

Play is the key way children learn about themselves, others and the world they live in. It is essential to their learning, development, health, and physical, mental and social well-being – and it's FUN! Play provides the building blocks to be ready for school.



Puzzles

Puzzles are great for developing both your toddler's motor and thinking skills.

Did you know?

Completing puzzles helps develop essential visual perceptual skills (this is processing and making meaning from what we see) that are required for handwriting and other important daily activities later on.

It is important to match the difficulty level of the puzzle with your child's stage of development. Toddlers can lose interest in puzzles that are too easy, and become frustrated and give up if puzzles are too difficult. Having fun is the key!

Add language

Animal puzzles are a great opportunity for having fun with language. You and your toddler can try naming all the animals and making their matching sounds.

You can use language to gently give cues while your toddler completes a puzzle e.g. "Try turning it around" or "That piece is too big".

Puzzles are perfect for practicing turn-taking, which is an essential skill for communication. You can prompt turn-taking by saying "My turn" or "James' turn" to help your toddler.

Other development

Your toddler is developing concentration, visual memory, and problem solving skills while playing with puzzles.

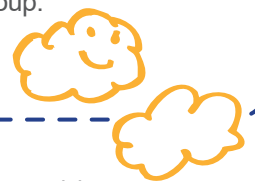


Manipulating puzzle pieces and stabilising the puzzle board helps your toddler practice and develop their fine motor skills, eye-hand coordination and using two hands together.

Variations

Sound puzzles provide a surprising reward for matching up the correct pieces. Puzzle play mats or floor puzzles can be great fun and also help to develop your toddlers balance and control as they move themselves and the pieces around.

You could visit your local public library or toy library to borrow a variety of puzzles to keep them fresh and entertaining. Your local government website should be able to direct you to libraries close to you, or ask your child health nurse or other parents at playgroup.



- Playgroup WA has a treasure trove of play activities for babies, toddlers and 3-5 year olds, for home and playgroup. These play activities cover a balanced diet of play across sensory, movement, language and thinking skill areas.

You can find them at www.playgroupwa.com.au/playideas or visit www.facebook.com/playgroupwa