

Toddler Family Fun Guide

The Pennsylvania One Book 2021 “Many Books, One Pennsylvania Community” Program engages young children, families, and caregivers to read, explore, and play with special emphasis on emotional resilience and wellness. The purpose of this guide is to provide activity ideas, family engagement, and learning at home.

How to Raise a Reader: Talk. Write. Read. Play. Sing.

Doing those five things with your child every day helps them build pre-reading skills. Talking builds vocabulary; if you’ve heard a word before, it is much easier to sound it out when you try to read it. Writing and coloring improves the fine motor skills needed to hold a pencil and shows children that letters represent sounds. Reading together creates a magical love of books and stories. Playing enhances imaginative play and encourages language development. Lastly, when you sing, you slow down and emphasize the different sounds in words. All of the tips and activities in this guide will help you talk, write, read, play, and sing together.

- Read together every day.
- Set up a comfortable place to snuggle and read. The act of being close together adds another positive feeling to reading.
- Ask open-ended questions while you read. For example, you could ask, “Does ice cream make you happy?” which has a yes or no answer. Instead, consider asking, “I see that the bunny in this book is happy because she has ice cream. What makes you happy?” This question has many possible answers. It’s ok if you answer the question for the child as they are learning how to talk.
- Reading the same book multiple times may seem boring; however, children enjoy the feeling of knowing what is coming next.
- If you find an author or illustrator that you like, read more books by them.

- If you like reading stories, flipping through a magazine, or delighting in the illustrations in a book, let your child see how much you are enjoying reading for pleasure.
- Point out all of the different types of print in your environment, such as signs in stores and labels on food. When possible, read aloud instructions, recipes, or street signs to help children make connections between the print, words, and sounds in their world.
- Look for activities that extend upon the themes, characters, and plot lines of the book. These activities help children build their knowledge base and enjoyment of the book.



A Book About Me

PA Early Learning Standard

- ▶ **Social and Emotional Development – Student Interpersonal Skills**
 - Infants and toddlers will attach to familiar adults and use this bond as a secure base to develop independence.
- ▶ **Language and Literacy Development – English Language Arts**
 - Infants and toddlers will engage in reciprocal communication.

Attachment to family and friends influences early brain development and helps to shape emotions in toddlers. People rarely print real photographs these days, but a simple photo album with a few family pictures is a wonderful way to tell stories and talk together.

Materials:

- Recent photographs of family, friends, and pets
- Photo album



Directions:

- If the child is old enough, ask them to help with the album by choosing which photo goes where.
- After the album is created, share it like a book. Point to photos and talk about who is in the photo.
- Ask about silly photos and laugh together.
- Ask about the clothing in photos.
- If there are photos of pets, ask what sound the animal makes.



How Many Colors Can You Find?

PA Early Learning Standard

- ▶ **Language and Literacy Development – English Language Arts**
 - Infants and toddlers will engage in reciprocal communication.

This activity helps children work on their observation skills, which is a building block for science. It also builds confidence as they learn the colors and get good at the game.

Materials:

- A place with lots of colors. The produce section of a grocery store is a great option. Another location is a garden store when there are lots of flowers.

Directions:

- Ask the child to point to something red, green, blue, etc.
- When they find a red strawberry, for example, praise the child and say something like, "Yes. That is a red strawberry. Strawberries are sweet and taste good with chocolate."
- If a child points to a banana when they are asked to find something green, you can say something like, "Yes. That banana is still green because it isn't ripe yet. When a banana turns yellow, it is ready to be eaten."
- Ask the child what their favorite color is, then have them find something that is that color. Tell them your favorite color and ask them to find that.

Bubble Foam



PA Early Learning Standard

- ▶ **Approaches to Learning – Constructing, Organizing, and Applying Knowledge**
 - Infants and toddlers will use sensory exploration and demonstrate a growing interest in the environment to gain information.
- ▶ **Scientific Thinking and Technology and Expression – Exploring, Processing, and Problem-Solving**
 - Infants and toddlers will become increasingly purposeful in their exploration of living and nonliving things.

This messy activity will leave everyone cleaner after they are done playing. Tactile play can be so relaxing and can keep little fingers occupied for long periods of time.

Materials:

- Tear-free bubble bath
- Water
- Large bowl for mixing
- Hand mixer
- Shallow storage container
- Optional: Food coloring
- Optional: Bath toys or other waterproof toys

Directions:

- Mix one part bubble bath with two parts water in the large mixing bowl.
- Mix on medium-high with the hand mixer for about one minute. If you've ever made whipped cream, this is a similar concept as you will end up with peaks.
- Put bubble foam in the storage container with some toys and let your imagination fly.
- Optional: Add food coloring to the mix. Do multiple batches with different colors for rainbow foam.
- Optional: This can be a great bathtub activity but be careful because things can get slippery quickly. If you are worried about a soapy mess, bring the bubble foam outside on a sunny day.

Questions:

- What does the bubble foam feel like?

Extensions:

- Create a car wash for toy cars using the bubble foam. If you are outside, have a hose ready for rinsing cars after they are washed. If doing the activity inside, have a bowl of clean water available for rinsing. Don't forget to dry the cars after you are done.

Lifesize Me!

PA Early Learning Standard

- ▶ **Creative Thinking and Expression – Communicating Through the Arts**
 - Infants and toddlers will use imagination and creativity to express self through the process of art.
- ▶ **Health, Wellness, and Physical Development – Learning About My Body**
 - Infants and toddlers will identify basic body parts.
- ▶ **Social and Emotional Development – Student Interpersonal Skills**
 - Infants and toddlers will demonstrate competence and an increased concept of self.

This is a fun activity that kids can come back to over a period of days. It is meant to help them gain a sense of self, size, and beauty. Remember that toddlers are still learning how to control their body movements. This super large art activity allows for a lot of room for trial and error.

Materials:

- Large sheet of paper (larger than your child)
- Crayons or markers

Directions:

- Have the child lie down on top of the paper on the floor.
- Draw an outline of the child using a crayon or marker.
- Encourage the child to do a self-portrait.

Questions:

- This is a great time to talk about body parts. Where are your eyes? Where are your legs? What color pants are you wearing?





The Itsy Bitsy Spider (and other songs)



PA Early Learning Standard

- ▶ **Creative Thinking and Expression – Communicating Through the Arts**
 - Infants and toddlers will respond to music in a variety of ways.

Studies have shown a strong connection between music and empathy. Listening to and interacting with a song with other people creates a social bond. Listening to music can also increase happiness as the body releases endorphins.



Materials:

- Recorded music (or sing yourself)

Directions:

- Include music time in your everyday activities.
- Play favorite tunes and dance or sing along.

Questions:

- What is your favorite song?
- Why do you like this song?

Songs and Rhymes



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This Is the Way We Wash

Songs can be used at any time of day to make life a bit more fun. Try this one at bath time. You can change the body part as you wash the child. You can also change the time of day to “in the afternoon,” “after dinner time,” or whatever fits your scenario.

*This is the way we wash our arms
Wash our arms, wash our arms
This is the way we wash our arms
So early in the morning*

Try using the song above throughout your day:

*This is the way
we walk to the car...
This is the way we
eat our vegetables...
This is the way we
put on our shirt...*

Head, Shoulders, Knees, and Toes

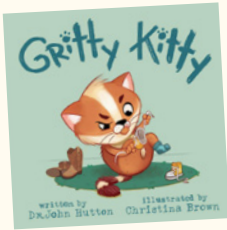
This is a great song for learning about our bodies. Point to each body part on the child or on yourself as you sing. Encourage kids to imitate your movements.

*Head, shoulders, knees, and toes
Knees and toes
Head, shoulders, knees, and toes
Knees and toes
And eyes and ears and
mouth and nose
Head, shoulders, knees,
and toes
Knees and toes*



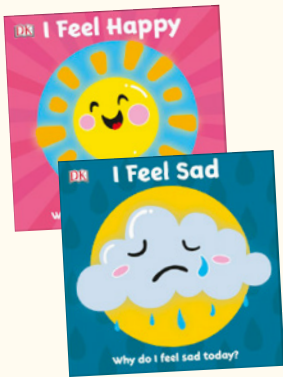
Books to Share

Learning about emotions is difficult for children. They have a tough time figuring out what they are feeling and an even harder time understanding the emotions of others. Books can help introduce ideas in a fun way. These are just a few examples of some of the books out there. Be sure to ask at your local library for more titles. These books are available in board book format.



Gritty Kitty. Dr. John Hutton. Illustrations, Christina Brown. Blue Manatee Press, 2019.

Gritty Kitty doesn't let setbacks keep her down. She keeps trying and shows resilience throughout.



I Feel Happy. Dorling Kindersley Limited, 2020.

I Feel Sad. Dorling Kindersley Limited, 2020.

Both of these are part of a series of books that explain emotions in a simple way.



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