



# Norwood

Child and Family Resource Centre

## ACTIVITIES TO SUPPORT SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT



9516 114 Avenue NW Edmonton, AB  
[www.norwoodcentre.com](http://www.norwoodcentre.com) | 780-471-3737

## Ease Transitions with a Goodbye Routine

**Outcome:** Having a special goodbye routine enhances the secure attachment between you and your child and makes them feel more safe and secure as they transition into any new environment. Modelling encouraging behaviour will make saying goodbye a positive experience for both you and your child.

**Materials Needed:** A special toy, blanket, photo... YOU!

### How:

Create a special goodbye routine with your child and model encouraging behaviour when you leave.

- **Think of a special handshake or wave to do with your child.**  
Try using a hug-kiss-wave goodbye pattern.
- **Let your child keep a special toy or blanket with them while waiting for you to come back.**  
Assure them you will be back when you say you will (and mean it!)
- **Role model a cheerful goodbye:**  
Make it short and sweet; use a happy tone and positive body language, and do your special handshake or wave.

## Sing, “If You’re Happy and You Know It”

**Outcome:** This activity helps children recognize their own and others’ emotions and feelings, enhances back and forth language and communication and increases leadership ability. It is also good practice for understanding turn-taking.

**Materials Needed:** You! **Optional Extension Materials:** Paper and popsicle sticks.

### How:

Engage your child or children in this song to explore emotions through singing.

- **Start the song by singing,**  
“If you’re happy and you know it, clap your hands.” (Clap your hands twice).  
“If you’re happy and you know it, clap your hands.” (Clap your hands twice).  
“If you’re happy and you know it, and you really want to show it, if you’re happy and you know it, clap your hands.” (Clap your hands twice).
- **Invite your child or children to take turns choosing the emotions and actions then implement them into the song.** For example, If the emotion is anger, the action could be stomping your feet. You would sing: “If you’re angry and you know it, stomp your feet.” (Stomp twice).

### Extension:

Cut out circles and attach them to popsicle sticks.

Draw emotions on the circles: angry, happy, sad, scared, excited, etc. (you can also write the word at the bottom).

Use the cutouts to invite the child or children to talk about emotions.

## Play “Simon Says”

**Outcome:** Children build their listening skills, self-control, ability to pay attention and ability to follow and give instructions.

**Materials Needed:** None.

### How:

You take the role of ‘Simon’ and have your child or children follow simple, fun instructions ... but only if you say “Simon says” first!

- Invite your child or children to stand facing you.
- Encourage them to follow your instructions, but only if you first say the words, “Simon says.”
- For Example:
  - “Simon says ... point to your toes.”
  - “Simon says ... touch your eye.”
  - “Simon says ... touch your elbows.”
  - “Now ... touch your ear”
- Children should follow the first three instructions, but not the last instruction, because for that one you didn’t say “Simon says.”
- Encourage children to take turns being ‘Simon’ and giving instructions to others.

**Extension:** For older children, you can explain the rules of the game where if the instruction does not include “Simon says” and they do the action they are out of the game.

## Build a Block Tower

**Outcome:** Turn-taking is a skill that young children must master before they can move on to understanding the more complex concept of sharing. Learning how to take turns is essential for establishing friendships and navigating other relationships throughout life.

**Materials Needed:** A set of blocks (wooden, plastic or cardboard). You can also use

### How:

Using blocks, take turns with your child to build a block tower.

- Set the first block in front of your child and invite them to add a block by saying: "Your turn."
- Acknowledge when your child adds their first block by pausing and saying: "Wow, you added a block!"
- You then add another block to the tower and say: "My turn."
- During this activity make sure to let the child know how much you enjoy taking turns and how proud you are of them.
- Encourage your child to let you know when your turn is next by asking: "My turn?" This will give your child a sense of empowerment and encouragement.

**Extension:** For older children, you can also teach turn-taking by using a timer and/or by playing a game of cards. Older children will understand the complexity of games like *Go Fish* and will have fun taking turns and laughing with everyone.

## Play 'Pass the Milkshake'

**Outcome:** This activity helps children understand the concept of sharing. Sharing prepares children to learn to compromise and be fair as they get older.

**Materials Needed:** An empty plastic water bottle, buttons, water, and any other small loose items you would like to add to the bottle to make music.

### How:

Use the bottle to make music, then pass it along to another child so they can make music, too.

- Fill the plastic water bottle with the materials of your choice: buttons, beads, rocks, water, etc.
- Take the plastic water bottle and sit in a circle with your child or group of children.
- Have the children pass the bottle to each other while singing a 'milkshake song,' like this:

"Shake it (child's name), shake it, shake it like you can, shake it like a milkshake and pass it to your friend."

## Set up a Photo Booth

**Outcome:** Spending quality time together while engaged in a fun activity allows you, your child, and anyone else you who joins you to develop social skills around building and maintaining healthy relationships. Together you will play, have conversations, be patient with each other, and enjoy each other's company.

Technology can be a tool to maintain connection and attachment to other people but not a replacement for actual face-to-face social interactions and watching/learning from others.

**Materials Needed:** Phone or tablet, paper, markers or tools for drawing/colouring, makeup, glue, scissors, glitter, fabric or a blanket, some other props of your choice—costumes or special outfits you may have, hats or crowns, fake or real flowers, sunglasses, masks, etc.

### How:

Create a fun photo booth with your child and take pictures together to strengthen the relationship between you and also with other people around you.

- **Research different photo booth images that you and your child can use for inspiration to make your own photo booth.**
- **Make a list of materials or props you will need to start.**  
You can substitute or remove materials as needed and have fun with materials around your home.
- **After creating your photo booth, take lots of photos!**  
Let your child see the photos you take and let them take pictures of you, too! Invite friends, family, and neighbours to join in!
- **Let your child help choose which photos you share with friends and family members.**
- **Share comments, laugh, and just have a good time enjoying all your new photos as you look through them!**

## Share Bedtime Stories

**Outcome:** When you read a book with your child, you give them your complete attention, which helps them feel secure and loved. Focused time together provides an opportunity for you to listen to and understand your child's feelings and help them learn empathy. It also helps you to form a bond with your child, which will play a vital role in their long-term ability to maintain long-lasting relationships.

**Materials Needed:** An age-appropriate book or story from your child.

### How:

Spend quality time with your child by reading books before bedtime to strengthen the bond between you. Through stories, you can help your child understand emotions, build their language skills, and encourage creativity and imagination.

- When setting up your child's bedtime routine, include reading books or making up stories.

You and your child can take turns making up stories to tell each other.

- Once your book is finished or the story is complete, you and your child can spend a little time discussing it or reviewing the storyline.

Don't be afraid to stop during the story if your child has a question or you are not sure they can understand certain words yet.



## Set up a 'Creation Station'

**Outcome:** This activity supports children in developing social skills such as taking turns, cooperating, negotiating, communicating back and forth, and identifying feelings.

**Materials Needed:** Loose parts—corks, lids, pebbles, sticks, boxes, q-tips, pom-poms, spools, shells, scissors, glue, playdough, paint brushes, paper (newspaper, magazines, or construction paper).

### How:

Provide a variety of creative materials and give children the freedom to explore and create together.

- Place materials and items to create with on a tabletop or on the floor where everyone can be invited to get creative.
- Encourage children to explore and use whatever materials they like to develop their creations.
- Invite conversation by asking your child how different materials feel or by naming and noticing similarities and differences between each creation. For example: "Wow! I see you have a lot of green items and your brother has a lot of blue items."