

Quick summary

Duplo bricks are large, easy-to-handle building blocks made for very young children. For a 1-year-old, Duplo is best used for exploration, grasping, stacking a little, and lots of parent-led, supervised play. Keep activities short, fun, and safe.

What you need

- A small Duplo set (big bricks, few pieces).
- Soft floor surface (rug or play mat).
- Close adult supervision.
- A small basket or tray for tidy-up games.

Step-by-step: Introduce Duplo to a 1-year-old

1. **Set up safely:** Sit on the floor with your child. Remove tiny toys and distractions. Spread out 6–10 large Duplo bricks within reach.
2. **Show one brick at a time:** Hold it, name the color, and let your child touch it. Keep your language simple: "Red!" "Big!"
3. **Encourage grasping and mouthing awareness:** Expect mouthing at this age — supervise closely and remove any damaged pieces. Praise when they hold a brick: "You have it!"
4. **Offer simple actions:** Demonstrate pressing two bricks together, then hand one to the child and help them join or knock them apart.
5. **Stack and knock down:** Build a tiny tower (2–3 bricks), let them touch, then let them knock it down. Repeat — they learn cause and effect.
6. **Play rolling/wheels:** If there are Duplo cars, push them back and forth. This supports tracking and joint attention.
7. **End with a tidy-up game:** Put bricks in a basket together. Sing a short tidy-up song and hand bricks one-by-one to the child to drop in.

Simple activity ideas (5-10 minute plays)

- **Touch and name:** Hold two bricks, ask the child to touch one, say the color/word ("Blue!").
- **Stack-and-topple:** Build 2-brick towers and let them knock them down.
- **Hand-to-hand transfer:** Put one brick in each hand, encourage swapping or moving between hands to build bilateral skills.
- **Car push:** Roll a Duplo car slowly toward the child and let them push it back.
- **Sorting by color (very simple):** Place two color piles and offer bricks to drop into matching piles (adult-led).

What skills this builds

- Fine motor: grasping, holding, releasing.
- Hand-eye coordination: placing and joining bricks.
- Cause-and-effect understanding (stack then knock down).
- Language: short labels, names, and action words.
- Social: shared attention and turn-taking with an adult.

Safety and care

- Always supervise — 1-year-olds explore with their mouths.
- Use Duplo (larger bricks) rather than smaller Lego pieces until older and fully safe.
- Check pieces for damage; discard cracked or small broken parts.
- Keep play short and cheerful — toddlers get tired and fussy quickly.
- Wash bricks occasionally (warm soapy water; air dry) to keep them clean.

When to increase difficulty

Between about 15–24 months many children begin stacking 2 or 3 bricks and can try simple joins independently. Gradually offer slightly more pieces or introduce basic patterns (tower, car) as their skill and attention grow.

Tips for caregivers

- Follow the child's lead. If they love knocking down, do more of that—learning happens through repeated play.
- Use lots of simple words and praise: "Build!" "Again!" "Nice!"
- Keep sessions short and frequent: several 5–10 minute plays across the day are better than one long session.
- Model patience and celebrate small wins (first time stacking two blocks is a big step!).

With safe supervision and simple, repeatable activities, Duplo is a wonderful tool to support a 1-year-old's early motor, cognitive, and language development.