








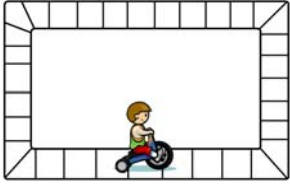
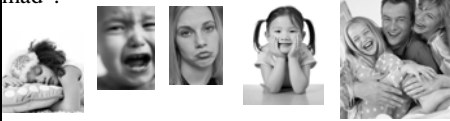

Play, Learn, and Read at Home

Developmental Activities for Kid's Birth to Five

Story this month: The Little Engine That Could by Watty Piper

Focus Skills for parents: Have your child read the phrase with you, "I think I can, I think I can!"

	0-12 Months	1-3 Years	3-5 Years
Problem-Solving Skills	<p>Infants learn about their world through play. Between the ages of 9-12 months your baby will be interested in this game. Use a toy train and tie a string to it. Place your baby on the floor in a sitting position. Put the toy near your baby with only the string within his reach. Demonstrate for your baby how to pull the sting and get the toy. You can purchase pull toys and/or make your own.</p> 	<p>A child as young as 12 months begins to understand color differences. Between the ages of 2 and 3, your toddler will begin to match colors and shapes. Cut out different colored square shapes. Take a "color walk" through the book with your child. Select a color square, lay it on the page and then point with your toddler to all of the objects that are the same color. Always name the color when you point to them. Do the same with circle, square, rectangle, and triangle. The triangles are hard to find but they are there!</p>	<p>This story offers several ways to develop your child's pre-math skills. Sorting objects based upon appearance or function is a skill that develops between the ages of 4-4 1/2 years. Get 3 shoe boxes to use as train cars. Using items in your home make 1 pile of several different kinds of objects (small animals, cars, dishes, balls, silverware etc.) Limit category choices to three and place one of the items in each of the shoe boxes. Help your child sort the objects into the train cars. When you're done, ask your child to predict which one is the heaviest, then go weigh the boxes. Count the objects as you put them in and find the numbers on the train cars.</p>
Language/ Communication Skills	<p>Between 2-7 months your child will start to make cooing sounds such as ah, ee, o and oy. By 7 months, you should begin to hear babbling with some consonant sounds such as baba, mama, dada and gaga. As your child approaches his first year he should be able to imitate some simple sounds. When you read the story, say /woowoo/ for the train sound and see if your baby will imitate it.</p> 	<p>This story has a lot of great vocabulary to teach your child. Sometimes, just look thru the book and name everything you see (ie. monkey, book, house, boat, tree, rabbit etc.). Simply naming things is very important for your toddler as by the time they are two they should have close to 50 words that they can say. A 2-3 year old child will start putting words together. This story also uses lots of descriptive words like "blue eyes; big golden oranges". Walk thru the book modeling descriptive word combinations for your child (ie. yellow hat, happy clown, long arms, big engine etc.).</p>	<p>Continue to build your child's vocabulary by making your own book that features words that describe objects. A small photo album makes a nice base for a book. Have your child select pictures of objects or people from magazines. Cut them out and place them on a plain piece of paper cut to fit the photo book. Together with your child, make up a phrase that describes the picture (ie. red apple). Write those words on the paper under the picture and slip it into the book. Get creative and see how long of a phrase you can come up with—(ie. big, red, sweet, juicy apple!) Read the book together pointing to each word as you say it. This helps your preschooler understand that print has meaning!</p>
Self-Help Skills	<p>Learning rules and routines is something your infant is developing. Setting the stage for later expectations can begin in the first year of life. A 10 month old can HELP pick up toys or objects and put them in a basket, toy box or container. Sing the song, "Pick up, clean up everybody everywhere, Pick up, clean up put it right there!" This song helps to set the routine for your child. Remember that you are working along side of your child. You cannot expect them to do it on their own.</p>	<p>Your two to three year old child will begin to help take care of his things if you make the environment easy for him to understand. Using simple pictures, place a picture of his PJ's, shirts, socks etc. on the drawer that they belong in. Ask him to help take care of the clean laundry by matching the object to the picture and putting it away. Remember you are helping your child learn simple rules and expectations. Keep the tasks short and do it with them!</p>	<p>Learning how to use a table knife is a skill your preschooler will be interested in. Give your child a couple of pieces of bread and have him cut off the crusts, then cut each piece into 4 squares or train cars. Line them up on a plate and have your child put a variety of spreads (butter, peanut butter, jelly, cream cheese, ketchup with a piece of ham, mayo with a piece of cheese etc.) on each train car. Then of course let them eat their train car snack!</p> 

<p>Small/Fine Motor Skills</p>	<p>Small blocks are a great toy for infants to have access to. An infant as young as 5 months will begin to be interested in holding the block in one hand and transferring it to the other hand. Around 9 months your baby will imitate you holding a block in each hand and banging them together. Around 10 months of age your infant will enjoy the game of putting blocks in a container and then taking them back out. Around one year of age your baby will be able to place one block on top of another.</p> 	<p>The toddler years are great for many building projects. Children between the ages of 1 and 2 continue to master block skills and ultimately by age 3 will build a 9 cube tower out of one inch cubes. As your child is practicing these skills, jello boxes, plastic cups, tupperware containers, books, and canned goods can all be used to practice stacking. Around two years of age, your child should be able to imitate a three block train. Give your child three blocks and keep three for yourself. As your child watches you line up three small blocks and push them like a train—see if your child will do the same. Don't forget to say, "woowoo"!</p> 	<p>Your child's pre-writing skills begin with scribbling and making marks on paper. Between age two and three your child will be imitating simple vertical and horizontal lines. By three years of age your child should be able to copy a circle shape. Between age 4 and 5 your child will begin to make simple geometric shapes such as squares, rectangles and triangles. Help your child draw a train with several cars by linking together rectangles and circles for the wheels. Make a train track by drawing horizontal and vertical lines.</p> <p>Write a number on your train cars. If you want to load your train, cut out toys, foods, animals etc. from magazines and store ads to glue in the cars.</p>
<p>Large/Gross Motor Skills</p>	<p>Around 8 months of age most babies start to "combat" crawl. That is crawling with their tummy touching the floor. Place a desired object slightly out of reach when your baby is lying on his tummy to encourage her to crawl toward the toy. Soon your baby will be creeping along on their hands and knees. Get down on your hands and knees and play "choo choo train" by crawling with your baby all over the house! Remember that even though your baby is put to sleep on their back, supervised tummy time everyday is very important for them to develop the muscles to sit, crawl and walk.</p>	<p>Toddlers enjoy doing "heavy work" loading and unloading boxes and pushing and pulling them around the house. Get some empty boxes from the grocery store. Pretend that they are train cars and let your child load them with tupperware, canned goods, pots, dirty laundry and toys. Have him move the toys to the bedroom or the dirty clothes to the laundry room. This kind of play provides important feedback to your toddler's brains about their muscles and how they move. Don't forget to have your toddler get into a train car and push him around for a ride!</p>	<p>If you are having a preschooler play date, make a train track outside. Using sidewalk chalk, make a large rectangle pattern in the driveway. Let the kids ride small riding toys around the pattern pretending to be the different engines. Tie wagons onto the riding toys for them to pull different loads. By three years of age most children are able to pedal a tricycle.</p> 
<p>Social-Emotional Skills</p>	<p>Sing this song to your infant:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Train (Tune of the Farmer in the Dell)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">The engine chugs along, The engine chugs along, Up and down the mountain tracks, The engine chugs along.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">The train goes click,click,click. The train goes click,click,click Straight across the open plain. The train goes click, click, click!</p> <p style="text-align: center;">The whistle goes woo, woo The whistle goes woo, woo All across the USA, The whistle goes woo,woo!</p>	<p>Learning the appropriate words to describe emotions is an important skill for your toddler. Your child will need to be taught the appropriate words. Using a small photo album, take pictures of family members' faces showing different emotions such as happy, tired, sad, angry, surprised, scared etc. Put them in the photo album and look at the book simply saying, mommy happy; daddy tired; etc. Of course remember to use the words in appropriate contexts as well. When your child is having a temper-tantrum say, "You are mad".</p> 	<p>This story teaches young children about perseverance. That is, sticking with something even though it is hard!! Use this story as an example with your child when they are doing something that you know they are having a hard time with. It might be waiting for food to come in a restaurant or completing a puzzle. Talk about the story and recite with them: "I think I can, I think I can wait until my food comes."</p> 

Other suggested books to read:

The Little Engine that Could is a story that was originally published in 1930. It has become an American classic with many children and adults chanting the mantra, "I think I can, I think I can!" There are some other stories about the little engine that you might enjoy exploring with your child such as: **The Little Engine that Could and the Fire Rescue** by Megan Bryant; and **The Little Engine that Could saves the Thanksgiving Day Parade** by Watty Piper. There is a book called, **The Little Engine that Could Storybook Treasury** by Watty Piper, that features seven of the most popular little engine stories.

If you have access to the internet, explore this web-site with your child <http://members.aol.com/vlcondon/index.htm> . It shows a variety of American Railroad Steam Engines with pictures and sound.

The Play, Learn, and Read at Home activities are brought to you by the Ionia County Intermediate School District's Great Parents Great Start program. Children move thru predictable stages of development. The activities provided above are meant to be a guide. If you have concerns regarding your child's development please call Start Smart at 1-888-742-4491 or 1-616-527-4900 ext 1461. For more information check us out at www.ioniaisd.org or www.migreatparents.org.