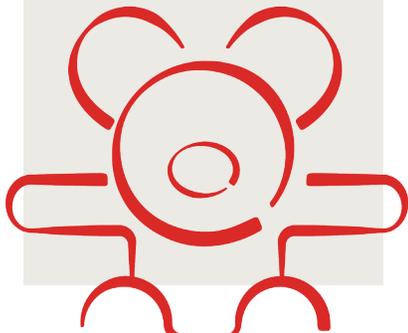


WEEKLY LEARNING ACTIVITIES: PRENATAL TO AGE 2



Monday

Laundry basket fishing! Using your laundry basket for the boat, a blue blanket for water, kitchen tongs as a “fishing pole” and some toys as fish, let your child set sail on a fishing trip. Once they’ve caught all the fish, throw them back in the water (catch and release) and do it again. Talk about where the fish are located, their size, color and shape. Encourage them along the way! “Catch the big fish next to the little one!”



Tuesday

Puzzle/block play. Playing with puzzles and blocks helps build spatial awareness skills and growing knowledge about shapes, space, position, direction and movement. To complete a puzzle or build with blocks, a child must determine which piece goes where and then manipulate it to fit, stack or build. Use puzzle and block play vocabulary as your child plays: above, below, in front of, next to, rectangle (all shape names), edge, corner, face and side. Make observations that build on each other: “You took the red block that was beside the yellow block and put it above the blue block.”

Wednesday

Exploration time! Helping your baby or toddler explore their environment leads to later success in spatial thinking, a math skill that includes knowing about shapes, space, positions, direction and movement. Give babies and toddlers time to play on the floor, pull up to sit, reach for objects overhead, climb over cushions, crawl in and out of boxes and baskets, push chairs, carts and wagons. As they play, use math talk to describe what they are doing! “You’re sitting next to the round basket.” “You pulled your blanket over your head.”

Thursday

Let’s compare. Try comparing different things with your child to discover which one is: lighter/heavier, longer/shorter, wider/thinner, bigger/smaller. Say things like, “Who has the bigger plate, you or Mommy?” You can raid your child’s toy chest, picking toys of different sizes and pointing out which is big and small. Start with balls and graduate to stuffed toys, cars and dolls. You can also use household items like books and jars. Remember to change your words based on the concept you’re teaching.

Friday

Fill it up! By simply filling and pouring, your child is learning about math! During bath time, give your child different-size containers. Encourage them to “fill it up” and “dump it out” or “fill the other container.” During play, have them fill containers with objects, water or sand and make observations and ask questions. “This holds a lot. Can you fill it all the way to the top? Try pouring from one to the other. Which one holds more? What happens if you pour the bigger container into the smaller one”?

MORE LEARNING ACTIVITIES: PRENATAL TO AGE 2

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IN THE BAG

Before you go out, grab some safe things for your child to play with and put them in a bag. While you're waiting, reach into the bag and talk about what you find. "This is something for you to chew on. Here's a rattle for you to hold. Let's shake it!" Suggested age: 0-6 months.

Brainy Background

Talking about what's "In the Bag" is interesting to your child and will help them build their vocabulary and their brain. Speak in full sentences. It's okay to use words they don't know yet. That's how they learn!

EYE-TO-EYE

You can talk to your child about anything! Use their name as you make eye contact and chat. Your attention is like a hug from the inside that helps them feel focused, calm and settled. Pay attention to what is happening around them and talk about it. Suggested age: 0-6 months.

Brainy Background

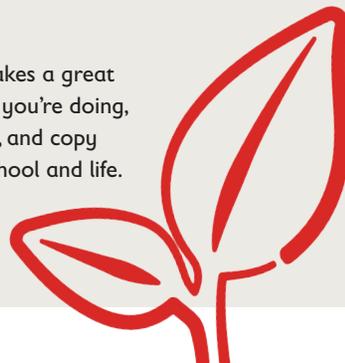
Your child is learning they can count on you to help them feel calm and settled. It's a big part of trust and helps them begin to learn to settle themselves.

SMILE AND WINK

Smile at your child, then wink at them. Repeat it several times, then encourage them to try to copy you. The smile is easy, and their wink, which may be just crinkling their eyes, will make you smile again! Take turns. Count how many smiles and winks you share. Suggested age: 2-3 years.

Brainy Background

Playing "Smile and Wink" may seem simple, but it takes a great deal of skill for your child to pay attention to what you're doing, remember the rules (first you smile, then you wink), and copy what you're doing. These are important skills for school and life.



SOUND SENSOR

Play with your child by using your voice and/or handy things that make a sound. Bang a pan or hum as you move around. Watch them move their head to follow the sound. Smile and talk with them when they figure out where the sound is coming from. Suggested age: 0-6 months.

Brainy Background

Your child is learning to follow where sounds are coming from. Their brain is turned on as it connects what they hear to the world around them. These connections prepare your child for future learning.

MIRROR, MIRROR

During changing time, see if there's something safe and mirror-like to give your child. Point to their nose in the mirror and say, "There's your nose. Can you find your mouth? Your eyes?" Have a conversation about what they're finding. Suggested age: 12 months-2 years.

Brainy Background

Even the most routine tasks, like diaper changing, provide opportunities for your child to explore and learn about the world. Finding parts of their face in the mirror and naming them builds concepts and vocabulary, and it's fun, too!

BIG HUG, LITTLE HUG

When it's time for a hug, ask your child if they want a big hug or a little hug and then do what they ask. Then you take a turn and say whether you want a big or little hug. You can add other words, like a wiggly hug or a quiet hug.

Brainy Background

The sense of touch is calming and comforting to your child. These hugs not only make your relationship stronger, they also allow you to share new words and concepts with them, like big and little.

WEEKLY LEARNING ACTIVITIES: PRESCHOOL



Monday

Feel good! One of the best ways to support your child is to help them feel positive about themselves. Be specific. “Wow! You are so... creative, strong, fast, curious, etc.” Your child’s inner voice is a reflection of what they hear from you!

Block play. Playing with blocks helps young children with visual spatial learning. If you don’t have blocks at home, you can use boxes, books or other household items to stack, build and construct!

Tuesday

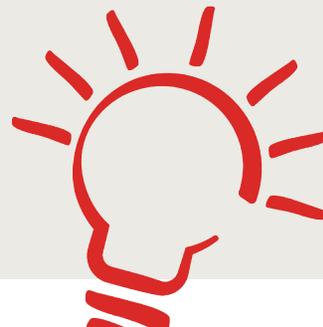
Green thumb. Do you have any indoor plants? Talk to your child about what plants need (sunlight, water, etc.). If you don’t have any indoor plants, is there something growing outside you can teach your child to take care of?

Music for memory! Can you play different types of music while your child draws or paints? Music can improve memory and focus. Experiment with a variety of music.

Wednesday

Clean up fun! To keep positive when trying to get chores done, try to make it a game. Time your child to see how fast they can clean up. Can they clean up the toys before you count to 20?

Taste test. Discover new tastes with a variety of foods. Can you and your child try salty, tangy, sweet, or spicy foods? Talk about the tastes and textures.



Thursday

Guess it! Guessing small numbers of items helps a child build confidence that they can look at a group of items and know how many there are (without actually counting). Ask your child questions such as, “How many crackers do you have?”

Nighttime numbers. Use bedtime routines to practice counting and math! Ask your child, “How many books should we read before bed?” or “How many stuffed animals will you tuck in?”

Friday

Got problems? When your child has a problem with a sibling or another child, help them think through how to solve the problem. Can they tell their sibling or peer exactly what they want? Help them say things like, “Please give me my toy back.”

Tambourine sounds! Use 2 paper plates to make a tambourine. Put dry rice, beans, or seeds on top of 1 paper plate. Add a second plate and tape or staple together. What sounds does it make? Encourage your child to use their creativity to decorate it!

MORE PRESCHOOL LEARNING ACTIVITIES

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ONE, TWO, THREE FOODS

Pick three food words such as “banana, apple, pear” to make a word pattern. Repeat with your child three times. Have them pick three food words and make a pattern three times: “fork, spoon, plate.” Talk about what word comes first, second and third. Suggested age: 3-4 years.

Brainy Background

When your child is choosing words, listening to words, and making patterns with you, they’re creating and then using a rule. Understanding and applying rules will help them learn math concepts as they grow.

SANDWICH SHAPES

Sandwiches can seem even better when they aren’t square. As you make one for your child, ask, “How many pieces do you want?” Count them together. Talk about their shapes or arrange them on a plate in a new shape and ask what it looks like now. Suggested age: 3-5 years.

Brainy Background

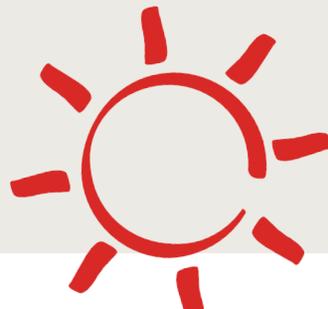
Did you ever think making a sandwich could stretch your child’s thinking skills? You’re helping them learn the skill of making unusual connections, which is the basis of creativity!

STRESS BUSTERS

During a calm moment, invite your child to think of ideas to help when they feel stressed. They can try using words to explain feelings, hitting something that can’t be hurt, or counting numbers. See what works and brainstorm new ideas. Suggested age: 2½-5 years.

Brainy Background

Asking your child to think of ideas to help manage stress helps in several ways. They can learn to manage their feelings and behavior. You’re also helping them learn to take on challenges.



CHOOSING CLOTHES

Try giving your child some options today. As you’re getting dressed, give them the choice between two shirts. Ask them why they like the one they have chosen and where they remember wearing it. What else has the same color or pattern? Suggested age: 3-5 years.

Brainy Background

Helping your child explain why they made this choice builds their reasoning and communication skills.

WHAT FLOATS?

Are you near water? Even a big puddle works. Grab some rocks, sticks or leaves and toss them in one at a time. Do they float or sink? Talk back and forth about how things like shapes or size may make a difference. Keep trying new things and test your ideas. What other experiments can you do together? Suggested age: 4-5 years.

Brainy Background

This game helps your child learn to think like a scientist. This kind of thinking helps them focus on understanding what they see, and make guesses based on that. Thinking-in-action like this helps them figure out if something is true or false or even something in between.

TODAY’S TO-DO

Talk back and forth with your child about the plans for the day. Maybe you can chat about what you’re having for breakfast. Where are they going for the day? What might you do together? Or what are you both excited to do today? Suggested age: 4-5 years.

Brainy Background

There is no better way to learn how to plan than practicing. Giving your child a chance to think about the day ahead helps them use what they already know in new and flexible ways.

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WEEKLY LEARNING ACTIVITIES: PRENATAL TO PRESCHOOL



PARENT AND CAREGIVER CORNER

Extend your child's learning. Here are some helpful ways:

1. Help children see themselves as thinkers. Wonder aloud, ask questions, pose challenges.
2. Respond to curiosity. Curiosity motivates children to explore and learn. Supporting their curiosity will raise yours. Asking questions ignites curiosity and pushes new ways of thinking.
3. Use mirror talk. Providing feedback to your child makes them feel noticed and that their work is valued. It also helps become aware of their actions and thinking.
4. Solve problems together. Collaborating with your child can help them think through the steps of solving a problem, use multiple strategies, and develop a positive attitude toward problem solving.
5. Link new to familiar. Linking new concepts with things they already know and are interested in makes it more likely they will remember and use what they learn.

Remember, we're all in this together!