

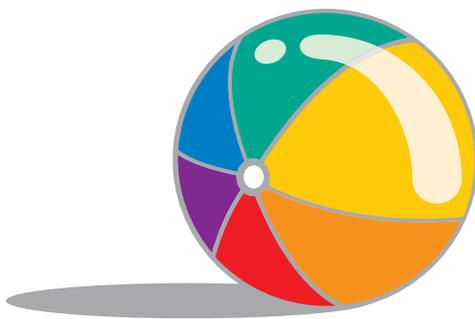
MIND builders



What's the Missing Word?

Your child may want to read the same book over and over again. He is learning when he does this, so play along! After you have read a book to your child several times, see if your child can “fill in the blanks.” This works particularly well if the words in the story rhyme. On each page, read the beginning of a sentence, but leave off the last word and see if your child can fill in the missing word. If he can't think of the word, read it to him, and see if he remembers it the next time you read it.

Reading a story over and over and letting your child fill in the missing words helps build his memory.



Treasure Hunt

Take turns with your child hiding three or four objects around the house or outside in a small area. You can hide small stuffed animals, blocks, balls, or socks. At first, let your child watch while you hide the objects. As she becomes familiar with the game, see if she can find the objects that you hide while she is not looking. If she needs help finding the objects, use “close” and “far” to let her know if she is getting close. For example, say: **“You are getting close, close, closer!”** when she moves close to an object, or **“Ooh, you are far away, farther away, even farther away!”** as she moves away from an object.

This activity helps develop your child’s memory and the concepts of close and far away.



2

three year old

Number of the Day

You can make learning about numbers fun!
Tell your child:

Today, let's see how many things we can find that are "two" - today is "2" day!

Throughout the day, search for things that come in two's.
For example:

**We wear two shoes, we have two eyes,
a bicycle has two wheels.**

See how many things your three year old can find or create in two's. At mealtimes, help your child group his food in sets of two, and count them as he eats them,

One, two!

When walking, count your steps in two's,

One, two, one, two, one, two.

Help your child learn what the number looks like, by showing him the number on a piece of paper or in a book. Or, write it on the sidewalk with chalk.

Learning the concept of numbers will help your child learn about counting and math.



Let's Go Hunting

Give your child a plastic bag or other container that can hold several items. Tell her you are going on a "numbers hunt." Make a list of five things that your child will have to find on her numbers hunt. On a piece of paper, write the numbers 1 to 5 from the top to the bottom of the paper, and then draw the object next to the number. For example:

1 -  (ball)

4 -  (books)

2 -  (socks)

5 -  (spoons)

3 -  (juice boxes)

Go with your child as she hunts for the items, and help her count each item as she puts it in her bag. Be sure the items are in safe places for her to look and reach. Once she has all the items, dump them out and help her sort them. Make a big "show" of checking the item off your list for example, **Did you find one ball?** When she picks up or points out the ball, count together, **One ball. Check!** And check the item off your list. If she missed an item, help her figure out what to do. For example, **1-2-3 books. We need four books. Can you find one more book?**

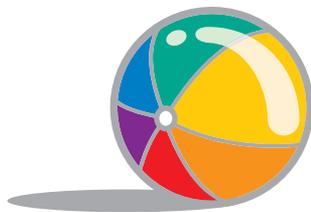
Your child is learning about counting and sorting as she hunts for a specific number of objects.



Shaving Cream Painting

This can be a messy activity, but it's great fun for your child and helps him grow! Buy a can of inexpensive shaving cream next time you go to the store. Set up a place for your child to play with the shaving cream either outside on newspapers that are spread out, or inside on a large table that is easy to clean. Dress your child in something that can get dirty. Spray a good amount of shaving cream onto the newspapers or table and let your child play with it, first with his hands. You can also give him tools to make patterns in the shaving cream, like a fork or an old comb or brush. After he has played for awhile, help him smooth the shaving cream. Help him practice scribbling in the shaving cream with his finger, or making shapes like a square, circle and triangle. Add a few drops of food coloring so he can try mixing the colors into the shaving cream, or mixing the colors together. This can be a fun activity for two or more children to experiment together with the shaving cream.

Your child is learning about patterns, shapes, and colors, and using his fingers and sense of touch to play with the shaving cream.



What is Different?

Cut out several pictures from a magazine or draw several pictures that have something in common and could be put into a group together. For example, make groups of fruits or shoes or trees or furniture. Make at least three groups of pictures, with three pictures in each group, for a total of nine pictures. Then lay out four pictures for your child to see. Three that are in the same group and one that is not. Ask your child to point to the picture that does not match. If he cannot find the one that is different, give him clues. For example, lay out three pictures of vegetables, and one tree. Say,

**Three of these you can eat,
but one you cannot.**

Can you find the one you can't eat?

It is something you can climb on.

Do the same thing with the other groups of similar pictures. Talk with your child about the pictures and how they are the same and how they are different. Your child may come up with some interesting ideas on how they are the same and different!

Your child is learning the ideas of "same" and "different."





A Special Trip

On a day when you will have several hours to spend with your child, plan a trip to a new place that will have new things for your child to see and experience.

Think about your child and something he really enjoys, or is good at. For example, does your child like to make art – painting and coloring? Does he love fish or dinosaurs or animals? Then think of a special place you can go together and explore. You can visit an art museum, a pet store, or a natural history museum that has dinosaur exhibits. You can go to the Zoo, or a children’s Museum. Visit a regional park that may have a lake, picnic areas and playgrounds. Go on a shell-collecting trip to the beach or go to a pumpkin patch and pick out a pumpkin to carve. Whatever you do on your special trip, talk about what you see and teach your three year old new words and ideas. At the zoo, learn the names of the animals together. At the park, talk about the different kinds of trees or plants or how the play equipment works.

Giving your child new experiences builds his mind and his words.



I Spy the Flag!

When you are out in the community with your child, look for the American flag. Many government buildings, businesses and homes have flags flying that will be easy for your child to see. Every time you see a flag, point it out to your child. Talk about the colors of the flag. After she is familiar with the flag, play a game of "I spy!" and see how many American flags she can find on your trip. Once your child is familiar with this game, you can play "I Spy" with many different things. For example, look for all of the blue cars, or at Christmas, look for all the houses with Christmas lights.

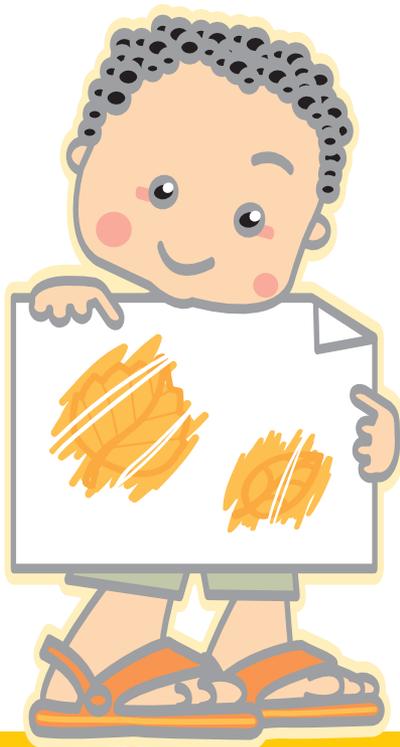
Your three year old is learning to recognize an object or symbol that is not always in the same place or context. This builds her memory and problem-solving skills.



Leaf Patterns

Go on a walk together and collect leaves of different shapes and sizes. Bring them home and lay them flat on a table. Cover a leaf with a piece of paper and using the broad side of a crayon, show your child how to rub the crayon on the paper right on top of where the leaf is lying underneath. The shape and pattern of the leaf will appear on the paper. Talk together about how the leaves are different shapes, sizes, and make different patterns. Hang your child's artwork where his family and friends will see it!

This activity will help your child learn about shapes, patterns and textures.



Play Dough Impressions

You can purchase play dough at the store, or make some of your own with flour, salt and water. Add in food coloring if you want to color the play dough you make. Have your child close her eyes, and press something into the play dough, like a coin, a belt buckle, a watch band – anything that has a pattern that will leave a mark on the play dough. Then show the play dough to your child and ask if she can guess what made the mark? If she has trouble guessing, show her how you made the mark in the play dough. Then let her make an impression in the play dough while you are not looking. She will have a great time trying to make impressions that you will not be able to guess!

Here is a recipe for play dough that doesn't need cooking.

Mix together:

1 cup flour

1/2 cup salt

a little less than 1/2 cup water
(just enough for the dough to mix together)

This activity helps your child learn about patterns. When she sees a copy of an object in the play dough, and figures out what it was, she is building her problem-solving and memory skills.



Notes