

Helpful Learning Activities for Children 36-48 Months Old

Focus on: *Cognitive Development*

Copying Drawings.

Using crayons, pencils, or markers on a large sheet of paper, play a drawing game where you follow your child's lead by copying exactly what he draws. Next, encourage your child to copy your drawings, such as circles or straight lines.



Easy Homemade Birdfeeder

Make a bird feeder using peanut butter and birdseed. Help your child find a pinecone or a piece of wood to spread peanut butter on. Roll in or sprinkle with seeds and hang in a tree or outside a window. While your child watches the birds, ask her about the number, size, and color of the different birds that visit.

Grouping Objects by Their Use.

Put out several objects that are familiar to your child (brush, coat, banana, spoon, book). Ask your child to show you which one you can eat or which one you wear outside. Help your child put the objects in groups that go together, such as "things that we eat" and "things that we wear."

Grow a Plant.

Choose seeds that sprout quickly (beans or peas), and together with your child plant the seeds in a paper cup, filled almost to the top with dirt. Place the seeds 1/2 inch under the soil. Put the cup on a sunny windowsill and encourage your child to water and watch the plant grow.



Listen for Sounds.

Find a cozy spot, and sit with your child. Listen and identify all of the sounds that you hear. Ask your child if it is a loud or soft sound. Try this activity inside and outside your home.

Make an adventure path outside.

Use a garden hose, rope, or piece of chalk and make a "path" that goes under the bench, around the tree, and along the wall. Walk your child through the path, using

these words. After she can do it, make a new path or have your child make a path.

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Focus on: *Cognitive Development (cont'd)*

More or Less.

While cooking or eating dinner, play the "more or less" game with your child. Ask who has more potatoes and who has less. Try this using same-size glasses or cups, filled with juice or milk.



Play a Matching Game.

Make two sets of 10 or more pictures. You can use pictures from two copies of the same magazine or a deck of playing cards. Lay the pictures face up and ask your child to find two that are the same. Start with two picture sets and gradually add more.

Practice Following Directions.

Play a silly game where you ask your child to do two or three fun or unusual things in a row. For example, ask him to "Touch your elbow and then run in a circle" or "Find a book and put it on your head."



Pointing It Out.

Before bedtime, look at a magazine or children's book together. Ask your child to point to pictures as you name them, such as "Where is the truck?" Be silly and ask him to point with an elbow or foot. Ask him to show you something that is round or something that goes fast.

Rounding Up.

Cut out some large paper circles and show them to your child. Talk with your child about things in her world that are "round" (a ball, the moon). Cut the circle in half, and ask her if she can make it round again. Next, cut the circle into three pieces, and so forth.

Simon Says: Naming Body Parts.

During bath time, play Simon Says to teach your child names of body parts. First, you can be "Simon" and help your child wash the part of his body that "Simon says." Let your child have a turn to be "Simon," too. Be sure to name each body part as it is washed and give your child a chance to wash himself.

Talk About the Number 3.

Read stories with 3 in them (The Three Billy Goats Gruff, Three Little Pigs, The Three Bears). Encourage your child to count to 3 using similar objects (rocks, cards, blocks). Talk about being 3 years old. After your child gets the idea, move up to the numbers 4, 5, and so forth as long as your child is interested.

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