










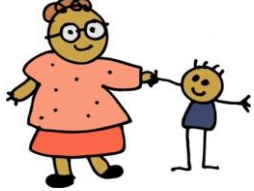

# Play, Learn, and Read at Home

## Developmental Activities for Kid's Birth to Five

**Story this week:** Giraffes Can't Dance by Giles Andreae and Guy Parker-Rees

**Focus Skills for parents:** Dance movement offers many opportunities for personal wellness and self-discovery by providing opportunities that explore the link between mind, body, and emotions through creative exploration. Dance with your child to many different types of music!

	0-12 Months	1-3 Years	3-5 Years
<b>Problem-Solving Skills</b>	<p>Your baby is beginning to pick up on the many different sounds of the world including voices, music, and everyday sounds such as alarms, timers, and other equipment. Hide a clicking clock or toy that makes sounds under a pillow or blanket. Let your baby listen to find the sound: "Do you hear it? Where is it? Can you find it?"</p>	<p>Play a game with your child. You do something and then try to imitate you. Clap your hands. If he tries to imitate you, say, "Look, you can clap too!" Touch your nose, stick out your tongue, dance like giraffe, and say "You try." When he does something new, imitate him. Be silly and have fun!</p> 	<p>Turn on some music! Ask your child to help with the laundry. Sort by color or put things similar in one place. Let your child help you put all the socks in one pile and all the shirts in another. She can line up shoes and boots in the right place, and you can help her make sure they are in pairs. Sing and move to the music while you make the matches and sort items!</p>
<b>Language/Communication Skills</b>	<p>At naptime or bedtime, hold your baby close and dance together to some quiet music. Your baby has probably spent a lot of time exploring during the day. Now she needs some cuddling. This communicates to baby a feeling of closeness and intimacy.</p> 	<p>Dance like Giraffe! While listening to music, show your little one how to move and clap to the rhythm. Your child will enjoy moving to the beat. Play different types of music, such as rock, county, hip-hop, funk, electronic, pop, or classical. Be sure to keep the volume down. Those sweet ears have to last a long time!</p>	<p>Turn off the television and other electronics, and listen with your child to sounds around your home. Listen to the refrigerator motor, wind chimes, a clock ticking, or people talking. Ask your child to tell you what she hears. Try this at night. Listen for the night sounds of crickets, frogs, or cars beeping Whisper to each other about what you hear.</p> 
<b>Small/Fine Motor Skills</b>	<p>Turn on some music and use a small, soft ball (or make a ball out of socks rolled together) and play catch with your baby. He won't be able to really catch the ball yet, but he will enjoy the rhythm and trying to throw and chase after it.</p>	<p>Encourage your little one to practice throwing a small, soft ball. A rolled up pair of socks works just fine. Have him stand in one spot and throw the ball. Try again and see how far it goes. At first, he may need you to show him how to throw the ball. Say, "Wow, look how far that went!"</p>	<p>Sting a necklace out of dried pasta with big holes. Tube-shaped pasta, such as rigatoni, works really well. Your child can paint the pasta before or after stringing it. Make sure she has a string with a stiff tip, such as a shoelace. You can also tape the ends of a piece of yard so that it is easy to string.</p>

	0-12 Months	1-3 Years	3-5 Years
<b>Large/Gross Motor Skills</b>	<p>When you are changing your baby's diaper or getting him ready for bed, play this game. As your baby kicks his legs, sing in rhythm to the kicking. When your baby stops kicking, stop singing. When he starts again, start singing. This will develop into a fun game of stop and go. Your baby not only exercises his muscles, but he gets to be the boss.</p>	<p>Play some fun dancing music and show baby how to dance! Wiggle and turn, clap, stomp your feet. Try lots of different kinds of music. Wave around some scarves and ribbons. Get other family members to join in. Have a dance party!</p> 	<p>Stand on one foot. Ask your child, "Can you do this?" Even if your child stands for only 1 second, encourage them. Pretend to be an airplane flying with your arms out across the room. Jump, crawl gallop, and tiptoe around the house. Let your child be the leader and copy her. Play with the whole family.</p> 
<b>Self-Help Skills</b>	<p>Give baby a serving of cool, cooked noodles. Let baby pull apart a few strands. This is a fun way to practice using fingers and to snack at the same time.</p> 	<p>Let your child figure out how things work and what they do. Show baby how the switch turns the light on and off. Show him how the flashlight works. Talk to him about what you are doing and why: "I'm putting on a coat because I am cold."</p> 	<p>When you climb stairs, let your child hold on to only one of your fingers. You may have to slow down, but let her climb the stairs with little support or all by herself. Show her the stair rail and encourage her to hold it for support. When your child climbs all by herself, give her a big hug!</p> 
<b>Social-Emotional Skills</b>	<p>Your baby is learning to enjoy imitation. Encourage this by showing your baby how to play Follow the leader. Use simple movements, even dance, such as tapping on the table or putting a hat on your head. Talk about what you are doing. Say, "It's your turn," and see if your baby will follow along. Let your baby have a turn at being the leader.</p>	<p>Your little one may enjoy trying on different hats or dancing and looking at themselves in the mirror. Make a dress-up box with a few hats or simple accessories. As your child gets older, you can add new things now and then.</p> 	<p>Giraffe goes through many feelings while he learns to dance. Help your child name feelings as they happen. You can help her understand feeling worried by telling her, "You look worried. Can you tell me about it? If you know your child is frustrated, use the words, "I know you are really frustrated, but you can have a turn in a minute." When your child learns feelings have names, she will be able to handle them more easily.</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. Sources include *Ages and Stages* and *Teaching Strategies Gold*. For more information on your child's development visit: [www.GreatStartMontcalm.org](http://www.GreatStartMontcalm.org)