



## Play, Learn, and Read At Home

### Developmental Activities for Kids Birth to Five.

Story this month: **The Biggest Apple Ever** by Steven Kroll & Ill. By Jeni Bassett

	0-12 Months	1-3 Years	3-5 Years
<b>Problem-Solving Skills</b>	<p>Letting your little one explore at the apple orchard and learn about how things work begins in this age group. Curiosity is key to learning! They may tip over a basket of apples, to examine the fruit better, or pull leaves off of a tree.</p> 	<p>Working together at this age can be hard, but requesting help from a little one and having them help with a project or encouraging them to ask for help teaches them through experience how they can accomplish a job with others.</p>	<p>Turning the pages of a book one at a time and remembering parts of a story while listening starts in this age group. Engaging with our book is a great way to explore reading and how books work.</p> 
<b>Language/Communication Skills</b>	<p>While working on a point, the child can point to a variety of things in the pictures to have you name them. Keep the naming to one word: apple, mouse, truck, window, pan, teacher, etc. as you go through the book. You may only be reading the pictures, but this is building great skills to help your child continue to develop their language.</p>	<p>This book is full of some great pictures and while you are reading it or looking through it, you can ask your child to help you find different things. You may look for all the apples. Where is the truck? The person with the red shirt or the striped shirt.</p> 	<p>If you are able to visit an apple orchard in your community, have your little one tell you about it. You may have to begin with leading questions, such as “Did you see lots of trees?” “What was on the trees?” Remember, an orchard changes a lot from spring to fall, so multiple visits would be a lot of fun. As they get older, they can begin to tell you more about their trip from memory. You may have to ask some simple questions to help, “Where did we go today?” “What did you see there?”</p>
<b>Large/Gross Motor Skills</b>	<p>Learning how to throw or simply letting go of objects on their own at this age is a great skill. You can work on this by having a basket (laundry would be most accessible) and rolled up socks or different size balls that are easy to hold and working on throwing them into the basket.</p>	<p>If you are able to go to a local apple orchard in the fall, going on a nature walk through the rows of apples, picking apples by reaching and pulling are great skills to work on. Walking over a variety of ground works on strength and balance.</p> 	<p>In the book, the boys use a ladder; working on climbing at a playground is a great way to work on strength and balance. There are often stairs, a variety of surfaces for climbing (even slides), and ladders.</p> 

<p><b>Small/Fine Motor Skills</b></p>	<p>Eating an apple! You would not think this would use fingers to work on a pincer grasp, but cutting up an apple into bite-size pieces makes it easier for little ones to eat, but also works on using the fingers to pick up.</p>	<p>Making dough or rolling dough to make a real or pretend apple pie uses muscles from all over the hand that help with holding a pencil later. Playdough, salt dough, or piecrust are all great ways to work the fingers, palms, and whole hands.</p> 	<p>Make apple prints by cutting an apple in half and dipping it in paint then stamp on paper. You can cut it in half 2 different ways to make very different prints. This works on the whole hand by having your little one holding something larger in their hands, but if they struggle, just cut your apple stamp smaller</p>
<p><b>Self-Help Skills</b></p>	<p>Using fingers or a spoon is a fun way to eat. Usually little ones find their fingers to be faster, but introducing the spoon and working with it, gets better with time. They might enjoy applesauce with a spoon.</p> 	<p>Using a spoon and fork are a great start when eating. These skills work on eating independently. Providing a child with a beginning-food onto plate, middle eating, and then the end moving the plate to the sink works on life skills that will build as the child gets older.</p> 	<p>Using silverware is a big step for parents to allow their little ones, but working on cutting is a great skill as your child's hands grow, and they seek independence. You can start with cutting playdough and move to food. There are some nice kid safety knives available. Always use adult supervision.</p> 
<p><b>Social-Emotional Skills</b></p>	<p>Playing with others begins in this age range, and little ones love playing with their parents first. You are their best teacher! You can work on silly faces in a mirror; work on how to activate toys, or even being silly on the floor and learning how to roll.</p> 	<p>In the story, the two boys work together to find the biggest apple. They then decide that a friend will win, so they change their plans to make the biggest apple pie together. Working together to accomplish an activity is a great way to build social skills. Picking up sticks to help clean up the yard, picking up toys, or holding a bag open to help someone put something inside it are examples of how you can teach your child the value of teamwork.</p>	<p>Sharing at this age is still developing, but you can help by working on my turn/your turn activities. First, play these kinds of games with parents and work up to doing it with a sibling and/or peer. Sharing is hard for young ones to understand and as the adult, you can help guide them through the process and help with the emotions.</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](http://www.GreatStartMontcalm.org)**

