










Play, Learn, and Read at Home

Developmental Activities for Kid's Birth to Five.

Story this month: The Little Mouse, The Red Ripe Strawberry, and The Big Hungry Bear by Don and Audrey Wood

Reading Strategy: This book has beautiful pictures to help tell the story. As you read the story, pause on each page and allow you and your child the opportunity to look and talk about the pictures. As you read through the book, ask your child what they see, what they think the mouse will do with the strawberry, and how the mouse can keep the strawberry safe from the bear.

	0-12 Months	1-3 Years	3-5 Years
Problem-Solving Skills	<p>As your baby learns about their world, you may notice that young babies don't know that if an object is out of sight that it still exists. This is called object permanence. Babies begin to realize around 8 months old that objects can still exist even when they don't see them. Playing peek-a-boo with your baby is a great opportunity to not only interact with your baby but also to show them that you're still there. Babies love playing peek-a-boo.</p>	<p>As your baby grows into a toddler, playing peekaboo can turn into playing hide-and-seek with their toys. Toddlers can use their problem solving skills to find their toys. Help your child say knock-knock where the toy is hidden, then open it up and show them their toy. You can also tape pictures of the toy on the outside where the toy is hidden to help younger toddlers find the toy.</p> 	<p>As you read the story about the bear and the mouse, talk about how big the bear is and how small the mouse is. Find some big items and some small items around the house and have your child sort the items into big and small categories.</p> 
Language/Communication Skills	<p>Language is key to a children's development. Talk with your baby about everything you're doing, from changing their diaper to making meals to playing with their toys. As your infant gets older they can understand their body parts as you name them. Point to their facial features and name them. Then ask them where their nose, eyes, ears, mouth etc. are and have them point to the parts.</p>	<p>The little mouse and the big hungry bear both loves strawberries. Ask your child what else mice and bears like to eat. Then have a conversation about the foods that you and your child like to eat and don't like to eat. Use descriptive language to describe your favorite foods.</p>	<p>Make up silly songs with your preschooler about food. Such as</p> <p><i>Twinkle Twinkle little pizza How I really want to eat ya</i></p> <p>Or</p> <p><i>I like bananas, yes I do, I like bananas, how about you?</i></p>

	0-12 Months	1-3 Years	3-5 Years
Small/Fine Motor Skills	This activity will help babies develop their eye/hand coordination as well as their memory. Let your baby see you put a toy in your hand. Close your hand and ask your baby where the toy is. Open your hand so your baby can see the toy. Close your hand again and ask your baby where the toy is. Encourage your baby to try to grab at your fingers or the toy.	The strawberry see pick-up game: Make a big strawberry out of a piece of construction paper. Have a little container of chocolate chips ready and a pair of tongs. Have your child use the tongs to pick up a chocolate chip and put it on the strawberry as one of the seeds. Using the tongs will be great practice using their small muscle skills and eye-hand coordination.	Make a strawberry puzzle. Invite your child to draw a picture of a strawberry, or find a picture of a strawberry in a magazine or food ad. Let your child use the scissors to practice their fine motor skills. Show your child how you can both share the paper strawberry by each taking half. Then place it back together again to make a whole strawberry.
Large/Gross Motor Skills	Getting your baby to move around using their large muscles is a key part of development. Encourage your child to move around according to their developmental abilities. If your baby isn't crawling yet, encourage them to roll over. If your baby is learning to crawl, help them to crawl farther than before. If they have mastered crawling, encourage them to stand up. Once they're standing, encourage them to cruise around the room hanging onto the furniture to steady their body.	Gross motor activities are so important for young children, not only for exercise, but also to build up the strength in their muscles. A great activity to help with this is animal walks. Try various walks or hops like different animals, starting with a mouse and a bear. Try a frog, rabbit, cat, dog etc. Encourage creativity, make up different animals/creatures and walks.	Exercise is an important part of our daily lives and children should incorporate it into their daily routines. Do different exercises with your preschooler. Allow your child to choose the number of jumping jacks or whatever exercise you do. 
Self-Help Skills	A great practice for your baby to start learning self care skills is to learn to feed themselves. Start by putting cheerios in front of your baby. As they learn to eat cheerios, start putting soft fruits, then move on to other foods. When your child is successful, their self-esteem will increase. 	The mouse has a strawberry. This is strawberry season is just around the corner. Give your toddler different foods with strawberries (if there are no allergies to strawberries). Strawberry shortcake, strawberry smoothies, or strawberries in yogurt or milk. These snacks are healthy and easy for your child to help you make them. 	The mouse puts a disguise on the strawberry. Play dress up with your child and put on different outfits, hats, and other materials to make disguises. Your child will be practicing valuable self-help skills. 
Social-Emotional Skills	Infants are social and love to look at faces of people. Hold your baby in front of the mirror so they can see themselves. Play games in the mirror and see if your baby will imitate your moves. 	As toddlers develop they get a better idea of themselves as individuals. They begin to understand they have feelings. Parents can help their toddlers understand these emotions better by labeling what they might be feeling. For example, "your face is scrunched up like you might be mad" or "you have a big smile, are you happy?".	Get out some art supplies and draw a self-portrait of yourself and encourage your child to draw themselves. After talking about your self-portraits, add different disguises and why you would choose that disguise.

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 through 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