

# 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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## Picture This

Do you have some books or magazines around? Show your child the pictures. They will like clear simple pictures, especially of faces. Talk with them about what you see. How do they respond? Now talk about their response!

Suggested Age

0 - 12 months

## Brainy Background



One of the best ways for your child to learn about language is by looking at things with you and hearing you talk about them. When you talk back and forth with them, commenting on their responses, you build their brain!

#83

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

## Blow, Baby, Blow!

Gently blow on your child's face and hair. Ask them, "Do you feel the wind?" Notice if they seem to like the sensation. If so, blow with long and short breaths. Make your pauses in between long and short, too. How long can you and your baby play?

Suggested Age

0 - 12 months

## Brainy Background



When you change how fast and slow you blow, your child feels different sensations, which is how they learn. You're also helping your baby learn to control their attention, an ability that develops focus and self-control.

#164

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

## Bathtime ABCs

Is your child starting to babble? Use bathtime as an opportunity to babble about the letter B. If they say, "ba," you can say, "Baby takes a bath with bubbles! Ba-ba-ba!" If they respond with more babbles, copy them right back! What other words can you make from their babbling sounds?

Suggested Age

0 - 12 months

## Brainy Background



You're helping your child develop communication skills when you respond to their sounds with sounds of your own, building on their babbling to create words. They're also learning to engage in the back and forth conversations that are basic to relationships and learning.

#386

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

## Tummy Drum

When your child is on their back, gently pat their tummy. Sing a favorite song and tap along to the beat on your baby's tummy. Try patting fast and slow. Do they smile or kick? Keep going as long as they seem to be having fun.

Suggested Age

0 - 12 months

## Brainy Background



When you share different sounds and sensations with your child, you're introducing them to concepts of math, rhythm, and music. Connecting with them by touching and talking helps them feel safe and taken care of, laying a strong foundation for learning and growth.

#455

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

## Babble On

Don't be afraid to babble. When your child starts to make noises, treat it like a real conversation and mimic the sounds right back. See how many times you can go back and forth!

Suggested Age

0 - 12 months

## Brainy Background



All kinds of conversations help to build children's brains—even when they're still learning how to talk. By following your child's lead and responding, you spark the connections they need for language and communication later on.

#13

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

## Eye Gazing

Take a few minutes and look into your child's eyes. As they look back, smile and talk with them. Do what they do. If they blink, you blink. If they look left, you look left. Let them see your eyes too, and have fun keeping eye contact.

Suggested Age

0 - 12 months

## Brainy Background



When your child looks at you, and you respond, they're making new connections in their brain. Children learn best through loving relationships. When you look at each other and react to each other, the bond you have is growing stronger.

#44

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

## Cleaning Jingle

Cleanup time can be a learning time if you sing about it with your child. "This is the way, we clean the house, so early in the morning." If they respond with sounds, use them in your song. "(Your child's name) says, ba, ba, ba, so early in the morning."

Suggested Age

0 - 12 months

## Brainy Background



When you sing to your child, the part of their brain that processes sound lights up, helping them make sense of what they're hearing. It also stimulates the action part of their brain, which gets them ready to say words. Singing helps them listen to the sounds even more clearly, which helps them learn words in the future.

#402

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

## Meal Plan

When feeding your baby, talk about what they're doing and why you think they're doing it. "You're drinking your milk because you're so hungry!" Talk about what will happen next. "After your tummy is full of milk, you'll be sleepy and it will be time for your nap."

Suggested Age

0 - 12 months

## Brainy Background



Talking with your baby and labeling their sounds and actions helps them connect words to feelings, and builds vocabulary. When you talk about your baby's daily routine, you help them feel safe throughout the day's changes.

#607

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

## Slow Dance

Play, sing, or hum a slow song and hold your child while you dance together. How do they respond to the feeling of dancing? What about the sound of the music? Respond to what they do. Laugh if they laugh! Enjoy this special moment.

Suggested Age

0 - 12 months

## Brainy Background



Dancing together is a back-and-forth conversation using movement, not words. It deepens the connection between you two. It also allows your child to use their senses, which is how they learn about the world at this age.

#791

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

## Cleaning Together

Turn cleaning into a game. Give your child a clean, almost-dry sponge and ask them to help you wipe off a surface you're cleaning. Ask them to wipe it clean in long lines from top to bottom. Then try making a zigzag. Then circles. See what they think of too!

Suggested Age

12 months - 2 years

## Brainy Background



Doing grown-up work can make your child feel very proud of themselves and their accomplishments. In addition, they're learning how to take care of the things in their life and is also learning new words too!

#401

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

## See You Later

Before you leave or drop your child off somewhere, share a favorite, fun or special “See you later” saying. Create a new goodbye ritual. Tell them that after it’s finished, it will be time for you to leave. Reassure them you will see them later.

Suggested Age

12 months - 2 years

## Brainy Background



Transitions can be difficult for toddlers. When you create a goodbye tradition with a “See you later” saying or other ritual, you give them some control, which helps them feel safe.

#119

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

## Big Hug, Little Hug

When it’s time for a hug, ask your child if they want a big hug or a little hug and then do what they ask. Then you take a turn and say whether you want a big or little hug. You can add other words, like a wiggly hug or a quiet hug.

Suggested Age

12 months - 2 years

## Brainy Background



The sense of touch is calming and comforting to your child. These hugs not only make your relationship stronger, they also allow you to share new words and concepts with them, like big and little.

#143

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

## Bathtime Stories

Make up a story about someone who takes a bath just like your child. You can say things like, “First, they washed their hair,” while you wash their hair. Then add twist by saying, “Then they splashed in the water,” and see if they splash too.

Suggested Age

12 months - 2 years

## Brainy Background



Making up stories shows your child creative ways of thinking. You are also sharing new words with them. They’re learning focus and self-control as they listen closely and make connections between their body and your words.

#371

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

## Hand to Hand

While washing dishes, give your child a spoon to hold. Say, "You have a spoon!" Then hold your hand open and say, "My turn!" See if they will hand the spoon back to you. If they do, say, "Thank you!" If they don't, give them another utensil and see if you can trade them back-and-forth.

Suggested Age

12 months - 2 years

## Brainy Background



When you and your child play this game of give-and-take, you're helping them understand the back-and-forth of communication. They're using their skills of focus and self-control as they listen, watch, and follow your directions.

#413

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

## Dancing Feet

Sing, or turn on music, and dance with your child! See if they can copy what you do with your feet. Try stomping one foot three times. What do they do? Copy their moves and build on them by adding a jump or going on tiptoe. Do they do it too? Keep the dance going!

Suggested Age

12 months - 2 years

## Brainy Background



This kind of conversation with movement is one way for your child to learn about the importance of listening and responding when interacting with others. They're also practicing the life skills of focus and self-control as they copy your actions.

#920

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

## Funny Faces

Make a silly face and ask your child to make it too. Then ask them to make a sillier one for you to copy. Then take turns back and forth and see who can be the silliest.

Suggested Age

2 years - 3 years

## Brainy Background



When you imitate the face that your child is making, you're helping them express what they're thinking and feeling. This happens even if they don't yet know how to say it in words. These conversations with faces begin to help them learn about others' point of view.

#19

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

## Shopping List Scribble

Writing a shopping list? Talk with your child about what you need. Read aloud what you write down: “Milk, eggs, cereal.” Invite them to write or draw on the list too and to tell you what they’re thinking about when they make those marks on the paper.

Suggested Age

2 years - 3 years

## Brainy Background



Your child is learning that the marks you both make on paper have meaning. Understanding that one thing stands for another is an important thinking skill for learning to write, read, and communicate.

#272

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

## I Can Help

While you’re doing laundry, ask your child to help. Invite them to sort clothes into piles of dark and light colors.

Suggested Age

2 years - 3 years

## Brainy Background



It may take longer, but when you let your child help, they learn about how to hold an idea in their mind and get it done. These thinking skills are needed to make plans and see them through—skills they will need the rest of their life.

#495

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

## Fast-Slow Race

Invite your child to have a “Fast-Slow Race.” Find a starting line and count out loud together, “one, two, three!”, then go! As you get going, call out “slow!” Can they adjust their speed? Give them a turn calling out “fast” or “slow.” How fast can you go? How slow?

Suggested Age

2 years - 3 years

## Brainy Background



During a “Fast-Slow Race,” your child is practicing listening to directions and responding as the game changes. These skills will help them manage feelings and actions, now and in the future.

#819

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

## Be a Fixer

Pretend to fix things with your child. With a plastic spoon, pretend to fix a hinge on a kitchen cabinet. "I'm fixing this broken hinge on the cabinet door. Now it's your turn." After their turn, hold out your hand saying, "My turn!" Keep taking turns, smiling while you work.

Suggested Age

2 years - 3 years

## Brainy Background



Pretending is an important way that children make sense of their world. When children pretend, they learn that one thing (a plastic spoon) can stand for something else (a tool to fix a broken hinge). That is the basis of understanding symbols, which is important to literacy and math.

#846

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)

## 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 find a match. Then let them take a turn as the puppet.

Suggested Age

2 years - 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.

#506

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)

## Sound Pattern Play

Take turns with your child making sound patterns. For example, say, "Coo, coo, ca, coo." Ask them to repeat your sounds. Then ask them to come up with a new pattern, and you repeat it. See if you can make the patterns harder by going faster or adding more sounds.

Suggested Age

2 years - 4 years

## Brainy Background



Your child must use their focus, memory, and self-control to pay attention, remember the pattern, and follow the rules of the game. Playing sound games like these are a great way to build language skills with them in a fun way too.

#103

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

## Cleanup Helper

Invite your child to be the cleanup helper by giving them special jobs they can do. You can say, "Please help me find what needs to be washed in a washing machine." Or "Can you help wipe down the table or sweep up the crumbs on the floor?"

Suggested Age

2 years - 4 years

## Brainy Background



When you help your child find ways they can help around the house, they learn they're an important part of your family's everyday routines. It also shows you believe in them, which encourages them to do more things on their own.

#145

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

## Grab Some Words

Shopping? Give your child a copy of your shopping list or a few of the store's coupons, talking back and forth about what they're looking at. Point to a word or picture on your list or on a coupon and say, "Look, we need bananas. Let's go find some together!"

Suggested Age

2 years - 4 years

## Brainy Background



You're helping your child learn to develop self-control when you give them the opportunity to use words and pictures as a way to focus. When you involve them in tasks like shopping, you also give them a sense of responsibility, something they will need in school and in life.

#286

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

## Grocery Goof

As you put groceries away, involve your child by saying something like, "The frozen food goes on the shelf," or "I'm putting the paper towels in the refrigerator." Do they catch your "mistake?" Encourage them to share with you their thinking: Where should those items go and why? Then let them take a turn trying to trick you!

Suggested Age

2 years - 4 years

## Brainy Background



When you make playful mistakes, you encourage your child to listen closely and use what they already know to correct you. By asking them to share their thinking, you help them practice stepping back to think before answering, a skill that requires focus and self-control.

#419

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

## 1, 2, 3, Clean!

Involve your child in cleanup by saying something like: "We're going to do three things. Ready? One: Touch your head. Two: Spin around. Three: Jump up and down." Do these actions together. Then ask them to come up with three different things to do. See how long you can keep taking turns.

Suggested Age

2 years - 4 years

## Brainy Background



Your child is using their memory to keep the order of things to do in mind and practicing self-control to stay on task. You're helping them learn tools for doing something they may not want to do, an ability they need for taking on life's challenges.

#421

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

## Little Chef

Keep your child engaged in dinner prep. Take turns measuring, pouring, and mixing. If they might spill, put the bowl in the sink so spilling is okay. Talk to them about what you're doing and the ingredients you're using. Encourage them to smell, touch (and taste!) as you go. Ask them what they notice.

Suggested Age

2 years - 4 years

## Brainy Background



This activity gives your child the opportunity to hear new words, which builds their vocabulary. Measuring involves counting, which will help them with math in the future. Having a conversation about the experience helps them develop their communication skills.

#584

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

## Practice Makes Perfect

Do you and your child have a daily challenge, like getting ready for school? Have them practice that challenge during playtime. You can say: "Let's pretend we're getting ready to go to school. What should we do first?" Talk about the steps if they need help remembering. "We eat our breakfast, pack our lunch, brush our teeth, and then get on the bus."

Suggested Age

2 years - 4 years

## Brainy Background



When children have the chance to practice something, they begin to feel a sense of control in challenging situations. They're practicing critical thinking and problem-solving skills as they break the task down into steps and apply what they already know to solve it.

#937

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

## Colorful World

When you're out with your child, team up with them to find colors. Have them point to something and name the color. Then you name all of the things you can think of that are the same color. Take turns playing this game.

Suggested Age

3 years - 4 years

## Brainy Background



Thinking about the characteristics objects have in common (whether it's colors, shapes, or size) sparks connections in your child's growing brain.

#632

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

## Super Silly Handshake

Invent a super silly handshake for you and your child. Take turns adding a step (like shaking twice). Repeat it until you both have it down. Now change one of the steps. How do they respond? Go back and forth between the new and old way.

Suggested Age

4 years - 5 years

## Brainy Background



Creating and learning a super silly handshake helps your child remember and do what is needed to achieve a goal. This is a big step in learning self-control.

#28

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

## Practice Positivity

Practice saying things in new ways with your child. Take turns saying something negative, then try to talk about the same thing positively. For example, "I don't like loud noises" can become "I like quiet sounds."

Suggested Age

4 years - 5 years

## Brainy Background



This game is a good way to practice describing things and people in different ways. They're practicing language skills and how to see things from someone else's point of view. These skills are helpful in having good relationships now and in the future.

#40

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

## Shopping Search

When shopping, call out something you're looking for on a shelf and have your child help you find it. Give them a clue: "It's in a red box." Can you do five in a row before you reach the end of the aisle?

Suggested Age

4 years - 5 years

## Brainy Background



Helping your child pay attention and follow your clues improves their focus and self-control.

#260

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

## Playful Dinner Prep

Try to prepare dinner in a new way. Ask your child, "What if we only used one arm to make dinner tonight?" See what you can do easily and what's really hard. Share ideas back and forth about how you manage with only one arm. Then try, "What if you use your right arm and I use my left arm?" What is easier together?

Suggested Age

4 years - 5 years

## Brainy Background



When you try to do things differently, you can't go on autopilot. The process of setting challenging goals and finding ways to achieve them promotes skills that are very important to learning.

#557

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

## Guess My Number

Think of a number and see if your child can guess it based on your clues. Say something like, "My number is bigger than four and smaller than six." Or "It is the number of fingers on my hand." Make it harder by adding or taking away numbers. "My number is two more than the number three."

Suggested Age

4 years - 5 years

## Brainy Background



Your child must think on their feet and use what they already know about numbers to play this game. Guessing games like this one ask your child to use their memory and focus to follow the clues and come up with the answer.

#108

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

## Where Am I?

Describe a place in your home to your child. You can say something like: "I am in a room with a table, a stove, and a refrigerator. Where am I? That's right, the kitchen!" Provide as many or as few clues as they need. Then give them a turn to give you clues so you can guess the room.

Suggested Age

4 years - 5 years

## Brainy Background



It takes focus for your child to listen closely to your words and what scientists call working memory to keep the details of these familiar places in their mind. Your child is also making connections between what they already know and the place you're describing.

#129

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

## Coupon Kid

Put your child in charge of the coupons when shopping. Go over the coupons ahead of time so they know what to look for. Encourage them to hold up the coupon when finding the item in the store. Have them put it in an envelope and then give the coupons to the cashier.

Suggested Age

4 years - 5 years

## Brainy Background



Your child must use their attention, memory, and self-control to look for items in the store. When you give them responsibility in everyday tasks, you're showing them you believe in their abilities to do things on their own. This builds confidence.

#291

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

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