

Problem-solving

These activities involve children using curiosity, exploration, observation and persistence to develop reasoning and understanding about objects and actions around them.



Bright socks

This activity is designed for babies 1-4 months of age

What you need:

- A blanket
- A colorful sock for your baby

What you do:

- Place your baby on their back on a blanket on the floor.
- Put a brightly colored sock onto your baby's foot.

How it helps:

- Helps your baby learn to look at their feet.
- Helps encourage your baby to pull at their feet and grasp their foot.



Problem-solving

0-12 months

Peek-a-boo

This activity is designed for babies 4-8 months of age

What you need:

- A blanket

What you do:

- Hide your face behind a blanket.
- Say “Where is mommy?”
- Drop the blanket and say “Peek-a-boo” or “Here I am!”
- You can also hide a favorite toy under the blanket.



How it helps:

- Helps your baby learn that you are still there behind the blanket.

Hide the toy

This activity is designed for babies 8-12 months of age

What you need:

- Highchair or another seat with a tray
- A cup
- A small toy

What you do:

- Place the cup on the tray and put a small toy under it so that it's hidden.
- Ask your baby where the toy went.
- If they don't lift the cup up, lift it up for them and show them the toy.
- Do this several times while using phrases such as "You found it" and "Where did your toy go?"
- Soon, your baby will be able to lift the cup up on their own.
- Later you can add a second cup and hide the toy under one of the cups and ask them which cup their toy is under.

How it helps:

- Your baby will learn to remember where an object is hidden.
- Your baby will begin to hide the toy on their own.



Problem-solving

12-24 months

Copy cat

This activity is designed for children 12-16 months of age

What you need:

- You and your child.

What you do:

- Do something then try to get your baby to imitate you.
- For example, clap your hands. When your baby claps, say “Look, you can clap too!”
- Try other actions such as touching your nose or sticking out your tongue. After each one, say, “You try!”
- Be silly and have fun.



How it helps:

- Helps your child imitate actions.
- Your child will enjoy this repetitive activity for hours of fun.

Problem-solving

12-24 months

Matching socks

This activity is designed for children 16-20 months of age

What you need:

- Clean laundry with different socks

What you do:

- Show your child one sock of a pair.
- Have your child find the other matching sock.
- Show your child how to match the socks if they need help.
- You can ask your child questions such as, “Whose big blue socks are these?”



How it helps:

- Your child will learn to put similar items together.
- Helps your child begin to learn how to sort different objects by what is similar.

Problem-solving

12-24 months

Pouring and scooping fun

This activity is designed for children 20-24 months of age

What you need:

- A sandbox, medium sized plastic bin or a tray
- Uncooked rice, noodles, popcorn or sand
- Different sized container.

What you do:

- Show your child how to scoop and pour the material in the bins or box.
- Talk to your child about what the sand feels like in their hands.
- Talk to your child about the cups being empty and full when they scoop and pour.
- Encourage your child to pour sand from one container to another.
- Poke holes in the containers so that sand can fall slowly.



How it helps:

- Helps your child learn the meaning of “empty” and “full.”
- Helps your child learn how to scoop and pour.

Problem-solving

24-36 months

Dish helper

This activity is designed for children 24-30 months of age

What you need:

- A step stool or chair
- Apron
- Plastic dishes
- Sponge or washcloth
- Towels or a dishrack



What you do:

- Bring a step stool or chair over to the kitchen sink.
- Fill the sink up with mild-temperature water with soap to wash dishes. Be sure that the water isn't too hot so that your child doesn't get burned.
- Put plastic dishes in the sink for your child to wash with the sponge or washcloth.
- Show your child how to wash and rinse the dishes and then place them in a dish rack or on a towel to dry.

How it helps:

- Your child will learn how adults wash dishes.
- Your child will feel important with helping you in the kitchen.
- Helps support your child's wish to copy household tasks that adults do.

Extension to activity:

- Say to your child, "The dishes are wet. What do we need to do now to get them dry?"

Problem-solving

24-36 months

Following directions

This activity is designed for children 30-36 months of age

What you need:

- A ball, shoes or anything your child can use when following a direction you give them.

What you do:

- Give your child fun two step directions that give them something to do. (Example: “Please take off your shoes and put them on the mat by the door” or “Please take the wrapper and put it in the garbage can.”)
- Other two step directions include: “Please pick up the ball and put it in the hoop” or “Please open the cupboard and take out a plate for me.”
- This is a good time to be a role-model for your child and use “please” when giving directions and saying “thank you” when they complete the direction.



How it helps:

- This activity helps your child learn how to remember steps to the actions.
- Your child will also learn the correct order for steps when following directions.

Extension to activity:

- Ask your child, “What can we do with the plate now?” Your child can show you or tell you what to do next.

Problem-solving

24-36 months

Counting and grouping

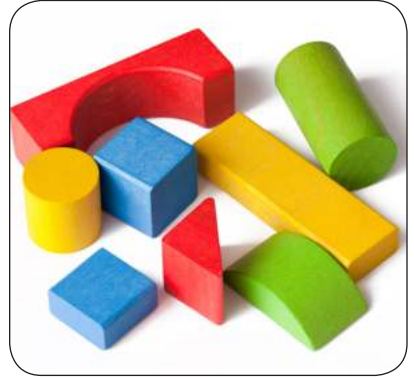
This activity is designed for children 24-36 months of age

What you need:

- Two pieces of cereal
- Two small blocks
- Two small balls

What you do:

- Give your child a piece of cereal.
- Tell your child, “Here is one piece of cereal.”
- Give your child another piece of cereal and tell them, “Here is another piece of cereal. Now there are two pieces of cereal”
- Do the same thing with the balls and blocks.
- Then group the cereal, balls and blocks in twos. (So the cereal pieces are together, the balls are together and the blocks are together)
- Tell your child, “See, there are two cereal pieces, two balls and two blocks. Let’s count them.”
- You can do this activity as often as your child shows interest.



How it helps:

- Your child will begin to learn the concepts of how many items there are together (quantity).
- Your child will begin to learn what one-to-one correspondence is and how things can be grouped together.

Extension to activity:

- Ask your child to bring you two objects that are the same.

Problem-solving

36-48 months

Puzzle picture

This activity is designed for children 36-48 months of age

What you need:

- Scissors
- Empty cereal box

What you do:

- Cut the front of a cereal box into six to seven pieces to make puzzle pieces.
- Using the pieces, show your child how to put the pieces together to make a puzzle. The puzzle when finished should look like the front of a cereal box.



How it helps:

- This activity will help your child complete a puzzle by moving pieces around to make the puzzle pieces fit.
- Your child will use their memory skills to remember what the cereal box looks like when all of the puzzle pieces are together.

Extension to activity:

- If your child has mastered this activity, cut smaller picture pieces out of another cereal box or a magazine to make another puzzle in order to make the activity more challenging.

Problem-solving

36-48 months

Shopping with pictures

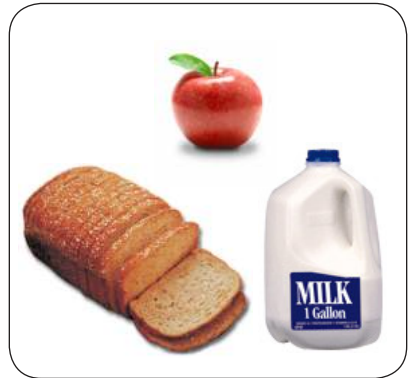
This activity is designed for children 36-48 months of age

What you need:

- Scissors
- Envelope
- Grocery advertisements from a newspaper

What you do:

- Cut pictures of different foods you will need from the grocery store.
- Place the pictures in an envelope and take them to the store with you.
- Have your child hold the envelope for you and they can take the pictures out one at a time.
- When they pull out a picture, ask your child what the picture is and tell them that you need to buy that item.
- Continue doing this with the other pictures in the envelope.



How it helps:

- Your child will practice their skills with picture to object correspondence.

Extension to activity:

- While in the grocery store and holding the picture cards, ask your child, "What do we have to do to find this?"

Problem-solving

36-48 months

Hunting for colors

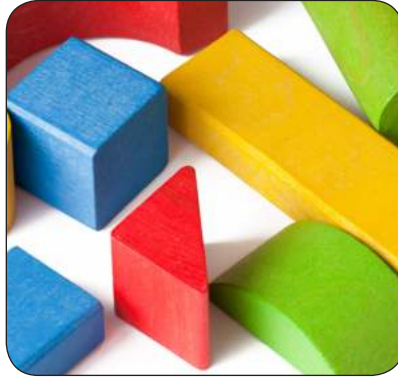
This activity is designed for children 36-48 months of age

What you need:

- Different colored objects at child-level in your house

What you do:

- This will be a scavenger hunt for colors in your home.
- Ask your child to find something that is the color yellow around your house.
- Have them bring you the object when they find something yellow.
- Repeat with different colors.
- Be sure to praise your child for bringing you back the right colored objects (and praise them even if they don't for trying!)



How it helps:

- Your child will practice remembering the colors and color recognition.
- Helps your child remember directions when they leave the room.

Extension to activity:

- Ask your child to bring you two objects that are the same color or bring two different colored objects to you.

Problem-solving

48-60 months

Count and wait

This activity is designed for children 48-60 months of age

What you need:

- When you are waiting for something to happen, count out with your child how long it takes for it to happen.

What you do:

- You can try this when riding in the car and waiting for the light to change or when waiting for a train to pass on the railroad tracks.
- You can also try this activity when it's a sibling's turn to play with a toy or when it's time to switch toys or activities.



How it helps:

- This activity helps your child learn to be more patient and will help her with waiting in the future in situations when you are not around.
- This activity helps your child with their counting.

Extension to activity:

- Provide a kitchen timer or an hourglass sand timer. Ask your child how many turns they think they should have and their sibling should have while the timer is running. You can flip the timer two times during one child's turn.

Problem-solving

48-60 months

Missing object

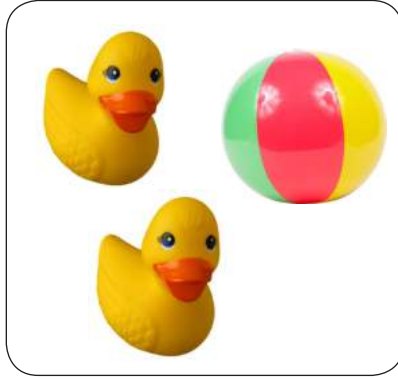
This activity is designed for children 48-60 months of age

What you need:

- Two to three toys

What you do:

- Lay out two to three toys on a table.
- Have your child look at the toys for a while.
- When they are ready, have your child wait in the other room while you hide one of the toys.
- See how long it takes for your child to find out which toy is missing. If needed, you can give clues to your child to help.
- Hide a different toy next; you can also switch roles for who has to find the missing toy.



How it helps:

- This activity helps your child with memorization.
- This activity helps your child focus on the task and what items to remember.

Extension to activity:

- You can add more toys to the table for a higher level of difficulty.

Problem-solving

48-60 months

Telling stories

This activity is designed for children 48-60 months of age

What you need:

- A comfortable place for you and your child to sit

What you do:

- Make up a story that includes a problem and tell it to your child.
- Be sure to use exaggerated words, different voices, facial expressions and lots of body movements, especially when pretending to be different characters.
- Encourage your child to tell you a story with a problem in it and help get them to use lots of facial expressions and different voices too.



How it helps:

- This activity encourages your child to use their imagination when telling their story.

Extension to activity:

- Ask your child questions about what happens next in the story or how to help solve the problem in the story.