

Vroom Tips™



Picky Eating, Saying No, Meltdowns: what's a parent to do? Vroom Tips like these build life skills and strategies to help lessen these **Challenging Moments** in the future. These print-at-home tip sheets include a mix of Vroom Brain Building Activities™ for children ages 0-5.

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!

© 2022 Vroom is a program of the Bezos Family Foundation

Yes Places

Your child needs places they can explore without hearing “No.” Give them things they can use to learn safely, like cardboard or wooden spoons. Child-proof spaces or “Yes Places” also let you say “Yes.” When you save your “No’s” for when you really need them, it helps your baby learn what “No” really means.

Suggested Age

0 - 3 years

Brainy Background



For your baby to learn what “No” means, try not to use it so often. Babies need to explore - it’s how they figure out the world and how it works. “Yes Places” help them learn and help you save “No” for when you really need it. It might help them learn to say “No” less often, too!

#1053

Learn more at vroom.org

Saying No

Your child can understand “No” before they can talk. They’re learning from your words, tone, and expressions. When you need to set a limit, use a firm voice to say “No” very clearly. If you save “No” for when it really matters, like touching something hot, it will work better.

Suggested Age

12 months - 3 years

Brainy Background



You can teach your child to understand limits. When you mean “No,” say it with confidence. The rest of the time, try to say “Yes” to a better choice. Try telling your child what they CAN have and CAN do. Instead of saying “No” to a request for candy, try saying “Yes” to a banana instead.

#1051

Learn more at vroom.org

Peek-a-Mood

Does your toddler shout “No!” whenever they’re angry? Naming their feelings can help. In a calm moment, try this. Cover your face and then reveal a big expression. It can be angry, surprised, or happy. Ask your child to guess the feeling. Take turns. Talk about times you have each felt that way.

Suggested Age

12 months - 3 years

Brainy Background



Your child can learn to manage angry feelings. Putting words to emotions lets your child share with you how they feel. Through practice, your child can learn to recognize and express their feelings. They can also learn to understand how other people might feel.

#1052

Learn more at vroom.org

Hide and Peek

Is your child afraid of new people? Play Hide and Peek! Hide your face behind a pillow or crouch behind a chair. Now ask your child to find you. Let them move the pillow or find your hiding place. Take turns, laugh, and have fun with this joyful game.

Suggested Age

12 months - 3 years

Brainy Background



Knowing you're there helps your child feel safer with new people. Games like Hide and Peek remind your child that you're still there, even when they can't see you. By practicing, they learn to manage their feelings and be more confident.

#1062

Learn more at vroom.org

Finding Sparks

If your child seems to give up easily, look for "Sparks." Do they want to stop to look at a tree or a puddle on the walk home? Let them stop and investigate. Ask questions and encourage them to wonder. These "Sparks" are things that interest your child. Help them find "Sparks" whenever and wherever you can!

Suggested Age

12 months - 5 years

Brainy Background



Letting your child explore and wonder helps them grow as learners. You can help your child find "Sparks" that interest them. It will help them learn to focus, be curious, ask questions, and even finish things they start.

#1115

Learn more at vroom.org

One Play at a Time

Does your child take out too many toys at once? This can make them (and you!) feel overwhelmed. Watch them play. When they lose interest in a toy, help them put it away before taking out the next one. "I see you want to play with something else. Let's put this one away first. Then we can play with that one."

Suggested Age

2 years - 3 years

Brainy Background



When you pay attention as your child plays, you can help them learn to put away one thing before taking out another. This helps them learn focus and self-control. They learn by listening to you, watching you, and copying you. They will feel calmer when things are more organized. And you will, too!

#1050

Learn more at vroom.org

Play-By-Play

When your child grabs, pretend you're a sportscaster and report on what you see. "you're grabbing the toy, but your friend wants it too. He seems angry. Here is another toy. I am giving it to you. Look, now you have a toy, and so does your friend."

Suggested Age

2 years - 3 years

Brainy Background



You can help your child learn to take turns. Describing what you see helps your child connect words to actions. It also shows them how their actions can make other people think or feel. You can show your child different solutions. This will help them learn to solve their own problems in the future.

#1060

Learn more at vroom.org

Let's Take Turns

Is your child grabbing toys? During a calm moment, invite them to take turns with you. Use a toy to practice and explain. "I am holding the toy now because it is my turn. Would you like a turn? Now you have the toy. It is your turn. It's fun when we take turns!"

Suggested Age

2 years - 3 years

Brainy Background



Practicing taking turns when things are calm shows your child how it feels to share. This can help them remember how to share in harder moments. Children learn through practice.

#1061

Learn more at vroom.org

Nice to Meet You

Is your child nervous around new people? Try playing pretend with a stuffed animal or a sock as a puppet. Pretend to be the animal and introduce yourself to your child. You can say, "Hi. I'm Bear. What's your name?" Let the conversation continue back and forth. Remind your child that it is fun to meet new friends!

Suggested Age

2 years - 3 years

Brainy Background



When you let your child pretend to meet someone new, you give them a chance to practice this skill. When someone new comes into their life, they can remember the game you played. Children learn through play, pretend, and practice.

#1063

Learn more at vroom.org

Safe with Me

Meeting new people can feel scary. Try inviting your child to think of a small item that helps them feel safe. It could be a blanket, toy, stuffed animal, or photo. The next time you go to meet someone new, invite them to bring the object along.

Suggested Age

2 years - 3 years

Brainy Background



To help your child deal with meeting new people, you can build on what already works. When they choose a comfort object, they're finding a tool that works for them. They can use this tool to face a challenge. They can also learn skills to help them face challenges on their own in the future.

#1064

Learn more at vroom.org

The Clean Up Song

Make up a song you can sing when you clean up. When an activity is over, sing the Clean Up Song with your child. It can be very simple, like "I clean. You clean. We all clean up together." Or, "Clean up. Clean up. Everybody, clean up." Clean up together while you sing and repeat the song until the job is done.

Suggested Age

2 years - 3 years

Brainy Background



When clean-up time is fun, children usually don't mind helping out. Children love rhymes and songs. They also love rituals. Using the same song every time sends your child a clear message that it's time to clean up. They also learn to be responsible.

#1097

Learn more at vroom.org

The Feelings Show

Is it hard for your child to express how they feel? Try playing different kinds of music and invite your child to draw, dance or act out how the music makes THEM feel. Join in! Dance, draw, or act out how the music makes YOU feel. Then talk about your feelings together.

Suggested Age

2 years - 4 years

Brainy Background



Your child can learn to share their feelings. When they express themselves to music, they can dance, draw, or act out how they feel. This helps them connect sounds with words and feelings. When you join in and talk about your feelings, you show your child ways they can express themselves.

#1077

Learn more at vroom.org

The No Game

If your child loves to say “No,” give them the chance in playful, safe situations. If you’re playing dress-up, put socks on your hands and ask, “Is this where we wear socks?” Let them say “No!” Take turns with your child to ask silly questions that let them say “No” as much as they want. Next, ask questions that practice saying “Yes!”

Suggested Age

2 years - 4 years

Brainy Background



Saying “Yes” and “No” can make your child feel like they have control. Use pretend play to let your child practice being in charge. Pretending lets your child replay situations and try out new ones. They can practice ways to communicate in a safe space and prepare for real conversations.

#1078

Learn more at vroom.org

Let Them Lead

If your child loves to say “No,” try putting them in charge. While you’re playing together, let them take the lead. You can model language and help them expand their ideas. But try letting them take charge of the play experience. You can ask, “What do you want to play now?” and “What should I do?”

Suggested Age

2 years - 4 years

Brainy Background



Saying “No” is one way children feel in control. If it feels like they’re saying “No” all the time, try letting them take charge of a play session. A bit of real control may help them not need to say “No” all the time. Taking the lead also helps your child learn to make decisions and communicate.

#1079

Learn more at vroom.org

Ready for Potty?

Learning to use the toilet will be easier when your child is ready. Look for clues and follow their lead. Do they talk about using the bathroom? Know when they need to go? Show interest in the potty? Understand wet and dry? Pull their pants on and off on their own? Stay dry for two hours? They may be ready!

Suggested Age

2 years - 4 years

Brainy Background



Toilet training happens best when the time is right. Children are ready at different times. You can watch for clues that your child is ready. When they learn to read signals from their body that they need to go, they’re learning to make judgments. This is so important as they grow and learn.

#1106

Learn more at vroom.org

Potty Play

Even before your child uses the potty, you can use Potty Play to help them learn. Let them sit on the potty anytime, even with clothes on. You can join the play and ask if a puppet or stuffed animal needs the potty. Your child can let the toy “use” the potty.

Suggested Age

2 years - 4 years

Brainy Background



By letting your child play at using the toilet, you're helping them get ready to learn. Children love to pretend. They also learn best through play and practice. They're learning to use the potty, but they're also learning to set goals and make connections.

#1107

Learn more at vroom.org

Try, Try Again

When your child has a potty accident, let them know it is okay. Mistakes are part of learning. They might make it to the potty half the time, but soon they will make it every time. Try to be cheerful and confident. You can say, “Oh well. We can try again next time. Keep practicing and you'll get it!”

Suggested Age

2 years - 4 years

Brainy Background



We all learn by trying and failing. When you let your child know that mistakes are a normal part of learning, you're doing more than helping them learn to use the toilet. You're teaching them a helpful approach to life.

#1108

Learn more at vroom.org

Shop Talk

Making connections to sounds can help your child get ready to learn to read. When you're shopping, notice something and ask your child to think about the sound it makes. For example, “This apple is red. What sound does R-R-Red start with?” Can we find something else that starts with a “R-R-R” sound?

Suggested Age

3 years - 5 years

Brainy Background



Shopping is a great time to build language skills. This game can help your child hear sounds and make connections. This will help them develop thinking and reading skills in the future.

#1089

Learn more at vroom.org

Messy Matching

Make clean-up time fun with a finding game. You can look for color, size, or type of object. For example, you and your child can put away all the red things. Let them pick the next color. Find all the things with wheels or the things that are soft. Take turns setting goals until everything is cleaned up!

Suggested Age

2 years - 5 years

Brainy Background



Cleaning up helps children learn to be responsible. When your child plays an active role, they see that they can learn to do new things. This game also teaches children to sort and make connections. These skills will help them in reading and math.

#1049

Learn more at vroom.org

Angry Example

Help your child manage anger with your own actions. In small moments when you feel a bit upset, show them ideas of what people can do when they feel angry. Tell your child what you're doing. "I am angry that it's raining today. I am going to take some deep breaths." Or, "I am upset that I stubbed my toe! I am going to yell in this pillow!"

Suggested Age

2 years - 5 years

Brainy Background



Children copy what adults do. When you show your child how you can handle feeling upset, you give them ideas. The next time they feel angry, they will have more choices of how to act. This helps them learn to manage their feelings.

#1071

Learn more at vroom.org

Feelings Chart

You can help your child manage their feelings by making a Feelings Chart together. Use drawings or photos of faces with different expressions. Label each one with a feeling. Ask your child to show you on the chart how they're feeling. Then ask them to name the feeling.

Suggested Age

2 years - 5 years

Brainy Background



Feelings can be hard to manage. A chart can help children understand different feelings. When they choose how they're feeling on the chart and then name it, it can help them manage the feeling, too. Building this skill will help them learn to manage their feelings in the future.

#1072

Learn more at vroom.org

Feelings Talk

Help your child talk about thoughts and feelings by starting with YOURS. You can say, "I feel happy today because it is such a beautiful day." Or, "I feel tired from a long day today." Invite your child to share how they're feeling, too.

Suggested Age

2 years - 5 years

Brainy Background



Both adults and children can manage their feelings by understanding them. You can say what you're feeling and why. This shows your child how to be aware of feelings rather than being controlled by them. When you ask your child how they feel, you help them learn to recognize and express their own feelings.

#1073

Learn more at vroom.org

Feelings Game

To help your child manage anger, try a guessing game. Act out a feeling with your face and body. It can be surprised, happy, or any feeling. You can add words, like "Eek! A snake!" Or "Wow! A butterfly!" Have your child guess how you're feeling. Now switch. Have them act out a feeling, and you guess!

Suggested Age

2 years - 5 years

Brainy Background



We can learn to manage our feelings when we name them. Acting out and guessing feelings can help children learn to recognize feelings. They use our faces and words to understand. They see that other people have their own thoughts and feelings. They can learn to name and manage their own feelings, too.

#1074

Learn more at vroom.org

Code Word

To help manage anger, invite your child to choose a Code Word. They can use this word to let you know when they feel angry. You can use the word to help remind them of strategies they can use, like taking a deep breath to calm down.

Suggested Age

2 years - 5 years

Brainy Background



When children feel angry, it may be hard for them to say how they feel. Sometimes their feelings may feel too big, and they may lose control. Having a Code Word can help your child let you know how they're feeling. It can also help them remember ways they can manage their feelings.

#1075

Learn more at vroom.org

Feelings Picture

Does your child seem to say “No” all the time? Help your child learn to share their feelings in a new way. Invite them to draw how they feel. Even if the picture looks like a scribble, ask them to share how they were feeling while drawing. Write their exact words under or next to the drawing.

Suggested Age

2 years - 5 years

Brainy Background



Children can learn to share how they feel in ways other than saying “No.” When you let your child express feelings through drawings and words, you help them learn to name and manage their feelings. You also help them connect words and ideas. These are communication skills!

#1076

Learn more at vroom.org

Ask About Art

You can help your child get ready to learn to read. When they draw or create, get them talking about what they made and write down their answers. Instead of asking what a picture is, ask them to tell you about it. Maybe ask, “Is there something you want to say about your picture?” Rather than saying their picture is “good,” try to notice things and let them respond to stretch their learning.

Suggested Age

2 years - 5 years

Brainy Background



You can help your child get ready to learn to read. When they draw or create, get them talking about what they made and write down their answers. Instead of asking what a picture is, ask them to tell you about it. Maybe ask, “Is there something you want to say about your picture?” Rather than saying their picture is “good,” try to notice things and let them respond to stretch their learning.

#1093

Learn more at vroom.org

One More Try

If your child gives up easily, show them how to try again. You can say, “I can’t find my hat.” Then add, “One More Try! I found it!” Celebrate and reflect on what happened. “I tried again, and I did it!” The next time they wants to give up, try saying, “One More Try!” in a fun and positive voice.

Suggested Age

2 years - 5 years

Brainy Background



Giving something “One More Try” is easy. It can help your child learn to tackle a job a little bit at a time. Learning not to give up can take time, so try to be patient and make it fun! Sticking with tasks will help your child when they try to learn new skills and reach goals.

#1114

Learn more at vroom.org

Can You Find?

If clean-up is fun, your child will be more likely to help. Try a game of finding and tidying up items in common. "I can find a circle. This car has wheels that are circles. Can you find a circle and put it away?" Or, "I can find something we wear. We wear socks. Can you find something we wear and put it away?"

Suggested Age

2 1/2 years - 5 years

Brainy Background



Clean-up time can be fun. Your child can also learn new things. When you find and name shapes, you help your child learn to look carefully and notice shapes. This will help them when it comes time to learn to read. This game also helps children take turns, listen, and make connections.

#1095

Learn more at vroom.org

Story Starter

When your child says they feel bored, invite them to imagine with you. Start by creating a story-starter like, "Imagine if a spaceship landed right in this room!" and ask them what might happen next. Add to the story together. Have your child think of the next story and then take turns.

Suggested Age

3 years - 5 years

Brainy Background



You can show your child that they can make their own fun when they feel bored. Sometimes they just need you to get them started. Taking turns helps them learn to listen, share, and focus. When they use their imagination, they build creative skills.

#1045

Learn more at vroom.org

Time to Guess

Help your child learn to focus by trying to stick with one task. Help them choose a fun, short activity. Then have them guess how much time it will take. Set a timer to see how close their guess was. Make it a game by using a curious, playful tone. As they get more practice focusing, pick longer activities.

Suggested Age

3 years - 5 years

Brainy Background



Setting a timer can help your child learn to focus on a task and finish what they start. Guessing the time will help them learn how to plan. Instead of just telling them what to do, which often doesn't stick, you can help your child learn new skills for themselves.

#1055

Learn more at vroom.org

I Spy Colors

You can help your child learn to focus by playing games that ask them to look carefully. Start by saying, "I found something blue! Can you guess what it is?" Now let them choose the next color. Take turns being the "finder" and the "guesser."

Suggested Age

3 years - 5 years

Brainy Background



Games can help children learn new skills. When they look, find, follow rules, guess, and remember, they build focus and thinking skills while having fun.

#1056

Learn more at vroom.org

When I Get Mad

Is it hard for your child to control angry feelings? When things are calm, invite your child to act out what they do when they feel angry, like stomping or yelling. Discuss other choices they can make, like taking a deep breath. Do some practicing so they is ready for the real thing!

Suggested Age

3 years - 5 years

Brainy Background



Children learn through play and practice. When you pretend with your child, they can think about how they might act when they feel angry. When your child shares their ideas, they learn that they can manage their feelings, and that they have choices about how to act.

#1058

Learn more at vroom.org

The Angry List

Many children shout when they feel angry. During a calm moment, invite your child to make a list of other things they can do when they feel angry or mad. Write down all their ideas. Talk through the list together, and let them choose their favorites. Post the list on the wall or refrigerator.

Suggested Age

3 years - 5 years

Brainy Background



When your child thinks of what they can do when they feel angry, they see that they have choices. They learn that they can handle their feelings, even scary ones. When you talk through their ideas, you help your child learn to solve problems and plan. You make them feel heard and build their confidence.

#1059

Learn more at vroom.org

Chair Chat

Does your child find it hard to sit still during a meal? Invite them to think of something to talk about while sitting at the table together. Everyone at the table can join in this Chair Chat. It can be a memory, a place, or something to learn about. You can suggest ideas, too!

Suggested Age

3 years - 5 years

Brainy Background



When mealtimes are more fun, children are better able to stay at the table. It is great to let your child come up with their own ideas for what to talk about. It helps them feel known, understood, and included. Taking turns talking helps you all bond and helps your child build language skills.

#1065

Learn more at vroom.org

Kitchen Helper

To help your child sit for meals, make a list together of jobs that need to be done for mealtime. Add pictures, decorate the list, and post it where your child can see it. Each day invite them to pick their job. They can set the table, wash food, fold napkins, or do lots of other jobs to help prepare.

Suggested Age

3 years - 5 years

Brainy Background



When children help plan and prepare the meal, they're more interested in it. Children love to do grown up tasks with adults. Having a job helps them learn to set goals and complete them. They can also build other skills, like math skills from measuring, or reading skills from using the list.

#1066

Learn more at vroom.org

Word of the Day Play

To help keep your child at the table during mealtime, invite them to pick a Word of the Day. You can make up stories or songs together using the word. You can talk about its meaning, or try to find words that rhyme with it.

Suggested Age

3 years - 5 years

Brainy Background



Games like this can help your child be an active part of mealtime chats. When you invite your child to suggest a Word of the Day, you show them that their ideas matter. Talking together helps build language skills and helps them learn to take turns.

#1067

Learn more at vroom.org

Great Plate

Your child will want to stay at the table if mealtime is fun. Try this game. Take turns choosing a word from the meal to rhyme with. Examples could be plate, fork, fish, eat, or yummy. Let your child start. Rhyming words can be real words or silly rhymes just for fun, like plate/flate or yummy/zummy!

Suggested Age

3 years - 5 years

Brainy Background



Word games can help your child stay at the table during mealtime. They also help your child make connections between words and their meanings. Hearing the sounds that words make is important when it comes time to learn to read.

#1068

Learn more at vroom.org

Tongue Tied Tales

Help your child stay at the table with fun games like Tongue Tied Tales. These are groups of words that begin with the same sound and are hard to say. Try these: "Pat the Pretty Puppy" or "Wobbly, Wiggly Worm." Now take turns thinking of new ones with your child!

Suggested Age

3 years - 5 years

Brainy Background



Making mealtime fun can help your child stay at the table. Games like Tongue Tied Tales also teach your child focus and self-control.

#1069

Learn more at vroom.org

Story Share

When your child has trouble sitting for meals, turn mealtime into storytime. You can read books or make up your own tales together. Start a story and let your child say what happens next. Begin with, "Once there was a child who was very brave." Now take turns adding to the story!

Suggested Age

3 years - 5 years

Brainy Background



When your child helps make up stories with you, they can stay at the table and learn skills at the same time. You're helping your child learn communication skills. They can discover that stories have beginnings, middles, and ends. Soon, they'll see that each idea in the story connects to the idea that came before.

#1070

Learn more at vroom.org

No-Tech Time

Does your family need some No-Tech Time? Make a plan with your child for when the whole family will set aside No-Tech Time. Make a list of things you can do together. Invite your child to make a list of things they can do alone, too. Decide where devices will be kept during this time - for kids and adults!

Suggested Age

3 years - 5 years

Brainy Background



When you create family No-Tech Time, your child will learn from your example. You can make a plan for what to do when devices are turned off. Having a plan helps your child learn to face challenges. And you will probably have a lot of fun as a family, too!

#1082

Learn more at vroom.org

Who am I?

Acting out in public can be tough for everyone. Help your child be more aware of their behavior by playing pretend. When children pretend, they have to think on their feet and not go on autopilot. Can they imagine they're someone different? Maybe someone old or in a wheelchair? Ask your child questions about this person. What would they do, think or feel?

Suggested Age

3 years - 5 years

Brainy Background



Pretending can help your child see that the way they act impacts other people. This can help them control themselves. It also helps them to listen and understand others. When they try to see the world from someone else's point of view, they develop empathy. This can also help them learn respect.

#1083

Learn more at vroom.org

Character Clues

Does your child seem unaware when they make someone feel upset or hurt? When you're reading or watching TV, pause and ask how they think a character might be feeling. Stretch their thinking by asking WHY they think that. Are there clues in the words or pictures about how the character feels?

Suggested Age

3 years - 5 years

Brainy Background



Asking questions helps your child learn to think about how other people feel. Books or shows are a great way practice this skill. Understanding other people builds respect and helps your child learn social skills. This will help them not act out or say things that might embarrass or insult someone else.

#1084

Learn more at vroom.org

Your Feelings

Does your child shout or have outbursts in public? In a calm moment, ask them what they do when they feel happy, angry, sad, or another emotion. Ask, "How do you like to be treated when you feel this way?" Take turns talking about your feelings together. You might say, "When you yell at me instead of talking, it's hard for me to understand what you need."

Suggested Age

3 years - 5 years

Brainy Background



This kind of chat can help your child learn to be self-aware. It is important to talk about feelings and how we like to be treated. When children think about their emotions, it helps them become more aware of how others might feel. This can help them learn to treat others with respect.

#1085

Learn more at vroom.org

Sounds & Words

You can help prepare your child to learn to read by playing Sounds & Words. Start by finding something with a short and simple word name. If you see a cat, point to it and ask your child questions about the way the word sounds. You might ask: "What else sounds like the word 'cat'? Does 'rat' sound like 'cat'? Yes! Does 'bird' sound like 'cat'? No!" Take turns finding words and play with their sounds together!

Suggested Age

3 years - 5 years

Brainy Background



When you point out word sounds and have fun with them, you help your child connect sounds, words, and meanings. Listening carefully to word sounds, will help your child learn to read later.

#1086

Learn more at vroom.org

Sound Stories

Invite your child to try this memory game using word sounds to help them get ready for reading. Start a story with your child's name. Take turns adding something to the story with the same word sound. You might start, "This is a story about Max." Your child might say, "Max came from Mexico." You could add, "Max from Mexico has a Muffin."

Suggested Age

3 years - 5 years

Brainy Background



Children love to hear stories about themselves! When your child listens to the sounds that words make, they make connections between words and sounds. This will help them when it comes time to learn to read. This game also builds memory and attention skills, which are important reading skills too!

#1087

Learn more at vroom.org

What's Next?

Want to help your child get ready for reading? Read a book or tell a story to your child. Then, invite them to guess what happens next. It can be a real story, like "I saw a puddle of water on the ground. What do you think I did then?" Or it can be a story you make up, like "The girl saw a mountain made of chocolate. What do you think she did?"

Suggested Age

3 years - 5 years

Brainy Background



Your child can learn skills now that will help them learn to read. When you ask questions, you help your child learn to communicate. When your child tries to predict what will happen in a story, they learn to make sense of the story and see connections.

#1088

Learn more at vroom.org

Letter List

To help your child get ready for reading, try this shopping list game. Say the first letter of the next item you're looking for. "Our next item starts with M! What could it be?" Have them guess as you go to find it. When you reach the item, ask them to find the matching first letter on the package or sign.

Suggested Age

3 years - 5 years

Brainy Background



Thinking of an item that begins with a letter helps your child connect sounds and words. When they see the letter on a sign or item, they're learning what the letter looks like. These skills will help them learn to read later.

#1090

Learn more at vroom.org

Getting the Point

You can help get your child ready for reading by showing them how you do it. When you read with your child, use your finger to point to the words you're reading, going from left to right. Hold the book upright and turning the pages from left to right too. See if they begin to remember some simple words, like "no."

Suggested Age

3 years - 5 years

Brainy Background



It is important to make reading fun and not pressure your child into reading back to you. When you do this, you can create a love of learning. Children can recognize letters and then words. This will help them learn to read and also help them learn to think and make connections.

#1091

Learn more at vroom.org

Clean & Count

Turn clean-up time into a math game. Put away the first item and call out, "One!" Then invite your child to put something away and call out, "Two!" Take turns calling out the next number and putting items away until the job is done. How high did you count together?

Suggested Age

3 years - 5 years

Brainy Background



When you make clean-up time fun, your child will be more helpful. By working together, you can help your child learn to listen, count, and take turns.

#1094

Learn more at vroom.org

Music Meets Messy

Help your child look forward to clean-up time up by singing or putting on music each time you clean up. You can even introduce new music from around the world. Invite them to dance and move to the music while they tidy up. Ask how the music makes them feel.

Suggested Age

3 years - 5 years

Brainy Background



When you use music to make clean-up time fun, your child learns to be helpful and tidy up. You teach them how to find strategies for finishing a job. Exploring music is a great way for your child to learn about what they like. They can learn how music makes them feel and express those feelings.

#1098

Learn more at vroom.org

Our Chore Chart

You can make it easy for your child to help around the house. Work with them to make a Chore Chart for the week. Let them know you're a team, and invite them to choose which chore they will do each day. Post the chart and let them check off each day they complete their chore.

Suggested Age

3 years - 5 years

Brainy Background



Doing jobs at home makes your child feel important, like they're doing "grown-up" things. Choosing their jobs will help them feel like they're in charge. When they complete a task, they will feel proud and part of the team. A Chore Chart can help build important skills, like responsibility.

#1100

Learn more at vroom.org

Happy Shopper

When you're shopping together, does your child ask you to "Look at this!" throughout the store? We often think children are asking to buy something when they may just want to share their excitement. When your child shows you an item, share their joy in how cool it is. They will often be happy with this and not ask to buy. Really!

Suggested Age

3 years - 5 years

Brainy Background



When your child seems to ask for everything in the store, they may just want to share their feelings. When you join in your child's feelings, you make them feel heard. They learn that what they feel is important and that you can see things from their point of view.

#1101

Learn more at vroom.org

List Helper

Working together can help you and your child avoid impulse shopping or the "gimmies." Before you go to the store, make a list with your child of what you plan to buy. Ask them to help think of what you need. They can even draw pictures of the items next to the words you write. When you're at the store, they can hold the list for you. They can also help you find the items you're looking for.

Suggested Age

3 years - 5 years

Brainy Background



Your child may not ask for everything if they help plan the trip to the store. When they help you make a shopping list, they build skills. They learn to plan, think ahead, and see how words look when they're written down. Your child will also feel like an important part of the team!

#1102

Learn more at vroom.org

Wants and Needs

Does your child want everything at the store? At home, try playing Wants and Needs. Explain the difference. Point to an item and ask them if it's a "want" or a "need?" Take turns. Next time they want something, cheerfully ask them if they think it is a "want" or a "need." Talk about their answer together.

Suggested Age

3 years - 5 years

Brainy Background



Your child may not always know the difference between wants and needs yet, and that's ok. It is important to keep it fun and playful. Children learn best through play. Thinking about it and problem-solving with you will help them learn to manage their own feelings too. This also helps them feel heard even if they can't take something home.

#1103

Learn more at vroom.org

Looking for Fun

Sometimes when you shop, your child seems to want everything in the store. They love to look around to find things they like. Give them other things to look for. You can say, "I see something orange and pointy. What is it? Yes! It's a carrot!" Now let your child describe an item for you to find.

Suggested Age

3 years - 5 years

Brainy Background



Playing games at the store is great. It helps your child focus on something other than asking for things. Shopping will be more fun for both of you, and you can teach your child self-control.

#1104

Learn more at vroom.org

Shop and Talk Math

Shopping is a great time to build on your child's sense of numbers. Look for chances to use and talk about numbers around the store. You can count the apples in your cart, think about bigger and smaller, and point out numbers you see. Ask questions to help your child use "Math Talk" when you shop.

Suggested Age

3 years - 5 years

Brainy Background



When you talk about numbers, you build on your child's early math sense. Ideas like size and shape will help them learn math, and will also help them make connections. "Math Talk" can also help your child stay busy at the store and help you manage the "gimmies."

#1105

Learn more at vroom.org

What If ...

If your child seems to give up easily, you can help them learn to be curious. When they notice something, ask questions. "Why" questions help them learn to wonder. "What if" questions build thinking skills. They can also give you fun science ideas to test together.

Suggested Age

3 years - 5 years

Brainy Background



Your child can learn to be curious and ask questions. Wondering how things work helps your child become a learner for life. When you challenge your child, you help them learn how to learn.

#1109

Learn more at vroom.org

Science All Around

You can help your child learn not to give up. When they ask a question or notice something, give them clues to figure things out. For example, if they see butter melt on toast, you can ask if that is always true. Invite them to test their answer. Let them see if the butter melts when the toast is cold.

Suggested Age

3 years - 5 years

Brainy Background



Figuring things out can help your child learn to stick with tasks. When children notice things, you can ask them questions. This helps them learn to be curious. By letting them test their ideas, you're helping your child think like a scientist and become a lifelong learner.

#1110

Learn more at vroom.org

Wait for It

Your child can learn not to give up. When they ask a question, try not to answer right away. Give them a chance to think about what their own answer might be. You can ask "What do you think?" Or, "What ideas do you have so far?" Ask follow-up questions to stretch the moment, and their thinking!

Suggested Age

3 years - 5 years

Brainy Background



When you invite your child to share what they think before you tell them the answer you help them practice being curious. Giving them a chance to stretch their minds and think helps build confidence. This helps your child learn to think on their own. It also helps them learn to stick with things and keep trying.

#1111

Learn more at vroom.org

Here's a Clue

When your child feels like giving up, you can try this approach. Help your child with the problem on their own by asking questions and giving clues. "This part of the puzzle is blue. Do you see another piece that is blue?" Or, "you're looking for your shoes. Where do we keep our shoes?"

Suggested Age

3 years - 5 years

Brainy Background



When you ask questions and offer clues, you help your child learn to stick with challenges. Instead of just telling them, you can let your child find the answer on their own. This can help them become curious and learn to solve problems.

#1112

Learn more at vroom.org

One Thing at a Time

Does your child seem to give up easily? Break down what they're doing into small tasks. Clean up time? Let's put away three toys. Getting ready for bed? Let's take off our shoes. As your child gets better at sticking with tasks, you can help them take on more and bigger tasks.

Suggested Age

3 years - 5 years

Brainy Background



Big tasks can feel overwhelming to children. It can be helpful to break big tasks into smaller ones. You can give your child a feeling of success when they complete a small task. You can also help them learn self-control.

#1113

Learn more at vroom.org

Planning to Play

Does your child seem to lose focus? Invite them to choose an activity they want to do. Ask them to tell you out loud how they plan to do it. While they're playing, check in to see how the plans are going along the way. What is working? What is fun? What needs changing?

Suggested Age

3 years - 5 years

Brainy Background



Planning can help your child focus. When you help your child make a clear plan and follow through on it, they learn to set goals. By discussing what is working and what is not, you help your child improve their plan. People who plan, follow through, and review are more likely to thrive.

#1054

Learn more at vroom.org

What Now?

To prevent boredom, invite your child to make a list with you of "Things to Do." Let them think of the first idea, then you suggest something they like to do, and so on. Post the list on the wall and use it when they're bored. Keep adding good ideas. Your child can add pictures, too!

Suggested Age

4 years - 5 years

Brainy Background



Children can learn to plan by thinking about what they can do when they feel bored. This will help them begin to learn to solve their own problems. By respecting their interests, you can also help them build confidence.

#1044

Learn more at vroom.org

Mood Memory

Is your child feeling bored? Change the mood by inviting your child to share a memory. It can be funny, happy, sad, or scary. Ask them to tell you about the memory or draw it. Thank your child for sharing, and feel free to share your own memory, too!

Suggested Age

4 years - 5 years

Brainy Background



When you ask your child to lead the way out of feeling bored, they learn to do it on their own next time. Sharing a memory helps them learn to name their feelings. When you share your own memory, they learn that other people have feelings, too.

#1046

Learn more at vroom.org

By the Rules

To help your child play by the rules, ask questions to help them make connections between playing fair and feeling good. First, share the rules to make sure your child knows them and has the skill to play. While playing, you can say, "I want to go again. But we are playing by the rules, so it is your turn!" Ask your child how it feels to play fair.

Suggested Age

4 years - 5 years

Brainy Background



Sharing and talking together about feelings helps your child understand how you think and feel. This way, they see that their actions affect others and why rules matter. When you work together on a plan, set goals, and practice, you're teaching your child how to problem solve and do something hard.

#1047

Learn more at vroom.org

Easy Rules, Hard Rules

When you play a game, does your child find it hard to play fair? Talk with them about the rules. Ask which rule they think is the easiest to follow and which one is the hardest. Invite them to think about why each rule matters. Take turns talking about what you both can do to follow the rules.

Suggested Age

4 years - 5 years

Brainy Background



Learning to play fair takes time. By discussing the rules, your child can understand why we have rules. They can learn that rules matter, even ones that are hard to follow. Your child can apply this lesson to their own behavior. They can learn self-control and how to work well with others.

#1048

Learn more at vroom.org

Game Changer

Staying focused takes practice. Changing the rules to a game can teach your child focus and self-control. Try a game where you do the opposite of what is said. When you say, "Stand up," you both sit down. When you say, "Sit down," you both stand up. Now let your child lead the game!

Suggested Age

4 years - 5 years

Brainy Background



When we switch the rules, we help children learn new skills and think in new ways. This game builds memory and focus. Asking your child to resist doing what they would normally do helps them learn self-control.

#1057

Learn more at vroom.org

Game Plan

Does it ever feel like your child only wants to be on a screen? Ask your child to make a Game Plan for the day or week. The plan should include what they want to play, when, and for how long. Discuss the plan. Ask questions, listen, and solve problems together. Agree on a final plan that works for both of you.

Suggested Age

4 years - 5 years

Brainy Background



When your child makes a Game Plan to show you, they learn to think and solve problems. Talking about the plan helps them learn important skills. They learn to communicate. They learn to see an issue from someone else's point of view. And they learn to solve a problem together with another person.

#1080

Learn more at vroom.org

Our Game Checklist

Do you and your child disagree on video games? Make a checklist of what you both look for in a game. You might look for chances for learning and values like kindness. They might want music or characters they like. Show your child a game that might work, and use the list to see whether it works for both of you.

Suggested Age

4 years - 5 years

Brainy Background



When you and your child create a checklist, you help them learn to reflect. Thinking about their experience and what they like helps them learn to think in new ways. The checklist will help them see your point of view and will give you both a clear way to choose a game next time.

#1081

Learn more at vroom.org

Name Art

Your child can start to learn to read by playing with letters and words. Most children find their names very interesting. Write your child's name on a piece of paper and invite them to use the paper to draw on. You can write your name on a piece of paper and draw a picture, too.

Suggested Age

4 years - 5 years

Brainy Background



Giving your child a page with their name on it can build reading and writing skills. Drawing on and around a familiar word lets your child explore its shapes. In this way, you're helping your child start to learn letters and words.

#1092

Learn more at vroom.org

Tiny Tunes

Choose a favorite, fun dance song to clean up to. Turn the volume up a bit and have fun dancing and singing along as you clean. You can even just sing if you don't have music handy. See how much clean-up you can get done by the time the song is over!

Suggested Age

4 years - 5 years

Brainy Background



When you make tidying up fun, you make it easy for your child to join in. Cleaning up helps teach children to be responsible. Sorting and putting things away can help them learn to be organized.

#1096

Learn more at vroom.org

Clean Up Clues

Make it easy for your child to help clean up by thinking ahead. Use colored dots, tape, or other clues to help them see where their things go. You can also label drawers or shelves with pictures to help them see where to put clothes or toys away.

Suggested Age

4 years - 5 years

Brainy Background



When you think ahead, you can make systems for cleaning up. When your child uses clues to figure out where things go, they learn focus and self-control. Learning to be helpful and clean up after themselves is a great habit for your child. And it's great for you, too!

#1099

Learn more at vroom.org