

Fun Learning Activities for Kids at Home

Domain	Age in Months		
	0 – 6 months	6-12 months	12-18 months
Communication	Make eye contact and tune in with your child through one on one conversations. To tune it, discuss things your infant may be looking at in the room or interested in during your conversation. Be sure to smile and respond when your baby makes bids to communicate through sounds and babbling.	Consistently incorporate sign language into your daily routines. Signs for “more”, “all done”, “milk”, and “eat” can easily be picked up by your infant and can enhance communication efforts between you and your baby.	Practice back and forth conversations by pretending with toy telephones. Any household object or toy can be used...don't be afraid to use your imagination!
Gross Motor	Gently tie a balloon on a string to one (or both) of your baby's ankles. Encourage them to kick the balloon to make it bounce around. This builds their lower body strength and prepares the infant for crawling and walking in the future.	Facilitate a paint crawl/walk. Place paint on a large sheet of paper and encourage the infant to crawl or walk through the paint to create designs. For maximum fun and less clean up, bring this activity outdoors.	Set up a pouring station. Fill various pitchers, vases, cups, and bowls with water dyed different colors with food coloring. Contain the mess by placing all the containers into one large bucket.
Fine Motor	Place oobleck, play dough, paint, a mixture of water and glitter, or colored whipped cream in a Ziploc bag. Allow your infant to squeeze and maneuver the bag in their hands. This can also be introduced to tummy time for added stimulation.	Create a Post-It pull wall. Stick assorted post it notes on a safe, open wall in your home. Have your infant pull the sticky notes off the wall one by one.	Cut pipe cleaners into various sizes. Clean out a vacant spice jar and ask your child to drop the pipe cleaners through the holes. Make it a race or ask your toddler to describe whether each pipe cleaner is big or small during the process.
Cognitive	Stuff a kitchen whisk with pom pom craft balls. Have your infant figure out a method to retrieve all of the pom pom balls from inside the whisk. This also makes a great shaker toy for younger infants.	Conduct an “I Spy” labeling game. Point out various items around the house that you “spy”. Have your child point to and identify the objects verbally. Example: You spy a toy tiger. Ask your child questions such as where they think the tiger lives or what it likes to eat.	Sort your child's favorite cereal by creating a color sorting mat. Have your child color in large circles based on the various shades presented in the cereal. Remember to save your color sorting mat! It could be used to sort more than just cereal in future activities.
Social - Emotional	Sing “If You're Happy and You Know It” with your infant. Be sure to make the various expressions, sound effects, and motions as you sing.	Conduct a happy and sad facial expression sorting game. Print several photos of children with happy or sad expressions. Label two containers with happy or sad. Have your child sort the expressions into the correct bin.	Read an excerpt from the story “Breathe like the Bear” by Kira Wiley each day. This story teaches children 30 different mindfulness strategies. Remind your child of the calming methods you've explored during times of anger or misplaced feelings.
Suggested Reading w/ Activity	“Baby Happy, Baby Sad” By Lisa Patricelli Get two baskets or containers. Make a sign for one that says “happy” with a happy face and one for the other basket that says “sad” with a sad face. Cut out lots of pictures from magazines and give them to your child. Sit with your child and look through the pictures. Ask which basket which picture should go in.		

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Domain	Age in Months		
	18-24 months	2 years	3 years
Communication	Make a picture album with pictures of your child, people, and pets. Talk about the pictures together. Ask your child, "Who's that?" "What are they doing?"	Pretending is fun! Point to the toothpaste and ask your child, "Is that the soap?" Let him tell you what it really is. Your child will enjoy "teaching" you the right name of things.	At the start of the day, ask your child to look out the window and tell you about the weather. Is it sunny? Is it raining?
Gross Motor	Stand on one foot. Ask your child "Can you do this?" Praise efforts. Try other movements; fly like an airplane, jump, crawl, gallop, and tiptoe around the house. Let your child be the leader and copy. Involve the whole family.	Show your child how to walk like different animals (e.g., squat like a duck, walk on all fours like a dog). Pretend to be these animals and make noises like them. Play along. Call the cat: "Here, kitty, kitty."	Show your child how to march around the house. Add a pot to use as a drum and create a flag to make a parade!
Fine Motor	Trim the corners from an ordinary household sponge to form a "pancake." Give your child a small skillet and a spatula. Show how to flip the pancake.	Cut off the front part of your child's favorite cereal box. Now cut this into four or five puzzle pieces. Help your child as needed to put this simple puzzle together.	Let your child dress a large stuffed animal or doll with real baby clothing. Make sure the baby clothes have a couple of large buttons or snaps to let your child practice small finger work.
Cognitive	Gather at least two of several household objects. Use two paper bags with the same things in each bag. Pull one item out and ask your child to reach in and find one in his bag. Remind your child, "No peeking, just feeling!"	Line up four to five small cars or other objects in a row. Make sure your child sees what you did. Give your child some objects to line up in a row just like you did. You can line up different things, such as blocks, spoons, or shells.	Play a pretend game and say, "We're going on a picnic, and we're bringing a..." Name an object that you would bring. (basket, apple. . .) Ask your child to think of an object to bring and repeat.
Social - Emotional	Help your child name feelings as they happen. "You look worried. Can you tell me about it?" If you think your child is frustrated, state: "I know you are really frustrated, but you can have a turn in a minute." When your child learns that feelings have names, she will be able to handle them more easily.	Start a dress-up bin for your child. Go through your closet and put some old clothes in a box. Old purses, wallets, hats, ties, shoes, belts, and necklaces are fun. Let your child dress up and then look in the mirror.	Help your child learn to manage taking turns by counting how long a turn will take. For example, tell your child to swing for 10 swings, and then it will be my turn. Count 10 swings out loud. "Okay, now it's my turn for 10 swings. Help me count."
Suggested Reading w/ Activity	"An Awesome Book of Thanks" By Dallas Clayton Families can help their child understand the importance of being thankful for what they have. Families can help their child by saying "thank you" at home. Make it a routine at dinner time before eating, go around the table, each person naming something they are thankful for.		