

Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes: 16-36 months

Naming body parts during a song or a game helps your child:

- Learn names of body parts
- Build awareness of her body
- Build listening skills

Ideas to try with your child:

- Begin with simple games, saying things like: “Touch your nose,” or “Find your tummy.” Then try games such as “Dad says touch your nose” or “Mom says tickle your tummy” to help her focus attention on different people directing her.
- Singing songs helps kids learn quickly. Songs like: “Head Knocker, Eye Winker” or “Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes” can be found here: <http://www.rif.org/kids/leadingtoreading/en/babies-toddlers/finger-plays.htm>
- Getting dressed is a good time to practice identifying body parts with the clothing that goes on them. Say things like, “Blue sock on your toes,” “T-shirt on tummy,” and “Batman shoes on your feet.”
- Direct during bath time as well, with phrases like: “Time to clean your feet” and “Let’s wash your face and scrub your hands.”

If your child is struggling:

- When you say “Mom says touch your head,” you touch your head as well so your child can copy your movements.
- When singing a song such as “Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes” do it very slowly, so your child can touch each part before singing the next part of the song.
- During bath time, simplify your language by saying just the body part name as you wash it: “toes,” “tummy,” and “hair.”

Going further:

- Do “Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes” very fast, or try to do the “Hokey Pokey” together.
- Expand the naming of body parts in the simple games and activities above: from eyes to eyelashes, from head to forehead, from arms to elbow, etc.
- Using a bear or a doll, ask your child point to her body parts for you.

The WA State Department of Early Learning and the Richland School District believes that parents, families, and caregivers are young children’s best teachers. This resource guide, part of *Strong Foundations for School: Resource Guides for Parents of Young Children*, highlights a key developmental skill for **children Ages 16-36 months** that parents can help improve at home.



Adapted from *WA State Early Learning and Development Guidelines, 2012*: “Touch correct body parts in songs or games where you identify parts of the body.” *Communicating, Ages-16-36 months*, pg. 48