

Play helps your toddler:

- Learn about her body and the world around her.
- Learn to share and cooperate.
- Be creative and use his imagination.
- Have strong bones, lungs, muscles and heart.
- Sleep better at night.

**Play is child's "work" —
this is how they learn!**

Activities to build your toddler's muscles — and his brain:

Large muscle activities

- Walking, running
- Hopping, jumping
- Dancing
- Throwing

Small muscle activities

- Stacking blocks
- Playing homemade instruments
- Drawing pictures
- Picking up toys
- Making snowmen
- Building sandcastles
- Blowing bubbles

Play every day!



WIC WOMEN
INFANTS
CHILDREN
We nourish families.

 **VERMONT**
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

This project was funded in part with Federal funds from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service, under the 1999 WIC Special Projects Grants.

The contents of this publication do not necessarily reflect the view or policies of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, nor does the mention of trade names, commercial products, or organizations imply endorsement by the U.S. government.



**PLAYING
WITH YOUR
TODDLER**

Let's try this:

Why is it important for my toddler to be active and play?

- Your toddler needs active playtime to grow her muscles and develop her brain.
- Your toddler needs to practice an activity over and over to learn to do it well.
- Your toddler needs to explore to learn about himself — and his world.

You are your child's first and most important teacher. Take the time to play outdoors with your toddler every day!

What kinds of play do toddlers like?

- Toddlers like repeating movements and activities — especially yours! Monkey see, monkey do. If you are active, your child will be too!
- Toddlers like toys they can fill up, dump out, push and pull.
- Toddlers love to play outside.

**The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends no television for children under the age of 2.
Play with your child instead.**

READY...SET...GO PLAY!



Super Kid!

Help your toddler learn to jump and land safely. Hold on to her hand while she jumps from low steps, curbs or sturdy boxes. Practice landing on both feet, with knees bent. To make her a Super Kid, give her a cape made from a towel or small blanket.

Body Parts Follow the Leader

Put on some music and encourage your toddler to do what you do:

- Bend your elbows
- Slap your knees
- Shake your legs
- Wave your arms
- Swing your hips
- Clap your hands
- Wiggle your toes
- Snap your fingers
- Stomp your feet

Chase Me, Chase Me

Playfully — and safely — chase your toddler around the yard, playground or through the house. Give him a hug when you catch him!

Balancing Act

1. Ask your toddler to lift one foot while holding on to a chair.
2. Have him switch legs and lift the other foot.
3. Challenge him by asking him to try it with no hands.

Let's See, I'll Be...

Ask your toddler to act like:

- A pony prancing
- A bird flying
- A frog leaping
- A kangaroo jumping
- A bunny hopping
- A horse galloping

Household things to play with

Just open your cupboards, closets and drawers!

- Wooden spoons
- Plastic cups and bowls
- Pots and pans
- Empty boxes
- Pillows
- Dress up clothes
- Balls made from rolled up socks, paper, foil — or snow!

Active toys

Good gifts from family and friends

- Big, soft balls
- Blocks
- Push and pull toys
- Ride-on toys
- Toy shovels, rakes, brooms, vacuums, lawnmowers

Games to play

- Follow the leader
- Hide and seek
- Ring around the rosy
- Marching band



Playing with your toddler helps him grow smarter, stronger, healthier and happier!