



TODDLER

Learning Games!

Children Learn Through Play

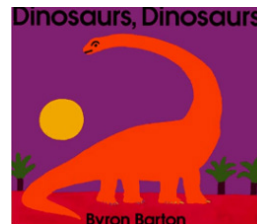
As you know, children of all ages learn through play. Here are a variety of fun games to play with your toddler. Enjoy!

Pair and Sort Pictures

Invite your child to look for a pair in a small group of pictures. Pairing and sorting helps your child notice similarities and differences.

What you do: Cut identical pictures from two copies of the same magazine, catalog, or advertisement. Make the pictures sturdy by taping each one to a piece of cardboard. Show your child two matching pictures. Point out details in one picture and encourage him to find those same characteristics in the other picture. "I have a bird with blue feathers. Can you find another bird that looks like mine?" Show three pictures, two of them matching. Invite him to find the pair. Mix two sets of pictures and encourage him to look for the two matching pairs. Help him get started by holding up a picture and asking, "What do you see? Can you find one that looks just like this?" Give him the cards to play with as he matches them.

Add another pair to the game after he matches successfully. Invite him to sort the pictures any way he chooses. He may stack them in random piles or find a new way of categorizing them.



Suggested Book:
Dinosaurs, Dinosaurs
by Byron Barton

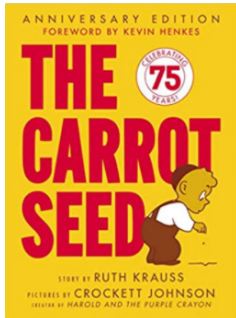
Help Him Help

Allow your child to serve himself at meals from bowls or containers that are small or are not full. Your child will increase his independence as you give him opportunities to do things for himself. Many children are self-serving at their school; they will be so proud to show you how they can do a few things by themselves.

What you do: Put food on the table in small bowls with large spoons. If you need to use a large bowl, make sure that it is not very full. Invite your child to serve his own plate. Show him how to use the serving spoon. Provide a small plastic pitcher and cup so that he can pour his own drink. Be sure to place all items within his reach. Guide his choices about which foods to take and how much to add to his plate.

Please see below for some additional activities that you could try with your child.

Encourage him to eat a smaller amount at first and to take more later if he still wants it. "I see you put three small carrots on your plate. After you eat them, you can have more if you like." Expect a small mess with each attempt. As his skill develops, he will be able to serve his food more neatly.



Suggested Book:
The Carrot Seed
by Ruth Krauss

For example, if she says, "All wet," you might say, "You're right. Your clothes would get all wet!" Listen every day for the words first, then, next, and until. Encourage her when you hear them in her speech. Yes! We do need to get a plate first!



Suggested Book:
Blue Hat, Green Hat
by Sandra Boynton

What Would Happen If...?

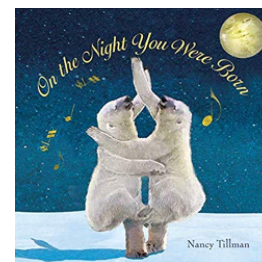
Create some silly situations from daily life for your child to figure out. Your child will understand a little more about the logic of familiar routines and in what order things must happen.

What you do: Create situations that present time or space in an incorrect order and share them with your child. Pretend to make mistakes when doing simple tasks. For example, you can zip her coat before she puts her arm in the sleeve, or hold her glass upside down as you start to tip the milk carton to pour. Ask her, "What would happen if you put on your shoes and then put on your socks?" Or ask, "What if you got in the bath and then we took off your clothes?" Give your child time to answer with words or gestures to show the proper order of events. Repeat her words in a full sentence.

Tell Family Stories

Let your child move stick puppets to act out a family story that she and you tell together. Telling stories will help your child understand the relationships among people in families.

What you do: Collect some pictures of family members and friends to cut up. Glue the pictures to popsicle sticks to make puppets. Make up a story about the family. Encourage your child to move the puppets around to act out the story. Include a few real events along with imaginary events in your story. Ask your child questions to involve her in making up part of the story. "What do you think she did next? How did it make you feel?" Talk about the adults so that your child can be aware of them as people with feelings and needs. Encourage her to tell her own story with the puppets.



Suggested Book:
On the Night You Were Born
by Nancy Tillman

*Activities should be done under the supervision of an adult or older sibling.