

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.



## Wonder of balloons

**Balloons can provide hours of fun and learning for toddlers. Toddlers are drawn to the bright colours and they are easier than a ball to throw and catch.**

### Did you know?

Balloon play can build resilience! This is the ability to recover from setbacks and keep going even when things go wrong. Resilience is important for your child's emotional development and coping skills. When a balloon pops talking your toddler through helps build coping skills e.g. "Uh oh – it popped! What a big noise! What a surprise. Let's blow up another one."

### Add language

You can provide words to go with what your toddler is doing and experiencing. Use action words, describing words (e.g. colour and size) and words that relate to position e.g. up and down. Repetition helps your toddler learn the words. These words for colour, size and position are used for learning early maths.

### Other development

Try playing catch with a balloon. A balloon moves more slowly than a ball and can be easier to grasp.

Your toddler will also learn to control their movements i.e. being more gentle so that the balloon doesn't pop!



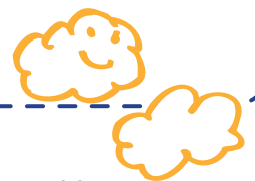
These hand-eye coordination games develop early ball skills ready for social ball games in later years.

### Variations

Using a fly-swat or cardboard tube to bat a balloon around is a great way to encourage active play and improve hand-eye coordination. Hanging the balloon by a string from a branch or doorway so your toddler can practise hitting it also helps their hand-eye coordination.

### Safety

Balloon pieces can be a choking hazard for young children.



- 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](http://www.playgroupwa.com.au/playideas) or visit [www.facebook.com/playgroupwa](https://www.facebook.com/playgroupwa)