



Radio Stations : **All Community Radio Stations**  
Subject : **Early Childhood Development**  
Audience : **Parents, caregivers and educators**  
Program No : **Toys and playing with your toddler (LOVE)**

#### **Guidelines to the presenter**

- Presenter – please familiarize yourself with the brief and the use the facts effectively by referring to them from time to time during the show.
- You should be seen as a peer rather than an authority.
- Offer guidance or opinion rather than telling people what to do.
- Encourage people to seek further information
- Always keep the objectives and outcomes in mind and drive these.

#### **Topic:**

**Toys and playing with your toddler**

#### **Objectives:**

- To build parents' confidence in the importance of their role in their toddler's early learning.
- To give parents ideas of items in their environment that could be toys.
- To give parents ideas of play, games and learning activities they can do with their toddlers.
- To reiterate the importance of a language rich environment in forming the foundation of early literacy and numeracy.

- To emphasize the importance of not pushing children beyond their developmental stage
- To emphasize that parenting can be fun!

### Introduction

Young children learn from birth and this period of early childhood sees the greatest development in the young child's brain. In fact up to 90% of brain structure is in place by the time your child turns 5! We also discussed how young children learn through play. In fact play is children's work! So as a parent it is important for you to make your home a safe and loving place where your growing baby can explore and play with you and other members of your family.

Today we're going to discuss ideas for toys and play as your baby develops into a toddler. The age that babies start to walk can vary, but generally young children become toddlers from about age 1 to about age 2 and a half.

Questions	Facts/Information
<p>1. <i>As babies start to move around, first crawling and then starting to stand and take their first steps, I guess parents really have to watch them and make sure they are safe?</i></p>	<p>They certainly do! This is the age of exploration and babies have very little sense of fear. They don't understand the danger of stairs, water, dangerous chemicals or sharp objects, so parents need to toddler-proof their home and make sure it is as safe as possible for their adventurous toddler!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All sharp, poisonous and dangerous kitchen items must be put out of reach, because the kitchen is a</li> </ul>

<p>2. <i>Shouldn't one just stop them going into places like the kitchen and get cross and say 'no' when they touch things?</i></p> <p>3. <i>Once a baby starts trying to stand and walk, how can parents help?</i></p>	<p>favourite place for your toddler to explore. It's full of exciting cupboards and drawers that will be opened and everything pulled out.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Water left in buckets, bowls or baths is particularly dangerous as your baby or toddler can fall in and drown.</li><li>• Remember, every day your toddler gets braver, stronger and more agile and his curiosity will encourage him to get to objects to touch, drop, throw or put in his mouth.</li></ul> <p>Babies and toddlers learn through their senses about the people and things in the environment around them. They need to explore, experiment, move, touch and manipulate things. That's how they learn. If you have precious or dangerous items your child must not touch, put them out of reach and try to limit saying 'no' to times when it is critically important, such as when your toddler is in danger. Otherwise you can dampen your toddler's curiosity.</p> <p>Babies will fall when they first start standing and walking, so try and protect them from the sharp corners of tables, and push</p>
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<p>4. <i>I guess that when babies take their first steps, it's an exciting milestone for parents, but how is this linked to their learning and brain development?</i></p>	<p>furniture closer together so that they can hold on to something as they make their way around the room.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• When your baby is learning to walk, she will love to push something light and sturdy, like an up-turned apple box, to help her keep her balance.</li><li>• When she is more stable, she will enjoy pulling something behind her, and you can make a toy by tying a thick piece of string or wool onto a box or block.</li></ul> <p>As we said earlier, babies learn through their senses, including their sense of movement. They learn where their bodies are in relation to other items in their environment. This is called position in space, and eventually this skill becomes important in being able to identify the position of symbols in something like reading and writing.</p> <p>The toddler's ability to move around also enables them to get to more places and explore more things, so their world and their understanding of it, is growing in leaps and bounds. And all these experiences and connections your baby is making results in</p>
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5. *It helps for parents to know about these things. It makes them realise what an important part they play in their baby's development and in setting them up for success in school and in life. What else do parents need to know about their toddler's muscle development?*

complex developments and connections being made in his brain. And the more complex his brain connections, the better his foundation for future learning.

Just as your baby or toddler is becoming stronger, better balanced and able to walk, so the small muscles of his fingers and hands are developing, as well as his ability to coordinate his eyes and his hands to reach out, hold and manipulate objects.

- To strengthen her hands and finger muscles to prepare her to hold a pencil one day, you can give her a toilet roll to squeeze, or newspaper to tear, or a clothes peg to pinch together.
- This is the age when toddlers love to pick up shells, buttons, bottle tops or stones and put them into a container & then take them out. Just make sure that none of these things go into his mouth!
- They love to stack plastic containers or small boxes one on top of the other and then knock them down, or fit containers one inside the other.
- As they get a little older, you can help them group and sort various

<p>6. <i>It's clear to most parents that at the same time as children gain more control over their bodies, they are beginning to say a few words. How should parents support their toddler to talk properly?</i></p>	<p>household objects like clothes, buttons, lids, boxes and to notice what's the same and what's different.</p> <p>Toddlers certainly make many different sounds and seem to be trying to say words. Like every other aspect of development, babies do not all develop at the same rate and some learn to talk faster than others. As we learned in the last session, your role as parent is critically important and you need to use every opportunity to let your child hear you speak, sing, rhyme, play word and sound games and tell stories.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Toddlers love it when Mum or Dad repeats the noises they are making back to them.</li><li>• When they say words, repeat those back with lots of praise and encouragement.</li><li>• If they pronounce words incorrectly, don't correct them, just repeat back to them the word used correctly and in a sentence. Their ability to pronounce words correctly will develop in time.</li></ul>
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7. *One forgets how much young children have to learn about their world, and it makes one realise the miracle of the way they learn to speak. And they are not taught this by a teacher in school!*

Yes, it makes you appreciate what a wonderful job you do as your child's first teacher when you start to think of all the things your child knows and can do before she even starts school. And all this learning is a critically important foundation that will support her do well at school when she goes there. Language is the key to understanding, thinking, learning and problem solving, so the greater your child's vocabulary and his language understanding, the better he will be able to learn and think.

- An important way to extend your child's language is through storytelling and looking at books, pictures and advertisements that would interest your child.
- Be observant and discuss what you see around you as you take your toddler to the shops, the beach or for a walk; talk about what other people are doing or how they may be feeling.
- Play with sounds and words, especially rhyming words. Word play increases your toddler's awareness of sounds and gives her the confidence to try out those sounds in new words.

8. *In previous radio programmes, we have discussed developmental domains – the different aspects of your baby or toddler’s development: cognitive or brain development; physical development; social and emotional development and spiritual or moral development. Do each of these areas develop separately?*

- Find pictures of farm and wild animals and have fun making the sounds the animals make. Vehicle sounds are also fun to make.

No. Just as each baby or toddler develops at his or her own pace, so all these areas of your baby’s development are happening at the same time. As you love, talk to and play with your toddler, you are supporting his or her development in all areas. Think about the things you do with your toddler and try and identify how she is developing in each development or domain area.

- For example, now that your toddler is more sturdy on his legs, encourage him to dance to music and develop his sense of rhythm. What do you think he is learning?
- Pots and pans and a wooden spoon make a wonderful drum! What is she learning?
- Play singing and clapping games and songs through which you touch and name his body parts – ‘Heads and Shoulders, Knees and Toes’ is an old favourite! What do you think he’s learning?
- Peek-a-boo will develop into hide

<p>9. <i>So it really just takes for a Mum or Dad to spend time playing with their toddler, sensitively watching them and taking joy in the excitement of their daily development!</i></p>	<p>and seek, and this is a wonderful opportunity to start introducing position words like 'next to the bed', 'under the table', 'behind the curtain'. Hide and seek is an important way of helping toddlers understand that even if she can't see something, it is still there.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Rolling an orange or gem squash ball helps toddler's eyes to track the movement of an object and supports eye-hand coordination.</li></ul> <p>Yes. And Mums and Dads can have lots of fun thinking up new ways of playing with their toddler using what's already in their home. The key criteria in using any item as a toy, or in doing any activity is the safety and well-being of your toddler. Use your imagination!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• For example, most toddlers love bath time. Use your imagination about what you bring in to the bath. You will be starting your toddler's science lessons! Exploring water is a great way for young children to learn scientific concepts, new language and thinking:</li><li>• Small rocks sink; leaves, corks and</li></ul>
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*10. Just as you describe parents using their imagination, when do babies and toddlers start having an imagination?*

you can make some shells float. As your child's understanding grows, you can ask them to predict what will happen and try out different objects to sink and float.

- Pouring water from one container to another develops all sorts of knowledge and skills: eye-hand coordination; water flows down (the effects of gravity!); containers are empty or full ..... and! .....and! ..... and!
- But never forget that bath and water play must ALWAYS be supervised by a responsible adult.

As the toddler's language develops, so does the power of his thinking and imagination.

- Pretend play often starts with cuddly toys like a doll or soft animal. These too are quite easy to make from scraps of material stuffed with foam off-cuts.
- Most toddlers love to have a pretend tea party where they get to pour pretend tea into your tea cup (small plastic cups or lids make good cups). You pretend to drink and enjoy!

	Join in your child's imaginary play and let him lead and direct you.

### **Conclusion**

So if Mums and Dads spend precious time playing with their little ones, watching them grow and develop becomes an exciting adventure. If you are consciously aware of your toddler's development in all areas, cognitive, language, physical, emotional, social and spiritual, you will marvel at the miracle of development and how much your baby is learning day by day. And all this without a teacher or school! It just shows you what an important role Mums, Dads and special adults play in a child's life and in his or her development and learning. So use your imaginations and have fun! Next week we will be discussing story telling and how you can share stories with your little one, so be sure to listen in.

### **Learning outcomes**

After listening to this show the audience should:

- Understand how toddlers learn through play by using all their senses.
- Understand the important role they play in observing their toddler's development, responding to it and extending their learning through play, language and daily activities.
- Gain ideas of items in their environment that could become toys or daily activities that could become games.
- Realise the importance of creating a safe environment and the need for constant adult supervision.
- Take joy in the miracle of their toddler's daily growth and development and the fun of being a parent.