

## IDEAS FOR WORKING WITH MY 20 MONTH OLD GRANDCHILD

Darlene writes:

I just started babysitting my 20 month old granddaughter. I am finding it difficult to find activities to do with her. Most activities seem to be geared towards older children. Can you please direct me on how to use your ideas with my granddaughter. She is just learning to talk, so it is hard for me to work with her. Please help me. I want to give her a good head start with her education.

Jean replies:

Your granddaughter is still very young for formal teaching. Just do normal things with her, like talking to her, describing the things you are doing to and with her can help her. Language development is very important at this time. You can increase her vocabulary, by pointing to objects and saying their names.

You can also teach her opposites. When she puts something into a container, say "in". When she takes something out of a container, say "out". You can do the same with up/down, big/little, hot/cold, etc.

One of the most important things you can do is to provide her with a safe environment, in which she can explore safe toys. She is learning about her environment by touching, seeing, smelling, hearing and of course "tasting" by putting things into her mouth. This is how she learns.

Another important thing you can do with her is to read to her. Provide her with soft safe books for her to explore on her own. You can dance with her, crawl with her (if you can), in other words, interact with her as much as you can.

Set up a schedule with her. Play 15 minutes, have a snack, play a restful activity, then a short nape, then repeat the process. Children at her age have very short attention spans, don't plan long activities. Don't be afraid to let her explore on her own as long as she is in a safe environment.

Check out our Toddler Calendar on the website and go to our Toddler Station for ideas.

Sincerely, Jean Warren, Preschool Express