



Social and Emotional Development **Activity for 18 to 24 Months**

Initiating My Own Play

Toddlers love to do what other people are doing. Adults can be good role models for young children on how to play independently.

Materials:

- Child's toys and play materials
- Toy chest or box

What to do:

1. Point out family members' activities to the child: "Look, Daddy is peeling potatoes. Mommy is reading the paper. Sister is riding her tricycle. What are you going to do?" Encourage the child to engage in activities she can perform on her own, such as looking at picture books or playing with cars, trains, or dolls.
2. Ask the child, "What would you like to play with?" when finishing with a meal or getting dressed after a nap. See if the child requests a particular toy. If the child doesn't respond, try giving her a choice between two toys you name.
3. Start the child on an activity and gradually reduce direct interaction until the child can focus and play for a minute or two alone.
4. Try to re-engage a child if she loses interest after a minute or two. From the sidelines, give her ideas to keep playing. For instance, if you see the child put down a doll, suggest the doll is hungry and she should feed it.

