

Communication

Activities to Help Your Child Grow and Learn



Your child can talk about many things and can follow simple directions. She will make mistakes with her grammar, such as saying “foots” instead of *feet*. Your child can tell you what’s happening. She is using longer sentences now. Talk about what happened during the day. Read to your child every day. She might even pretend to read favorite books by herself, using the words you have read to her.

Reading Magazines

Talk about the pictures in magazines. Find pictures that your child will recognize, such as toothpaste, soap, diapers, pets, or cars. Point to the picture and ask, “What is this? Do we have this at home? What do we do with this?”

Silly Me

Your child will have fun when you act silly. Pretend you don’t know what things really are. Point to the toothpaste and ask your child, “Is that the soap?” Let him tell you what it really is. Act surprised. Your child will enjoy “teaching” you the right name of things.

Bandage Game

Make pretend bandages using tape or stickers. Ask your child, “Where is your cut?” See how many body parts your child can name. Give her some help for the tricky ones, “Oh, you hurt your wrist.” Put a bandage on each part. You can wash the bandage off during bath time. This game can also be played with a doll or stuffed animal.

Let’s Put Things Away

Have your child help you put away things like food or folded laundry. Use words such as *up*, *down*, *over*, or *through*: “Please put the can *on* the shelf” or “Please put your socks *in* the drawer.” Thanks for the help! You can give silly directions, too: “Put the lemons *under* the chair.”

What’s Going On?

Ask your child to tell you what is happening in a picture in a book or magazine: “What is the baby doing? What is the dog doing?” Then, listen carefully to your child’s interesting story.

What’s Your Name?

Play this silly name game. When you greet your child, act as if you don’t know who he is. Say, “Hello, little boy. What’s your name?” When he tells you, greet him with happy surprise: “Oh, you’re my little boy! I’m so happy to see you!”

Notes:



Don’t Forget! Activities should be supervised at all times by an adult. Any material, food, or toy given to a young child should be reviewed for safety.

Gross Motor

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Your child is improving skills using his leg and arm muscles. He is working on making these muscles stronger, more flexible, and more coordinated. He can catch an 8-inch ball, jump about 2 feet, make sharp turns around a corner while running, and avoid obstacles in his path.



30-36 months

Over the River

When playing outside, place a towel or piece of cloth about 2 feet wide on the grass. This is the "river." Have your child run and jump over the river without "getting wet." At first, you can fold the towel so that the river is not so wide. Then, you can make it bigger. Watch out for alligators!

Balloon Kick

Let your child kick a balloon from one end of the room to the other. Lay a box on its side for a goal. See if she can kick the balloon into the box.

Animal Walk

Show your child how to move like different animals. Can he waddle like a duck or walk on all fours like a dog? Encourage him to pretend to be these animals and make noises like them. Play along. Call the cat: "Here, kitty, kitty." Balance on one foot like a pink flamingo.

Heel-to-Toe Walk

Show your child how to walk heel to toe along a line on the sidewalk or a short length of clothesline on the ground. She can stretch her arms to keep her balance. She can hold an umbrella and pretend she is walking a tightrope in a circus!

Basketball

Place an empty laundry basket on the floor against a wall. Give your child a soft ball about 4 inches in size. Place a string or piece of tape on the floor for a throw line. Show your child how to throw overhand to get the ball in the basket. Start about 4 feet back from the basket. Move back as your child gets better.

Chasing Bubbles

Go outside on a nice day to blow bubbles. Ask your child to clap his hands together and pop them. Blow some bubbles high so that your child needs to jump to pop them. Blow some far away so that your child will need to run to pop them. Clap big ones and then clap little ones. When you're done, go wash those soapy hands!

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Fine Motor

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Your child is learning to hold pens, crayons, and markers with her thumb and two fingers just like adults do. She has learned to make scissors open and close and can make snips in paper when you hold it. She can use her two hands together with small toys, such as interlocking blocks or stringing beads. She can put together puzzles with five or more pieces.



Yummy Puzzles

Cut off the front part of a cereal box. Now cut this into four or five puzzle pieces. Your child will have fun putting this simple puzzle together. He may need a little help at first.

Little Writer

Show your child how to make lines and circles or even simple shapes. Circles and straight lines will be easiest for your child to copy. Your child may want to learn to write the first letter of her name. Keep it fun! It is okay if your child's marks don't look much like real letters. Encourage her attempts: "You're a good writer!"

Tong Time

Give your child a pair of small kitchen tongs, children's chopsticks, or tweezers. See if he can move cotton balls or dry macaroni from one container into another. Then try something heavier such as walnuts, spools, or small stones.

Junior Mechanic

Collect large bolts, matching nuts, and even washers. Your child will enjoy matching the bolt to the nut and twisting them together.

Little Flicker

Make little balls of newspaper about the size of marbles and show your child how to "flick" a ball across a tabletop or space on the floor into an open box or at a target. Use thumb and index finger to "flick." See how far your child can flick the paper balls or hit the target. This game can bring lots of laughs!

Bubbles!

Let your child use washable crayons or markers to draw bubbles on paper. Let him draw as many as he wants and color them in. Show him how to draw big bubbles and little bubbles, purple bubbles and green bubbles. Now that he has drawn so many bubbles, maybe it's time to blow some real bubbles!

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Problem Solving

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Your child can notice how things are the same and how they are different. He knows about colors, long and short, a little and a lot, and which one of your kitchen spoons is the biggest. With your help, he can put three things of different sizes in order from small to large. Pretend play is still very important and fun for both of you!

What Is This?

After giving your child a bath, stand or seat your child in front of a mirror. With a towel, dry different parts of her body. While drying her hair, be silly and ask, "What is this stuff?" While drying her shoulder, ask, "What is this thing?" While drying ribs, ask, "What are these bony things?" Have fun being together while tickling, cuddling, and teaching the names of body parts.

Making Trains

Line up four to five small cars or other objects in a row to make a "train." Make sure your child sees what you did. Now give your child some objects to line up and make a train. You can line up different things, such as blocks, spoons, or shells. Say, "Wow, look at your train. Where is it going?"

Big and Little

Show your child two items of different sizes, such as shoes, cups, or spoons. Talk about the big one and the little one. Talk about the size of things in your house, at the park, or at the supermarket: "Wow. Look at that pumpkin. It's really big!" Add a medium-size item and try playing Big, Little, and One in the Middle.

Tell Me Your Story

Give your child plain paper and a few washable crayons or markers for drawing. Ask her to tell you about what she drew. Write the story on your child's paper. Print her name. Tell her, "This is your story, and this is your name." Read the story to someone important.

Reading the Neighborhood

Show your child signs in your neighborhood, such as a stop sign. Tell him what it means. Point out the railroad sign and tell him it's where the trains go. In a restaurant, show your child the different pictures on rest room doors, one for girls and one for boys. Look at the painted crosswalk on the street. Next time you go out, ask him to read signs with you.

Silly Sounds

Play a silly copy game with your child in the car or on the bus. For example, tell her a silly phrase like, "Bee, zim, zop." See if your child can copy you. Let your child make up a silly phrase and copy her. Now make up a silly song to sing!

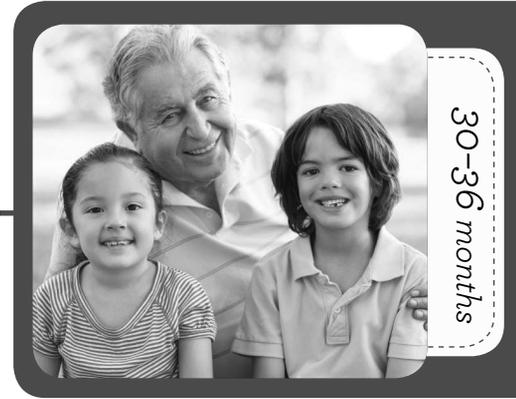
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Personal-Social

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Your child is able to take care of some of her personal needs, but she still needs your hugs and support. With a little help, she can usually separate from you in familiar settings. She can obey simple rules. She enjoys simple games with other children and is proud of her accomplishments. She will respond with pride when you notice positive behavior, such as being helpful, following a rule, or doing something for herself.

Cooking Helper

Let your child help with cooking by measuring, pouring, stirring, washing, and tearing greens. With your help and a plastic knife, he can even cut soft foods, such as bananas. These are real activities that help the family. Tell him, "Thank you for helping with our meal!" Ask him to tell the family what is in the salad. Yum!

Super Picker-Upper

Show your child how to put trash in the trash can. If your child drops paper, ask her to pick it up and put it into the trash can. She may enjoy helping you put trash outside for the garbage truck to pick up. Show your child how important it is to keep the world clean. Talk about what would happen if people didn't pick up trash.

Bathing Beauty

Your child will enjoy trying to wash himself in the bathtub. Show him how to use a washcloth and soap. Be sure to let your child know that he is doing a good job. Then, give your child a towel to dry himself: "Whose clean little boy is this?" Have fun!

Naming Feelings

Help your child understand feelings by noticing them and naming them. Children need to learn that other people have feelings, too: "When you take the toy, it makes your sister sad." Don't be afraid to use big words: "I can tell you're *excited* because it's your birthday!"

Super Driver

Make an obstacle course in your home or outside. Let your little driver push a cart or pull a wagon, steering around boxes, rocks, or over a hose. There's a big hug at the finish line!

Look at You!

Start a dress-up bin for your child. Go through your closet and gather old clothes. Gather men's items as well. Old purses, wallets, hats, ties, shoes, belts, and necklaces are fun. Let your child dress up and look in the mirror. Be prepared to play for a while. Have your camera ready!

Notes:



Don't Forget! Activities should be supervised at all times by an adult. Any material, food, or toy given to a young child should be reviewed for safety. Always watch your child during mealtime and bath time.