



Big Blocks, Little Helper

Build a block tower together. By noticing, naming, and responding to your baby's gestures and sounds, you help their ideas become clearer.

Helps Your Child Grow



Communicating and Speaking

Putting your baby's gestures and sounds into words, pausing for a response, and offering two clear choices helps them express what they want more precisely.



Relationships with Adults

Being noticed, understood, and answered during play helps your baby expect warm, responsive interactions with you.



What You'll Need

1. Large building blocks



Put Their Idea into Words

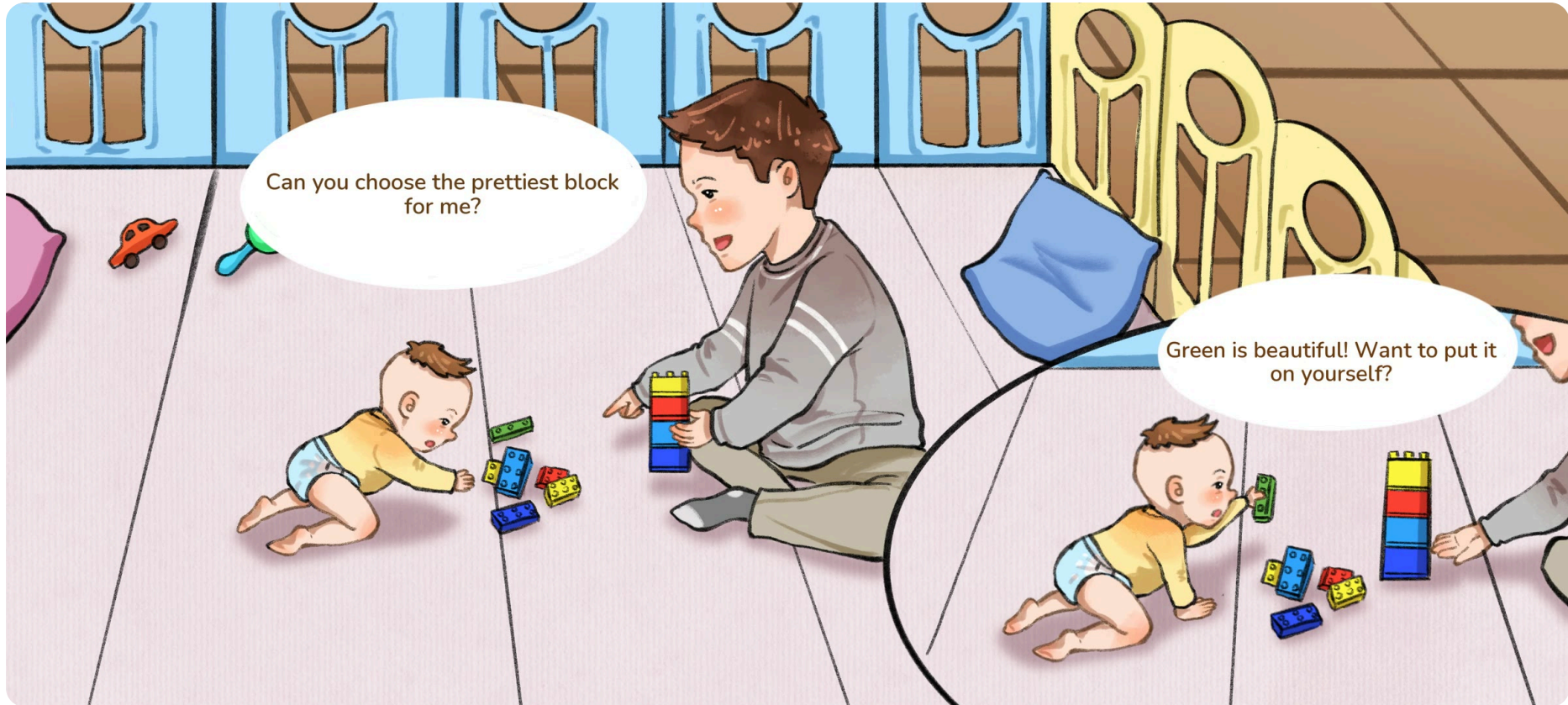
Talk with your baby as you build. When they reach, look, or make a sound toward a block, say what you think they mean: “You want that block.” This helps connect their actions with words.

Observations

- Makes a sound toward you as if asking for something
- Takes a block you offer

Tips

- At nine months, babies often communicate by looking, reaching, pointing, and making sounds. Treat these actions as meaningful attempts to tell you something.
- Instead of immediately handing over a block, pause and ask a short question: “This one?” The pause gives your baby another chance to look, reach, or vocalize.
- Describe what you are doing together: “I’m stacking. You’re holding the red block.”



Ask, Then Wait

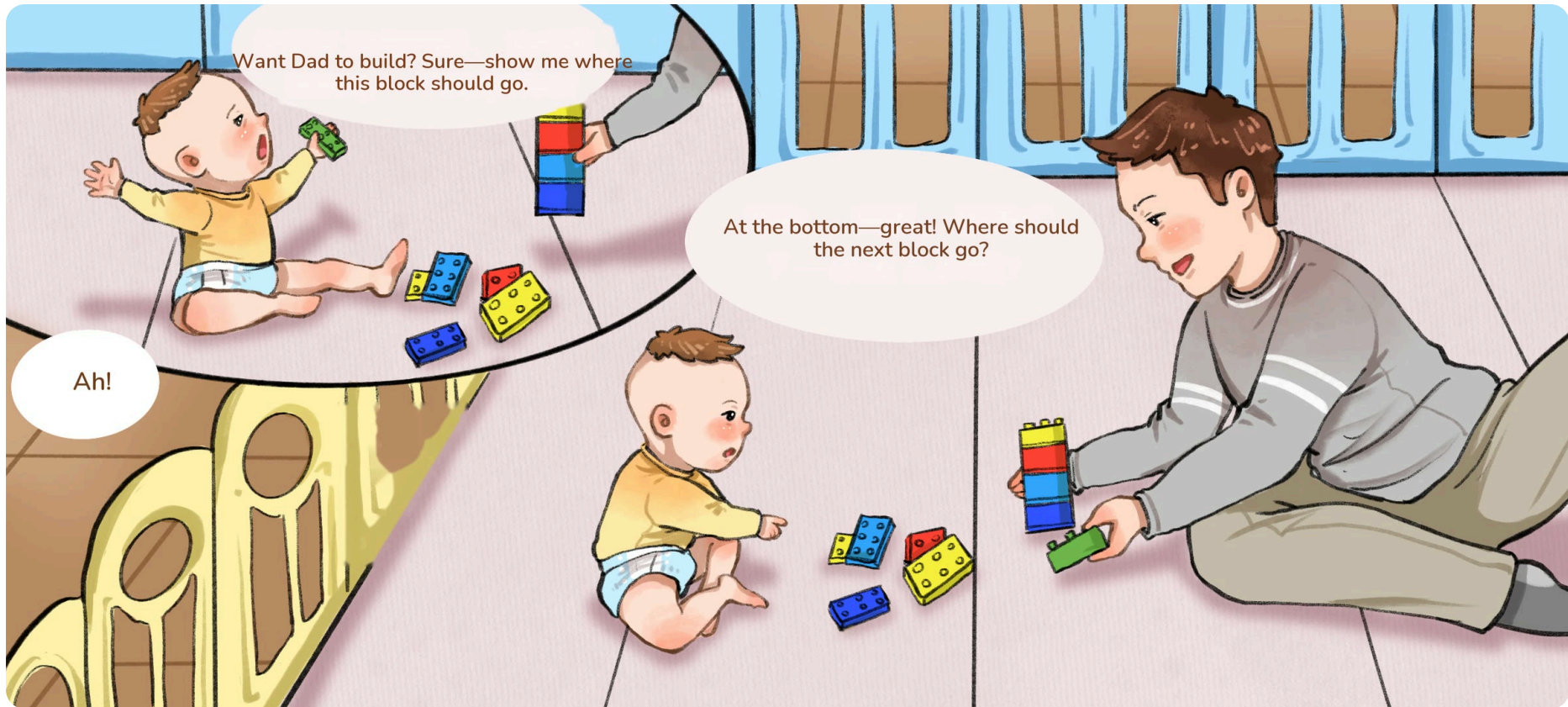
Try building the tower higher. Ask what your baby wants to do next. If you are unsure, make a guess aloud and wait for them to confirm with a look, reach, movement, or sound. Being understood can encourage them to keep communicating.

Observations

- Looks toward you when you call their name during play
- Picks up a large block with their whole hand

Tips

- A quiet pause may mean your baby is looking and deciding. Give them time before asking again.
- After a question, wait for your baby to choose by looking, pointing, or reaching.
- Keep the exchange playful. A warm response can make your baby more eager to communicate.
- Celebrate each small step so your baby feels how enjoyable it is to build with you.



Offer Two Choices

If your baby is trying to tell you something but the message is unclear, hold up two blocks and ask, “The red one or the blue one?” Narrowing the choice gives them a simpler way to show what they mean. If your first guess is wrong, notice their response and try again.

Observations

- Uses sounds to express an idea during play
- Enjoys playing the building game with you

Tips

- It is fine if your first guess is wrong. Continuing to notice and respond matters more than guessing correctly right away.
- A choice between two objects makes it easier for your baby to take part in the exchange.