



Play, Learn, and Read at Home

Developmental Activities for kid's birth to five

Story this month: Red Sled by Lita Judge

Focus Skills for parents: Read through the book with your child talking about what's happening and how the characters might feel. Wordless books allow your child to become the author and make the story be anything they want it to be!

	0-12 Months	1-3 Years	3-5 Years
Problem-Solving Skills	<p>Make a winter snow storm in a bottle! Fill a plastic bottle ½ with water, ½ with corn syrup and add glitter. Secure the lid with glue. Your baby can shake the bottle and watch the glitter “snow” settle to the bottom!</p> 	<p>Your child will enjoy making a winter picture using white paint and marshmallows. Teach the concepts small, medium, and large by using different sized marshmallows. Allow your child to dip the marshmallow into the paint and stamp it on the paper. They may surprise you and make a snowman!</p>	<p>Children this age begin to sort and classify. Take a large piece of paper and divide it into four different sections. Use old magazines to put pictures that would correlate with the season such as boots, flowers, the sun, rain, mittens, etc. Write the name of the season in each section such as spring, summer, winter & fall.</p>
Language/ Communication Skills	<p>Throughout the story the animals shout out different vocalizations using vowel sounds. Your baby should imitate different vowel sounds around 6 months of age. While looking at your baby, read the different sounds in the book and then wait to give your baby a chance to imitate your sounds.</p>	<p>Children this age are starting to combine two words together. Color words are often words used to describe objects such as red sled. Throughout your day, talk to your child about different red objects you see such as, “red hat, red shoes, red flag, red door, red stop sign.” Encourage your child to find other objects that are red!</p>	<p>Take a picture walk through the book pointing out details on each page. Then, go through the book and read it like a story. For example, “The moose asked bear and rabbit if he could ride with them.” Take turns with your child and have him tell you his version of the story. This will build his story telling skills!</p>
Small/Fine Motor Skills	<p>Make pretend snow without the cold by placing a stale loaf of bread (crust removed) into a food processor or blender. Pulse until bread turns into a fine crumble. Dump into a plastic container and have fun!</p> 	<p>All children need to strengthen fine motor (think fingers, hands, and wrists) muscles to help develop correct pencil grip and handwriting abilities in the future. Scatter cotton balls on the floor and give your child tongs to pick them up and place in a container. As they improve, set a timer to see if they can beat their time.</p> 	<p>Your preschooler will enjoy making snowball garland to hang in the doorway to her room! Simply let her thread cotton balls on fish line spacing them a few inches apart and secure each ball with a knot on either side as you string. She will need help with the knot!</p> 

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Large/Gross Motor Skills	<p>Make a snowman picture by painting the bottom of one of your baby's feet! Add arms, a black hat, and a carrot nose to make it complete!</p> 	<p>Too cold or wet to sled outside, bring the sled indoors. Your child can load his sled with stuffed animals or toys and push/pull them through the house! This kind of heavy work provides information to your child's muscles.</p>	<p>Just the act of walking and stepping in deep snow will help build the muscles in your child's legs! Play follow the leader and create a maze through the snow. Have your child shuffle their feet together to make a path, take big wide steps, or hop with two feet.</p>
Self-Help Skills	<p>Add a song to the routine of getting dressed such as this one to the tune of Mulberry Bush:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">This is the way we put on our shirt, put on our shirt, put on our shirt, This is the way we put on our shirt So early in the morning. (verses: put on our pants, shorts, hat, shoes, etc.)</p>	<p>Use first/then statements to help teach your child a new skill. For example, if they are learning to brush their teeth, start with “First get your toothbrush, then the toothpaste.” Using first/then statements is a positive way of explaining to your child what you want them to do. Break the routine into small steps so they can be successful.</p>	<p>Make homemade hot cocoa <i>with</i> your child after a day of playing in the cold! For one cup, have your child measure 2 Tablespoons of cocoa powder with 2 Tablespoons of sugar in a small pot. Add 1 cup of milk and stir to combine. Heat on stove until warm!</p> 
Social-Emotional Skills	<p>Around 6-10 months your child may be showing signs of separation anxiety. Babies experience this because they are old enough to form a mental image of you. They become helpless and afraid. When leaving, give them enough time to adjust mentally and physically. Make farewells loving but brief and positive. In order to maintain your child's trust, never sneak out without them knowing.</p>	<p>Take a day and have fun sledding with your child. Being together on the sled offers closeness and spending time with them will help them feel important! Research has proven that spending time together 1:1 with your child will directly decrease their temper tantrums.</p> 	<p>When young children get to make choices about different events in their day it fosters their sense of independence. The characters in the book had many choices to make. As you take a picture walk through the book, focus on the choices that the animals make. Ask your child questions like, “Was that helpful or hurtful? What would you do if you found a sled and all your friends wanted to go sledding?”</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

