



Lincoln Parents' Center

December 2016

December Play Theme: Stars



Through play children are learning how things work, how to use their bodies, how to solve problems, and how to get along with others. Play is an avenue through which children can express their emotions, build relationships with others, and master difficult experiences.

Talk Together

For your baby: Sing "Twinkle Twinkle Little Star" with your baby, using hand gestures to go along with the song. Bundle your baby up one evening before bed and show her the stars. Point them out, repeating the word star. Listen for her to say it, it might sound like tar or sar.

For your toddler: Sing "Twinkle Twinkle Little Star" and teach your toddler hand gestures to go with the song (flick your fingers for twinkling stars, wave your hands over your head for up above the world so high, etc.) Take your child outside before bedtime and look up into the night-time sky. Can he find any stars? What color are they? Are they bright? Are they twinkling? What else does he see in the night sky—a moon, an owl, a plane?

Read Together

Read some starry books together. **For babies**, try: *Sleep Songs: Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star/Golden Slumbers* by Amanda Wallwork, *Little Bear's Special Wish* by Gillian Lobel, and the classic *Goodnight Moon* by Margaret Wise Brown. **For older toddlers**, good choices include, *Hush Little Baby* and *Twinkle Twinkle Little Star* both by Sylvia Long, *Owl Moon* by Jane Yolen, and *Forest Bright, Forest Night* by Jennifer Ward.

Play Together

For your baby: Play "basketstar" with your baby. Buy a few star-shaped cookie cutters in different shapes or cut star shapes out of cardboard. Let your baby touch these and play with them. If you hold out a metal bowl, see if your baby will drop the cookie cutters in (they will make an exciting clatter). When she's done you can take them out and play "basketstar" all over again.

For your toddler: Try making a starry night sky. Cut a few star shapes from a new kitchen sponge. Then give your child a piece of black or blue paper and pour a little washable yellow paint into a bowl. Show your child how to dip the sponge star into the paint and then onto the "sky" paper. See how starry your child's sky is.

Information found on "Zero to Three National Center for Infants, Toddlers, and Families"

INSIDE FUN IDEAS:

*Build a tent, fort, or castle. All you need to create a magical get-away is a sheet or blankets and pillows.

*Bubbles can be as much fun indoors as out. Blow bubbles & have your toddler try to pop them with her hands/feet or count them.

*Bowling. Use empty soda bottles as pins & any rubber ball to set up a toddler friendly bowling ally.

*Build a pillow mountain by piling up as many pillows, & blankets as possible in the middle of the room away from sharp corners. Your child will enjoy climbing up and rolling down the "mountain".

*Bathtub painting by placing your toddler in the tub with no water and washable finger paints. Clean up is a cinch!

*Snow play on cold days by filling your sink with snow. Put mittens on your child and give him spoons, cups, and bowls. He can play in the snow without you having to worry about being out in the cold.

*A big box can provide hours of fun. Allow your child to decorate it and include her favorite toys.