

Montessori-Inspired Activities for Your Toddler

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p>Day 1: Sensory Play Dough Day (touch) Make edible play dough in different colors and have fun smushing and rolling (younger toddlers) or creating (older toddlers). You can add glitter (I rolled ours in old Christmas cards one day with Baby J), although that makes it less edible! You can also have a tray of beads, beans, or whatever else is on hand to push into the play dough if you're not planning to keep it in the refrigerator for future play.</p>	<p>Day 2: Cooking Day (taste and smell) Mash up a banana or a soft-cooked vegetable with your little one and let her start adding spices (after smelling them). Talk about what seasonings taste good with others. Stir up a wonderful concoction. (You will have to help her decide which items to add and how much of them, since at this age it's a lot of fun to dump but not much fun to eat the results.) Pull out raisins, dried cranberries, and other easy ingredients to blend from your cupboards. Then have a tea party with your special snack.</p>	<p>Day 3: Shapes Day (touch and see) Read a shapes book to your child (if you don't have one, check one out from the library.) Look for different shapes in his toy box, create little figures in different shapes, or use a geometric solids toy to help him explore the world of new shapes.</p>	<p>Day 4: Rhythm Sticks and Movement Day (hear) Music makes every day better! (Find Sarah Berry's mini-class with babies on YouTube.) You can dance with your toddler and let him tap sticks together as you play fun music with clear rhythm. (Old MacDonald Had a Farm, If You're Happy and You Know It, etc.) You can buy special rhythm sticks that allow you to make different noises, or just use the skinny ends of wooden spoons.</p>	<p>Day 5: Textures Day (touch) Libraries are great for textures day, because they often have board books for children with different-textured pages. Also, during your child's outside time, help him or her notice all the different textures. Children are constantly rubbing and touching and stepping on anything that looks unusual to them, so really you're just joining in the activities they do naturally and giving the textures names. "Soft! Ouch--that's poky! Oooh...slimy." If you have a textured puzzle at home, play with it with your child after naptime to reinforce what she's learned about</p>	<p>Day 6: Finding Disappearing Objects Day (see) If you have an object permanence box, this is the day to pull it out of the closet and use it! (Hiding toys for a while and then reintroducing them makes them brand-new to kids at this age!) If not, set up a shoebox or curtain and hide things from your little one so she can crawl around it/reach inside it to find the object. Play hide and seek with your toddler.</p>	<p>Day 7: Gardening (see, touch, taste, smell) If you have pots of herbs or a garden outside, take your toddler out to explore the garden and taste the herbs. If not, you can buy fresh herbs at Walmart, put them in water, and some of them (basil) will root out, forming new plants you can pot. Let your child pinch off leaves and smell and taste them.</p>

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				textural differences today.		
<p>Day 8: Exploring the Color Red</p> <p>Go on a walk and look for red landmarks (fire hydrants, red roofs, etc.). Take a crayon with you and compare it with the landmarks. Then come home and gather red items in your home. Have your toddler place them in a basket and examine them. Open your spice drawer, examine red-colored spices and sniff them. Talk about their scents and tastes. "Spicy!" Read a book about colors and find the red pages.</p>	<p>Day 9: Exploring the Color Blue</p> <p>Time to add another color to your Montessori work basket collection! You can start the day out with blueberries for breakfast, talking about the color blue, and then going outside to see if the sky is blue today. Collect objects around the house that are blue, separating toys if necessary (since sometimes they will have blue components/building blocks) and put them in a basket. Show your child the red basket. Mix the two colors together and then help your toddler separate them into different baskets again. Read your color-book again and find everything that is blue. Allow your child to select other</p>	<p>Day 10: Exploring the Color Yellow</p> <p>Add another color to your toddler's repertoire! Breakfast today is eggs (if your child eats hard-boiled eggs, you can help him separate white from yellow and point out the difference). Next, find items around the house that are yellow. Add them to a basket. If you're feeling rich, head to the Dollar Tree and pick up some pom-poms and large, colorful beads to separate into your color-themed baskets.</p>	<p>Day 11: Exploring the Color Green</p> <p>Open the crayon box in the morning and let your child color, talking with him about the different color names as he makes his work of art. When he's using green, talk about what else we know about that's green. You can let him look in the vegetable crisper in your refrigerator and point at the green vegetables. If he's hungry, offer him a green snack. (Celery, snow peas, etc.) Outside time is a blast with the color green--there are always many trees and bushes he can find that have different shades of green. If you still have green edible PlayDoh in the refrigerator, playtime could include building trees and bushes out of the Playdough.</p>	<p>Days 12-14: Orange, Violet (Purple), and Rainbow Days</p> <p>Eat oranges and grapes, make new color baskets, have a sorting-colors day, and then celebrate rainbows on the last day of the week.</p>	<p>Days 12-14: Orange, Violet (Purple), and Rainbow Days</p> <p>Eat oranges and grapes, make new color baskets, have a sorting-colors day, and then celebrate rainbows on the last day of the week.</p>	<p>Days 12-14: Orange, Violet (Purple), and Rainbow Days</p> <p>Celebrate rainbows! You can read the story of Noah's ark and the first rainbow during your regular reading time. Keep using your color book(s), crayons, and continue looking through the house for items in the different colors you're exploring.</p>

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	books for reading time and, as you read, point to blue pictures. (If you have an older toddler, ask him to find the blue objects on the pages without your help unless necessary.)					
<p>Day 15: Wooden Puzzle Day You can get a wooden puzzle with large handholds in many stores. Another option for young children is blocks that stack onto posts, such as an inexpensive stackable wooden train.</p>	<p>Day 16: Fine Motor Skills Day If your toddler is beginning to want to feed herself with a spoon, today is a great day for spoon practice! Fill a wide, shallow box with dried pinto beans or anything else in the pantry that's easy to clean up. Set an ice tray either next to the box or nestled inside it. Let your toddler use tools to transfer the beans into the ice cube tray. These could be spoons or fun grasping tools. If she decides to use her fingers, she's still practicing her fine motor skills because she has to</p>	<p>Day 17: Let's Play Ball (gross motor skills) Choose an oversized ball, such as a soft, mesh-covered beach ball. Practice rolling on top of it, pushing it, and throwing it. If your child is older, have her try standing on one foot and throwing the ball. Encourage her to think of other "tricky" ways she can play with the ball. If your child is still in the transitional stage between baby and toddler, he can crawl along while pushing the ball. Help him roll over</p>	<p>Day 18: Music Time! Create a playlist for your child of happy music. (I like to play Spanish music for J.) Use a set of bells/a child's xylophone OR set up different sizes of metal bowls for tapping, and play along with the music during one song. Your child will probably be anxiously awaiting her turn, but have her watch for at least the first verse/chorus. Then let her take charge of the "instrument."</p>	<p>Day 19: Lacing/Sewing Day You can make your own lacing toy by knotting string, pulling it through a paper plate, and making plenty of holes. Make sure your lacing tool is small enough to go through the holes but not too small for your toddler's fingers. Or, you can buy a lacing toy.</p>	<p>Day 20: Construction Worker Make your little one into a construction worker for the day! Make a hat out of construction paper :) or just pop a cap on his head. Then, either create tools for him (think--wooden spoon and pegs for hammer and nails) or let him play with a child's tool set. Show him how to build a box/whatever else you can come up with. Then, let him happily pound away in a safe</p>	<p>Day 21: Make an Instrument Day Choose an instrument to make for/with your child. (Here's the list of homemade instruments you can easily put together: https://therestfulhome.com/homemade-instruments-for-baby/.) Model playing along with music on the radio and then let her play to her heart's content. If you play a real instrument, try playing it and letting her accompany you.</p>

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	carefully pinch and carry the little beans.	the top of the ball with his body, especially if the ball is smaller than he is. Try to help him gain independence as he plays ball.			place.	
<p>Day 22: Sticks and Stones Go outside and explore nonliving things--dead sticks, stones, etc. This would be a great day for throwing rocks in the pond/river if you live near one! You can bring music into this day by using your rhythm sticks to make music, or by collecting small pea gravel in a container to make a shaker.</p>	<p>Day 23: Leaves and Flowers Let your child explore plants today. If you have a vegetable garden, let her help you harvest today's meal, tear up herbs for spices, etc. If not, go to a nursery and let your child smell the flowers and maybe choose a plant to take home. For older toddlers, you can try activities like sprouting beans in a wet paper towel, but for babies/young toddlers, such extended-time activities won't make much sense.</p>	<p>Day 24: Things that Go Today is the day to wave at cars, play with trucks and trains in the playroom/bedroom, and read stories about things with wheels. You can visit a toy store and look at different types of vehicles there, go to the library and check out books on things that go (look for books for tomorrow's activity, as well), or even stop near a train station and watch a train go by, imitating the noises.</p>	<p>Day 25: Funny Noises Animal noises, car noises, plane noises--and funny noises! Make this a fun storytime day. (Suggested reading: <i>Mr. Brown Can Moo! Can You?</i>)</p>	<p>Day 26: Painting the Sidewalk with Water (or Chalk) If you have a sidewalk or carport entrance, have fun next to your child drawing pictures on it with sidewalk chalk. Don't want the mess of chalk? Just use paintbrushes your child can dip into water. She can use wet brushstrokes to paint happily on the cement.</p>	<p>Day 27: Digging Day If you don't have a sandbox, look for a nearby park that has one or something similar where children can dig. Help your toddler outline a garden and use twigs and leaves for imaginary plants. Or, you can bury "treasures" in the sandbox for your child to dig up. (This might be a day to bring out the book <i>Pirates Don't Change Diapers!</i>)</p>	<p>Day 28: Look at all the Buildings Go downtown (or outside if you live in a large apartment complex/near city buildings). Point at tall buildings, short buildings, shiny buildings, and old buildings. Ask your toddler questions, even if he isn't speaking much yet. Have a storytime about houses and buildings. Use blocks to help your toddler create his own big buildings and houses.</p>
<p>Day 29: Review</p>	<p>Day 30: Finger-Painting Day!</p>					

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<p>Colors Read your color books again. Get out the baskets you've made for all your colors, point out the different colors, and have a sorting time. If your child enjoys coloring/painting, have picture-making time.</p>	<p>Climb in the bathtub and start painting with sloppy, paint-covered hands. You can easily clean the bathtub--and your messy child--when the fun comes to an end.</p>					
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