

WEEKLY LEARNING ACTIVITIES: PRENATAL TO AGE 2



Monday

Ask, watch, connect. Using a plastic bowl and several small objects of one kind, talk to your baby about what you see them doing. Ask, “Can you put the block in the bowl?” and observe their reaction. Does your baby follow instructions, reach for the block but not put it in, or look but not attempt the request? Ask again, this time demonstrating. For toddlers, gradually add more objects. Playing games like this regularly helps your child connect words with actions and instructions.

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Tuesday

Peek-a-boo! This game is sure to delight your baby or toddler. Find a large box. Hold a stuffed animal inside, out of your baby’s sight. Sing, “Silly bear, silly bear, hiding in a box. One, two three, and up he hops!”

Expand on this game with your toddler. See if they want to get inside and hop out when you sing their name. This game builds listening skills, self-control and demonstrates cause and effect.

Wednesday

Water play. Grab a towel, stay close for safety’s sake, and talk to your baby or toddler about what they are doing.

For babies, pour the water into a small, shallow bowl or pan so that it is easy for them to reach their toys. For toddlers, throw scoops, a few bubbles, a brush and some plastic blocks or bricks into a bin of water. Then watch as they wash, pour and scrub their toys!

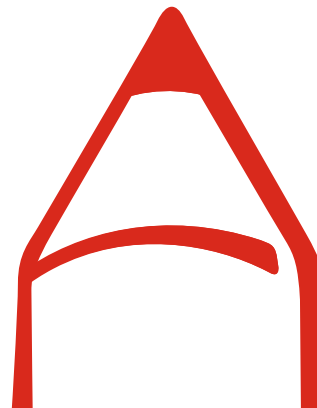
Thursday

Animal sounds. Teach your baby or toddler sounds that animals such as cats, dogs and cows make – meow, woof and moo! Read books about baby animals and play with them by making the baby animal sounds.

Later, pretend you are the animal’s parent and your toddler is the baby animal. Call to each other with animal sounds.

Friday

Bedtime day stories. As you tuck your baby or toddler in at bedtime, take a few minutes to tell the story about your day together – what you did, what you saw, how you felt, what you learned, etc. This helps them remember their experiences and make sense of what happened during the day. And even better, the ritual of telling your child a story about their day, every day, is soothing and calming – even for babies. This precious practices helps you and your child bond!



MORE LEARNING ACTIVITIES: PRENATAL TO AGE 2

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MIRROR MIRROR

Does your child wiggle when you change their diaper? Do you have an unbreakable mirror or something safe and reflective where they can see themselves? Give them this to hold and talk about what they're looking at: "I see you looking at your nose!" Suggested age: 0-1 year.

Brainy Background

Babies learn with their senses. When they see their face and you talk about their nose and other body parts, they're making connections between words and objects, which lays the foundation for reading in the future.

HAND TO HAND

While washing dishes, give your child a spoon to hold. Say, "You have a spoon!" Then hold your hand open and say, "My turn!" See if they will hand the spoon back to you. If they do, say, "Thank you!" If they don't, give them another utensil and see if you can trade them back and forth. Suggested age: 1-2 years.

Brainy Background

When you and your child play this game of give and take, you're helping them understand the back and forth of communication. They're using their skills of focus and self-control as they listen, watch and follow your directions.

HIDING CLUES

Invite your child to hide. Then search for them, talking out loud about the clues you're using to find them. You can say, "I see something wiggling. I wonder if they're near that chair." If they giggle, say, "I hear a laughing noise near the door." Now you hide and they make up the clues to find you! Suggested age: 2-3 years.

Brainy Background

Children love hiding games because they help them understand when things disappear they can continue to exist. To stay hidden, they have to use self-control. In sharing your clues for finding your child, you're helping them learn problem-solving skills too.



DIAPER SONG

When you're changing your child's diaper, sing about what you're doing. Watch them and copy the sounds they make so you can create a song together. Your song plus their sounds can become your own Diaper Song for changing time! Suggested age: 0-1 year.

Brainy Background

When your child hears new sounds and sees you respond to the sounds they make, they can become focused and engaged. This enables them to learn new words and sounds that will help them learn to talk and read in the future.

TEXTURE TIME

As you change your child, describe the textures of the things you're using. Talk about the wet wipe, the soft pad, etc. Watch where they're looking or pointing, and talk about its texture. "That's the bed. It's soft;" or "This is the diaper. It's smooth!" Suggested age: 1-2 years.

Brainy Background

When your child hears and sees new ways to describe everyday things, they're making new connections in their brain that will help them talk and read in the future.

CLOTHING CHOICES

Does your child want to choose their clothes? Help them by giving them two choices: "Do you want to wear your blue pants or your green pants?" When they choose, congratulate them by saying, "Great choice. I like those, too." Suggested age: 2-3 years.

Brainy Background

Limiting choices in the early years sets your child up for success as a decision-maker, a skill they'll use their whole life. You're giving them the control they want and need yet protecting them from being overwhelmed. This lets them focus on thinking.

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WEEKLY LEARNING ACTIVITIES: PRESCHOOL



Monday

Scrub a dub! Have your child help scrub out the tub after a bath. Give them a special cloth/sponge for this task. Squeezing and scrubbing help build fine motor muscles!

Weird walking. When going for a walk, see what silly movements or walks you can think of together! Can you walk backward? Sideways? One foot on the curb and one foot off?

Tuesday

Picnic time! Using stuffed animals or dolls, set up a pretend picnic and eat together. Pretend play supports all areas of your child's development!

Remember us. Practicing remembering helps children learn problem solving skills. Help your child remember things that were fun that you did together in the past. Ask "what happened next?"

Wednesday

Thinking books. During reading with your child, ask them what they think is happening in a picture. Let them describe and encourage them to use their imagination!

Kitchen categorize. When in the kitchen, help your child categorize items. Can you put the plates together and add a spoon? Ask your child which item does not belong.

Thursday

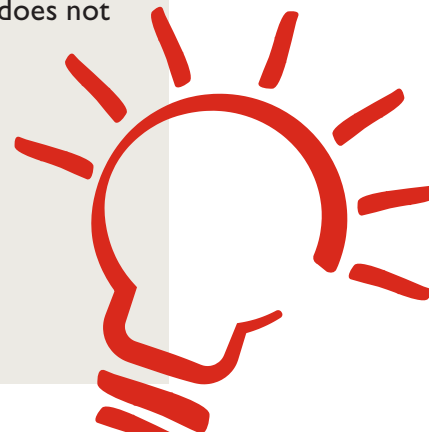
Wait it out. While your child is waiting for something, count together to see how long it takes. Can they guess how much longer?

Size up! Let your child play with adult-size clothing. Pretending is fun and practicing closing buttons/zippers/snaps helps work on fine motor muscles.

Friday

Dinner planning. When setting out plates/utensils for meals, have your child count out how many are needed of each for everyone eating. Can they figure out how many more plates are needed? How about cups?

Letter locate! Pick a letter with your child and try to find it everywhere you go. Take turns saying the letter when you see it. You will start noticing letters everywhere! Focus on one letter at a time.



MORE PRESCHOOL LEARNING ACTIVITIES

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MATH MUNCHING

At mealtime or snacktime, create math stories with your child: "Imagine you're a hungry bear and these crackers look yummy." Count them together and invite them to choose a number of crackers to eat. Then ask: "How many crackers did you eat? How many crackers are left?" Suggested age: 3-4 years.

Brainy Background

Having fun with math helps your child love to learn, while becoming familiar with counting, numbers and what they stand for. They're also learning to pay attention, to hold numbers in their mind as they use this information, and to use self-control not to eat everything all at once!

PAINT THE GARDEN

Going for a walk? Gather a paint brush, fill an empty container with water, and take a color walk outdoors, painting the flowers and leaves as you go. Talk with your child about what they see. Enjoy the textures, colors, shapes and living creatures by expressing your own joy and wonder. Suggested age: 3-4 years.

Brainy Background

Taking a color walk helps your child notice the life all around them outside, building their skills in observing and describing their experiences. It also develops their appreciation for nature and provides a wonderful way for you to enjoy nature together.

OFF BEATS

When you're doing the dishes, use one of the clean pots and a spoon to make a drum. When you hit the drum twice, have your child hit it once, making a different beat. Suggested age: 4-5 years.

Brainy Background

This game calls on very important learning skills: paying attention, remembering how many times you hit the drum, and then not going on autopilot.



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 what characteristics objects have in common (whether it's color, shape or size) sparks connections in your child's growing brain.

PICK A HAND

Play a game by hiding something small in your hand behind your back. First, show your child the object, like a coin or a pen, in your hand. Put it behind your back and change hands or leave it in the same. Ask them to guess which hand the object is in. Let them hide the object and you guess. Suggested age: 4-5 years.

Brainy Background

When your child guesses which hand the object is in, they're focusing, looking for clues and making predictions. This game helps build an understanding of math concepts. And taking turns is important!

DINNER BITES

At dinner, have some fun with your child by counting each bite they take of dinner. After the first bite, announce "one!" in a silly voice. If they know numbers, make a mistake ("one, three") and see if they can spot your mistake! Suggested age: 4-5 years.

Brainy Background

Children learn about numbers when they match them with real things, like bites of food. They're also learning numbers go in a certain order, especially when you make a pretend mistake and they try to catch your mistake.

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WEEKLY LEARNING ACTIVITIES: PRENATAL TO PRESCHOOL



PARENT AND CAREGIVER CORNER

During pregnancy, you can make a big difference in how you feel by doing a few simple things:

- **Healthy eating** – Eating a healthy diet that limits caffeine and processed foods plays an important role in stabilizing your moods.
- **Exercise** – A little exercise can improve your sleep, which increases energy, mood and appetite. Start small with walking up and down steps. Then take a walk around the neighborhood. Sunshine provides mood-enhancing Vitamin D.
- **Family** – Positive family relationships help you feel connected, loved and valued.
- **Friends** – Surrounding yourself with supportive people is key in emotional health. Being with people who care releases hormones that reduce stress.
- **Sleep** – Rest is key to improving your mood and preventing depression. Exercise and reducing stress improve sleep.
- **Stress control** – Play and do things you enjoy like singing and laughing.

In these times of uncertainty, we all may feel stress and not always respond the way we intend to react. Give yourself permission to make mistakes, own them, and do it differently next time. Modeling how to respond helps give yourself grace when mistakes are made (raising your voice, being impatient/frustrated, etc.) and shows children ways to repair connections to loved ones. Saying things like, “I did not mean to hurt your feelings – let me try to help you again,” reminds your child that we all make mistakes, but they can be repaired! **We’re all in this together.**