

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!

© 2019 Vroom is a program of the Bezos Family Foundation

Shopping Switcheroo

Try to imagine what your child is seeing when they're with you at the store. Watch them and describe what you think they may be seeing. When they're looking at fruit, talk about what it is and how it tastes. Do the same in any store or aisle.

Suggested Age

0 - 6 months

Brainy Background



When your child sees you watching and hears you talking about their experiences, they're making new connections in their brain between what they see and the words you use. As you go back and forth, you're teaching them they're valued.

#267

Learn more at vroom.org

Bat It

After a clean diaper is on, hold a small safe toy over your child's head as they lie on their back. Make a soft noise and jiggle the toy. Do they bat at it with their hands? Try to kick it? Answer their actions with another sound and gentle jiggle.

Suggested Age

3 months - 6 months

Brainy Background



As you play this game with your child, they're learning to pay attention and pursue a goal: hitting the toy with their hands or feet. It's amazing to think a baby so young is already developing these skills they will use the rest of their life.

#428

Learn more at vroom.org

Big Kids

When out at a place like a park, look for the big kids. Sit your child on your lap or move yourselves so you can watch them together and talk about what you're seeing. "Those kids are playing hide-and-seek like you will one day!"

Suggested Age

0 - 6 months

Brainy Background



Watching and talking about big kids gives your child the chance to learn about other people by watching. As they get older, they will want to imitate kids on the swings or going down slides. For now, watching and talking are fun.

#186

Learn more at vroom.org

Sound Off

Turn waiting into a “Sound Off.” Make different sounds like a whisper, peep, ding, or roar. Pause after each sound so your child can respond. Do they smile? Look at you? Make a sound themselves? Try a new sound. Keep going back and forth!

Suggested Age

0 - 6 months

Brainy Background



This back-and-forth conversation with sounds gives your child practice listening and helps them learn to notice differences in sounds, the foundation for language development and communicating with others.

#229

Learn more at vroom.org

In the Bag

Before you go out, grab some safe things for your child to play with and put them in a bag. While you're waiting, reach into the bag and talk about what you find. “This is something for you to chew on. Here's a rattle for you to hold. Let's shake it!”

Suggested Age

0 - 6 months

Brainy Background



Talking about what's “In the Bag” is interesting to your child and will help them build their vocabulary and their brain. Speak in full sentences. It's okay to use words they don't know yet. That's how they learn!

#237

Learn more at vroom.org

Dry Dance

As you dry your child, rub their fingers and toes one at a time. Name each one as you dry them and do a little dance! When you dry a pinky, shake your hand. When you dry their toe, stamp your foot. Make up a new move for each little finger and toe!

Suggested Age

0 - 6 months

Brainy Background



Being a part of the “Dry Dance” with you helps your child become more aware of their body, not to mention your playfulness and love. A loving, caring relationship with you supports their developing brain and thinking.

#361

Learn more at vroom.org

High in the Sky

After changing your child, lift them up and give them a chance to look around. Then, safely in your arms, turn around or lift them up and down. Let them enjoy the new view and talk with them about what they're seeing.

Suggested Age

0 - 6 months

Brainy Background



Moving around will grab your child's attention as you give them time to see the world from a different point of view. You're showing them the joy of new discoveries, a step on the path to becoming a lifelong learner.

#471

Learn more at vroom.org

Eye-to-Eye

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

Suggested Age

0 - 6 months

Brainy Background



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

#796

Learn more at vroom.org

Ready, Set, Play!

Look for signs that your child is ready to play. Do they look at you and kick their feet? Make funny sounds? Reach out their arms to you? Try to read their actions and follow their lead, making eye-contact and talking to them while you do!

Suggested Age

0 - 6 months

Brainy Background



When you read your child's signals and follow their lead, you're having a back-and-forth conversation. Building on what they do and say while going back and forth is one of the most important ways you can support their learning.

#797

Learn more at vroom.org

Sound Sensor

Play with your child by using your voice and/or handy things that make a sound. Bang a pan or hum as you move around. Watch them move their head to follow the sound. Smile and talk with them when they figure out where the sound is coming from.

Suggested Age

0 - 6 months

Brainy Background



Your child is learning to follow where sounds are coming from. Their brain is turned on as it connects what they hear to the world around them. These connections prepare your child for future learning.

#811

Learn more at vroom.org

Favorite Sounds

Choose a few objects that make noise: keys, phone ringer, musical toy, etc. Show your child each object and then make the sound. Tell them the object's name and what it does. When they respond, do another sound. Go back and forth. See which one they like best.

Suggested Age

0 - 6 months

Brainy Background



When your child watches you and the object, and hears the sound, they're using their focus. When you respond to them by offering another sound and interacting, they're engaged and their brain is actively learning new words, sounds, and reactions.

#812

Learn more at vroom.org

Here I Am!

Talk with your child as you move around the room, telling them, "Here I am!" Do they move their eyes? Turn or lift their head to look for you? When they find you, give them a big smile, again saying, "Here I am!"

Suggested Age

0 - 6 months

Brainy Background



Your child is interested in you, and from birth on they're able to follow what they see and hear. As they track you, reinforce this discovery by telling them where you are.

#828

Learn more at vroom.org

Snack Talk

When you're having a snack, talk with your child about what you're doing. "When I bite an apple, it makes a crunch sound. When you have teeth, you'll eat apples too." If they respond or reach for it and it is safe, let them touch it. "It feels smooth, doesn't it?"

Suggested Age

0 - 6 months

Brainy Background



When you talk to your child, the part of their brain that processes sound lights up, helping them make sense of what their hearing. It also sparks the action part of their brain, which gets them ready to say words. Although they can't talk yet, this simple activity is helping them learn how to talk!

#1025

Learn more at vroom.org

Diaper Song

When you're changing your child's diaper, sing about what you're doing. Watch them and copy the sounds they make so you can create a song together. Your song plus their sounds can become your own "Diaper Song" for changing time!

Suggested Age

0 - 9 months

Brainy Background



When your child hears new sounds and sees you respond to the sounds they make, they can become focused and engaged. This how they learn new words and sounds that will help them learn to talk and read in the future.

#437

Learn more at vroom.org

Singing Laundry

When you're doing laundry, sing every step: putting in detergent, closing the door, folding the clothes, etc. Watch your child and copy the sounds they make so you can create a song together. This is fun and puts a new spin on this chore.

Suggested Age

0 - 9 months

Brainy Background



When your child hears new sounds and sees you respond to the sounds they make, they're focused and engaged. When they're focused and engaged, they learn new words and sounds that will help them talk and read in the future.

#496

Learn more at vroom.org

Mealtime Melodies

As you feed your child, sing softly and watch how they respond. If they like it, smile and sing even more. If they make some sounds when responding to you, add their sounds to your song so you can make “Mealtime Melodies” together.

Suggested Age

0 - 9 months

Brainy Background



When you sing with your child and respond to their reactions, they’re learning about sounds and words. Learning new sounds and words will help them learn to talk and read in the future.

#562

Learn more at vroom.org

Sharing the Story

When you’re reading with your child, let them explore it with all of their senses. Allow them to touch, pat, hold, and even taste (if it’s clean) what you’re reading. Describe their actions like, “You’re patting the picture of the bunny.”

Suggested Age

0 - 12 months

Brainy Background



Children learn through touching, feeling, and putting everything into their mouths. As you talk about their world and senses, you help connect words, pictures, and objects. Plus, you’re not only sharing the story, you’re sharing your joy of reading with them.

#82

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

Skin Sensations

Talk to your child about how things feel on their skin: “Your shirt is soft.” “The wind is cold.” “The ice cube is slippery.” See how they react and continue the conversation: “You like the warm water in your bath!”

Suggested Age

0 - 12 months

Brainy Background



When you talk back and forth with your child about how things feel on their skin, you’re introducing them to new words and feelings. This helps make new connections, which is how they start learning to use these words themselves in the future.

#33

Learn more at vroom.org

Sing-Song Voice

Is your child making lots of sounds? Talk back to them by repeating their sounds or describing what they’re doing using a sing-song voice. Do they respond by kicking their feet, waving their arms, or making more sounds? Together, you’re telling your own story!

Suggested Age

0 - 12 months

Brainy Background



Children’s brains are wired to hear you talk in a sing-song voice. When you talk slowly and stretch the sounds out in a musical way, their eyes light up and their heart rates increase. Toddlers who hear sing-song voices smile more often—proof that you are making connections and building a brain!

#57

Learn more at vroom.org

Calming Song

As you’re putting your child to bed, rock them gently and sing softly to them. Pay attention to how they tell you they want more singing. Do they turn their head toward you? Smile? Move? What do they do to say “enough?” Cry? Turn away? Take note of how to respond to their cues now and in the future!

Suggested Age

0 - 12 months

Brainy Background



Singing to your child before bedtime is like a calming conversation using music. You sing, they respond, you respond etc. They’re learning how it feels to calm themselves, which is an important life lesson.

#314

Learn more at vroom.org

A Changing Conversation

When you're changing your child, make a funny sound. How do they respond? By smiling? Kicking their legs? Making a sound? Try a new sound and see what they do. Keep adding new ones to the mix!

Suggested Age

0 - 12 months

Brainy Background



Back and forth conversations can happen even without words. You're teaching your child how conversations work. First one person speaks, then the other. This is an early lesson about communication—a skill that's important in school and in life.

#429

Learn more at vroom.org

Blowfish

After you change your child, puff up your cheeks like a blowfish and then place their feet on your cheeks to push the air out till you go "pop!" What other sounds or faces can you make together—like sticking out your tongue? Can they copy some of these?

Suggested Age

0 - 12 months

Brainy Background



The back-and-forth game you're playing with your child when making faces and noises may seem silly, but it's not! They're learning to watch you and respond, which are important skills for communicating now and in the future.

#438

Learn more at vroom.org

Lip Lesson

As you dress your child, copy the sounds you hear them make, like "ah, eee, ooo, bee, dee." How do they respond? As you make a sound, place their fingers on your lips so they can feel the vibrations and movements of your lips. Try different sounds as you do!

Suggested Age

0 - 12 months

Brainy Background



Touching and listening to sounds fosters your child's interest in listening and communicating. It won't be long before you're having back-and-forth conversations with real words.

#470

Learn more at vroom.org

Laundry Pointing

As you do laundry, let your child know what you're doing: "I'm putting white clothes in the washer so they will be clean." As you say the words, point to the objects (clothes, washer, soap). When they respond, continue the conversation by talking and pointing.

Suggested Age

0 - 12 months

Brainy Background



You help your child learn new words by talking and pointing. Also look at what you want them to pay attention to, and then they will learn even more.

#497

Learn more at vroom.org

Mealtime Detective

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

Suggested Age

0 - 12 months

Brainy Background



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

#553

Learn more at vroom.org

Colorful Meal

As you feed your child, put a bright dishcloth, towel, or scarf over your shoulder. Do they notice it? Do they look back and forth between your face and the colors? Talk to them about the different colors or patterns as they do.

Suggested Age

0 - 12 months

Brainy Background



A "Colorful Meal" creates a change of scene that invites your child to notice the details of what is going on around them. Paying attention is an important skill for learning.

#559

Learn more at 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

Did You Hear That?

When you're outside, ask your child, "Did you hear that?" each time you hear a sound. Imitate the sound out loud and make gestures to go along with it. Invite them to make the sound too.

Suggested Age

0 - 12 months

Brainy Background



You're giving your child practice at being able to hear different sounds. This is an important skill for enjoying and learning language so they can communicate well with others.

#189

Learn more at vroom.org

Share a Stare

As you hold your child and look into each other's eyes, make a silly face or sound. How do they respond? With twinkly eyes? A smile? A laugh? Try it again but do something different. This is the beginning of a lifetime of laughs to share together.

Suggested Age

3 months - 12 months

Brainy Background



This back and forth game of sharing a laugh is anything but silly. It is an important building block in your child's ability to enjoy and communicate with other people. It also deepens your relationship with one another—and it's fun!

#21

Learn more at vroom.org

Daily Discoveries

What is your child doing? Reaching for a toy? Hitting two blocks together to make a sound? As they discover their world, pay attention, smile, and use words that they will learn someday: “You reached out your fingers and got your toy.”

Suggested Age **3 months - 12 months**

Brainy Background



When you pay attention to what your child does and share their delight in doing and learning, you start them on the path to becoming a lifelong learner.

#22

Learn more at vroom.org

Up-Down, Side-to-Side

Sit on the floor holding your child on your knees. Gently move them up and down, side to side, and explain what’s going on. “Now you’re going up, up in the sky!” “Now you’re moving over to the door,” or “down, down to the ground.” Make up new ones as you go!

Suggested Age **3 months - 12 months**

Brainy Background



As you bond and play with your child, you’re sharing the joy of moving with them and introducing words that describe moving and where things are. These are important math concepts.

#833

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

Drop the Ball

A fun outside game is “Drop the Ball.” Give your child a safe object to hold onto and drop, like a ball or a crumbled piece of paper. If you pick it up, they will drop it again. “Down it falls. Up it comes.” Keep up the game with new objects!

Suggested Age

6 months - 12 months

Brainy Background



Building your child’s ability to use their hands is important. They will use this ability at home, at play, and at school. In addition, they’re learning to pay attention and to have self-control—also key skills for life.

#192

Learn more at vroom.org

Mirror Mirror

Does your child wiggle when you change their diaper? Do you have an unbreakable mirror or something safe and reflective where they can see themselves? Give them this to hold and talk about what they’re looking at: “I see you looking at your nose!”

Suggested Age

6 months - 12 months

Brainy Background



Babies learn with their senses. When they see their face and you talk about their nose and other body parts, they’re making connections between words and objects, which lays the foundation for reading in the future.

#430

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

Where's Your Hand?

Put one of your child's socks on one of their hands, asking "Where's your Hand?" How do they respond? Wave their hand? Look at it? Next, put it on the other hand. Do they respond in the same way or do anything differently?

Suggested Age

6 months - 12 months

Brainy Background



As your child finds the answer to "Where's your hand?" they're practicing paying attention. They're also working on controlling their hands and fingers. Focusing like this is an important skill in learning.

#829

Learn more at vroom.org

Three Hands

Hand your child safe objects or toys for their right hand and for their left. Then give them a third. How do they respond? Do they try to hold it with hands that are already full? Talk to them about what they might be thinking about holding objects.

Suggested Age

6 months - 12 months

Brainy Background



This simple game is a fun way to watch your child's thinking change over time. Even before they walk, they're starting to be able to come up with new strategies to help them solve problems.

#834

Learn more at vroom.org

It's a Bird, It's a Plane!

Tell your child their food is an airplane and make the food fly around until they open wide so you can land it in their mouth. Make plane noises and talk about whether it is flying high, low, or in circles.

Suggested Age

6 months - 18 months

Brainy Background



Your child is learning to focus by watching you bring their food to their mouth. As they learn to feed themselves, they can also pretend their food is flying into their mouth.

#1017

Learn more at vroom.org

Babbling Baby

Does your child babble or make lots of sounds? This is a first step in learning to speak. Set these sounds to music. If they're saying, "Ba, ba, ba," sing this sound to a favorite tune. Watch their eyes light up. Guess what? Your baby's brain lit up too!"

Suggested Age

6 months - 18 months

Brainy Background



Your child will love the fact that you're singing along with them. By doing so, you and your child are having a conversation with sounds, which helps them listen carefully and copy you. This gets them ready for conversations with words, which will lead to better reading skills.

#818

Learn more at vroom.org

Hand Talk

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

Suggested Age

0 - 18 months

Brainy Background



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

#1026

Learn more at vroom.org

Playtime Poems

When your child makes a sound, turn it into a rhyme. If they say "Eee," say, "Eee rhymes with WE and we are together." How many funny poems can you make with the sounds they are making? It is fun for them and helps them listen to sounds.

Suggested Age

6 months - 18 months

Brainy Background



Your child is a ready to learn! When you watch what they're doing and follow their lead, you can begin to build their learning by adding your ideas. When they're responded to, their brain is active, which increases learning.

#35

Learn more at vroom.org

Bath Routines

Create fun and simple bath routines with your child. For example, every time you feel the temperature you can say, "Splish, splash!" When the bath is over, shake the washcloth saying, "Shake, shake." Look for ways to add to the bath routine.

Suggested Age

0 - 2 years

Brainy Background



Regular routines help your child know what to expect. If you use these words in other ways (shaking salad dressing or drying dishes), you're helping your child apply what they've learned to these new situations.

#363

Learn more at vroom.org

Toe Tales

As you sit with your child, hold their feet and touch each of their toes, making up a story about each one. The small one is a little piglet that goes "oink oink!" The next one is his big brother, etc. Keep going and respond to what they do and say!

Suggested Age

0 - 2 years

Brainy Background



When your child hears words and feels your touch, they're making connections in their brain between words and actions. When you respond to what they do and say, it helps them to develop the foundation for talking and reading.

#806

Learn more at vroom.org

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.

Suggested Age

0 - 5 years

Brainy Background



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 build creativity.

#38

Learn more at vroom.org