



Play, Learn, and Read at Home

Developmental Activities for Kid's Birth to Five

Story this week: Guess How Much I Love You by Sam Mc Bratney

Focus Skills for parents: Your child thrives on the opportunity to interact with you and imitate your actions. While reading the story, imitate the characters' actions and repeat the words. Stretch, reach, and hop together while showing affection, "I love you this much!"

	0-12 Months	1-3 Years	3-5 Years
Problem-Solving Skills	<p>Helping your baby learn how the world works is one of the best parts of parenting! Like Big Hare, you can help your baby to learn through imitation. Give baby a spoon or a block for each hand. Show her how to bang them on a tabletop or highchair tray while you sing a song. Sing and tap loudly, then sing and tap very softly. Hooray for the band!</p>	<p>Encouraging your toddler to copy you can lead them to be independent in their problem solving. On a large piece of paper, draw and scribble together with your toddler. Take turns. You scribble, and then let her scribble. You draw a line, and then let her draw a line. Let her take a turn, and then you copy her scribbles.</p> 	<p>Gather three things that are very similar or in the same category, such as three lemons. Add a fourth item that does not belong, such as a bar of soap. Ask your child which one doesn't belong. You can also gather three things from the bathroom (soap, shampoo, toilet paper) and add something else, such as a screwdriver: "What doesn't belong? Why?"</p> 
Language/Communication Skills	<p>Little Hare and Big Hare identify many parts of their body as they move to show their love! When you are bathing, diapering, or changing your baby's clothes, sing a song: "This is the way we wash our toes, wash our toes, wash our toes. This is the way we wash our toes, so early in the morning."</p> 	<p>Find times to "read" throughout the day. You can point to pictures and words, and your child will begin to learn what words are about. At the grocery store, point to and read signs to your child. At a restaurant, let your child "read" a menu. At home, help her "read" magazines by looking at pictures together and talking about them.</p>	<p>Try teaching your child about patterning through imitation. Do a simple action, such as clapping your hands. Tell your child, "Do what I do." Add a second motion such as patting your stomach. Have your child do it with your first, then by himself. Now add a third motion. See if your child can remember all three: clasp, clap, pat, pat, wink, wink. Add more as long as your child can remember them and you both are having fun.</p>
Small/Fine Motor Skills	<p>Give your baby plenty of opportunities to try out different toys. Things that feel different or toys that make sounds will be very interesting to your baby. Some of the best toys aren't toys at all, such as spoons or cardboard tubes from paper products.</p>	<p>Make sure your toddler gets to practice writing and drawing. You might keep paper and crayons or washable markers in the kitchen so you can keep an eye on her while getting dinner ready. Use drawings for placemats for the family. She will be so proud!</p>	<p>Let your child play with tools. Show her how to screw a large nut onto a bolt. Let her try to hammer a short nail into a piece of soft wood after you start it. Help fit a fat screwdriver head into a large screw, turn it, and watch it go into something soft like soft wood or a cardboard box.</p>

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Large/Gross Motor Skills	As your baby gets better at sitting alone, give your baby a small pan or pot lid and a spoon to play with. Baby will enjoy the noise as he bangs it, pats, it, and rolls it. He will also learn to control the parts of his body as he makes connections between holding, actions, and sounds.	Explore along with Big Hare and Little Hare! Your toddler is beginning to run now. In a grassy part of your yard or a safe park, play chase with your little one. Most toddlers love to be chased, and they love to be caught and hugged. Your child will love doing this over and over! It's good exercise!	Gross motor activities can be wonderful bonding time! Use an empty round ice cream carton, bucket, or any other safe round container as the stand for a medium-size ball or balloon. Let your child swing a small plastic bat or a cardboard roll from paper towels or gift wrap. When she hits the ball, she can run hom-right into yours arms!
Self-Help Skills	Allow your baby to hold a plastic cup. Put a little water in it and see what baby will do. She will probably enjoy trying to drink out of a cup. Let her experiment. A bib or a small towel might come in handy as they learn to control the flow of the cup with their arm and mouth movements. 	Bond by spending time together and letting your toddler help make a snack. He can unscrew lids from containers such as applesauce once you get the lid loosened. He can help scoop and/or spread butter with a plastic knife. He can also help eat. Yummy! 	Offer choices to your child about her activities, including taking care of herself. You might offer her the choice to brush her teeth either before or after she puts on pajamas. You can also let her pick a snack from two options or choose between two different shirts or pairs of shoes to wear. It's more fun and easier if she has some choice in how things happen, but not too much choice. 
Social-Emotional Skills	While looking in the mirror with your baby, talk about body parts, such as eyes, nose, and ears. Touch your nose and say, "Daddy's nose!" Touch baby's nose and say, "Baby's nose." Then say, "Daddy's eyes, baby's eyes." Play this game as long as baby seems interested. 	Your toddler is busy and often frustrated. He will need a lot of comfort and support to understand his feelings. He responds to what he's feeling right now and does not know that he will feel better in a little while. Give him words for how he is feeling: "You are sad that mom is leaving. I will be back after nap" or "It's really frustrating when you can't get that sock on." He will need your warm voice, a hug, and comfort.	Act out different feelings with your child. Be happy, sleepy, sad, silly, surprised, and frustrated! Show your child different facial expressions like a deep frown, a giggle, or pretend to cry and have him guess what you are feeling. Now have your child help you! This will help your child learn to express their feelings in manageable and appropriate ways. 

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

