

# At-Home Activities for Toddlers

## Language Activities

- Make a sensory book with your child. Find materials of different textures, such as aluminum foil, corduroy, sand paper, fleece, etc., and glue them to pages to make a book. As you read the book with your child, encourage him or her to feel the textures. Model vocabulary as your child touches the textures, i.e., “The sandpaper feels *rough*. The foil is *shiny*.”
- Teach your child some sign language using resources on websites such as [babysignlanguage.com](http://babysignlanguage.com). Play the videos or view the images that demonstrate the hand motions, then practice them with your child.
- Make simple tasks fun by playing with language. Throughout the day, invent playful, rhyming phrases when talking to your child or giving directions. For example: *Stand on the floor, floor, floor, at the door, door, door*, or, *Take your cup, cup, cup, and pick it up, up, up. Put it in, in, in, the dirty bin, bin, bin!*

## Cognitive Activities

- Fill a shallow bin with water. Invite your child to test different household items and toys to see what sinks and what floats. For added fun, freeze some colored water in ice cube trays to add to the water. Talk about hot and cold, and how the ice changes from a solid to a liquid when added to the water. Discuss how the melting cubes are changing the color of the water in the bin.
- Gather common items from around the house; such as, empty plastic baby food containers, paper towel rolls, egg cartons, plastic eggs, Duplo blocks, large bristle blocks, and other items that do not pose a choking hazard. Invite your toddler to use his or her imagination and build, stack, fill and dump!
- Go for a walk outside or around the house with your child. Point to different objects and ask if they are bigger or smaller than your child. Encourage your child to stand next to the items to compare heights.

## Creative Arts Activities

- Create some homemade playdough with your child. Provide a variety of items like cookie cutters and rolling pins, plastic knives, and other household objects that the children can use to press, poke, cut and roll.
- Explore some different genres of music with your child. Use a music app to play some jazz, big band music, classical, reggae, or show tunes. Encourage your child to dance or color to the music. Provide things like scarves and ribbons to twirl, or make an improvised drum out of found materials. Talk about the different styles of music and how it makes your child feel.
- Make some simple costumes by cutting and stapling ears to headbands or pinning stuffed-sock tails to a pair of pants, and encourage your child to act like a favorite animal. Encourage your child to mimic animal sounds, or act out stories with animal characters as you read.

## Physical Development and Health

- Fill a basin or large bowl with water and place sponges or washcloths in the water. Invite your child to choose his or her favorite plastic baby doll or toy to wash. Encourage your child to use the washcloths and sponges to scrub the baby doll's hands. Explain that washing our hands washes away dirt and germs and keeps us healthy.
- Place 10 to 12 clothespins around the edge of a paper plate. Challenge your child to get all the clothespins off the plate and back in a cup or bowl. Demonstrate how to grasp the clothespins using a pincer grasp. Pinch the clothespin with your finger and your thumb, squeeze to open it and then drop it in the cup. Encourage your child to remove all the clothespins and drop them in the cup or bowl.
- Draw a circle on poster paper, then draw smaller concentric circles inside. Color each circle a different color. Tape the poster on a wall in an outside area. Invite your child to stand a few feet away and kick the ball toward the target. Demonstrate how to kick the ball and encourage your child to try. Move your child closer to the target or farther away as needed.

## Character Education

- Create a picture collage of family and friends who are important to your child. Look at the pictures together and point to and name each person. Talk about why you are thankful for the people in the collage and discuss how these people help your child.
- Gather old clothing and invite your child to play dress up. Encourage the children to express themselves and role-play being different family members.
- Help your child develop independence using visual cues. Create simple illustrations or take pictures to represent the steps involved in completing simple tasks or following routines, such as washing hands or getting ready for rest time. Make a poster or create picture cards to clip on a key ring. Talk to your child about the steps and ask what comes next. Point to the picture clues on the poster or flip chart to help your child sequence the steps.

# At-Home Activities for 2-Year-Olds

## Language Activities

- Create picture cards or gather various props that represent a theme of a children's song. For example, create a picture card for each verse of "The Wheels on the Bus," or gather toys or stuffed animals to represent the characters in "The Farmer in the Dell." Point to the pictures or props and ask your child to identify them. Invite your child to sing a story with you. Prompt your child to touch the pictures or props as you sing about them. Encourage your child to sing along.
- Cut construction paper so that it fits inside sandwich bags. Have your child assist you with gluing photos or magazine pictures of common items onto the construction paper. Insert the pictures into the bags, press out excess air and seal them. Stack them on top of each other and punch holes in the zippered sides. Fasten them together with yarn. Invite your child to read the book with you, identifying the pictures and talking about them as you go.
- Place several different objects in a dark-colored bag. Invite your child to pull an object out of the bag and identify each item. Ask questions about the object and encourage your child to respond. Try asking open-ended questions instead of yes/no questions to encourage vocabulary use.

## Cognitive Activities

- Use this time at home to clean out some closets! Ask your child to help you sort clothing into categories. Place two baskets out, and challenge your child to sort tops and bottoms, winter and summer, short sleeves and long sleeves. Children can practice matching socks, shoes and mittens. Once the clothes are sorted, talk about where they belong and encourage your child to help you put things away.
- Select an object to play hide and seek. Show the child the item, then have your child close his or her eyes while you hide the item in plain sight. Challenge your child to look for the item. Give clues using directional words as necessary. Repeat the game several times, or invite your child to hide the item for you to find.
- Take pictures of your child engaged in routine activities, like eating breakfast, walking the dog, cleaning up toys, or taking a nap. Use the pictures to create a "First-Then" schedule. Print the pictures and use them to help your child understand the order of events. For example, "First we will have breakfast, then we will call Nana." These visual clues help children to learn to anticipate what will happen next, giving them a sense of security. Remove the pictures as you complete tasks, and replace them with new events. "First we will read a book, then you will take your nap."

## Creative Arts Activities

- Gather all the socks from the laundry room that are missing mates, and repurpose them into hand puppets with your child. Use markers or fabric paint to draw faces, or use glue and fabric scraps to create characters. (Be sure not to use items that could pose a choking hazard). When the puppets are dry, use them to play. Sing and talk in different voices. Have the puppet ask questions, and encourage your child to answer the puppet.

- Select one or two kinds of materials for your child to use for stamping. Some examples include: blocks, small wooden shapes, plastic cups, playdough tools, cookie cutters, or paper towel tubes with bubble wrap taped over one end. (Note: be sure the items are large enough that they do not pose a choking hazard.) Place spoonfuls of different colored paints onto a paper plate. Encourage your child to dip the materials into the paint and stamp designs on paper.
- Make some musical instruments with your child with items found around the home. Paper plates and macaroni become tambourines; paper towel tubes and rice become shakers; and oatmeal cylinders become drums! Encourage your child to listen to his or her favorite tunes and play along to the rhythm.

## Physical Development and Health

- Draw a large outline of a hand on a chalkboard or dry erase board. Using different colored chalk or markers, draw silly looking shapes and squiggles that represent germs. Invite your child to use an eraser or paper towels to “wash” away the germs from the hand. Explain that when we wash our hands, germs are wiped away. Alternatively, draw a mouth with large teeth and shapes and squiggles on the teeth. Invite your child to use an old toothbrush to “brush” away germs that cause cavities on our teeth.
- Lay a piece of large plain paper on the floor. Invite your child to choose two crayons, one for each hand. Assist your child to spin around in a circle 5 times. When finished spinning, direct your child to the paper to create a “dizzy” drawing or scribble art. Repeat as desired, encouraging your child to use different colors each time.
- Spread glue over a piece of paper, or cut and peel a piece of Contact paper, placing it with the sticky side up. Invite your child to tear pieces of construction or tissue paper to place on the paper. If your child cannot tear pieces of paper, cut some strips or squares for your child to grasp and place. Encourage your child to use a pincer-grasp, picking the pieces up with their thumb and forefinger.

## Character Education

- Create a cozy area in your home using pillows, soft cushions, stuffed animals and blankets. Place your child’s favorite books as well as your own in the area. Spend a few moments each day in the cozy area with your child and read together. Encourage your child to read to you.
- Encourage your child to help complete simple chores in and around the house. Children feel a great sense of accomplishment when they can do their share and feel a sense of responsibility. Some suggestions include folding towels, putting dishes or groceries away, putting paper in the recycling box, and helping take care of pets or plants.
- Create a family photo album of places, things, people and animals for which your family is thankful. Take pictures, print and place the photos in an album or create a scrapbook together. Read the book together and keep in a place where it can be read often as a reminder of the things for which your family is thankful.

# At-Home Activities for 3-Year-Olds

## Language Activities

- Scatter letters (or numbers) around on the floor. Invite your child to use a car or dump truck to pick up and deliver the letters that you call out.
- Practice language skills and introduce new vocabulary while pretending to take a trip on an airplane, bus or train together. Set up kitchen chairs in a row. Take turns pretending to be the roles of passengers, pilots or engineers, flight attendants, or a ticket counter sales person, etc. Use art materials to create tickets and signs. Dress up in different outfits that go along with the roles.
- Cover the bottom of a plate, tray or cookie sheet with a layer of cornmeal, salt, sugar, sand or flour. Encourage your child to use his or her finger to create designs, lines or shapes on the tray. Challenge your child to write the letters in his or her name on the tray, or to spell *Mom*, *Dad*, or another family member or pet's name.

## Cognitive Activities

- Build a tower out of recycled materials. Encourage your child to count how many items are stacked before the tower falls. Discuss which items work best. Ask your child to describe why certain items work better than others.
- Tape shapes (or numbers) around the room. Give your child a flashlight and turn off the lights. Together use the flashlight to point to and identify the hidden shapes around the room.
- Explore your five senses with the following activities: Create a scavenger hunt list. Use the sense of sight to search around the house outside for the different items. Place items in a bag and see if your child can guess what they are, using only his or her sense of touch. Blindfold your child and invite him or her to smell different spices and try to guess what they are. Do the same for different tastes. Hide a timer somewhere in a room and see if your child can use the sense of hearing to find it.

## Creative Arts Activities

- Tape paper to different surfaces outside such as around the trunk of a tree, on a fence, or on the sidewalk. Remove the wrappings from old crayons. Invite your child to make crayon rubbings of the different surfaces.
- Combine materials with playdough such as LEGO® pieces, sequins, dry pasta, beans, googly eyes, mini figures, plastic beads, straws, artificial flowers, non-metallic glitter, etc. Provide a variety of tools such as a rolling pin, ice tray, cookie cutters, spoons, forks, scoops, scissors, etc., for the children to use as they create.
- Make a homemade drum by decorating a shoe box with markers, crayons, paper scraps and glue. When completed, encourage your child to play the drum as he or she marches and moves around the room. Practice playing different rhythms, tempos or patterns together. Play different types of music and encourage your child to play along with the drum. Clap a pattern and see if your child can play back the pattern on the drum.

## Physical Development and Health

- Fill a shallow dish with water. Sprinkle non-metallic glitter, preferably in a clump, in the middle. Assist your child to drop a tiny bit of milk into the dish near the glitter. Watch as the glitter scatters away from the milk. Compare how the milk repels the glitter to how soap repels germs. Explain that this is why it is important to use soap when we wash our hands. For added fun, repeat the activity with other substances like pepper or oregano.
- Help your child create an obstacle course using materials such as pillows, blankets, sleeping bags, cardboard boxes and chairs. Come up with some objectives, like rolling up and out of a blanket, throwing and catching a pillow, jumping into and out of boxes, and crawling under chairs. Use materials from the environment and be creative with the movements!
- Find sweaters, jackets or other clothing with large buttons or snaps. Encourage your child to practice working the buttons and snaps. To further challenge your child, consider teaching him or her how to manage zippers.

## Character Education

- Pretend to be a family of superheroes. Make superhero capes by cutting and decorating old bed sheets. Invite your child to use paint, markers and other craft items to make his or her own unique cape. Use aluminum foil to make headbands and wrist cuffs. As a family, discuss what each member's superpower is and pretend to be superheroes throughout the day.
- Create a daily visual schedule for your home routines. Sit down with your child and review the routines they need to complete each morning or night. Use visual cues for your child to follow the schedule independently. Offer praise and encouragement as they accomplish each routine. There are many samples of visual schedules on the Internet.
- Create a family pinwheel to help navigate struggles. The theme of the pinwheel could be choices of meals, family activities, toys or literature. Decide together as a family the theme and what items or activities to add to it. Use picture cues. Cut out an arrow shape from card stock and place it in the middle of the pinwheel using a brad. Use the wheel when a struggle or disagreement arises, spin the arrow, and where the arrow lands is the choice for that moment.

# At-Home Activities for 4-Year-Olds

## Language Activities

- Invite your child to write a letter to a family member or friend. Encourage him or her to try to write some of the letter or take dictation. Suggest that your child draw a picture to send with the letter. Together address an envelope and invite your child to decorate the envelope. Share the steps of how a letter reaches its destination through the post office.
- Write letters (or numbers or sight words) randomly on a large piece of paper. Build a ramp with a cookie sheet and pillows and place the ramp at the end of the large piece of paper. Invite your child to place a race car at the top of the ramp and let it go. Encourage your child to name the letter the car stops on or near. Name the letters surrounding the car as well. Experiment with changing the slope of the ramp to increase or decrease the distance traveled.
- Practice language skills and introduce new vocabulary while pretending to take toy animals to the veterinarian. Set up a room to be the vet office. Alternate pretending to be the veterinarian, receptionist or visitor. Use paper, pens and art materials to create signs and medical charts. Dress up in different outfits that go along with the roles.

## Cognitive Activities

- Find 4-5 animal figures that are different sizes. Challenge your child to put them in a line from smallest to tallest or shortest to longest. Repeat the activity with race cars, blocks, or other toys. Challenge your child to place the items from tallest to smallest as well.
- Draw or tape a number in each cup of an egg carton, muffin pan or ice cube tray. Invite your child to count and place the corresponding number of small items into each cup. Use, cereal pieces, beans or small toys. To further challenge your child, encourage him or her to use tweezers or tongs to pick up the items and place them in the cups.
- Talk about how some items absorb water and some repel water. Collect a variety of items such as a sponge, napkin, Styrofoam, a sock, plastic bag, paper, aluminum foil, cotton balls, etc. Encourage your child to predict which items will absorb water. Place the objects on a tray and use an eyedropper and colored water to determine which items are absorbent.

## Creative Arts Activities

- Make your own sidewalk paint together. Mix 1 cup of water with 1 cup of cornstarch. Pour the mixture into the cups of a muffin tin and add a different color of food coloring to each cup. Provide paintbrushes and paint the sidewalks or rocks.
- Together, gather a variety of clean, dry recycled materials such as plastic bottles, lids, boxes, or containers along with tape or glue. Invite your child to use markers or crayons to design a structure or machine on paper and then use the materials to create the design.
- Play a variety of music with different tempos. Place a tissue or scarf on your heads and dance around to the music without letting the tissue fall to the floor. Talk about the tempo of the music and share strategies for keeping the tissue from falling.

## Physical Development and Health

- Invite your child to conduct an experiment to see why we should wash our hands. Lay out three slices of bread. Explain that one slice may be touched; one slice may only be touched after you wash your hands; and one slice will be kept untouched (as a control). Explain that the control piece of bread will be used to compare the other two items being tested (in this case: the effect of dirty hands vs. clean hands). Invite your child to touch the slice of bread with unwashed hands. Seal it in a baggie and label it “dirty.” Have your child wash his or her hands thoroughly for 20 seconds before touching the other slice of bread. Place it in a separate baggie labeled “clean.” Then place the control slice into a bag marked “control.” Check the results every three days. Review, compare, and explain the importance of handwashing.
- Gather pictures of animals. Show your child an animal and challenge him or her to mimic how it walks. Examples include: jump like a frog, waddle like a duck, hop like a kangaroo, slither like a snake. Encourage your child mimic the sound of the animal, too. For added fun, ask your child to speed up or slow down the movements.
- Draw lines from one end of a piece of paper to the other. Construction paper works best for this activity. Invite your child to tear the paper along the line or cut on the line using child-safe scissors. To further challenge your child, draw zig zag or wavy lines for him or her to cut. Talk about the safe use of scissors and to monitor your child during this activity.

## Character Education

- Decorate a jar together. Whenever you catch someone in the family being respectful, cooperating or sharing, add a cotton ball to the jar. When the jar is full, have a fun family celebration that everyone chooses together.
- Create an emotions chart for home like the one in the classrooms. Have each member identify how they are feeling in the morning. Throughout the day family members can change how they are feeling on the chart as needed. This will help to spark a dialogue about feelings and how family members can help or celebrate with each other.
- Assemble a “creation” box for your child to foster your child’s imagination and creativity. Collect items such as string, yarn, paper, markers, crayons, tape, glue, child safe scissors, boxes, artificial flowers, etc. Place these items in a box. Provide free time for your child to use the items in the box to create whatever he or she would like to make.

# At-Home Activities for 5-Year-Olds

## Language Activities

- Encourage your child to write the letters of the alphabet on paper or use chalk to write them on the sidewalk. Together search through the house or outdoors for small items that begin with each letter of the alphabet. If your child struggles to find something, encourage him or her to draw a picture of an object that begins with the letter and cut it out.
- Play an exercise game to practice letter recognition and spelling. Write the letters of the alphabet along the edge of a long piece of paper. Together think of simple exercises to do for each letter. For example, A = 3 jumps, B = 2 squats. Try to think of some silly movements or sounds as well. Begin the activity with the child's name. Invite your child to spell his or her name and complete the exercises for each letter. Continue the challenge by exercising while spelling seasonal, holiday or sight words.
- Take turns tracing letters on each other's back with a finger, toy car or other small item. Try to guess which letter your partner wrote.

## Cognitive Activities

- Play board games with your child that use dice to advance a game piece along a path. See if your child is able to look at the dots on the die and name the number. That is called *subitizing* when a child can see a quantity and know how many are in the set without counting each item in the set. Next, see if your child is able to perform a pre-addition skill called *counting on*. This is when your child names the number on one die (for example, 5), then is able to count the dots on the other die starting with the next consecutive number (6 in this example). Consider making up your own games using dice to practice subitizing and counting on.
- Challenge your child to go on a scavenger hunt outside. Create a list of items that can be found in your yard, such as: a yellow flower, rocks, green leaf, brown leaf, grass, stick, seed, moss, weed. Have your child collect the items in a bag. Discuss similarities and differences in the things they found. Encourage your child to glue items to paper and write labels.
- Have your child gather a collection of toys and bring them to the table or floor. Ask your child to organize the toys into groups. How does your child organize the toys? In lines? In groups? Do they make sub-groups? Prompt your child to verbalize his or her thinking. Challenge your child to sort the toys by an attribute such as color, size, material, or theme.

## Creative Arts Activities

- Together look through examples on the Internet of close-up photography of nature or other random items. Give your child access to a digital camera (on a tablet, phone or camera). Take a nature walk or look around the house for items your child could photograph up close. Encourage him or her to find interesting angles and talk about how to bring the object into focus. Show the pictures to other family members and see if they can guess the items.

- Search for images of art created by the artist, Marcus Oakley. Invite your child to make collages similar to his style of art. Cut pieces of cardboard into different shapes and sizes. Arrange and glue the pieces onto a larger letter size piece of cardboard. Use markers, crayons or paint to color the shapes.
- Play music from different genres. As the music plays, invite your child to dance around the room according to how the music makes them feel. Play a Freeze Dance game. Pause the music at random points and encourage everyone to freeze until the music begins again. To add a silly twist, invite your child to make a funny pose when the music stops.

## Physical Development and Health

- Invite your child to guess how many times he or she breathes in one minute. Have your child place a hand on his or her chest and count one breath every time the chest rises. Set a timer for one minute and help your child count the breaths. Next, ask your child to guess how many times he or she breathes in one minute after exercising. Encourage your child to run in place or around the yard for one full minute, then repeat the breath-counting exercise. Compare the guesses and the results. You can also show your child how to find his or her pulse and count heartbeats per minute. Keep up the counting with different exercises throughout the week.
- Challenge your child to play a game of catch, while balancing objects on different parts of the body! For example, balance a beanbag on your head while tossing a ball. Balance a beanbag on your elbow while rolling a ball to a partner. Make the game more challenging by adding poses. For example, balance a beanbag on your back while rolling a ball between your legs. Encourage your child to experiment balancing other objects as well.
- Cut a hole in the side of a box that is large enough for your child to fit both hands inside at the same time. Gather some playdough and some pictures of common items. Place the playdough inside the box and ask your child to choose a picture. Challenge your child to try to recreate the item with playdough, while the playdough is hidden from view inside the box! Reveal the sculpture when your child is finished and compare it to the picture. For added fun, create boxes for each member of the family to play simultaneously. Compare everyone's results.

## Character Education

- Work together with your child to help organize his or her room or playroom. Use this as an opportunity to discuss responsibility, caring for belongings and safety. Discuss why it is important to be careful with toys and other belongings.
- Play a game together to spark creativity and resourcefulness. Invite someone to choose a common household item and then everyone takes turns thinking of as many new uses for that item as possible.
- Play a family version of the game "Make Me Laugh." The game works by one person being silly, making funny faces or telling jokes and trying to make the others laugh or smile. The person or people who keep a serious face for a set period of time wins.



Enjoy the fun at home! Kiddie Academy is proud to be a partner with Kindermusik. The *Music and More* program is designed specifically for early learners. Parents are able to reinforce classroom experience at home through the monthly downloads, monthly eBooks and monthly multimedia activities. The monthly themes are listed below!

Take time with your child to enjoy videos, streaming audio, story time, video fieldtrips and more by visiting the websites linked below.

- Infant's: <http://kiddieacademymusic.kindermusik.com/kah/peekaboo/>
- Toddler's: <http://kiddieacademymusic.kindermusik.com/kah/singandplay>
- Two's: <http://kiddieacademymusic.kindermusik.com/kah/wiggleandgrow>
- Three's: <http://kiddieacademymusic.kindermusik.com/kah/laughandlearn>
- Four's & Five's: <http://kiddieacademymusic.kindermusik.com/kah/moveandgroove>

## Child-Friendly and Educational Websites

### Virtual Fieldtrips:

<https://adventuresinfamilyhood.com/20-virtual-field-trips-to-take-with-your-kids.html>

<https://www.nasa.gov/kidsclub/index.html> (for children 5 and older)

<https://kids.nationalgeographic.com/>

### Storytime:

<https://www.storylineonline.net/>

<https://classroommagazines.scholastic.com/support/learnathome.html>

<https://storytimefromspace.com/>

### Active:

<https://www.cosmickids.com/>

### Games: Ages 2-5

<https://pbskids.org/>

<https://www.funbrain.com/>

<https://www.highlightskids.com/>

<https://www.adventureacademy.com/>

### Games: Ages 6-10

<https://pbskids.org/>

<https://jr.brainpop.com/>

<https://www.highlightskids.com/>