



**Communication/  
Language**

**Exploring Words**

**Option 1** (IG) Toddlers participate in a book sharing about an itsy bitsy spider.

**Option 2** (IG) Toddlers participate in a second book sharing about an itsy bitsy spider, with opportunities to use hand and arm movements to represent the spider’s actions.



**Cognitive**

**Solving Problems**

**Option 1** (OO) A toddler explores putting balls inside an angled tube and catching balls at the lower end of the tube.

**Option 2** (OO) A toddler explores rolling balls through tubes placed at different angles.



**Self-Regulation**

**Paying Attention**

**Option 1** (IG) Toddlers watch a caregiver help a pretend butterfly fly and stop flying.

**Option 2** (IG) Toddlers practice helping a pretend butterfly fly and stop flying.



**Social-Emotional**

**Exploring Feelings**

**Option 1** (IG) Toddlers look at and have opportunities to imitate facial expressions associated with different feelings.

**Option 2** (IG) Toddlers look at and talk about pictures of facial expressions associated with different feelings, with a follow-up opportunity to individually imitate a facial expression of the toddler’s choice.



**Physical/Health**

**Using Our Hands**

**Option 1** (IG) Toddlers practice how to shake and stop shaking a bell.

**Option 2** (IG) Toddlers practice how to stop shaking a bell in response to words in a song.

(OO)=One-to-One, (IG)=Informal Gathering



## 12–24 Months

### Option 1 Informal Gathering



#### Skill and Goal

**Receptive language**  
**Expressive language**

Toddlers participate in a book sharing about an itsy bitsy spider.



#### Key Concepts

Spider  
Small  
Up  
Down



#### Materials Needed

*The Itsy Bitsy Spider* by Iza Trapani



#### Also Promotes

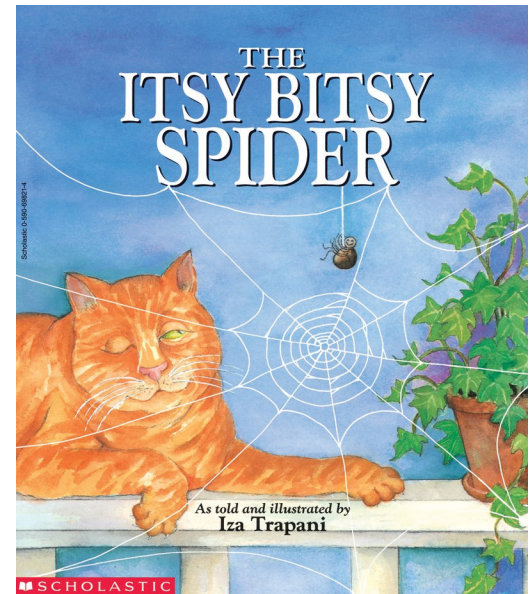
Cognitive  
Self-Regulation

**BEGIN:** *[Invite several toddlers to join you to read a book. Show the cover of the book and point to the spider.]*

**EXPLAIN:** Our book is about an itsy bitsy spider. Here is the spider. The words “itsy bitsy” mean small. The spider is small. There is a song about the itsy bitsy spider.

*[Sing 1–2 lines, not verses, of the song. Some toddlers may be familiar with the song from experiences in your room or in their families.]*

Our book tells us about many different things the spider climbs up. Our spider also falls down.



**ACT:** *[Use the following strategies to engage toddlers in the book:*

- *Point to the spider in the waterspout. Encourage toddlers to find and point to the spider on remaining pages of the book.*
- *Read slowly, so toddlers have time to look at the detailed illustrations and think about the words you say. Talk with toddlers about what they see and think.*
- *Describe pictured items that may be unfamiliar to toddlers, such as a waterspout, and how they work. Point to and describe parts of illustrations. The maple tree especially has various forms of wildlife not mentioned in the book text that will be of interest to toddlers.*
- *Use an arm/hand gesture when you say up and down.*
- *Use your own words to describe key actions, such as how the mouse bumped the spider by flicking its tail and how the breeze of a fan made the spider fall.*
- *Use your own words to explain complex wordings, such as “no longer did it blow” and “back up the chair did creep.”*
- *Connect the picture of the spider resting in its web to toddlers’ experiences with resting and calming down after an exciting*

**Option 1 continued**

*time. Example: "The spider had a busy day climbing up many things. The spider is resting in its web. We are learning how to rest after we do a lot of busy things that make us excited." Point out the sunglasses. This is silly!]*

**RECAP:** The itsy bitsy spider climbed up many different things. The small spider climbed up a waterspout, a kitchen wall, a pail, a rocking chair, and a tree! What usually happened after the spider climbed up something? (it was knocked down) The spider went up the tree again and made a web. The spider rested in the web it made.

 **What to Look For—Option 1**

Pay attention to which of the many features of this book appeal to toddlers in your gathering so you can provide support for their interests. Possibilities include: finding the small spider in the illustrations, how the spider repeatedly goes up and down different things, how an item (fan) or animal (mouse, cat) makes the spider fall, and the web made by the spider in the tree.

Toddlers who are familiar with the itsy bitsy spider nursery rhyme will know about the spider's experience with the waterspout but probably not the four other items the spider climbs in this book. Each one is a story in itself.

Watch for signs of toddler understanding of your descriptions of what happens in the story. Younger toddlers will likely have more interest in the story line than in the rhyming text.

 **More Scaffolding Tips—Option 1**

**Extra support** ■ If time and toddler interest are short, omit several of the items, such as the pail and rocking chair, but include the tree so toddlers learn about the web and the spider's success in staying at the top of one of the items it climbs.

**Enrichment** ■ Invite a toddler(s) who shows keen interest in the illustrations to look at and talk about the pictures with you in a separate session.

## 12–24 Months

### Option 2 Informal Gathering



#### Skill and Goal

**Receptive language**  
**Expressive language**

Toddlers participate in a second book sharing about an itsy bitsy spider, with opportunities to use hand and arm movements to represent the spider's actions.



#### Key Concepts

Spider  
Small  
Up  
Down



#### Materials Needed

*The Itsy Bitsy Spider* by Iza Trapani



#### Also Promotes

Cognitive  
Physical/Health  
Self-Regulation

This activity option is for toddlers who have recently participated in Option 1. The session is an opportunity for toddlers to (1) help recall and tell about the spider's experiences and (2) use simple hand and arm motions to represent the spider's main actions.

Open the session by showing the book cover and reminding toddlers that our book tells us about a spider going up and down different things. Use arm gestures when you say and accentuate the words up and down.

Reminder toddlers that "itsy bitsy" means small. Hold your hands/arms

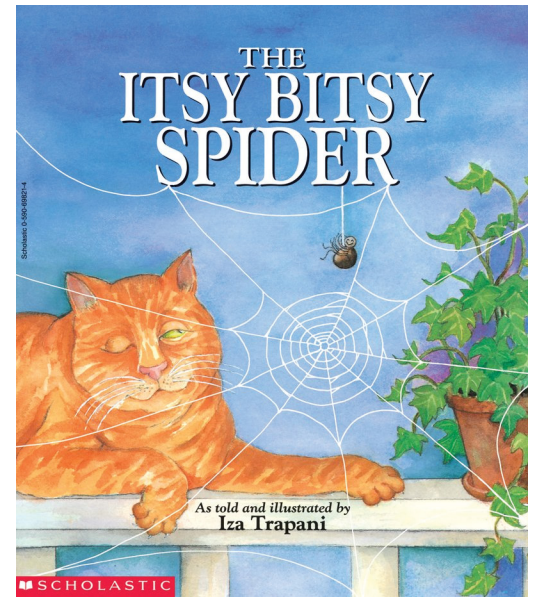
far apart in front of you and ask toddlers whether the spider was this big. Then put one hand down and use your thumb and index (pointer) finger on your other hand to show the small size of the spider. Explain that we could hold the spider with our thumb and finger. Encourage toddlers to hold their thumb and finger like you are.

Show each page and use your own words to describe what happened.

Incorporate some of the book's text as appropriate. Use the following strategy to help toddlers recall and talk about each of the five items the spider climbed:

- Invite toddlers to point to the spider in the picture.
- Point to the item the spider climbed. Ask toddlers to say the name of the item. Positively acknowledge and build on their responses. Example: "Joshua said the spider climbed 'wa-wa.' Water goes through this thing when it rains. This is a picture of a waterspout." You may not wish to ask about items, such as the kitchen wall, that may be difficult for toddlers to name from the picture.
- Encourage toddlers to join you in moving their arm and hand up when you talk about the spider going up.
- Ask what happened when the spider got to the top of the item. Encourage toddlers to join you in moving their arm and hand down when you talk about the spider falling down.
- Invite toddlers to tell what the spider did in the web it made.

Use your knowledge of toddlers' verbal skills and understanding of the story to determine the focus of questions. See Scaffolding Tips. Spend more time on pictures that seem to be of particular interest to toddlers.





## Option 2 continued

### What to Look For—Option 2

There are important language and cognitive benefits in a follow-up sharing of an interesting book. Carefully monitor toddlers' verbal and nonverbal responses to your questions and hand/arm movement requests to determine whether more or less challenge would be appropriate. Use your observations to make accommodations during the book sharing. The scaffolding tips offer suggestions.

Toddlers are not expected to engage in the customary finger and hand actions for the "Itsy Bitsy Spider" nursery rhyme. The actions suggested in this activity option are basic and appropriate for this age. Some toddlers may prefer to watch only. Positively acknowledge different forms of participation.

### More Scaffolding Tips—Option 2

**Extra support** ■ If your open-ended questions, such as "What happened when the spider got to the top of the rocking chair?" seem too challenging for most toddlers in your gathering, use yes-or-no questions, such as "Did the spider stay on top of the pail?" ■ Use the book sharing strategies suggested in Option 1 if yes-or-no recall questions are too challenging.

**Enrichment** ■ Instead of asking a general "What happened when the spider got to the top" question, describe and then ask about a specific event related to the item. Example: "Remember, the mouse moved its tail. What happened when the mouse moved its tail?" ■ Demonstrate and encourage toddlers to move their thumb and index (pointer) finger from side to side while moving their arm up an item.



### Interest Area

**Materials Needed:** *The Itsy Bitsy Spider* by Iza Trapani, several toy spiders, water table or tub with several inches of warm water, several buckets or toy watering cans

Place the spiders in the water table with an assortment of buckets or toy watering cans. Use a book picture to remind toddlers of how the spider climbed a pail. Invite toddlers to have their spiders go up a bucket or watering can; then come down. Encourage toddlers to use the words up and down when they move their spiders. Draw attention to bucket and watering can differences in climbing up and falling down.



### Family Child Care

**Materials Needed:** *The Itsy Bitsy Spider* by Iza Trapani

In addition to offering Options 1 and 2 with toddlers, invite preschool-age children to do familiar hand and finger actions as you say or sing the rhyme. Preschool-age children may not be familiar with some of the items the spider climbs in the book. Infants may enjoy holding a plush toy spider as they watch preschool-age children move their fingers, hands, and arms.



## 12–24 Months

Option 1  
One-to-OneSkill and Goal  
Problem-solving

A toddler explores putting balls inside an angled tube and catching balls at the lower end of the tube.



## Key Concepts

Inside  
Outside  
Tube  
Roll



## Materials Needed

Jumbo mailing tube (see Be Prepared)  
5–7 small balls  
Large block or small box  
2 pails or containers



## Also Promotes

Physical/Health  
Communication/Language

**Be Prepared:** A mailing tube of eight inches in diameter and 36 inches in length works well for this activity. Set up an attractive arrangement with a pail or container of the balls and the tube. Make sure the balls can easily roll through the tube. Place one end of the tube on the block or small box so the tube angles downward. Put supports on the sides of the tube resting on the box so it stays in place. Put the second (empty) pail near the lower end of the tube.

**BEGIN:** *[Invite a toddler to join you to play with balls and the tube. Point to the tube as you name it.]*

**ACT:** This is called a tube. Watch what happens to our ball when I put it inside our tube.

*[When the toddler is looking at the ball, put the ball in the upper end of the tube. Draw the toddler's attention to the rolling ball at the lower end of the tube, if necessary.]*

Our ball rolled inside the tube. It rolled to the other end of our tube. Now our ball is outside of our tube. We cannot see our ball when it is rolling inside our tube.

Would you like to put another ball inside our tube?

*[If the toddler does not want to put a ball inside the upper end of the tube, encourage him/her to catch the ball when it rolls out of the lower end of the tube.]*

*If the toddler opts to put a ball inside the tube, remain near the upper end of the tube to provide verbal guidance or hands-on support for putting the ball inside the hole of the tube.*

*If the toddler can readily put a ball in the tube, place the pail of balls near the upper end of the tube and then move to the lower end of the tube to catch balls the toddler puts in the upper end. Put balls in the second pail.*

*Describe the actions of the ball and the toddler. Emphasize the concepts of inside, outside, rolls down, comes out, and how we cannot see the ball when it is inside the tube.*

*Reverse roles, so the toddler catches balls you put in the upper end of the tube.]*

**RECAP:** *[Describe what happened. Example: "You put a lot of balls inside our tube. The balls rolled to the other end of our tube. Then you caught balls that rolled out of our tube. We could not see the balls when they were inside the tube."]*

**Option 1 continued****👁️ What to Look For—Option 1**

The two main ways for a toddler to participate in this simple activity—putting balls inside the tube and catching balls as they roll out—have valuable learning potential. Both contributions emphasize the invisibility of a ball as it rolls through the tube plus the anticipation and excitement of seeing the ball again at the lower end of the tube. The Enrichment tip of elevating the angle of the tube can indirectly support a toddler’s insight into the link between tube angle and speed of the ball. Catching balls as they roll out of the tube offers a different perspective on the ball rolling, and can help strengthen a toddler’s understanding of more when he/she puts the “caught” balls into the pail. It is fine if a toddler prefers to assume one of these two roles only.

**📈 More Scaffolding Tips—Option 1**

**Extra support** ■ In the opening segment of the activity, repeat putting a ball in the upper end of the tube if it appears the toddler would benefit from another demonstration. ■ Use gestures, as appropriate, when you ask the toddler if he/she would like to put a ball inside the tube.

**Enrichment** ■ Demonstrate lifting one end of the tube to make balls roll out faster. Encourage the toddler to lift the tube higher when he/she puts a ball inside the tube.



## 12–24 Months

### Option 2 One-to-One



#### Skill and Goal

##### Problem-solving

A toddler explores rolling balls through tubes placed at different angles.



#### Key Concepts

Push  
Roll  
Inside



#### Materials Needed

2 jumbo mailing tubes (see Be Prepared)  
5–7 small balls  
Large block or small box  
3–4 small blocks  
Pail or container



#### Also Promotes

Physical/Health  
Communication/Language

**Be Prepared:** Secure identical mailing tubes. Tubes of eight inches in diameter and 36 inches in length work well for this activity. Put one of the tubes flat on the floor. Place the balls in the pail and put the pail near one end of a tube. Put the second tube and block (or box) nearby.

This activity option is designed to help a toddler explore how the angle of a tube is connected to whether and how fast a ball rolls through a tube. Your approach to the activity will depend on the toddler's experiences with rolling balls, especially rolling balls through a tube (as in Option 1). Possibilities for supporting the toddler's experiences in this activity are described below, listed from simpler to more complex arrangements. Use one or more of the possibilities in response to the toddler's engagement in the activity. Consistently use gestures to complement your words.

Open the session by displaying and naming the tube, and encouraging the toddler to look into the tube. You may wish to move your hand or fingers on the opposite end of the tube to strengthen the toddler's understanding that the tube is open at both ends. You also may wish to help the toddler stand the tube on one of its ends so it is straight up (vertical position) and drop a ball through the top of the tube to demonstrate the tube is open.

After a period of exploring the tube, offer one or more of the following arrangements:

- Put the tube flat on the floor and gently push a ball into the tube. Use a light push so the ball does not roll out the other end of the tube. Explain that the ball is inside the tube. Suggest that the toddler lift one end of the tube. Draw attention to how the ball rolled out at the other end. Explain what happened. Repeat by gently pushing the ball into the tube. Again, encourage the toddler to lift one end of the tube to see what happens.
- Raise one end of the tube using a block or box. You may need to loosely tape the tube to the box or block to keep it steady. Invite the toddler to put one or more balls through the tube. Describe what happens. (This is a repeat of Option 1.) Then help the toddler add 3–4 small blocks to raise the end of the tube even higher. The toddler may notice how the ball rolls faster when the end of the tube is higher. Invite the toddler to participate in both actions: putting balls inside the tube and catching balls as they roll out of the tube.
- Place two tubes side by side, each with one end raised using a block or box. Then help the toddler add 3–4 small blocks to raise the end of one of the tubes higher than the other. Draw attention to how the end of one tube is higher than the end of the other tube. Invite the toddler to put one ball in each tube at the same time (or the toddler puts a ball in



**Option 2 continued**

one tube and you put a ball in the other tube at the same time). Ask which ball rolls faster (comes out sooner). Repeat the rolling of balls in the two tubes at the same time.

**👁️ What to Look For—Option 2**

Any one of the segments of this activity may be an entire focus of a toddler's actions. A toddler may be primarily interested in looking through a tube, maybe playing a form of *Peek-a-boo* with it. A toddler will be able to look through the eight-inch tube using both eyes, unlike narrow tubes. Or a toddler may wish to mostly push a series of balls through a tube that is flat on the floor, maybe lifting one end of the tube when a ball(s) does not roll out. In contrast, another toddler may wish to repeatedly watch what happens when balls are put in adjacent tubes, with one tube angled higher than the other. In general, follow the toddler's lead with the tube(s) and balls, and look for ways to promote a toddler's active problem-solving participation so the session does not become one of you demonstrating only.

**📊 More Scaffolding Tips—Option 2**

**Extra support** ■ In the first bulleted arrangement, your gentle push of the ball into the tube may prompt the ball to roll out of the other end. If this happens, explain that you pushed the ball with your hand and it rolled through the tube. Then again put the ball at one end of the tube and push the ball with less force so it (hopefully) does not roll to the other end of the tube and there is an opportunity for the toddler to lift the tube and find out what happens.

**Enrichment** ■ If a toddler shows interest in the angles of the tubes, encourage him/her to explore differences in angles by putting different numbers of small blocks under each of the two tubes. ■ When you present the tube at the beginning of the activity, introduce making a sound in the tube by lifting it to your mouth and saying "hello." Hold the tube so the toddler has an opportunity to produce a sound. As a response to the toddler's sound, whisper "hello."

 **Interest Area**

**Materials Needed:** tubes and balls used in Options 1 and 2, *Where is Spot?* by Eric Hill, *Caps For Sale: A Tale of a Peddler*, *Some Monkeys and Their Monkey Business* by Esphyr Slobodkina

In addition to exploring balls and tubes under close adult supervision, toddlers will enjoy books with flaps related to solving a problem, such as *Where is Spot?* The problem presented in the book is resolved. Mother dog looks in several places and finds the puppy. The *Caps for Sale* book also supports problem-solving skills.

 Family Child Care

**Materials Needed:** containers and small toys, small soft blocks, manipulative toys that connect—such as Mr. Potato Head®, bowling-type games, balls, and empty milk cartons.

The problem-solving skills promoted in this activity plan for toddlers may be enhanced with other types of materials for younger and older children in your setting. Infants enjoy dumping items out of containers and putting them back. Mobile infants will enjoy knocking down a stack of light blocks. Bowling-type games with balls and milk cartons are enjoyable for many children. Manipulative toys that fit together and come apart, such as Mr. Potato Head®, are enjoyable problem-solving tasks. When weather permits, preschool-age and older toddlers may enjoy going through a simple maze you create in the yard.



## 12–24 Months

Option 1  
Informal GatheringSkill and Goal  
Concentration

Toddlers watch a caregiver help a pretend butterfly fly and stop flying.



## Key Concepts

Butterfly  
Fly  
Stop



## Materials Needed

\*Butterfly (see Be Prepared)



## Also Promotes

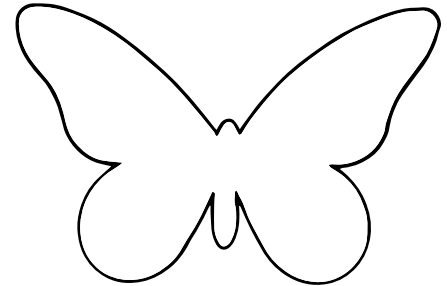
Communication/Language  
Physical/Health  
Cognitive

\*Printables provided

**Be Prepared:** Use the provided pattern to cut a simple butterfly shape from bold-colored construction paper or felt.

**BEGIN:** *[Invite several toddlers to join you to watch a pretend butterfly. Slowly move the butterfly back and forth in front of the toddlers.]*

We can have fun playing with a make-believe butterfly. I am going to pretend our butterfly is flying. Watch how I help the butterfly fly.



**ACT:** *[Flutter the butterfly back and forth in front of you as toddlers watch.]*

I am moving the butterfly. Our butterfly is flying.

Our butterfly is getting hungry! The butterfly stops moving so it can eat.

*[Hold the butterfly still for the toddlers to see. You may wish to hold the butterfly in the palm of your hand as if it landed.]*

Now our butterfly is eating. I stopped moving our butterfly so it could eat. We eat when we get hungry.

*[Begin moving the butterfly again.]*

Our butterfly is done eating. The butterfly is flying again. Flying, flying, flying.

Now our butterfly is getting sleepy. Our butterfly stops flying so it can sleep.

*[Hold the butterfly still for toddlers to see. You may wish to hold the butterfly in the palm of your hand as if it landed.]*

Our butterfly is sleeping now. Sleeping, sleeping, sleeping.

Should I help our butterfly wake up so it can fly one more time?

*[If one or more toddlers respond positively, repeat part of the process of flying and stopping the butterfly.]*

**RECAP:** I helped our butterfly fly. I moved our butterfly and we pretended the butterfly was flying. Then I stopped moving our butterfly. The butterfly was not flying. We had fun watching the butterfly fly and then stop!



## 12–24 Months

### Option 2 Informal Gathering



#### Skill and Goal Concentration

Toddlers practice helping a pretend butterfly fly and stop flying.



#### Key Concepts

Butterfly  
Fly  
Stop



#### Materials Needed

\*Butterflies—1 per toddler and caregiver (see Be Prepared)



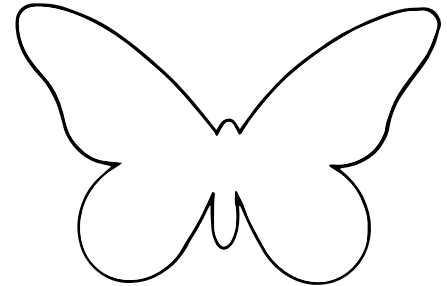
#### Also Promotes

Physical/Health  
Communication/Language  
Cognitive

\*Printables provided

**Be Prepared:** Use the provided pattern to cut simple butterfly shapes from bold-colored construction paper or felt.

Invite several toddlers to join you to play with pretend butterflies. Introduce one of the pretend butterflies and flutter it back and forth in front of you as if it were flying. Example: “We are going to have fun playing with pretend butterflies. Our butterflies are going to fly around. I am pretending my butterfly is flying. See how I help my butterfly to fly?” Give each toddler a pretend butterfly to hold. Provide time for toddlers to explore their butterflies. Then invite toddlers to help their butterfly fly like you are. Example: “Let’s all pretend that our butterflies are flying. You can help your butterfly fly like I am!” Describe toddlers’ actions. Examples: “Amani is moving her butterfly back and forth in the air just like I am. Amani’s butterfly is flying!” “We are moving our butterflies together. Our butterflies are flying!”



Announce that the butterflies are hungry and it is time for them to stop flying. We will stop flying our butterflies so they can eat. Draw attention to how you stopped moving your butterfly. Example: “I am not moving my butterfly. My butterfly stopped flying. My butterfly is eating. It is not flying.” Encourage toddlers to stop moving their butterflies and hold their butterflies still while they eat. “Let’s all stop moving our butterflies. Our butterflies will stop flying so they can eat.” Demonstrate holding your butterfly in the palm of your hand while it eats. Encourage toddlers to do the same.

Explain that the butterflies finished eating. Begin to move your butterfly again and encourage toddlers to do the same. After several moments of the butterflies flying, explain that the butterflies are getting sleepy. It is time for the butterflies to stop flying so they can sleep. Stop moving your butterfly and encourage toddlers to do the same. Example: “We stopped moving our butterflies. Our butterflies stopped flying. The butterflies are sleeping.” Again, demonstrate holding your butterfly in the palm of your hand while it sleeps. Encourage toddlers to do the same.

Conclude the activity by acknowledging toddlers’ efforts to move and stop moving their butterfly. Example: “We had fun playing with our pretend butterflies. We helped our butterflies fly. Then we made our butterflies stop flying. Now our butterflies are sleeping!”



### What to Look For—Options 1–2

Option 1 promotes toddlers' concentration skills in watching you move a pretend butterfly, whereas Option 2 promotes concentration skills in manipulating a pretend butterfly, especially with fly and stop actions. There also is important concentration work in connecting your words to actions with the pretend butterflies. Encourage toddlers to fly their pretend butterflies in ways they wish. It is not necessary to copy your precise movements. Some toddlers may wish to stand. If a toddler leaves the play area with his/her butterfly, encourage him/her to eventually come back. Example: "I see James leaving with his butterfly. I hope James' butterfly flies back! Butterflies like to be together."

Stopping the movement of the pretend butterfly will be challenging for some toddlers. Offer reminders and draw attention to how most butterflies are now still. Example: "It is time for our butterflies to stop flying. Our butterflies are eating now. We do not move around when we eat. We hold out butterflies still, like this." See Extra Support tips.

### More Scaffolding Tips—Options 1–2

**Extra support** ■ Place your butterfly on the floor (rather than the palm of your hand) when it is time to eat and sleep. ■ In Option 2, sit or kneel next to a toddler who has difficulty stopping movement of his/her butterfly. Quietly coach the toddler on what to do. Demonstrate as you describe actions. ■ If toddlers are standing in Option 2, ask them to sit down with their butterflies when it is time for the butterflies to stop flying.

**Enrichment** ■ In Option 2, invite toddlers to pretend their body is a butterfly. Their arms are their wings. Encourage them to fly around the gathering area and to sit when it is time to be still (eat or sleep). Toddlers may enjoy using large scarves as they pretend to fly with butterfly wings.



### Interest Area

**Materials Needed:** chunky, age-appropriate crayons, light-colored construction paper

Invite several toddlers to create their own pretend butterflies. Encourage toddlers to make marks on their paper. Ask if they would like you to fold their paper in half to create butterfly wings. Invite toddlers to fly their butterflies and then to have them stop to eat or sleep.

 Family Child Care

**Materials Needed:** age-appropriate crayons, light-colored construction paper

Involve preschool-age and older children in the Interest Area activity. Older children may enjoy guided use of scissors to cut a simple butterfly shape. Help children fold their paper in half to create butterfly wings. Children of all ages will enjoy Option 2, and an older child may wish to lead the activity. Older infants may enjoy holding a large toy butterfly or being held and “flown” around during the activity.



## 12–24 Months

### Option 1 Informal Gathering



#### Skill and Goal

##### Awareness of emotions

Toddlers look at and have opportunities to imitate facial expressions associated with different feelings.



#### Key Concepts

Feeling  
Face



#### Materials Needed

*Can You Make a Happy Face?* (Rookie Toddler) by Janice Behrens



#### Also Promotes

Communication/Language

**BEGIN:** *[Invite several toddlers to join you in reading a book about different types of feelings.]*

**EXPLAIN:** We are learning that our face can tell what we may be feeling inside.

*[Point to the child on the book cover.]*

Look at the picture of this girl.  
She has a big smile!

**ASK:** Do you think the girl in this picture feels happy or sad?

**EXPLAIN:** Our face can show a smile when we feel happy.

**ACT:** Let's look at some other pictures of faces and talk about what the person may be feeling. There are many different kinds of feelings.



*[Use the following approach to each different facial expression:*

- *Use the book text and your own words to describe features of the pictured facial expression and to name what the pictured child may be feeling. Example: "Look at the eyes of the boy in this picture. Are his eyes open or closed? The boy is yawning. The boy is feeling tired (sleepy)."*
- *Make a face and invite toddlers to make a face like the facial expression shown in the picture. Example: "I am making a sad face like the sad face shown in our book. Let's all make a sad face."*
- *Repeat the name of the feeling as you describe a feature of toddlers' facial expressions. Example: "We are making a sleepy face. Our mouths are yawning. Our faces say that we are tired."*

**RECAP:** The pictures in our book showed different ways a face can tell what someone is feeling inside. We tried making the faces shown in our book. There are many kinds of feelings.

### 👁️ What to Look For—Option 1

Look for opportunities to emphasize that (1) there are different types of feelings and (2) many times a face can tell what someone is feeling. Some emotions included in the book will be familiar to most toddlers and have been explored in prior ELM activity plans. Toddlers are likely to differ in their level

**Option 1 continued**

of interest in specific emotions, depending on their unique experiences and awareness of emotions. Positively acknowledge any and all attempts to mimic a facial expression as well as the choice to watch others make facial expressions.

**More Scaffolding Tips—Option 1**

**Extra support** ■ Tell the meaning of words toddlers may not know. Example: Describe and demonstrate a yawn. ■ Omit attention to an emotion that you anticipate will be too challenging for toddlers to consider.

**Enrichment** ■ Invite toddlers to make a face like the expression shown in a picture before you mimic the pictured face.



## 12–24 Months

### Option 2 Informal Gathering



#### Skill and Goal

##### Awareness of emotions

Toddlers look at and talk about pictures of facial expressions associated with different feelings, with a follow-up opportunity to individually imitate a facial expression of the toddler's choice.



#### Key Concepts

Feeling  
Face



#### Materials Needed

*Can You Make a Happy Face?* (Rookie Toddler) by Janice Behrens



#### Also Promotes

Communication/Language  
Cognitive

Invite several toddlers to join you to look at a book about different feelings. Explain that our face can tell what we may be feeling inside. Point to the cover picture of a child with a smile and ask what the girl might be feeling. Look at the book's pictures of different facial expressions with toddlers and use the book text and your own words to describe features of facial expressions. Encourage toddlers to say with you the name of the feeling the pictured child may be feeling. Respond to toddlers' comments and pointing.



At the end of the book, remain on the final page of pictures of facial expressions included in the book. Point to each expression and say (or invite toddlers to say) the name of the feeling the face is showing. Then invite toddlers, one at a time, to point to a face on the page and make a face like the pictured face. Say the feeling expressed by the pictured face when the toddler points to it. Example: "Jamie, you're pointing to a face that looks happy. Do you want to show us your happy face?" Say again the feeling expressed by the child's face. Example: "Jamie is showing us a happy face!" Toddlers may select an expression chosen by another toddler(s) in the gathering. Conclude the session by leading toddlers in clapping together for the different faces we made.

### 👁️ What to Look For—Option 2

This activity option is more challenging than Option 1 because toddlers as individuals are invited to select and imitate a facial expression. Individual choice- and face-making are not part of Option 1. The current activity encourages each toddler to think about an expression and feeling of interest to him/her, although a toddler may opt not to select and mimic an expression, or may select an expression at random. Consistent with Option 1, positively acknowledge any and all efforts to make an expression similar to the pictured child's expression. Skill in mimicking a facial expression is not a focus of the activity. Also consistent with Option 1, look for ways to emphasize there are different kinds of feelings and our facial expressions can tell what we may be feeling.

**Option 2 continued** More Scaffolding Tips—Option 2

**Extra support** ■ Demonstrate selecting and mimicking a pictured facial expression when you introduce this segment of the activity. ■ Point to two possibilities for a toddler to consider if he/she seems uncertain about which facial expression to select.

**Enrichment** ■ After a toddler shows a facial expression of his/her choice in the final segment, ask him/her to say what feeling his/her face is showing us (rather than you saying the name of the feeling).

 Interest Area

**Materials Needed:** assortment of books with pictures of facial expressions, several nonbreakable handheld mirrors

Invite toddlers to look at pictures of different facial expressions in the books. Name (or invite toddlers to name) the feelings shown in pictured facial expressions. Encourage toddlers to make a similar face in a mirror. Toddlers may be interested in finding and/or looking at similar types of facial expressions in different pictures, such as two different pictures of a smiling face.

 Family Child Care

**Materials Needed:** *Can You Make a Happy Face?* (Rookie Toddler) by Janice Behrens

Preschool- and school-age children in your setting may enjoy a separate activity of taking turns making a facial expression that a peer(s) tries to identify. Encourage children to consider possibilities for their face from the facial expressions shown on the final page of the suggested book.



## 12–24 Months

### Option 1 Informal Gathering



#### Skill and Goal Fine motor development

Toddlers practice how to shake and stop shaking a bell.



#### Key Concepts

Bell  
Shake  
Stop  
Quiet



#### Materials Needed

Bells—1 per toddler and caregiver



#### Also Promotes

Self-Regulation  
Communication/Language  
Cognitive

**BEGIN:** [Sit on the floor with several toddlers. Display and gently ring a bell. Stop ringing the bell, put the bell in your lap, and point to one of your ears.]

Our ears can hear a ring-ring sound when I shake a bell with my hand. Let's listen again.

[Again display and gently ring a bell.]

My hand is shaking a bell. The bell is making a ring-ring sound.



**ACT:** Each of us can hold a bell and shake it with our hand. We will hear a lot of ring-ring sounds when all of us shake our bells!

[Give each toddler a bell. Shake your bell.]

Let's all shake our bells.

[Encourage toddlers to shake the bells for about 10–20 seconds. Then prominently hold your bell with both hands to show toddlers you have stopped shaking your bell.]

I am holding my bell with two hands. Now my bell stops making a ring-ring sound.

Let's all hold our bells with two hands.

[Point to your ear.]

I cannot hear any bells. We are all holding our bells quiet. We made our bells stop ringing.

**ASK:** Do you want to shake our bells again?

**EXPLAIN:** I will sing a song that tells us when to shake our bells and when to stop shaking our bells.

**ACT:** Let's shake our bells together.

**Option 1 continued**

[Sing the following song as you and toddlers shake the bells. Hold your bell with both hands when you reach the “going to stop” phrase.]

**Ring Our Bells**

(Tune: “Row, Row, Row Your Boat”)

**Ring, ring, ring our bells.**

**Ring, and ring our bells.**

**Ring, ring, ring our bells,**

[pause]

**And now we’re going to stop.**

[Recognize the toddlers’ efforts. Example: “We made a nice sound with our bells.”]

Repeat bell ringing if toddlers are interested.]

**RECAP:** We used our hands to shake a bell. We used our hands to hold our bells quiet. Our bells did not make any sound when we held them quiet with our hands.

**👁️ What to Look For—Option 1**

Toddlers at this age generally enjoy producing sound and will be eager to make sound with a bell. Be flexible about how toddlers grasp and manipulate the bell. Toddlers are learning how to hold things that require movement and may use either hand to grasp and shake the bell. As suggested in the activity description, look for ways to strengthen toddlers’ awareness that we move our hand to make a sound with the bell. We also use our hands to make our bell quiet. We do not hear sounds when we stop shaking our bell.

Some toddlers may have difficulty holding their bell with both hands as a way to stop shaking the bell. Accept all efforts. Also, be flexible about toddlers’ adherence to the stop requests in shaking the bell. The primary aim of the activity is to support toddlers’ awareness of how our hands make and stop making sounds with the bell. It may take some toddlers a bit of time to manage the self-regulation aspects of starting and stopping on request. See the Extra Support tip about relaxing or eliminating the start and stop elements of the activity. Ringing bells together should be fun for toddlers.

If a toddler is not engaged in exploring bell sounds, encourage him/her to watch the activity or to feel free to go to another play area. Be aware of how the bell sound may be annoying to some toddlers, including toddlers who do not have the language skills to tell you.

When toddlers enjoy an activity, they may say “Do it again!” or wave both hands to signal you. Repeat the song if toddlers enjoy it!

**Option 1 continued****More Scaffolding Tips—Option 1**

**Extra support** ■ Provide verbal support for toddlers' patient waiting when you distribute the bells. Examples: "Ria is waiting for a bell. Here is your bell, Ria." "Diego is waiting for a bell. Here is your bell, Diego." ■ If a toddler seems unsure how to hold the bell to produce a sound, gently take his/her bell, turn the bell, and place the handle portion in a toddler's hand. Explain, "Hold the bell like this so the bell can make a good sound." ■ If young toddlers are not developmentally ready to start and stop the bells, sing familiar songs and encourage the toddlers to ring the bells. Do not use the suggested song if it seems to impose too much for toddlers to reasonably manage.

**Enrichment** ■ Give each toddler a turn to ring his/her bell. Example: "We can take turns shaking our bells. Please hold your bell with two hands so it is quiet. Now we will listen to Elijah shake his bell." ■ Play a game of "shake our bell and stop." Ring your bell and let the toddlers say "stop."

## 12–24 Months

Option 2  
Informal Gathering

## Skill and Goal

## Fine motor development

Toddlers practice how to stop shaking a bell in response to words in a song.



## Key Concepts

Shake  
Bell  
Stop  
Start



## Materials Needed

Bells—1 per toddler and caregiver



## Also Promotes

Self-Regulation  
Communication/Language  
Cognitive

This activity option uses a song about a farmer ringing his bell to support toddlers' practice in stopping shaking a bell. The song involves word changes that some toddlers will find to be humorous.



Open the session by explaining that we need to listen carefully to our song. A farmer is shaking a bell in our song. The song will tell us when to start shaking our bells and when to stop shaking our bells. Demonstrate how to stop shaking your bell by using both of your hands to keep your bell quiet. Invite toddlers to repeat your demonstration as you describe key actions. Also, explain with a demonstration that ring and shake mean the same thing.

Emphasize the words rang and stop when you sing the song. Demonstrate all actions. Note that the request to stop shaking a bell is said, not sung, in an effort to help toddlers notice the request.

Provide a brief pause after toddlers stop shaking their bells. Then offer a clue that soon we will start shaking our bell. Example: "Are you ready to start shaking your bell? Here comes the next part of the song!"

## The Farmer Rang His Bell

(Tune: "The Farmer in the Dell")

**The farmer rang his bell. The farmer rang his bell.**

**Hi-ho the Derry-o, the farmer rang his bell.**

*[say]* **The children said "Stop."**

*[Stop your bell by grasping it with the opposite hand.]*

**The cow rang a bell. The cow rang a bell.**

**Hi-ho the Derry-o, the cow rang a bell.**

*[say]* **And the mommy said "Stop."**

*[Stop your bell by grasping it with the opposite hand.]*

**The duck rang a bell. The duck rang a bell.**

**Hi-ho the Derry-o, the duck rang a bell.**

*[say]* **And the daddy said "Stop."**

*[Stop your bell by grasping it with the opposite hand.]*

**The horse rang a bell. The horse rang a bell.**

**Hi-ho the Derry-o, the horse rang a bell.**

*[say quietly]* **And the baby said "Stop."**

*[Stop your bell by grasping it with the opposite hand.]*

**Option 2 continued****👁️ What to Look For—Option 2**

This option builds on prior ELM activities aimed at helping toddlers stop an action in response to a verbal request, including the Self-Regulation activity with a pretend butterfly in this block. The use of a song in the current activity offers an important practice variation, although the stop requests are to be said rather than sung. Stopping an action upon request, even when the request is anticipated, is a self-control skill that takes time to master. See the Extra Support tips and accept different types of participation.

Toddlers may differ in their readiness to use a hand (versus an arm) to shake the bell. They also may differ in their ability to hold the bell with both hands as a way to stop shaking the bell, as noted in Option 1.

Watch for possible confusion in toddlers' understandings of the words "ring" and "shake"; they mean the same thing in the activity. You may wish to change the words of the song to "shake, shake our bells." The activity can contribute to vocabulary knowledge with repeated use of words such as "bell," "ring," "shake," and "sound."

**📊 More Scaffolding Tips—Option 2**

**Extra support** ■ Each time there is a request to stop, add a reminder that it is time to stop shaking our bells. Example: "Oh! The children in the song said 'stop.' The song says we stop shaking our bells. The farmer stops his bell. We stop our bells!" ■ If the stop request is too challenging, omit this part of the song or sing a familiar song that supports bell ringing actions only. ■ Shorten the song by combining Mommy and Daddy stop requests into a single verse.

**Enrichment** ■ If toddlers in your gathering readily stop ringing their bells upon request and can walk with good balance, conduct the activity while leading toddlers around a small circle in the activity space.



## 12–24 Months

### Option 3 Informal Gathering



#### Skill and Goal

##### Fine motor development

Toddlers practice contrasting ways to shake a bell.



#### Key Concepts

Bell  
Shake  
Ring



#### Materials Needed

Bells—1 per toddler and caregiver



#### Also Promotes

Self-Regulation  
Communication/Language  
Cognitive

Invite several toddlers to join you in ringing our bells in different ways. Each of the bulleted suggestions below involves two contrasting types of bell shaking. Demonstrate each action first and then encourage toddlers join you in doing the action as you describe their efforts. Pause between each contrasting type of shake. Example: Shake the bell slowly. Pause. Shake the bell fast. Use as many of the following contrasting pairs as time and toddler interest permit:

- Shake a bell with an arm, and then shake a bell with a hand (at the wrist).
- Shake a bell with one hand (or arm), and then move the bell to the other hand and shake the bell with this other hand (or arm).
- Shake a bell with both hands, and then shake a bell with one hand.
- Shake a bell slowly, and then shake a bell fast.

### What to Look For—Option 3

The pairs of contrasting approaches to shaking a bell can support toddlers' awareness of how hand (including fingers) and arm contribute to making a sound with a bell. Watch for chances to point out sound differences, such as the louder sound of a bell shaken fast compared to the softer sound of a bell shaken slowly. This helps support toddlers' emerging awareness of cause-effect connections. Look also for actions that may benefit from your verbal or gentle, hands-on support, such as transferring a bell from one hand to the other hand. Because toddlers will differ in their fine motor skills, some of the contrasting actions will not be implemented as intended. Example: Some toddlers may not readily shake a bell with a hand versus an arm. Enthusiastically acknowledge toddlers' efforts.

### More Scaffolding Tips—Option 3

**Extra support** ■ Encourage toddlers to stand, especially if you anticipate this will help coordination and control of movements with the bell.

**Enrichment** ■ If toddlers show interest in the louder versus softer sound of their bell when they shake fast versus slowly, encourage toddlers to take turns shaking their bell fast and slow, so they can hear their own bell.





### Interest Area

**Materials Needed:** basket of bells, *I Hear* by Helen Oxenbury

Provide a basket of bells on a low table so toddlers may continue exploration of how to shake a bell, including how to stop and start a bell. Sit with toddlers to talk about how they start shaking a bell and how they stop the bell ringing. On another day, share the *I Hear* book to emphasize the importance of listening. During play periods, draw attention to objects that move and then stop.



### Family Child Care

**Materials Needed:** bells

Invite children in your setting to pretend they are a team of “bell horses.” Explain that a team of “bell horses” carried heavy loads before there were big trucks. When a team of horses arrived in a village pulling a wagon with supplies, children and adults would hear the bells and come out to greet them.

Older infants and toddlers will enjoy ringing bells. Preschool-age and older children may enjoy galloping while ringing their bells and also talking about the types of supplies village children and parents may have received from the wagons pulled by bell horses.