



Play, Learn, and Read at Home

Developmental Activities for Kid's Birth to Five.

Story this month: I Love Trains by Philemon Sturges

Tip for Parents: Use the Paired Reading strategy with this rhyming text. After you have read the story several times, pause when you are reading to see if you child can fill in the rhyming word.

	0-12 Months	1-3 Years	3-5 Years
Problem-Solving Skills	<p>Babies love to touch, hold, and throw objects. An important skill in your baby's development is being able to bring objects to the center of their body which requires your baby to use both sides of their body together. Have your child put a block in each hand and encourage them to bang the blocks together at the center of their body. Your 6 month old infant should be able to do this skill.</p>	<p>A child as young as 12 months begins to discriminate color differences. Between 2 and 3 your toddler will begin to match colors and shapes. First make a train with 2 or 3 different shoe boxes and decorate each "train car" with a color. Discover with your child items around the house that match the box car color. Try the same activity with shapes.</p> 	<p>Make a train using different sized boxes. Write the number 1 on the first train, the number 2 on the second and so on up to 5. Talk to your child about filling each car with the quantity on the car. You can use stuffed animals, balls, cars, blocks, etc. Your preschooler should be able to understand that one object represents one number. Count with them as they put each item in the box.</p>
Language/Communication Skills	<p>Many people in the book are waving. Teach your baby how to wave by modeling every time you go bye-bye or when someone comes over to visit. Your baby will start to wave around 6-9 months and will probably be able to wave only when they hear the words bye-bye by 12 months.</p> 	<p>Exposing your child to unique vocabulary as a young child will benefit them when they learn to read. At the beginning or end of the book where all the cars are labeled, find a picture of one of the cars and then try to find it in the story. For example, say, "This is a Gondola Car; let's find it in the story." The object is use the correct name of the car and look through the book to find the car that matches.</p>	<p>Using the pages at the beginning and end of the book, teach your child unique facts about the train cars and what they do. Play a game where you describe what the train car does and your child finds the picture or names it. For example, this train car is green and can carry enough water to fill 4 big swimming pools. Your child can look through the book to find it or say the tanker car.</p>
Small/Fine Motor Skills	<p>Around 10 months, your baby will enjoy unwrapping secret stuff! Loosely wrap one of your baby's toys in a piece of tissue paper, newspaper, or cloth. Give it to your baby and encourage them to find the toy. When they find it, share in the excitement. Always supervise to prevent the paper from going into their mouth.</p> 	<p>Give your child a large sheet of paper, paint, and a paint brush. They can paint at the table or at an easel. Let them paint each sheet of paper a different color. After the paint dries, cut out different sized squares and rectangles. These will be the box cars of their train. Give them a piece of tape and let them attach a piece of yarn. Hang their train on the refrigerator for everyone to see!</p>	<p>Ask your child to look in the mirror and tell you what she sees. Then have her draw or paint a self-portrait. By about approximately 4 1/2 years of age your child should be able to draw a person that details at least 6 different parts.</p> 

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Large/Gross Motor Skills	<p>Plenty of floor time is important for your infant to develop muscles that will help them begin to move. Around 7-10 months your baby will start to explore their environment by crawling. By 7-8 months they may be able to crawl backwards, and then 8-9 months start to crawl forward. While your baby is crawling on hands and knees, she is developing and improving balance; using her right and left sides of the brain to process hearing, sight and movement; learning about spatial concepts such as under and over; and building muscle tone and eye-hand coordination!</p>	<p>Toddlers enjoy doing “heavy work” loading and unloading boxes and pushing and pulling them around the house. Pretend that your boxes are train cars and let your child load them with different objects such as canned foods, pots, plastic dishes, and toys etc. Have her move the toys by pushing the train cars to the bedroom or the dirty clothes to the hamper. You may also tie a rope so your child can pull the boxes. This kind of play provides important feedback to your toddler’s brain about their muscles and how they move. Don’t forget to have your toddler get into a train car and push her around for a ride!</p>	<p>Have your child step in and out of the box for a ride in the train. This activity helps a child develop balance skills. At around 5 years of age a child will be able to balance on one foot for about 5 seconds. Until they are able to do make sure your child has support.</p> 
Self-Help Skills	<p>Babies around 9-12 months will start to be interested in putting hats on and off. Use a hat for your child to play peek-a-boo and practice putting on and off their head. The more you laugh and make a big deal about it, the more they will do it!</p> 	<p>The boy is waiting to see his dad at the end of the train. Toddlers can be very impatient and demanding. Help teach your child how to “wait” when you are not in a hurry. Next time your toddler is at your feet wanting your attention look at them and say, “Wait, one minute” and put one finger in the air. Continue briefly with what you are doing and then tell your child, “Thank you for waiting.”; then you can help them with their needs.</p>	<p>Give your child a variety of different foods for their snack and see if they can build a train using the food you gave them. For example, you can use different sized crackers, cheese and lunch meat cut in different shapes, olives or carrot sticks. Let your child create a yummy snack train and let her eat it!</p> 
Social-Emotional Skills	<p>Around 5-8 months your baby will begin to react to strangers or distant family members. This is a normal part of development. Greet your friend or family member with a hug or handshake to show your baby that you accept the person. Ask them to approach your baby slowly so she has time to warm up to them. Never force your baby to be held or kissed by someone who causes anxiety.</p>	<p>The boy in the book uses “I” statements like “I wave.” When you talk to your child and others, model using “I” statements such as “I will help you,” instead of “Mommy will help you.” Your toddler will start using self-centered pronouns like “I, me, and mine” around 24-30 months of age.</p> 	<p>The two girls in the book are flying a kite together. Your preschooler will also enjoy spending time together with a special friend. Keep play dates small as three can be a crowd at this age. Limit your time to 1 hour and expect to supervise the play. Plan ahead for a snack and check for any food allergies or dislikes. Have your child put away special toys ahead of time that they are not willing to “share.”</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

