

WEEKLY LEARNING ACTIVITIES: PRENATAL TO AGE 2



Monday

Unique world views.

With your child in your arms, crouch down low or gently lift them up in the air. Describe what you're doing and respond to their reactions.

"You're as high as the light! What can you see up there?" "You're as low as the rug! What can you see down here?" This helps them learn about space and perception, especially through back-and-forth conversation, where you follow their lead and respond to their reactions.

Tuesday

How things feel. Try saying: "Your shirt is soft." "The wind is cool." "The ice is slippery."

Based on how they react, continue the conversation: "You like the warm water in your bath!"

When you talk back and forth with your child about how things feel on their skin, you're introducing new words and feelings. This helps make new connections, which is how they start learning to use these words themselves in the future.

Wednesday

Play ball! You can play with your baby long before they can catch and throw. Give your baby a ball and see what they do. Show different ways to play by rolling the ball or dropping it into a container. As they develop, they will start to imitate and invent their own games.

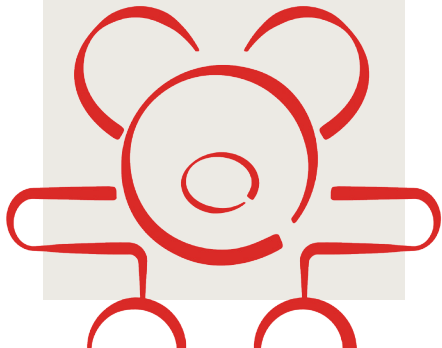
Show your toddler how to "make a basket!" Place a container close enough, and let them try. The first few "throws" might miss, but after a few tries, they will get the hang of it!

Thursday

Rhyme time! When your child seems fussy, try singing a rhyme or a song. Do they calm down when your voice is quiet, or do they respond to big facial expressions and an enthusiastic voice? Try different rhymes and songs to find their favorites. When you respond to your child's movements and sounds, you build a trusting relationship that supports future learning. You also teach them ways to deal with stress, while building a love of language.

Friday

What do you hear? When you're outside, pay attention to the sounds you're hearing and talk about them with your baby or toddler. Ask your child, "Did you hear that?" Say, "I hear a bird tweeting. Do you?" Imitate the sound, and try to find the bird. You're giving your child practice at being able to hear different sounds. This is an important skill for enjoying and learning language, so they can communicate well with others.



MORE LEARNING ACTIVITIES: PRENATAL TO AGE 2

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SLOW DANCE

Play, sing or hum a slow song and hold your child while you dance together. How do they respond to the feeling of dancing? What about the sound of the music? Respond to what they do. Laugh if they laugh! Enjoy this special moment. Suggested age: 0-12 months.

Brainy Background

Dancing together is a back-and-forth conversation using movement, not words. It deepens the connection between you two. It also allows your child to use their senses, which is how they learn about the world at this age.

WATCH AND LEARN

Offer your child something common like a scarf, an empty box or a pot. Watch and see what they do. Do they try to put the scarf in the box or the lid on the pot? Boost their learning by commenting on what they're doing, "You put the scarf in the box!" Suggested age: 12 months-2 years.

Brainy Background

Helping your child explore what they can do with an object supports curiosity and creativity. They're also building thinking skills to understand the concepts of size and shape.

TENT TIME

Make a tent with your child! Cover two sturdy chairs with a blanket or towel and invite them to come inside. Make it a special place for games like playing "Peekaboo" or bringing special tent toys inside to play with. Name the special place together! Suggested age: 2½-3 years.

Brainy Background

A tent creates a new, almost magical space in a familiar place. As your child goes in and out, they have a chance to change their view of the world, adjust their behavior and play accordingly – in other words, to be a flexible thinker.



COLORFUL MEAL

As you feed your child, put a bright dishcloth, towel or scarf over your shoulder. Do they notice it? Do they look back and forth between your face and the colors? Talk to them about the different colors or patterns as they do. Suggested age: 0-12 months.

Brainy Background

A "colorful meal" creates a change of scene that invites your child to notice the details of what is going on around them. Paying attention is an important skill for learning.

DANCING FEET

Sing, or turn on music, and dance with your child! See if they can copy what you do with your feet. Try stomping one foot three times. What do they do? Copy their moves and build on them by adding a jump or going on tiptoe. Do they do it too? Keep the dance going! Suggested age: 12 months-2 years.

Brainy Background

This kind of conversation with movements is one way for your child to learn about the importance of listening and responding when interacting with others. They're also practicing the life skills of focus and self-control as they copy your actions.

LITTLE LINEUP

Pick a few objects around the house, and line three of them up by size from smallest to biggest. Talk with your child about the lineup. Have them turn around while you rearrange the objects. See if they can put them back into the original order and talk them through it! Suggested age: 2½-3 years.

Brainy Background

Your child is using what they already know about size to line things up like this. Using what they already know in new situations, like remembering the old order after the objects are rearranged, is an important skill for school and life.

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WEEKLY LEARNING ACTIVITIES: PRESCHOOL

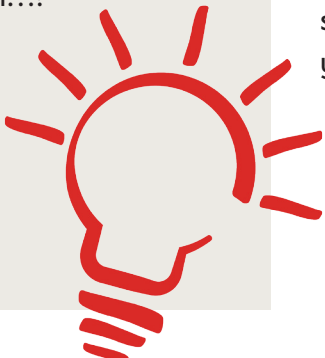


Monday

Race time! Use paper towel rolls or other used cardboard tubes as ramps for cars, balls or other things that go. Race to see which item goes the fastest! Can you guess which one will win?

Remember when?

Asking questions help children relate the pictures or words in the book they are reading to experiences outside the book. Ask questions like, "Do you remember when...?"



Tuesday

Melt it! Fill a muffin tin with different objects. Have your child choose things that might melt or might not melt such as butter, a rock, a piece of cheese, crayons, soap, ice, Legos, etc. Can you guess which things will melt and which ones will not? What item will melt the fastest?

Rubber band time.

Can you stretch rubber bands over a small bowl? Does it make sounds? How far can you pull it?

Wednesday

Clean penny!

Collect old pennies and soak them in a small bowl of vinegar with a teaspoon of salt. Within a minute, the pennies will be instantly "shined." For an added bonus, rinse some of the pennies in water after the vinegar dip and then compare them to the vinegar only pennies. If you wait an hour, the vinegar pennies will start to turn green.

Hide it! Hide a few of your child's favorite toys around the house, turn off all the lights, and send them off to find items with a flashlight!

Thursday

Feet draw! Can you use paint brushes, markers or chalk to draw with your feet? Ask your child if they think it will be harder or easier than drawing with their hands!

Tool time. Using tools safely at home builds fine motor skills! Support your child to cut using safe scissors, use a hole punch, grab items with tongs or other household tools to practice using those small muscles!

Friday

Repeat it! When reading, it is important to review what has been read. With young children, this might mean going back to pictures in the book and asking questions about what things are or what noises do things make. Repeating is a good thing! Kids love to hear favorite books over and over again!

Tight rope! Make a tight rope by laying tape down on your carpet or on the pavement outside. Teach your child to walk across it without falling off. Can you go fast? Slow? Walk like different animals?

MORE PRESCHOOL LEARNING ACTIVITIES

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WINK WATCHER

Smile at your child and wink at them. Then encourage them to try to copy you. When they can do this, change the order – wink first and then smile. You can step up the challenge by smiling and winking two times. Suggested age: 3-4 years.

Brainy Background

Playing this game helps your child learn to pay attention to what you're doing, remember the rules and copy what you're doing. These are important skills for school and life.

WHEEL WATCH

Encourage your child to point out the different kinds of wheels they see. Talk with them about what you both notice. Do they see big wheels on a truck or thin wheels on a bike? What else can they think of that has wheels? Suggested age: 3-4 years.

Brainy Background

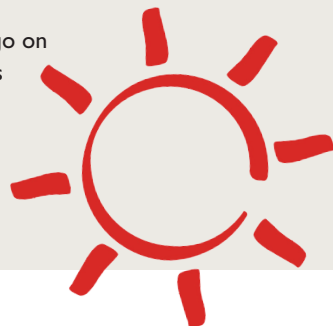
By listening and responding to your child, you're helping build their vocabulary and ability to focus. Group things, like finding what is the same and what is different, also helps them become better at making connections.

PLAYFUL DINNER PREP

Try to prepare dinner in a new way. Ask your child, "What if we only use one arm to make dinner tonight?" See what you can do easily and what's really hard. Share ideas back and forth about how you manage with only one arm. Then try, "What if you use your right arm and I use my left arm?" What is easier together? Suggested age: 4-5 years.

Brainy Background

When you try to do things differently, you can't go on autopilot. The process of setting challenging goals and finding ways to achieve them promotes skills that are very important to learning.



LISTENING GAME

When you're out with your child, talk about sounds. When you hear a sound, tell them what you hear and chat about where you think it is. "I hear a bird and I think it is in that tree." Ask what they hear, and where they think the sound is coming from. Take turns being the leader. Suggested age: 3-4 years.

Brainy Background

When your child listens and names what they're hearing, they're paying attention and learning to connect words with sounds. This promotes language skills. By going back and forth together, you're reinforcing their learning.

FORTUNE TELLER

Talk with your child as you drive, take a bus or however you get around. Ask them what they think will happen when they get where you are going. You could ask them who they will see, or what they will do when they get there. What will they do after that? Stretch the chat by continuing to ask what will happen next. Suggested age: 4-5 years.

Brainy Background

Talking back-and-forth like this is a good way to help your child develop their language and communication skills.

FACES AND FEELINGS

Next time you and your child are stuck waiting, point out a face in a magazine ad or picture, and have them copy it. Ask them what they think the person is feeling. Discuss with them when both of you might have felt this way, too. Suggested age: 4-5 years.

Brainy Background

When you talk about your own and others' feelings, you're helping your child learn to take a new point of view, which is helpful in getting along with others.

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WEEKLY LEARNING ACTIVITIES: PRENATAL TO PRESCHOOL



PARENT AND CAREGIVER CORNER

You've got grit! Whether you're expecting or raising a child, we hope that you know that you've got grit! So, what does that mean? Dr. Angela Duckworth, founder of the Character Lab and an expert on the study of grit, says that grit is "having passion and perseverance for a very long-term goal, sticking with your future day in and day out, living life like it's a marathon not a sprint, and working really hard to make dreams a reality." Those are all characteristics and actions that any parent or caregiver would want to have as they care, raise and teach children. Grit has also been found to be unrelated or even inversely related to talent, which means that even if you think you are just an average person or have little to provide for your children, you can still have grit!

How do we build grit? Well, if we had a scientific method or even a magic wand to wave, we would do so. But grit comes from within yourself, and it comes from your mindset. When we have a "growth mindset," meaning that we believe that the ability to learn isn't fixed and that we are always able to learn and grow, we are highly more likely to persevere.

What can you do to be grittier and help build grit in your children?

- Encourage having a mind that's willing grow, learn and shift thoughts and perspectives.
- Teach that it's okay to fail – we all fail sometimes, it's normal. But believe that failure is not a permanent condition!
- Look inside yourself for what you can do to be successful and to produce your wellbeing. Be willing to make mistakes, to be wrong, and to start over again with lessons learned.

Use your grit and help your children thrive. **Remember, we are in this together!**