






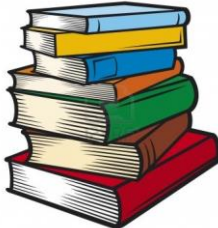


# Play, Learn, and Read at Home

## Developmental Activities for Kid's Birth to Five.

**Story this month:** Pete the Cat, Pete's Big Lunch by James Dean

**Reading Strategy:** Predicting the words in a story by using the pictures is a natural strategy built into the text of the book. Encourage your child to further develop their predicting skills by guessing what the words are by pointing at the pictures.

	0-12 Months	1-3 Years	3-5 Years
<p><b>Problem-Solving Skills</b></p>	<p>Babies between 5 ½ to 8 months enjoy exploring sounds objects can make. Let your baby play with a variety of objects and materials which make different sounds when they hit, bang, slide, or poke them. This may include: spoons and pans, small aluminum pie tins, squeak toys, paper, rattles, and toy keys. Give your baby plenty of time to discover the sounds toys can make at their own pace. It will be more meaningful when they figure out, "I did that!"</p> 	<p>Between 29 to 33 months your child should begin to develop an understanding that some colors are the same. Place two different colored containers in front of your child such as a red box and a blue box. Gather a few toys or other objects that match the color of the two containers, e.g., blue and red cars, blue and red blocks. Put one or two objects in the matching colored container as your child is watching you and say, "red block, red box, it matches!; blue car, blue box, it matches! Give your child the opportunity to do this activity on their own. Provide guidance to your child, by labeling exactly what he is doing, (ie. blue ball, red box). He will eventually figure out when you say "it matches" that the colors are the same.</p>	<p>At this age, children are learning to sort colors and point to several colors when named. Having your child help with laundry is a great way to help your child learn about sorting. To help your child develop his critical thinking and problem solving skills, dump the pile of laundry on the floor and ask your child for ideas about how they think you should group the items together to wash. Your child might decide to group by "shirts" or "socks," which could make for an interesting discovery in the laundry. Use this opportunity to help your child explore what happens when colors mix together (see fine motor activity). Get your child started by selecting some items and saying I think, I will make a "black" pile. See what kind of pile your child makes, help him label it.</p>
<p><b>Language/ Communication Skills</b></p>	<p>Babies between 7 ½ to 12 months are exploring with their voice by varying their tone and inflection. They also make sounds that resemble your exclamations such as "Uh-oh!" As you read the story, add extra emphasis to words such as "Oh no!" and "Uh-oh!" Pause and WAIT to see if your baby will imitate the sounds back to you. Exaggerate your facial expressions to keep your baby interested in watching you. Also include words of your own while reading such as "Oops!" and "Oh!"</p>	<p>Your toddler is learning to understand and answer simple questions which require more than a yes or no answer. As you are reading the story, ask your child simple "What," "Where," "Who," and "How" questions. For example "What did Pete put on his sandwich?", "What color is that fruit?", "Who did he share his big sandwich with?"</p> 	<p>Your preschooler is learning to understand the meaning of prepositions such as in, out, under, next to, on top of, and in front of. Help your child understand the meaning of prepositions by playing follow the leader. Go <i>under</i> the table, go <i>in</i> the closet, walk <i>on top of</i> the pillows. Next, as you read the story ask your child questions such as "Is the banana <i>on top of</i> or <i>under</i> the hot dogs?" Is Pete sitting <i>on</i> or <i>off</i> of the chair?" Or, I wonder where Pete is?</p> 

	0-12 Months	1-3 Years	3-5 Years
<b>Small/Fine Motor Skills</b>	Between 7 ½ to 10 months babies are learning to pick up small objects using a pre-pincer grasp. Provide many opportunities for your baby to practice picking up small or thin objects using their index finger and thumb. These items may include: shoestrings, yarn, pegs, and strings from their pull toys, puffs, cheerios, straws, or spoon handles.	Toddlers between 20-25 months will improve their coordination by learning to place objects on a string. Stringing objects requires your child to use both hands and encourages good eye-hand coordination. Provide your child with shoelaces or yarn. Wrap tape around the ends of the string. Use a variety of objects to string such as large noodles (manicotti), fruit loops, or large wooden beads.	Get several cups of water and drop different colors of food coloring into each one so you have a cup of red water, blue water, green etc.) Then give you child a cup of plain water and an eye dropper. Encourage your child to squeeze the eye dropper and gather some of the colored water and put it into the clear water. Let your child explore and discover what happens when you mix the colors together. Squeezing the dropper helps develop your child’s pre-writing skills.
<b>Large/Gross Motor Skills</b>	Pete the Cat invites his friends to come over and share his lunch with him. Between 10-12 months your child will begin to walk by learning to take a few steps forward with support. Let your child practice walking while you hold both of his hands. Hold your child’s hands toward his sides, no higher than his shoulders. Kneel face-to-face with your child while holding his hands. Talk about walking to different spots or items like Pete’s friends Give him a big hug at the end!	Try stacking larger items like Pete stacked food on his sandwich! See how high you can stack books or stuffed animals. Pretend to make a “sandwich” just like Pete! You can stack pretend food from a toy kitchen set. When your stack gets high and falls over say “Oh no! Let’s build it again!” 	Pete the Cat makes his sandwich very high! Let your child practice their climbing skills by piling a large amount of blankets, cushions, and pillows on the floor. On your hands and knees, climb on or over the large pile. As the pile gets smaller as you climb, continue to rebuild the pile. Climbing strengthens muscles and the understanding of spatial relationships. 
<b>Self-Help Skills</b>	Babies find their feet very interesting and fun to play with. As your baby approaches that his first birthday, he will be interested in taking off his socks. To help him practice this skill, start by having about half of the sock off the foot such that with a couple good tugs your child experiences success with getting the sock off! This is a good time for your exclamation words... “Uh-oh, you got your sock off!”	Pete the Cat loved his white shoes! Toddlers between 21-30 months are learning to put shoes on. Let your child practice putting on loose or large shoes. To make it is easier for your child to put his foot it, remove or loosen any laces. Offer only as much help as needed. 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!	Preschoolers are becoming increasingly independent each day. Between ages 3 and 4 your child should be able to put their shoes on by themselves and put them on the correct feet. These skills take a lot of practice in order to be successful. As your child is putting their shoes on, sing a song to help guide them. I.e., to the tune “Dem Bones”, your right shoe goes on your right foot. Your left shoe goes on your left foot. Point to the correct foot as you are singing.
<b>Social-Emotional Skills</b>	Babies love music! Give your child musical instruments such as a bowl and spoon, shakers, two objects to bang together as you sing “I Like to Eat, Eat, Eat, Apples and Banana!” Add in different words of foods that you saw in the story. 	Children at this age are naturally quite messy with just about everything they touch. Expect and allow messy play within reasonable limits. For example, show your child its fun and okay to make mud pies outside, but he needs to clean up before coming inside.	Children will often feel bad after making a mess or a mistake. Build their self-esteem and confidence by saying the phrase from the story when your child is feeling bad. For example, after your child spills his milk say reassure him by telling him it is okay. Then help your child clean up the mess.

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)