

Bubbles and Toddlers

Blowing and watching bubbles are great fun for toddlers and may not seem like anything more, but actually this entertaining activity has many important roles in cognitive, language, and physical development for toddlers. Really!

Activities for Library and Home

- Engage toddlers in blowing bubbles from simple wands and watching others blow bubbles. Let them to chase the bubbles and try to pop them!
- Let toddlers pop the bubbles on different body parts while you label the parts.
- Have toddlers get their hands wet and try to catch the bubbles gently.
- Have toddlers blow on bubbles once the bubbles are in the air to see what happens!
- Let toddlers blow a small amount of bubble mixture through a straw in a cup; watch the bubbles come up over the top of the cup!
- Help toddlers make their own simple bubble wand with a chenille stem or paper cone.
- Introduce science concepts, such as 'look at the bubbles drift in that direction; that's the way the wind is blowing,' and 'air is trapped inside the bubble and the soap skin is very thin; that's why the bubble is so light and floats.'
- Count bubbles with the toddlers as they drift by.



Extension Activities for Parents at Home

- Make dish soap foam: Squirt dish soap in a food processor and add one-quarter as much water. Blend (yes, really!) for sensory foam. The longer you blend, the thicker and foamier the soap gets. Feeling even more adventurous? Add food coloring. Have toddlers draw in the foam for a great activity to help get them ready to write.
- Make a soapy jar: Fill up empty plastic peanut butter or similarly sized container halfway with water. Add a few drops of food coloring and a good squirt of soap (optional: add glitter). Seal tightly (or even glue shut)! Give to your toddlers to play with and watch as they shake for soapy water and then let the mixture settle for less foamy water.

Learning

- [Research shows](#) that toddlers that blow bubbles develop language skills earlier than those that don't! Researchers found a clear link between a toddler's ability to control their breathing and carry out complex mouth movements with the ability to develop language skills, and that bubble blowing is an activity that speeds this development.
- Chasing bubbles—crawling, walking, reaching, climbing—and trying to catch and pop them helps toddlers strengthen muscles and develop gross motor skills.
- When toddlers blow into the bubble wand and watch bubbles coming out, they're learning first hand, by observation, about cause and effect; this is a crucial STEM concept and basic principle for understanding the world around them.
- Making simple bubble wands from chenille stems or paper cones helps toddlers develop fine motor skills that they'll need for writing.
- Blowing bubbles naturally engages toddlers in experimentation and play with purpose, allowing the fun and excitement to guide their curiosity and learning.

Vocabulary Builder:

Introduce words like translucent, rainbow, transparent, airy, adrift, and windblown as vocabulary builders when talking with toddlers about bubbles. Engage them with questions like, 'did you blow one bubble, 2 bubbles, or many bubbles?', 'what colors do you see in the bubbles?', 'how hard do you need to blow to get the bubbles to come out?', and 'how long did the bubbles last?'