

Exploring

infants and toddlers



Capital District
Child Care Council

a tipsheet for parents and caregivers of children ages 0 to 2

Toddler Block Play

During block play children experiment with muscles, senses, vocabulary, emotion, and social interaction. Children use their imaginations and solve problems when exploring blocks. The complexity of block play changes as children grow physically and mature cognitively. Listed below are a few activities that caregivers can initiate to support learning for toddlers.

- Make a demolition game of knocking down a short tower of blocks with small construction vehicles.
- Make a game of filling and dumping blocks from a small bucket.
- Build a short wide tower. Place a small animal on top and cover with a fabric square to make a bed.
- Add toys (wheel barrow, wagon, shopping cart) to move blocks around and extend learning.
- Make a tape "road" on the floor to push "block cars" on.
- Cut a block-sized hole into a large sturdy box to use as a mail box in a block area.
- Play "Copy Me." Arrange two or three blocks simply and see if child can replicate.
- Add farm animals, construction vehicles, plastic food, baby dolls to the block area.
- Since toddlers enjoy toppling blocks, use foam, cardboard, plastic, or wood blocks.
- Take digital pictures of children's creations and display them where the

children can easily see.

- Keep large sheets of newsprint paper in block area so children can trace blocks, or draw pictures of their creations and add their narrations. Post on pictures on wall.
- Keep out only the amount of blocks that children can reasonably put away on their own or with a minimum of help.

The versatility of blocks makes them an important addition to the toy box of any child.

Here are some alternative materials to use as blocks.....

- Large cardboard boxes reinforced with clear packing tape.
- Old phone books stabilized with packing tape and covered with pretty contact paper.
- Foam blocks.
- Cardboard brick blocks.
- Empty cereal boxes and oatmeal canisters reinforced with contact paper.
- Clean, empty plastic coffee cans and sugar canisters (Glue tops on to save on pick up time).



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