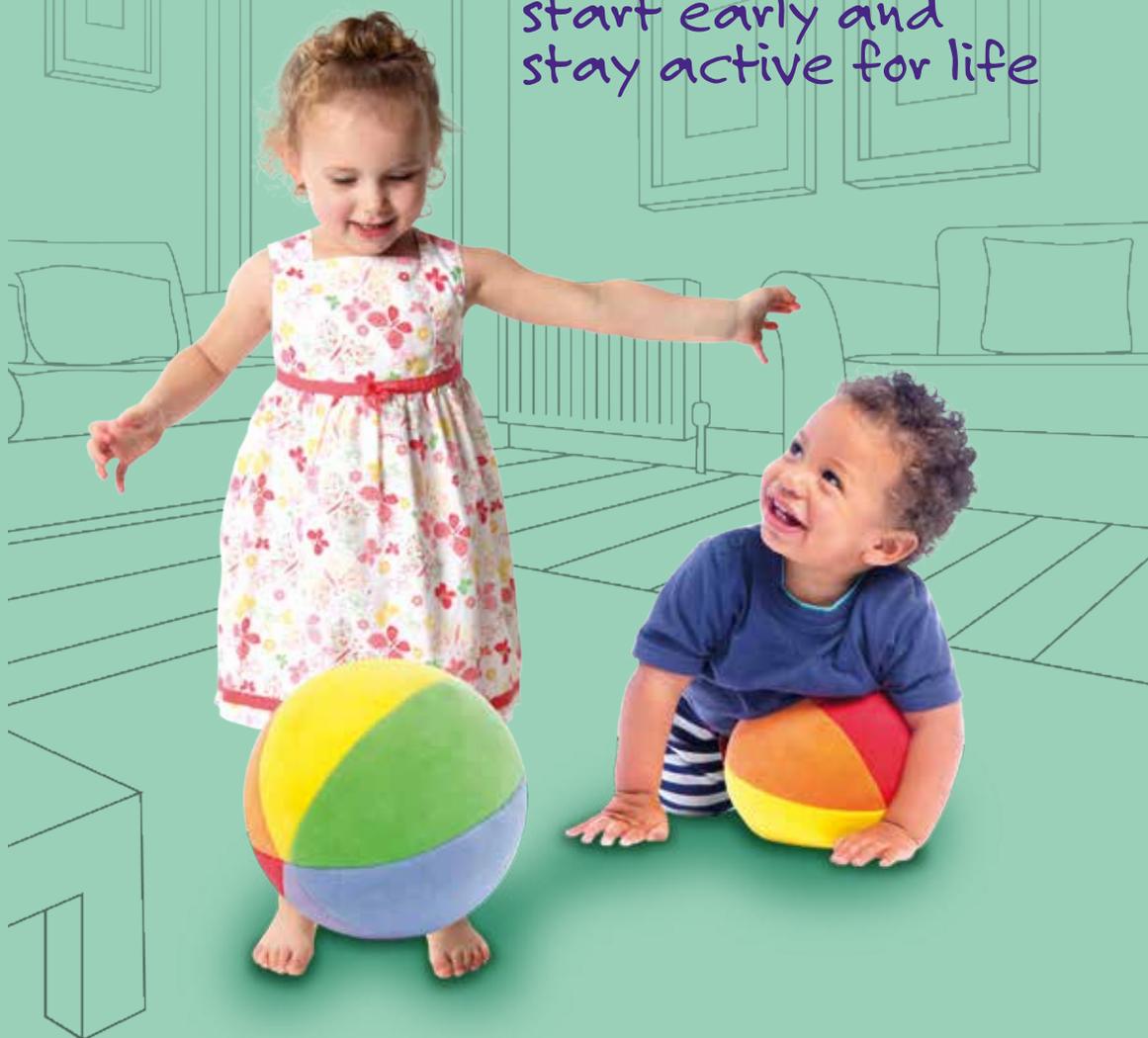


play@home toddler

start early and
stay active for life



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play@home

Toddlers play to enjoy themselves, not for the good it is doing them.

This book:

- introduces play activities and ideas which are appropriate to children's stages of development
- encourages you to establish daily health-related routines with your toddler
- encourages your toddler's enjoyment of physical activity, which will lead to a healthier life
- develops body awareness and promotes the development of good patterns of movement
- promotes the value of finding playmates for your toddler, so that they learn to interact and think about others
- stimulates your toddler's curiosity, imagination and creativity
- encourages good loving touch in your family and strengthens parent-child relationships
- shows how play can help toddlers learn different skills involving thinking, moving, communicating, socialising and imitating
- encourages playing outdoors, which enhances learning and is fundamental for children and young people to thrive in health, wellbeing and development.

All children and young people have the right to play and the right to learn as stated in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The importance of play@home

The first seven years of life are the most influential in establishing good exercise habits and setting the foundation for learning throughout life.

Everything children do is exercise related, whether it is talking (exercising the jaw and brain) or walking.

Having daily exercise routines at an early age helps children to become strong and healthy as they grow. This develops their self-esteem and encourages them to 'have a go' at new activities.

This also promotes the value of finding playmates for your child, so they learn to interact socially and think about others, and stimulates your child's curiosity, imagination and creativity.

It is important for parents and carers to be active with their children, not only as role models, but also for their own health and energy. This provides the foundation for a physically active life for the whole family, and encourages enjoyment of physical activities, sport and exercise.

For children with additional needs, some of these activities may need to be adapted. Talk about this with your child's therapist.



How to use your toddler programme

This programme gives you a selection of ideas. Choose what your child likes and what suits your family situation.



Remember that all toddlers are different and have their own timetable of development. Some will enjoy activities beyond the stated age group, others will not be ready to do some things at the stated time.



Use the ideas in this book as starting points for your own ideas. Make up your own games, invent your own toys. Share your ideas and discoveries with others.



If you are unsure about the suitability of a toy for a particular age, give your toddler one which is a little too difficult rather than one which is too simple. Toys which are too easy are quickly discarded.



If you do not understand any of the instructions, ask your health visitor.

Facts about your toddler

The order of development is the same in all children, but the rate of development varies from stage to stage and from child to child.

Through play, toddlers:

- use play and play materials to help them in their stages of development
- have fun and avoid boredom, which quickly leads to frustration and bad temper
- need play activities suitable for their individual stages of development and those which are interesting to them
- use play to discover, practise and develop new and old skills, to concentrate, to experiment and to use their imagination
- use play to give them emotional satisfaction and a sense of achievement.

If you feel your toddler is not progressing as expected and you think there could be something wrong, contact your health visitor or doctor.

Language development

- Toddlers learn to communicate by listening and concentrating when someone is talking.
- It's as important for your toddler to understand language as it is for them to actually speak it. It is important to talk to toddlers directly so that they can see facial expressions and gestures.
- The conversation needs to relate to what is happening now (like eating, dressing, playing), or to what is going to happen: 'We are going to visit Grandma.'
- Toddlers need to be listened to when they are trying to communicate, showing them that what they have to say is important and interesting.
- Praise or positive reassurance with all their efforts, no matter how small, encourages them to continue their learning.

Toddler behaviour

- Toddler behaviour is very confusing because their desire for independence conflicts with their desire for emotional support. They often do not know what they want, so cannot make decisions easily, and will change their mind several times.
- They will often fight against control and help, and insist on doing things for themselves (like dressing) even though they are unable to do so.
- Toddlers will sometimes be selfish, which is important for defining who they are and to understand their relationship to things and people.

- Sharing cannot be rushed, but toddlers need to be given plenty of opportunities to learn to share and to take turns.
- Toddlers need to learn for themselves what appropriate behaviour is. They need your love, emotional support and approval to be adventurous and try out new activities in their own environment.

Social interaction

- Toddlers enjoy playing alongside others of similar ages.
- The first stage in learning about socialising is when they begin to develop an awareness of other people's reactions to them, together with the give and take necessary for group life.
- Play with other children gives them the opportunity to discover that they are alike, concerned with the same things and that they do many things as well as others, perhaps some things better. This develops self-confidence.

Fair play

- It is never too early to teach your children about playing fair. Encourage respect for other family members and teach children to learn to share toys; to be nice and patient; and to take turns.
- Praising effort is important, particularly when young children are still developing skills such as running, jumping and coordination. Success should be based on joining in and trying, rather than 'being the best'.

Books

- Books are important in the development of the language skills of listening, understanding and communicating.
- Reading books with your toddler helps to develop their visual understanding and the ability to notice detail, and stimulate their imagination.
- An early enjoyment of books provides a foundation for a child's more formal education later on.
- Try to engage them at different times and in small amounts, or follow your child's lead.
- Having books, magazines and comics around the home will encourage toddlers to copy you and read.
- Toddlers should be encouraged to copy adults even before they can read.

Wellbeing



Getting it right for every child is Scotland's approach to help children thrive and grow to be all they can be. It's about supporting and improving the wellbeing of every child. It's also about putting children and families at the centre of all the services that work for and with them.

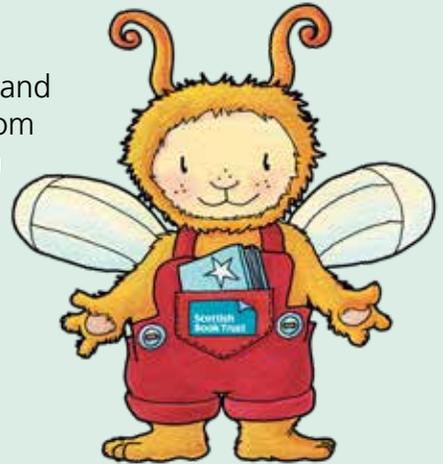
There are eight things your child needs to thrive (sometimes referred to as wellbeing indicators):

- to feel and be safe
- to be physically and mentally healthy
- to achieve in their learning at home, at nursery and school, and in the community
- to feel nurtured and supported in the family home
- to be active and have the chance to play
- to feel respected, listened to and involved in the decisions about them
- to become responsible and active members of their communities
- to feel included.

Bookbug

Bookbug encourages parents, carers and children to read and sing together from birth. We give books to every child in Scotland. There are four age-appropriate Bookbug Bags:

- **Bookbug Baby Bag** (given by your health visitor when your baby is between 3 and 5 weeks old)
- **Bookbug Toddler Bag** (given by your health visitor when your toddler is aged between 13 and 15 months)
- **Bookbug Explorer Bag** (given at nursery when your child is 3)
- **Bookbug Primary 1 Family Bag** (given at school when your child is in Primary 1).



If you have not received your free Bookbug Toddler Bag, please ask your health visitor for more details. Families can also have Gaelic versions of the bags as well as their English versions. We can also provide tactile books for children and families with additional support needs.

Come along to free Bookbug Sessions at your local library or community group. These are free, fun sessions of stories, songs and rhymes to enjoy with your child and other families. Find your nearest Bookbug Session at www.scottishbooktrust.com/localbookbugsessions or ask at your local library.

Bookbug is run by Scottish Book Trust and funded by the Scottish Government and Creative Scotland. Local Bookbug activity is coordinated by the library or education service together with the NHS. Find out more and download the free Bookbug app at www.scottishbooktrust.com/songandrhyme

Play materials

Cheap materials, most of which you'll have in your home, have been used in nearly all the activities in this book.

The most expensive toys are not always the best toys, and just because they're expensive does not mean that your child will prefer them.

Household items to save:

- empty plastic bottles that have not had poisonous or harmful substances in them
- large bottle caps, egg boxes, plastic containers
- cardboard boxes of all sizes
- aluminium foil and foil dishes
- old magazines, newspapers and junk mail
- kitchen towel tubes
- string and wool
- paper, corks
- material scraps, cotton reels, wooden pegs.

Environmental items to collect include shells, dried acorns and pine cones.



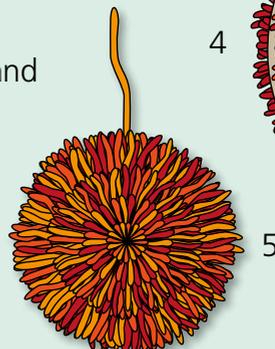
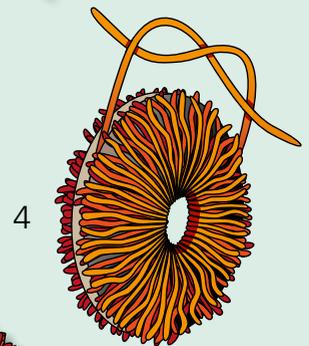
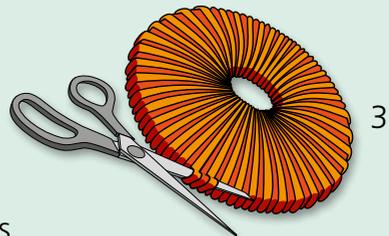
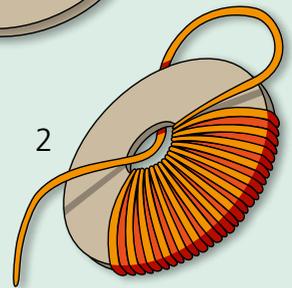
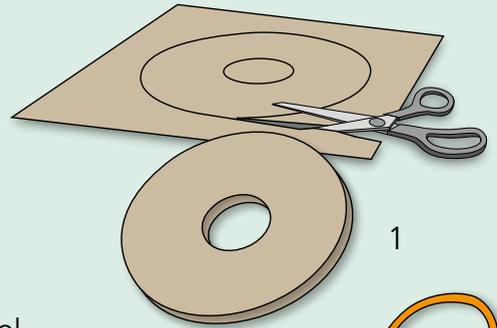
How to make a pom-pom

- To make a pom-pom, first cut two circles out of a piece of cardboard, and then cut the centres out of each circle (see diagram 1).
- Place the two circles together, one on top of the other.
- Thread a double length of wool through the hole and over the edges (see diagram 2), binding firmly over the loose ends of the wool.
- Continue until the circles are completely covered.

Note:

Do not fill up the centre hole entirely, or the circles will be difficult to remove.

- Cut the wool round the outer edge, inserting the point of your scissors between the circles (see diagram 3).
- Ease the circles slightly apart, and tie a length of wool very tightly between them (see diagram 4).
- Pull off the cardboard circles, and trim off any uneven ends from the pom-pom.
- The finished pom-pom (see diagram 5).



How to make a bean bag

- Cut out two pieces of fabric approximately 14 cm x 20 cm.
- Place the right sides of the fabric together and sew around the edges with a 1.5-cm seam, leaving a 5-cm opening along one side.
- Turn the fabric through the hole so that the right sides show, and iron it.
- Sew around the bag as close to the edge as possible.
- Fill it with approximately two cups of uncooked rice, and then close the opening with two rows of stitching. (Dried peas, beans, lentils or sand can be used instead.)
- Bean bags can be thrown, balanced on your head or slid along the floor.

How to make a music shaker

- Use small boxes, plastic bottles or containers (clear or coloured).
- Part fill with lentils, beans, rice or broth mix.
- Make sure shaker is securely fastened.



Homemade paint recipes

Here are three different recipes to choose from:

Recipe 1:

Beat together soap flakes and warm water to make a mixture that looks like whipped potatoes. Add food colouring of your choice.

Recipe 2:

- 1 cup cornflour
- 1 cup soap flakes
- 1 litre boiling water
- food colouring

Dissolve the cornflour in a little cold water. Slowly add the boiling water and boil until thick. Take it off the heat and beat in the soap flakes. Add food colouring.

Recipe 3:

- 1 cup flour
- 3 cups boiling water
- 1 cup cold water
- food colouring
- ¼ teaspoon dishwashing detergent

Combine the flour, detergent and cold water, stirring until it is smooth. Gradually pour the mixture into the boiling water and bring it to the boil, stirring constantly. Add food colouring and let it cool.

Note: These recipes can be used for either finger painting or brush painting. Store the paint in airtight containers. The paints made with soap flakes are easier to wash off clothes and surfaces.

Homemade bubbles recipes

Recipe 1: Bubbles

Mix together:

- 18 fl oz water
- 2 fl oz washing-up liquid
- 4 teaspoons sugar
- food colouring (optional)

Recipe 2: Longer-lasting bubbles

Mix together:

- 6 fl oz water
- 2 fl oz washing-up liquid
- 2 fl oz glycerine
- 1 tablespoon sugar

Recipe 3: Frothy bubbles

Mix washing-up liquid and water, or bubble bath and water, in a small bowl. Blow bubbles through a straw in the bowl. For coloured bubbles add some food colouring.

Remember:

Do not let your toddler swallow the bubbles.

Homemade playdough recipe

- 1 $\frac{1}{4}$ cups flour
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup salt
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup water
- Combine the flour and salt and slowly mix in the water.
- Work the mixture into a smooth dough with your fingers.

Homemade glue recipe

- 1 cup water
- 1 heaped teaspoon flour
- Mix the flour to a paste with a little water, then add the rest of the water and boil the mixture for a few minutes. Cool in a covered container.

section

1

12–18 months



Bookbug says:

Bring your toddler along to fun, free Bookbug Sessions for stories, songs and rhymes at your local library. To find details of your local session go to www.scottishbooktrust.com/localbookbugsessions

12–18 months

Messy play

Instructions

- Use finger paints (see page 14 for recipe).
- Sit your toddler in their chair with a tray in front.
- Remove or protect their clothes.
- Put blobs of paint on the tray (2 or 3 colours).
- Show them how to spread the paint using their whole hand.
- Allow them plenty of time to make a mess.
- Have a damp cloth and towel ready to wipe clean.

Variations

Try this with yogurt, custard, cornflour mixed with water, jelly or rice pudding. Try different temperatures – warm (not hot) custard. Drive a toy car through the mess.

Note: You can make a print of your toddler's patterns by laying a piece of paper over the paint on the tray.



benefits

- Physical – Developing hand–eye coordination and hand movement skills.
- Other – Enjoying new sensations and textures. Discovering patterns. Teaching them that there is a time for messy play.

12–18 months

Animal sounds

Instructions

- Find a book with large pictures of farm animals from the library, a friend or a bookshop. Sit together and look at the book.
- Point to an animal, name it, and then make the sound the animal makes. Move on to the next animal in the book and repeat.
- Encourage your toddler to copy your words, sounds and facial expressions.

Variations

- Find different books such as a transport book with trucks, planes and motorbikes, or a book of zoo animals.
- Make your own picture books with a scrapbook, using magazine pictures and your own drawings and make up a story.

Precaution

- Toddlers experiment with the feel and sound of tearing paper, so keep delicate books out of reach and give your child a variety of books with cardboard or fabric pages for them to help themselves to.

Suggested rhyme – Baa baa black sheep (page 65)



benefits

- Physical – Encouraging relaxation and using pictures to learn about movement.
- Other – Developing vocabulary and learning about animals. Encouraging an enjoyment of books.

12–18 months

Stand and walk

Instructions

- Teach your toddler to walk sideways and backwards with one or both hands held.
- Stand up a distance away and encourage them to walk and then run up to you.

Variations

- Teach your child to turn around in a circle and walk around obstacles like a chair.
- Give them a large wheeled toy that they can push and pull.
- Encourage them to squat down and pick up a toy off the floor and stand up again with a helping hand.
- Help them to learn to walk up and down stairs and to walk on different surfaces, such as concrete, sand and uneven ground.
- Let them learn by watching children and adults move.

Precautions

- Provide an obstacle-free area for your toddler to practise walking and running.
- Make sure that their play area is safe to protect them from injury.



- Do not worry if your toddler does not want to walk yet.
- Babywalkers will disrupt the natural pattern of your child's development and are not recommended by experts.

Suggested rhyme – Ring a ring o'roses (page 65)



benefits

- Physical – Developing balance, coordination and movement skills.
- Other – Gaining a sense of achievement in discovering new skills. Practising judging distances.

12–18 months

Let's build

Instructions

- Give your toddler a set of blocks to play with (these can be homemade using wood or cardboard).
- Build a tower with the blocks, let your child knock it down, then rebuild it again and again.
- Encourage them to build up the blocks themselves.
- Talk about what you are doing.

Variations

- Try different objects for building with, such as empty cereal boxes and egg boxes, or plastic boxes from the kitchen cupboard.
- Stack cushions and pillows on top of each other.
- Smooth wooden offcuts can be stacked up outside and knocked over again.

Precautions

- Your toddler may only be able to build a tower of three blocks by the age of 18 months – but they will really enjoy knocking down whatever you build.
- Make sure wooden blocks are untreated, the edges are sanded and, if painted, use non-toxic paint.

Suggested rhymes – Jack and Jill (page 65)

Dance to your daddy (page 65)



benefits

- Physical – Developing hand skills, grasp and hand–eye coordination. Experimenting with movement and balance.
- Other – Learning about size, shape, weight and gravity. Encouraging your toddler to think and to learn new words.



Natural landscapes in the outdoors provide rich, diverse and multisensory experiences.

Remember to play indoors and outdoors

section **2**

18 months–2 years



Bookbug says:

You just need a few minutes each day to share books together. Sit your child on your knee or close to you, and simply turn the pages of a book, chatting about the pictures.

18 months–2 years

Cuddle fun

Instructions

- Give plenty of loving touch and massage daily.
- When playing tig or hide and seek with your toddler: catch them, give them a big cuddle and then let them run away again.
- Repeat this several times.
- Then change places and let them catch and cuddle you.

Variations

- Roll and tumble on the floor together, and take your child for rides on your back.
- When changing them, or at bathtime, blow raspberries on their tummy, back, arms, legs and feet. Laugh and giggle together.
- Each night, give all members of the family a kiss and a hug before going to bed. Your toddler might like to do this with their stuffed toys and dolls too.

Precautions

- Let your toddler break contact when they want to.
- They may become very excited during this game, so give them time to wind down afterwards with a quiet game or book.



benefits

- Physical – Combining loving touch with active play.
- Other – Learning by example and feeling good together.

18 months–2 years

Music movement

Instructions

- Sing action songs such as Incy wincy spider (see page 66).
- Use homemade instruments to make sounds to the rhythm of your song (see page 13).
- If you play a musical instrument, play the tune and sing along or stamp your foot to the beat.

Variations

- Make up your own songs and rhythms.
- March, dance, sing and play instruments together with music on the radio. Anything that makes a noise is a musical instrument.
- Give your toddler plenty of chances to watch other people doing different types of dancing.

Precaution

- Let your child experiment with movement to music with plenty of praise – laughing at them may cause them to lose confidence.



benefits

- Physical – Improving balance, flexibility, movement skills and coordination.
- Other – Developing a sense of rhythm, and learning through watching. Learning to rhyme.

18 months–2 years

Finger painting

Instructions

- Let your toddler paint with their fingers (see recipes page 14).
- Cover the table or floor with some newspaper, so that they do not make a mess, then pour some finger paint onto a piece of wax paper or plastic.
- Show them how the paint can be swirled and moved around, using thumbs, fingers, hands and fingernails.
- Let them experiment with it.

Variations

- Give your child two or three different colours to mix and swirl together.
- Many different household substances can be used for finger painting.
- Ready-mixed children's paint can also be used.
- For outside play, mud makes very good finger paint.
- Encourage your child to touch things with different textures such as the bark on trees, gravel, animals' fur, painted surfaces, crushed ice and so on.
- Add different textures to paint such as rice or sand.
- Mix cornflour with water until creamy, pour into a dish and push fingers into it.



Precaution

- Your toddler still enjoys tasting everything they touch, so be sure not to give them toxic substances to paint with.

Suggested rhyme – Tommy Thumb (page 66)



benefits

- **Physical** – Developing hand skills and hand–eye coordination. Experiencing various textures.
- **Other** – Encouraging creativity and imagination, and time for relaxation. Learning new words.

18 months–2 years

Playdough

Instructions

- Clear a space on the worktop or table, or put some newspaper or a sheet of plastic on the floor for your toddler to use their playdough (see playdough recipe on page 16).
- Let them squeeze, poke, prod, roll, squash and manipulate their playdough.
- Provide some containers to put the playdough in, holes to push through, and blunt instruments to cut with.

Variations

- Playdough can be enjoyed outside: sticking it on fences, walls and blocks of wood. Your toddler can decorate it with stones, leaves, sticks and flowers.
- They will want to experiment with the dough to see what it will do, like trying to bounce or roll it like a ball.
- You can buy modelling clay.

Precaution

- When buying modelling clay make sure it is non-toxic.

Suggested rhymes – Half a pound of tuppenny rice (page 66)
Sing a song of sixpence (page 66)



benefits

- Physical – Developing hand–eye coordination and hand skills.
- Other – Experimenting with textures and shapes and developing creativity and imagination. Encouraging concentration. Learning new words.

18 months–2 years

Little helper

Instructions

- Encourage your toddler to be your 'little helper'.
- Ask them to fetch and carry things for you such as carrying the pegs out to the washing line and passing them to you one by one.
- Ask them to go to their room and get items for you like a nappy, their slippers, their boots or their hat.
- They can put their dirty clothes in the washing basket, get the dustpan and brush out of the cupboard and carry their plate out to the kitchen after meals.

Variations

- Let your child try bringing two or more items at once, or slightly heavier or more awkward items.
- Encourage them to help you to pick up and put away all their play things.

Note: Be patient. Sometimes having your toddler 'help you' means that it takes twice as long to get things done.

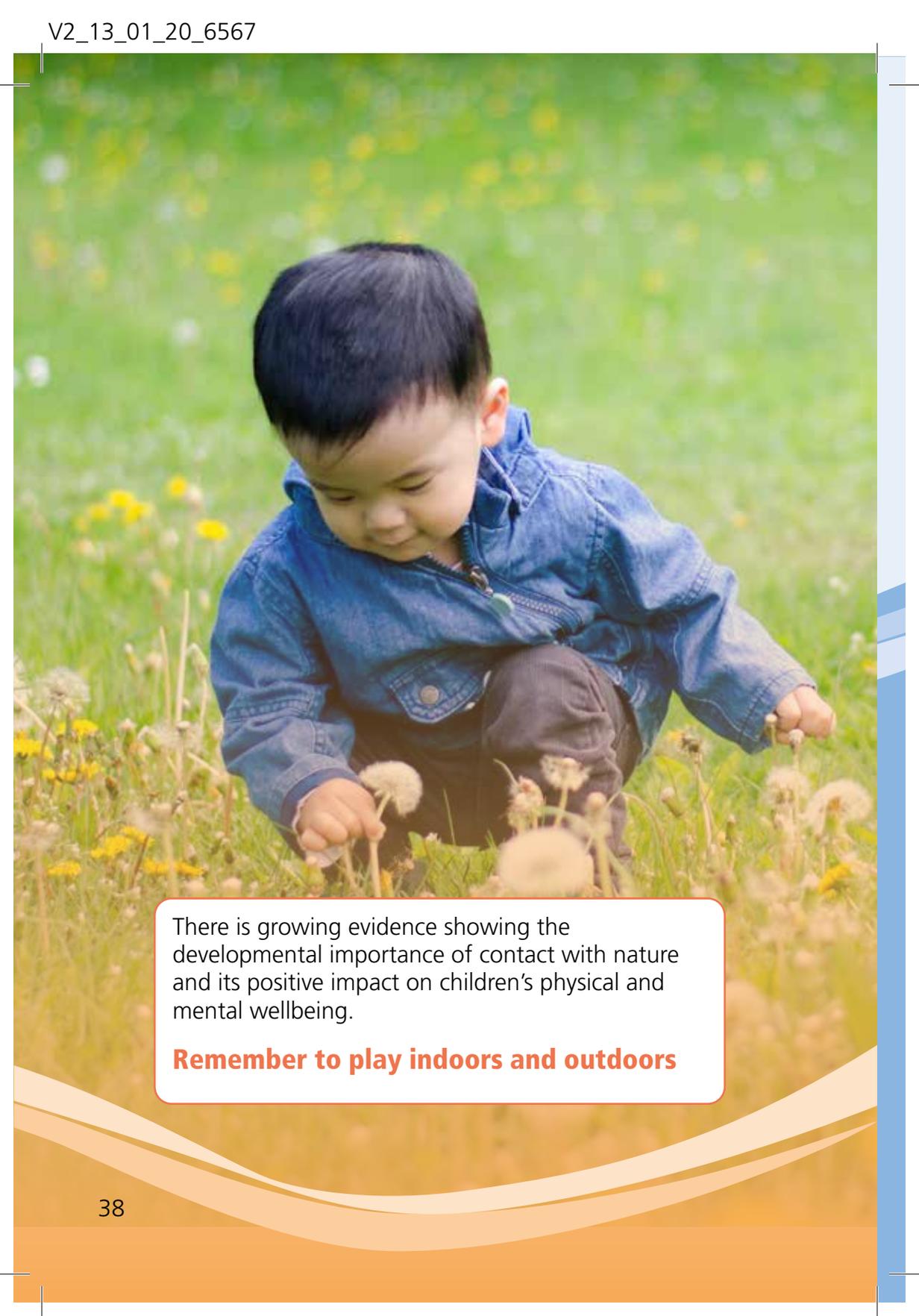
Suggested rhymes – Jack and Jill (page 65)

Sing a song of sixpence (page 66)



benefits

- Physical – Practising walking, balance, flexibility and coordination.
- Other – Developing a sense of achievement, learning by watching and linking objects, such as a brush and pan. Establishing routines. Learning new words.

A young child with dark hair, wearing a blue denim jacket and dark pants, is crouching in a lush green field filled with dandelions. The child is looking down at a dandelion seed head in their hands. The background is a soft-focus field of green grass and yellow dandelions.

There is growing evidence showing the developmental importance of contact with nature and its positive impact on children's physical and mental wellbeing.

Remember to play indoors and outdoors

section 3

2–2 ½ years



Bookbug says:

Books do not have to stay on the bookshelf. Keep books in toy boxes or on low shelves so your toddler can play with them or look at them independently.

2–2 ½ years

Singing

Instructions

- Sing – Hickory Dickory Dock
The mouse ran up the clock,
The clock struck one,
The mouse ran down,
Hickory Dickory Dock.
- Teach your toddler how to do the hand actions of a mouse running up a clock by walking their fingers up the wall as far as they can reach.
- Then with the other hand point a finger in the air to signal the 'clock struck one', and then walk the mouse down the wall again.
- Repeat this quickly and then slowly – start slowly as they learn the song, then quicken the pace.

Variation

- Make up your own songs and put actions to them.

For further action songs and rhymes, see the section at the back of this book and the play@home baby book, or the Bookbug Song and Rhyme library at:

www.scottishbooktrust.com/songandrhyme



Note: Your toddler may not learn all the words of a song, but will join in on their favourite chorus or phrases.

Suggested rhyme – Three tiny kittens (page 67)



benefits

- Physical – Improving hand–eye and upper body coordination. Coordinating movement with words.
- Other – Developing a sense of rhythm, and learning through watching, learning to associate words with actions.

2–2 ½ years

Bouncing ball

Instructions

- Show your toddler how to drop a ball to the ground, let it bounce and catch it with two hands.
- Then let the ball bounce away from you until it stops.
- Give your toddler the opportunity to experiment with dropping and throwing the ball and chasing it as it bounces.

Variations

- Let them stand at the top of a few steps, drop it down the steps, get it back and do it again and again.
- Let them bounce it on different surfaces such as grass, sand, concrete or carpet and try to bounce it in water.
- Find a long pipe or tube (or join several tubes together) so that they can drop the ball in at one end and watch it bounce out the other end.
- Let them watch older children playing with a ball and watch sports like volleyball, netball and basketball.

Precaution

- Make sure the play area is fenced so that your toddler cannot chase a ball onto the road.

Suggested rhyme – One potato, two potato (page 67)



Note

Do not expect your toddler to catch the ball in the air yet.



benefits

- Physical – Developing ball skills, balance and coordination.
- Other – Learning by watching.

2–2 ½ years

Stepping

Instructions

- Lie a ladder down on the grass for your toddler to play with.
- Have them step between the rungs of the ladder from one end to the other.
- Then ask them to turn around and step on each rung as they walk back. You will need to hold their hand for balance or they can bend over and walk on their hands and feet like a crab.
- Ask them to walk along with one foot either side of the ladder.

Variations

- Encourage your toddler to move sideways along the ladder, feet at one side, hands at the other.
- Cut out some large stepping stones from a newspaper, place them on the floor in a line fairly close together and try the same activities as above.
- On rainy days put on boots and step in puddles. Also step carefully between puddles and then run together trying to dodge the puddles.
- When walking along the footpath play a game where you're not allowed to stand on any cracks.
- Have other children join in.



Note

If your toddler becomes frustrated and has difficulty with the game leave it and let them go back to it when they're ready.

Suggested rhymes – Two little feet (page 67)



benefits

- Physical – Balancing on one foot, foot-eye coordination, movement skills and coordination.
- Other – Learning by watching and imitating.

2–2½ years

Wash hands

Instructions

- Teach your toddler how to wash and dry their hands.
- Have a little step handy so they can reach into the basin.
- Turn the cold water on and off for them and pass them the soap.
- Make handwashing a habit before and after meals and after using the toilet.

Variations

- Let your child try to clean their own teeth after each meal with some help from you.
- Encourage them to brush or comb their hair and to feed themselves with a spoon and fork.

Precaution

- Supervise your toddler in the bathroom at all times.

Note: It takes toddlers twice as long as an adult to do these activities. Be patient and let them learn and practise new skills.



benefits

- Physical – Developing hand skills, coordination and balance.
- Other – Asserting independence and gaining a sense of achievement by attempting activities they have learnt by watching others. Establishing healthy routines.

2–2 ½ years

Cooking fun

Instructions

- Let your toddler help you with the baking: stirring, mixing and kneading.
- Give them a space on the worktop or table and a bowl of mixture and let them copy what you're doing.
- Make and name simple shapes – square, triangle, circle.
- Put their 'creations' in the oven with yours for baking.

Variations

- Give your child playdough (see recipe page 16), clay or pastry. You can even make their own stove and oven from a large cardboard box.
- Give them a rolling pin, baking trays, biscuit cutters and blunt cutting utensils to use. Use a fork for patterns.
- Begin counting lessons by counting the number of dough shapes they have made.

Precautions

- Do not leave your toddler in the kitchen alone.
- Teach them the difference between hot and cold.
- Turn saucepan handles inwards so they are not over the edges of the cooker, or use a cooker guard.

Suggested rhymes – Hot cross buns (page 67)

Pat-a-cake (page 68)



benefits

- Physical – Developing hand and movement skills, hand-eye coordination and learning to concentrate.
- Other – Learning through watching and learning new words. Encouraging creativity and imagination.

A close-up photograph of a child's legs and feet. The child is wearing dark blue trousers and bright blue rubber boots. They are stepping into a shallow puddle of water on a rocky, pebbly ground. The water is splashing upwards, creating a dynamic scene. The background is slightly out of focus, showing more of the rocky terrain and some fallen leaves.

Children need to play indoors and outdoors, free of charge, and in spaces where they feel safe.

Remember to play indoors and outdoors

section 4

2 ½–3 years



Bookbug says:

Sharing books together will inspire your child to begin drawing, writing and making up their own stories.

2 ½–3 years

Row the boat

Instructions

- Sit on the floor with your legs straddled and your toddler sitting between your legs with their back to you. Have them hold your hands and then pretend to row the boat, rocking back and forth together.

Sing: Row, row, row your boat

Gently down the stream,

Merrily, merrily, merrily, merrily,

Life is but a dream.

- Repeat this quickly and then slowly.
- Add some music.

Variations

- See-saw: Sit facing each other in the straddle position holding hands. Rock back and forth singing or chanting a rhyme.
- Lie back on your elbows with knees bent and feet to feet. (Your left foot flat against their right foot, and your right foot flat against their left.) Push each foot back and forth, like riding a bicycle. Gradually increase the resistance so that they have to push harder against your feet.



benefits

- Physical – Developing coordination and rhythm.
- Other – Having fun and learning to interact and to think about others. Learning rhythm.

2 ½–3 years

Up and over

Instructions

- Use a lightweight, soft ball that your toddler can easily hold in one hand.
- Set up two chairs facing back to back with a piece of string tied between them.
- Using an overarm throw, show them how to throw the ball over the string in an upward arc.
- They can then run to the other side and try to throw it back again.

Variations

- Vary the height of the string.
- Replace the ball with a bean bag (see page 13), a ball made of aluminium foil, or a wet sponge can be fun on a hot day.
- Throw the ball over a bush, wall, wheelbarrow or other object.
- Let your child stand or sit on a step to throw the ball.
- Have playmates join in and encourage them to take turns at throwing.
- This can be adapted to indoor play for rainy days using soft items to throw such as a ball of wool, a soft toy or socks.



Precautions

- Your toddler may lose confidence if they get hit by a ball, so do not expect them to catch the ball in the air.
- Avoid conflict by making sure they know what they are and are not allowed to throw around.



benefits

- **Physical** – Developing balance, coordination and movement skills.
- **Other** – Learning ball skills and watching. Experimenting with weight and gravity and learning to count.

2 ½–3 years

Frog hop

Instructions

- Tell a story about a frog to your toddler and show them a picture of one.
- You may even find one if you visit a country park.
- Show them how to frog hop around the garden, make noises like frogs and flick out their tongue to catch flies.
- Have other children join in frog hopping.
- Provide obstacles to frog hop over.
- Teach them how to land on both feet with their knees bent.

Variations

- Play the same game pretending to be a grasshopper, cricket or sparrow.
- Cut out stepping stones from a piece of newspaper and encourage your child to jump from one stone to another.
- Encourage them to jump from various heights (no higher than their waist) onto a soft surface, landing with their knees slightly bent.



Precaution

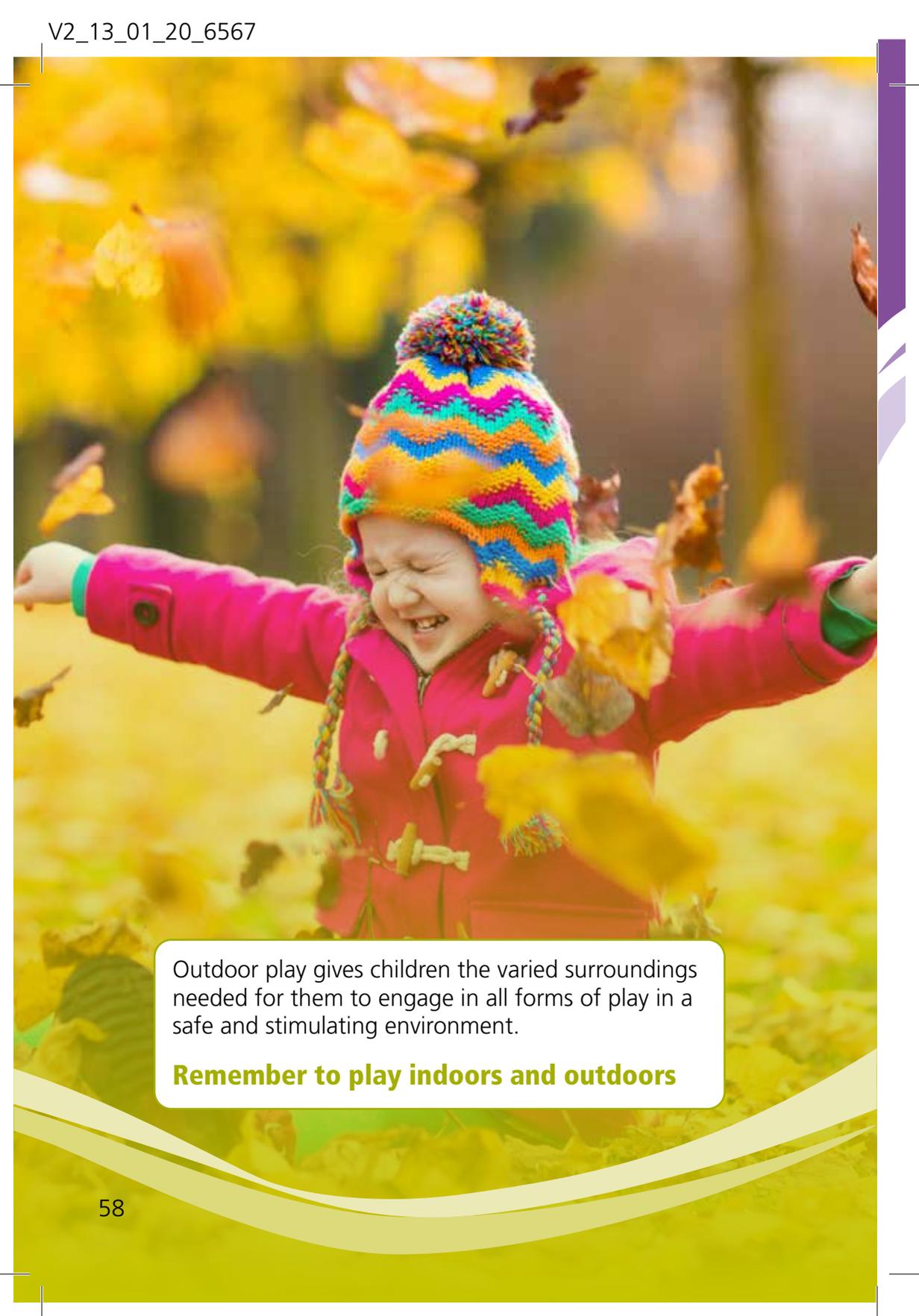
- Do not force them to jump from a height if they do not want to as this may cause them to lose confidence.

Suggested rhyme – Three little speckled frogs (page 68)



benefits

- Physical – Developing balance and movement skills.
- Other – Learning to watch, learning by example.

A young child is shown from the chest up, wearing a vibrant, multi-colored knit hat with a pom-pom and a bright pink jacket. The child has their arms outstretched and a joyful expression, surrounded by a thick carpet of yellow autumn leaves. The background is a soft-focus field of similar leaves, creating a warm and playful atmosphere.

Outdoor play gives children the varied surroundings needed for them to engage in all forms of play in a safe and stimulating environment.

Remember to play indoors and outdoors

Toddler massage

- Give your toddler plenty of cuddles, loving touch and close contact every day.
- Make the most of opportunities to massage them when they're sitting quietly looking at books or toys, during bath time, while you're dressing them, at bedtime or any other time they need calming or settling.
- Use cuddles and reassuring touch to dispel your toddler's anxieties and fears and to help both of you to deal with frustration and tantrums.
- Allow your child to give permission to be massaged or cuddled and to break contact when they choose.
- Be aware of your toddler's likes and dislikes with loving touch and adapt your massage technique accordingly.
- All toddlers, including those with additional needs, respond well to cuddles and loving touch.
- The following pages appear in the play@home baby book. The strokes can be used on your toddlers too, so we have copied them here for you to follow.

Massage techniques

Instructions

- Make sure your shoulders and hands are relaxed and make your movements slow and rhythmical, maintaining continuous skin contact as much as possible.
- Choose a comfortable position for yourself to massage your toddler, making sure that you are not twisting or straining your back.
- There are two main techniques used:
 - Stroking – gliding gently along the surface of the skin.
 - Kneading – gently moving the muscles underneath the skin.
- Repeat each technique 2–3 times, less for the face, which is a sensitive area.
- Be flexible, do more of the strokes that your toddler obviously likes.
- Massage oils: use natural oils because what is put on your toddler's skin may be absorbed into the body. Your chemist or health shop will advise you on what is available. Warm the oil by rubbing it on your hands first.

The front of the body

Begin with the front so that you can establish eye contact and talk to your toddler.

The legs

- Stroke from the top of the thighs to the tips of the toes.
- Knead muscles gently using your fingers and thumbs from the top of the thigh to the ankle.
- Massage the ankle area following natural shapes with your palms or fingers.
- Using your thumbs, massage the soles of the feet from heel to toe.
- Stroke each toe individually.

The stomach

Gently massage the tummy in a clockwise direction around the belly button, moving from your left to right. This stroke follows the natural direction of the large bowel.

Note: This stroke and the chest stroke for the diaphragm can be particularly useful if your toddler has a sore tummy or is constipated.

The chest

- Starting at the centre front of the chest and using both hands, stroke in a down and out direction following the spaces between the ribs. This strokes the small muscles running between the ribs used for breathing.
- Starting at the centre front of the chest where the ribs meet at the lower end of the breastbone, using both thumbs, stroke down and out following the line of the bottom rib. This follows the line of the big breathing muscle or diaphragm.

Note: These strokes can be particularly useful if your toddler suffers from 'wheeziness' or 'chestiness'.

The arms

- Stroke from the shoulder to the fingertips.
- Knead muscles gently using your fingers and thumb from the top of the arm to the wrist.
- Massage the wrist using your thumb and forefinger.
- Stroke the back of the hand using your fingers.
- Knead the palm of the hand using your thumbs.
- Stroke each finger using your fingertips and thumb.

Note: While working on their hands encourage your toddler to look at what you are doing and count each finger.

The head (Do not use oil)

- Stroke around the top of the head using your palms or fingers.
- Stroke down the sides of the face using your fingertips.

The face (Do not use oil)

Using your fingertips, stroke:

- from the centre of the forehead to the temples
- in circles on the temples
- the eyebrows from nose to temple
- from the nose over the cheeks to the ears
- from the inner corners of the eyes down the sides of the nose to the corners of the mouth
- from the centre of the chin out to the ears
- behind the ears from top to bottom
- the back and front of the ears, following their shape.

The neck

Stroke in a downward direction from:

- the ears to the shoulders
- the chin to the upper chest.

The whole front

Using both hands, one for each half of the body, stroke from the neck to the toes including the arms.

The back of the body

If your toddler does not want to lie on their tummy do these strokes with them across your lap or over your shoulder.

Head (Do not use oil)

Using your fingers and palms, stroke from the top of the head to the base of the skull.

The neck and shoulders

Using your fingertips, gently massage the muscles in a circular motion:

- from the top to the base of the neck on either side of the spine
- from the neck out to the shoulders.

The back

From the neck to the buttocks:

- stroke downwards using the whole palm of the hand
- massage the muscles in a descending circular fashion on either side of the spine using the fingertips of both hands.

The legs

Stroke the legs from the tops of the thighs to the toes.

The whole back

Give several long strokes from the neck to the ankle.

To finish

Wrap your toddler and cuddle them for a few minutes before starting the dressing process.

Precautions

- Do not expect your toddler to sit still in one place for a period of time, make the most of opportunities to massage as they occur.
- Using oil makes toddlers very slippery so carefully choose the times you use it.
- Do not use oil on your toddler's skin before going outside because of the risk of sunburn.
- Do not extend massage time beyond the stage where either of you cease to enjoy it.



benefits

- **Physical** – Toning skin and muscles. Developing loving touch and body awareness. Promoting general body control through relaxation.
- **Other** – Enhancing parent–child relationship and learning stress management.

Songs and rhymes

Baa baa black sheep –

from page 20

Baa baa black sheep

Have you any wool?

Yes sir, yes sir, three bags full

One for the master and one

for the dame

And one for the little boy

who lives down the lane.

Ring a ring o’roses –

from page 23

Ring a ring o’roses

A pocketful of posies

Atishoo atishoo

We all fall down.

Jack and Jill –

from pages 24 and 36

Jack and Jill went up the hill

To fetch a pail of water

Jack fell down

And broke his crown

And Jill came tumbling after.

Dance to your daddy –

from page 24

Dance to your daddy,

my little babby

Dance to your daddy,

my little lamb

You shall have a fishy

on a little dishy

You shall have a fishy,

when the boat comes in.

Incy wincy spider –

from page 30

Incy wincy spider
Climbed up the water spout
Down came the rain
And washed the spider out
Out came the sun
And dried up all the rain
And Incy wincy spider
Climbed up the spout again.

Tommy Thumb –

from page 33

Tommy Thumb,
Tommy Thumb
Where are you?
Here I am, here I am
How do you do?
Repeat with:
Peter Pointer, Toby Tall, Ruby
Ring, Baby Small, Fingers All.

**Half a pound of
tuppenny rice –**

from page 34

Half a pound of
tuppenny rice
Half a pound of treacle
Mix it up and make it nice
Pop goes the weasel.

Sing a song of sixpence –

from pages 34 and 36

Sing a song of sixpence
A pocketful of rye
Four and twenty blackbirds
Baked in a pie
When the pie was opened
The birds began to sing
Wasn't that a dainty dish
To set before the king.



Three tiny kittens –
from page 41

Three tiny kittens
Climb up a tree
See them jump down
again
One, two, three.

**One potato, two
potato –** from page 42

One potato, two potato,
three potato, four
Five potato, six potato,
seven potato more.

Two little feet –
from page 45

Two little feet go tap tap
tap
Two little hands go clap
clap clap
Two little eyes open wide
One little head wags from
side to side.

Hot cross buns –
from page 48

Hot cross buns
Hot cross buns
One a-penny, two a-penny
Hot cross buns.



Pat-a-cake –
from page 48

Pat-a-cake, pat-a-cake,
baker's man
Bake me a cake
as fast as you can
Pat it and prick it
And mark it with 'B'
Put it in the oven
for baby and me.



**Three little speckled
frogs –** from page 57

Three little speckled frogs
Sat on a speckled log
Eating the most delicious
grubs (yum yum)
One jumped into the pool
Where it was nice and
cool
Then there were two
speckled frogs.
Repeat with:
Two, one and finish with:
Then there were no
speckled frogs.

You can find more songs and rhymes in the
Bookbug Song and Rhyme library and download
the free app: [www.scottishbooktrust.com/
songandrhyme](http://www.scottishbooktrust.com/songandrhyme)

Further information

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An easy-to-follow guide to a beneficial, suitable and safe toddler exercise programme for 1- to 3-year-olds.

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This resource may also be made available on request in the following formats:



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