

Creative Movement for Older Babies and Toddlers: BALANCE

Fun new ideas to help your older baby or toddler explore the concept of on-balance and off-balance:

- Visual/
Spatial: Crafty! With your little one, paint half a piece of paper with beautiful blobs of paint, then fold in half to make it double. (It might be fun to explore using seasonal colors and use your colorful artwork to decorate your home!)
- Kinesthetic: Sofa cushions and pillows can make terrific "bridges" to climb over, crawl through and just roll around on. You can play mountain climber or scuba diver as you goof around with balancing! Opportunities like this, where your baby or toddler can safely explore being "off-balance" will help her to develop neurologically, as well as giving her a sense of comfort with that major mode of toddler movement: falling down!
- Linguistic/
aural: As babies and toddlers grow, so will their natural curiosity about language, words and songs. A fun way to help them to feel language like creators (instead of always learning what we teach them) is to sing silly songs that play with sounds. Have your toddler pick a vowel to use, or imitate your child's way of vocalizing as you sing!
SONG!
8 Apples and Bananas
I want to eat (*bring hand to mouth*)
I want to eat (*bring hand to mouth*)
I want to eat eight (*reaching and gathering*)
apples and bananas (*hands in a circle rubbing tummy*)
Repeat the song, varying the vowels you use: "Oo woont too oot, oo woont too oot..." "ee weent tee eat, ee weent tee eat", etc. Toddlers love it when you act nutty!
- Logical/
math: Crafty! How do we balance objects? Mobiles can be a fascinating way to play with falling and being stable. Use toilet tissue or paper towel rolls, hung with yarn or string, to make mobiles. Can you and your toddler hang one from the other? Can you make them all balance and spin?
- Spiritual/
nature: Out and about! Visit a farm stand or greenmarket! You and your child can play with the scales, weighing different fruits and veggies. Look for fruits and veggies that are balanced on each other.
- Musical: Song! This is a great one when you don't have any instruments handy:
Mr. Knickerbocker
Hey Mr. Knickerbocker, boppity-bop (*clapping, marching, or bending*)
I like-a the way that you boppity-bop
Listen to the sound that I make with my hands (*clap*)
repeat
Listen to the sound that I make with my feet (*stomp*)
repeat
Listen to the sound that I make with my teeth (*chomp*)
Listen to the sound...knees, cheeks, hips, arms, etc!
- Emotional/
social: Crafty! Babies and toddlers will begin to enjoy making pictures of loved ones, favorite pets or toys into lovely finger puppets. These are easy enough to do with a snapshot taped to a piece of cardboard big enough to wrap around your child's finger. Children enjoy role-playing with you about their daily lives.