

## *Refrigerator Notes*

### *Facilitating Children’s Language & Pre-School Readiness Skills: Parents as “Coaches”*

“Descriptive commenting” is a powerful way to strengthen children’s language skills. The following is a list of actions, behaviors and objects that can be commented upon when playing with your child. Use this checklist to practice descriptive commenting concepts.

<b>Objects, Actions</b>	<b>Examples</b>
_____ colors _____ number counting _____ shapes _____ names of objects _____ sizes (long, short, tall, smaller than, bigger than, etc.,) _____ positions (up, down, beside, next to, on top, behind, etc.,)	“You have the red car and the yellow truck.”  “There are one, two, three dinosaurs in a row.”  “Now the square Lego is stuck to the round Lego.”  “That train is longer than the track.”  “You are putting the tiny bolt in the right circle.”  “The blue block is next to the yellow square, and the purple triangle is on top of the long red rectangle.”
<b>Persistence</b>	
_____ working hard _____ concentrating, focusing _____ stay calm, patience _____ trying again _____ problem solving _____ thinking skills _____ reading	“You are working so hard on that puzzle and thinking about where that piece will go.”  “You are so patient and just keep trying all different ways to make that piece fit together.”  “You are staying calm and trying again.”  “You are thinking hard about how to solve the problem and coming up with a great solution to make a ship.”
<b>Behaviors</b>	
_____ following parent’s directions _____ listening _____ independence _____ exploring	“You followed directions exactly like I asked you. You really listened.”  “You have figured that out all by yourself.”



## REFRIGERATOR NOTES

### Promoting Toddlers' Language and Pre-School Readiness Skills

- Prompt your toddler to communicate by modeling the words for him to repeat
- Praise your toddler's use of words
- Chant and sing rhymes and teach your child body movements that go with the words
- Use many more descriptive comments than questions
- Describe your toddler's actions
- Praise and give positive feedback to your toddler (that's right!)
- Describe your toddler's body parts and feelings
- Listen to your toddler and imitate, or mirror, your toddler's words
- Notice what your toddler is interested in and talk about it
- Describe the objects, shapes, numbers, letters and colors of toys your toddler plays with
- Describe what your own actions to your toddler (e.g., "I'm going to the kitchen now)
- Tell your toddler you love him or her and share feelings of joy
- Notice when your toddler is working hard, concentrating, being calm, staying patient with a frustrating activity, trying again and name or describe this persistence
- Read to your toddler often
- Give your child opportunities to color and describe his actions
- Talk about positions of objects (e.g., inside, under, beside, next to)
- Talk about simple every day stories and events
- Use puppets to make up stories with your toddler
- Use make believe such as pretend phones to encourage talking
- Try to really understand what your toddler is saying
- Use new words to expand her vocabulary even if you know she won't understand at first





## REFRIGERATOR NOTES

### Reading with Your Toddler

- Read at a quiet time when you are relaxed and comfortable—with TV and music turned off (this prevents over stimulation)
- Hold your toddler in comfortable position on your lap when reading
- Read for a few minutes each day when your toddler seems calm and alert. (Reading at bedtime is a great routine to have established because it helps your toddler calm down.)
- If you have other children, read to them as well
- Use “parent-ese” language when reading, because this is preferred by toddlers over regular communication. Parent-ese sounds like this:
  - singsong, higher pitched, slower voice
  - clear articulation (not baby talk)
  - pause longer after speaking to wait for response
  - words repeated often
  - reader uses an exaggerated facial expression (big smiles) when responding
  - expressive voice using sound effects (for animals, cars, actions)
- Point to pictures in the book and talk about them or make up stories
- Re-read books your toddler likes many times
- Chant and sing rhymes
- Use hand movements with words
- Praise and give positive feedback (that’s right!)
- Slide your finger under the words or letters on the page and show left to right movement
- Encourage your toddler to turn the pages
- Read the names of the author and illustrator to your toddler as you begin reading
- Go to the library together for story time or just to browse. Let your child pick several books to take home





## REFRIGERATOR NOTES

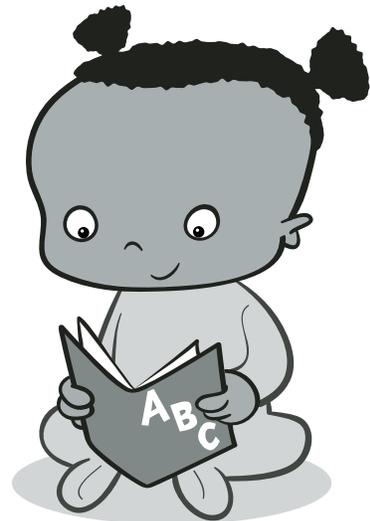
### Reading with Your Toddler

- For 12-18-month-old toddlers—read books that encourage your toddler to chime in and repeat words; books that label objects and parts of the body; books that illustrate action words such as walking or running; and books with flaps or noises.
- For 18-24 month old toddlers—read books about your toddler’s interests (boats, trucks); books that include hand movements; books with numbers, colors, shapes; books with stories that show feelings.
- Read books that reflect your toddler’s experience such as having a bath, putting on boots for the rain; books that use phrases such as good-bye, thank you; books that ask questions; books with rhymes and songs with hand movements;
- Keep reading each day.

Remember, toddlers have a wide range in attention span, that will vary daily. Don’t worry if your toddler seems restless and gets off your lap. Keep reading and ask him questions about the story to see if he is still interested. If he responds keep reading, if he seems more interested in another activity, wait and try to read again later.

Most toddlers will want to have the same book read over and over again—this is important to them because it provides security and allows them to memorize the book so they get a feeling of mastery over the book. Then they may even read the book back to you! It is an important pre-reading skill.

**I read the  
same book  
over and over**

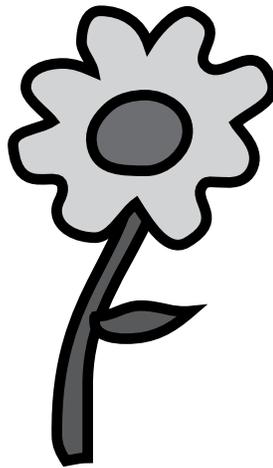




## REFRIGERATOR NOTES

### Social & Emotional Developmental Landmarks 19–24 months

- Enjoys helping around the house (19 months)
- Understand most of what you say—about 200 words (19–20 months)
- Still loves rhymes and songs repeated (all months)
- Recognizes when something is wrong (19–20 months)
- Captivated by visual illustrations in books (20 months)
- Points to picture when you name it (20 months)
- Can say 50-100 or more words—learns at a rate of 10 or more per day! (20–24 months)
- Imitates expressions (even swear words!)
- Imitates what you do (clean table, wash dishes) (20 months)
- Does pretend play such as feed baby doll (20 months)
- Can identify and name several body parts (20 months)
- Learns how to form a question—“why” (21–22 months)
- Starts using action words (e.g., more, eat)
- Name simple picture in book (22 months)
- Sings simple tunes (23–24 months)
- Begins to be interested in playing with other children (24 months)
- Half of speech can be understood (24 months)
- Can make 2–3 word phrases (“me go”) (24 months)

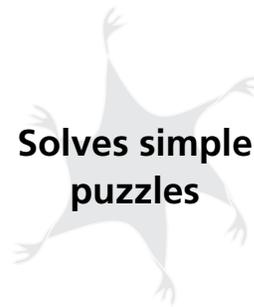




## REFRIGERATOR NOTES

### Physical Developmental Landmarks 19–24 months

- Uses fork and spoon (19 months)
- Can take off clothes (20 months)
- Can walk up but not down stairs (20–21 months)
- Stacks 6 blocks (21–22 months)
- Does simple puzzles (22–23 months)
- Puts on loose clothing (23–24 months)





## REFRIGERATOR NOTES

### Building Blocks for Reading With CARE



- C** Comment, use descriptive commenting to describe pictures. Take turns interacting, and let your child be the storyteller by encouraging him/her to talk about the pictures.
- A** Ask open-ended questions.  
"What do you see on this page?" (observing and reporting)  
"What's happening here?" (storytelling)  
"What is that a picture of?" (promoting academic skills)  
"How is she feeling now?" (exploring feelings)  
"What is going to happen next?" (predicting)
- R** Respond with praise and encouragement to your child's thinking and responses.  
"That's right!"  
"You are really thinking about that."  
"Wow, you know a lot about that."
- E** Expand on what your child says.  
"Yes, I think he's feeling excited, too, and he might be a little scared as well."  
"Yes, it is a horse; it's also called a mare."  
"Yes, that boy is going to the park. Do you remember going to the park?"

I read with  
CARE to my  
child





## Refrigerator Notes

### Goodness of Fit—Managing Your Child’s Temperament

Even if parents have different temperaments than their children, they can still strive for a good fit with their child. A good fit is when parent’s demands and expectations are compatible with their child’s temperament, abilities and characteristics. The goal is always to manage rather than to squelch or change temperament.

Here are some tips for achieving a good fit and managing your child’s temperament.

- Realize that your child’s temperament style is not your “fault” because temperament is something biological and innate, not something that is learned from parents. Your child is probably not purposely trying to be difficult or irritating. Don’t blame him or yourself.
- Respect your child’s temperament without comparing to other siblings or trying to change his or her basic temperament.
- Consider your own basic temperament and behavior and tailor your parenting responses when they clash with your child’s responses to encourage a better fit.
- Remember what you model for your children is what they learn from you.
- Try to consider and anticipate your child’s adaptability, activity level, sensitivity, biological rhythms and ability to sustain attention when planning activities that are most suitable for your child.
- Try to focus on the issues of the moment. Do not project into the future.
- Review your expectations for your child, your preferences and your values. Are they realistic and appropriate?
- Anticipate high risk situations and try to avoid or minimize them.
- Enjoy the interactions and the differences in each of your children.
- Avoid labeling your child as bad or difficult as this may lead to negative self-image and further compound his difficulties.
- Try to distinguish between a tantrum that is temperamentally induced (reaction to disappointment) versus one that is manipulative (designed to get parent to give in).
- Help your child develop a positive self-esteem – that is, to have a fair sense of his strengths and weaknesses.
- Find a way to get relief for yourself and your child by scheduling some time apart.

Remember above all temperament qualities can be shaped to work to a child’s advantage if they are sensibly managed.

