



Brain Building Basics

Science made simple!
Remember these 5 steps to
help build your child's brain.

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vroom.org



1. Look



Even before babies can talk, they're showing you what they're interested in. Look into their eyes, or at what catches their eye, and begin brain building!

2. Follow



Powerful brain building moments are created when you let children lead the way, and you follow by responding to their words, sounds, actions, and ideas.

3. Chat



It may not seem like it, but the sounds and gestures young children make are their way of communicating with you! So talk out loud together and keep chatting as your children grow to engage them in learning about the world around them.

4. Take Turns



Back and forth interactions between you and your children are one of the most important ways to help their brains develop. So be sure to take turns while you're talking, playing, or exploring with your children.

5. Stretch



Make the moment last longer by building on what your child says, or asking follow-up questions that expand your child's thinking and learning. When you stretch the conversation with questions like, "What do you think about that?" or "How does that make you feel?" you're stretching the brain building moment too!

Here are just a few examples of Brain Building Basics from Vroom. Find out more at vroom.org.



Baby Sit-Ups

Place your child on their back on a blanket. Holding either side of the blanket above their head, gently lift the sides and move them up almost into a sitting position. Look into their eyes, smile, and speak to them then gently lower them back down. If they enjoyed it, do it again!

Ages 0-1



Brainy Background

powered by Mind in the Making

One of your child's earliest skills is their ability to pay attention to something interesting—in this case, you! They especially like to look at you. By smiling at and talking to them, you help increase their attention span as well as strengthen the bond between you.

For more activities like these, check out the free Vroom app! #1012



Park Pointers

While you're at the park with your child, point to things you see and say what they are. "There's a black bird and he's flying!" or "The little girl is jumping." Watch where they're looking and say what it is.

Ages 1-2



Brainy Background

powered by Mind in the Making

When you describe what you see or what your child sees, they're making connections between words and what they mean. Children who know words and what the words mean have a head start on learning.

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FOLLOW:



Here We Go!

With your child on your lap, pretend you're riding together on different things. First say, "We're on a horse. Neigh!" while bouncing up and down. Then say, "Now we're in a race car!" and move quickly from side to side. Watch their reaction to the motions and repeat the ones that they like.

Ages 1-2

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Brainy Background

powered by Mind in the Making

Switching between different ways of moving gives your child practice with responding flexibly to a changing situation. You're helping them learn to focus on what's happening, a skill that is essential for learning and life.

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

#773



Clothing Choices

Does your child want to choose their clothes? Help them by giving them two choices: "Do you want to wear your blue pants or your green pants?" When they choose, congratulate them by saying, "Great choice, I like those too."

Ages 2-3

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Brainy Background

powered by Mind in the Making

Limiting choices in the early years sets your child up for success as a decision-maker, a skill they'll use their whole life. You're giving them the control they want and need yet protecting them from being overwhelmed. This lets them focus on thinking.

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

#466

CHAT:



Stair Count

When your child is learning to walk up and down stairs, hold their hand, and count each step you take. This will help them become familiar with their numbers and think it's a fun game at the same time!

Ages 1-2



Brainy Background

powered by Mind in the Making

Making connections between numbers and what they stand for (such as the steps your child climbs or the fingers on their hands), helps them see that numbers aren't just words they memorize, but they actually stand for quantities of things. It's the beginning of learning math.

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

#51



Listening Game

When you're out with your child, talk about sounds that are all around you. When you hear a sound, tell them what you hear and describe where you think it is. "I hear a bird and I think it is in that tree." Ask what they hear and where they think the sound is coming from. Take turns being the leader.

Ages 3-4



Brainy Background

powered by Mind in the Making

When your child listens and identifies what they're hearing, they're paying attention and learning to connect words with sounds, which promotes language skills. By going back and forth together, you're reinforcing their learning.

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

#657

TAKE TURNS:



Little Parrot

Play a pattern with your hands and let your child do their best to copy. Try different patterns of sounds and lengths, like clapping or opening and closing your fist. Then you can take a turn to copy what they do. See how long you can go back and forth.

Ages 1-2

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Brainy Background

powered by Mind in the Making

As your child watches you and copies your movements, they use their memory and focus. These skills will help them learn to take in new information and use it as they get older. Children learn best when there is a back and forth interaction, like when you watch them and respond to what they're doing.

For more activities like these, check out the free Vroom app! #863



Balancing Feat

Take turns with your child standing on one foot and then the other, trying to balance. You can say, "Your turn," and "My turn." See if you can do it with your eyes closed. What else can you do?

Ages 3-4

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Brainy Background

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You and your child are having a conversation with actions as you take turns standing on one foot, then the other. When they practice doing this, they're learning about balance—what it takes to stay steady and not fall down.

For more activities like these, check out the free Vroom app! #869

STRETCH:



Sound Conversations

If your child says "Ba," repeat the sound back to them. Then add on to it, "Ba, ba, ba." Do they try to copy your sounds? Add a new sound next, "Ba, ba, MA." Do they notice the change? Do they try to repeat it? Go back and forth repeating each other's sounds and building on them.

Ages 0-1

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Brainy Background

powered by Mind in the Making

Having Sound Conversations with your child encourages communication, using sounds and actions to "talk" to you. Changing the sounds helps them pay careful attention to the differences between sounds—an important step in learning to talk.

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

#157



Snacktime Challenge

Drop a small piece of bread or other small snack inside an empty clear plastic bottle. Encourage your child to get the piece out of the bottle. Do they shake the bottle or put their fingers inside? Encourage them to try different ways. If they're struggling ask, "What would happen if you turned it upside down?"

Ages 1-2

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Brainy Background

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You're helping to build your child's critical thinking and problem-solving skills when you encourage them to test out ideas and come up with answers on their own. By talking with them about what they're doing, you help them to understand the world.

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

#1034