










# Play, Learn, and Read at Home

## Developmental Activities for Kid's Birth to Five

**Story this week:** Gus Grows a Plant by Frank Remkiewicz

**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>	Gus learns so much about the world around him by growing his plant. Put a piece of cereal or another small object inside a clear plastic container or bottle without a lid. As your baby works to get the cereal out, he will learn more about inside and out. Another way to show baby inside and outside is to get a big box that your baby can crawl into and out of.	Children this age are just beginning to notice when two things are alike, especially shoes, socks, or other objects they know. Hold up one of their shoes or a sock. Ask your little one, "Where's the other one just like this?" Help them make the match: "Yes, these two are the same."  	Using any object in your house, play a hiding game with your child. For example, hid a teddy bear under a pillow. Give your little one clues to find the bear: "Where's the bear? Can you find her? She's under something green" or "She is behind something soft." Give your child help as needed. Then let him hide things and give you clues.
<b>Language/ Communication Skills</b>	Help your baby learn to listen and follow simple directions. Try simple directions, such as "Show me Grandma," "Wash your tummy," or "Hold the diaper." When baby responds or follows the direction, be sure to let him know you notice: "Oh, there's Grandma" or "Thank you for holding the diaper."	Read to your child every day. Snuggle up and make this a special time. Point to pictures and name things for her in the story. Gus Grows a Plant offers many opportunities to point out things that your little one sees in their daily life. Sometimes ask her to find something: "Where's the tree? Oh here it is." She May need a little help from you at first.	You can play this in the car, on the bus, or on a walk. Say, "I spy with my little eye a green truck." Your child tries to find out what you spied. Then it is his turn to spy something. Remember to spy things your child can see. You can also say, "I hear with my little ear..." Listen for sounds such as a motorcycle, a car horn, a bird singing, a dog barking, or a radio.
<b>Small/Fine Motor Skills</b>	Gus shows us the joys of being outside in his story. Take a walk outside. Encourage your baby to pick up items, such as stones, twigs, and leaves. Put them in a pail or paper bag. Talk about the color or the size: "Look, this big leaf is nice!"  	Let your child draw a picture for you with a crayon and a large piece of paper. Give your little one plenty of room. She may only make a few marks, but give a lot of encouragement: "Look at the picture you made!" This is a time when children are learning where and when to draw. When finished talk about putting the crayon away as you hang up their work of art!	Make orange juice or lemonade with your child. Have him help squeeze the fruit using a handheld juicer. Show him how to twist the fruit back and forth to get the juice out. To make lemonade, you will need to add some sugar and water. Let him help you stir it up. Cheers!  

	0-12 Months	1-3 Years	3-5 Years
	<p>Get a small empty plastic container, put some holes in it, and let your baby fill it with water during bath time. Help him to hold it up and discover “rain” for himself while you supervise.</p> 	<p>Let your child experience rocking on a rocking horse or in a chair. Sit him on your lap and use your body to rock back and forth. Play with him sitting opposite you on the floor. Hold hands and gently pull and push him to and from you. Sing a little song, such as “Row, Row, Row Your Boat,” while you rock back and forth.</p>	<p>Pretend you and your child are frogs or rabbits, and show your child how to jump with both feet together. Then jump over a child line, crack in the sidewalk, or small object. Make marks with child to measure how far he can jump with both feet together: “Wow, look how far the frog jumped that time!”</p>
<b>Self-Help Skills</b>	<p>Gus learns many self-help skills while planting his plant. Set out a few items such as a pail, soil, and gardening tools outside. Allow your child to practice raking and shoveling the soil. Add more containers to help your baby gain the sense of scooping and pouring.</p> 	<p>Your child will love going for walks and seeing new things. Talk to her about what you are seeing. In an open area, let your little one push their own stroller. She will enjoy the feeling of power as she moves something big all by herself. Be sure to watch that she keeps the stroller where it is safe.</p> 	<p>Your child can make a book about all his favorite things. Clip or staple a few pieces of paper together for him. He can choose his favorite color. Let him show you what pictures to cut from magazines. He may even try cutting all by himself. Glue pictures on the pages. Your child can use markers or crayons to decorate the pages. Stickers can be fun, too. You can write down what he says about each page. Let him “write” his own name. It may only be a mark, but that’s a start!</p>
<b>Social-Emotional Skills</b>	<p>Give your baby a damp sponge. Let her wipe the table, chairs, floor, walls, and doors-whatever she can reach. She may enjoy doing this while you are getting dinner ready or washing dishes. Baby won’t really clean anything but will feel proud of doing things “just like mommy.” Tell baby, “thank you for helping Daddy (or Mommy).”</p>	<p>Like Gus, children love feeling proud of themselves! Ask your child to help you put toys away. You will need a box with a safe cover or a shelf where toys should be placed. Show baby how to pick up the toys and where to put them. Keep this task easy and brief right now. It’s a good idea to do it together and have fun!</p>	<p>Let your child hold a baby sibling or cousin. Help your child as he holds the baby so that he can sit steadily and use his arms to support the baby. Talk about how babies must be handled must be handled gently. Tell him what a good friend he is to the baby and how the baby likes him.</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)**