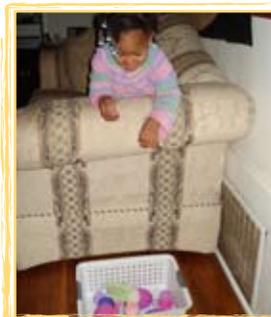


A child's interests are

Windows of Opportunity

to fun and enjoyable learning

Throwing and dropping things are powerful learning activities for many young children



Places to learn and activities to enjoy AT HOME

In the kitchen

- If she delights in dropping toys, spoons, cereal bits, and other things to the floor from her high chair, she probably also relishes the fact that you stoop and hand them back to her. She has learned that her action prompts a fun *interaction* with you! For the times when you're too busy with kitchen chores for "pick-up games," tie a few toys to her chair tray with short pieces of ribbon or string. Show her how to pull up the strings to retrieve a toy herself.
- When you're cooking, find ways he can be involved. After washing his hands, let him take on activities like dropping fruit or vegetables into water to rinse or tossing croutons onto a big bowl of salad. Praise him for his helpfulness, using words to describe his efforts. "You dropped the sugar sprinkles on every cookie. You're a very good kitchen helper!"
- Many kitchen cupboards and drawers hold an assortment of sturdy utensils that can stand up to occasional throwing/dropping fun. For example, arrange a set of plastic mixing or storage bowls on the floor to serve as targets into which she can toss potholders, refrigerator magnets, or plastic lids. You could show your older toddler how to use a plastic or wooden serving spoon to scoop such things up and drop them into the kitchen containers.

In the yard

- Play "toss the clothespin into the laundry basket" next time you're outdoors together, hanging clothes on the line. Each time a clothespin lands in the basket, praise your little one with a different rhyming cheer: "The clothespin went in! You did it again!" "In it goes, right on the nose!"
- Your young child's love of throwing can be a doorway to helpfulness in the yard. After a storm, for example, you can gather up fallen twigs and small branches together. Make a fun game of seeing who can throw the branches into a garden hamper or onto a tarp for removal.

In the bathroom

- Bath time is a terrific opportunity for throwing and dropping things. The exciting splashes make it extra fun! Some ideas: Let your young child drop a few fizzy bath tablets or bath-oil capsules into the running water to add interesting scent, color, and/or bubbles to the water. Provide a variety of different plastic cups and scoops your toddler can fill with water and then drop into the tub for a major splash.
- Show your young bather how to float a washcloth on the surface of the bathwater and then sink it by pelting it with tub toys.

Places to learn and activities to enjoy **AWAY FROM HOME**

Supermarket

- Let your toddler grasp and drop green beans (or any other fresh fruits and vegetables) one at a time into a produce bag you hold open for her.

A walk in the neighborhood

- As you push him in his stroller, give him a lapful of autumn leaves to drop one by one along the way.
- With permission, let her toss a treat to a neighbor's pet dog.

Coin laundry

- Make a game of balling up small articles of clothing (such as socks and underwear) and tossing them into the washing and drying machines.

Duck pond

- Bring along pieces of dry bread, cracked corn, or other appropriate feed to toss to ducks and geese.
- Gather small stones or acorns to throw into the water or to drop in from a dock or a foot bridge over the water. Which ones make the biggest splashes?
- Show your child how to hold her hands together, palms up, to scoop up handfuls of water and toss them high into the air, letting the cool drops splash down on herself. It's raining!



The joy of throwing pebbles into a pond—kerplash!

Community playground

- From a secure perch atop a playground climbing structure, let him drop small sticks and acorns to the ground below. Help him avoid dropping anything on people who might be beneath him. Talk about what he is doing. "You dropped the stick! Down, down it goes—All the way to the ground! Look, here's another stick you can drop. Where will you make this stick go?"
- On a snowy day, scoop up handfuls of snow to form into small balls she can drop or throw.
- Show him how to throw a soft ball onto a playground slide so that, if he stands or sits at the bottom of the slide, the ball rolls right back down to him and he can play over and over again.
- Does the playground have a sandbox? Dig a hole in the sand and let her drop a small toy into it. Quickly cover the toy with a couple of scoops of sand. Where did the toy go? Show her how to use a sand shovel or her hands to uncover the hidden toy.

Religious services

- Let your young child be the family member who drops your family's contribution into the collection basket or plate.

Shopping mall

- Let your little one toss a few pennies into a wishing well or fountain pool at an indoor mall or into a charity volunteer's collection "kettle."



Mommy shows me how to toss food to funny geese.

