

# Vroom Tips™



These print-at-home tip sheets include a mix of Vroom Brain Building Activities™ for children ages 0-5. Share them, put them up on your fridge, or carry them around—whatever helps remind you that brain-building moments are all around you.

## Brain Building Basics™

We've made the science of early learning simple! Remember these 5 actions to help build your child's brain anytime. They're color coded for easy finding.

### Look

Children use their eyes to learn. See what catches your child's attention and talk about it. Or connect eye-to-eye, then smile, chat, hug, or make funny faces!

### Follow

Young children learn best when you follow their lead. Tune into your child's words, sounds, movements and ideas! Then respond with your own words and actions.

### Chat

Children's brains light up when you talk, sing, or make sounds back and forth with them. Chat about your day, food, and what's around you, or string sounds together for a fun conversation!

### Take Turns

Children learn from taking turns when you play, talk, or explore. After they go, take your turn. Then repeat: they go, you go, they go, you go!

### Stretch

Children's brains grow strong when you help them stretch their learning further. Keep a moment going: ask your child a question that starts with what, when, where, how or why!

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## Eye-to-Eye

You can talk to your child about anything! Use their name as you make eye contact and chat. Your attention is like a hug from the inside that helps them feel focused, calm, and settled. Pay attention to what is happening around them and talk about it.

Suggested Age

0 - 6 months

## Brainy Background



Your child is learning they can count on you to help them feel calm and settled. It's a big part of trust and helps them begin to learn to settle themselves.

#796

Learn more at [vroom.org](https://vroom.org)

## Kick and Play

Does your child like to kick their legs during tummy-time? Putting things like crumpled paper or a rolled up towel behind their legs can make it even more interesting. Talk with your baby about how it might feel or sound when they kick. What else could you use for kicking?

Suggested Age

0 - 6 months

## Brainy Background



Your child learns about the world through their senses. It is important to share words for how things feel and sound as well as the names of things. You're helping them learn to connect language with the world around them. Giving them something to kick also helps them learn to link their actions with an outcome.

#1010

Learn more at [vroom.org](https://vroom.org)

## Taste and Touch

Offer your child objects that are safe to put in their mouth, like wooden spoons or plastic cups. Talk about what they're doing as they put the objects in their mouth or move them. Even if they can't yet speak, they're supported by your voice and interest in their actions.

Suggested Age

0 - 12 months

## Brainy Background



At this age, one of the most important ways your child learns about the world is by exploring objects with their mouth. As you talk about what they're doing, as well as the color, shape, and size of the objects, you're sharing vocabulary to use for these experiences.

#1009

Learn more at [vroom.org](https://vroom.org)

## Baby Sit-Ups

Place your child on their back on a blanket. Holding either side of the blanket above their head, gently lift the sides and move them up almost into a sitting position. Look into their eyes, smile, and speak to them then gently lower them back down. If they enjoyed it, do it again!

Suggested Age

6 months - 12 months

## Brainy Background



One of your child's earliest skills is their ability to pay attention to something interesting—in this case, you! They especially like to look at you. By smiling at and talking to them, you help increase their attention span as well as strengthen the bond between you.

#1012

Learn more at [vroom.org](https://vroom.org)

## Finger Food Fun

Do you have a muffin tin or ice tray at home? Take small pieces of your child's finger foods and put them in different sections of the tin or tray. Leave some empty spaces so they can move pieces around. Describe out loud what they're doing, "You moved the cracker over!"

Suggested Age

9 months - 12 months

## Brainy Background



You're helping your child develop the ability to focus on an object and control their body to achieve a goal, in this case picking up food. These skills will set them up for successful problem-solving later in life. They also learning math ideas like space and shape.

#1004

Learn more at [vroom.org](https://vroom.org)

## Mealtime Detective

How does your child tell you they're hungry? Do they fuss? Turn their head toward the bottle or breast? Look at you? How do they tell you they've had enough? Do they turn away? Stop eating? Push away? You can be a detective. Look for the clues and talk to them about what you think the clues mean.

Suggested Age

0 - 12 months

## Brainy Background



When you try to understand what your child is telling you and then respond, you're having a back-and-forth conversation. This is one of the most important ways you can build on and extend their learning. It's a big step to help them become a lifelong learner.

#553

Learn more at [vroom.org](https://vroom.org)

## Feeding Memories

When feeding your child, use that time to tell them a story. You can make one up or share something that happened when you were a child. When they respond to your voice and make a sound, repeat the same sound back to them.

Suggested Age

0 - 18 months

## Brainy Background



Your voice is your child's favorite sound. Even though they can't say words yet, they're listening and learning that sounds go together in words. This is an important foundation for language later on.

#535

Learn more at [vroom.org](https://vroom.org)

## I See You

As you feed your child, tell them what you see. "I see your fingers picking up a piece of food." "I see your mouth chewing a banana". "I see you drinking with your mouth." If they make a sound or say a word, repeat it to create a back and forth conversation. Babbling and talking are learning!

Suggested Age

0 - 18 months

## Brainy Background



When you have a back and forth conversation with your child, even before they can talk, they're listening to you and learning new words. They're also learning to communicate with another person and how much fun it can be.

#1024

Learn more at [vroom.org](https://vroom.org)

## Hand Talk

Show your child how to tell you they're feeling hungry by touching their hand to their mouth or rubbing their belly. If you do this over and over and then give them food while saying the word "hungry," they will pick up the symbol and learn to talk to you with their hands.

Suggested Age

0 - 18 months

## Brainy Background



Children can express themselves with their hands (for example, by pointing) long before they can use words. Helping them learn to use "Hand Talk," will help them learn to communicate with words in the future.

#1026

Learn more at [vroom.org](https://vroom.org)

## See and Say

In the kitchen with your child, describe what you're doing, especially if you notice they're interested in something, like pouring water in a bowl or cup. Say things like, "Water goes in the cup." See how they respond. They might look at you and then look at the cup.

Suggested Age

0 - 18 months

## Brainy Background



You motivate your child to learn more about the world around them when you notice what interests them. Talking about what you're doing introduces them to lots of new words, and helps them connect those words to things.

#1028

Learn more at [vroom.org](https://vroom.org)

## Expressive Eater

Watch your child during mealtime. Are they reacting to how the food tastes and feels? Copy the faces they make and respond. Do they make a happy face when eating something sweet like fruit? You could ask, "Do you like that juicy apple?" Stretch the chat and ask another question or comment on their response.

Suggested Age

6 months - 18 months

## Brainy Background



A few important things are happening here. You're describing your child's experiences and responding to them with words. This helps them connect objects and language, and feelings and actions. Plus, talks like these build the bond between you and your child, and they engage your child in learning at the same time!

#600

Learn more at [vroom.org](https://vroom.org)

## The Hand Wash

Let your child be your partner as you wash up before a meal. Say, "It's time to wash our hands, yours and mine." Put soap on both your hands and lather up. Be silly as you dry your hands off together. Do you shake dry? Toss the towel back and forth? Make a hand jumble? What else?

Suggested Age

12 months - 18 months

## Brainy Background



Making your child your partner in hand washing helps them learn about this important routine. A back-and-forth conversation with words and gestures, builds your relationship too. Say, "You can wash your hands!"

#555

Learn more at [vroom.org](https://vroom.org)

## Mealtime Textures

What are all of the words you can use to describe the food your child is eating? Is the banana mushy, squishy, or slippery? Are the eggs warm, crumbly, and soft? Point as you say the words and watch them respond and reply back to them.

Suggested Age **12 months - 18 months**

## Brainy Background



When your child hears and sees new ways to describe their food, they're learning new words. They are learning to think carefully about their world. This will help them communicate more effectively.

#568

Learn more at [vroom.org](https://vroom.org)

## Exercise Buddy

Invite your child to help you exercise. Hold them while you do sit-ups, first fast and then slow. Talk about your speed with them. Do leg lifts and raise your leg above their head then back to the ground, talking about their size as you do. What else can you do?

Suggested Age **12 months - 18 months**

## Brainy Background



Exercise and other physical play deepens your relationship with your child, building the trust and love between you. Your loving relationship is fuel for their brain.

#835

Learn more at [vroom.org](https://vroom.org)

## Mirror Dance

Put on a song both of you like and watch your child move. As they dance, copy what they're doing. When they stop, you dance around and let them watch you. See if you can create a back and forth dance, taking turns copying each other.

Suggested Age **12 months - 2 years**

## Brainy Background



As your child copies your dance, they're paying attention to your movements, using their short-term memory, and controlling their actions—all important for learning focus and self-control.

#822

Learn more at [vroom.org](https://vroom.org)

## Feed Me!

Encourage sharing and taking turns by asking your child to feed you, too. After they take a bite say, "My turn!" Open your mouth and see if they'll give you a bite. Say, "Thank you!" and then prompt them to take a turn. They will love having a turn at being in charge!

Suggested Age

18 months - 2 years

## Brainy Background



When you and your child take turns, you're modeling the back-and-forth of communication, which will help them as they learn to talk and read. They're also learning about relating to others in a fun way.

#1029

Learn more at [vroom.org](https://vroom.org)

## Obstacle Course

Make an obstacle course today! Line up a few pillows for a jump or go under the table as a tunnel. Lines on the floor could even become a tightrope. Try one or two of these and then add on some of your own! Talk to your child about what they're doing as they do it!

Suggested Age

2 years - 2 1/2 years

## Brainy Background



As your child moves around the obstacle course, they're learning ideas like over, under, into, along, up, and down—all through their senses. They're also gaining control of how and when they move, which is an important step in building self-control.

#798

Learn more at [vroom.org](https://vroom.org)

## Play Kitchen

Work together with your child to create a play kitchen by offering them pots, spoons, and other safe kitchen items. Use the top of a table as a stove and ask them what they need to make food, like soup. Pretend to put in ingredients and take turns stirring and tasting your creation!

Suggested Age

12 months - 3 years

## Brainy Background



Pretending is essential to learning. In addition to learning more about everyday life like cooking, children are learning that one thing can stand for something else (a table is a stove). This is an ability they will also use learning that letters stand for sounds or numbers stand for quantities of things.

#983

Learn more at [vroom.org](https://vroom.org)

## Homemade Play

What can you find in your house to play pretend with your child? Offer them clothes, blankets, empty boxes, or clean and safe kitchen objects to use. Follow their lead and see where it takes you. If you need to, you can give them ideas like, “Should we build a boat or pretend to cook dinner?”

Suggested Age

12 months - 3 years

## Brainy Background



Playing pretend is a great way for your child to explore ideas and practice language skills. They also get to try on different roles, like being a parent or a baby, and to see the world through other people’s eyes. This is an important skill for getting along with others.

#856

Learn more at [vroom.org](https://vroom.org)

## Animal Bites

Sometimes mealtime can be a challenge. Encourage your child to eat by offering them choices about how they eat. You can say something like, “Do you want two big dinosaur bites or four little bird bites?” Count the bites together and ask them to think of their own “Animal Bites” eating ideas.

Suggested Age

18 months - 3 years

## Brainy Background



When you help your child to make their own choices, you show them they can do even difficult things. This helps them take on challenges and develop confidence. Counting “Animal Bites” together is a fun math experience for them too!

#609

Learn more at [vroom.org](https://vroom.org)

## Little Parrot

Tap a rhythm with your hands and let your child do their best to copy. Try different patterns of sounds and lengths, like clapping or opening and closing your fist. Then you can take a turn to copy what they do. See how long you can go back and forth.

Suggested Age

18 months - 3 years

## Brainy Background



Your child uses memory and focus as they watch you and copy your movements. As they get older, these skills will help them learn to take in new information and use it. Children learn best when there is a back-and-forth interaction, like when you watch them and respond to what they’re doing.

#863

Learn more at [vroom.org](https://vroom.org)

## Little Independence

Does your child want to do everything themselves? Whether it's eating with fingers or trying to use a fork, give them ways to be more independent. Talk to them about what they're doing. If they need, help them a little. When they're done, notice how they respond with a smile or an "I did it!" Celebrate with them!

Suggested Age

2 years - 3 years

## Brainy Background



It may take longer and be messier, but you're helping your child to feel good and develop new skills. This will give them a sense they can try something new and succeed.

#554

Learn more at [vroom.org](https://vroom.org)

## Piece-by-Piece

Offer your child a whole fruit or vegetable, like an apple. Ask questions about what the apple looks like, feels like, and smells like before cutting it. After you cut it, talk about what you both notice. What does it look like, smell like, and feel like now? Does it always taste the same?

Suggested Age

2 years - 3 years

## Brainy Background



It takes flexible thinking to understand two things can look different but still be the same, like how an apple can be whole or sliced and is still an apple. This ability is important for learning and creativity. Talking back and forth is the best way to develop their language skills too!

#610

Learn more at [vroom.org](https://vroom.org)

## Sweep Together

Include your child in common chores. For example, start with, "It's time to sweep! Can you hold the dustpan for me?" Then, let them dump the dirt into the trash. Don't be surprised when they ask you to hold the dustpan for them. Go back and forth. Taking turns is how they learn best and makes them feel included.

Suggested Age

2 years - 3 years

## Brainy Background



Not only is your child learning by copying you, but they're also learning by doing. They're also figuring out how things work—that things get dirty and need to be cleaned up. More importantly, they're learning to be helpful and considerate.

#847

Learn more at [vroom.org](https://vroom.org)

## Snack Senses

Take turns with your child coming up with words that describe what they're eating. If they have a carrot ask, "What does it look like?" They might say, "orange," and you might say, "pointy." Keep the conversation going with questions like, "What does it feel, smell, and taste like?" or "What does it sound like when you eat it?"

Suggested Age

2 years - 4 years

## Brainy Background



When you use lots of different words with your child, you help them build their vocabulary and connect words with what they mean. They're also practicing tuning out distractions to focus on one thing. These are important skills for learning to read.

#1035

Learn more at [vroom.org](https://vroom.org)

## Five Senses Sampler

Food can exercise your child's five senses! Let them taste a piece of the food and ask how it tastes, then have them smell it and tell you what they smell. Talk about the shape of it and how it feels to the touch. You can smell and taste it too.

Suggested Age

12 months - 5 years

## Brainy Background



The more your child can experience the world through their senses, the more they'll learn.

#1022

Learn more at [vroom.org](https://vroom.org)

## Cooking Lessons

No matter what you're cooking, your child can be a helper. Give them a play-by-play of what you're using. If it's safe, let them touch, smell, or taste things too. Chat about what you're making: "Red pepper makes the beans spicy."

Suggested Age

2 years - 5 years

## Brainy Background



Talking about everyday activities as you do them helps build your child's communication skills—and their brain! Be sure to point to objects as you say their name to help them learn new words.

#534

Learn more at [vroom.org](https://vroom.org)

## Animal Adventure

Turn your living room into an “Animal Adventure.” Make an animal noise. Can your child guess the name of the animal? Can they copy the sound back? Now it’s their turn to make a sound for you to guess. See how many times you can go back and forth: “Woofff! Hissssss! Rooarr!”

Suggested Age

2 years - 5 years

## Brainy Background



Back-and-forth conversations, whether they’re with words, sounds or faces, help your child learn to pay attention, listen carefully, and follow the rules rather than go on autopilot.

#785

Learn more at [vroom.org](https://vroom.org)

## Daily Favorite

In the evening, ask your child what their favorite part of the day was. Make sure you follow up with questions. “Why did you like that? Was it more fun than the last time you did that? Why?” You can make this a regular part of your day!

Suggested Age

2 1/2 years - 5 years

## Brainy Background



Asking your child questions that require more than a simple yes or no help build language, communication, and reasoning skills. Repeat what they say back to them in more complex sentences. Don’t be afraid to use words they don’t know!

#528

Learn more at [vroom.org](https://vroom.org)

## Mini Chef

Have your child help with safe and simple tasks while you are cooking. Mixing or adding an ingredient can be good places to start. As you work, ask them what they think will happen when they stir things together or add something new. Listen to their ideas, then talk together about what you see happening.

Suggested Age

3 years - 5 years

## Brainy Background



This is real-life science. Guessing about what might happen promotes your child’s curiosity. This helps them adopt a lifelong love of learning!

#527

Learn more at [vroom.org](https://vroom.org)

## Toddler Chef

Get your child thinking as they help you prepare a snack or meal. Ask them, “Do you think all these noodles will fit in this bowl?” or “Should we use this big red tomato or the little one?” or “Would you like to peel these two bananas for the fruit salad?”

Suggested Age

3 years - 5 years

## Brainy Background



As you cook together, you’re teaching your child basics about the world around them—colors, sizes, numbers—and you’re also helping them see that learning is fun.

#537

Learn more at [vroom.org](https://vroom.org)

## Five Faves

Tonight at dinner, talk about favorites. “What is your favorite color (animal, food, place, book)?” You start and then let your child have a turn. Keep going back and forth until you each name five favorites!

Suggested Age

3 years - 5 years

## Brainy Background



When you talk about favorites, you’re helping your child learn about a category of things—things they like. See if you can notice similarities in what they like (“you like adventures”). You’re helping them learn to make connections in their thinking.

#548

Learn more at [vroom.org](https://vroom.org)

## Dance Moves

Playtime can become a dance party. Turn on some music, sing, or hum, and start doing a silly dance: shake a leg, wiggle your hips. Can your child copy your moves? Next song, it’s their turn to lead. Go back and forth until you’re danced out!

Suggested Age

3 years - 5 years

## Brainy Background



Dancing games can be great brain builders! This one teaches your child to pay attention to sounds and rhythm and to copy your moves. They also get to be the leader and that’s a good feeling.

#784

Learn more at [vroom.org](https://vroom.org)

## Musical Mazes

Work together to build a maze. You can use things like chairs, tables, pillows, or whatever is handy. Then sing or play music while your child walk's through the maze. When the music stops, they should stop. See if they can move to the music when it gets faster and slower.

Suggested Age

3 years - 5 years

## Brainy Background



Building a maze takes creativity and problem-solving. Your child needs to think on their feet to start and stop, or move fast and slow with the music. This takes focus. Plus they'll need to use self-control to respond to the changing music and not just go on autopilot.

#858

Learn more at [vroom.org](https://vroom.org)

## Silly Charades

Play a game where you pretend to be an animal, object, or someone you both know. See if your child can guess who or what you are. Clues like sound effects or movements are helpful. When your child guesses, have them take a turn and you guess. Enjoy!

Suggested Age

4 years - 5 years

## Brainy Background



Pretending is fun! It not only helps you see someone else's point of view, it also builds communication skills. Guessing is great too. In this game your child is learning to pay attention to figure out the clues. This game also makes us think back and use what we already know in a new way!

#826

Learn more at [vroom.org](https://vroom.org)

## Thoughtful Eating

Using self-control and focus while eating a favorite treat can be fun. First, ask your child to look at the snack and describe what they see. Then smell it, touch it, and finally take just a little taste. Talk with them about what they did to help them wait.

Suggested Age

2 1/2 years - 5 years

## Brainy Background



Waiting helps your child practice self-control. This is an important skill to manage feelings and actions. They are also learning problem-solving skills like slowing down and taking a step back to see something in a new way.

#599

Learn more at [vroom.org](https://vroom.org)

## Calm Down Kit

Use an empty shoebox or other container to make a “Calm Down Kit” with your child. Have your child put special items inside that help them feel secure and relaxed. When they are feeling upset, remind them to use their kit. They even can decorate the box to make it their own.

Suggested Age

2 1/2 years - 5 years

## Brainy Background



It helps to make a “Calm Down Kit” before upset feelings happen. You’re helping your child plan for how to handle stress so they can take action in a difficult moment. This gives them more control. It also builds skills important to tackling challenges.

#941

Learn more at [vroom.org](https://vroom.org)

## Mealtime Check-In

When eating together, invite your child to think about their day by asking, “What was the best part of your day?” Have each person at the table answer. Then ask, “What was the worst part of your day?” Go around the table again. Share your day with them and encourage them to ask others.

Suggested Age

3 years - 5 years

## Brainy Background



When your child hears about your day, they begin to learn how to understand another person’s point of view. This is an important skill for life. They’re also practicing the back-and-forth of conversation and thinking about their own day. This builds family connections and makes mealtime fun.

#592

Learn more at [vroom.org](https://vroom.org)

## Build a Fort

Build a fort with your child out of pillows, blankets, and anything else handy. Talk with them about what you will build and make a plan. Ask them to help you figure out how to build it. The fort can be a hideaway to pretend, dream, and imagine.

Suggested Age

3 years - 5 years

## Brainy Background



When you ask your child to come up with an idea and figure out how to make it, they’re learning to set goals and use critical thinking and reasoning skills. They’re also using communication skills express themselves.

#872

Learn more at [vroom.org](https://vroom.org)

## Freeze Frame

Clap your hands and ask your child to stop and freeze in a pose when you stop clapping. When you begin clapping again, they should move, then stop in a different pose when the clapping stops. First, clap slowly. Then get faster so they have to keep changing poses. Take turns, letting them be the clapper while you pose.

Suggested Age

3 years - 5 years

## Brainy Background



You're helping your child think on their feet and not go on autopilot by changing positions in response to your clapping. They must pay attention and use self-control to stop and go, while also remembering what poses they have already used.

#905

Learn more at [vroom.org](https://vroom.org)

## Measure Me

Show your child how to use string or yarn to measure parts of their body. Have them put out their arm and hold the string along the length of their arm. Cut the string and hold it out: How long is it? Can they compare it to other body parts? Can they measure your arm?

Suggested Age

3 years - 5 years

## Brainy Background



Your child is building a strong foundation for learning when you help them understand how one thing, like string, can stand for something else, like the length of their arm. They're exploring math ideas, like measuring and comparing, by actually doing them—the best way for children to learn.

#921

Learn more at [vroom.org](https://vroom.org)

## Stories in Action

Come up with a short story for your child to act out. Say something like, "There once was a child who loved to climb trees," and encourage them to pretend to climb. Add on to the story with more actions. See how creative you can get. Let them have a turn to tell a story while you pretend.

Suggested Age

3 years - 5 years

## Brainy Background



When children pretend, they're listening, remembering, controlling their behavior to fit the story, and being imaginative. Learning that words can stand for actions helps later on with the understanding that written words can stand for ideas—a skill children use in learning to read.

#925

Learn more at [vroom.org](https://vroom.org)

## Home Shopping

Encourage your child to set up a store at home using items from around the house. Once the shelves are stocked, they can pretend to go shopping. Help them make a shopping list and find a bag or basket. You can be the cashier. Talk with them about what they're shopping for. Then switch. You can shop, and they can be the cashier.

Suggested Age

3 years - 5 years

## Brainy Background



Pretending is a fun way for your child to make sense of their experiences. They are using memory to use what they already know about shopping to pretend with you. Plus, they're thinking flexibly to switch between roles of shopper and cashier.

#991

Learn more at [vroom.org](https://vroom.org)

## Menu Maker

Involve your child in meal planning. Ask them to choose how to organize the meal. Can they do it by color or family favorites? For example, they could ask family members which dish is their favorite. Then help your child draw or write a menu based on everyone's picks.

Suggested Age

4 years - 5 years

## Brainy Background



Your child is using important skills to make their menu. They're grouping things and making connections. They're learning how important language is in daily life and using early reading skills.

#590

Learn more at [vroom.org](https://vroom.org)

## ABC Moves

Go through the ABCs with your child and make the shape of each letter with your bodies. How would you make the letter A? Make a triangle with your arms above your head and your legs standing wide. Can your child make the letter B with their body? Take turns making the other letters!

Suggested Age

4 years - 5 years

## Brainy Background



This game uses focus, self-control, and memory. These skills help your child imagine the shapes of letters and then make them with their body. It also helps build their language and reading skills.

#1006

Learn more at [vroom.org](https://vroom.org)