

Vroom Tips



Whether it's mealtime, bathtime, or anytime in between, there are so many ways to help build your child's brain. This PDF has a few brain building activities for children ages 0-5. You can print or cut them out, put them on your fridge, or carry them around—whatever helps to remind you that brain building moments are all around you in the things you already do.

Check out the pages that are relevant to you and your child, and print the ones you want. For example, ages 0-1 are on pages 2-4, etc. And if you have a friend, family, or community member that might like a few “brain builders,” please share this with them too!



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!

Ages 0-1



Brainy Background powered by Mind in the Making

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.

For more activities like these, check out the free Vroom app!

#13



Dance Party

Your child may not be walking or talking yet, but with your help, they can definitely boogie. So turn on some music and hold them as you dance around. When you sit down together, shake your arms to the music and see if they can do the same!

Ages 0-1



Brainy Background powered by Mind in the Making

Paying attention to sounds and movements is an early step in listening for sounds—a reading skill.

For more activities like these, check out the free Vroom app!

#14



Peekaboo

Grab whatever is nearby, like a blanket, a book, or your hands, and use it to play Peekaboo with your child. First you hide behind it and then say “Peekaboo!” Next, let them be the hider.

Ages 0-1



Brainy Background powered by Mind in the Making

Peekaboo helps your child learn that you’re still there, even when you’re hiding. But most of all, it’s fun! Your face and voice are your child’s favorite toys.

For more activities like these, check out the free Vroom app!

#15



Weather Report

At bedtime, talk to your child about the weather today and what it meant for you. “Today was COLD. I wish I had worn a heavy jacket because I was outside all morning!”

Ages 0-1



Brainy Background powered by Mind in the Making

Talking about everyday activities helps build children’s vocabulary, communication skills, and their brains!

For more activities like these, check out the free Vroom app!

#16



Copy Cat

Like you, children experience many different emotions every day. Make faces that mirror how your child seems to be feeling. Talk to them about why you’re making those faces. “You’re smiling and seem happy, and I am smiling and happy too.”

Ages 0-1



Brainy Background powered by Mind in the Making

When you imitate the face your child makes, you help them express what they think and feel even though they can’t speak yet. These “conversations without words” begin to help them learn about others’ feelings and emotions!

For more activities like these, check out the free Vroom app!

#17



Changing Chats

When you’re changing your child’s diapers, make funny noises and see if you can make them giggle or coo, then giggle and coo back at them. See how many times you can go back and forth. Follow their lead and have a conversation with faces and sounds.

Ages 0-1



Brainy Background powered by Mind in the Making

By following your child’s lead and also responding, you’re building the connections their brain will need for conversation and language later on.

For more activities like these, check out the free Vroom app!

#426



A Tall Tale

At their next diaper change, tell your child a silly story about the tallest little child in the world while stretching their arms over their head.

Ages 0-1



Brainy Background powered by Mind in the Making

Your voice is your child’s favorite sound. Even though they can’t talk back yet, they’re already taking in your words and using them to build the foundation for language later on.

For more activities like these, check out the free Vroom app! #427



Dressing Play

Even if your child doesn’t seem to understand, tell them everything you’re doing as you get them ready in the morning. Start with how you picked their clothes and go from there. Make eye contact and respond back to the sounds they make.

Ages 0-1



Brainy Background powered by Mind in the Making

Think of yourself as a sports announcer—one who responds back with sounds and faces. These back and forth conversations are helping them bond with you and begin to associate words with their experiences.

For more activities like these, check out the free Vroom app! #459



Feeding Memories

When breastfeeding or giving your child a bottle, use that time to tell them a story of something happy you remember from your childhood. When they have finished eating and responds to your voice, make the same sound back to them.

Ages 0-1



Brainy Background powered by Mind in the Making

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

For more activities like these, check out the free Vroom app! #535



Words All Around

Your child learns best from what you say and do, so read everything you can out loud. Read signs outside, recipes, or ads in a magazine. Be sure to point! Do they imitate any of your words or sounds? Do they point, too? Go back and forth with them, pointing and reading out loud.

Ages 1-2



Brainy Background powered by Mind in the Making

By introducing your child to different types of things to read, you help them make the earliest connections between written words and what they stand for. This kind of back and forth conversation, even before they have words, is building their communication skills.

For more activities like these, check out the free Vroom app!

#85



Silly Faces

After brushing your child's teeth at night, play a silly game together in the mirror. Ask them to make a funny face and then imitate them. Then switch and have them imitate your silliest face. There's no limit to how much fun you can have together!

Ages 1-2



Brainy Background powered by Mind in the Making

Taking turns imitating each other gives your child practice paying attention to your silly face so that they can copy it. Paying attention helps them concentrate and focus—important skills when it comes to learning and solving problems.

For more activities like these, check out the free Vroom app!

#310



Toothy Wonder

When you're brushing your child's teeth, look in the mirror together. Talk about how your teeth are the same and different from theirs. For example, you have more teeth, and bigger teeth, but you both can make funny faces. Follow their lead and talk with them about what they notice.

Ages 1-2



Brainy Background powered by Mind in the Making

Comparing things that are the same and different will help your child sort their experiences into categories and make connections—skills that are important in reading, math, and science in the future. This also builds their connection with you!

For more activities like these, check out the free Vroom app!

#342



Dirty Dishes, Goofy Giggles

While you clean up the dirty dishes, show your child a dirty dish and say “yuck” with a funny face. Your expression should make them giggle. With each new dish, use a new word, such as “sticky” or “goopy.” See what funny words they can come up with too.

Ages 1-2



Brainy Background powered by Mind in the Making

Your child learns communication skills from your tone of voice, facial expressions, body movements, and words. They also learn to love the sound of words when you use funny words.

For more activities like these, check out the free Vroom app!

#392



Name That Dish

While you put away the clean dishes, hold each one up and ask your child to “Name that Dish!” Plate! Bowl! Fork! And so on. Make it fun like a game show. You hold up the item, they tell you what it is, or you say what it is, then on to the next one!

Ages 1-2



Brainy Background powered by Mind in the Making

Your child learns to make connections between words and objects when they can see it and hear them at the same time. These connections are important to developing talking and reading skills.

For more activities like these, check out the free Vroom app!

#397



Cleaning Together

Turn cleaning a surface 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!

Ages 1-2



Brainy Background powered by Mind in the Making

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!

For more activities like these, check out the free Vroom app!

#401



Singing While You Change

Sing one of your favorite children’s songs to your child while you change them, but put their name in the song: “Row, row, row (your child’s name) boat, gently down the stream,” or “Rock-a-bye (your child’s name) in the treetop.” Encourage them to sing along too.

Ages 1-2



Brainy Background powered by Mind in the Making

Your child is learning new words and sounds when you sing. The more meaningful and playful words they hear, the more they will appreciate language. This will help them learn more words to use when they begin to talk.

For more activities like these, check out the free Vroom app! #431



Peekaboo Box

Everyday items make great toys. Give your child an empty tissue box and a spoon. Let them see you put the spoon into the box. Do they watch? Shake the box. Reach in and take the spoon out. Giggle. Now it’s their turn. Give them the spoon. What do they do?

Ages 1-2



Brainy Background powered by Mind in the Making

It’s a simple game, yet your child is exploring a big idea: Objects and people still exist even when they’re out of sight. Although it will take until they’re around two to really learn this, the practice is fun! Play this game often.

For more activities like these, check out the free Vroom app! #787



Lid Match

Find containers around the house with different covers, like a pot and a lid, a shoebox and its top, and an empty plastic bottle with a cap. Encourage your child to match the lids with the containers and then to try putting the tops on and taking them off again. As they get better at matching, give them more lids and containers.

Ages 1-2



Brainy Background powered by Mind in the Making

When your child works to match lids and containers, they’re focusing, tuning out distractions, and using what they already know to make connections and problem solve. You help them build these skills when you encourage them to test out ideas and come up with their own answers.

For more activities like these, check out the free Vroom app! #959



Bathtime Weather

Use your child’s time in the tub to talk about the weather. Sprinkle water on their arms and talk about rain. Let them take a turn sprinkling rain on your arms. When you’re draining the tub, show them how the water looks like a tornado. Take turns opening and closing the drain to let the water swirl around.

Ages 2-3



Brainy Background powered by Mind in the Making

Having conversations helps to build children’s brains—they’re learning new words, and learning about cause and effect when they see the water go down the drain.

For more activities like these, check out the free Vroom app!

#348



Splish, Splash, Pour

Grab two cups before bathtime. Give your child a cup and pour water into theirs. Then ask them to pour the water back into yours. Count the number of times out loud and see how many times you can go back and forth!

Ages 2-3



Brainy Background powered by Mind in the Making

Supporting children as they explore and discover will help them become learners for life. Counting out loud also helps them build a stronger sense of numbers.

For more activities like these, check out the free Vroom app!

#351



Pocket Cleaners

Let your child help you empty your pockets at night. Take out the items that are safe to share with them one at a time. As you do, tell them about your day and where the item came from. For example, “This card is how I get on the bus to go to work.”

Ages 2-3



Brainy Background powered by Mind in the Making

Children love to hear about adults’ days—especially the good things that happen. By sharing stories, you’re helping them learn about your world and building their vocabulary too!

For more activities like these, check out the free Vroom app!

#456



Laundry Sense

Give your child a chance to explore textures when you're putting away laundry. Before you fold, pass pieces to them first and ask how each feels. Is it soft, rough, thin, heavy? What else feels that way?

Ages 2-3



Brainy Background powered by Mind in the Making

This game helps your child “think like a detective” because they’re using their senses, including touch, to understand the world around them.

For more activities like these, check out the free Vroom app!

#491



Clothes Confusion

As you fold or organize clothes after doing the laundry, call the objects the wrong name or color. Call a pair of pants a “dress,” or a red shirt “purple.” See if your child can catch your mistake! Can they tell you the real answer? Then let them have a turn.

Ages 2-3



Brainy Background powered by Mind in the Making

Your child must use focus to play this game, memory to remember the rules, and think flexibly as the game changes. When they take the lead, they must use self-control to stop copying you and give the real answer—all important learning skills.

For more activities like these, check out the free Vroom app!

#508



Glass Half Full

When your child drinks out of a glass, have a back and forth conversation about how full the glass is. Is it a little full? Half full?

Ages 2-3



Brainy Background powered by Mind in the Making

When you have a back and forth conversation about how full the glass is, you're helping your child gain basic ideas about math. It can also help them learn new words!

For more activities like these, check out the free Vroom app!

#525



Cooking Lessons

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

Ages 2-3



Brainy Background powered by Mind in the Making

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

For more activities like these, check out the free Vroom app!

#534



Cup Tower

You don't need much to build fun things around the house. Grab a few plastic cups and stack them into a tower and then show your child how fun it is to knock them all down. Hand the cups over and let them have a go. Take turns building all kinds of new towers!

Ages 2-3



Brainy Background powered by Mind in the Making

Supporting children as they explore and discover will help them become learners for life. This game also helps them discover how the physical world around them works. Have a back and forth conversation about their discoveries!

For more activities like these, check out the free Vroom app!

#779



Tune Time

Turn playtime into music time. What is one of your child's favorite songs? Sing a line for them and then pause. Can they sing the next few words? Take turns back and forth, and clap to the beat. You're making beautiful music together!

Ages 2-3



Brainy Background powered by Mind in the Making

Music time becomes learning time. By helping your child pay attention to the words of songs and the beat, you're helping them learn to listen carefully. Remembering the words and tunes of songs also strengthens their memory.

For more activities like these, check out the free Vroom app!

#782



Still as a Statue

Ask your child to pretend to be a statue and freeze in a pose, like standing on one foot. Try to have them hold this pose as long as possible while you do everything you can to make them laugh and move. Then you can take a turn as the statue and see if they can make you laugh and move!

Ages 3-4



Brainy Background powered by Mind in the Making

This game is all about focus and self-control. Your child is concentrating to stay in the statue pose, and learning to tune out distractions so they can achieve a goal. This kind of playful learning helps them develop skills for life.

For more activities like these, check out the free Vroom app! #198



Recap the Day

Turn bedtime into a reflection of your child's day. Ask them if they got dressed or ate breakfast first. Tell what you remember too. If you want to be playful, switch the order: "You went outside and then you got dressed." Have them correct you.

Ages 3-4



Brainy Background powered by Mind in the Making

Helping your child describe parts of their day helps them build their communication skills.

For more activities like these, check out the free Vroom app! #303



Bath Count

When your child is in the tub, think of all the things you can count together. For example, the number of splashes they make or the number of times you pour water on them. Take turns counting and talk about what you are doing.

Ages 3-4



Brainy Background powered by Mind in the Making

Counting small numbers of things helps your child understand that numbers go in a sequence, from little numbers to big ones.

For more activities like these, check out the free DailyVroom app! #350



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?”

Ages 3-4



Brainy Background powered by Mind in the Making

Putting things into categories and being able to see similarities and differences helps your child build the skill of making connections, which is at the heart of learning. You’re also building their memory in fun ways while encouraging them to help out!

For more activities like these, check out the free Vroom app! #415



I Pick, You Pick

When you’re getting your child dressed in the morning, pick out their pants and then ask them to find a shirt that matches the color of those pants.

Ages 3-4



Brainy Background powered by Mind in the Making

This game helps your child make connections and group like things. They might have a good reason for why things go together. So listen to their ideas. If their idea won’t work, explain why.

For more activities like these, check out the free Vroom app! #458



Clean Clothes

When you’re putting away laundry, have your child find the places in the drawers or shelves where the clean clothes go. If they guess something different from where you would put it, talk about your reasons for putting it somewhere else.

Ages 3-4



Brainy Background powered by Mind in the Making

Grouping objects into categories (figuring out what’s the same and what’s different) is an important exercise that sparks connections in their growing brain. Having a back and forth conversation makes the learning so much richer.

For more activities like these, check out the free Vroom app! #492



Mini Chef

When you're cooking, have your child help with simple tasks like adding an ingredient. Ask them what they think will happen when you add the ingredient (like pouring a cup of milk into flour) and then talk together about what actually happens.

Ages 3-4



Brainy Background powered by Mind in the Making

This is a real-life science experiment. Guessing about what might happen promotes your child's curiosity, which is critical to learning.

For more activities like these, check out the free Vroom app!

#527



Light Show

Turn playtime into a lightshow with your child. Lift them so they can reach a light switch or stand on a steady chair (stay close to keep them safe). Say "on" or "off" and see if they can flip the switch to match your words. Then let them take a turn calling out directions to you

Ages 3-4



Brainy Background powered by Mind in the Making

This game teaches your child how one action causes another (cause and effect). When one of you flips the switch, talk about how the lights turn off and on. It's also the chance for them to hear new words like "flip" and "electricity."

For more activities like these, check out the free Vroom app!

#781



Dance Moves

Playtime can become a dance party. Turn on some tunes on your phone or radio 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!

Ages 3-4



Brainy Background powered by Mind in the Making

Believe it or not, dancing games can be great brain builders! This one in particular teaches your child to pay attention to sounds and rhythm and to imitate you using their body. It also gives them the chance to be the leader and that's a good feeling.

For more activities like these, check out the free Vroom app!

#784



Thankful Tidbits

At bedtime, take turns with your child listing things you're thankful for. Here's an easy one to start with, "I'm thankful for you!" Then, help them think of something they're thankful to have in their life. See how many times you can go back and forth.

Ages 4-5



Brainy Background powered by Mind in the Making

Every back and forth conversation builds your child's brain. After they say something, repeat it back in complete sentences. And did you know that paying attention to what's positive in your life has been shown to lead to more happiness and satisfaction? For both of you!

For more activities like these, check out the free Vroom app! #305



Daily Do-Over

Bedtime is a great time to look back on all the fun you and your child packed into the day. So tonight, ask them what their favorite parts of their day were—like stepping in a puddle or popping bubbles at bathtime. Then share yours with them—they will love hearing about your day!

Ages 4-5



Brainy Background powered by Mind in the Making

By reflecting on your day together, you're helping your child build their vocabulary and their memory skills. And by sharing an event from your day you're giving them a peek into the world of adults.

For more activities like these, check out the free Vroom app! #306



Tiny Tent

Grab a blanket to make a tiny tent at bedtime. Pretend to be camping outside with your child. Say: "Shh ... what do you hear? See? Smell? What do you think is happening outside our tent?" Afterward, snap a pic of them at your campsite!

Ages 4-5



Brainy Background powered by Mind in the Making

Pretending is very important to learning—it helps your child to imagine, be creative, and take the perspective of others. And it's fun!

For more activities like these, check out the free Vroom app! #307



Bath Bottle

Give your child a clean plastic bottle to play with in the tub. How many different things can they do with it? Push it under the water? Fill it with water? Float it like a boat? As they try something new ask them, “What do you think will happen?”

Ages 4-5



Brainy Background powered by Mind in the Making

Your child likes to make things happen. And it’s even more fun when you watch and share their pleasure by having them guess what will happen as they discover more about their world and their impact on how things work. When they play this way, they’re thinking like a scientist.

For more activities like these, check out the free Vroom app!

#354



Name That Clothing

Try getting dressed a new way this morning! Lay your child’s clothes out, but instead of asking them to find their pants, ask them, “Can you find the clothes you wear on your legs? On your feet?” Keep playing until they’re dressed.

Ages 4-5



Brainy Background powered by Mind in the Making

This new way of dressing gives your child practice using information they’re holding in their mind—what scientists call their “working memory.” Using information you know in different ways helps lead to success in school and success in life!

For more activities like these, check out the free Vroom app!

#461



Sock Sorters

When you’re doing laundry, have your child help you match socks. Ask them to help you match by size. Then change the rules and ask your child to match by color. Have a back and forth conversation about what you’re doing.

Ages 4-5



Brainy Background powered by Mind in the Making

Grouping objects into categories helps your child understand the world around them. When you ask them to change the rules of a game (from colors to size), you’re helping them think flexibly and not go on autopilot.

For more activities like these, check out the free Vroom app!

#490



Kitchen Music

When you're cooking, let your child create an instrument using a plastic container with measuring spoons or keys inside. Clap a certain rhythm and ask them to try and copy your beat with their homemade instrument. Then have them take a turn at leading, and you follow their beat.

Ages 4-5



Brainy Background powered by Mind in the Making

Going back and forth in a game like this helps your child pay attention and remember the pattern of noises. It's a great brain builder!

For more activities like these, check out the free Vroom app!

#531



Salty-Sweet Showcase

When you're in the kitchen, let your child try a few grains of salt and then a few of sugar. Ask how they taste. Which do they like better? What foods taste like they might have salt in them and what foods taste like they have sugar in them?

Ages 4-5



Brainy Background powered by Mind in the Making

Firsthand experiences like these help your child think like a scientist and use their senses to understand the world around them. Having back and forth conversations about these discoveries together makes the experience richer.

For more activities like these, check out the free Vroom app!

#532



Playtime Picks

Pick a color or letter with your child and, together, go on a scavenger hunt to find as many things as you can in three minutes. How many things in the house are blue? Count out loud together as you find each item. You can also play with letters: How many things do you see that start with T?

Ages 4-5



Brainy Background powered by Mind in the Making

"I Spy" games like this one are great brain builders. They make your child aware of their environment and teach them to make connections between similar things. You can try this game with letters, colors, shapes—anything really!

For more activities like these, check out the free Vroom app!

#783