

RESOURCES FROM SAVE THE CHILDREN

JULY ACTIVITY CALENDAR: PRENATAL TO AGE 2



	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
WEEK 1	Promoting play! Babies are masters of playing with common household items! Simple objects don't need a specific function to lead to open-ended play, exploration and discovery. Offer something new! What's their response?	Shape detective. Search the house for round, circle-shaped things. Point out the shape and guide your child's finger around the edges. Try hunting for other shapes.	Freeze! Dance to music. Stop the music and say, "Freeze." Teach your child how to stand in place. Restart the music. Games like this teach listening, self-control and help build balance and coordination.	Does this fit? Experiment using empty boxes – cereal, macaroni, rice – to discover which fit together. Model measurement vocabulary – longer, shorter, etc. Ask questions: Can that one fit inside this one?	Toy puzzles. Create toy-matching puzzles by drawing the outline of toys, household objects, shoes, etc. on paper. Then let your child try to match them!
WEEK 2	In the tunnel. Create paper tunnels by taping two sides of paper to the floor. "Drive" cars or "herd" animals through, etc. Talk about what your child is doing. This helps build fine motor skills and imaginative play.	Cloud talk! Go outside and talk about the clouds using describing words such as: dark/gloomy, light/fluffy, thin/thick, low/high.	Team cleaning! When cleaning, give your child a job, such as picking up toys, helping sweep/vacuum, wiping the table, putting laundry in a basket. Teamwork builds confidence and a sense of responsibility.	Question everything! When reading or playing, ask questions like, "What else do you see?" "Tell me about it." "What if?" "I wonder how?" "How did that happen?" "What do you think?"	Different sounds. When you're outside, pay attention to sounds you're hearing. Giving your child practice at hearing different sounds is an important skill for communicating with others.
WEEK 3	Outside laundry! Give your child a container of water and soap outside. Pretend to wash and dry some old clothes. If you have clothespins, pinching them is great, small muscle work!	Pretend fishing trip. Take a "fishing trip" using your laundry basket for the boat, a blue blanket for water, kitchen tongs as a "fishing pole" and toys as fish. Talk about where fish are, their color, size and shape.	Take a walk. While taking a walk, let your child choose which way to go. Should you go fast or slow? Can you walk or run? Giving choices helps them have a sense of control.	Story time! During story time, expand on your child's ideas. Slightly build on their phrases so they can imitate what you've said. Add, "Yes, there are 3." "What else do you see?"	Learning math! Filling and pouring helps your child learn about math! During bath time or play, give different-sized containers to fill, dump, etc. Offer suggestions and ask questions about size, comparison, etc.
WEEK 4	Go outside. Being outside is a wonderful sensory experience for young children. Talk about sounds, movements, scents and textures. Bring their treasures home and use them to retell their adventures.	Working through frustration. Talk about being frustrated when something isn't going your way. Model how to work through frustration. Demonstrating ways to work through difficulties gives your child tools to manage tough times.	Obstacle course! Rearrange furniture or cushions to make "tunnels" or hiding places. Suspend scarves, ribbons or a blanket to crawl through. Add a large box for crawling in and out.	New feelings. Introduce new words and feelings. Talk about how things feel on your child's skin: "Your shirt is soft." "The wind is cool." "You like warm water in your bath!"	Splish, splash! Fill a small tub with water, squirty toys, cups, etc. Add some non-toxic soap. Have fun! Just remember, never leave your child unattended!

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Your baby's brain is growing so quickly! Our friends at Vroom share more activities and the science behind them.

WEEK 1 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.

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

WEEK 2 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!

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.

WEEK 3 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 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.

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.

WEEK 4 DANCING FEET: Sing or turn on music and dance with your child! See if they can copy what you do with your feet. Try hopping on 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!

Brainy Background: This kind of conversation with movement 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.



PARENT AND CAREGIVER CORNER

There is no guide for how to parent. Most of us parent our children the way we were parented. Parents sometimes 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. 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 notice parents' moods and can feel complex emotions like sadness and fear.
- Babies benefit from being talked to – starting from birth – and being read to, starting at 6 months.
- 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 follow rules.
- When you set and enforce clear and appropriate limits, you help build self-control and resilience. You also strengthen their ability to cope with life's frustrations and disappointments.
- Try to stay calm, connected and loving – even as your child is protesting limits. Anger and rejection may increase children's distress and makes it harder for them to learn.

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Published July 2021