



Problem Solving

Activities to Help Your Child Grow and Learn



Your child may be counting to 15 from memory and accurately counting 10 objects. He is able to follow directions when he is in a group activity and knows the rules at home and at school. He enjoys pretend play and may act out different roles with friends. Wild stories and exaggerations are common. He enjoys “reading” books and may have simple books memorized. He is really starting to understand how things work in the world and is endlessly curious about why things are the way they are.

Pretzel Fun Make pretzel letters (or numbers). Pretzels can be made with pizza dough or pie crust dough. Cut the dough into strips and form numbers or letters out of the dough. Brush with a beaten egg, sprinkle with a little salt and bake until golden brown. Eat up an A, B, or C!

Fun Food Coloring Most children love to experiment with food coloring. Let your child color her food. Here are some ideas: color scrambled eggs blue, color a glass of milk, add a drop of color to a piece of apple or to a slice of bread before toasting it, and color mashed potatoes. Ask your child to think of other ideas.

How Long? Count how long your child can do a new skill, such as standing on one foot, or how many times he can bounce a ball. Celebrate each time he can do a new skill for a little more time. Let him count while you try something, such as balancing a book on your head. This will help your child practice new skills and counting.

How Many?

Storytime Tell a story to your child. Use different voices, body postures, and facial expressions to be different characters. Now it’s your child’s turn to tell a story. Encourage your little one to ham it up—and don’t forget to be an appreciative audience.

What’s Missing? Lay out five or more different toys and give your child time to look at all of them. Now, hide a single toy at a time. See how long it takes your child to figure out which toy is missing. You may need to give her some clues at first. Once she guesses which toy is missing, hide a different toy. Now it’s her turn to try to trick you!

Find the Treasure This activity has to be planned well ahead of time. Hide “treasure” (e.g., a favorite snack, a small bag of old jewelry, a new toy) in a place your child is able to reach. Make drawings of all of the places you want your child to search (e.g., a TV, a mailbox) for the “treasure.” Be sure to make the drawings simple and clear. Each clue should direct your child to a place where he will find the next clue until he eventually finds the “treasure.”



54–60 months