







Play, Learn, and Read at Home

Developmental Activities for Kid's Birth to Five

Story this month: Snowmen at Night by Caralyn & Mark Buehner

Focus Skills for parents: Rhyming Skills-After you have read the story several times, pause and let your child complete the rhyme.

| | 0-12 Months | 1-3 Years | 3-5 Years |
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| Problem-Solving Skills | <p>One of the ways your 6-12 month old learns about the world is through touch. Bring a small amount of snow inside for them to experience. Put mittens on their hands and have them pat at the snow and hold some in their hands.</p>  | <p>Reinforce the concepts of big and little by pointing to the big snowball (bottom sections) and the little snowball (head) of the snowman. Make comparisons with clothing items (boots, coat, socks, shoes, mittens, etc) such as the coat is big and the mittens are small. Make a pile of all of the clothes and sort into two piles, one big and one little.</p> | <p>Preschool age children are learning about size differences. The snowman is made out of small, medium, and large snowballs. Make three circles and see what the snowman would look like if the big snowball was on top, middle, etc. Make snowmen out of small, medium, and large squares, rectangles, and triangles just for fun.</p> |
| Language/Communication Skills | <p>If taught, most infants will be able to point to a named body part such as eye, nose or mouth by 12 months. Point out these body parts as you look at the snowmen in the book. You may also find them on your child, mommy, daddy, sister, etc. If your child is interested, start pointing out the hat on each snowman and other items of clothing.</p>  | <p>Understanding –ing verb forms is a skill that develops between 2 and 2 1/2 years of age. After you have read the book several times, play a game with the book where the child finds the picture of what you are asking: Where’s Sliding? Drinking? Skating? Racing? Giggling? Playing? Throwing? Sledding? To start, you will want to be on the page that the action is displayed. An older child may be able to search thru the book to find it. Between 2 1/2-3 your child will start to use –ing verb forms. While looking at the book, ask “What is he doing?”</p> | <p>At the very beginning of the story, the question is posed, “What do snowmen do at night?” This is a great opportunity for your child to use language to predict what he thinks. Pose other questions to your child such as, “What do snowmen eat?”; “How do clowns act?”; “How do you tell boy snowmen from snowgirls?”; “What do snowmen talk about?”, and “How do snowmen sleep?” The great thing about these questions is that there is no right or wrong answer. The older your child gets, the more sophisticated he will be with respect to his predictions.</p> |
| Small/Fine Motor Skills | <p>Your 6-9 month old will be interested in looking for objects hidden in the snow. Bring some snow inside in a tub and hide items such as a carrot, cup, small rattle, spoon, or mitten in the snow for your child to dig through and find. If you don’t want to use snow use cotton balls in the tub and do the same activity.</p> | <p>Purchase a couple of small spray water bottles. Fill them with different colored water by adding food coloring to each spray bottle. Build a snowman and let your toddler squeeze the trigger to spray the snowman with the different colors. Your child may need to use two hands to activate the sprayer. This activity strengthens the muscles in the hand which will later be needed for writing. Your child will delight in seeing the snowman become a colorful work of art.</p> | <p>(Save a couple cereal boxes then cut them apart and use the inside of the box to make a puzzle.) Cut out three different circle shapes for your child to trace onto the box. Your child can decorate the face or tummy of the snowman. Make several snowmen puzzles with your child and have them complete several snowmen at one time. The older your preschooler is, the more involved they can be in actually making the puzzle such as using scissors to cut out the circles.</p> |

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| <p>Large/Gross Motor Skills</p> | <p>In the winter we don't think about taking our little ones out to play but some days are perfect to experience winter with a sled ride. Use an infant/toddler sled that allows your child to sit upright. Even though they are not actively participating, the movement provided via the sled ride is important for brain development but, limit outside play to 10-15 minutes.</p>  | <p>Convert your laundry basket into a sled for your child to play with indoors. Have your toddler fill the 'sled' with stuffed animals, dolls and other toys to push or pull through the snow. This kind of play involving "heavy work" of pushing and pulling is also very important and provides the brain with important input. Of course, your child will need to be pushed around in the basket as well. This provides movement for him and burns calories for you!</p> | <p>Every preschooler should have the opportunity to go sledding. The hill does not have to be big to provide fun. Your child can sled down the hill or roll down the hill. Climbing back up the hill, in boots and pulling a sled is an activity that promotes strength and coordination. Just before you are ready to head in, make snow angels with your child. Have them lay down in the snow and move their arms and legs.</p>  |
| <p>Self-Help Skills</p> | <p>Drinking from an open cup is a skill your baby can begin to work on between 6 and 9 months. Pour a small portion of formula or water into the cup and hold it up to your baby offering them a small sip. By 12-18 months your child will be able to drink independently holding a cup, lifting it to drink, and then returning the cup to a resting position. Of course there will be some spilling as your child masters this skill. You will be amazed at how interested your infant is in drinking from a cup.</p> | <p>Between 1-2 years bottle feedings are eliminated and replaced with a cup. Sippy cups have become part of the American way of life and often function just like a bottle. Drinking from a bottle or sippy cup for an extended period of time may cause the child to develop a different kind of swallow pattern whereby the tongue pushes forward to control the flow of liquid. In the future this can cause orthodontic and speech problems related to the "s" and "z" sounds. Limit use of sippy cups and offer drinking directly from an open cup.</p> | <p>By about three years old your child can pour a liquid from a small container and do some simple serving. Teach your child how to make chocolate milk. Allow them to measure a teaspoon of the chocolate mix, pour the milk and stir. Put the chocolate milk in a small container so they can serve to the whole family. When making hot chocolate, you may want to help pour the water but they can add cocoa and marshmallows.</p> |
| <p>Social-Emotional Skills</p> | <p>In the story, the snowmen enjoy playing games. Your 6-10 month old is primed and ready for simple interaction games with you such as peek-a-boo (pulling a cloth off your head, peeking over an obstacle to see you) pat-a-cake and "So Big".</p> | <p>Toddlers typically engage in parallel play. This is when they are interested in the other child, will go where the other child is, and play next to them doing a similar activity. They may offer another toy to a child but it is really only to look at. They often do not release it or expect it right back. It is best if toddlers have the same or similar toys accessible to them to prevent a tug of war. Toddlers will play turn-taking games such as rolling a ball back and forth.</p> | <p>Preschoolers are starting to understand the concept of cooperative play. Several preschool age children will be able to work together to do an activity such as building a snowman or play simple games. They are beginning to understand the concepts of rules in a game and are learning to wait and take their turn.</p> |

I'm a Friendly Snowman
(Tune: "I'm a Little Teapot")

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| <p>I'm a friendly snowman big and fat (stretch arms out at sides) Here is my tummy and here is my hat. (point to tummy and then top of head) I'm a happy fellow, here's my nose (smile and then point to nose) I'm all snow from my head to my toes (point to head and then toes)</p> | <p>I have two bright eyes so I can see (point to eyes) All the snow falling down on me (flutter fingers downward) When the weather's cold I'm strong and tall (stand up tall) But when it's warm I get very small (crouch down low)</p> |
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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

