

Introduction and Preparation for the Focus Area – About Me



Introduction

During the first three years of life, children begin creating a picture of who they are, what they can do, and what they feel. The picture that children create will affect every area of their development. *The Arkansas Framework for Infant and Toddler Care* contains information about each developmental strand and how the strands intertwine with each other. Consider reviewing the Framework as a foundation for using the **Adventures for Toddlers** curriculum with your children.

During the first 18 months of life, children are usually referred to as young infants (birth to 8 months) and mobile infants (8 to 18 months). Children between the ages of 18 and 36 months are usually called toddlers.

While each toddler is a unique individual, normally developing toddlers share many common characteristics. They are beginning to assert their independence. They are learning to do many things for themselves and to make simple choices. They use language to refer to themselves and others and to express a need. They can learn to use words to express their feelings.

Toddlers are becoming aware of their bodies and what their bodies can do. The five senses of touch, taste, smell, seeing and hearing are the information-gathering tools of toddlers. Through their senses, toddlers get in touch with their world.

Through both planned and spontaneous experiences, caregivers can provide opportunities for toddlers to discover many things about themselves, their world and others in their lives.

Note that many of the experiences in this Focus Area have an age designation of either Younger Toddler (YT) or Older Toddler (OT) and that these two age designations do not specify age in months. Weekly plan sheets that focus on one or more of the big ideas in a topic are included. One plan sheet for each week will be designated for Younger Toddlers and one for Older Toddlers.

There will be several weeks of plan sheets for each Focus Area. Some of the same experiences will be included for more than one week because toddlers need many opportunities to develop and reinforce skills and begin to understand concepts.

Developers of Adventures for Toddlers suggest that caregivers use their knowledge of individual children to determine which experiences are appropriate for which children in their care. Feel free to adapt the weekly plan sheets or to develop new plan sheets to meet the needs of each child and of the group. Consider adding additional experiences from the many that are a part of this Focus Area.



Resources

- Children's books can be purchased online, from school supply catalogs or local book stores.
- Check with your local library for the availability of children's books.
- Contact the Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education for the following materials or locate at www.arkansas.gov/childcare
 - ✓ Arkansas Framework for Infant and Toddler Care
 - ✓ Picture This: A Framework for Quality Care for Infants and Toddlers

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Infant and Toddler Family Connection ✓ A Story a Month - Mother Goose Rhymes: Jack & Jill, Jack Be Nimble and Little Miss Muffett ✓ A Story a Month – July 2002 – <i>The Very Busy Spider</i> (patterns for storytelling figures) ✓ B.A.M.M.M.! – Books and Movement – A Magical Mix, Learning Activity #1 – I Can Move My Body in Many Ways. - <i>From Head to Toe</i> (patterns for storytelling figures) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Infant /Toddler Photo Activity Library, A Pam Schiller Resource, published by Gryphon House (52 photos & activity cards focusing on the following topics: Me and My Body, Families, Things I Wear, Toys, Pets, Big Animals, Transportation, Construction.) Website: www.ghbooks.com Phone: 301-595-9500 or 800-638-0918 (toll free) • CDs which can be ordered online or from school supply catalogs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Start Smart Songs for 1s, 2s & 3s – Brain-Building Activities by Pam Schiller, KIMBO Educational ○ Toddlers on Parade, KIMBO Educational ○ 50 Toddler Sing-Along Songs (2 CDs with 50 activities), Twin Sisters, www.twinsisters.com
 <p><u>Picture File</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collect pictures that relate to this Focus Area – About Me. Examples of pictures to collect include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ children from infancy through preschool – pictures to reflect diversity ○ families that reflect diversity ○ body parts such as faces, ears, noses, mouths, eyes, hands, and feet ○ children involved in activities such as running, riding a wheel toy, building with blocks, feeding a doll, looking at a book, eating, playing with a ball ○ people expressing different emotions. <p>Include small (index card size) as well as larger pictures. Consider mounting the small pictures on index cards. Laminate or cover all of the pictures with clear, self-adhesive paper for durability.</p> • Post some of the pictures on the wall at toddler’s eye level. Observe to see if toddlers look at the pictures and point to and/or name the objects or people in the pictures. Join them and expand on what they say. For example, say to Megan who has pointed to a baby and said “baby” say “Yes Megan, that’s a baby playing with a rattle.” • Put some of the small pictures in a container and place it in the library area so that it is accessible to children. Observe a child as he takes the pictures out of the box. Should the child bring a picture to you, involve him in discussing what he sees in the picture. “That’s a girl playing with a ball.” • Keep some of the pictures in a basket or tote bag within easy reach. Use the pictures with an individual child or a small group of children. Invite them to name objects and to talk about what is happening in the pictures. Allow children to look at the pictures on their own. Model and talk with them about the proper way to handle the pictures.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Determine if funds are available to purchase The Infant /Toddler Photo Activity Library, a Pam Schiller resource published by Gryphon House. See Resources for ordering information. <p>Note: Refer to Curriculum Tips and Techniques – Picture File, for additional information about how to organize a picture file.</p>
 <p><u>Toddler Environment</u></p>	<p>The toddler environment should always provide equipment and materials for language experiences, manipulative exploration, gross motor and block play, sensory exploration, pretend play and outdoor exploration. The following additions to the environment are intended for the entire topic: About Me. Each Weekly Plan Sheet will specify which materials to add for that week.</p> <p><u>Library Area</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Add books: See How We Have Grown and We Are Friends Add container of pictures that have been laminated or covered with clear self-adhesive paper. (See Picture File, page 2 for examples of types of pictures to collect.) <p><u>Manipulative Exploration</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Add Texture Book Large stringing beads with different patterns and textures Picking Up Cotton Balls Knob puzzles with 2 to 5 pieces Pegboards (wood or plastic) with large, blunt-ended pegs <p><u>Gross Motor & Blocks</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Textured blocks/cubes Tape down large pieces of bubble wrap to the floor in block area. Collect and add large firm pillows for stacking and for crawling over Make grocery bag blocks as follows: 1. Involve toddlers in scrunching newspaper to fill the bags and make them stable. 2. Fold down the tops of the bags to create a flat top. 3. Tape the flat top securely. Add small people figures (wood, rubber, or vinyl) and small vehicles <p>Note: Store people figures and vehicles in clear plastic tubs that are labeled with both pictures and words.</p> <p><u>Sensory Exploration</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hang wind chimes in classroom. Locate them so that air moves them. Observe to see if children look for the source of the sounds made by the chimes. Add scented playdough (one scent a day). Add Sensory Bottles. <p><u>Pretend Play</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Add large soft dolls that have clothes that can easily be taken off and put on. Have dress-up clothes such as vests and shirts that children can put on and take off. Shorten sleeves of shirts to fit children. Include clothes of different textures. Include gloves of different textures, such as cotton gloves, leather gloves, fleece gloves, and rubber gloves. Have dress-up clothes with large buttons and snaps. Demonstrate buttoning and snapping. Encourage children to button and snap, assisting as needed. Have unbreakable full-length mirror that is securely fastened to wall.

- Add unbreakable hand mirrors.
- Add toy telephones (at least 2).

Outdoor Exploration

- Hang wind chimes and windsocks outdoors. Locate them so that children can see and hear them. Observe to see if children look for the source of the sounds made by the chimes or if they notice the movement of the windsock. If children do not notice the wind chimes, for example, make a comment such as, “I wonder what is making that sound. Let’s see if we can find out what it is.”
- Go on a sensory walk with the children. Invite them to touch safe items in nature: the bark of a tree, the leaves of a shrub or tree, a rock, a pinecone. Use tactile words to describe the items. “Feel how rough the bark of this tree is.” “This rock is really hard.”

Safety Note: *It is the responsibility of the child care program and each employee to ensure the safety of toddlers in the program. This includes the materials and equipment provided for children’s use. Should you have safety questions, the developers of this curriculum suggest that you consult with your Child Care Licensing Specialist for technical assistance.*

Curriculum books such as *The Creative Curriculum for Infants, Toddlers & 2s, 2nd Edition*, contain safety information. See **Curriculum Tips and Techniques, References and Resources**, for additional resources.



Family Experiences

Send home a note to families stating that for the next few weeks the children will be involved in the Focus Area: **About Me**. They will participate in experiences that focus on who they are, what they can do, and the feelings they can express. How families can be involved in this Focus Area will depend on the situation of each child and his or her family.

Consider some of the following ways to involve the families:

- Invite families to send 2 or 3 photos of their child; photos that show the child from infancy to now.
- Invite families to send photos of their child and family members and to indicate on the back of each photo the name and relationship of each person.
- Include the titles and authors of some of the child’s books that relate to the Focus Area: **About Me**. Suggest that they look for these books in the local library, check them out and read them with their toddler.
- Send home the booklet, *Picture This: A Framework for Quality Care for Infants and Toddlers*. Suggest that families read the booklet, especially pages 2-7.

#1.1 – My Name – I’m Growing

 <p><u>Big Ideas</u></p>	<p>Here are some big ideas about toddlers that you can help them explore:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ I have a name. ➤ I am growing.
 <p><u>Materials to Collect and Make</u></p>	<p><u>Featured Books</u> Mother Goose books</p> <p>Key: (BB) – Available in Board Book only (+BB) – Also available in Board Book</p> <p>Note: See Book List section, for suggested Mother Goose books or use Mother Goose Books that are available to you.</p> <p><u>Books to Make</u> See <i>How We Have Grown</i></p> <p><u>Storytelling Figures and Mother Goose Rhyme Charts</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Locate at A Story a Month on the Arkansas Better Beginnings website: Storytelling figures (felt or magnetic) for the Mother Goose Rhyme, Jack and Jill Storytelling figures (felt or magnetic) for the Mother Goose Rhyme, Jack Be Nimble • Illustrated Mother Goose Rhyme Chart, Jack and Jill • Illustrated Mother Goose Rhyme Chart, Jack Be Nimble <p><u>Additional Materials</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sensory bottles • Sound bottles • Unbreakable hand-held and wall-mounted mirror • Mirror in a box • Grocery bag blocks
 <p><u>Book List</u></p> <p>*Featured Books</p>	<p><u>Mother Goose Books (BB)</u></p> <p><i>Humpty Dumpty and Other Rhymes</i> by Iona Opie and illustrated by Rosemary Wells</p> <p><i>Little Boy Blue and Other Rhymes</i> by Iona Opie and illustrated by Rosemary Wells</p> <p><i>My First Real Mother Goose Board Book</i> by Blanche Fisher Wright</p> <p><i>Pussycat Pussycat and Other Rhymes</i> by Iona Opie and illustrated by Rosemary Wells</p> <p><i>Wee Willie Winkle and Other Rhymes</i> by Iona Opie and illustrated by Rosemary Wells</p>



**Reading
Books with
Toddlers**

Note: Review the section in **Curriculum Tips and Techniques** on Reading Books with Children, for suggestions on how to use books with children.

Benchmarks: 4.5.C Shows enjoyment of books and stories
4.3.C Responds to verbal and non-verbal communication

Book: Mother Goose book (your choice)
Rhymes: **Jack and Jill** and **Jack Be Nimble**

How to begin:

- Read the rhyme with the children while showing the illustrations.
- Repeat the rhyme with children
- Invite children to say the rhyme with you.

Note: Read and say other rhymes with children any time there is an opportunity to do so.



**Language
and
Cognitive
Materials
and
Experiences**

Note: Review the section in **Curriculum Tips and Techniques** on Making Storytelling Figures (felt or magnetic).

Benchmark: 4.5.C Shows enjoyment of books and stories

Planned Experience: **Storytelling, Mother Goose Rhymes (YT & OT)**
Jack and Jill
Jack Be Nimble

How to begin:

- Make either felt or magnetic storytelling figures for each of the stories.
- Read the rhymes with children several times so that they are familiar with the characters and the order of events.
- Use the storytelling figures to present the rhymes.
- Involve children in placing figures on the storyboard when you feel they can do this.

Benchmarks: 4.4.C Communicates through language
1.2.C Becomes aware of self as a unique individual

I Am Special

(Sing to tune of Are You Sleeping?)

Savanah is special, Savanah is special.
Yes, she is. Yes, she is.
Savanah is so special, Savanah is so special.
Yes, she is. Yes, she is.

Note: Insert each child's name as you sing this song.

Where Is Jackson?

(Sing to tune of Are You Sleeping?)

Where is Jackson? Where is Jackson?
There he is. There he is.
I see Jackson. I see Jackson.
Yes, I do. Yes, I do.

Note: Insert each child's name as you sing this song.

I See Ryan

(Sing to tune of Are You Sleeping?)

I see Ryan, I see Ryan.
Yes, I do. Yes I do.
Ryan is playing with blocks. Ryan is playing with blocks.
Yes, he is. Yes, he is.

Note: Insert each child's name and the activity in which they are involved as you sing this song.

Hickety Pickety Bumble Bee

Hickety Pickety Bumble Bee.
Can you say your name for me?

Jack Be Nimble

Jack be nimble,
Jack be quick.
Jack jump over the candlestick.

Note: Provide a block for one child at a time to jump over as you insert his or her name into the rhyme.

Jack and Jill

Jack and Jill
Went up the hill,
To fetch a pail of water.
Jack fell down,
And broke his crown,
And Jill came tumbling after.

Sally Go Round the Sun

Sally go round the sun
Sally go round the moon
Sally go round the chimney pots
On a Sunday afternoon.

Note: Substitute furniture or equipment that you want children to go around as you say this rhyme. For example,

Sally go round the table,
Sally go round the chair
Sally go round the slide.

Note: After saying the previous 3 rhymes with children, substitute children's names in the rhyme.

Note: *Make charts for Jack Be Nimble and Jack and Jill. Laminate or cover the charts with clear self-stick paper for durability. (See **Curriculum Tips and Techniques**, for information on making charts.) Show the charts as you and the children say the rhymes together. Post the charts at the child's eye level. Should you observe a child looking at one of the charts, join her and invite her to say the rhyme with you.*

Benchmarks: 4.4.C Communicates through language
1.2.C Becomes aware of self as a unique individual

Planned Experience: The Name Game (YT & OT)

Materials: 2 toy telephones

How to begin:

- Use one of the telephones and pretend to call the child. Invite the child to answer the phone.
- Ask, "Who is this?" or "Is this Mikala?"
- Encourage the child to say his or her name into the telephone. If the child does not respond with his/her name, say something like, "This is Mikala I am speaking to."
- Repeat the activity, encouraging the child to answer with his/her name.
- Allow a child time to respond with his or her name before saying the child's name.

Extensions:

- Extend the telephone conversation to include other people in the child's family. For example, say, "May I speak to Grandpa?" or "May I speak to Daddy, please?" Be familiar with each child's family members in the home so that you can incorporate their names into the telephone conversation.
- Include the names of other children who join you in the name game.
- Make up silly names. For example, say, "Is this Jackaroo? No? Boo Boo Moo? No?"
- Include this activity as often as children seem interested and as long as they need prompting to say their names.
- Use children's names throughout the day as you speak with them and as you refer to the other children in the group.
- Have toy telephones available in the pretend play area and observe to see if and how children use them.

Note: *Encourage older toddlers to talk with each other on the phone. For example, after the called toddler has answered the phone, hand your phone to another child and say, "Jamelli, I'm giving the phone to Eric. He wants to talk to you."*

Additional Benchmark: 3.2.C Shows interest in peers

Benchmarks: 1.2.C Becomes aware of self as a unique individual
4.4.C Communicates through language
4.5.C Shows enjoyment of books and stories

Planned Experience: See How We Have Grown (YT & OT)

Materials: See *How We Have Grown* Book

How to begin:

- Ask families to send two or three photos of their child; photos that show how the child has grown from infancy to now.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a class photo album with one page for each child. Label the page with the child's name. • Slip photos into albums with plastic sleeves or magnetic, clear pages. • Label the album, See How We Have Grown. • Sit on the floor in the Language Area and begin to look at the book. • Invite a child to join you by saying something like this: "Antonio, come look at this book with me and see how much you have grown." • Include other children in the activity as they join you and Antonio. Show them their individual page. • Invite children to name the other children in the book. <p>Extensions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Place the book in the Library Area so children can look at it on their own. • Join a child you observe looking at the book and involve him or her in naming the children on each page and discussing what they are doing. <p>Note: <i>When you invite a child to join you in an activity, make sure the child is not actively engaged in something of interest.</i></p>
 <p><u>Self, Social and Emotional Experiences</u></p>	<p>Benchmark: 1.2.C Becomes aware of self as a unique individual</p> <p>Planned Experience: Someone Special (YT & OT)</p> <p>Materials: Unbreakable mirror and small box with lid</p> <p>How to begin:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide an unbreakable mirror safely attached to the bottom of a box which has a lid. • Say to a child, "I have something very special in this box. Would you like to see what's in the box?" • Allow the child to take the lid off the box and look inside. • Invite the child to tell you what she sees in the box. Respond appropriately to what child says. For example, if she says "Me", say "Yes, Rachel, you see yourself in the box." • Allow each child a turn looking inside the box. • Suggest that children look at themselves in the full-length mirror on the wall. Say, "Rachel, you can see all of yourself in this mirror." <p>Extension: Consider making two or three mirror boxes and allowing children to explore them independently.</p> <p>Note: <i>When you invite a child to join you in an activity, make sure the child is not actively engaged in something of interest.</i></p>
 <p><u>Sensory and Art</u></p>	<p>Benchmarks: 6.1.C Gains an understanding of basic concepts and relationships 6.2.C Applies knowledge to new situations 6.3.C Develops strategies for solving problems</p> <p>Planned Experience: Sensory Bottles (YT & OT)</p> <p>Materials: Collection of sensory bottles (Review the section in Curriculum Tips and Techniques for Making Sensory Bottles)</p>

<p><u>Materials and Experiences</u></p>	<p>How to begin:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Place the bottles on a low shelf or table. • Observe toddlers as they interact with the bottles. Do they shake them? Do they roll them? Do they look at the objects inside the bottle? Do they apply the strategies they used with one bottle to another bottle they select? Do they seem to have a favorite? • Join toddlers as they interact with the bottles. Pick up one of the bottles, shake it and say, “I see the stars moving in this bottle. Joshua, see if you can make the stars move.” <hr/> <p>Benchmarks: 6.1.C Gains an understanding of basic concepts and relationships 6.2.C Applies knowledge to new situations 5.2.C Develops fine motor skills 5.3.C Coordinates eye and hand movements</p> <p>Planned Experience: Sticky Experience (YT)</p> <p>Materials: Long piece of self-adhesive paper (3 feet), tape, lightweight materials such as feathers, fabric scraps and small laminated pictures, container for materials</p> <p>How to begin:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remove the backing from a long piece of self-adhesive paper (3 feet) and use tape to attach the paper sticky side out to the wall at children’s height. • Invite toddlers to feel the sticky surface. Discuss with them that the wall is “sticky.” • Place lightweight materials such as feathers, fabric scraps and small laminated pictures in a container near the sticky wall. • Observe to see if children try and stick any of the items to the wall. If not, join them and select one of the items in the container and say, “I wonder if this will stick to the wall.” • Comment when children are successful in sticking items to the wall. For example, say, “Yolanda, you stuck that picture of a horse to the wall.” <p>Extensions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cut out photos of the toddlers or pictures from magazines and glue them to the tops of plastic lids from yogurt containers or potato chip cans. • Place the pictures in a container near the sticky wall. • Observe to see if children try and stick any of the pictures to the wall.
 <p><u>Food/ Nutrition Experiences</u></p>	<p>Benchmarks: 1.3.C Demonstrates increasing sense of competence and confidence in growing abilities 1.4.C Asserts independence 5.4.C Develops self-help skills</p> <p>Experience: Fruit Tasting (YT & OT)</p> <p>Materials: Small pieces of fruit such as bananas and cantaloupe, each in a separate bowl with a small serving spoon, one small bowl, spoon and napkin for each child and for you</p> <p>How to begin:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sit at table with a small group of children. • Give each child a bowl, spoon and napkin. • Put a spoon of one fruit in your bowl and say, “I’m serving myself some bananas. Brianna, let me help you serve yourself some bananas.” Assist children to serve themselves a spoonful of the fruit. • Repeat this process with the other fruit.