

BATHTIME FOR TODDLERS

DAILY ROUTINE EXPLORATIONS WITH YOUR YOUNG CHILD

Every child is different, and these are only suggested adaptations and activities. Do what works best for encouraging your child's independent exploration during this daily routine. Consult your pediatrician, physical therapist (PT), and/or occupational therapist (OT) first.



Bathtimes are a great opportunity to support STEM learning. You can talk about STEM ideas and use STEM words as you bathe your child.

Toddlers can begin to learn about cause and effect during bathtime. Help your toddler observe, make predictions about the properties of everyday household objects (plastic cups, spoons) and conduct experiments in water.

Children learn new things when they practice them in everyday routines. Try one or two of the following activities during bathtimes. With a little bit of practice, bathtime can become a natural place to talk and learn about STEM. Use these ideas to set up the environment and materials to best suit your child's needs.

DO NOT leave children unsupervised during bath time or while playing with water. Children can drown in 1 inch of water.

GENERAL BATH TIME TIPS

- Test the temperature of the water before placing your child in the bathtub or basket
- Ensure there are no electronics nearby that could accidentally fall in the bathwater
- To prevent mold growth, be sure to use child AND water safe toys
- For a child with no/very little head control or who has rigid muscle tone, consider using a cleaning wipe instead of soap and water as an alternative



Follow your child's lead and interests. Enthusiastically ask your child questions about what they are doing and what they like.



Answer your child's questions. If you do not know the answer, work together with your child to discover the answer.



Encourage your child to participate in the activity as much as possible. Praise your child's efforts and successes.



BATHTIME FOR TODDLERS ADAPTATIONS

DAILY ROUTINE EXPLORATIONS WITH YOUR YOUNG CHILD

Every child is different, and these are only suggested adaptations and activities. Do what works best for encouraging your child's independent exploration during this daily routine. Consult your pediatrician, physical therapist (PT), and/or occupational therapist (OT) first.

ACCESS/ENVIRONMENT

WHAT CAN I DO TO SUPPORT MY CHILD'S LEARNING?

- To help position your child for bath time, place your child in a plastic basket or child bathtub
- Add a waterproof plastic mirror to the edge of the bathtub or basket
- Add grippers to the bottom of the basket or bathtub

MATERIALS

WHAT CAN I DO TO SUPPORT MY CHILD'S LEARNING?

- Use long/bigger handled toys for easier grasping
- Put household objects and/or toys into a basket/container within reach of your child
- Offer high contrast household objects and/or toys for better visual discrimination
- For easier grasping, adapt water toys by building up the handles or creating grip straps using household items (e.g., pool noodles)

INTERACTIONS/INSTRUCTION

WHAT CAN I DO TO SUPPORT MY CHILD'S LEARNING?

Note: Communication may include the use of words, signs, gestures, and different types of cues (e.g., touch, object, movement, visual, etc.)

- Provide hand-over-hand support to help your child explore water better
- Narrate/sign your child's actions as they experiment with the water (e.g. "Wow! The spoon disappeared under the bubbles when you dropped it.")
- Use a variety of methods of communication (e.g., sign language, gestures) to meaningfully engage your child
- Use pictures and/or icons to signal next steps and/or each step of a sequence
- Communicate with your child at eye level
- Speak/sign slowly, emphasize keywords, and wait for a response
- Praise your child's efforts with words, facial expression, or body language
- Make eye contact and smile as you talk to your child



Follow your child's lead and interests. Enthusiastically ask your child questions about what they are doing and what they like.



Answer your child's questions. If you do not know the answer, work together with your child to discover the answer.



Encourage your child to participate in the activity as much as possible. Praise your child's efforts and successes.



BATHTIME FOR TODDLERS

EXPLORATION I

DAILY ROUTINE EXPLORATIONS WITH YOUR YOUNG CHILD

Every child is different, and these are only suggested adaptations and activities. Do what works best for encouraging your child's independent exploration during this daily routine. Consult your pediatrician, physical therapist (PT), and/or occupational therapist (OT) first.

Water Sensor

Description: Help your child **recognize temperature** by talking about **hot/warm** and **cold/cool** water. While bathing your child in a bathtub, sink, or basket, add warmer or cooler water and/or ice cubes to the bathwater.

What My Child Is Learning!

Children learn best by interacting with people and objects. Introduce STEM words, ask questions, and encourage them to explore water. Help your child make a connection between words and real-life experiences and develop fundamental critical thinking skills.

While bathing your child, describe how the water feels. Ask, "How does the water feel? Is it **warm? Cool?**" Use simple terms like "**warm**" and "**cool**" as you adjust the water **temperature**, helping your toddler become familiar with these sensations.

While children are learning how to express words, they may already have numerous ways to communicate! Watch for their cues as they may express their **curiosity and interest** by turning toward an object or pointing to something. Using open-ended questions offers an opportunity for children to **explore** an object that they are interested in.



Image Credit: Adobe Stock



BATHTIME FOR TODDLERS

EXPLORATION II

DAILY ROUTINE EXPLORATIONS WITH YOUR YOUNG CHILD

Every child is different, and these are only suggested adaptations and activities. Do what works best for encouraging your child's independent exploration during this daily routine. Consult your pediatrician, physical therapist (PT), and/or occupational therapist (OT) first.

Sinker or Floater?

Description: Help your child **notice and recognize** that water has unique **properties that changes how an object moves**. While bathing your child in a bathtub, sink, or basket, encourage your child to **repeatedly drop** water safe toys (e.g., sponge, rubber duck, ball, large stone) into the water and **observe** if they sink or float.

What My Child Is Learning!

Children learn best by interacting with people and objects. Introduce STEM words, ask questions, and encourage them to explore water and how objects move in water. Help your child make a connection between words and real-life experiences and develop fundamental critical thinking skills.

While bathing your child, model dropping different objects into the water. Talk about how buoyant objects like a rubber duck and toy boat float and dense objects like stones sink in water. Encourage your child to observe and touch the objects. Ask, "*Which objects do you **think** will sink? Float? What do you think about [specific object]? Can you **make it** sink?*"

While children are learning how to express words, they may already have numerous ways to communicate! Watch for their cues as they may express their **curiosity and interest** by turning toward an object or pointing to something. Using open-ended questions offers an opportunity for children to **explore** an object that they are interested in.



Image Credit: Digvijaysinh Rajput, Pexels



BATHTIME FOR TODDLERS

EXPLORATION III

DAILY ROUTINE EXPLORATIONS WITH YOUR YOUNG CHILD

Every child is different, and these are only suggested adaptations and activities. Do what works best for encouraging your child's independent exploration during this daily routine. Consult your pediatrician, physical therapist (PT), and/or occupational therapist (OT) first.

Volume Measurer

Description: Help your child recognize **volume** by **measuring how much** water is needed to fill different sized cups and/or containers. While bathing your child, talk about **full and empty, more and less**, as your toddler plays with **pouring water from one container to another**.

What My Child Is Learning!

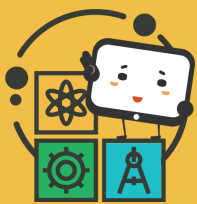
Children learn best by interacting with people and objects. Introduce STEM words, ask questions, and encourage them to recognize patterns in their daily routines. Help your child make a connection between words and real-life experiences and develop fundamental critical thinking and problem-solving skills, as well as math skills.

While children are learning how to express words, they may already have numerous ways to communicate! Watch for their cues as they may express their **curiosity and interest** by turning toward an object or pointing to something. Using open-ended questions offers an opportunity for children to **explore** an object that they are interested in. Ask:

- *What would happen if you poured the water from the bigger cup into the smaller cup? From the smaller cup into the bigger cup?*
- *Which cup holds more water? Less water?*
- *What do you think will happen when we add this _____ (toy/object) to the cup of water?*
- *How do you pour/dump out the water? How do you fill the cup with water?*
- *Which cup is bigger? Smaller?*
- *What do you think will happen when I drop the water through the colander?*
- *What do you think will happen when we add this _____ (toy/object) to the water?*



Image Credit: Mark Evans, Flickr



BATHTIME FOR TODDLERS

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITY IDEAS

DAILY ROUTINE EXPLORATIONS WITH YOUR YOUNG CHILD

Every child is different, and these are only suggested adaptations and activities. Do what works best for encouraging your child's independent exploration during this daily routine. Consult your pediatrician, physical therapist (PT), and/or occupational therapist (OT) first.

- Consider taking these explorations outdoors in a pool or water table
- Check out these books about bathtime:
 - *Time for a Bath* by Phillis Gershator
 - *Bathtime* by New Holland Publishers
 - *Good Night Bath Time* by Adam Gamble & Mark Jasper
 - *Splish! Splash! Bath Time* by Little Hippo Books

