










# Play, Learn, and Read at Home

## Developmental Activities for Kid's Birth to Five.

**Story this month:** Big Bear, Small Mouse by Karma Wilson

**Reading Strategy:** This book has beautiful pictures to help tell the story. Bear and mouse spot opposites as they come upon new friends during their adventures.

	0-12 Months	1-3 Years	3-5 Years
<b>Problem-Solving Skills</b>	<p>As your baby learns about their world, you may notice that young babies don't know that if an object is out of sight that it still exists. This is called object permanence. Babies begin to realize around 8 months old that objects can still exist even when they don't see them. Playing peek-a-boo with your baby is a great opportunity to not only interact with your baby but also to show them that you're still there. Babies love playing peek-a-boo.</p>	<p>As your baby grows into a toddler, playing peekaboo can turn into playing hide-and-seek with their toys. Toddlers can use their problem solving skills to find their toys. Help your child say knock-knock where the toy is hidden, then open it up and show them their toy. You can also tape pictures of the toy on the outside where the toy is hidden to help younger toddlers find the toy.</p> 	<p>As you read the story about the bear and the mouse, talk about how big the bear is and how small the mouse is. Find some big items and some small items around the house and have your child sort the items into big and small categories.</p> 
<b>Language/Communication Skills</b>	<p>Language is key to a children's development. Talk with your baby about everything you're doing, from changing their diaper to making meals to playing with their toys. As your infant gets older they can understand their body parts as you name them. Point to their facial features and name them. Then ask them where their nose, eyes, ears, mouth etc. are and have them point to the parts.</p>	<p>Big Bear and Little Mouse stroll through their adventures in opposites while rhyming. While reading this book, try to use gestures to act out high and low, soft and loud, big and small, etc. See if your child can fill in the word verbally while you are reading the book again.</p>	<p>This book is great for rhyming and opposite concepts! Make up silly songs with your preschooler about animals. Such as</p> <p><i>Twinkle Twinkle little bear How I want to show you care...</i></p> <p>Or</p> <p><i>Old Mc___ (insert child's name here) had a mouse...</i></p>
<b>Small/Fine Motor Skills</b>	<p>This activity will help babies develop their eye/hand coordination as well as their memory. Let your baby see you put a toy in your hand. Close your hand and ask your baby where the toy is. Open your hand so your baby can see the toy. Close your hand again and ask your baby where the toy is. Encourage your baby to try to grab at your fingers or the toy.</p>	<p>The bear pick-up game: Make a big bear out of a piece of construction paper. Have a little container of small items (consider small pebbles or beads) ready and a pair of tongs. Have your child use the tongs to pick up the items and put the items on different parts of the bear. Using the tongs will be great practice using their small muscle skills and eye-hand coordination.</p>	<p>Make an animal puzzle. Invite your child to draw a picture of an animal of their choice, or find a picture of an animal in a magazine. Let your child use the scissors to practice their fine motor skills. Show your child how you can both share the paper animal by each taking half. Then place it back together again to make a whole animal.</p>

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<b>Large/Gross Motor Skills</b>	<p>Getting your baby to move around using their large muscles is a key part of development. Encourage your child to move around according to their developmental abilities. If your baby isn't crawling yet, encourage them to roll over. If your baby is learning to crawl, help them to crawl farther than before. If they have mastered crawling, encourage them to stand up. Once they're standing, encourage them to cruise around the room hanging onto the furniture to steady their body.</p>	<p>Gross motor activities are so important for young children, not only for exercise, but also to build up the strength in their muscles. A great activity to help with this is animal walks. Try various walks or hops like different animals, starting with a mouse and a bear. Try a frog, rabbit, cat, dog etc. Encourage creativity, make up different animals/creatures and walks.</p>	<p>Exercise is an important part of our daily lives and children should incorporate it into their daily routines. Do different exercises with your preschooler. Allow your child to choose the number of jumping jacks or whatever exercise you do.</p> 
<b>Self-Help Skills</b>	<p>A great practice for your baby to start learning self care skills is to learn to feed themselves. Start by putting cheerios in front of your baby. As they learn to eat cheerios, start putting soft fruits, then move on to other foods. When your child is successful, their self-esteem will increase.</p> 	<p>Take your child on a walk outside like bear and mouse. Ask your child what you should wear on your walk (jacket, shoes, clothes, etc.). Back a snack and other supplies in a backpack. Encourage your child to help you decide what items to bring and have them help you prepare.</p> 	<p>Bear and mouse have their friends gather in the cave. Have your child help to set the table for a meal. Talk about how many plates, cups, napkins, and utensils you will need. Where do you find these items? Where should everyone sit? Have your child help set items into place before the meal. Your child will feel proud to plan and host their party!</p> 
<b>Social-Emotional Skills</b>	<p>Infants are social and love to look at faces of people. Hold your baby in front of the mirror so they can see themselves. Play games in the mirror and see if your baby will imitate your moves.</p> 	<p>As toddlers develop they get a better idea of themselves as individuals. They begin to understand they have feelings. Parents can help their toddlers understand these emotions better by labeling what they might be feeling. For example, "your face is scrunched up like you might be mad" or "you have a big smile, are you happy?".</p>	<p>Get out some art supplies and draw a self-portrait of yourself and encourage your child to draw themselves. After talking about your self-portraits, add different disguises and why you would choose that disguise.</p>

The **Play, Learn and Read at Home** activities are brought to you by the Montcalm County Great Start Collaborative Great Parents Great Start program. Children move thru predictable stages of development. The activities provided above are meant to be a guide. For more information on your child's development visit: [www.GreatStartMontcalm.org](http://www.GreatStartMontcalm.org)

