

Brain Building **TIPS** that Support Early Learning Domains



PRESCHOOL 3-5 YEARS

Powered by
vrom



Creative Expression

Language & Literacy

Math & Science

**Motor Skills &
Physical Development**

**Social & Emotional
Development**





The preschool years are a time of rapid learning and development.

Preschool children learn best through back-and-forth interactions and joyful play during everyday moments. **Try these fun Vroom Tips™ to support these areas of development:** physical, cognitive, social and emotional, language and literacy, and creative expression.



Brain Building TIPS

that Support Early Learning Domains

 CREATIVE EXPRESSION



Tip

2-5
YEARS

Tune Time

Turn playtime into “Tune 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.

Brainy Background™

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.

Tip

3-5
YEARS

Construction Site

When building with cardboard boxes and other items, help your child make a plan to follow. Talk about it together and use pencils and paper to draw out what they want to build before beginning. Encourage them to check this plan as they build.

Brainy Background™

This kind of imaginative play sparks your child’s creativity while using critical thinking skills to plan ahead and follow through on that plan. You’re also providing them with the opportunity to explore writing and drawing and its importance in everyday life.

Tip

4-5
YEARS

Dance Duet

Let your child pick a fun, fast song to dance to. Take turns making up dance moves. They can start, then you copy them. Keep going back and forth as you both repeat the moves and add new one. Before you know it you will have a whole dance routine!

Brainy Background™

When you and your child build on each other’s patterns, they’re using their memory and focus to remember the moves. They are also thinking flexibly to make up their own moves. These skills are important for creativity and learning.

Tip

4-5
YEARS

Paper Fashion

Do you have any old newspapers or magazines? Ask your child to create a hat using these materials and nothing else. Encourage them to try out different ways to work with the paper. What happens if they fold it or rip it? See if they can keep the paper hat on as they walk across the room.

Brainy Background™

Your child is using their critical thinking and problem-solving skills to think about the goal of making a paper hat, and then trying different ways to reach that goal. This promotes the skills of flexible thinking, focus, self-control, creativity, and persistence.

Brain Building TIPS

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 LANGUAGE & LITERACY



Tip

3-5
YEARS

Fill in the Blank

Fill in the blanks to make up a story: "We're going to _____. When we get there we'll see _____." As your child gets in the rhythm, take turns going back and forth. Is your story realistic? Make believe? There is no right or wrong, just have fun!

Brainy Background™

Creating a "Fill-in-the-Blank" story means your child is thinking and cannot go on autopilot. They have to shift their thinking to a new and changing story line. Thinking in flexible ways builds problem solving skills.

Tip

3-5
YEARS

What Would You Do?

Invite your child to stretch their thinking by asking, "What would you do if you could...climb to the sky? Swim to the bottom of the sea? Run fast as the wind?" Invite them to take a turn asking you, "What would you do if..." questions.

Brainy Background™

Playing the "What If" game lets your child call on what they already know about the world and adjust it to fit into new possibilities. This ability to remember and think flexibly will be useful for the rest of their life

Tip

3-5
YEARS

Trick Rhymes

Play a rhyming game with your child. Start by saying words that rhyme, like "green," "clean," and "mean." Then say a word that doesn't rhyme, like "boat." Do they notice the word that doesn't rhyme? Help them come up with a new rhyming word. Then give them a turn to try and trick you!

Brainy Background™

This game helps your child practice important skills like remembering, paying close attention, and being able to respond to the situation as it changes instead of reacting automatically. You're also helping your child learn to love language when you play fun word games together.

Tip

4-5
YEARS

Letter Lookout

Pick a letter with your child and try to find it everywhere you go. Take turns calling it out when you see it. If they see an apple for the letter A, then you have to find something next. See how many things you can find. Four? Ten? More?

Brainy Background™

"I Spy" games like this one are great brain builders. They make your child aware of their environment and teach them to make connections between similar things. You can try this game with letters, colors, shapes—anything really!

Brain Building TIPS

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 MATH & SCIENCE



Tip

2-5
YEARS

Mealtime Math

Are you eating crackers or other food like that? Ask your child how many they want. Give them that amount and say, “Eat one. How many are left?” Count together, encouraging them to count out loud. Then you take a turn. Continue this game until the crackers are all gone.

Brainy Background™

In “Mealtime Math,” your child is thinking in symbols—that the numeral 3 represents three of something. This game helps them begin to understand how to add and subtract in everyday life. Games like this help build a strong foundation for learning math later on.

Tip

3-5
YEARS

Path Predictor

Out for a walk? Pick a spot ahead of you and ask your child to predict how many steps it will take to get there. Then have them test this out. Encourage them to change the way they move, like running or jumping to the same spot. How do those changes affect the prediction?

Brainy Background™

Your child is thinking like a scientist by making predictions and testing them against what actually happens. This game also develops the skill of critical thinking and helps them explore math ideas, like distance and counting.

Tip

3-5
YEARS

Throwing Near and Far

Does your child love to throw things? Set up an experiment together. Get different safe things for them to throw, like a scarf, rolled up socks, a paper cup, etc. Which one can they throw the farthest? Talk about what they notice.

Brainy Background™

When you help your child set up an experiment like this, you're helping them to learn how to think like a scientist. This means thinking critically to test out ideas, seeing what happens, and then using what they have learned to find out even more.

Tip

4-5
YEARS

Count and Clap

Ask your child to clap with you. Say a number and clap that many times. Then make it harder by clapping on every other number as you count out loud together. One, two (clap), three, four (clap). Now try every third number.

Brainy Background™

To play “Count and Clap” your child has to stay focused and use self-control to count or clap according to the rules of the game and not go on autopilot. Your child is also practicing early math skills in a playful and fun way.

Brain Building **TIPS** that Support Early Learning Domains

MOTOR SKILLS & PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT



Tip

2-5
YEARS

Rolie Polie

Grab a ball or anything that rolls and is soft and play a game of catch. Roll the ball back and forth and talk to your child about what is happening.

Brainy Background™

Brain building can be just this simple. This game helps your child learn to pay attention and remember the rules. Chatting while you do it adds new words to their vocabulary too.

Tip

3-5
YEARS

Balancing Acts

Ask your child to stand on one foot and see how long they can keep their balance. Can you count the seconds together? What do they have to do to stay steady? For a challenge, ask them to hold their knee up high or stand on tiptoe. You can try it too! Talk together about these challenges.

Brainy Background™

These “Balancing Acts” are a great way for your child to practice tuning out distractions and focusing on a specific task. These activities take a lot of self-control to do, both physically and mentally, and also improve coordination and balance.

Tip

3-5
YEARS

Counting Walk

As you walk, ask your child to pick a landmark, like the next corner or an upcoming sign, and count how many steps it takes to get there. Encourage them to take big steps and little steps or to run and then walk. Talk with them about how these changes affected the number of steps.

Brainy Background™

As your child moves, they're learning about math concepts like distance and counting by experiencing them with their body. You're encouraging them to be curious and ask questions about the world. This kind of thinking leads to creativity and the ability to make interesting connections.

Tip

3-5
YEARS

Stop and Go

While at the park, play a game of “Stop-and-Go” with your child. When you say “go” you both run, dance, and jump around. Then, when you say “stop” everybody freezes. After a few rounds, let them be the one to shout the commands.

Brainy Background™

Playing “Stop-and-Go” helps your child focus, remember the rules, and not go on autopilot—important skills for success in school and in life.

Brain Building TIPS

that Support Early Learning Domains

SOCIAL & EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT



Tip

2-4
YEARS

Feelings on Display

Invite your child to act out their feelings with their face and body. Say something like, “Show me how you feel when you eat a delicious apple,” or “What does your face look like when you’re excited to go outside?” Share your own faces and poses to show them how you feel.

Brainy Background™

Learning how feelings are expressed on our faces and bodies helps your child better understand themselves. It also helps them understand the behavior of others and that they might have different thoughts and feelings from their own, which is important in getting along well with others.

Tip

2-5
YEARS

Feeling Faces

Ask your child to watch your face. Make a happy face by smiling or laughing. Then ask them, “How am I feeling?” Take the conversation further, asking, “What do you think I am thinking about to make me feel happy? Do you remember feeling happy?” Talk about other feelings too. Take turns. Ask them to make faces for you.

Brainy Background™

As your child watches your facial expressions, they pay careful attention as well as use the skill of making connections between what they see and what you might be feeling. Being able to express and understand emotions is essential to interacting with and learning from others.

Tip

2-5
YEARS

What’s the Feeling?

Make a face that expresses an emotion and ask your child to guess what you’re feeling—for example, angry, sad, tired, excited, or scared. Then invite them to express a feeling on their face and you guess what the feeling is. Have fun going back and forth.

Brainy Background™

Your child will learn to understand and manage emotions better when you talk about the name of the feeling. Give this activity more depth by talking about a time when each of you experienced this feeling.

Tip

2½-5
YEARS

Treasure Trove

Talk with your child, back and forth, about a “treasure” in their life. It can be a special object or person or event. Talk about what the treasure looks like, sounds, and feels. Ask them how the treasure makes them feel. Then tell them why they’re your treasure.

Brainy Background™

Talking back and forth about special people, objects, and events helps your child create memories of who they’re, and what’s important in their life. They’re also learning to express themselves as you give them the experience of being heard and understood.



Visit **GrowYoungBrains.org** for more information on brain-building resources for child care programs.