



Play, Learn, and Read at Home

Developmental Activities for Kid's Birth to Five.

Story this month: King Jack and the Dragon by Peter Bently and Helen Oxenbury

	0-12 Months	1-3 Years	3-5 Years
Problem-Solving Skills	<p>Children begin developing problem solving skills during infancy. Move your face or a favorite toy behind a cover while your baby is watching. Ask, "Where is mommy?" Drop the cover and say, "Here I am!" Cover baby's doll or bear. Ask, "Where is the bear? Move the cloth and say, "There he is!"</p> 	<p>King Jack and his friends learn different uses for items found in the home. Help your child play games or do tasks that use tools. For example, use a sponge to wipe up a chair. Use a strainer and a scoop to play in the sand. Use measuring cups and funnels to fill up containers in the bathtub. Be sure to use the correct name for these items. You will be surprised at how fast your busy little one learns them!</p> 	<p>There are many ways to help children learn problem-solving skills while encouraging them to use their imagination. At any quiet time, play this little guessing game. Think of someone who your child knows well. Give clues one at a time to see if your child can guess who you are describing: "She has curly hair." When your child guesses correctly, switch turns. You might even describe the goldfish!</p> 
Language/Communication Skills	<p>King Jack hears many noises during his adventures! Show your baby two things that make noise, such as a squeak toy, a set of measuring spoons, keys on a ring, or a rattle. Let baby play with them for a while, then hide the items under a box or cloth and make a noise with one. Take the cloth off and ask baby, "Which one made the noise?" See if she can guess.</p>	<p>Play a silly name game. When you greet your child act as if you don't know who he is. Say, "Hello little boy. What's your name?" When he tells you, greet him with a happy surprise, "Oh, you're my little boy! I'm so happy to see you!"</p> 	<p>King Jack and the Dragon go on an adventure through dramatic play. Create a story or a play with a few puppets. Have a conversation with them, taking turns asking and answering questions. Put on a puppet show of a familiar story or folktale. Talk about the characters, assign roles, and enjoy a wonderful play!</p>
Small/Fine Motor Skills	<p>Give baby a container or box and a few items such as clothespins, spoons, and small cars. Make sure the items are big enough that they can't be swallowed. Show baby how to put them all in the container, then dump them out again. The next day, change the container or the objects. Make this activity a bit more challenging by choosing a container with a smaller opening.</p>	<p>King Jack loved his practiced his independence with his crew! Your child will enjoy making her own snack. She can help twist open lids on jars; open containers; spread cream cheese, hummus, butter, jam, or jelly; scoop out applesauce; and more. The more she can do herself (without your support), the faster she will learn and the more skilled she will become.</p>	<p>Time to dress up! Provide a couple of clothing items with large buttons for your child. You can also let her help you fasten a button on your clothes. Pretend it is a hide a seek game. The button hides first, then peeks out, and then comes through the hole: "There you are Mr. Button Man! I got you!"</p> 

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Large/Gross Motor Skills	<p>Give your baby a box large enough to push while standing. Show her how to fill it with a few toys, small cartons, or boxes. Let her push these things around the room from one area to another. She may want to take everything out. If so, show her how to put it all back in again.</p> 	<p>Place an empty laundry basket on the floor against a wall. Give your child a soft ball about 4 inches in size. Place a string or piece of tape on the floor for a throw line. Show your child how to throw overhand to get the ball in the basket. Start about 4 feet back from the basket. Move back as your child gets better.</p> 	<p>King Jack sure loved to be outside! Bring your child to a neighborhood playground, park, or open grassy area as often as possible. He will enjoy climbing, running, swinging, sliding, and learning new skills. Encourage him to interact with nature, looking for different types of leaves, bark, sticks, rocks, and more! Watch his imagination soar! Blow some bubbles. Ask your child to clap his hands together and pop them.</p>
Self-Help Skills	<p>Give baby her own toothbrush. Let her see you or her siblings brushing their teeth. Put a tiny dab of toothpaste (without fluoride) on the brush so baby can taste it. Don't expect much brushing. She will probably chew the bristles as she learns about this new thing, and you may need to finish for her. Be sure to cover baby's toothbrush and store it in a clean, safe place until next time.</p>	<p>Make a simple playhouse like King Jack! Turn a box over and draw burners to make a stove. Place a plastic tub or dishpan on another low box or table for "washing dishes." Add a doll, stuffed animal, plastic plates, cups, a dish towel, and some safe cooking utensils. Your child can "cook" at his stove while you cook dinner. Follow your child's lead. Talk and have fun!</p>	<p>Keep a footstool in the bathroom so that your child can step up and see herself in the mirror. Give your child her own washcloth and towel, and teach her how to wash her face. Give her a big kiss on her clean and shiny face! At bath time, she can wash and dry herself, too. Don't forget to have her brush her teeth with your help!</p> 
Social-Emotional Skills	<p>King Jack's adventures end quality time with his family. One of the easiest, yet most valuable ways to spend time with your children is by reading to them. Find time every 2 weeks or so to go to a library or bookstore. Pick out new books with your child. Cuddle every day and read together. Read the story, talk about the pictures, and let her take turns pointing to pictures and turning pages. What a special time together!</p>	<p>Provide a variety of clothes to play with—nothing fancy, just oversized shirts, scarves, hats, skirts, shoes, or even loose fabric. Invite a friend over and have a party! Choose a theme, such as going to the beach or getting ready for a party. Have your child search for objects or props. Pick out your own outfit once your child has selected hers. Children love to imitate adults in their family and community.</p>	<p>Let's imagine! You and your child switch roles. He can pretend to help you get dressed or brush your hair. This pretend time could include a change of small jobs, clothes, behaviors, vocabulary, and other habits. Keep the activity positive and fun!</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 through 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

