

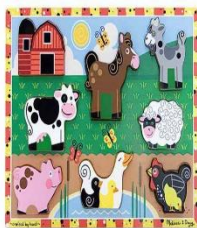
TOYS and suggestions



Books: Picture books like the one I included in this basket are great to target vocabulary. When the goal is to teach your children new words, try to keep the books simple, with big bright pictures and only 2-3 pictures per page as to not overwhelm. Extension activity: match or have your child pair the puzzle pieces of the animals (included in this basket) with the pictures in the book. Have your child touch each of the textures on the book and use words to describe the texture (soft, smooth, etc.)



Stacking and nesting toys: Stacking toys are great fun and can teach your child size and color concepts, as well as address problem solving skills (which cup fits?), cause and effect relationships, and spatial concepts. During play with your child, describe with spatial concept words such as “up” “on top” “under”, “over” “bottom” “in” “out” and size concepts such as “bigger” “smaller” “smallest”, etc. You could take turns stacking each cup or roll the cups to each other for some social play. This stacker is also a wonderful choice for the development of fine motor skills.



Puzzles: Choose puzzles according to your child’s fine motor skills. Puzzles are excellent for the development of problem solving skills, visual spatial skills, and vocabulary skills. For children at about 1 years old, choose puzzles with large knobs so it is easy for their little hands to grasp. For our toddlers, chunky puzzles, like the one I included are ideal. These puzzles are easier to take in and out. They also stand up for pretend play opportunities. As your child plays with this puzzle, model the animal sound for them (“moo” for cow, “oink” for pig). Ask your child what sound an animal makes. Target following of directions and comprehension skills through this easy extension activity: Set up a short relay by putting puzzle pieces on one side of the room and puzzle board on other. Have your child run, hop, crawl, etc. to a specific animal (Get the one that says “neigh”) and run back to place it in the correct socket.



Potato Head: Potato heads are fantastic and versatile. This toy is awesome for fine motor skill development, naming body parts, pretend play skills, and even working on some action vocabulary words (walk, fall, drink, etc.). Note that this toy is not recommended for children under two as there are small parts. Activities that promote speech and language development: Target understanding for the function of body parts and our five senses by having your child find the one that “helps us see” or the one that “helps us listen”. Mix it up and have your child give you directions to build the potato to practice her/his expressive language. Ask your child various “Wh” questions (What is on potato’s head? What color are his shoes? etc.). If you have extra potato head accessories, you could work on categorization with your child. (Put all the clothing here, all the body parts there, etc.)



Bubbles: Bubbles are magic with young ones. I have included the no spill bottle of bubbles in this set. There are various teachable moments that can be incorporated into bubble play. When playing with bubbles with your child, have her or him request for them (“more bubbles”, “more”, “bubbles”, or simple signs depending on your child’s language skills). When they need help blowing their own bubbles, have them ask for “help”. When you blow them, talk about where they are flying (“bubble go up”, “pop bubble”, “bubble on chair”, etc.). If your child is still learning to talk, “POP” is a great, fun, word for your child to imitate as she/he pops them all over the room.



Baby Sign Language: This adorable, interactive book illustrates eight early signs including “eat”, “more”, “milk”, and “all done” that you can teach and use with your baby or toddler. When you sign to your child, be sure to also model the word for them to associate the meaning with the sign. There are multiple benefits of introducing signs to your baby. Sign language facilitates and builds language and communication skills. The following are some benefits of sign language for babies:

- 1.) aids child’s understanding of language
- 2.) provides more communication opportunities
- 3.) gives pre-verbal child ways to communicate
- 4.) strengthens social and emotional bond
- 5.) helps child learn that movements have meaning
- 6.) decreases child’s frustration
- 7.) gives pre-verbal child ways to communicate