



Play, Learn, and Read at Home

Developmental Activities for Kid's Birth to Five

Story this week: Snow Day! by Patricia Lakin

Focus Skills for parents: Snow Day offers wonderful opportunities for children to relate to real-life activities and events while practicing sequencing skills through picture to word correspondence. Help your child develop sequencing skills by pointing at the events and pictures in the story. Ask what comes next? Point at the picture and see if your child can help you to guess the words. Show your child how stories go from left to right and from top to bottom.

	0-12 Months	1-3 Years	3-5 Years
Problem-Solving Skills	<p>Tie several colorful scarves together. Insert one end into a cardboard tube like from a paper towel roll. Let your baby pull the scarves through the tube. Now see if your baby can stuff the scarves back in the tube!</p> 	<p>Snow Day! Let your child practice pouring and filling. Provide recycled materials such as clean milk cartons, yogurt cups, detergent scoops, and plastic bottles for playing in the snow, sand, or water. She could even play with these in the tub! Talk about what your child is doing, and use new words such as empty, full, pouring, and scooping.</p>	<p>Winter clothing can be so much fun! Put a glove or a hat on your head or somewhere it doesn't belong. Ask, "Where is my glove?" When your child points or says it's on your head, ask him wear it really belongs: "On my hand? Really?" Have fun with this silly game. Try another object, such as a bar of soap in a cereal bowl.</p>
Language/ Communication Skills	<p>Snow Day offers many connections with sequencing. 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 one of the items under a box or cloth and make noise with one. Take the cloth off and ask baby, "Which one made the noise?" See if she can guess.</p>	<p>Communication helped the alligators have fun with their day and remember everything they needed! Have your child help you put away things like food or folded laundry. Use words such as up, down, over, or through: "Please put the can on the shelf" or "Please put your socks in the drawer." Thanks for the help! You can give silly directions, too: "Put the lemons under the chair."</p>	<p>Boy did those alligators have trouble remembering! Challenge your child to remember and do three things in a single direction. Ask your child to go into the bathroom, flush the toilet, and bring your toothbrush! You can also ask her to find your fuzzy blanket, wrap it around a book, and put it on the sofa. Or ask her to find a shoe, put a lock in it, and put it under the table: "Can you do it? Yeah!"</p>
Small/Fine Motor Skills	<p>Put small pieces of cereal in a screw-top or snap-top plastic container. Put the lid on loosely. Let baby take the lid off. You may have to show your baby how to take the lid off and get the cereal. Soon he will do it by himself.</p> 	<p>Give your child a pair of small kitchen tongs, children's chopsticks, or tweezers. See if he can move cotton balls or dry macaroni from one container into another. Then try something heavier such as walnuts, spools, or small stones.</p> 	<p>Give your child a small box, wrapping paper (or a colorful page from the newspaper), and clear tape. Cut the paper to a size your child can manage. Ask him to wrap the "present" and make believe you're going to give it to a friend. Your child can pull the paper up and around, then tape to the box. "Look at that! You did it all by your self!"</p>

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Large/Gross Motor Skills	<p>Tunnels in the snow! While folding laundry, throw a blanket or a sheet over a table or the backs of two chairs. Let your little explorer crawl into the "tunnel." When he's out of sight, call him. Then, greet him with surprise when he finds you: "Oh, there you are!"</p>	<p>Show your child how to walk heel to toy along a line on the sidewalk or a short length of clothesline on the ground. She can stretch her arms to keep her balance. She can hold an umbrella and pretend she is walking a tightrope in a circus!</p> 	<p>Play music and move around with your child (or several children). When you turn off the music everyone should stop moving. Encourage your child to freeze in many different positions (on one foot, bent over, on tip toe). Say, "Melt!" so that everyone can move again.</p>
Self-Help Skills	<p>The alligators loved to play with their friends! Your baby may enjoy watching older children play, especially when he has older brothers and sisters. If there are other babies his age in the neighborhood, he will enjoy playing alongside them. At first, they will enjoy watching each other. Eventually, they will learn to play together.</p> 	<p>You child can begin to help in little ways. She can use a sponge to wipe up the table after dinner. She can put toys or socks in a basket. She will feel good about helping. Let her know you notice: "What a big helper!"</p> 	<p>The alligators knew how to stay warm! Let your child play dress up in some old or interesting clothes. Boots are fun, as well as large hats, belts, and other accessories. A scarf or necklace adds a nice touch. A purse, wallet, or vest also makes the play interesting. Make sure there are some buttons to button, zippers to zip, or gloves to stick fingers into. Put a mirror at your child's level: "Where are you going today?"</p>
Social-Emotional Skills	<p>Look at all those alligator teeth! When you have a moment at home or while running errands, stop and encourage your baby to look at her face in a mirror. Make silly faces. Tell her what a big girl she is getting to be!</p> 	<p>Time for an outing! Find a place to have a picnic with your child. The park or playground is fun, but your child will have fun even if the picnic is inside your home. Let your child help prepare some simple food and drinks for the picnic. Maybe the stuffed animals would like to join you. Let your child practice feeding herself.</p> 	<p>Puppets are great for pretend fun. Use store-bought puppets or make your own. Find or draw a picture of a person or animal, cut it out, and paste it on cardboard. Attach a popsicle stick or paint-stirring stick, or chopstick for a handle. Draw a face on the bottom of a paper lunch bag and put your hands into the folds. Make it "talk" and let your child be a character. Have conversations in pretend voices.</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. Sources include *Ages and Stages* and *Teaching Strategies Gold*. For more information on your child's development visit: www.GreatStartMontcalm.org

