



Play, Learn, and Read at Home

Developmental Activities for kid's birth to five

Story this week: Little Blue Truck by Alice Schertle

Focus Skills for parents: Prediction: “What is going to happen?” “What would you do?”

	0-12 Months	1-3 Years	3-5 Years
Problem-Solving Skills	As the dump truck tried to avoid the puddle, your infant will begin to move around obstacles in their way between 8-11 months. Sit across the floor with a desirable object in view. Encourage her to move to get it. She may push an object out of her way and/or reach to get the desired toy!	When children first learn about size they think of things as “big” and “little.” In the story, the blue truck is little but the dump truck is big. As you talk about size, compare objects. Some apples are big and some are small/little. Compare items of the same size like matchbox cars or bananas. Extend the activity using words like long/short, wide/narrow, etc.	This story covers the basic colors in a crayon box! To teach the concept of color, constant repetition and expanding on what colors are and what they are not is necessary. Start teaching colors with matching. If you are working on the color of blue, show your child the blue car and ask them to find something of the same color. Matching colors is a pre-skill to naming colors!
Language/Communication Skills	Infants as young as 9 months old begin to show you by their behavior that they are understanding words in their world. When you read the book, focus on naming the animals as you point to them. By 12 months of age, your child will begin to point out some animals when you name them. 	There are specific sounds for the animals and vehicles throughout the story. As you read, point out the different sounds. Truck-Beep, Toad-Croak, Sheep-Baaa, Cow-Moo, Pig-Oink, Chicken-Cluck, Mama Chick-Peep, Goat-Maaa, Horse-Neigh, Duck-Quack, Dump Truck-Honk. Do a walk through the book pointing to the different objects and WAIT for your child to offer the sound that matches!	Encourage your preschooler to use their imagination by retelling the story in their own words! Gather two vehicles and some farm animals. If you don't have these, cut them from magazine pictures or draw and color them on paper. Use the book and objects but let your child provide the text. If they get stuck, ask open-ended questions such as, “What happens here? What are they doing?”
Small/Fine Motor Skills	It is important for your baby to experience a variety of textures. Playing in chocolate pudding is a great way for him to safely explore while developing muscles in his fingers. Place him in his highchair with a spoonful of pudding on his tray. If he is hesitant to touch, show him how you put your finger in it to spread it around. Follow your baby's lead and don't force him. It should be an enjoyable experience!	Most children love to play with playdough! Make your own “Dirt Playdough” with your child. They will love measuring the ingredients, dumping them into the bowl, and stirring. 2 C. Flour 1/2 C. Cocoa 2 1/2 C. Water 1 1/4 C. Salt 1 1/2 T. Cream of Tartar 5 T. Oil Mix all ingredients and heat on stovetop over medium heat. Stir until mixture forms a ball. Remove from heat and knead when cool!	Many preschoolers have the skills needed to use scissors. Let your child snip colored paper and then glue together to make their own animal picture. Use green paper for a frog, brown paper (paper bag) for a horse, etc. If you don't have colored paper, your child can color paper with crayons, markers, or paint. Provide an outline of the animal to help your child! To add texture, snip from colored foam sheets found in the craft area of your local store.

	0-12 Months	1-3 Years	3-5 Years
Large/Gross Motor Skills	While your baby is lying on their back, assist them in touching their left hand to their right foot. Switch it up and bring their right hand to their left foot. Any activity that encourages a child to cross the vertical center of their bodies is beneficial as it helps the two hemispheres of the brain communicate better.	Children of all ages love to play in boxes! Build your own little blue truck by covering a box in blue paper. Make your own dump truck using yellow paper. Fill the boxes with heavy items such as a bag of sugar from your pantry. Move the furniture to make obstacles in the room. Your toddler will love pushing and pulling the trucks around the furniture!	In the book there is a STOP sign and a TOAD CROSSING sign. Make up your own obstacle course incorporating signs and actions from the book. Make sure to include a swerve, something to push, a place to jump and flap, and a spot where they may need to ask for help. Let them help plan the course and then do the course together!
Self-Help Skills	Like the animals in the mud, your baby will get messy at meal times. Sometimes she will refuse her face being wiped. To help with this, prepare two damp clothes. When she is done eating, tell her it is time to wash her face. Give her a cloth and show her how to wipe her face. Use a hand-held mirror to show her the food on her face. Take turns with her wiping her face and make it fun! 	As your toddler develops more independence, there will be times that they need a little help like the little blue truck. They may even tell you, "I can't do it." Instead of taking over and doing for your child, encourage him. Say "You are having a hard time putting on your coat. Find the hole for your arm. You can do it!" By using words of support, your child will gain confidence. When they are successful, instead of "good job" be specific about what they accomplished. "John, you put your coat on all by yourself! You did it!"	The dump truck tells blue, "You helped me and they helped you." Create a helping environment by giving your child jobs they can help with around the house. These are not paid chores but ways they can be helpful. Some examples are setting the table for dinner, washing vegetables, sorting laundry, caring for pets, dusting, etc. Do jobs together and talk about what you are doing. When finished let your child know how helpful they were by saying, "You put the silverware on the table. That was helpful in getting ready to eat dinner."
Social-Emotional Skills	While sitting on the floor, put him facing you on your lap and bring your knees up and down singing: "Bumping up and down in my little blue truck, Bumping up and down in my little blue truck, Bumping up and down in my little blue truck, Won't you be my darling?" Then, drop one leg flat, sitting him on just one knee and bump him bumpier And sing, "One wheel's off and the axle's broken, One wheel's off and the axle's broken, One wheel's off and the axle's broken, Won't you be my darling?"	Winking is used as a gesture to say "hi" by the toad to the truck. Practice winking with your child in front of a mirror. Show them how you close one eye at a time. One eye may be easier than the other so try both. Not everyone can wink but you won't know unless you try! Most kids will wink with both eyes closed at the same time. Have fun winking to each other and celebrate your child's attempts if they can't wink. 	Little blue truck and the dump truck are helpers. Talk with your child about other ways people are helpful using different modes of transportation such as a police car, ambulance, car transporter, tow trucks, semi-trucks, etc. Seeing the point of view of others and having empathy for them is part of a child's social-emotional development. You can extend the activity by visiting the fire department or stopping to safely watch construction of a home! 

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