

# WEEKLY LEARNING ACTIVITIES: PRENATAL TO AGE 2

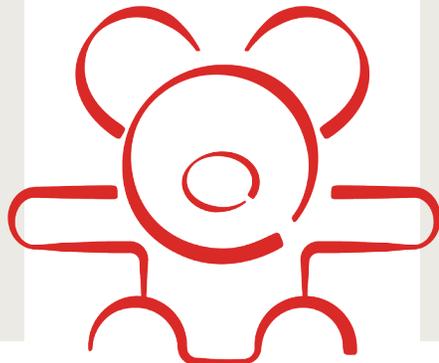


## Monday

**Sensory obstacle course.** Rearrange furniture or cushions to make “tunnels.” Suspend colored scarves or ribbons at one end of the tunnel for your baby or toddler to crawl or walk through. Place a safety mirror (the ones that can be detached from baby play mats are ideal) at the end. Include different textured materials and cushions to climb and crawl over. A large box could also be added for children to crawl in and out of. Babies – and toddlers too! – will love this activity.

## Tuesday

**Storytelling.** Break out some of your best performances! Try out all kinds of crazy voices, noises and actions – the sillier, the better! You can play it safe and rely on textured board books and stories that have stood the test of time. Or you could tweak some favorite stories from your childhood, add some puppets, even socks on your hands, and have your baby or toddler captivated.



## Wednesday

**Experience the outdoors.** Being outside is a wonderful sensory experience for babies and toddlers. Talk about the sounds you hear, movements you see, fragrances you smell. Explore the textures of natural objects. Are they smooth, rough, bumpy, etc.? Experience different textures as you walk together on grass, or put their feet in some sand.

Bring treasures home and use them to remember and retell the story of your adventure!

## Thursday

**Boxes are fun!** No need to buy fancy blocks to build your infant’s motor skills. Wrap up some smaller boxes (cereal or shoe boxes work well) with recycled newspaper or wrapping paper and allow baby to learn to rip them open. They will love the sound of paper ripping as they pull on it. Babies as well as toddlers will also enjoy stacking boxes, knocking them over, and rebuilding the stack with your help.

## Friday

**Splish, splash!** You don’t have to save water play for bath time: Fill a small plastic tub with water and various squirty toys, plastic cups, kitchen ladles, and other items. Non-toxic bubble bath adds another fascinating element to water play. Just remember to never leave your baby or toddler unattended near water, even for a moment.

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## READY, SET, PLAY!

Look for signs that your child is ready to play. Do they look at you and kick their feet? Make funny sounds? Reach out their arms to you? Try to read their actions and follow their lead, making eye-contact and talking to them while you do! Suggested age: 0-6 months.

### Brainy Background

When you read your child's signals and follow their lead, you're having a back-and-forth conversation. Building on what they do and say while going back and forth is one of the most important ways you can support their learning.

## LAUNDRY INS AND OUTS

Invite your child to help you gather dirty clothes. Put them IN the laundry basket, pull them OUT. Then put them IN the machine, and pull them OUT. Use the words IN and OUT to describe your actions and see how they learn these ideas! Suggested age: 12 months-2 years.

### Brainy Background

Children this age like putting things in and out of stuff. Use this interest to help you get a chore done! It also helps them learn the concepts of IN and OUT and organize their world.

## SCHOPPING LIST SCRIBBLE

Writing a shopping list? Talk with your child about what you need. Read out loud what you write down: "Milk, eggs, cereal." Invite them to write or draw on the list, too, and to tell you what they're thinking about when they make those marks on the paper. Suggested age: 2-3 years.

### Brainy Background

Your child is learning about the marks you both make on paper having meaning. Understanding that one thing stands for another is an important thinking skill for learning to write, read and communicate.



## MEALTIME MELODIES

As you feed your child, sing softly and watch how they respond. If they like it, smile and sing even more. If they make some sounds when responding to you, add their sounds to your song so you can make "Mealtime Melodies" together. Suggested age: 0-9 months.

### Brainy Background

When you sing with your child and respond to their reactions, they're learning about sounds and words. Learning new sounds and words will help them learn to talk and read in the future.

## WHERE IS IT?

As you play with your child, take a toy or safe object and hide it as they watch you. Ask them, "Where is it?" and then let them find it. Then ask them if they can hide it and you find it. Create a cheer to use when each of you finds the toy and keep taking turns. Suggested age: 12 months-2 years.

### Brainy Background

When your child watches you hide their toy and then finds it, they're focusing and using their memory. When they hide the toy, they're imagining about how you might think so they can find a tricky hiding place. These skills are important in learning.

## PICK THE CUP

As you both have something to drink, take turns talking about how your cups are the same and different. Is one bigger? Smaller? What colors are they? What is in your cups? Is the liquid warm or cold? Suggested age: 2-3 years.

### Brainy Background

Exploring a cup might sound silly, but when you explore and talk about the everyday things that are around you in a back-and-forth way, you're fueling the curiosity your child will need to be a lifelong learner. For them, the ordinary is extraordinary.

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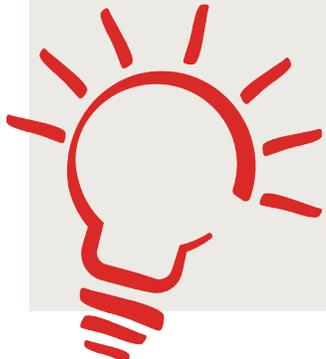
# WEEKLY LEARNING ACTIVITIES: PRESCHOOL



## Monday

**Muffin math!** Muffin tins are great for sorting! Sort fruit by color, snacks by shapes, or use old buttons to sort by size/color.

**Describe it.** Start talking about an object. Ask your child to guess what you describe. Then take turns guessing!



## Tuesday

**Letter practice!** Use whatever you have lots of: salt, flour, rice, shaving cream, etc. Pour into a shallow container. Can you take turns writing letters with your finger?

**Count it.** Use old containers with plastic lids and cut a small opening on the lid. Write a number on the lid. Ask your child to drop that number of pennies or quarters into the container.

## Wednesday

**I wonder!** Before you read something new, ask your child what they think the story will be about. Ask them why they think that. Let them imagine!

**How many?** When getting ready to eat at mealtime, ask your child what is needed. How many forks do we need? What are other things you can think of together? Ask how many. Then practice counting them out – 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 while holding up each one individually.

## Thursday

**Name puzzle!** Write your child's name on a piece of paper with some space between each letter. Cut the letters apart and use as a puzzle. Can you think of other words to make into a puzzle?

**Dishes sort.** When washing dishes, ask your child to help sort by shape and size. Can they stack all the small plates together? Talk about the shapes and sizes together.

## Friday

**Draw the end!** Read a story but do not read the last page. Ask your child to draw what they think will happen.

**Hair cut!** Take a used paper towel or toilet paper roll and draw a face on it. Cut "hair" at the top by cutting small strips all the way around. Can your child cut your new creature's hair with a child-safe scissors?

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## SPICE RACK SMELLS

While working in the kitchen, open up different spices. Smell the differences and even touch them with your child. You can describe these smells (using dramatic words) and talk back and forth with them about some of the foods that you eat with them. Suggested age: 3-4 years.

### Brainy Background

Your child learns from their senses – from looking, listening, touching and smelling. “Spice Rack Smells” uses all of these ways of learning. Making a meal together is a memorably way for them to have fun and to learn.

## SILENT GAME

While waiting, challenge your child to see how long both of you can be silent. Let them be the timer. You can use your face and body movements to communicate. Whoever stays silent the longest wins! Suggested age: 3-5 years.

### Brainy Background

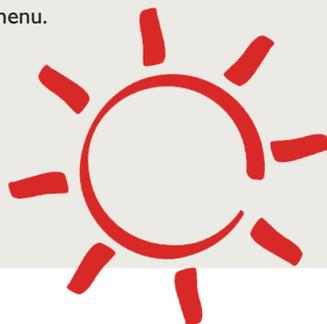
When your child is challenged not to talk, they’re focusing on their goal and using self-control to stay silent. Focus and self-control are important life skills for learning new things.

## MENU MAKER

Involve your child in meal planning. Ask them to choose how to organize the meal. Can they do it by color or family favorites? For example, they could ask family members which dish is their favorite. Then help your child draw or write a menu based on everyone’s picks. Suggested age: 4-5 years.

### Brainy Background

Your child is using important skills to make their menu. They’re grouping things and making connections. They’re learning how important language is in daily life and using early reading skills.



## REPORTING LIVE

Waiting is part of life. Do you wait in line at the store, at a doctor’s office, or for a ride? While you’re waiting, pretend you’re a newscaster. Using your pretend microphone, ask your child questions: “What do you see? Who else is there? What do you think is going to happen next?” Suggested age: 3-5 years.

### Brainy Background

Giving your child a chance to tell the news provides them with a chance to look at what is happening around them and put it into words. They’re learning to be an effective communicator. There’s nothing like a pretend microphone to get someone talking!

## STAMP COLLECTION

Take your child with you to get the mail. Check out the different stamps and help them compare. Ask them, “Are these two stamps exactly the same? How are they different?” Suggested age: 4-5 years.

### Brainy Background

Figuring out what’s the same and different helps your child pay attention and create categories. For example, both of the stamps have blue in them but one’s a bird and one’s a flower. Creating categories is important in math thinking!

## ABC MOVES

Go through the ABCs with your child and make the shape of each letter with your bodies. How would you make the letter A? Make a triangle with your arms above your head and your legs standing wide. Can your child make the letter B with their body? Take turns making the other letters! Suggested age 4-5 years.

### Brainy Background

This game uses focus, self-control and memory. These skills help your child imagine the shapes of letters and then make them with their body. It also helps build their language and reading skills.

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# WEEKLY LEARNING ACTIVITIES: PRENATAL TO PRESCHOOL



## PARENT AND CAREGIVER CORNER

As the world practices physical distancing and quarantine, you may begin to feel increased levels of loneliness and social isolation. A lack of meaningful, in-person social connections can have serious impacts on an individual's well-being. Parents can feel lonely during these days of social distancing. One thing to keep in mind is that although we are physically distancing ourselves from others during this time, we can still be socially connected. This is important for children too! Here are some ideas on ways to overcome feelings of loneliness:

- Start a new hobby, or return to one from your youth that you enjoyed.
- Get a good night's sleep.
- Rely on your social network, but from a distance. Call your best friend from high school or a cousin you haven't talked to in a long time.
- Use this time to meet your neighbors, from a safe physical distance, of course!
- Get involved in a group in your community or online based on your interests.

Having routines like this in place can decrease loneliness. When you are talking with family and friends on the phone, turn on the speaker so your baby can hear the voices of others, too. When connecting virtually, bring your baby into view! After COVID-19 restrictions are lifted, there are other ways that you can become connected. Have you ever considered signing up for home visits or play groups? There are lots of community-based programs that can help you make connections to the people and places where you live. **We're all in this together!**