



vroom

Brain building moments

Science tells us that the more we engage with our children, the better they'll do later on in school and in life. With these Vroom activities, you have what it takes to be a brain builder!

Learn more about brain building at vroom.org, and download the free Vroom app for more activities like these.

version 4

Sing Talk

Instead of talking as usual, try singing in a different voice. For example, it's very funny to sing about getting dressed. Sing, "I'm sliding on my shirt, jumping in my pants," in a low voice. You and your child can use familiar tunes and make up your own words.

Ages 0-5



Brainy Background powered by **Mind in the Making**

When you're having fun, it's likely your child will be having fun too. When you put new words into tunes and describe what you're doing, you're helping them make new and unusual connections. These types of connections promote creativity.

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

#38

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,
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#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 their 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!”



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,
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#17

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,
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#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,
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#787

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

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,
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#401

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.

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#392

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!

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#456

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,
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#508

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!

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#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.

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#782

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.

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#491

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.

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#458

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.”

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#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.

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#784

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,
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#198

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.

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#492

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!

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#461

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!

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#783

Sock Sorters

When you're doing laundry, have your child help you match socks. Ask them to help you match them by size. Then change the rules and ask them 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.

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#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!

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#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.

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#532