

# 100 Things You Can Do *To* *Support Your Child's Development*



 easterseals  
100



Easterseals Central Illinois is your partner in raising a happy, healthy child. Our team of child development experts have shared 100 of their favorite ways to support all areas of a child's development. For more activities and resources including handouts, videos and social stories visit [esci.link/resources](https://esci.link/resources).

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**Gross motor skills, coordination, balance, strengthening:**

1. Floor is Lava (can use pillows or colored paper)
2. "Mirror Me" – Strike a pose, have child copy your body

position

3. Use painters tape to make indoor balance beam
4. Action motor songs (i.e. “Head, Shoulders, Knees, and Toes”)
5. Count jumps on trampoline or couch cushions on the floor
6. Balloon volleyball
7. Animal walks across the room
8. Balance stuffed animals on head (try standing, standing on one foot, walking)
9. Play “Red Light, Green Light”
10. “Ice skate” on carpet sliding feet on paper or Styrofoam plates
11. Three-four part obstacle using furniture or household objects to climb over, under, around, or on
12. Have a scavenger hunt (inside or outside)
13. Play catch with a ball (easy>hard: balloon>beach ball>playground ball>weighted ball)
14. Make a blanket fort
15. Hula Hoop toss (lay hula hoop on the floor for target to tossing bean bags or stuffed animals)
16. Paper ball soccer – (scrunch up newspaper or used wrapping paper) kick back and forth or kick to a goal (such as a basket or box turned on its side)
17. Play “Simon Says”

### **Fine motor skills, sensory play, arm/hand strengthening:**

18. Finger play songs (i.e. “Where is Thumpkin” or “Itsy Bitsy Spider”)
19. String beads or dry pasta on pipe cleaners (can make bracelets, key chains, or ornaments)
20. Sidewalk chalk outside or on construction paper inside

21. Play dress up together
22. Crayon rubbings (place paper over a hard textured surface and use the side of a crayon to show design)
23. Use socks or paper lunch bag for a puppet show (can decorate with colors or add googly eyes)
24. Simple card games (i.e. "Go Fish")
25. Cut Play-Doh with scissors or cookie cutters
26. Building with blocks – can have child copy simple structures or patterns
27. Play "I (eye) Spy"
28. Use shaving cream on bathtub wall (can spread out and draw with fingers or can make foam shapes and letters stick to tub)
29. Pudding painting – spread pudding on wax paper or plate and have child use finger or utensil to "draw" or use like finger paint
30. Make two ingredient cloud dough (mix one part conditioner with two parts corn starch)

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31. "Lily Pad Hop" – use construction paper or pillows as lily pads, have child hop or frog jump from pad to pad
32. Swing at the park or in back yard (can sit on bottom or lay on stomach)
33. "Magic Carpet Ride" – have child sit or lay on blanket and pull them across the floor
34. Pretend play pushing/pulling objects in laundry basket or cardboard box
35. Have a dance party



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**Social emotional  
development/expression**

36. Use a mirror to practice making different faces while identifying various emotions
37. Use a pinwheel to practice taking deep breaths
38. Use characters in books to help your child gain emotion identification skills
39. Practice self-care to ensure you are best able to care for those you love
40. Model appropriate expressions of anger for your child
41. Join your child in their world of play — encourage and praise imagination and creativity!

- 42. Practice I-statements, “I feel... because...”
- 43. Help your child re-frame negative statements more positively
- 44. Use art to help your child express their emotions when they have trouble verbalizing
- 45. Give your child a warning before transitioning to another activity, “Five more minutes”



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- 46. Take advantage of opportunities to embrace unpredictability to model flexibility, “All the spoons are dirty, I guess we are eating ice cream with forks!”
- 47. Use pets to practice gentle touches
- 48. Find other ways to provide nurturance besides hugs, e.g. put lotion on hands, wash hands together, wrap them in a blanket
- 49. Acknowledge your child’s feelings, not just the words they are saying
- 50. Role-play scenarios your child might be worried about using humor and creativity, e.g. If there is fear of thunderstorms or tornados, ask, “What kind of candy do you wish it was raining?”
- 51. Use a rocking chair or swing as a calming strategy

- 52. Incorporate movement breaks throughout the day
- 53. Use kinetic sand or Play-Doh as a regulating activity
- 54. Create a calming corner



**Free Online ASQ Developmental Screening Tool**



**MakeTheFirstFiveCount.com**  
**Support appropriate behaviors**

- 55. Plan a play date with another child with similar interests
- 56. Challenge them to do something new independently
- 57. Use a basic item (bowl, cardboard, etc.) in a creative way
- 58. Put a favorite item out of reach so they can practice requesting it
- 59. Identify items in a book that go together (blue thing, things with wheels, etc.)
- 60. Go on a scavenger hunt
- 61. Practice trading toys with another person
- 62. Practice different ways to greet people (saying hello, waving, high five, etc.)
- 63. Read books with kids with varying types of abilities
- 64. Identify ways to be a good friend
- 65. Do a family activity that benefits the whole house

66. Teach your child a new chore
67. Have your child pick out their own pajamas
68. Play Charades
69. FaceTime with relative (ask your child to identify their facial expressions – happy, excited, etc.)
70. Work on Imitation skills - play “I do, you do”
71. Have your child pick a reinforcement to work for- then make a plan of how to earn it
72. Praise your child for something very specific that they did well!

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## **Feeding Therapy**

73. Kids don't have to eat “kid foods.” With early and frequent exposure, kids can learn to eat most all the same foods as their parents.
74. Older kids can help plan a menu for the week and younger kids can pick out foods in the produce section at the grocery store. If you are shopping curbside pick-up right now, they can look at the pictures online when you place your order
75. Explore new foods as a family – pick out a new recipe a few times a month and everyone gets to rate it on a scale of 1-5
76. Have the whole family eat together for meals whenever possible
77. Model for your kids a willingness to try new foods – if you are saying aloud that you won't eat specific foods they will follow those cues and choose their own foods to refuse
78. When planning a meal, try to have a protein, starch, and a fruit and/or vegetable for each meal
- 79.



Involve your child in cooking process – such as let them help you stir the pancake mix or put fruit into the blender for a smoothie

80. Vary the presentation of foods – cut a banana into slices or spears, cut toast into quarters or strips 81.

Maintain a meal/snack schedule



### **Speech-Language development**

82. Establish a morning routine

83. Blow bubbles high and low so the child has to reach

84. Create motions for your child's favorite song 85.

Wake-up time: If child is in bed and waking up, model

“time to get UP” or “do you want to get OUT” 86. Keep

preferred items out of reach to give child opportunity to request

87. Model “more” if child looks at you expectantly 88.

Bath/bathroom show me \_\_\_\_ (teeth, mouth, nose, hair, eyes etc.)

89. While in the bath/bathroom describe what you see, smell, taste, feel (slippery, smooth, wet, hot, cold) 90.

While in the bath/bathroom add multi-step directions:

Put on soap, now scrub

91. When eating say “Show me the \_\_\_\_” (different foods or color of foods)

92. When eating model phrase “I want \_\_\_\_” 93. When

eating talk about the texture, size, shape, color of the different foods on their plate

94. When getting dressed give child direction of which clothing item to put on: “Put on your sock”

95. When getting dressed expand to two-step directions by saying “Put on your sock, then put on your shoe”

96. When getting dressed work on colors by asking child to pick out certain colored shirts – or – talk about what colors the child is wearing that day

97. When driving, label anything you see out the window when you’re stopped

98. When at a stoplight and the light turns green, model the phrase “ready, set, \_\_\_!”

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99. When driving, search for things that go fast and then search for things that go slow

100. When driving up and then down a hill, say “up, up up!” “down, down, down!”



**BONUS!**

101. On your way to the store ask what types of things we get at a store?

102. Describe items you see throughout your day: color, shape, size, quantity, texture, etc.

103. Giving two options and using a carrier phrase “I want \_\_\_” to help your child choose

104. Talk about what you or others are doing around you to practice verbs



***We are your partner in raising happy, healthy children! If you have questions or concerns about your child's development please contact:***

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Child and Family Connections  
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For children ages 3+:  
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