

WEEKLY LEARNING ACTIVITIES: PRENATAL TO AGE 2



Monday

Sequence your day.

Sequencing is a pre-reading skill children need before learning to read. Putting a series of objects or events in a specific, logical order teaches children to recognize patterns, make predictions and comprehend stories.

Talking about daily activities helps them understand basic sequencing vocabulary words including first, second, third, in front of, behind, before, after, next, first, then, last, beginning, middle, end, began, concluded and finally. Try to use these words in everyday conversations and situations.

Tuesday

Get some fresh air.

Don't underestimate the effect fresh air has on your child – and you. Take your child out of the stroller and pull a leaf off a tree to feel. Put their hand on the tree trunk. If the area is clean, play in the grass. Doing this gives young children a sense of what their world is made of, instead of just what they see. Talk about what you see, hear and feel so your child starts to pick up and connect words to objects.

Wednesday

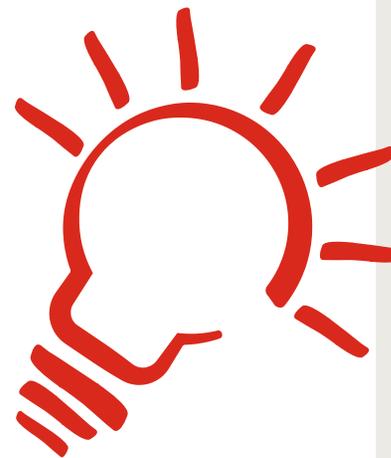
Splish, splash! Because water has such a joyful, relaxing effect on children, it's great to take advantage of it any time of the day.

During bath time, use sponges, funnels and cups to splash water on different parts of your baby's body.

Spread a vinyl tablecloth on the floor and set out a shallow pan of water with lots of cups, sponges, spoons and a doll to wash. Important reminder: never leave your child unattended during water play – not even for a second!

Thursday

Speak their language! "Translate" your baby's sounds into the words you think they might mean. If they smile and wave their arms when you sing "The Itsy Bitsy Spider" say, "You love the spider song! Let's do it again." This lets your child know you understand them.



Friday

Get moving! Play "Ring Around the Rosie" and "London Bridge" to encourage your child to move, sing, listen and take turns.

Ring around the rosie, pockets full of posies, ashes, ashes we all fall down!

London Bridge is falling down, falling down, falling down. London Bridge is falling down, my fair lady.

MORE LEARNING ACTIVITIES: PRENATAL TO AGE 2

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CATCH ME IF YOU CAN

When you're folding laundry, take long socks and dangle them above your child's head. Encourage them to try to capture the toes of the socks! As they move their arms up and down to reach the socks, you can say, "Up!" and "Down!" to describe their actions. Suggested age: 0-12 months.

Brainy Background

When you play this game, your child is learning new words as they listen to you describe what they're doing. They're also introduced to important concepts like up and down through their senses.

REAL LIFE MATCHUP

Match pictures to the real objects. After looking at a picture of an apple, for example, let your child touch and smell one. Describe what they're doing. "You're feeling the smooth, red apple. Look, here it is in the picture!" Go back and forth and create a conversation. Suggested age: 0-12 months.

Brainy Background

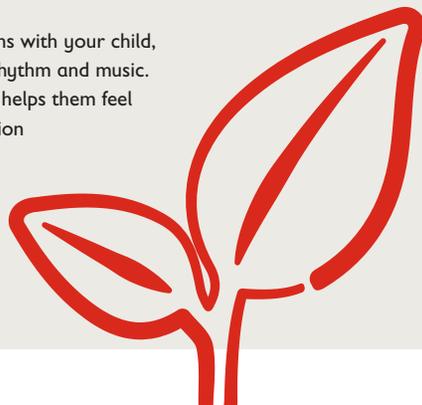
Babies take in information through their senses. When you let them make connections between real objects and pictures by using their senses, you help them understand the world around them. You're also introducing them to new words in a fun way through a back-and-forth conversation.

TUMMY DRUM

When your child is on their back, gently pat their tummy. Sing a favorite song and tap along to the beat on your baby's tummy. Try patting fast and slow. Do they smile or kick? Keep going as long as they seem to be having fun. Suggested age: 0-12 months.

Brainy Background

When you share different sounds and sensations with your child, you're introducing them to concepts of math, rhythm and music. Connecting with them by touching and talking helps them feel safe and taken care of, laying a strong foundation of learning and growth.



DELICIOUS DESCRIPTIONS

When shopping with your child, point out what you see. Use lots of different words to talk about the taste of different foods. Maybe you could say, "There are some juicy, sweet oranges," or "I bet those yellow lemons are sour!" Follow their lead and talk about what they point and look at. Suggested age: 12 months - 2 years.

Brainy Background

You're building skills when you guide your child's attention and make connections between words and what they mean. They are learning important skills like focus and self-control. When you respond to a word, sound, point, or even a look, you're showing them what they "say" is important.

CLEANING TOGETHER

Turn cleaning into a game. Give your child a clean, almost dry sponge and ask them to help you wipe off a surface you're cleaning. Ask them to wipe it up clean in long lines from top to bottom. Then try making a zigzag. See what they think of too! Suggested age: 12 months - 2 years.

Brainy Background

Doing grown-up work can make your child feel very proud of themselves and their accomplishments. In addition, they're learning how to take care of the things in their life and are also learning new words too!

I CAN HELP

While you're doing laundry, ask your child to help. Invite them to sort clothes into piles of dark and light colors. Suggested age: 2-3 years.

Brainy Background

It may take longer, but when you let your child help, they learn about how to hold an idea in their mind and get it done. These thinking skills are needed to make plans and see them through – skills they will need the rest of their life.

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WEEKLY LEARNING ACTIVITIES: PRESCHOOL



Monday

Play the sleeping song game. Here are the short lyrics to a fun song: “Sleeping, sleeping, all the children are sleeping. And when they woke up, they were all ---.” Fill in the blank with various animals, insects, or even non-moving objects like a pencil, or a rock. Let their imaginations run wild. Kids love acting like cats, snakes and even robots or babies!

Tuesday

Copy dancing! Copy dancing is a game you can play to get the wiggles out. One person dances while the other copies their moves. Kids love being the leaders, and imitation is, after all, the highest form of flattery. So put on some dancing tunes and show off those moves!

Wednesday

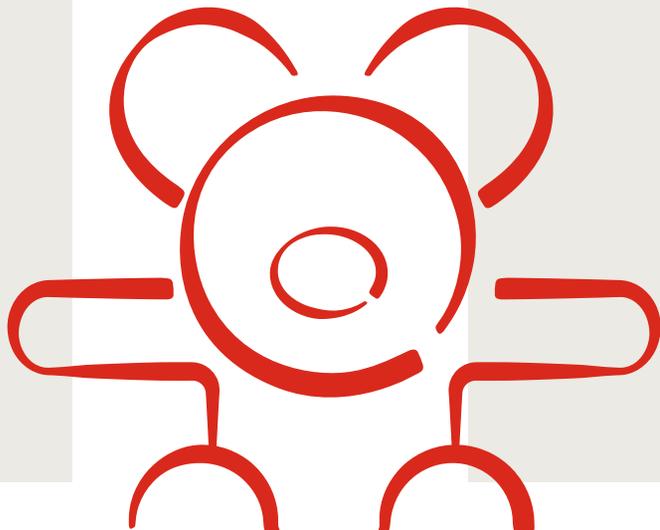
Play story go-around! This activity will have you and your child laughing so hard! Make up a story by letting each person add one sentence. Start with characters and a simple plot, like “a dog and cat went to the beach,” and let your child take it from there. The sillier, the better! Take turns as you both add onto the story.

Thursday

Create your own story. Children have so many stories to tell, but need your help writing it all down. Fold paper in half and staple at the crease to make pages. After the story is written, go back and read it to your child so they can illustrate each page. This simple activity builds confidence, self-esteem and literacy skills.

Friday

Have fun with yoga. Introducing yoga to your child helps establish healthy habits at an early age. Yoga can enhance your child’s strength, coordination and flexibility, while encouraging body awareness and self-esteem. It can also reduce your child’s anxiety and stress and promote a sense of calmness. If you enjoy yoga, your child probably will, too! Just remember, they won’t stay quiet and breathe so expect laughter at the names of animal poses. You might even want to make up songs as you go!



MORE PRESCHOOL LEARNING ACTIVITIES:



COLORFUL WORLD

When you're out with your child, team up with them to find colors. Have them point to something and name the color. Then you name all of the things you can think of that are the same color. Take turns playing this game. Suggested age: 3-4 years.

Brainy Background

Thinking about the characteristics objects have in common (whether it's colors, shapes, or size) sparks connections in your child's growing brain.

LAUNDRY DELIVERY

After folding the laundry, ask your child to help you with "Laundry Delivery." Ask them, "Where do the towels go? That's right, in the bathroom! What about your pajamas? Yes! In your room. Which drawer?" Switch and let them pick the items and ask you where they go. Suggested age: 3-4 years.

Brainy Background

When children learn to group things into categories, they learn how to organize and make sense of their world. Just think about how important matching is to reading, math, science, and many other subjects.

SPOT THE COLOR

Ask your child, "What color is your shirt today (or pants or dress)?" Then ask, "What other things are that color?" Add your ideas, too, and make it a back and forth game. See how many things you can think of. Suggested age: 3-5 years.

Brainy Background

Playing the "Spot the Color" doesn't just teach your child colors. You're also giving them the chance to practice focusing on an idea and a task with another person. The ability to focus is very important in life and in school.

KEEP ON CLAPPING

Encourage your child to clap along to the rhythm of a familiar song. Guide them by clapping together. Then ask them to try and keep clapping while you clap to a different song. This may be as hard for you as it is for them! Suggested age: 4-5 years.

Brainy Background

Keeping the beat of a song takes focus and memory. When you ask your child to continue to clap to the rhythm while you clap to a different rhythm, you're also helping them learn to pay attention and use self-control – both important learning skills.

WHERE AM I?

Describe a place in your home to your child. You can say something like, "I am in a room with a table, a stove, and a refrigerator. Where am I? That's right, the kitchen!" Provide as many or as few clues as they need. Then give them a turn to give you clues so you can guess the room. Suggested age: 4-5 years.

Brainy Background

It takes focus for your child to listen closely to your words and what scientists call working memory to keep the details of these familiar places in their mind. Your child is also making connections between what they already know and the place you're describing.

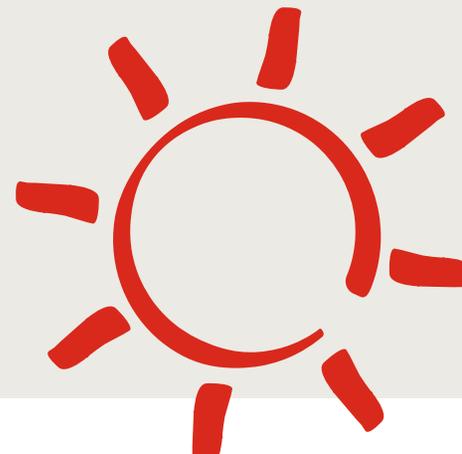
COUPON KID

Put your child in charge of the coupons when shopping. Go over the coupons ahead of time so they know what to look for. Encourage them to hold up the coupon when finding the item in the store. Have them put it in an envelope and then give the coupons to the cashier. Suggested age: 4-5 years.

Brainy Background

Your child must use their attention, memory, and self-control to look for items in the store. When you give them responsibility in everyday tasks, you're showing them you believe in their abilities to do things on their own. This builds confidence.

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WEEKLY LEARNING ACTIVITIES: PRENATAL TO PRESCHOOL



PARENT AND CAREGIVER CORNER

Positive sounds and positive communication. Did you know that nearly all babies are able to hear noises in the womb? Once born, and as they develop from infants to toddlers to school-aged children, they understand and process sounds much more than we ever realized. Around the age of two, as children begin processing the sounds they hear more quickly, they can start to distinguish sounds between languages and can even begin assigning meaning to the sounds they hear. This means if you want your child to learn two languages, start talking to them in the womb and keep it going once they are born!

Talking with your child when they're young will help strengthen their cognitive skills, but more importantly, it also helps them learn to associate meaning and emotion to the sounds they learn. Why not consistently use positive, supportive words and help them learn those words, too? When we use and teach our children words that uplift, support, and provide positive reinforcement, we teach them positive behaviors and reactions as well. Think of words to teach your children, and also sounds and sign language to use, that uplift your them, help them cope, and help them manage their emotions. And, be sure to use that positive communication for yourself as well when you need some lifting up.

Remember, we're all in this together!