

WEEKLY LEARNING ACTIVITIES: PRENATAL TO AGE 2



Monday

Nesting play! Turn measuring cups, bowls and pans into a game for your baby. While taking items apart, putting them together, turning over, banging, lining up, etc., your baby is practicing fine motor and thinking skills.

More nesting play... Using empty food boxes (cereal, macaroni, rice, etc.), have your toddler experiment to discover which boxes fit inside one another. Model measurement vocabulary such as longer, shorter, narrow, taller, etc. Ask questions: Can that one (point to smaller) fit inside that one (point to bigger)? How do you know?

Tuesday

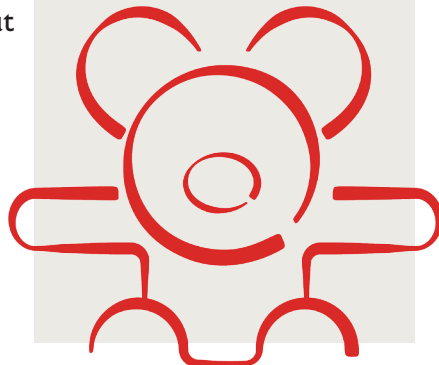
Material world. Fill an old tissue box or baby wipes tub with squares of cloth for your baby to pull out one by one. Count the squares, feel their texture and even play peek-a-boo! Then refill it and play again.

Paper tunnels! Create a tunnel by taping 2 sides of a piece of paper to the floor. Drive or roll toy cars through, herd animals through or shelter out of the pretend rain. Talk with your toddler about what they are doing. This builds fine motor skills and imaginative play.

Wednesday

Floating catch. Gentle games of catch help babies develop hand/eye coordination. Toss colorful, lightweight scarves in the air so that your baby can attempt to grab them.

Toy matching! Draw the outline of toys, household objects, shoes, etc. on pieces of paper. Then let your toddler try and match the outline with the real thing!



Thursday

Eye spy bottles! Fill a plastic bottle with rice. If desired, add several drops of food coloring and vinegar. Shake. Add some little trinkets, and tighten the lid. Babies enjoy shaking and rolling the bottle and being rewarded by discovering new and exciting objects each time they move the bottle.

Shape detective. Search the house for round, circle-shaped items. Point out the shape and guide your child's finger around the edges. Try hunting for additional shapes, such as squares and triangles!

Friday

Everyday toys. Babies are masters of engaging with common household items they consider to be amazing "toys." Simple toys that don't have a specific function lead to open-ended play, greater exploration and discovery. Offer your baby something new to interact with! What is their response?

Freeze! Put on some music and dance. Every few minutes, switch the music off and say "Freeze!" Play the music again, and get back to dancing. Games like this teach listening skills, self-control, and build balance and muscle coordination.

MORE LEARNING ACTIVITIES: PRENATAL TO AGE 2 Powered by **vroom™**



HAND TALK

Show your child how to tell you they're feeling hungry by touching their hand to their mouth or rubbing their belly. If you do this over and over and then give them food while saying the word "hungry," they will pick up the symbol and learn to talk to you with their hands. Suggested age: 0-1 year.

Brainy Background

Children can express themselves with their hands (for example, by pointing) long before they can use words. Helping them learn to use "Hand Talk" will help them learn to communicate with words in the future.

SNACKTIME CHALLENGE

Drop a small piece of bread or another small snack inside an empty clear plastic bottle. Encourage your child to get the piece out of the bottle. Do they shake the bottle or put their fingers inside? Encourage them to try different ways. If they're struggling ask, "What would happen if you turned it upside down?" Suggested age: 0-1 year.

Brainy Background

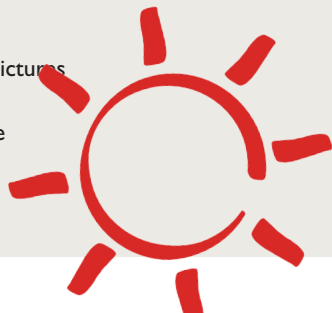
You're helping to build your child's critical thinking and problem-solving skills when you encourage them to test out ideas and come up with answers on their own. By talking with them about what they're doing, you help them understand the world.

CAN YOU FIND IT?

Use your cell phone to take pictures of things in your room like a chair, a table or the refrigerator. Ask your child to look at your cell phone picture and say, "Can you find it in the room?" As they get good at this, you can make it a little harder. Suggested age: 2-3 years.

Brainy Background

This game helps your child make connections between pictures (symbols) and real objects. This skill is basic for reading (where written marks stand for words) and math (where numbers stand for quantities of things), and is essential in learning.



IT'S A BIRD, IT'S A PLANE!

During snacktime, tell your child their finger food snacks are airplanes and make them "fly" around until they open wide so you can land them in their mouth. Make plane noises and talk about whether it is flying high, low or in circles. Suggested age: 0-1 year.

Brainy Background

Your child is learning to focus by watching you bring their food to their mouth. As they learn to feed themselves, they can also pretend their food is flying into their mouth.

WATCH AND LEARN

Offer your baby familiar objects like a scarf, an empty box or a container with a lid. Watch to see what they do. Do they try to put the scarf in the box or the lid on a container? Then encourage more learning by commenting on what they're doing, "You put the scarf in the box!" Suggested age: 1-2 years.

Brainy Background

When you give your child time to explore everything they can do with a simple object, you support curiosity and encourage creativity. They're also building critical thinking skills to understand concepts of size and shape.

SWEEP TOGETHER

Include your child in everyday chores. "It's time to sweep! Can you hold the dustpan for me?" Let them dump the dirt into the trash. Don't be surprised when they ask you to hold the dustpan for them. Go back and forth. Taking turns is how they learn best and makes them feel included. Suggested age: 2-3 years.

Brainy Background

Not only is your child learning by imitating you, they're learning by doing. They're also figuring out how things work – that things get dirty and need to be cleaned up. More importantly, they're learning to be helpful and considerate.

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WEEKLY LEARNING ACTIVITIES: PRESCHOOL

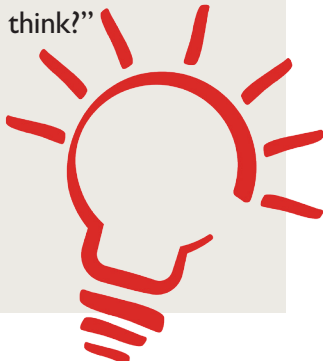


Monday

Cloud talk. Go outside and talk about clouds using describing words, such as dark, gloomy, light, fluffy, thin, thick, low, high. Do you see any shapes or animals in the sky?

Question everything!

When reading or playing, ask your child questions such as: “What else do you see?” “Tell me about...” “What if?” “I wonder how...” “How did that happen?” or “What do you think?”



Tuesday

Ice it! Using a small container or bag, fill it with water and drop in a small plastic block or other plastic toy. Place in the freezer. Once frozen, take out the bag and predict how long it will take to melt.

How do I feel?

Model feelings for your child. Talk about being frustrated when something is not going your way. Model how to work through frustration. By demonstrating ways to work through hard things, you are giving your child tools to manage tough times!

Wednesday

Laundry pretend.

Give your child a container of water and soap outside. Using old clothes or doll clothes, pretend to wash and dry the clothes. If you have clothes pins for hanging them to dry, even better! Pinching clothes pins is great small muscle work!

Play ideas. Support your child to include others’ ideas during play. If your child struggles to include new ideas, help them think of ways they can play together using everyone’s ideas.

Thursday

What’s your idea?

When reading with your child, expand on their ideas. Make sure to build on your child’s phrases just a little so that your child is able to imitate what you’ve said. Add, “Yes, you’re right! There are 3 _____. What else do you see?”

Rain collector!

On a rainy day, put a container outside to collect rain. Predict how many inches you think it will rain. Then measure it when the rain stops.

Friday

Helping hands! When cleaning, give your child a job. Can they pick up toys and put them up high so you can sweep/vacuum? Can they wipe a table with a cloth and water? Can they put laundry in a basket? Working as a team builds confidence and a sense of responsibility.

Which way? When taking a walk with your child, give them options of which way they would like to go. Should you walk fast or slow? Can you hop or skip? Giving children choices helps them have a sense of control and responsibility.

MORE PRESCHOOL LEARNING ACTIVITIES



HOW MANY?

Invite your child to predict how many seeds will be in an apple when you cut it or how many pieces of orange there will be when you peel it. Count the seeds or slices together and compare their prediction to what you both discovered. What other foods can you use for this game? Suggested age: 3-4 years.

Brainy Background

In this game, your child is using early science skills to predict the number of seeds or slices, count them, and then compare their prediction to what they discover. They're also learning to estimate numbers, an important concept in math.

TURN TOWER

Using items like cups, take turns stacking with your child to build a tower. Say, "My turn," as you stack one and then, "Your turn," as they do. Eventually, stop using words. Do they keep taking turns? Try to playfully break the rules and take two turns. What do they do? Suggested age: 3-4 years.

Brainy Background

You're showing your child the importance of working together as you build, while also asking them to focus to make sure the tower stays up. They're also using working memory to keep track of whose turn it is, without your words to guide them.

SHELF HELP

Ask your child to help you organize a shelf in the kitchen. You can suggest categories like, "boxes, cans, cereal and crackers." Let them organize and categorize. You can even give them a towel to wipe out the shelves to help you get started. Suggested age: 4-5 years.

Brainy Background

Children typically love to do grown-up things. When they categorize and organize, they're making connections that will help them with math, reading and science. They're also putting themselves in your role, which promotes perspective taking skills.



BALANCING FEAT

Take turns with your child standing on one foot and then the other, trying to balance. You can say, "Your turn," and "My turn." See if you can do it with your eyes closed. What else can you do? Suggested age: 3-4 years.

Brainy Background

You and your child are having a conversation with actions as you take turns standing on one foot, then the other. When they practice doing this, they're learning about balance – what it takes to stay steady and not fall down.

HOME MUSEUM

Invite your child to collect special items and display them around the house. Ask them to lead you through the museum and share with you why the items are meaningful. Then you take a turn to choose favorite things to share with them. Suggested age: 4-5 years.

Brainy Background

As your child takes time to think about what they want to say and how to say it, they're practicing important communication skills and using memory to recall past experiences. Celebrating their words, feelings and actions sets up a positive learning environment.

SILLY CHARADES

Play a game where your child has to figure out what you are. Make different facial expressions and body movements and see if they can get it. Sound effects are allowed, too! Then ask them to be something and you try. You can pretend to be animals, objects or people you both know. Suggested age: 4-5 years.

Brainy Background

When your child is guessing what or who you are, they're using observational skills and memories of past experiences. When they're acting and pretending to be someone or something else, their perspective taking and communication skills are promoted.

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WEEKLY LEARNING ACTIVITIES: PRENATAL TO PRESCHOOL



PARENT AND CAREGIVER CORNER

There is no official “How To” guide for parenting. Most of us parent our children the way we were raised. Sometimes, parents find themselves thinking back to their childhoods. You might think about traditions, routines or parenting practices you enjoyed as a child and want to continue with your baby, and other behaviors that you’d like to stop. Even before your baby is born, it is great to think about what parenting practices you see yourself doing or not doing. Here are some parenting practices to consider:

Know your child’s development:

- Even very young babies pick up on parents’ moods and can feel complex emotions like sadness and fear.
- Babies benefit from being talked and read to before birth. It’s never too early to start!
- Young children have very little self-control. Things like being able to take turns, share and follow rules consistently can be difficult and take a lot of practice.

Support your child’s emotions:

- Young children are driven by emotions, not logic; irrational behavior is normal and to be expected. They need empathy, patience and guidance to learn how to accept and follow rules.
- When you set and enforce clear and appropriate limits, you help build self-control and resilience, and the ability to cope with life’s frustrations and disappointments – key life skills.
- Try to stay calm, connected and loving – even as your child is protesting the limit. Anger and rejection may increase a child’s distress and make it harder for him or her to learn from the experience.

Always remember, we’re in this together!