



Your early learning guide for infants, toddlers and three-year-olds

Module 2:

Toddler Environment (18-36 months)

Toddlers are ready to experiment with independence while still needing lots of comfort and attention from a responsive caregiver. They need an enriched environment with a variety of rotating materials. They need uninterrupted time to explore and play in an environment full of language and experiences. Materials that foster independence and self-help skills, opportunities to socialize with peers, and consistent routines support social and emotional, language, and cognitive development.

Language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Photographs of familiar objects • Board books • Picture books • Wordless books 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Factual books • Teacher/Family made books with photos • Books in children’s home language • Flannel board
Music and Movement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Push/pull items • Instruments, shakers, chimes • Scarves and props for dancing • Variety of music – different cultures and types 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Balls • Riding toys • Tunnel, hoops, balance
Cozy Areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small peaceful area • Pillow or stuffed toy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A few toys to play with by oneself • Mirror
Art and Sensory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crayons/Markers/Chalk • Variety of paper types • Collage materials • Play-doh or clay 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sculpting tools • Smocks • Art prints / Pictures • Opportunities to paint and glue
Science Exploration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sand/Water table with items to fill, pour, measure, and weigh • Natural materials to explore, sort, and classify (i.e. pinecones, sticks, shells, flowers) • Flashlight or light table and color paddles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Magnify glass and items to examine • Books or pictures of real items • Natural textures (i.e. birds’ nests, pelts, tree bark) • Plants to water

Math and Manipulatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sorting materials of different shapes, sizes and color• Books that include counting and shapes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Stringing beads• Puzzles• Shape sorters• Pegs and peg boards
Construction	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• At least two types of blocks• Block props to rotate (i.e. cars, signs, people)• Theme items (i.e. farm, zoo, city props)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pictures of buildings• Materials that allow children to dump and fill• Space to build that isn't in the way of other play
Dramatic Play	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Kitchen furniture / Home furniture• Mirrors• Small dishes and utensils• Pretend food (ethnic options included)• Dolls/doll clothes (multi-cultural)• Doll furniture – bed, highchair or stroller	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Dress up clothes (i.e. hats, shoes, scarves)• Community Helper props and costumes• Real materials and containers (i.e. wooden spoons, small pots/pans, baskets, empty food boxes, juice cartons, etc.)
