

# Sample Theme Unit

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The activities in this book are intended to be done under adult supervision. Appropriate and reasonable caution is required at all times. Beware when using all materials and tools suggested in this book, including but not limited to scissors, hot glue or objects that could pose a choking hazard. Observe safety and caution at all times. The authors of this book disclaim all liability for any damage, mishap or injury that may occur from engaging in activities in this book.

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# About the Authors



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Sarah has a Masters in the Art of Teaching and nearly 20 years experience working with children, the last 10 being in the early childhood classroom.

Sarah is an educator turned stay-at-home mama of five! She is the owner and creator of Stay At Home Educator, a website about intentional teaching and purposeful learning in the early childhood years. She's taught a range of levels, including preschool and college, and a little bit of just about everything in between.

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## Katie T. Christiansen

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Katie has been in Early Childhood Education since 2001 and has worked as a teacher and school administrator. She is a mom to three children and has homeschooled each of her children for a time. Katie loves to teach play-based learning and focuses on teaching the whole child.

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## Louise McMullen

Louise has a BA(hons) in education and art and has been an early childhood teacher for 15 years.

Louise has 3 young children and she loves inspiring others with her fun art, craft, learning and activity ideas.

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## Nicolette Roux

Nicolette is a homeschooling mom of 4. She loves to share her simple and easy crafts & activities, printables and learning ideas for ages 0-5.

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# Introduction

These lesson plans are designed for toddlers ages 18 months to 35 months. The collaborating authors have a combined total of over 65 years experience working in early childhood education. The lesson plans are play-based, as that is what is developmentally appropriate for children up to 35 months.

You will want to observe your toddler and assess each activity according to your toddler's skill and interest level. If an activity is too challenging or too simple, adjust accordingly before it is presented again. Each activity presents a variety of ways to make modifications for a range of skill levels.

Also, consider the interest level for each activity. While every activity in each unit is designed specifically for toddlers, some activities will be favorites, while others will not be. Favorite activities will be those that your toddler either requests by name, naturally gravitates to, and those that will occupy them for long periods of time without moving onto something else. Keep these in mind and maybe in a separate bin.

Remember that all of these activities offer great educational value, so they are worth trying, even if your toddler might originally be less interested. Developmentally, toddlers are working through how to establish boundaries as they execute independence, so they might grow into a lesson if it is offered a few times.

If you are incorporating, say, three activities into your toddler's day, it would be doable to have one of the favorites, one of the less favorites and a new activity that they haven't seen before. That way, toddlers will have something they like, something that reviews an important skill and the excitement of something new.

Most activities will range between 15 and 30 minutes in length, but you can taper them if your toddler is working on extending their attention span. Toddlers like repetition, so if they are very interested in an activity, aren't ready to move on, but you don't have additional things for that particular lesson, simply repeat it with them until they give you cues that they are done.

We also recommend that you read a book aloud daily. A book list is available for every theme. It can be a different book each day or the same book for the week. Toddlers benefit from repeated readings, so it's ok to read the same book over and over again. Be sure to talk to your toddler and ask questions as you read.

Toddlers will be fascinated about getting introduced to the fun alphabet letter names and sounds, learning some of the numbers, begin refining their fine motor skills for pre-writing and more with these lesson plans created especially for this age range. It is not developmentally appropriate for all toddlers to know their letters, sounds, and numbers, so if your toddler can't automatically recall them, that is perfectly ok. The purpose with these lesson plans is to expose toddlers to literacy and math skills at a developmentally appropriate level, which does not mean rote reciting.

Here, we provide creative lesson plans that are filled with hands-on activities to teach toddlers developmentally appropriate skills that will propel them to the preschool years with success. This book is very user-friendly as it is geared toward parents, teachers, caregivers and even grandparents!

## How to Use This Book

Firstly, flip through the ebook to scan the different lesson plans. Familiarize yourself with the format of the lessons so you can easily pick what you want your toddler to work on that day. Remember to keep in mind that your 2-year old toddler might be at a more rudimentary level, compared to your 4-year old or vice versa. There is even a wide range of skills development from an 18 month old to a 2-year-old.

Each lesson not only states what skills are being targeted, but also offers modifications for different skill levels as well as ways to adjust the lessons to create a new and different activity. There is no scope and sequence for these lessons, meaning that there is no specific order in which to do them. Look at the targeted skills and try to do one or two activities each week within each skill set.

At first, you may have more success offering just a couple of activities each week for a few minutes each day and then gradually building up as your toddler learns to expect a routine for learning time, as well as develop an attention span and interest for learning activities. Observe your toddler and make decisions based on what you feel is appropriate for their current level.

# Activities at a glance:

1. Baby Bathtime Pretend Play
2. Doctor or Hospital Pretend Play
3. Fruit Faces
4. Mini Me
5. All About Me Songs
6. Handprint or Footprint Art
7. My Name Page
8. Family Photo Book
9. Make Faces in the Mirror
10. Playdough Faces
11. "What Can You Do?"
12. Make a Shared Trail Mix
13. My Shoe Color
14. Tap the Body Counting Activity
15. Sensory Mirror Activity
16. Chalk Body Patio Activity
17. How Do I Feel Today
18. Sorting Faces
19. Match the Body
20. Shoe Pairing Sensory Bin

# Recommended Reading:

1. *From Head to Toe* by Eric Carle
2. *Eyes, Nose, Fingers, and Toes: A First Book All About You* by Judy Hindley
3. *Quick as a Cricket* by Audrey Wood
4. *Here Are My Hands* by Martin Jr., Bill, John Archambault
5. *Clap Your Hands* by Lorinda Bryan Cauley
6. *I Like Me!* by Nancy Carlson
7. *I Like Myself!* by Karen Beaumont
8. *Where Is Baby's Belly Button?* by Karen Katz
9. *Toes, Ears, & Nose!* by Marion Dane Bauer, Karen Katz
10. *Making Faces: A First Book of Emotions* by Abrams Appleseed
11. *Hello, World! My Body* by Jill McDonald





# Sensory Mirror



## Skills:

- Physical well being: fine motor skills, uses sensory input to guide actions, engages in sensory play
- Social skills: concepts of self
- Oral language, vocabulary development

## Materials:

- Small mirror
- Shaving cream

## How to:

This sensory mirror activity is a great way to focus on facial features while using the hands and fingers to move the shaving cream around the mirror.

Before starting this activity, talk about the features on the face. Ask the child to point to their nose, eyes, mouth, and so on. Sing a song such as "If You're Happy and You Know It."

Then, place a mirror on the table and squirt a small amount of shaving cream around the edges.

Invite the child to first look into the mirror and notice his face. Can they see their nose? Eyes? Mouth? Other features?

Now, tell the child to use their hands to smear the shaving cream all over the mirror. Can the face be seen now?



## How to continued:

Use the fingers to wipe away some of the shaving cream and then look in the mirror again. What facial features can the child see?

Ask the child what area of the mirror needs to be wiped to see the nose. What about the eyes? Mouth?

Eventually a large portion of the mirror can be wiped so that the entire face can be seen.

## Extensions:

Older children can also work on facial expressions while doing this activity. Before using the mirror, talk about how the face looks when it's sad, happy, scared, and so on. Then, when the child is sitting at the table with the shaving cream and mirror, rather than noticing different facial features, focus on expressions instead. Instruct the child to wipe away enough of the shaving cream to see the face. How does it look when it's sad, happy, scared? What other expressions can the child make?

## Modifications:

If there is a concern about using shaving cream, use whipped cream instead. This is also a good solution for children who are still putting things in their mouths.

If the child has a sensitivity to touching the cream, have a cloth or baby wipe handy. This way they can wipe their hands whenever they wish while continuing with the activity.



This is a sample of the theme unit.

The full Unit “All About Me” can be purchased on the website.



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