

WEEKLY LEARNING ACTIVITIES: PRENATAL TO AGE 2



Monday

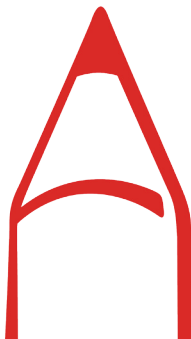
Where's my bear?

Hide a stuffed bear under a scarf, in a box or somewhere an older infant or toddler can crawl or walk. As a hint, leave a little part showing. Ask your child to help find your lost bear. Look everywhere! As you look, describe where you are looking. When you "find" something that clearly isn't the bear, say, "This isn't my bear, it's my shoe! Where should we look next?" Continue until you "find" it, and then celebrate together!

Tuesday

Everything is countable!

Anything and everything can enhance and support learning math, language and science when you build counting and number talk into your everyday activities. Count and name body parts during diapering, bathing and dressing. Count food, household items and toys such as cereal, sips, raisins, bites, plates, cups, books, etc. What other ideas do you have of things to count?



Wednesday

Copy me! Play a game with your baby by encouraging them to copy your actions. Say "Copy me!" and start doing simple actions for them to repeat like clapping your hands, sticking out your tongue, or blowing raspberries. When your baby tries something new, imitate.

Make this a fun challenge for toddlers, who love showing they can follow directions, by adding some tricky moves they are still learning including "Kick the ball!" "Turn around in a circle!" "Moo like a cow!" Be silly, have fun!

Thursday

Tacky tape. Give your baby a small wad of masking tape, sticky side out, to play with. Place baby-friendly toys in a muffin tin. Cover each with a strip of tape and let your baby go at it.

Challenge your toddler to hockey. Make a square goal on the floor with tape. Grab a small broom, a floaty, etc. and encourage your little one to push small toys – ball, cars, etc. into the target.

These fun activities build motor skills and problem-solving skills.

Friday

Babies love faces!

Mirrors help babies explore. Try naming the different parts of a face as you point to yours and your baby's. Make silly faces at your baby in the mirror and see if they imitate you or make a different face back.

Mirrors are perfect for toddlers, too! Looking in the mirror, ask questions such as "Who is that?" and "Where is your _____ (nose, tummy, etc.)?" Point out and name expressions. The possibilities are endless!

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LIP LESSON

As you dress your child, copy the sounds you hear them make, like “ah, eee, ooo, bee, dee.” How do they respond? As you make a sound, place their fingers on your lips so they can feel the vibrations and movements of your lips. Try different sounds as you do! Suggested age: 0-1 year.

Brainy Background

Touching and listening to sounds fosters your child’s interest in listening and communicating. It’s never too early to begin playing back and forth with sounds. It won’t be long before you’re having back and forth conversations with real words.

DRESSING STEPS

Dressing your child? Describe each step of the process. For example, “First we put your leg in the pants. Then we put in the other leg, Now we pull the pants up.” Pause after each step so they can move their legs or stand up to help you or make a comment. Suggested age: 1-2 years.

Brainy Background

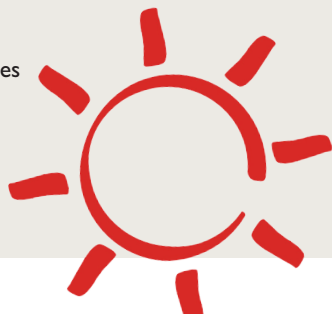
Your step-by-step description invites your child to focus on the details of getting dressed. By pausing, you’re giving them practice in waiting and controlling their behavior as they begin to learn to get themselves dressed. And talking with them is always a brain building moment! These are important life skills.

WHAT DO YOU FEEL?

Put some safe items your child loves – like an egg carton, plastic bottle or small box – into a bag just for them. They can play with the full bag. When they reach in, ask, “What do you feel? Is it an egg carton or a bottle?” Suggested age: 2-3 years.

Brainy Background

Who needs expensive toys when learning possibilities are limitless from everyday objects? This activity promotes the skills of paying attention and making connections between what your child remembers by sight and feels by touch.



HIGH IN THE SKY

After changing your child, lift them up and give them a chance to look around. Then safely in your arms, turn around or lift them up and down. Let them enjoy the new view and talk with them about what they’re seeing. Are they looking at the window or the shelves? Suggested age: 0-1 year.

Brainy Background

Moving in space will catch your child’s attention and interest as you give them time to take in different views of the world. You’re showing them the pleasure of new discoveries, a step on the path of becoming a lifelong learner.

WHAT ARE YOU THINKING?

What is your child looking at? “Yes, those are my shoes. And that is my hat. Do you want to try on my shoes and hat? I’ll help you!” Take turns! “Can you put my hat on my head? Now try your head. Look, it is too big!” Suggested age: 1-2 years.

Brainy Background

Your child is learning about which clothes belong to you, and which belong to them, and they’re learning the concepts of small and big. When you laugh about putting your hat on their head, you’re also promoting their sense of humor.

SOCK PUPPETS

Sorting the laundry? Encourage your child to help you find all of the socks and make a pile of them. Pick a sock and pretend it is a puppet looking for its matching friend. Celebrate when you and your child find a match. Then let them take a turn as the puppet. Suggested age: 2-3 years.

Brainy Background

Not only is this activity fun, but your child makes connections as they group the socks and look for the matching pairs. They must use focus and self-control to remember the details of the matching sock. When they pretend, they’re thinking creatively.

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WEEKLY LEARNING ACTIVITIES: PRESCHOOL

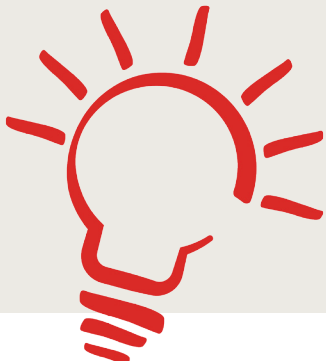


Monday

How do you know?

After reading a book, ask your child, "What was the story about?" "Why do you think that?" "What helped you know?"

Snack math! During snack time, ask your child to hand you 1, 2 or 3 crackers or other snack items? Count how many are left together!



Tuesday

Water sounds! Use empty plastic bottles and fill with varying amounts of water. Listen to the different sounds you can make by blowing over the lid, or putting a cap on and shaking!

Coin sort. Coins are a great tool for sorting. Can your child sort pennies, nickels, dimes and quarters? Talk about how they are the same and how they are different.

Wednesday

Sidewalk art! If you have sidewalk chalk, you can pound it down to a powder, add a little water and paint with a paintbrush for a new way to be artistic outside! If you don't have sidewalk chalk, use water and brushes or water and your finger!

Feel it. Help your child recognize feelings in others. Ask them, "Why do you think that person is sad/happy/scared?" in favorite books/TV shows and of course in daily life. Ask your child how they feel and help recognize their own feelings, too.

Thursday

Turn up the positive! Be specific about what your child is doing that is positive! Your child believes they are who you tell them they are. Try statements like, "You are such a good helper." "You are so creative." "Look how strong you are!" "That was hard, but you can do hard things!" This is a great way to build confidence.

Water play. Use cooking tools to play with water outside. Use a container to fill with water and use measuring cups, spoons, strainers or other kitchen tools to play!

Friday

Book creators. When reading a book, talk about the different creators. Ask your child, "What does the author do?" "What does the illustrator do?"

Keep it up! Using a ball or a balloon, keep it up in the air as long as you can. Guess how long you will be able to keep it off the ground next time!

MORE PRESCHOOL LEARNING ACTIVITIES

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OUR WEATHER WRAP-UP

When you come in from outside, have a conversation with your child about the weather. Were you hot or cold? Make sure you use simple sentences, but add bigger words, too. Suggested age: 3-4 years.

Brainy Background

Talking with your child about their experience helps to build their brain. Remember to ask questions: "Did your coat keep you warm?" and build on what they say: "The wind made me shiver, like it did you."

SNACK SORTERS

Give your child three different snacks like pretzels, cheese and apples. Talk about what's the same and what's different. Ask them if they can put one type of snack together (like all the pretzels). Then ask if they can find another way to sort the snacks, like by size, shape or color. Suggested age: 3-4 years.

Brainy Background

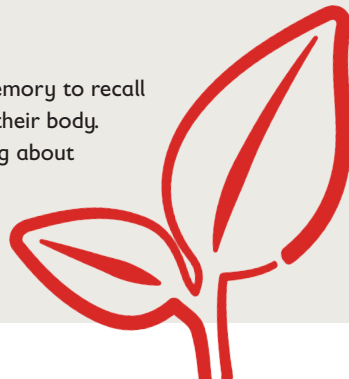
The skill of making connections is essential to learning. When your child puts things into categories, they're learning concepts like size, color and shape. They're also learning to think flexibly by seeing how things can go together in different ways.

ALPHABET MOVES

With your child, go through the alphabet and make the shape of each letter with your bodies. The letter A can be a triangle with your arms above your head and your legs standing wide. Ask them to make the letter B with their body. Take turns making the other letters. Suggested age: 4-5 years.

Brainy Background

Your child must use focus, self-control and memory to recall the shapes of letters to represent them with their body. Through firsthand experience, they're learning about language and literacy.



HOW MANY?

Invite your child to predict how many seeds will be in an apple when you cut it or how many pieces of orange there will be when you peel it. Count the seeds or slices together and compare their prediction to what you both discovered. What other foods can you use for this game? Suggested age: 3-4 years.

Brainy Background

In this game, your child is using early science skills to predict the number of seeds or slices, count them, and then compare their prediction to what they discover. They're also learning to estimate numbers, an important concept in math.

FIND THE KEY

Is your child interested in your keys? While you watch, offer them a turn to try and open doors with them. Can they fit the key in the door? Talk with them about what they're doing like: "You're turning the key but the door won't open. What else should we try?" Suggested age: 4-5 years.

Brainy Background

Offering your child opportunities to solve problems builds their independence, encourages them to follow their interests, and to find answers to questions on their own. Your support, with your words and actions, motivates them to keep trying even when things are hard.

PREPARE A PATTERN

Do you have a muffin tin or an empty egg carton? Look for things that can fit inside each hole, like pen caps. Make a pattern, like one red cap in a hole, then two blue caps in another, then another red cap. Then give the caps to your child. Can they match the pattern? Suggested age: 4-5 years.

Brainy Background

Making and re-creating patterns asks your child to focus and use their working memory to keep the pattern in mind, even when it isn't there anymore. Being able to recognize patterns is an important skill for math, science and language learning.

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WEEKLY LEARNING ACTIVITIES: PRENATAL TO PRESCHOOL



PARENT AND CAREGIVER CORNER

Continuation of self-care – during pregnancy. Access free websites to follow your baby’s development, so you know what to expect! The [Baby Center](#) is a great resource for expecting families.

Continuation of self-care – for parents with young children. Your mind and soul need nourishment, just like your body. One way to reduce stress is to do things that you enjoy. Pleasant activities can make you feel better because they are relaxing, inspiring or fun. Many are everyday activities, like singing or listening to music, doing your nails, exercising, soaking in the tub, eating your favorite food, taking a walk or reading a good book. List 10 things that you like to do. During the week, identify a time that you can do an activity from your “favorites” list. Afterwards, reflect on these questions: How did it affect your mood? Did you have more energy? How would you feel if you did something that you enjoy every day? What would it be like to do something fun right now?

As Katie Reed said, “Self-care is giving the best of you, not what is left of you.” In order to be the best parent or caregiver you can be, you must give yourself fun, relaxing moments so that you restore your physical, mental and emotional energies. We support building the relationship of self, just as we encourage children to do the same! **Remember, we are in this together!**