

Activities To Do With Your Child

These activities will spark a brain building interaction between you and your child that is joyful, engaging, and full of learning! Each activity is paired with an explanation that highlights the science behind the interaction to help you understand why the exchange matters.

Activities will help you to engage in interactions that are the Brain Building Basics:

1. Look

Make eye contact so you and your child are looking at each other, or share a focus of attention.

2. Follow

Take your child's lead by responding to their sounds and actions, even before they are old enough to talk. When they do start talking, ask follow up questions like "What do you think?" or "Why did you like that?"

3. Chat

Talk about the things you see, hear, and do together, explaining what's happening around you.

4. Stretch

Make each brain building moment longer by building upon what your child does and says.

5. Take Turns

With sounds, words, faces, and actions, go back and forth to create a conversation or a game.

Ideas for Mums and Dads

Do as I Say, Not as I Do

Ask your child to listen to your words and do what you say, instead of following what you do. Say, "Stomp your feet" while you clap your hands. They should stomp their feet and try not to focus on the clapping. Try new words and new actions when they learn to do this. Take turns!

Your child has to focus carefully on what you say and use self-control to not be distracted by what you do. It's hard, but playing this game helps children develop life skills that they'll use now and in the future.

Bathtime Weather

Use your child's time in the tub to talk about the weather. Sprinkle water on their arms and talk about rain. Let them take a turn sprinkling rain on your arms. When you're draining the tub, show them how the water looks like a tornado. Take turns opening and closing the drain to let the water swirl around.

Having conversations helps to build children's brains—they are learning new words, and learning about cause and effect when they see the water go down the drain.

Pocket Cleaners

Let your child help you empty your pockets at night. Take out the items that are safe to share with them one at a time. As you do, tell them about your day and where the item came from. For example, "This card is how I get on the bus to go to work."

Children love to hear about adults' days—especially the good things that happen. By sharing stories, you're helping them learn about your world and building their vocabulary too!

Laundry Sense

Give your child a chance to explore textures when you're putting away laundry. Before you fold, pass pieces to them first and ask how each feels. Is it soft, rough, thin, heavy? What else feels that way?

This game helps your child "think like a detective" because they're using their senses, including touch, to understand the world around them.

Glass Half Full

When your child drinks out of a glass, have a back and forth conversation about how full the glass is. Is it a little full? Half full?

When you have a back and forth conversation about how full the glass is, you're helping your child gain basic ideas about math. It can also help them learn new words!

Cooking Lessons

No matter what you're cooking, your child can be a helper. Give them a play-by-play of the ingredients you're using and if it's safe, let them touch, smell, or taste them. Have a conversation about what you're making: "Red pepper makes the beans spicy."

Talking about everyday activities as you do them helps build children's communication skills—and their brains! Be sure to point to objects as you say their name to help them learn new words.

Cup Tower

You don't need much to build fun things around the house. Grab a few plastic cups and stack them into a tower and then show your child how fun it is to knock them all down. Hand the cups over and let them have a go. Take turns building all kinds of new towers!

Supporting children as they explore and discover will help them become learners for life. This game also helps them discover how the physical world around them works. Have a back and forth conversation about their discoveries!

Tune Time

Turn playtime into music time. What is one of your child's favorite songs? Sing a line for them and then pause. Can they sing the next few words? Take turns back and forth, and clap to the beat. You're making beautiful music together!

Music time becomes learning time. By helping your child pay attention to the words of songs and the beat, you're helping them learn to listen carefully. Remembering the words and tunes of songs also strengthens their memory.

Our Weather Wrap Up

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

Talking with your child about their experience 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, like it did you."

Thankful Tidbits

At bedtime, take turns with your child listing things you're thankful for. Here's an easy one to start with, "I'm thankful for you!" Then, help them think of something they're thankful to have in their life. See how many times you can go back and forth.

Every back and forth conversation builds your child's brain. After they say something, repeat it back in complete sentences. And did you know that paying attention to what's positive in your life has been shown to lead to more happiness and satisfaction? For both of you!