

Vroom Activities



Whether it's mealtime, bathtime, or anytime in between, there are so many ways to help build your child's brain. This PDF has a few brain building activities for children ages 1-2. You can print or cut them out, put them on your fridge, or carry them around—whatever helps to remind you that brain building moments are all around you in the things you already do.



Song Traditions

Sing the same songs daily that explain what you're doing with your child (for example, leaving the room, shutting the lights, finishing eating, wiping faces and washing hands, changing diapers, or counting fingers and toes).

Ages 1-2



Brainy Background powered by Mind in the Making

Children love traditions. Singing about their daily activities provides the comfort of a known routine. In addition, it helps your child make connections between their experiences and new words. They learn language from your sing-song voice.

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

#4



Sound Searchers

Pay attention to the sounds you're hearing and talk about them with your child. "I hear a bird tweeting. Do you?" Try to find the bird. Do this with fire trucks or cars going "vroom!" Pay attention to what they're listening to and ask them, "What do you hear?"

Ages 1-2



Brainy Background powered by Mind in the Making

Children learn through their senses and through games like Sound Searchers. Using words about the sounds you're hearing helps your child begin to listen to the differences in sounds and the words that describe them.

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

#36



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



What's That?

Does your child point and say “dat?” Ask them, “What do you want?” Have them lead you to what they’re pointing at. When you find it, you can say, “That’s a spoon!” or “That’s the light switch!”

Ages 1-2



Brainy Background powered by Mind in the Making

From infancy on, children pay attention to the intentions of other people and want to tell you their intentions. Pointing and saying “dat” is a first step toward learning the skill of communicating intentions. You can help children learn this by finding what they want and naming it.

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

#62



Stop and Start the Music

Set your radio to a music station and have your child turn it off and on. Every time they turn it on, start to dance—or move around—and say “on.” When they turn it off, stop moving and say “off.” Soon they will probably say “off” and “on” with you.

Ages 1-2



Brainy Background powered by Mind in the Making

When your child is at the stage of learning new words and concepts (like “off” and “on”), they learn them much better if they can make something happen (like turning music off and on) that demonstrates what the words and concepts mean.

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

#66



Body Language

Practice using gestures with your child as another way to communicate. You can wave your hand and say “hi!” or shake your head and say “no.” Or you can clap your hands and say “yay!” See if they will mimic your actions and sounds. Try going back and forth like a conversation.

Ages 1-2



Brainy Background powered by Mind in the Making

Many children use gestures before they speak. When you show your child how gestures and words work together, you add to their understanding of what it means to communicate. You also help them make connections between words and actions, an important part of talking, reading, and writing.

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

#73



Sing, Read, Repeat

Your child enjoys listening to their favorite stories and songs over and over again. After singing or telling stories with them, ask if they want more. How do they respond? Do they nod or squirm away? Talk about their actions like, “You said yes!” or “You look like you’re all done.”

Ages 1-2



Brainy Background powered by Mind in the Making

Children learn through repetition and shared back and forth conversations. Repeated storytelling and singing helps your child understand the meaning behind words and sets the stage for talking and eventually reading. They’re learning the basics of communication!

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

#88



Sing, Rhyme, Repeat

Help your child recognize patterns and familiar words by singing simple songs with repetition or rhymes. For example, try “Row, Row, Row Your Boat” or “Old McDonald Had a Farm.” Encourage them to join in by repeating the words or by adding their own ideas.

Ages 1-2



Brainy Background powered by Mind in the Making

The more you sing with your child, the more they’re able to predict sounds and words and join in. Songs and sound games are great activities for early literacy. They make connections between sounds and words as well as build their vocabulary in a fun and interactive way.

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

#99



The Power of Pointing

When your child points at something, talk back and forth about what they notice like, “You see the big truck!” Then you can take a turn to point something out to them and say what you see. Do they turn to look at it? Do they point or name the object?

Ages 1-2



Brainy Background powered by Mind in the Making

Your child learns to communicate when you respond to their movements and sounds and encourage them to reply. You support their desire to learn more about the world and motivate them to continue to be curious and explore. These are essential qualities for learning.

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

#100



See You Later

Before you go to work or drop your child off somewhere, share a favorite “See you later” story, such as “After a while, crocodile” or “See you soon, cocoon.” Create a new goodbye tradition. Tell them that after it’s finished, it will be time for you to leave. Reassure them you will see them later.

Ages 1-2



Brainy Background powered by Mind in the Making

Transitions can be difficult for toddlers. When you create a goodbye tradition through the “See you later” poem or another story, you give them some control, which helps them feel safe.

For more activities like these, check out the free Vroom app! #119



Big Hug, Little Hug

When it’s time for a hug, ask your child if they want a big hug or a little hug and then do what they ask. Then you take a turn and say whether you want a big or little hug. You can add other words, like a “wiggly hug” or a “quiet hug.”

Ages 1-2



Brainy Background powered by Mind in the Making

The sense of touch is calming and comforting to your child. These hugs not only make your relationship stronger, they also allow you to share new words and concepts with them, like big and little.

For more activities like these, check out the free Vroom app! #143



Name That Sound

When you’re in the park, pause and ask your child to Name That Sound! Take turns guessing. Are you hearing children playing or a dog barking? The squeak of a swing or the chirp of a bird? Point out that some things, like ants, don’t make sounds.

Ages 1-2



Brainy Background powered by Mind in the Making

When playing Name That Sound, you’re inviting your child to focus on hearing the differences in sounds and figuring out what they are. This is an important skill for enjoying and learning language that will help them communicate with others.

For more activities like these, check out the free Vroom app! #190



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.

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

#194



Shhh, What's That?

Do you hear a sound in the waiting room? Pause. Ask your child, "What's that sound?" Take turns guessing. Are you hearing a slamming door or papers rustling? The squeak of a sliding chair or someone clearing his or her throat? Name them all together!

Ages 1-2



Brainy Background powered by Mind in the Making

You're inviting your child to focus on hearing the differences in sounds. This is an important skill for enjoying and learning language so they can communicate with others.

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

#232



Reach for the Sky

Make your waiting time fun! Ask your child, "Can you do this?" and hold your hands up very high and say, "Reach for the sky!" Invite them to copy you. Next, put your hands behind your back and see if they copy you. Then take a turn and copy them.

Ages 1-2



Brainy Background powered by Mind in the Making

When your child tries to mimic the movements you make, their using the skills of focus and attention. You're exposing them to new vocabulary while also helping them make connections between words and what they represent, the building blocks of learning how to talk and, later, to read.

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

#239



Cart Vision

As you grocery shop, think about what your child might be seeing and discuss it with them while paying attention to sights, sounds, and smells. “Do you hear someone talking? It’s the lady over there.” “What do you smell? It smells yummy.” “See that green thing? It’s an avocado we’re going to buy.”

Ages 1-2



Brainy Background powered by Mind in the Making

Talking to your child about what they see, hear, and smell—even before they can talk much—is how they learn to make sense of experiences, and how they learn words and what they mean. By describing their Cart Vision, you’re also helping them feel important and understood.

For more activities like these, check out the free Vroom app! #268



Market Ins and Outs

In the market, point out the “ins” and “outs” with your child. Are they IN the cart? Is a worker taking pears OUT of the box? Did you put apples IN a bag? Are you walking OUT the door? Play often enough and they will get it and find ins and outs of their own!

Ages 1-2



Brainy Background powered by Mind in the Making

You’re helping your child begin to think and talk about where objects are in relationship to one other. This ability, which takes time to develop, helps them organize their understanding of the world and will be important in doing math in the future.

For more activities like these, check out the free Vroom app! #271



Color in the Cart

As you grocery shop, let your child help by holding some of the items. Choose the items by color or let them point to the one they want to hold and name the color. “You’re holding the yellow cereal box. What else is yellow?” or “Can you hold this brown box?”

Ages 1-2



Brainy Background powered by Mind in the Making

Children learn best when they’re interested and actively involved. When your child hears you name the colors of what they’re holding, they begin to make connections between words and their meanings. This will help them learn to talk, read, and communicate in the future.

For more activities like these, check out the free Vroom app! #275



Delicious Descriptions

When shopping with your child, point out different objects you see in the aisles. Use lots of description to talk about the taste of different foods, like, “There are some juicy, sweet oranges,” or “I bet those yellow lemons are sour!” Talk about where they point and look.

Ages 1-2



Brainy Background powered by Mind in the Making

You’re promoting skills like focus and self-control when you guide your child’s attention and make connections between words and what they mean. When you respond to their interests, whether they’re expressed by a word, a sound, a point, or a look, you’re showing them what they “say” is important.

For more activities like these, check out the free Vroom app! #288



Mirror Play

Brushing your child’s teeth? As you look in the mirror, talk about how your faces are the same and different. You both have two eyes and a nose, but yours are bigger. You both can make funny faces. Make a funny face and see if you can make them laugh!

Ages 1-2



Brainy Background powered by Mind in the Making

Comparing how your faces are the same and different helps your child learn to sort objects and experiences into categories. Sorting information into categories is important for reading, math, and science. And this game builds the connection between you!

For more activities like these, check out the free Vroom app! #311



Bathtime Stories

When your child is in the bath, make up a story about a child just like them who takes a bath too. You can say things like, “First, they washed their hair” while you wash their hair, or “Then they splashed in the water,” and see if they splash too.

Ages 1-2



Brainy Background powered by Mind in the Making

When you make up stories, you’re introducing your child to creative ways of thinking while sharing lots of new words with them. They’re learning focus and self-control as they listen closely, and making connections when they move their body to your words.

For more activities like these, check out the free Vroom app! #371



Bye-Bye Bubbles!

While cleaning up, give your child a soapy sponge and a large container with a little water so they can help wash safe kitchen items. Scrub up lots of bubbles together. When you're ready say, "Bye-bye bubbles!" and show them how to rinse the bubbles away. Encourage them to try it.

Ages 1-2



Brainy Background powered by Mind in the Making

You're helping your child make connections between cause and effect as they explore the water and bubbles. This kind of experimenting will help them with learning math and science later on. When you include them in daily chores, you help them feel confident and independent.

For more activities like these, check out the free Vroom app! #410



Hand to Hand

While washing dishes, give your child a spoon to hold. Say, "You have a spoon!" Then hold your hand open and say, "My turn!" See if they will hand the spoon back to you. If they do, say, "Thank you!" If they don't, give them another utensil and see if you can trade them back and forth.

Ages 1-2



Brainy Background powered by Mind in the Making

When you and your child play this game of give and take, you're helping them understand the back and forth of communication. They're using their skills of focus and self-control as they listen, watch, and follow your directions.

For more activities like these, check out the free Vroom app! #413



Texture Time

As you change your child, describe the textures of the things you're using. Talk about the wet wipe, the soft pad, etc. Watch where they're looking or pointing, and talk about its texture. "That's the bed. It's soft," or "This is the diaper. It's smooth!"

Ages 1-2



Brainy Background powered by Mind in the Making

When your child hears and sees new ways to describe everyday things, they're making new connections in their brain that will help them talk and read in the future.

For more activities like these, check out the free Vroom app! #439



Changing Steps

When changing your child’s diaper, describe the steps you’re taking: “First you lay down. Then we take off your pants. Now I unfasten your diaper.” Pause after each so they can lift their bottom or move their legs to help.

Ages 1-2



Brainy Background powered by Mind in the Making

Your step-by-step description invites your child to focus on the details of diaper changing. Your pause invites them to practice waiting and to control their behavior. These are important thinking skills they will use to learn in school and life.

For more activities like these, check out the free Vroom app! #441



Mirror, Mirror

During changing time, see if there’s something safe and mirror-like to give your child. Point to their nose in the mirror and say, “There’s your nose. Can you find your mouth? Your eyes?” Have a conversation about what they’re finding.

Ages 1-2



Brainy Background powered by Mind in the Making

Even the most routine tasks, like diaper changing, provide opportunities for your child to explore and learn about the world. Finding parts of their face in the mirror and naming them builds concepts and vocabulary, and it’s fun too!

For more activities like these, check out the free Vroom app! #442



Dressing Steps

Dressing your child? Describe each step of the process. For example, “First we put your leg in the pants. Then we put in the other leg. Now we pull the pants up.” Pause after each step so they can move their legs or stand up to help you or make a comment.

Ages 1-2



Brainy Background powered by Mind in the Making

Your step-by-step description invites your child to focus on the details of getting dressed. By pausing, you’re giving them practice in waiting and controlling their behavior as they begin to learn to get themselves dressed. And talking with them is always a brain building moment! These are important life skills.

For more activities like these, check out the free Vroom app! #474



What Are YOU Thinking?

What is your child looking at? “Yes, those are my shoes. And that is my hat. Do you want to try on my shoes and hat? I’ll help you!” Take turns! “Can you put my hat on my head? Now try your head. Look it is too big!”

Ages 1-2



Brainy Background powered by Mind in the Making

Your child is learning about which clothes belong to you, and which belong to them, and they’re learning the concepts of small and big. When you laugh about putting your hat on their head, you’re also promoting their sense of humor.

For more activities like these, check out the free Vroom app! #478



Laundry Detective

As you sort laundry, ask your child to guess who it belongs to. You can hold up a shirt, “Who wears this?” Let them respond and then they can pick the next piece of clothing and you guess. If they don’t know, you can tell them and share how you know this.

Ages 1-2



Brainy Background powered by Mind in the Making

When your child guesses who the clothing belongs to, they’re playing detective. They’re focusing, paying attention to clues, and using their working memory and problem-solving skills. These skills are important for learning new things.

For more activities like these, check out the free Vroom app! #501



Laundry Ins and Outs

Invite your child to help you gather clothes for washing. Put them IN the laundry basket, pull them OUT, and then put them IN the machine, and pull them OUT. Use the words IN and OUT to describe your actions and see how they learn these concepts!

Ages 1-2



Brainy Background powered by Mind in the Making

Children your child’s age like putting and pulling things in and out of containers. Using this interest to help you get a chore done also helps them learn the concepts of IN and OUT, and to organize their understanding of the world.

For more activities like these, check out the free Vroom app! #503



Laundry Sort

During laundry time, pull out a single sock and see if your child can find a match for it in the laundry basket. Once they get it, let them pull out another sock and you find the match. Talk about the clues you use to find the match.

Ages 1-2



Brainy Background powered by Mind in the Making

Your child is figuring out what's the same and what's different. This is an important early math skill that they'll use to organize their thinking and to solve math problems later in school.

For more activities like these, check out the free Vroom app! #504



Spin Cycle Challenge

Is there a window on the front of your washing machine? Watch it spin with your child. If there isn't a window, lift them so they can see the water going into the machine. Say things like, "Look, the water is rinsing soap off the clothes." See how they respond and respond back.

Ages 1-2



Brainy Background powered by Mind in the Making

Your child learns best by experiencing the world through their senses, with you as the guide. You're helping build their vocabulary and encouraging curiosity about how things work, which is at the heart of wanting to learn more.

For more activities like these, check out the free Vroom app! #512



Mealtime Copy Cat

Time to eat? Invite your child to imitate what you do. Pick up your spoon, take some food and say, "Mmm delicious," and put the spoon down. Or take tiny bites and have them do the same. Then invite them to do something and you copy them.

Ages 1-2



Brainy Background powered by Mind in the Making

This back and forth game helps your child learn to pay attention and remember so they can repeat your actions. They need these thinking skills to learn information and use it. Plus it can encourage a picky eater to eat!

For more activities like these, check out the free Vroom app! #570



Table Talk

As you sit down to eat, look at the table and talk with your child about where things are. “Where’s the plate? The plate is on the table. Veggies are in the bowl. The spoon is next to the plate.” What if you move them? “Now, where is the spoon?”

Ages 1-2



Brainy Background powered by Mind in the Making

You’re helping your child learn how to think and talk about where objects are in relationship to each other. This ability, which takes time to develop, helps them make sense of the world around them and is important for learning math in the future.

For more activities like these, check out the free Vroom app! #571



Favorite Flavors

As you eat with your child, describe the flavors you both are eating. “The fruit is sweet. The pickle is sour.” Make a face that goes along with it to make it more fun. You can also talk about which foods you like the best.

Ages 1-2



Brainy Background powered by Mind in the Making

When your child hears you describe the foods you’re eating, they’re making connections that will help them learn new words and what they mean. They’re also learning about what you like and don’t like. This is important in learning to get along well with others.

For more activities like these, check out the free Vroom app! #573



Open-Close, In-Out

Cooking dinner? Give your child some safe plastic containers to open and close. Say “open” and “close” as they play. Show them how to put things from the kitchen, like spoons, in and take them out of the containers. Say “in” and “out.” Make sure to talk to them about what they’re doing.

Ages 1-2



Brainy Background powered by Mind in the Making

Your child is thinking like a scientist by experimenting with how things work when they open and close containers and put things in and out. You can even give them different lids for the containers to see which ones fit and which ones don’t.

For more activities like these, check out the free Vroom app! #603



Hide-a-Bear

As you play with your child, take a stuffed animal or object and hide it as they watch you. Ask them, “Where is it?” and let them find it. Then ask them if they can hide it and you find it. Create a cheer to use when each of you finds the toy and keep taking turns.

Ages 1-2



Brainy Background powered by Mind in the Making

When your child watches you hide their toy and then finds it, they’re focusing and using their working memory. When they hide the toy, they’re imagining about how you might think so they can find a tricky hiding place. These skills are important in learning.

For more activities like these, check out the free Vroom app! #807



Dance Copy Cat

Put on a song both of you like and watch your child move. As they dance, copy what they’re doing. When they stop, you dance around and let them watch you. See if you can create a back and forth dance, taking turns copying each other.

Ages 1-2



Brainy Background powered by Mind in the Making

As your child copies your dance, they’re paying attention to your movements, using their working memory, and controlling their actions—all important for learning focus and self-control.

For more activities like these, check out the free Vroom app! #822



Where’s the Crayon?

Place something small and safe, such as a crayon, in the palm of one hand. Close both hands, asking, “Where’s the crayon?” When your child points to one of your hands, open it, saying, “Yes, here’s the crayon!” or if the crayon’s not there, open the other hand.

Ages 1-2



Brainy Background powered by Mind in the Making

Children begin to learn that an object is still there, even when it is hidden. Before they can talk much, children can also show you they understand what you’re saying by pointing. What else do they show you they understand?

For more activities like these, check out the free Vroom app! #841



Read to Me

Share a magazine or news article with your child. Be sure to point at what you're looking at and talking about. "Look at the blue shirt the lady is wearing—I have one too!" "This is a picture of diapers, like the ones you wear." Let them pick the next picture and talk about what you see together. .

Ages 1-2



Brainy Background powered by Mind in the Making

Around age one or later, babies become capable of understanding that pictures stand for real things. As you talk about the connections between pictures and real things—especially things they know—you help them understand symbols. This is a critical step in learning to read later.

For more activities like these, check out the free Vroom app! #848



Dancing Feet

Sing, or turn on music, and dance with your child! See if they can copy what you do with your feet. Try stomping one foot three times. What do they do? Copy their moves and build on them by adding a jump or going on tiptoe. Do they do it too? Keep the dance going!

Ages 1-2



Brainy Background powered by Mind in the Making

This kind of conversation with movement is one way for your child to learn about the importance of listening and responding when interacting with others. They're also practicing the life skills of focus and self-control as they copy your actions.

For more activities like these, check out the free Vroom app! #920



Good Morning, Good Night

Is your child beginning to pretend? Then you can play the Good Morning, Good Night game. When you say, "Good night," they can pretend to sleep by lying down and closing their eyes, and when you say, "Good morning," they can get up and dance!

Ages 1-2



Brainy Background powered by Mind in the Making

Pretend play helps your child make sense of their world and everyday situations. This game is a good way to help them understand more about going to sleep and getting up. It also encourages them to pay attention, follow the rules of the game, and control their behavior.

For more activities like these, check out the free Vroom app! #942



Watch and Learn

Offer your baby familiar objects like a scarf, an empty box, or a container with a lid. Watch to see what they do. Do they try to put the scarf in the box or the lid on a container? Then encourage more learning by commenting on what they're doing, "You put the scarf in the box!"

Ages 1-2



Brainy Background powered by Mind in the Making

When you give your child time to explore everything they can do with a simple object, you support curiosity and encourage creativity. They're also building critical thinking skills to understand concepts of size and shape.

For more activities like these, check out the free Vroom app! #999



Feed Me!

Encourage sharing and taking turns by asking your child to feed you, too. After they take a bite say, "My turn!" Open your mouth and see if they'll give you a bite. Say, "Thank you!" and then prompt them to take a turn. They will love having a turn at being in charge!

Ages 1-2



Brainy Background powered by Mind in the Making

When you and your child take turns, you're modeling the back and forth of communication, which will help them as they learn to talk and read. They're also learning about relating to others in a fun way.

For more activities like these, check out the free Vroom app! #1029



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



Brainy Background powered by Mind in the Making

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