

Vroom Tips™



This set of Vroom Brain Building Tips™ can help you support your child as they get to know themselves and others. We call it our Vroom Identity Tips set. Identity is a mix of how we see ourselves, our dreams for the future, and the groups we belong to. Brain Building Moments™ like these are all around you!

At 3 months old, children begin to notice physical traits like skin color.

By 9 months old, children start to show preference for faces that resemble their caregivers.

By age 2 children are beginning to practice categorization. For example, they might start sorting people by the color of their skin or gender.

By ages 3 and older children are becoming more aware of subtle social cues. They are also discovering the pros and cons of belonging to one group or another.

Brain Building Basics™

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!

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.

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!

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.

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!

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Picture This

Do you have some books or magazines around? Show your child the pictures. They will like clear simple pictures, especially of faces. Choose a variety of faces and skin tones. Talk with your child about what you see. How do they respond? Now talk about their response!

Suggested Age

0 - 12 months

Brainy Background



One of the best ways for your child to learn about language is by looking at things with you and hearing you talk about them. Including diverse people in your life helps your child build skills for making friends and working with others.

#83

Learn more at vroom.org

Color Love Song

Make up a color love song with your child. Start with something easy, like their eyes. "Hey little baby with the big brown eyes." Ask them what they want to sing about next, like their hair or skin. Takes turns singing about these things in positive ways.

Suggested Age

0 - 3 years

Brainy Background



When you sing this Color Love Song together, you show it's OK to love who you are. This helps your child build a positive sense of identity. Singing also helps your child grow their language skills.

#1128

Learn more at vroom.org

Memory Bank

As you are doing something with your child, share a related memory. For example when cooking, "Remember when we cooked collard greens with Grandma last Christmas?" Or when tidying, "I remember having a doll just like this when I was a girl."

Suggested Age

0 - 5 years

Brainy Background



Your child loves hearing your stories. Telling stories is a great way to create a shared sense of identity. Making connections through stories also helps your child build social and communication skills.

#1125

Learn more at vroom.org

Who We See

Notice how your child looks at different people. Do they react differently with men or women? People who are tall or short? Different skin tones? Do they respond to people differently when they look like you?

Suggested Age

6 months - 18 months

Brainy Background



By 9 months old, children begin to follow faces that look like their primary caregiver. They are also learning from you and how you respond to others. When you include different people in your life, you build your child's brain for inclusion.

#1129

Learn more at vroom.org

Picture Parts

Draw your child's attention to pictures of people in books, magazines, or even the signs around you. Look for diverse races and ethnicities. Point to different parts of a person's body or face and name them. Then point to and name the same parts on your child's body and on yours. As they get older, take turns pointing to and naming each part.

Suggested Age

6 months - 2 years

Brainy Background



You're helping your child learn to focus when you point to things and talk about them. When you use words to label parts of the body on their body, your own, and in pictures, you help them make connections between words and what they mean. Showing similarities among races can help create empathy.

#169

Learn more at vroom.org

I Notice You Notice

Is your child interested in someone else's hair or skin? Children notice race and are curious. You might calmly say, "You're noticing that your friend has beautiful curly hair. That's her hair. Where is your hair?"

Suggested Age

6 months - 3 years

Brainy Background



Bringing up skin color or hair texture like you would any other part of the body shows your child that it is normal. They're also practicing how to see things from someone else's point of view. These skills are helpful in having good relationships now and in the future.

#1124

Learn more at vroom.org

Our People

Talk to your child about the people they know. This could be their friends, teachers, or neighbors. How do they look the same or different from each other? It's OK to notice skin color.

Suggested Age

9 months - 5 years

Brainy Background



Children notice race. By 9 months old, children begin to follow faces that look like their caregivers. When we talk about race and the people we know, we can highlight the diversity around us in positive ways.

#1127

Learn more at vroom.org

Comparing Faces

While you wait, look for a picture of a child in a magazine, book, or signs around you. Look for diverse races and ethnicities. Point out the picture and talk about what is the same and what is different between them and the child in the picture. "She has two eyes and so do you!" "Her eyes are blue and yours are brown." Take turns!

Suggested Age

12 months - 3 years

Brainy Background



As you talk about the details in what you notice together, you're promoting the life skill of focus. You're also helping your child see similarities and differences between them and others, an important part of being able to understand another person's point of view.

#243

Learn more at vroom.org

Look Like Me

Does your child like looking at family photos with you? Take turns talking together about what people look like. Does their hair or skin look like your child's? Ask your child to point out the similarities that they notice.

Suggested Age

12 months - 5 years

Brainy Background



Children learn best through loving relationships. Feeling good about yourself starts from a feeling of belonging. Moments like these also help your child practice focusing.

#1120

Learn more at vroom.org

We Got the Beat

Music is a universal language. Play some music from another culture and dance around with your child. Does the music make you want to move your body in new ways? Ask your child how the music makes them feel.

Suggested Age

12 months - 5 years

Brainy Background



Music from other cultures is a fun way to add a little diversity to your home. Plus, paying attention to the music is an early step in listening for sounds. This is an important skill for communication.

#1123

Learn more at vroom.org

Food Favorites

As you go shopping, point out foods that are a favorite in your family. Attach it to a memory you share: "Do you remember when we used tortillas to make tacos?" Then invite them to find another food your family loves. Play back and forth as you move down the aisles.

Suggested Age

2 years - 3 years

Brainy Background



"Food Favorites" builds your child's sense of trust and belonging! Thinking about how someone else feels helps your child learn from others and form better relationships.

#270

Learn more at vroom.org

Little Chef

Keep your child engaged in dinner prep. Take turns measuring, pouring, and mixing. If they might spill, put the bowl in the sink so spilling is OK. Talk to them about what you're doing and the ingredients you're using. Encourage them to smell, touch (and taste!) as you go. Ask them what they notice.

Suggested Age

2 years - 4 years

Brainy Background



This activity gives your child the opportunity to hear new words, which builds their vocabulary. Measuring involves counting, which will help them with math in the future. Children of all backgrounds can build strong math skills from a young age.

#584

Learn more at vroom.org

Role Play

Ask your child who they would like to pretend to be. This can be someone they know or even a character from a book or show. Ask them how this person is the same or different from them. Stretch their thinking with questions, “Do you both like to laugh?” or “Do you both like to run?”

Suggested Age

2 years - 4 years

Brainy Background



When your child pretends to be someone else, they're learning how others may think or feel. Finding similarities with others helps your child develop a sense of self. Pretend play builds important skills like creativity, focus, and working memory.

#960

Learn more at vroom.org

Matching Faces

Invite your child to find examples of people that look like them in books and magazines while you are waiting. What about people that look different? Ask them about what people look like in the books you have at home.

Suggested Age

2 years - 5 years

Brainy Background



Your child is practicing thinking about how people are the same or different. Racial diversity in media can also shape how your child sees people of color. Chatting openly about race can help build their brain.

#1121

Learn more at vroom.org

Favorite Moments

When you get your child ready for bed, talk with them about your favorite moment of the day. If you tell it like a story they might be extra interested! Tell them why it was your favorite moment. Then, invite them to share their favorite moment of the day. Ask them about yours versus theirs. What's the same? What's different?

Suggested Age

2 1/2 years - 5 years

Brainy Background



By sharing your experiences with your child, you're helping them learn about your thoughts and feelings. Telling stories is a great way to create a shared sense of identity. Thinking about “what's the same” helps them learn to form categories in their thinking.

#321

Learn more at vroom.org

His Hair, Her Hair

When you're brushing your child's hair, talk to them about how their hair compares to others'. "Who has hair that's curly like yours? Who has hair that is the same color as yours? Who has hair that is the same color as mine?"

Suggested Age

2 1/2 years - 5 years

Brainy Background



Back and forth conversations about how your child's hair compares to others' help them learn to pay attention to what they see, to use their memory, and to group things into categories—all important in the development of vocabulary and math skills. Including a variety of hair types and colors shows that differences are normal and OK.

#457

Learn more at vroom.org

Kitchen Aid

Can your child help in the kitchen? Maybe they could stir the eggs with a fork before you scramble them. Or could they find the right lid for a pot you're using? As they get more experience in cooking, encourage them to guess what will happen next. What will happen when two things are mixed, or when something liquid is heated?

Suggested Age

2 1/2 years - 5 years

Brainy Background



Children of all backgrounds love to learn like scientists! They experiment and guess what will happen next. They love to see the results of these experiments. Thinking like a scientist in the kitchen helps your child pay attention and focus on what causes what to happen. Talking together helps them remember past experiments and their results.

#580

Learn more at vroom.org

Guess Who?

Ask your child to think of a family member or friend without telling you who. Have them give you hints until you guess who the mystery person is. Then it's your turn to pick a person and their turn to guess. It's OK to include skin color and hair texture in your description.

Suggested Age

3 years - 5 years

Brainy Background



This guessing game helps your child with critical thinking skills. They use these while figuring out the important things about a person to use as clues. And children notice race. Bringing up skin color shows that it's OK to talk about race.

#9

Learn more at vroom.org

Who's Bigger?

Next time you're getting ready for bed, ask your child to compare themselves to you. It's a fun way for them to discover all the ways you're different and alike! Who's taller? Shorter? Bigger? Smaller? Is your skin the same color, or different? Who has blue eyes? Who has brown eyes?

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 and making guesses about how things compare or fit together. Repeat the game a few times comparing different people. Repetition is how they learn!

#304

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My Story

Use your child as a hero in bedtime stories. Don't use their name but what they look like, such as: "A 3-year-old girl with dark curly hair was pulling a wagon when..." Include familiar sites and things they will recognize, like family details or shared memories. They will soon realize you're talking about them!

Suggested Age

3 years - 5 years

Brainy Background



Bedtime stories help your child wind down from the busyness of the day so that they can sleep. What better way than with a special story about them, one that calls on them to reflect about the details of their life. Family stories help your child understand who they are and build a sense of belonging.

#326

Learn more at vroom.org

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, no matter their race or gender!

#527

Learn more at vroom.org

Same and Different

On the go? Chat with your child's about the people you see. How are they the same or different? Do they have short or long hair? Are they walking or riding? What color is their skin? Share what you see, back and forth.

Suggested Age

3 years - 5 years

Brainy Background



People watching is a great time to focus on details. Children notice race, and that's OK. Noticing differences, including race, is natural. These skills will help your child better understand the world.

#634

Learn more at vroom.org

My Face, Your Face

Look in the mirror and compare your child's facial features to your own. Chat about how your features are different. For example, "I notice my nose is wider than yours. What do you notice?" Take turns sharing what you see.

Suggested Age

3 years - 5 years

Brainy Background



Differences are normal and make us who we are! Games like these also help your child to think like a scientist because they're observing the world around them and making guesses about how things compare or fit together.

#1126

Learn more at vroom.org

Shades of Faces

Help your child to find some photos or pictures of people. They can be in billboards, magazine covers, or anything with people's faces. Notice how each person's skin color is a different shade. This includes people who share the same race. Go back and forth sharing names for each skin color.

Suggested Age

4 years - 5 years

Brainy Background



As you talk about the details you notice, you're helping your child practice focusing. Our differences are natural, beautiful, and helpful. Children learn that it's OK to talk about race with open and fun chats like this.

#1122

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