

At Home Learning Guide for Toddlers (1–2 years old)

Week of April 20, 2020

Toddlers in our centers typically spend this week continuing their exploration of the natural world through the theme of gardens. Even though you're at home, there are so many ways to learn about the growth and change that come with spring even without a garden!

This week, activities for your toddler include:

- opportunities to look at, talk about, and sing about bugs.
- tips for turning everyday moments into learning experiences.
- ways to build executive function and cognitive skills while having fun at home.

Developmental Domains

are the areas of focus that support development of the whole child. Interested in learning more? Click [here](#) to discover the six developmental domains.

This Week's Theme: Insects, Spiders and Spring!

What you'll find in this guide. . .

We've organized this content the way your child would be learning it in their center, but you and your child can choose your own adventures and do the activities in any order.

MONDAY

Get the Wiggles Out
(Physical Development and Wellness)



Jumping on X's "X" marks the spot as your child practices balance, coordination, and following directions while jumping along a designated path.

TUESDAY

Read with Me! (Language and Literacy)



Books About Insects Bring the outdoors inside by reading and talking about insects you and your child find in books.

WEDNESDAY

Get the Wheels Turning
(Cognitive Development)



Find the Insect Your child looks for a specific item in a group of objects while gaining exposure to positional words in this fun insect-finding activity.

THURSDAY

Growing Flexible Brains
(Executive Function)



Where Is the Insect? Your child's focus and memory get stronger during this game of insect hide-and-seek.

FRIDAY

Express Yourself (Creative Expression)



Itsy Bitsy Spider Singing loud and proud or soft and slow helps your child enjoy and participate in songs and movement.

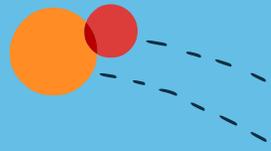
EVERYDAY LEARNING EXPERIENCES

Pick an activity to weave learning experiences into your everyday routines—no preparation needed!



FOCUS ON SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING

The Center on the Developing Child from Harvard University just released an infographic titled, ["What is COVID-19 and How Does it Relate to Child Development?"](#)

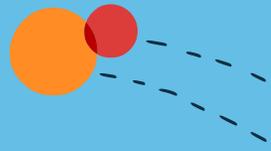


Getting Ready for the Week: Materials to Gather

- Sidewalk chalk or masking tape
- Books about insects, animals and plants in the spring time
- Plastic or toy insect or spider (a drawing or picture of an insect or spider will work)
- Bowl or container
- Small box or container (e.g. shoe box)
- Small blanket or towel
- Spider toy, puppet or picture (hand-drawn works great!)

Tip: At the beginning of your week, gather materials and place them in a container so you're ready to go!





MONDAY

Get the Wiggles Out: Jumping on X's

"X" marks the spot as your child practices balance, coordination, and following directions.



Length of activity:
10-15 minutes*

*Duration will vary depending on your child's interest.

**Level of Engagement
Required by Adult:** Medium



Level of Prep Required: Medium



What you need:
Sidewalk chalk
or masking tape



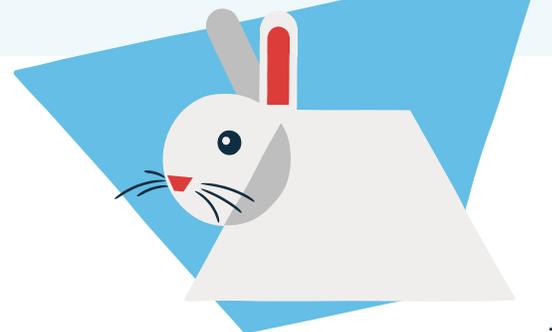
What your child is learning:

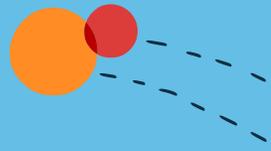
- Coordinating their body movements to jump
- Maintaining their balance while making big movements
- Following directions

What you do: Make a line of Xs about 6 inches apart on the floor using masking tape or, if it is safe for you to be outdoors, on the driveway using chalk. Demonstrate for your child how to jump from one X to the next. Invite your child to jump from one X to the next until they reach the last X. Then have your child turn around and jump back to the other end of the line. Ask your child if they have seen any animals that jump. Are those animals that you see in springtime? Can your toddler follow your directions to jump from one X to another?

Your child is developing balance and coordination while learning how their body can move in different ways. If jumping from one X to the next is too hard for your child at first, have them jump in place and when ready, taking small jumps forward.

If your child is ready: Change the arrangement of X's in a zigzag line and have your child jump from one X to the next along the zigzag.





TUESDAY

Read with Me: Books about Springtime

Bring the outdoors inside by reading and talking about insects, plants and animals found in books.



Length of activity:
15-20 minutes*

*Duration will vary depending on your child's interest.

Level of Engagement Required by Adult: High



Level of Prep Required: Low



What you need:
Books about insects, plants or animals



What your child is learning:

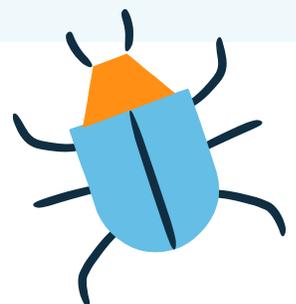
- Focusing on words and pictures in a book while listening to a read-aloud
- Enjoying the rhythm of spoken language during a read-aloud.

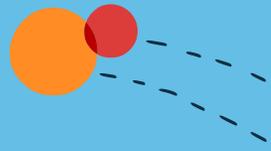
What you do: Select a book to read with your child. If multiple books are available, let them pick one. Share the cover and title of the book with them and then read the book. After reading the book, go back and look at the illustrations with your child. Talk with them about the illustrations by asking questions like:

- What do you see in the picture?
- Where are the insects in the picture?
- Can you point to the butterfly in the picture?"

If you don't have a book about insects, select any book about outdoors and ask questions about the illustrations, or talk to them about different kinds of insects that could be found in the setting. "How many animals do you see in the picture?" "Where would a spider hide in this picture?"

If your child is ready: After the story, invite your child to tell their own story about animals or plants in the springtime.





WEDNESDAY

Get the Wheels Turning: Find the Animals

Your child looks for a specific item in a group of objects while gaining exposure to vocabulary and math in this fun animal-finding activity.



Length of activity:
10 minutes*

*Duration will vary depending on your child's interest.

Level of Engagement Required by Adult: High



Level of Prep Required: Low



What you need:

- One plastic or toy animals
- Six to eight other items, such as toy cars, spoons or cups, and soft blocks



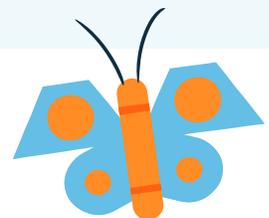
What your child is learning:

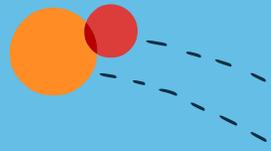
- Recognizing familiar objects
- Showing awareness of an object's location
- Sorting objects and categorization

What you do: Sit with your child. Show your child the animal toy. Ask your child the name of the animal. Talk with your child about the features of the animal. "This is a butterfly. Butterflies have colorful wings. The wings on this butterfly are black and orange."

Then select two of the other small items and place them in front of your child along with the animal. Ask your child to find the animal. If your child selects a toy that is not the animal, name the toy and remove it from the group. "You pointed to the block. I'm going to move the block over here. Let's look for the butterfly." Alternatively, ask them why they thought the object they chose might be the animal. When your child has found the animal, remove all the toys and select two new toys to place with the animal. Continue playing for as long as your child shows interest.

If your child is ready: Play the game with a few different animals, talking with your child about each new one before beginning the game. If there are two animals in the group, can your toddler find both of them?





THURSDAY

Growing Flexible Brains: Where Is the Insect?

Your child's focus and memory get stronger during this game of insect hide-and-seek.



Length of activity:
10 minutes*

*Duration will vary depending on your child's interest.

Level of Engagement Required by Adult: High



Level of Prep Required: Low



What you need:

- Small box
- Plastic or toy insect or spider or another toy of choice
- Small blanket or towel



What your child is learning:

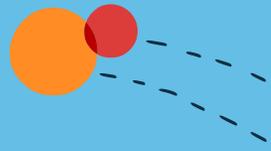
- Finding hidden objects in a familiar setting
- Completing one-step tasks with help from an adult
- Focusing on objects or experiences for short periods of time

What you do: Sit with your child. Show them the insect toy. Ask them the name of the insect, or if needed, help them name the insect. Talk with your child about the features of the insect. "This is a grasshopper. Grasshoppers have large, strong back legs that help them jump. Where are the back legs on this grasshopper?"

Then, with your child watching, place the insect under the blanket. Ask your child where the insect is. When your child finds the insect, use positional words to explain where it was. "You found the grasshopper! The grasshopper was under the blanket." Continue the game by hiding the insect, with your child watching, in other locations for your child to find.

If your child is ready: As they watch, hide multiple insects before inviting your child to find them all. Use positional words as hints or to describe the insects' locations once your child finds them. "The insect was behind the chair," or "The insect is close to the table."





FRIDAY

Express Yourself: Itsy Bitsy Spider

Singing loud and proud or soft and slow helps your child enjoy and participate in songs and movement



Length of activity:
5–10 minutes*

*Duration will vary depending on your child's interest.

**Level of Engagement
Required by Adult: High**



Level of Prep Required: Low



What you need:

- Itsy Bitsy Spider song lyrics (below)
- Spider toy, puppet or picture—or pretend your fingers are spider legs!



What your child is learning:

- Paying attention to and participating in musical experiences
- Using simple gestures or actions to represent things

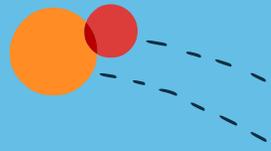
What you do: Familiarize yourself with the words to the song “Itsy Bitsy Spider.” Sing the song to your child, using the spider toy, puppet or picture or your own arms and hands to act out the lyrics. Then sing the song again, inviting your child to move the spider along with the song or to act out the lyrics with you by imitating your movements.

“Itsy Bitsy Spider”

The itsy bitsy spider
Crawled up the water spout.
Down came the rain
And washed the spider out.
Out came the sun
And dried up all the rain.
And the itsy bitsy spider
Crawled up the spout again.



If your child is ready: Change the lyrics of the song to be about a “big huge spider” instead of an itsy bitsy one. Change your tone, volume, and movements to match the new size of the spider by singing in a louder, deeper voice and using big hand and arm movements. Invite your child to participate by mimicking the new motions.



Everyday Learning Experiences

Pick an activity to weave learning experiences into your everyday routines—no preparation needed!

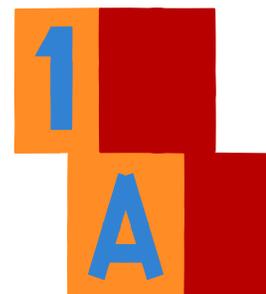
1 Ask your child to go from one room to another by jumping. Keep them interested by asking them to jump quickly, slowly, high, or low.

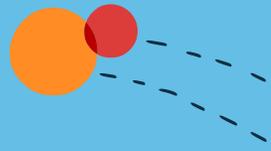
2 Pick any object in your home that has a combination of words and pictures, like a book, cereal box, newspaper, or poster. Read the words to your child and point to the pictures.

3 Choose an item that's familiar to your child such as a favorite toy or item of clothing. Place the item in a group with other objects and ask them to find it. Can they find the correct item on their own or with your help? You can make a game out of asking your child to find different objects around your home or parts of the body. "Point to your nose." "Where do you sleep?"

4 During a routine caregiving task, like changing a diaper or eating a meal, ask your child to help you find the items you need. For example, you might ask your child to find a clean diaper during a diaper change, find their favorite sippy cup at lunch time or where the blocks are stored for play time. Do they remember where the items are usually kept?

5 While performing any routine task like washing dishes or folding laundry, show your child the hand movements you're using and describe what you are doing. Make your words and movements repetitive and invite your child to mimic them.





Focus on Social and Emotional Learning

Social and emotional learning isn't just for children. It's also important that adults understand and take care of their own needs and stressors so that we are at our best for our children. For this week, we wanted to refer you to an [infographic](#) developed by the Center for the Developing Child at Harvard University that gives some quick pointers on how you can take care of yourself through this time. You can also go to their website for some great resources on child development in general that you might find interesting including, among so many other topics, brain development, play, helping your child deal with stress and build resilience, and self-regulation. Next week we'll have some targeted resources for you and your family on not just how to cope with the challenges that so many are facing, but how to use this time to build strong family bonds and help your child flourish!

