

BRAIN BOOSTERS



Early childhood is a time of extraordinary development and learning. In fact, a child's brain grows as fast as it ever will during the first five years of life! Luckily, supporting your child's healthy development doesn't have to be difficult - everyday activities can be learning opportunities. These cards offer easy tips for incorporating brain building activities into your daily routines. The key developmental domains targeted by each tip are noted at the top of each card.

If you have questions or concerns about your child's growth or want to talk with someone about parenting, please call **2-1-1** and ask for **Help Me Grow**. For more tips and activities, visit onlib.org/makingsmallmomentsbig.



DEVELOPMENTAL DOMAINS

When used in relation to human development, the word "domain" refers to specific aspects of growth and change. The five domains of early childhood development are:



Communication: A child's language skills, both understood and spoken.



Fine Motor: A child's hand and finger movement and coordination.



Gross Motor: How a child uses their arms, legs and other large muscles.



Personal-Social: A child's self-help skills and interactions with others.



Problem Solving: How a child plays with toys and solves problems.

COMMUNICATION



STORY
BEFORE
BEDTIME!

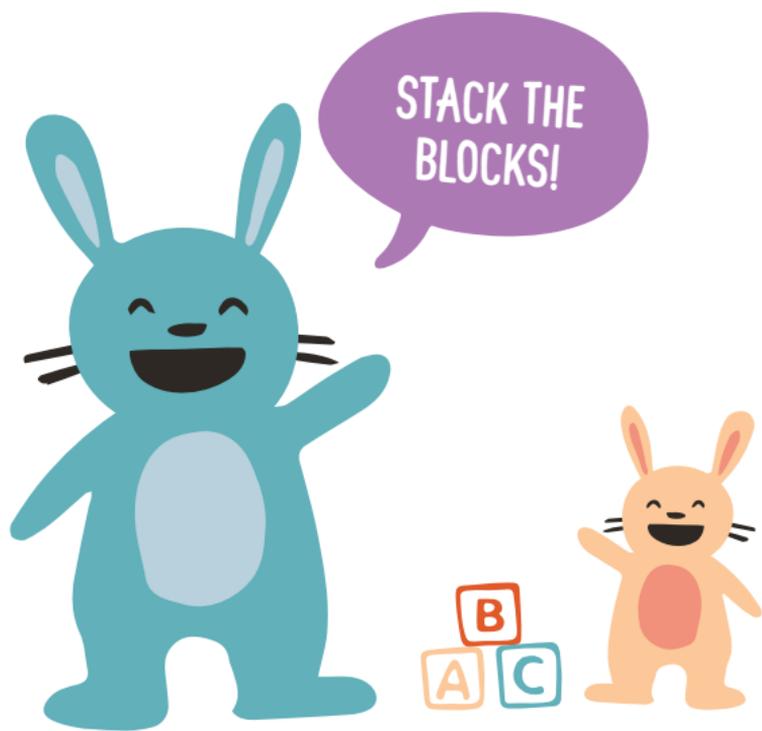
Select a favorite book and read it to your child, leaving out key words as you read. Ask your child to fill in the words while you point to the matching picture. For example, "The ___ [dog] ran out of the ___ [house]."

COMMUNICATION



Turn on some children's music and sing along. Your child will start learning through song as she recites letters, numbers, days of the week and body parts to melodic tunes.

FINE MOTOR SKILLS



When your child first plays with blocks, she will love throwing or banging them together. As she gets older, she might begin building simple towers and will especially love knocking them down.

FINE MOTOR SKILLS

LET'S DRAW
A PICTURE!



Scribbling is an important first step in learning how to write. Get out the crayons or washable markers and let your child draw and scribble away.

Say, "Tell me about your picture.

What colors did you use?"

GROSS MOTOR SKILLS



Make an obstacle course for your child with pillows to climb over and to sit on. As your child explores the course, describe her position in words: "Now you're sitting on top of the cushion! Now you're crawling over it. You went around it!"

GROSS MOTOR SKILLS



Play games that involve starting and stopping, such as "Red Light, Green Light." This is a great way for your child to learn about controlling his body and actions.

PERSONAL-SOCIAL



Talk about your own feelings when spending time with your child to show how to use words to communicate about emotions. You might say, “Reading bedtime stories is so warm and cozy!” or, “It’s really hard for me to wait my turn for the truck, so I’m playing with blocks while I wait.”

PERSONAL-SOCIAL



Establish predictable daily routines for bedtime, mealtime and naptime. You might say, "It's time for bed. We'll have a glass of milk, a story, and a kiss. Then - bedtime." Loving routines help children feel safe and secure and build an early understanding of patterns.

PROBLEM SOLVING



Create your own puzzle by cutting a cereal or pasta box into little pieces that your child can put back together.

PROBLEM SOLVING



Play matching and sorting games during your everyday routines. Your child can help sort socks into two piles - little socks for him and big socks for Mommy and Daddy. Next, find the matching pairs: "Do you see another sock with red stripes?"