



Play, Learn, and Read At Home

Developmental Activities for kids birth to five.

Story this month: **Walter's Wonderful Web** by Tim Hopgood

	0-12 Months	1-3 Years	3-5 Years
Problem-Solving Skills	<p>Shape sorter toys are fun to play with at this age; the simplest ones are best with no more than three shapes. Start by practicing putting items into a container and work your way to shapes. Example: use an empty, cleaned out juice bottle and put Q-tips or straws in.</p> 	<p>As your child gets older, continue using shape sorters. Add shape puzzles, simple to start, and then add more shapes as you work your way up. Label the shapes and talk about shapes you see around the house as well.</p> 	<p>Drawing shapes can be fun to work on; what shapes might make a house, a ball, a tree etc. A house could be a square or rectangle with a triangle. A tree could be a rectangle or triangle with a circle.</p> 
Language/Communication Skills	<p>Little ones are learning about language and how speech works at this age. Teaching them nursery rhymes is a great way for little ones to learn the rhythm of communication. Finger plays are another way to use their hands to connect the language to meaning. Itsy Bitsy Spider: The Itsy Bitsy Spider went up the water spout, down came the rain and washed the spider out. Out came the sun and dried up all the rain and the Itsy Bitsy Spider went up the spout again. You can make it a teensy weensy spider or also a Hugey Woogey spider!</p>	<p>While reading the book, there are some great sounds that occur throughout while the spider is creating his web. WHOOSH goes the wind! You can add sounds as needed and create a fun story with a variety of sounds. Rustling of the leaves, crashing to the ground, each shape can have a sound.</p> 	<p>While reading the book you can leave out words to allow your child to fill in the blank. You can do the sound whoosh or the shape. Ex: Whoosh! Went the wind and it blew away! Say this together the first few times through the book, and then leave this phrase out to allow your child to say it!</p>
Small/Fine Motor Skills	<p>Picking up Cheerios or puffs, leaves and rocks, blocks and rattles are all building hand muscles that will later help them build puzzles, write, paint and many other things. Make sure you are supervising while doing any of these activities if your child has not been exposed or you are not sure how they are going to handle the items.</p>	<p>Doing puzzles is a great task that can work on hand movements, putting pieces in (pieces with handles or without) make using fingers or full hands useful and prepares them for later skills.</p> 	<p>Painting or using markers to draw shapes onto rocks is a fun way to make pet rocks, hide rocks in the environment and go on a rock hunt. There is even a rock painting movement where people are finding rocks while at events or in parks that have been painted!</p> 

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Large/Gross Motor Skills	<p>In these early months your little one needs tummy time to work on building those muscles that will work together to help them roll over, army crawl, crawl, and then walk.</p> <p>Tummy time may occur on your tummy, then the floor on a blanket. If your little one is not liking it, start with short amounts multiple times a day.</p> 	<p>Walking around outside looking for spiders and their webs is a great activity! Early morning is a great time to find complete webs, along bridges, between plants, in windows, etc.</p> 	<p>Throwing is a common activity at this age, and teaching games with appropriate throwing is a great thing for a rainy day! Using masking tape and a hula hoop, create a spider web. With recycling paper you can create balls (bugs) to throw onto your web!</p> 
Self-Help Skills	<p>Just like Walter creating his web, by a year old your little one should be drinking out of an open cup. You can practice this skill by choosing a nice hard plastic cup, and putting very little in the bottom, practice tipping it back, holding it with two hands and then resting it on the top of their tummy or back onto a table.</p> 	<p>Working on getting dressed for a variety of seasons is hard work for little ones. Have them help by requesting body parts to put in the leg of pants, arm through an arm hole, if it is winter, hand into a mitten or glove. Also a great way to work on body parts!</p>	<p>Brushing your teeth is an activity that many children don't enjoy, but giving them the opportunity to do it themselves and keeping their routine at wake-up and bedtime are great times to practice everyone brushing. Singing a little song while they brush their teeth is a great way to build that independence.</p> 
Social-Emotional Skills	<p>No one helps Walter build his web, he must do it himself. Children this age are learning how to become independent, so helping them learn new activities, new emotions, new people, and new environments is important. They use you as their caregiver to be their safety person. They need you to help regulate their emotion, by staying calm when something to them may seem scary or introducing them to a new environment that may be over-stimulating for them.</p>	<p>Walter continues to try to make new webs without getting upset; he tries and tries again. Encouraging your little one while teaching them to do new things is a great way to build up their self-esteem while helping to lower their frustration. Every child learns different so they may need to have a model, visual, or listen to how to do it. If you model an activity, they learn by watching you or older siblings.</p> 	<p>Walter gets upset when he cannot get his web right. You can discuss what to do when you get mad or upset. You might: Take three deep breathes. Count to ten together "Blow" up a balloon -arms in front of you; as the balloon grows, move arms out and up to make a big balloon.</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

