

Vroom Tips™



These print-at-home tip sheets include a mix of Vroom Brain Building Activities™ for children ages 0-5. Share them, put them up on your fridge, or carry them around—whatever helps remind you that brain-building moments are all around you.

Brain Building Basics™

We've made the science of early learning simple! Remember these 5 actions to help build your child's brain anytime. They're color coded for easy finding.

Look

Children use their eyes to learn. See what catches your child's attention and talk about it. Or connect eye-to-eye, then smile, chat, hug, or make funny faces!

Follow

Young children learn best when you follow their lead. Tune into your child's words, sounds, movements and ideas! Then respond with your own words and actions.

Chat

Children's brains light up when you talk, sing, or make sounds back and forth with them. Chat about your day, food, and what's around you, or string sounds together for a fun conversation!

Stretch

Children's brains grow strong when you help them stretch their learning further. Keep a moment going: ask your child a question that starts with what, when, where, how or why!

Take Turns

Children learn from taking turns when you play, talk, or explore. After they go, take your turn. Then repeat: they go, you go, they go, you go!

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Water Works

Hand-washing time? Tell your child, “This is the HOT water (point to the faucet); this is the COLD water. Together they make warm water! This is the soap. Soap and water make BUBBLES that clean our hands. Now, let’s rinse off the bubbles. Can you help me dry my hands with this towel?”

Suggested Age **9 months - 2 years**

Brainy Background™



You’re helping your child learn a routine that will keep them healthy, and sharing the science of how things work (hot and cold make warm). If they’re just learning to use words, you can prepare them for what’s about to happen, by using a word they love, like, “We’re going to wash our hands—BUBBLES.”

#365

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The Hand Wash

Let your child be your partner as you wash up before a meal. Say, “It’s time to wash our hands, yours and mine.” Put soap on both your hands and lather up. Be silly as you dry your hands off together. Do you shake dry? Toss the towel back and forth? Make a hand jumble? What else?

Suggested Age **12 months - 18 months**

Brainy Background™



Making your child your partner in hand washing helps them learn about this important routine. A back-and-forth conversation with words and gestures, builds your relationship too. Say, “You can wash your hands!”

#555

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Silly Suds

Get silly while getting clean! Tell your child, “Let’s wash your hands!” but start washing their feet. What do they do? Then say: “Oh! Those are your feet! Where are your hands?” As they get older, have them lead, using other parts of their body like elbows, wrists, and ankles.

Suggested Age **12 months - 3 years**

Brainy Background™



Your child is using their focus to listen to your words and drawing on what they already know to play this silly game with you, which strengthens their memory. They’re also practicing thinking flexibly about opposites, as well as learning new words and what they mean in a fun way!

#377

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Mini Chef

Have your child help with safe and simple tasks while you are cooking. Mixing or adding an ingredient can be good places to start. As you work, ask them what they think will happen when they stir things together or add something new. Listen to their ideas, then talk together about what you see happening.

Suggested Age

3 years - 5 years

Brainy Background™



This is real-life science. Guessing about what might happen promotes your child's curiosity. This helps them adopt a lifelong love of learning!

#527

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Kitchen Music

Let your child create an instrument using a plastic container with measuring spoons or keys inside. Clap a rhythm or tap your toes. 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.

Suggested Age

3 years - 5 years

Brainy Background™



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!

#531

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How Many?

Cut an apple and ask your child to guess how many seeds they think will be inside. Or how many pieces of orange there will be after you peel it. Count the seeds or segments together and compare that number with their guess. What other foods can you use for this game?

Suggested Age

3 years - 5 years

Brainy Background™



Your child is thinking like a scientist. Making a guess, looking at the results, and then comparing the two is just what a scientist does. Your child is also learning to estimate numbers. This is an important skill for math.

#1037

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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

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Soothing Rhymes

When your child seems fussy, try singing a rhyme or a song. Do they calm down when your voice is quiet, or do they respond to big facial expressions and an enthusiastic voice? Try different rhymes and songs to find their favorites.

Suggested Age

0 - 12 months

Brainy Background™



When you respond to your child's movements and sounds, you build a trusting relationship that supports future learning. You also teach them ways to deal with stress while building a love of language.

#84

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Just the Two of Us

In a calm moment together, take the time to look at your child's face. Point to their nose and say, "your nose." Then point to your nose and say, "my nose." Respond to what they do. Do they point too? Do they smile or repeat your words or sounds? Try this with different parts of your face.

Suggested Age

0 - 2 years

Brainy Background™



Children are more likely to learn when they're in a relaxed and supportive environment. As you help your child learn new words, you're also introducing them to the ideas of same and different. The ability to make these kinds of connections is at the heart of learning.

#74

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Daily Favorite

In the evening, ask your child what their favorite part of the day was. Make sure you follow up with questions. "Why did you like that? Was it more fun than the last time you did that? Why?" You can make this a regular part of your day!

Suggested Age **2 1/2 years - 5 years**

Brainy Background™



Asking your child questions that require more than a simple yes or no help build language, communication, and reasoning skills. Repeat what they say back to them in more complex sentences. Don't be afraid to use words they don't know!

#528

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Stress Busters

During a calm moment, invite your child to come up with their own ideas for managing stressed feelings. You can make suggestions, such as using words to explain their feelings, hitting something that can't be hurt, or counting numbers. Try out the ideas and brainstorm others.

Suggested Age **2 1/2 years - 5 years**

Brainy Background™



When you give your child some responsibility for coming up with their own ideas for managing stressed feelings, you're helping them learn to manage their emotions and behavior. You're also helping them learn to take on challenges.

#174

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Today's Feelings

Encourage your child to talk about their day using feeling words like happy, excited, and sad. Ask questions like, "Was there a time when you felt frustrated today?" Ask them to make faces that express these feelings. Share your day too.

Suggested Age **3 years - 5 years**

Brainy Background™



When you take time to talk about feelings with your child in fun ways every day, you make your relationship stronger, while helping them make connections between feelings and actions. Once your child understands their emotions, they can relate more easily to others.

#67

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Song Traditions

There are things we do every day. Sing the same songs at those moments to explain what you're doing with your child. Examples could be leaving a room, finishing eating, or washing hands. What else do you do daily that you could sing about?

Suggested Age

0 - 2 years

Brainy Background™



Children love traditions. Singing about your shared daily moments adds to the comfort of a known routine. It also helps your child connect these moments and new words. They love learning language from your sing-song voice.

#4

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Sing, Rhyme, Repeat

Help your child recognize patterns and familiar words by singing simple songs with lots of repetition or rhymes. Can't remember one? Make up your own! Encourage them to join in by repeating the words or by adding their own ideas.

Suggested Age

12 months - 2 years

Brainy Background™



The more you sing with your child, the more they're able to predict sounds and words and join in. Songs and sound games are great for building early language and reading skills. They make connections between sounds and words and build their vocabulary in a fun and playful way.

#99

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Laundry Sort

During laundry time, pull out a single sock and see if your child can find a match for it in the laundry basket. Once they get it, let them pull out another sock and you find the match. Talk about the clues you use to find the match.

Suggested Age

18 months - 2 years

Brainy Background™



Your child is figuring out what's the same and what's different. This is an important early math skill that they'll use to organize their thinking and solve math problems later in school.

#504

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Tent Time

Make a tent with your child! Cover two sturdy chairs with a blanket or towel and invite them to come inside. Make it a special place for games like playing “Peekaboo” or bringing special tent toys inside to play with. Name the special place together!

Suggested Age

2 1/2 years - 3 years

Brainy Background™



A tent creates a new, almost magical space in a familiar place. As your child goes in and out, they have a chance to change their view of the world, adjust their behavior and play accordingly—in other words, to be a flexible thinker.

#800

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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

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Laundry Delivery

After folding the laundry, ask your child to help you with “Laundry Delivery.” Ask them, “Where do the towels go? That’s right, in the bathroom! What about your pajamas? Yes! In your room. Which drawer?” Switch and let them pick the items and ask you where they go.

Suggested Age

3 years - 4 years

Brainy Background™



When children learn to group things into categories, they learn how to organize and make sense of their world. Just think about how important matching is to reading, math, science, and many other subjects.

#524

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Rhyme Zone

You can play this rhyming game anywhere, anytime. Think of a fun word, then let your child think of another word that rhymes with it. Take turns and keep going back and forth as long as you can! Plan? Fan? Ran?

Suggested Age

3 years - 5 years

Brainy Background™



Rhyming games, like this one, help your child focus on word sounds. This will help with reading and writing later on.

#7

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Make and Play

As your child plays, encourage them to find something to climb over or crawl under. What about something they can roll on the ground, bang like a drum, or balance? This game is fun inside or outside. Talk with them about it. What was the same and what was different?

Suggested Age

3 years - 5 years

Brainy Background™



It takes flexible thinking and creativity to find different ways to use familiar objects. Your child is also practicing focus and self-control as they crawl, climb, and balance. They can even learn some new words and concepts as they explore.

#978

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Calm Down Kit

Use an empty shoebox or other container to make a “Calm Down Kit” with your child. Have your child put special items inside that help them feel secure and relaxed. When they are feeling upset, remind them to use their kit. They even can decorate the box to make it their own.

Suggested Age

2 1/2 years - 5 years

Brainy Background™



It helps to make a “Calm Down Kit” before upset feelings happen. You’re helping your child plan for how to handle stress so they can take action in a difficult moment. This gives them more control. It also builds skills important to tackling challenges.

#941

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Lot or Little

Look at the world around you and call your child's attention to things you see like people, cars, buildings, or animals. Point to them and ask them, "How many do you see?" A lot or a little?" When they understand the rules of the game, invite them to take the lead. Then take turns!

Suggested Age **2 1/2 years - 3 years**

Brainy Background™



Young children are born with a sense of numbers. Estimating is one of the first things they can do. Even though older children sometimes begin to believe they aren't good at numbers, playing "Lot or Little" helps them stay comfortable with this inborn sense.

#668 **vroom.org**

Window Watching

Look out the window for big things and little things. Take turns with your child, saying, "I see something big." And then name it. Do the same thing with something little. Ask them to go next and see how many things you can find together!

Suggested Age **2 1/2 years - 3 years**

Brainy Background™



When you're "Window Watching," your child is practicing paying attention, focusing on an idea, and forming categories. These thinking skills are important for problem-solving.

#670 **vroom.org**

Our Weather Wrap-Up

When you come in from outside, have a chat with your child about the weather. Were you hot or cold? Make sure you use simple sentences, but add bigger words, too.

Suggested Age **2 years - 5 years**

Brainy Background™



Talking with your child about their world helps to build their brain. Remember to ask questions: "Did your coat keep you warm?" And build on what they say: "The wind made me shiver just like you!"

#1043 **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

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Seasonal Stroll

Walking somewhere today? Talk to your child about the seasons. Is it cold or warm? What clues do you see that tell you what season it is? Snow? Flowers? Colorful Leaves?

Suggested Age

3 years - 5 years

Brainy Background™



Games like these help your child to think like a scientist because they're observing the world around them. Turn it into a conversation, building on what they say and observe.

#648

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Near and Far

When you're outside, try playing this game with your child. Give them a place to stand and have them estimate how many steps they are from you. When they walk back, count their steps together aloud. Try all different distances!

Suggested Age

4 years - 5 years

Brainy Background™



Young children can tell there is a difference between large and small quantities! By doing fun, back-and-forth games like this, you're building on this skill and helping them understand more about what numbers stand for.

#630

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