**Learning Activities for Toddlers**

Not only will these learning activities keep your 2-year-old entertained, they’ll also teach ABCs, 123s, and other basics.

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The world serves as one big classroom for toddlers. "They love to master new concepts, so it's the perfect time to lay the foundation for future skills like reading and counting," says Erin Seaton, Ed.D., a lecturer in the department of education at Tufts University in Medford, Massachusetts. The key is to play off [your child's interests](https://www.parents.com/toddlers-preschoolers/development/behavioral/new-ways-to-play-expanding-your-childs-interests/). Here are eight fun [learning activities](https://www.parents.com/fun/games/educational/get-smart-fun-learning-activities/) for 2- year-olds that fit into everyday life.

**1. Displaying Her Name**

[Around age 2](https://www.parents.com/toddlers-preschoolers/development/growth/your-child-from-22-to-24-months-taming-those-terrible-twos/), your child will begin to recognize the letters that make up her name, so be sure to display it throughout your home—on her bedroom door, a bathroom step stool, the fridge, etc. Point to the letters, saying each one out loud, suggests Dr. Seaton. Talk about other words that begin with the same letter as her name does ("C is for Caitlin, but it's also for cat and cup").

* **RELATED:** [9 Easy Educational Crafts for Toddlers to Do at Home](https://www.parents.com/fun/arts-crafts/9-easy-educational-crafts-for-toddlers-to-do-at-home/)

**2. Reading Signs**

Point out words and letters on street signs, in stores, and at the doctor's office, says Sherril English, an education professor at Southern Methodist University, in Dallas. Say them out loud ("That sign says stop"), and help your child think of other [rhyming words](https://www.parents.com/baby/development/intellectual/kids-rhymes/) ("Stop sounds like hop, bop, and mop"). To help your toddler connect letters to the sounds they make, speak slowly, enunciate clearly, and place your finger under the letters and words as you read.

**3. Counting Everyday Items**

Your 2-year-old may be able to recite the numbers one to ten in order, but the ability to truly count probably won't come until [his preschool days](https://www.parents.com/parenting/better-parenting/advice/20-tips-for-parents-from-preschool-teachers/), says Dr. Seaton. Still, you can bolster his number recognition by tallying up totals as you get him dressed ("One, two, three buttons"), [prepare meals](https://www.parents.com/recipes/cooking/best-meal-prep-hacks-from-parents-foodies-and-cooking-pros/) ("There are six peas on your plate"), and shop for groceries ("I have three potatoes, so I need one more to make four"). Use your fingers when counting, and encourage him to copy you with his fingers.

* **RELATED:**[8 Easy Math Games for Toddlers](https://www.parents.com/toddlers-preschoolers/development/intellectual/math-games-for-your-toddler/)

**4. Separating Objects by Type or Color**

The act of observing, comparing, and contrasting objects is a vital part of early mathematics, says Dr. Seaton. Fortunately, little kids are master sorters. In this learning activity for toddlers, ask your child to group his stuffed animals by type (cats in one pile, bears in another) or by color. See if he can separate your clean socks from his [when you do the laundry](https://www.parents.com/parenting/moms/housekeeping/laundry-tips-for-busy-moms/), and have him put different-size spoons in their proper place in the silverware tray. Sometime before age 2, your child will also recognize the difference between less and more. "Ask questions like 'Which pile has the most and which one the least?'" says Dr. Seaton.

**5. Making a Shape Book**

Lots of children's titles [teach kids about shapes](https://www.parents.com/toddlers-preschoolers/printables/coloring-pages/printable-shapes-worksheets/), but you can go one better by helping your toddler make her own bound volume. After drawing shapes on a piece of paper, flip through magazines and newspapers together and cut out items that match each one, suggests English. Then go for a walk to look for other objects with distinctive shapes. Snap photos of the things your child points out—a square window, a round tire, a rectangular brick. Print out and paste the pictures into the book when you get home and label the shapes. Put multiple examples on a page to show that shapes come in different sizes.

* **RELATED:**[8 Easy Educational Crafts for 2-Year-Olds](https://www.parents.com/fun/arts-crafts/8-low-lift-crafts-for-2-year-olds-to-do-at-home/)

**6. Teaching Shapes in the Kitchen**

Cookies needn't always be round, and not all sandwiches are square. Many [favorite foods](https://www.parents.com/recipes/nutrition/foods-to-tempt-your-picky-eater/)—pancakes, cheese slices, and bread—can be cut into triangles, squares, stars, ovals, diamonds, and more. Out of the kitchen, try letting your child trace shapes of cookie cutters onto a piece of paper, and then help her identify and label each one, recommends English.

**7. Finger Painting for Color Recognition**

For hands-on exposure to colors, let your child dip into [finger paints](https://www.parents.com/fun/arts-crafts/painting/simple-art-projects-for-toddlers/) as a fun learning activity for toddlers. Name the colors as he spreads each one. Once the masterpiece dries, you can go on a scavenger hunt around your home, looking for items that match the colors used in the picture. Talk about how there are many shades of colors—from pale sky blue to blue that's so dark it looks almost black.

* **RELATED:**[How to Prepare Your Child for Preschool](https://www.parents.com/toddlers-preschoolers/starting-preschool/preparing/how-to-prepare-your-child-for-preschool-0/)

**8. Incorporating Colorful Language**

Use descriptive language as much as possible to help your child recognize different colors ("Can you put this yellow ball into the blue bin?"). At mealtime ask, "Do you want more of the red apple or the yellow banana?" You can also try designating a day in honor of a color, says English. Wear green on Thursday and eat green grapes and green beans while drinking green-colored milk (a little food coloring will do the trick). Then, at the end of the day, let your child unwind in a bath tinted green with fizzy bath tablets.