










# Play, Learn, and Read at Home

## Developmental Activities for kid's birth to five

**Story this week:** Just A Little Too Little by Mercer Mayer

**Focus Skills for parents:** Questioning: Ask open-ended questions such as, “What would happen if...?” Or “What should Little Critter do?” Open-ended questions require more than a “yes or no” answer or one word answer.

	0-12 Months	1-3 Years	3-5 Years
<b>Problem-Solving Skills</b>	<p>As young as 7-8 months, your baby will begin to imitate familiar actions such as patting and banging objects. Show your baby how to bang their hands on the table and then WAIT for them to imitate you! By 9-12 months your baby will imitate simple movements like feeding a baby doll, pushing a truck or pulling a string to get a toy.</p> 	<p>Around 25-30 months your child will understand and use size words such as “big” and “little.” Give your child a BIG box and a LITTLE box and ask them to sort their blocks according to size. They can also sort vehicles, stuffed animals, balls and/or blankets. Make homemade binoculars by taping together two toilet paper rolls and go outside to find objects that are “big” (trees, house, cars) and “little” (bugs, rocks, flowers).</p> 	<p>Little Critters and his dad work together when he learns he is a little too little. Help your child think independently by asking open-ended questions when faced with a problem. For example: “I can see that it makes you very upset when he takes your toy. <b>What should we do?</b>” Give your child time to think of a solution and then provide choices when he is stuck. For example: “Do you want to ask him for it or do you want to play with something else?”</p>
<b>Language/Communication Skills</b>	<p>Little Critters mom and dad use gestures such as pointing to communicate. When your baby notices something, reaches for something or points, say the word that matches what they want. This will help them understand that words have meaning. Your baby should be using gestures to communicate around 8-10 months.</p>	<p>The mouse and spider appear on every page throughout the book. Read the book together using a flashlight. Have your child find the mouse and spider by shining the flashlight on the picture. Continue naming and talking about other objects that they highlight with the flashlight such as the red wagon, big ladder and small leaf.</p>	<p>In the beginning of the story, Little Critter packs his backpack and wagon to go camping. Ask your child, “What would you pack in your backpack to go camping? What would we eat on our camping trip for breakfast, lunch or dinner? What are some things we could do while we are camping?”</p>
<b>Small/Fine Motor Skills</b>	<p>Around 8 months, your baby will be more coordinated in using her hands. Show them how to bang two objects together. You can use two objects such as blocks. Both objects should come together at her midline!</p>	<p>Your toddler may be interested in playing with tools. A piece of Styrofoam can take the place of a real piece of wood when it comes to hammering golf tees! Floral foam or playdough will also work!</p>	<p>Young children love to pick up and play with rocks. Make pet rocks by painting them or coloring them with markers. Use glue to add eyes, feathers, craft foam or felt for texture. They can add dots or make patterns with stripes!</p>

	0-12 Months	1-3 Years	3-5 Years
<b>Large/Gross Motor Skills</b>	<p>Around 8 months, your baby will have the strength to stand on their own. Although it may feel natural to pull them to stand by holding their hands, provide support at the chest to help them stand. Providing support at the chest will help to build trunk strength and improve their balance!</p> 	<p>Children of all ages love to play with cardboard boxes! Have your child create their own race car from a cardboard box big enough for them to sit in. Let them practice stepping in and out of the box or they can push the box around the house.</p> 	<p>Spend the afternoon together making a fort using cardboard from boxes, tables or the couch cushions. Drape over a sheet or blanket and you are all set! Camp out under the fort together and have a light snack while you read books! Remember to let your child do some of the work and offer help when needed!</p> 
<b>Self-Help Skills</b>	<p>Getting into a regular schedule can be work for both you and your baby. Start with a regular bedtime routine that includes quiet activities such as bath, jammies, feeding and lights out. Try to keep bedtime at the same time every night and set the scene for bedtime with low lights and quiet. Your baby will likely fall asleep during feedings, but by 3-4 months you will want to put them down awake so they can learn to fall asleep on their own.</p>	<p>Part of Little Critter's bedtime routine is taking a bath, brushing his teeth and putting on his pajamas! Use the phrase, "My turn, your turn," when doing these activities together with your child. Let them brush their teeth on their own first, "Your turn," and then brush for them to make sure their teeth are clean, "My turn." Be patient, your child may request many "turns" until the job is complete!</p>	<p>Little Critter enjoys being independent. So does your preschooler. Take the time to "teach" your preschooler how to do tasks around the house that they can do successfully. They can clean up their toys, put dirty clothes in a hamper, set and/or clear the dinner table or make their bed! These tasks may seem simple to us but they will build your child's self-confidence!</p> 
<b>Social-Emotional Skills</b>	<p>Little Critter brings his teddy bear to his campout! This is called a transitional object, one way to make your child feel safe and secure in your absence. When choosing a transitional object, be sure it is safe. Look for something small and soft such as a blanket or stuffed animal. Then incorporate it into your day by playing peek-a-boo with it or cuddling with it during feedings and have it for naptime and bedtime routines. It may take some time for your baby to bond to the object so keep trying!</p>	<p>Like Little Critter, your toddler will want to do many things "on their own." Help by being a coach! When they are frustrated because he can't do it all himself, label his feelings: "It makes you so mad when you can't open the container!" And introduce him to the word "help." Then provide the assistance he needs to master the challenge without appearing to do it all for him. This may mean holding your hand over his as you unscrew the top. It helps him feel like he has been a part of the solution.</p>	<p>Like Little Critter, there are many things your child wants to do on their own but they are just not big enough. Build her self-confidence by asking her for her help. Make her feel strong by saying, "This is kind of heavy. Can you help mommy/daddy?" Make sure it is something she can do so that she can be successful! She will be proud of her ability!</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](http://www.GreatStartMontcalm.org)