn to move freely and, with practice, to be creative in their movements. Both movement and dance are natural expressions of the young child.



## RIBBONS, SCARVES, STREAMERS

### **What you need:**

- Recycled gift ribbons
- Sheer, colourful scarves
- Streamers made by stapling one end of a 90 cm long strip of 5 cm wide coloured plastic inside a folded index card. Cover the staples with tape.
- Rings made from coloured plastic coffee can lids with the centres cut out (so they can be easily held).
- Music

### **What you do:**

1. Introduce one prop at a time by giving each child a prop to hold while they move to the music – first a ribbon, then a scarf, then a streamer.
2. Suggest concepts such as move the ribbon up, down, behind you, over your head, down to your toes, over your shoulder.
3. Older toddlers can experiment by holding a prop in each hand and moving to the music.
4. Give each child one or two lid rings to use as props while they move about to the music. Suggest that the rings can be used as ankle or arm bracelets while ‘moving’.



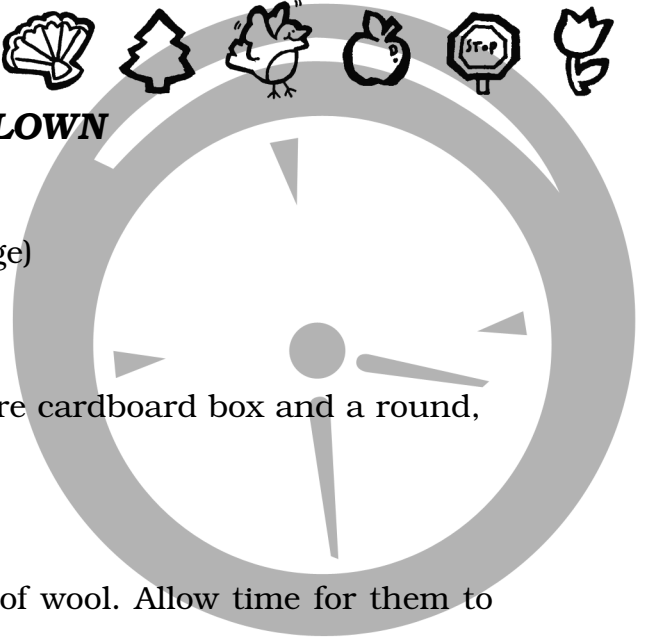
### **What toddlers experience:**

They will learn to identify and recognise body parts, discover that props add new dimensions to movement and that each can be used in a different way. Simple props will hold interest and encourage self-expression.





## WOOL BALL CLOWN



### **What you need:**

- Balls of wool (see pattern on the next page)
- Piece of heavy cardboard
- Wool in assorted colours
- Scissors
- Boxes with lids removed, such as a square cardboard box and a round, 10-litre ice-cream bucket
- Coloured plastic hoops in different sizes

### **What you do:**

1. **BE A CLOWN** – Give each child a ball of wool. Allow time for them to experiment with the ball of wool.

Give directions such as: be a clown and use the wool for a hat; place it on your shoulder; put it on your shoe and walk around.

2. **BODY PAINTING** – Be a clown and use the wool to pretend to paint your body. Allow time for this. Then suggest, don't forget your elbow, your knee, your tummy, your neck.
3. **TOSSING** – Be a clown and toss your ball of wool into a box (set out the boxes). Allow for practice. Then set out the hoops – be a clown and toss your ball of wool into a hoop.

Older toddlers can tell you the colour or size (largest or smallest) of the hoop into which they tossed their ball of wool.



### **What toddlers experience:**

Toddlers will develop skills in tossing, aiming and hitting a target, as well as practice in eye-hand coordination, following directions and making choices. The ball of wool provides an added tactile experience as it is used to locate and identify body parts.

