

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!

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!

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!

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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

Space Explorer

Show your child the world from different points of view. When they're in your arms, crouch down low or gently lift them up in the air. Describe what you're doing and respond to their reactions. "You're as high as the light! Look what you can see up here!"

Suggested Age

0 - 12 months

Brainy Background



Moving your child around and talking about what you're doing helps them learn about important things like shape and space. Children learn these ideas through back and forth conversations, where you follow their lead and respond to their reactions.

#122

Learn more at 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

Mirror Peekaboo

Do you have a mirror in your house? Hold your child and move in and out of the mirror, saying “Hello!” when you look in the mirror together and “Goodbye!” when you move away. Go fast and slow. Do they wave in the mirror or ask for more? Follow their cues.

Suggested Age **6 months - 12 months**

Brainy Background



This version of “Peekaboo” helps your child practice paying attention, while learning in a fun way that things and people go away and come back. This understanding provides them with a foundation for positive and trusting relationships throughout their life, starting with you!

#988

Learn more at vroom.org

Shake, Bang, and Roll

When your child picks up something safe, encourage them to “Shake, Bang, and Roll!” How many different ways do they explore the object? Talk to them about what they’re doing, “You shook the rattle and made a sound.”

Suggested Age **6 months - 12 months**

Brainy Background



This activity helps your child learn about the world. Watch them while you talk to them and be ready to step in if needed to keep them safe and happy. You’re helping them become a lifelong learner.

#795

Learn more at vroom.org

Spoon Pick Up

When your child drops their spoon on the floor (and they will!), pick it up and give it back to them saying, “The spoon is falling down, down, down!” How long does it take until they drop it again? When they do, talk about falling down again.

Suggested Age **6 months - 12 months**

Brainy Background



Make sure you feel comfortable with what your child throws on the floor so it’s not annoying. This game is the beginning of understanding cause (dropping a spoon) and effect (the spoon falling). You’re helping them learn this by connecting words to their actions.

#552

Learn more at vroom.org

Stop and Start the Music

Set your radio to a music station and have your child turn it off and on. Every time they turn it on, start to dance—or move around—and say “on.” When they turn it off, stop moving and say “off.” Soon they will probably say “off” and “on” with you.

Suggested Age

12 months - 2 years

Brainy Background



Learning new words and concepts (like “off” and “on”) is much easier at this age if your child can make something happen (like turning music off and on.) This helps add context to what these new words mean.

#66

Learn more at vroom.org

Where Is It?

As you play with your child, take a toy or safe object and hide it as they watch you. Ask them, “Where is it?” and let them find it. Then ask them if they can hide it and you find it. Create a cheer to use when each of you finds the toy and keep taking turns.

Suggested Age

12 months - 2 years

Brainy Background



When your child watches you hide their toy and then finds it, they’re focusing and using their memory. When they hide the toy, they’re imagining about how you might think so they can find a tricky hiding place. These skills are important in learning.

#807

Learn more at vroom.org

Bye-Bye Bubbles!

While cleaning up, give your child a soapy sponge and a large container with a little water so they can help wash safe kitchen items. Scrub up lots of bubbles together. When you’re ready say, “Bye-bye bubbles!” and show them how to rinse the bubbles away. Encourage them to try it.

Suggested Age

12 months - 2 years

Brainy Background



You’re helping your child think like a scientist as they explore the water and bubbles. This kind of play will help them with learning math and science later on. Plus, when you include them in daily chores, you help them feel confident and independent.

#410

Learn more at vroom.org

Open-Close, In-Out

Working in the kitchen? Give your child some safe plastic containers to open and close. Say “open” and “close” as they play. Show them how to take things, like spoons, in and out of the containers. Say “in” and “out.” Make sure to talk to them about what they’re doing.

Suggested Age

12 months - 2 years

Brainy Background



Your child is thinking like a scientist by seeing how things work when they open and close containers, put things in, and pull things out. You can even give them different lids for the containers to see which ones fit and which ones don’t.

#603

Learn more at vroom.org

Lid Match

Find things with a cover or top you can take on and off. It can be a pot with a lid or maybe a box. Even an empty bottle works. Ask your child to match the lids with the right bottom. After they found the pairs, they can try putting the tops on and taking them off again. Be creative as they get better at matching and give them different lids and containers to try.

Suggested Age

12 months - 2 years

Brainy Background



Matching games like this help your child learn to focus. They are tuning out distractions. This is a great way to use what they already know to make connections and solve problems. You are helping them build these skills when you encourage them to test out ideas and come up with their own answers.

#959

Learn more at vroom.org

Snacktime Challenge

Drop a small snack inside an empty clear plastic bottle. Encourage your child to get the piece out of the bottle. Do they shake the bottle or put their fingers inside? Can they try in different ways. If they’re struggling ask, “What would happen if you turned it upside down?”

Suggested Age

18 months - 2 years

Brainy Background



You’re helping to build your child’s critical thinking and problem-solving skills when you encourage them to test out ideas and come up with answers on their own. By talking with them about what they’re doing, you help them to understand the world.

#1034

Learn more at vroom.org

Category Convos

Tell your child about a favorite food. Ask them to name a food they like that's in the same category, like fruit, but different. Keep count of how many different things you both like in the same category. Play the same game with something else, like clothes!

Suggested Age

2 years - 3 years

Brainy Background



This game is teaching your child about categories; things that are the same in important ways, though different in others. They're also learning about your likes and dislikes compared to theirs, helping them learn about other people.

#49

Learn more at vroom.org

What's Next?

Boost your child's independence by asking them questions instead of telling them what to do. If you're getting ready to leave the house, instead of telling them to put shoes on, try saying something like, "I see your socks are on. What comes next?"

Suggested Age

2 years - 3 years

Brainy Background



Asking questions helps your child think before acting. This takes focus and self-control. Your child must stop what they might want to do so they can reach their goal. This is true for even something as simple as putting on shoes.

#147

Learn more at vroom.org

No Words?

Are you teaching your child to use words to express their feelings? As you're out and about, ask them to notice animals, which don't use words, and see how they express what they want. Does the dog bark or stare at you? Ask them what they think the dog is trying to say.

Suggested Age

2 years - 3 years

Brainy Background



You can help your child learn to communicate with words and in other ways by noticing how animals communicate without words. Use what they notice to ask questions and help them think like a scientist, applying what they see to their own life.

#153

Learn more at vroom.org

New to You

When they are playing, help your child do things they haven't done before. Try out the swings or the slide at a playground, or even feel the different textures on the ground. As long as they're safe, let them try new things, with a helping hand if they need it. How do they respond? Celebrate what they say and do!

Suggested Age

2 years - 3 years

Brainy Background



Giving your child the chance to do safe things by themselves helps them feel confident and to learn to take on challenges.

#182

Learn more at vroom.org

Touch Talk

Ask your child to touch the clothes you're both wearing. Talk back and forth about how they feel. You could say, "We're both wearing shirts. Mine is smooth and yours is wrinkled." Take turns using as many words as you can to describe how your clothes feel.

Suggested Age

2 years - 3 years

Brainy Background



This type of conversation helps your child learn how to make connections. This is the idea that that one thing (a word) can stand for other things (what they touch). You're also helping them learn new words and their meanings.

#246

Learn more at vroom.org

Big Foot, Little Foot

Have your child help sort socks and find pairs when you're doing laundry. While they do it, you can chat about which socks go together and why. Are they the same color, pattern, or size? Help them hold the socks next to their feet, then your feet, and talk about the differences. Who has big feet and little feet in your family?

Suggested Age

2 years - 3 years

Brainy Background



Grouping, and figuring out what's the same and what's different, helps your child to understand the world around them. Back-and-forth chats help them connect their world to words. Plus it builds their vocabulary!

#489

Learn more at vroom.org

Comparison Shopping

A store can be a great place to build your child's brain on the go. Give them something like a banana and an apple to hold. "Which is heavier? Which is larger? Which is softer?" You can do this with any items, in any aisle, in any store!

Suggested Age

3 years - 4 years

Brainy Background



Games like these help your child to think like a scientist. They're taking in the world around them and guessing how things compare or fit together. Repeat the game a few times with different objects for them to compare. Remember, repetition is how we learn!

#257

Learn more at vroom.org

Unpack Your Bags

After shopping, invite your child to help take items out of the bags. Give them some small, safe items to put away, giving hints for where things go, like, "Are there other cans in the cupboard that look like this one?" or "An apple is a fruit. Where do we keep the other fruit?"

Suggested Age

3 years - 4 years

Brainy Background



Grouping things and being able to see similarities and differences helps your child make connections, which is at the heart of learning. You're also building their memory in fun ways while encouraging them to help out!

#415

Learn more at vroom.org

Spice Rack Smells

While working in the kitchen, open up different spices. Smell the differences and even touch them with your child. You can describe these smells (using dramatic words) and talk back and forth with them about some of the foods that you eat with them.

Suggested Age

3 years - 4 years

Brainy Background



Your child learns from their senses—from looking, listening, touching, and smelling. "Spice Rack Smells" uses all of these ways of learning. Making a meal together is a memorable way for them to have fun and to learn.

#574

Learn more at vroom.org

Listening Game

When you're out with your child, talk about sounds. When you hear a sound, tell them what you hear and chat about where you think it is. "I hear a bird and I think it is in that tree." Ask what they hear, and where they think the sound is coming from. Take turns being the leader.

Suggested Age

3 years - 4 years

Brainy Background



When your child listens and names what they're hearing, they're paying attention and learning to connect words with sounds. This promotes language skills. By going back and forth together, you're reinforcing their learning.

#657

Learn more at vroom.org

Color Walk

Going for a walk? Grab a paint brush, put a little water in an empty container, and take a color walk outdoors! Paint the flowers, leaves, or other colorful things as you go. Talk with your child about what they see. Enjoy the textures, colors, and shapes in your world and share your own joy and wonder.

Suggested Age

3 years - 4 years

Brainy Background



A color walk helps your child focus on the world around them. They are building their brain by observing and describing their world. It also a wonderful way for you to slowdown and enjoy a walk together.

#696

Learn more at vroom.org

Snack Sorters

Give your child three different snacks. Talk about what's the same and what's different. Ask them if they can group one type of snack together (like all the fruit). Then ask if they can find another way to sort the snacks, like by size, shape, or color.

Suggested Age

3 years - 4 years

Brainy Background



Making connections is an essential skill for learning. When your child groups things, they're learning things like size, color, and shape. They're also learning to think flexibly by seeing how things can go together in different ways.

#1032

Learn more at vroom.org

What Floats?

Are you near water? Even a big puddle works. Grab some rocks, sticks, or leaves and toss them in one at a time. Do they float or sink? Talk back and forth about how things like shapes or size may make a difference. Keep trying new things and test your ideas. What other experiments can you do together like this?

Suggested Age

4 years - 5 years

Brainy Background



This game helps your child learn to think like a scientist. This kind of thinking helps them focus on understanding what they see, and make guesses based on that. Thinking-in-action like this helps them figure out if something is true or false, or even something in between.

#195

Learn more at vroom.org

Cart Manager

While grocery shopping, ask your child if they can manage the cart by sorting your shopping into vegetables, fruits, frozen foods, or by color. Can they find a way to keep the boxes lined up so they don't topple over?

Suggested Age

4 years - 5 years

Brainy Background



When your child sorts food and manages space, they're using math concepts. Sorting is important for learning math.

#265

Learn more at vroom.org

Count the Sounds

Take a few minutes with your child to stop and listen. Ask them what they hear. Does it sound like anything else they know? Have them guess what you hear. Together count how many different sounds you each hear and figure out what they are. How many can you guess?

Suggested Age

4 years - 5 years

Brainy Background



Children learn when they use their senses. When your child listens, identifies, and counts what they hear, they're using many of their senses, which promotes focus, memory, and making connections—skills that support reading and math in the future.

#654

Learn more at vroom.org

Shelf Help

Ask your child to help you in the kitchen. Let them organize a shelf and find their own way to group things. If they need help, it's OK to suggest things like "boxes here and cans there." Or they could put crunchy food like cereal and crackers together. You can even give them a towel to wipe out the shelves to help you get started. Most children love to do grown-up things like this!

Suggested Age

4 years - 5 years

Brainy Background



Your child is building their brain when they organize and put things in groups. These skills will help them with math, reading, and science later in life. When they take on grown-up jobs, it can help them see things from different points of view.

#827

Learn more at vroom.org

Water Wonders

Encourage your child to learn by playing with safe objects in the bath. Do you have a washcloth and a plastic cup? They can explore different ways they each hold water. Ask questions, like: "What happens when the washcloth gets wet? What happens when you squeeze it? Can you squeeze water out of a cup?"

Suggested Age

4 years - 5 years

Brainy Background



You and your child are thinking like scientists! Learning how things work through play boosts your child's curiosity and their passion for finding answers.

#387

Learn more at vroom.org

Scavenger Hunt

Before you go out, make a list with your child of natural things to collect as you go, like leaves or stones. When you get back, see if they can count how many of each item they found. Talk together about what you notice. What's the same and what's different about them?

Suggested Age

4 years - 5 years

Brainy Background



Making a list is a great way to expose your child to the everyday importance of reading and writing. When you talk back-and-forth about what you see, you're building their communication skills and vocabulary. When they explore the world around them, they're learning about science firsthand.

#723

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