

18-24 Months

1. **Little Helper**-Toddlers love helping their parents, so why not enlist them to remove clothes from the dryer, unload the dishwasher, wipe up spills, dust or sweep the floor. It's all good practice, makes them feel special and helps you out at the same time. **Skills:** Gross/Fine Motor, Imitation, Language, Self-Help.
2. **Dress Up**-Before you donate those old hats, shoes, scarves & clothing to Good Will, make a dress up box for your child. Kids this age love wearing adult clothing and accessories and don't fret if your little boys want to join in too. You can also add safe jewelry and purses/backpacks. **Skills:** Self-Help, dressing, imaginary play.
3. **Movers & Shakers**-Toddlers love making noise. Use old soda bottle, medicine jars, oatmeal boxes, etc and fill them with beans, rice, marbles, or anything that makes fun noise. Be sure to seal the boxes tightly because some of the small items may be choking hazards. Kids can decorate the sealed containers with paints or markers and then you can sing "Shake Your Sillies Out" and go to town making music. **Skills:** Fine motor, wrist rotation, creativity, rhythm, music appreciation.
4. **Paint with water**-Kids love to use large adult paint brushes and this can be done in a non-messy way by using water & a chalk board. Fill a cup/bucket with water and let your kids go to town painting with water. Outside, they can paint the house, fence or driveway, a great summer fun activity. **Skills:** Fine Motor, creativity.
5. **Hit the Target**-Toddlers love to throw anything & everything, so re-direct this behavior by teaching them throw toward a target. Use a box or laundry basket and let them toss balls, toys, etc inside. **Skills:** Gross Motor, Fine Motor
6. **Ramp it Up**-Place a book or a cutting board on a small pillow to create a ramp. Show your child how to race cars down the ramp or roll small balls down the ramp. If it is strong enough they can walk down the ramp themselves. **Skills:** Gross Motor, Fine Motor
7. **Blanket Slide**-if you have hardwood or smooth non-carpeted floors somewhere in your home, you can use a large blanket, have your child sit on the blanket and pull or spin them around on the floor providing lots of giggles and fun. See if they can maintain a sitting position while you change their direction quickly. **Skills:** Gross Motor, sitting balance, sensory
8. **Kickball**-Toddlers are just learning to balance briefly on one foot in order to kick a large ball, provide opportunity to kick a stationary ball before working on kicking a rolling ball, which is much more difficult. A large ball is easier than a small ball to start with. **Skills:** Gross Motor, one legged balance, coordination
9. **Throw it to me**-Toddlers at this age are starting to become more coordinated with their movements and should now be able to throw a ball about 3-5 feet to an adult with direction (instead of randomly). **Skills:** Gross Motor, Fine Motor, grasp, controlled release, balance, coordination.

- 10. New Words-**At this age young children are learning new words on a weekly, if not daily basis. Keep a word list on your phone or on your fridge so you can jot down any new words you hear your toddler repeat or try to say. This way everyone in your family can encourage the use of these words during play & meals. **Skills:** Expressive Language
- 11. Build it up, knock it down-**Many toddlers are only used to stacking interlocking Lego types blocks. Instead use regular wooden blocks or stack empty tissue boxes in order to promote controlled release & balance during stacking. See how many your child can stack and then make it fun by encouraging him to knock them down. Talk about the color of the blocks & count when stacking. **Skills:** Fine Motor, grasp, controlled release, balance, dexterity, cognitive concepts of color and number, language.
- 12. Pull it Through-**Use a colander/strainer and craft pipe cleaners. Encourage your child to poke the pipe cleaners through the strainer and pull them through. This gets them ready for later activities like bead stringing & lacing cards. **Skills:** Fine Motor, pincer grasp.
- 13. Roll the dough-**Use store bought Play Doh or easily make your own from a recipe on the internet. Provide cookie cutters, a rolling pin or large wooden dowel for your child to get creative. Pretend you are baking cookies or let your child lead with her own imagination. **Skills:** Fine Motor, sensory, tactile, imaginative play.
- 14. Who is that?-**Look in the mirror with your child and ask “Who is that?” or “What is her name?”, see if your child can answer with “me” or her name. Talk about what else the child may see in the mirror including Mommy or Daddy. Review body parts, stick out your tongue or move it side to side and see if she can imitate you. **Skills:** Sense of self, receptive/expressive language, imitation.
- 15. Family Photo Fun-**Pull out photos or photo albums and ask your child to identify people in the pictures including themselves. **Skills:** Receptive/Expressive language, sense of self, identification.
- 16. Puff, puff, Blow-**Use whistles, kazoos, pinwheels to work on blowing with strengthens lips, mouth, jaw. Or place cotton balls on a table and have a race to see who can blow theirs off the table first. **Skills:** Oral motor strengthening, language.
- 17. My tongue can wiggle-**Place dots of peanut butter to the sides of your child’s mouth and above or below his lips. Have him look in the mirror. See if he can use his tongue to lick the peanut butter. **Skills:** Oral motor skills, tongue movement and lateralization.
- 18. Label My Feelings-**Use pictures in books or magazines or make faces to demonstrate and label feelings of happy, sad, mad, frustrated, scared. Help your child recognize when he is feeling this way. **Skills:** Social-emotional development, language.
- 19. Obstacle course-**Use furniture, pillows, blankets, etc to create an obstacle course for your toddler which requires him to walk, run, crawl under, crawl through, step over, step on, balance, throw, kick, jump and/or climb. This can be done inside or out. **Skills:** Gross Motor, balance, coordination, following directions, language.
- 20. Treasure Hunt-**Gather some of your child’s favorite toys and a few new/novel objects and hide a few things in each room. Tell your child she is going on a treasure hunt & encourage her to hunt for the treasures you have hidden while you provide her with

clues “Your favorite doll is behind the dresser” etc. **Skills:** Listening, following directions, language.

- 21. Tell Me What to Do-**At this age many parents feel like all they ever say to toddlers is “no, stop, don’t”. Instead of telling your toddler what not to do, tell them WHAT to do. For example, instead of saying “don’t jump on the couch” say “Feet stay on the floor” and instead of saying “No throwing your cars” say “Cars drive on the carpet. **Skills:** Following rules, listening, promoting good behavior.
- 22. Pudding Paint-**Use any flavor pudding or even yogurt to finger paint on paper or your child’s high chair tray. This way you don’t need to worry if the hands go into the mouth. **Skills:** Fine Motor, sensory, tactile.
- 23. Squeeze & Drop-**Use a large empty can (preferably with a metal bottom)with non-sharp edges and place clothes pins around the rim. Have your child squeeze the clothes pins and then drop them into the can through a small hole cut into the lid. **Skills:** Fine Motor, grasp, release, finger/hand strength, dexterity.
- 24. Texture Bins-**Use large dish bins or Rubbermaid containers with lids. Fill bins with different dry textures such as beans, rice, sand, cotton balls, etc. Pull out bins on rainy days or during winter when outdoor sand play is impossible. Use sand toys, spoons, cups, etc to dump & fill and hide toys in bins and encourage your child to find them. Place a large plastic table cloth under the bin to make clean up easy. **Skills:** Fine Motor, language, cognitive.
- 25. Save your containers-**No need to buy pretend food items at the toy store, just save your yogurt containers, egg cartons, plastic soda bottles, etc and let your child pretend to cook or play a trip to the store with these recyclable items. **Skills:** Cognitive, imaginary play, language.
- 26. What’s That Sound?-**Whether inside or outside, encourage your child to identify familiar and novel sounds by listening. For example, when the microwave bell rings ask “What was that sound?”, or when a fire truck passes by, or a motorcycle zooms by help your child identify the sounds by sampling listening and recognizing what they heard. **Skills:** Listening, receptive & expressive language, cognitive, refining auditory skills.
- 27. Choices-**Toddlers love to be in control & giving them choices is one way to let them have it. During dressing ask “Do you want to wear the red shirt or the blue shirt today?” and during snacks and meals ask “Do you want a cookie or a cracker?”. **Skills:** Receptive/expressive language, making choices, self-esteem.
- 28. Let’s Talk Shapes & Colors-**During daily activities talk about the shapes and colors of objects. “There is a green pillow on the couch, can you find the other green pillow?” or “Your ball is round like a circle, your blocks are square, can you find me a round ball?” **Skills:** Cognitive, shape & color recognition, listening, language.
- 29. Piggy Bank-**Use a commercially bought piggy bank or just cut a slot into an empty container. Let your child drop in real coins or poker chips or bingo markers. Monitor due to choking hazard. **Skills:** Fine motor, dexterity, pincer grasp.

30. Get Crafty-Toddlers love crafts & at this age they are ready to use crayons, paints, markers, glue sticks, safety scissors, etc. Google toddler craft ideas and go to town!
Skills: Fine Motor, creativity, language.