

Vroom Tips



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 3-4. 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.



Rhyme Time

Pick a word, like cake, and take turns saying words that rhyme with it. Keep going until you run out of words that rhyme, and then let your child pick a word to play with. See if you can come up with silly ones to keep it fun like slinky, pinky, stinky.

Ages 3-4



Brainy Background powered by Mind in the Making

Rhyming or word guessing games, like this one, help your child detect differences in sounds. This will help with reading and writing later on

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

#5



Name That Tune

Start humming a song your child knows and have them guess what it is. If they guess wrong, start over and hum the tune again. After a few guesses, you can add in some words to the song as hints. After a few tries, let them try a tune while you guess.

Ages 3-4



Brainy Background powered by Mind in the Making

This game helps your child focus and pay attention to sounds—which is important in communicating, reading, and writing—and it’s fun too!

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

#6



Would You Rather?

Ask your child questions like, “Would you rather be a bird or a fish? Why?” Have them give you a few reasons from real-life experience like, “I love the water so I want to be a fish!” Then you take a turn answering their questions!

Ages 3-4



Brainy Background powered by Mind in the Making

Asking your child questions helps develop their reasoning skills—especially when you ask questions that go beyond simple “yes” or “no” answers.

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

#8



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!

Ages 3-4



Brainy Background powered by Mind in the Making

Creating a fill-in-the-blanks story means your child is thinking and cannot go on automatic pilot. They have to shift their thinking to respond to an unpredictable and changing story line. Thinking in flexible ways encourages problem solving skills.

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

#27



Smile and Wink Game

Smile at your child, wink at them and encourage them to try to copy you. When they can do this, change the order—wink first and then smile. You can make it even more complicated by smiling and winking two times. It’s a fun game that will make you laugh.

Ages 3-4



Brainy Background powered by Mind in the Making

Playing this game helps your child learn to pay attention to what you’re doing, remember the rules, and copy what you’re doing. These are important skills for school and life.

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

#55



Move Like Me

Ask your child to imitate you as you walk, jump, clap, or bend down to touch your toes. Then see if they can do the actions when you just say the words. Challenge them by going fast and slow or adding multiple steps like, “Reach up, turn around, and then jump!”

Ages 3-4



Brainy Background powered by Mind in the Making

Your child uses their skills of focus and self-control as they try to mimic your words and actions. By changing the speed of the movements, you ask them to think on their feet. They must also use their working memory to keep track of what comes next.

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

#81



Memory Book

The next time you come back from visiting your family, invite your child to help you make a memory book using one or more photos from your visit. Write the words they use to describe what's happening in the pictures.

Ages 3-4



Brainy Background powered by Mind in the Making

When you write down your child's words after a family visit, they make connections between their real experiences, photos, and their words. They use their working memory to remember details of the visit and their communication skills to describe what happened.

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

#94



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!

Ages 3-4



Brainy Background powered by Mind in the Making

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.

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

#110



Pretend Packing

Pretend you and your child are packing for a trip. It can be for a visit to a family member's house or an imaginary trip, like to outer space. Take turns naming things to bring. As they get older, you can try coming up with things in alphabetical order.

Ages 3-4



Brainy Background powered by Mind in the Making

When you take turns, you help your child practice their self-control. As they think of items to bring on your trip, they must use what they already know to imagine the future. This involves thinking critically to plan and thinking flexibly to come up with new and creative ideas.

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

#111



Guess Who!

Work together with your child to invent a story about people you pass on the street. Ask them, “Tell me about that man who just walked by.” See how they respond. You can help them by asking questions like, “What do you think he likes to do for fun?” or “What is his favorite food?” Use your imagination!

Ages 3-4



Brainy Background powered by Mind in the Making

As you and your child create a story, they use their communication skills to figure out what they want to say and how, in order to be understood. They also have a chance to practice seeing through others’ eyes as they explore how different people might think or feel.

For more activities like these, check out the free Vroom app! #118



In The Real World

When out and about, point out things you and your child have read about in books or seen in their favorite show. For example, “That backpack looks like the one Dora wears!” or “That train makes sounds like Thomas the Train!”

Ages 3-4



Brainy Background powered by Mind in the Making

This game helps your child understand symbols because they can see how the things in books or on TV are representations of real life.

For more activities like these, check out the free Vroom app! #177



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.

Ages 3-4



Brainy Background powered by Mind in the Making

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.

For more activities like these, check out the free Vroom app! #179



Reporting Live!

While waiting at the supermarket, drugstore, or doctor’s office, pretend you’re a newscaster. Using your pretend microphone, ask your child questions: “What do you see? Who else is here? What do you think is going to happen next?”

Ages 3-4



Brainy Background powered by Mind in the Making

Giving your child a chance to tell the news provides them with an opportunity to observe what is happening around them and put it into words. They’re learning to be an effective communicator. There’s nothing like a pretend microphone to get someone talking!

For more activities like these, check out the free Vroom app! #216



Finger Marker

While waiting, draw a shape (like a circle or a wiggly line), using your fingertip on your child’s open palm. Can they name it? Repeat the same shape until they can guess what it is. Take turns back and forth, drawing and guessing shapes.

Ages 3-4



Brainy Background powered by Mind in the Making

When you play a Finger Marker, you give your child a chance to put together what they know about how shapes look with how shapes feel. It’s a new and fun way to learn shapes through the sense of touch!

For more activities like these, check out the free Vroom app! #220



Hot Potato

You and your child can play this game anywhere you are. Find a small item to pass back and forth and sing a song as you do. As the song ends, whoever has the object does something special or silly, like blink three times or jump up and down. Take turns.

Ages 3-4



Brainy Background powered by Mind in the Making

Playing Hot Potato gives your child practice in following the rules and taking turns. It also gives them practice with self-control, a skill that helps them to stick with something long enough to meet their goals.

For more activities like these, check out the free Vroom app! #222



Silent Game

While waiting, challenge your child to see how long both of you can be silent. Let them be the timer. You can use facial expressions and body movements to communicate. Whoever stays silent the longest wins!

Ages 3-4



Brainy Background

powered by Mind in the Making

When your child is challenged not to talk, they're focusing on their goal and using self-control to stay silent. Focus and self-control are important life skills in learning new things.

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

#223



Letter Shapes

Encourage your child to point out letters on signs around them. Help describe the shapes of the letters, like, "Look. The letter A is pointy, like a triangle. What about the letter O?" See if you both can find all the letters of the alphabet and describe their Letter Shapes.

Ages 3-4



Brainy Background

powered by Mind in the Making

Your child is using focus to find letters, self-control to keep playing the game, and memory to use what they know about letters and shapes to make new connections. When you have fun with language and shapes, you help them enjoy learning.

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

#253



Comparison Shopping

The grocery store can be a great place to build your child's brain on the go. Give them a banana and an apple to hold. "Which is heavier? Which is larger? Which is softer?" You can do this with any items, in any aisle. Or even in any store!

Ages 3-4



Brainy Background

powered by Mind in the Making

Games like these help your child to think like a scientist because they're observing the world around them and making guesses about how things compare or fit together. Repeat the game a few times with different foods for them to compare. Remember, repetition is how we learn!

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

#257



Cart Companion

When you're grocery shopping with your child, hand them some of the items before you put them into the cart. As they check it out, tell them its name and talk about what you plan to use it for. Make sure it's a conversation, where they're adding their ideas!

Ages 3-4



Brainy Background powered by Mind in the Making

Holding the object in front of your child as you say its name helps them learn new vocabulary. And every time you have a back and forth conversation that extends their knowledge, you're building a brain!

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

#262



Drummer Beats

When you're doing the dishes, use one of the clean pots and a spoon to make a drum. Copy each other's sounds. Go back and forth taking turns, repeating the same sounds. Build on each other's beats.

Ages 3-4



Brainy Background powered by Mind in the Making

Your child will be paying attention and using their memory to repeat the sounds you make. Memory and focus are important skills in learning.

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

#395



One Shirt, Two Shirt

Try giving your child some options today. As you're getting dressed give them a choice between two shirts. Ask them why they like the one they have chosen, where they remember wearing it. What else has the same color or pattern?

Ages 3-4



Brainy Background powered by Mind in the Making

Helping your child explain why they made the choice they did helps build their reasoning and communication skills.

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

#460



Laundry Delivery

After folding the laundry, ask your child to help you with Laundry Delivery. “Where do the towels go? That’s right, in the bathroom! What about your pajamas? Yes! In your room. Which drawer?” Switch and let them pick the items and ask you where they go.

Ages 3-4



Brainy Background

powered by Mind in the Making

When children learn to group things into categories, they learn how to organize and make sense of their experience. Just think about how important “matching” is to reading, math, science, and many other subjects.

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

#524



Sandwich Shapes

Sandwiches can seem even better when they aren’t square. As you make one for your child, ask, “How many pieces do you want?” Count them together. Talk about their shapes or arrange them on a plate in a new shape and ask what it looks like now.

Ages 3-4



Brainy Background

powered by Mind in the Making

Did you ever think making a sandwich could stretch your child’s thinking skills? You’re helping them learn the skill of making unusual connections, which is the basis of creativity!

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

#543



Spot the Color

At breakfast, ask your child, “What color is your shirt today (or pants or dress)?” Then ask, “What other things are that color?” Add your ideas, too, and make it a back and forth naming game. See how many things you can name by the time you finish eating.

Ages 3-4



Brainy Background

powered by Mind in the Making

Playing the Spot the Color doesn’t just teach your child colors. You’re also giving them the chance to practice their growing ability to focus on an idea and a task with another person. The ability to “focus” is very important in life and in school.

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

#545



The Big Game

Play The Big Game with your child at breakfast this morning. Name something big. Then ask them, “Can you name something that’s bigger?” Take turns and keep playing until you come up with the biggest, most gigantic, huge thing you can think of. Switch it up and name the smallest thing you can think of.

Ages 3-4



Brainy Background

powered by Mind in the Making

Playing The Big Game helps your child see connections between the size of things and organize them according to size. These are thinking skills they’ll need in school and work.

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

#550



Spice Rack Smells

While working in the kitchen, open up different spices. Smell the differences and even touch them with your child. You can describe these smells (using dramatic words) and talk back and forth with them about some of the foods that you eat with them.

Ages 3-4



Brainy Background

powered by Mind in the Making

Your child learns from their senses—from looking, listening, touching, and smelling. Spice Rack Smells pulls together all of these ways of learning and turns fixing a meal into a memorable way for them to have fun and to learn.

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

#574



One, Two, Three Foods

Pick three food words such as “banana, apple, pear” to make a word pattern. Repeat with your child three times. Have them pick three food words and make a pattern three times: “fork, spoon, plate.” Talk about what word comes first, second, and third.

Ages 3-4



Brainy Background

powered by Mind in the Making

When your child is choosing words, listening to words, and making patterns with you, they’re creating and then using a rule. Understanding and applying rules in creating patterns will help them learn math concepts as they grow.

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

#577



Mealtime Check-In

When eating together, invite your child to think about their day by asking, “What was the BEST part of your day?” Have each person at the table answer. Then ask, “What was the WORST part of your day?” Go around the table again. Share your day with them and encourage them to ask others.

Ages 3-4



Brainy Background powered by Mind in the Making

When your child hears about others’ experiences, they begin to learn how to understand another person’s point of view—an important skill for life. They’re also practicing the back and forth of conversation and evaluating the day’s experience, which build family connections and make mealtime meaningful.

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

#592



Napkin Folds

When you set the table for a meal, encourage your child to think of different ways to fold napkins or paper towels to make different shapes and sizes. You might say, “What shapes can you make? What does this shape look like? What would happen if you kept folding the corners down?”

Ages 3-4



Brainy Background powered by Mind in the Making

Your child is thinking about a familiar thing—a napkin—in new ways as they fold. Engaging in a back and forth conversation about what they’re doing promotes curiosity and helps them make connections between shapes and what they look like. The conversation also helps develop creativity and critical thinking, all skills they’ll need later in life.

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

#593



Silly Songwriter

Turn a familiar tune like “Row, Row, Row Your Boat” into a silly song. Change the words to something like, “Row, row, row your elephant.” See if your child catches on to the joke. “Can you really row an elephant? What could you row?” Can they take a turn to add a silly verse to this song?

Ages 3-4



Brainy Background powered by Mind in the Making

To play this game, your child must listen closely and use their memory to recall the words to songs. They’re also playing with what’s real and what isn’t—important concepts for understanding how the world works.

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

#596



Math Munching

At mealtime or snacktime, create math stories with your child: “Imagine you’re a hungry bear and these crackers look yummy.” Count them together and invite them to choose a number of crackers to eat. Then ask: “How many crackers did you eat? How many crackers are left?”

Ages 3-4



Brainy Background powered by Mind in the Making

Having fun with math helps your child love to learn, while becoming familiar with counting, numbers, and what they stand for. They’re also learning to pay attention, to hold numbers in their mind as they use this information, and to use self-control not to eat everything all at once!

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

#611



Car Clappers

Sitting in a car in traffic makes anyone antsy. So turn it into a clapping game with just a few simple rules. When the radio is on, have your child clap to the music. When you turn the radio off, they stop clapping and “freezes.”

Ages 3-4



Brainy Background powered by Mind in the Making

Changing the rules of the game requires your child to think flexibly and respond to new information, instead of just going on autopilot. This kind of focus and self-control is an important skill that we use everyday—even as adults!

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

#616



Truck Mysteries

When you’re out for a walk or drive, point out all the different trucks for your child. See if they can guess what’s inside each of them by the pictures and words on the outside of the truck.

Ages 3-4



Brainy Background powered by Mind in the Making

This kind of game helps your child think like a scientist, looking for clues in the pictures and words about what’s inside the truck. If they make a mistake, give them a better clue. “See the apple and a word that begins with an f—it’s fruit.”

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

#617



Imagination Station

When you're waiting at a stoplight or on the subway, make up a story together about someone across the street or on the opposite platform. Where is the woman in the hat going? What will she do when she gets there? Try to elaborate on their ideas.

Ages 3-4



Brainy Background powered by Mind in the Making

When you're telling stories, have your child think about how the character in the story might think and feel. This will help them learn how to see other people's perspectives. It's a valuable skill that we all use everyday, adults and children!

For more activities like these, check out the free Vroom app! #626



Colorful World

When you're out with your child, team up with them to find colors. Have them point to something and name the color. Then you name all of the things you can think of that are the same color. Take turns playing this game.

Ages 3-4



Brainy Background powered by Mind in the Making

Thinking about what characteristics objects have in common (whether it's colors, shapes, or size) sparks connections in your child's growing brain.

For more activities like these, check out the free Vroom app! #632



Listening Game

When you're out with your child, talk about sounds that are all around you. When you hear a sound, tell them what you hear and describe where you think it is. "I hear a bird and I think it is in that tree." Ask what they hear and where they think the sound is coming from. Take turns being the leader.

Ages 3-4



Brainy Background powered by Mind in the Making

When your child listens and identifies what they're hearing, they're paying attention and learning to connect words with sounds, which promotes language skills. By going back and forth together, you're reinforcing their learning.

For more activities like these, check out the free Vroom app! #657



Paint the Garden!

Going for a walk? Gather a paint brush, fill an empty container with water, and take a color walk outdoors, painting the flowers and leaves as you go. Talk with your child about what they see. Enjoy the textures, colors, shapes, and living creatures by expressing your own joy and wonder.

Ages 3-4



Brainy Background powered by Mind in the Making

Taking a color walk helps your child notice the life all around them outside, building their skills in observing and describing their experiences. It also develops their appreciation for nature and provides a wonderful way for you to enjoy nature together.

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

#696



Follow Me

Ask your child, “Can you do what I do?” Walk forward or backward, bend down or reach up high. Talk with them about what you’re doing like, “Touch your toes and touch the sky!” Then give them a turn to lead. Change the game and see if they can do the opposite of what you do.

Ages 3-4



Brainy Background powered by Mind in the Making

When your child follows your actions, they learn concepts like up, down, forward, and backward by experiencing them with their body. By changing the rules, you challenge them to use self-control to stay focused and not go on autopilot, important skills for learning now and in the future.

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

#715



Wheel Watch

While on foot, on the bus, or in the car, encourage your child to point out the different kinds of wheels they see. Talk with them about what you both notice. Do they see big wheels on a truck or two small wheels on a bike? What else can they think of that has wheels?

Ages 3-4



Brainy Background powered by Mind in the Making

By supporting and responding to your child’s explorations, you’re helping build their vocabulary and ability to focus on a task. Being able to put things in categories (thinking about what’s the same and different), also helps them become better at making connections.

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

#737



Turn Tower

Using items like cups, take turns stacking with your child to build a tower. Say, “My turn,” as you stack one and then, “Your turn,” as they do. Eventually, stop using words. Do they keep taking turns? Try to playfully break the rules and take two turns. What do they do?

Ages 3-4



Brainy Background powered by Mind in the Making

You’re showing your child the importance of working together as you build, while also asking them to focus to make sure the tower stays up. They’re also using working memory to keep track of whose turn it is, without your words to guide them.

For more activities like these, check out the free Vroom app! #861



Balancing Feat

Take turns with your child standing on one foot and then the other, trying to balance. You can say, “Your turn,” and “My turn.” See if you can do it with your eyes closed. What else can you do?

Ages 3-4



Brainy Background powered by Mind in the Making

You and your child are having a conversation with actions as you take turns standing on one foot, then the other. When they practice doing this, they’re learning about balance—what it takes to stay steady and not fall down.

For more activities like these, check out the free Vroom app! #869



Warm and Cold

Hide something like a spoon or cup and encourage your child to find it. As they get closer say, “You’re getting warm.” If they move farther away say, “You’re getting cold.” When they find the item, invite them to choose a hiding place and use “warm” and “cold” to tell you where to look.

Ages 3-4



Brainy Background powered by Mind in the Making

As you give your child clues with the words “warm” and “cold,” they must remember the rules of the game to search for the item. They must focus on finding the object without getting distracted, a skill that will help them pursue goals now and in the future.

For more activities like these, check out the free Vroom app! #1005



Snack Sorters

Give your child three different snacks like pretzels, cheese, and apples. Talk about what's the same and what's different. Ask them if they can put one type of snack together (like all the pretzels). Then ask if they can find another way to sort the snacks, like by size, shape, or color.

Ages 3-4



Brainy Background powered by Mind in the Making

The skill of making connections is essential to learning. When your child puts things into categories, they're learning concepts like size, color, and shape. They're also learning to think flexibly by seeing how things can go together in different ways.

For more activities like these, check out the free Vroom app! #1032



How Many?

Invite your child to predict how many seeds will be in an apple when you cut it or how many pieces of orange there will be when you peel it. Count the seeds or slices together and compare their prediction to what you both discovered. What other foods can you use for this game?

Ages 3-4



Brainy Background powered by Mind in the Making

In this game, your child is using early science skills to predict the number of seeds or slices, count them, and then compare their prediction to what they discover. They're also learning to estimate numbers, an important concept in math.

For more activities like these, check out the free Vroom app! #1037



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

Ages 3-4



Brainy Background powered by Mind in the Making

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."

For more activities like these, check out the free Vroom app! #1043