









Play, Learn, and Read at Home

Developmental Activities for kid's birth to five

Story this month: **Grumpy Bird** by Jeremy Tankard

Focus Skills for parents: Use predicting as your reading strategy with this book and build your child's critical thinking skills. Ask your child, "What would happen if rabbit gave grumpy bird a hug? What do you think will happen next?"

	0-12 Months	1-3 Years	3-5 Years
Problem-Solving Skills	<p>Babies like to explore with cause and effect toys. Cut small holes around a empty cardboard box. Use different colors and widths of ribbon. Feed the ribbon into the holes and tie knots onto the ends. Show your baby how they can pull the ribbon through the holes.</p> 	<p>Throughout the book, there are many different shapes and pictures hidden on the pages. Some of the shapes look like snowmen while others look like insects. There are also big and small stars and circles. Look through the pages with your toddler to see if she can find the snowman, a large star, a bug in the tree, etc.</p> 	<p>Your preschooler will begin to understand the concepts of in/on/under around the age of 3 and between/behind/below around the age of 4-5. Create a night time scavenger hunt using plastic eggs with electric tea lights inside. Give your preschooler clues to where the eggs are hidden by using the above directional words.</p>
Language/ Communication Skills	<p>By 10 months of age, most children understand 5-10 words. When face-to-face with your baby while changing their diaper or putting them in their car seat, talk to them about what you are doing. The frequent routines and language will teach them that your words have meaning.</p>	<p>After 24 months, your child will begin to use and understand -ing words. Ask your child, "What is the bird doing?" See if they can answer with flying, eating, jumping, etc. Find other -ing activities in other books for your child to talk about! They may need your help at first.</p>	<p>Now that your child has developed a love of reading, you can focus on reading for meaning. Asking questions using the four W's: who, what, where and when. This will build your child's comprehension skills. "When did bird become grumpy? What made him feel better?"</p>
Small/Fine Motor Skills	<p>Older babies like the sound of crumbling paper and bright colors. Glue the bottoms of colorful muffin liners to a piece of paper. After it dries, let your baby grab at the paper with their fingers. Never leave them alone as the paper may rip and cause choking if put in their mouth.</p> 	<p>Many toddlers enjoy messy activities. For easy clean up, put your toddler in the bathtub naked with washable finger paints. They can make their art on the inside of the bathtub or on their body. In the bathtub they will have the freedom to explore and then can play in the tub while getting cleaned up!</p>	<p>Does your child know how birds make their own nests? Ask them, you may be surprised by their answer. Talk about how birds use items from nature. Have your child tell you what a bird would need and write it down. Then, take a walk outside and gather items so your child can make their own bird nest. Find a tree to display their nest!</p>

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Large/Gross Motor Skills	<p>Babies learn through imitation. Teach your baby how to play “So Big” by saying, “How big is baby?” Then with your arms raised up high say, “So Big!” You may have to help your baby raise her arms up in the air at first but if you do it regularly, your 7-10 month old will understand how to play.</p> 	<p>Play a simple game of charades with your child. Tell them you are going to pretend to do an action and they have to guess it. Start with something simple like brushing your teeth. See if they can guess what you are doing. Some ideas are dancing, eating, sleeping, etc. Take turns with your child and have them do the actions and you guess. You can also act out animals.</p>	<p>Like rabbit in the story, exercise is good for all of us. Write down different exercises on strips of paper such as: hop on one foot, walk around the table, spin in a circle, jumping jacks, crawl under the chair, have a pillow fight, etc. Then, put them inside plastic eggs and hide them around the house. As your child finds the eggs, have them break them open and do the exercise together!</p>
Self-Help Skills	<p>Around 9 months, your baby will enjoy eating a variety of finger foods. Some of the best first finger foods to try are soft, ripe pieces of fruit and well-cooked vegetables, soft pasta, and, yes Cheerios! After your child masters using a pincer grasp, thumb and pad of pointer finger, offer him Cheerios on a pipe cleaner. You may have to show him how to take the Cheerios off at first.</p> 	<p>At this age, children may need to eat 5-6 times a day with 3 meals and 2-3 snacks. Snacking can prevent your toddler from becoming grumpy and provide an energy boost between meals. Make a nutritious snack mix together using dried multigrain cereal, dried fruit, pretzel sticks and sunflower seeds. Your child will like being in control of the items they can choose to put in their snack mix!</p>	<p>Like beaver and rabbit, your preschooler will need to care for their teeth. Soak a hard-boiled egg in grape juice or dark soda for approximately 1 hour. Then give your child a toothbrush with just water on it. Have them brush the egg with the toothbrush. After a while, add toothpaste to the toothbrush. Explain how important it is to brush their teeth to remove stains from the food they eat.</p>
Social-Emotional Skills	<p>At nap or bedtime, sing this song to your baby! (Tune of: "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star") Little bird, little bird, fly around, Up to the sky, down to the ground. Little bird, little bird, flap your wings. Open your beak and sweetly sing. Little bird, little bird, fly to your nest. Now it is time to take a rest.</p>	<p>Like Grumpy Bird, we all get caught up in a bad mood. Research has proven that exposure to nature alters your brain chemistry to promote focus, cognition, and mental health. So next time you or your child is feeling grumpy, head outside for a walk and some fresh air to reset your mood!</p> 	<p>Music has the power to evoke different emotions. Some music makes us feel happy while other music can elicit feelings of sadness. Play different tempos of music from the radio of your car or from your cell phone. Ask your child, “How does this music make you feel?” If they cannot come up with specific feelings, help them by saying, “This music makes me feel like smiling, it makes me happy.”</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

