
















# Play, Learn, and Read at Home

## Developmental Activities for Kid's Birth to Five

**Story this month:** Llama Llama Mad at Mama by Anna Dewdney

	0-12 Months	1-3 Years	3-5 Years
<p><b>Problem-Solving Skills</b></p>	<p>Babies between 9-11 months are learning to take things out of containers. Provide your baby with containers (ie boxes without lids, butter tubs, toy boxes, pots or pans) and items to fill their containers with such as blocks, clothespins or spoons. Start with shallow containers and gradually introduce deeper containers and encourage your baby to take objects out of containers one by one or by dumping the container over to have them all fall out.</p> 	<p>Your one year old will enjoy putting objects in a container. Give your child an empty box or laundry basket and several food items such as a cereal/cracker boxes and food cans. Show your child how to put the items into the box and invite them to try. Between 2-3 years, give your child enough empty boxes and containers to fill a paper grocery bag. This activity will help your child problem solve, learn about spatial relationships and develop their eye hand coordination.</p> 	<p>Preschoolers learn about math and language through activities such as sorting and categorizing. When you return from the grocery store have your child help you take care of the groceries by making piles for you of things that go in the refrigerator, things that go in the cupboard, the bathroom or freezer etc. Use pictures of the categories (ie. freezer) to help your child do the task. Count the number in each pile and/or estimate how many items are in the pile or talk about which pile is the biggest!</p> 
<p><b>Language/Communication Skills</b></p>	<p>Between 6-9 months, babies are learning to wave bye-bye. Encourage your baby to wave like llama llama, by letting your baby see and hear you wave bye-bye in a variety of situations. For example, wave to people and pets as they leave the room or go outside, wave to pop up toys as you close the lids; such as jack-in-the-boxes, wave to pictures in a book when you turn the page. Help your baby wave good-bye to others by gently shaking your babies forearm. Praise, praise, praise your baby as they attempt this gesture!</p> 	<p>Llama llama shops for clothing items! Toddlers between 18-20 months are able to point to several clothing items on request. Name the various clothing items while getting dressed. Begin with basic items such as shirt, pants, and shoes. As your child develops and learns the name of different clothing items get them involved by asking them to, "Find their socks," etc as you get dressed. As your child learns these basic items, emphasize the names of other items such as sweater, slippers, belt, pajamas, boots, etc.</p>	<p>As adults we often use a lot of words to help children understand what they can and not do. This can be especially challenging when your preschooler really wants to do something <b>NOW!</b> Try the technique that Mama Llama used in the story..."First (this) then (that)" When using this strategy young children will be better able to comprehend that I still get to do what I want but I must do something else first. Pictures supports are a great way to help them understand:</p> <p>First  then </p>
<p><b>Small/Fine Motor Skills</b></p>	<p>Babies between 10-12 months are learning to pick up tiny objects using their index finger and thumb. Provide many opportunities for your child to practice picking up small objects, like Llama llama picked up puffs in the story. Provide only one or two tiny things for your child to pick up at a time such as bits of food, dry cereal, straws, and strings on pull toys, etc. Always make sure that you supervise your young child when you present them with small items to pick up.</p>	<p>Llama llama was having fun stacking blocks. Building towers with blocks help your child practice their eye-hand coordination and release skills. Join your child in building towers to make it more fun. Build a tower with the number of blocks your child can usually stack, and invite him to copy you; then add one more! Let your child knock the tower down and encourage them to make another one!</p> 	<p>Encourage your preschooler to put simple puzzles together like Llama llama. As your child approaches school age, your child will begin to do puzzles with interlocking pieces. Make a homemade puzzle with your child by gluing a picture from a coloring book or photo on a piece of tag board. Cut the picture in various shapes and sizes, and then have your child practice putting it together. Begin with 3-4 pieces, and then add more!</p>

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<b>Large/Gross Motor Skills</b>	Llama llama stooped down to pick items up from the floor. Beginning at 10 ½ months your child has developed enough balance and control to bend down from standing to pick something up and then, stand back up by holding onto something. Start by sitting your child on your lap to bend forward to pick up a toy. You may also place a small toy/object about six inches in front of your child's feet when standing. Encourage him to stoop into a squatting position while holding on to you or a piece of furniture for support.	Llama llama pushed the cart with his Mama Llama when they were at the store. As your child's balance and control in walking improve they will be ready for new movement challenges. Between 17-19 months, your toddler will have the skills to push and pull large toys or boxes across the floor. Show your child how to put his stuffed animal or doll in a box and take it for a ride by pushing or pulling the box around. Add weight to the box to make it more challenging, such as food boxes, food cans or toys.	Your preschooler is becoming more efficient at performing complicated motor activities. Create an obstacle course using boxes, chairs, plastic bottles and let your child push a box or child's size grocery cart around them. Arrange the course so they can practice making sharp turns. Make the obstacle course more complicated as your child's abilities allow. This may include pushing box/cart along a line made with tape, going under tables, or running/skipping while pushing.
<b>Self-Help Skills</b>	Between 10 ½ -12 months, your child is ready to participate in dressing. Dress and undress your child slowly when you are able to and encourage them to "help." Give your child simple directions such as "give me your foot" as you hold out your hand and tap their foot. Praise all of their "helping" efforts during dressing to encourage them to help again! 	Help your toddler learn to put on shoes like Mama Llama helped Llama llama. Let your child practice putting on loose or large shoes, even some of your own. Have your child sit on the floor or stool so his feet are on the floor. Place the shoe on the floor and let your child work his foot into the shoe. Offer only as much assistance as your child needs. It may be quicker for you to do most of the work, but your child will feel proud of their independence, which is worth the extra time! 	Messes and young children just seem to go together! Learning to help clean up, like Llama llama helped his mama is an important skill. Your child will have fun helping you and feel proud to be able to do adult-type activities! Depending on your child's interests and abilities, you could let your child "wash" the floor or tub during bath time with a sponge, take care of groceries or dishes, help you pick up toys at the end of day and return them to their proper places or sweep the floor with a toy broom. Help your child learn that picking up after themselves is part of their daily routine. 
<b>Social-Emotional Skills</b>	Between 1 ½-4 months your baby is learning to smile more and more each day with true social intent! Be very animated with your expressions when you talk and interact with your baby. Watch for their eye contact and smiles as their way to say, "I'm ready to play." At this age, small frequent doses of social interaction are usually better than longer ones. Watch for your baby's cues such as turning their head away or crying that they need a break from this play. 	Toddlers may begin to develop a special attachment to a favorite doll, blanket, stuffed animal, etc. and insist that they take it everywhere as Llama llama took his llama with to the store with him. These transitional objects provide comfort when children feel alone, sad, angry or even happiness so let that special something tag along with you as part of the family!!! 	Young children have a hard time labeling and describing their feelings with words but are pretty good at showing us how they feel through their behavior. Help your preschooler understand and express his feelings by giving him words to describe his emotions, e.g. "you are mad that jack took your toy." It might be helpful to use simple faces that represent different feelings such as scared, mad, tired, happy, excited etc. Teaching your child words and encouraging them to talk about their feelings, instead of acting them out will help your child learn to express themselves in a healthy way. 

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)

