

30-36 Month Play Ideas

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Play is a natural way for your young child to grow and learn. Activities in this list support key areas of development from your ASQ. Start with easy ones and see what they enjoy. Help your child build important skills while having fun.

Communication

Your child's language skills, what they understand and what they can say.

Help your child learn new words to describe objects in everyday conversations. Describe by color, size, and shape (the blue cup, the big ball). Talk about how things move (a car goes fast, a turtle moves slowly) and how they feel (ice cream is cold, soup is hot).

Tell or read a familiar story and pause frequently to leave out a word, asking your child to “fill it in.” For example, Little Red Riding Hood said, “Grandmother, what big _____ you have.”



Gross Motor

How your child's moves their arms and legs.

Teach somersaults by doing one yourself first. Then help your child do one. Let her try it alone. You may want to put some pillows on the floor to make it easier.

To improve coordination and balance, show your child the “bear walk” by walking on hands and feet, keeping the legs and arms straight. Try the “rabbit hop” by crouching down and then jumping forward.

Fine Motor

Your child's hand and finger movement and coordination.

Trace around simple objects with your child. Use cups of different sizes, blocks, or your child's and your hands. Using felt-tip markers or crayons of different colors makes it even more fun.

Make a poster of your child's favorite things using pictures from old magazines. Use safety scissors and paste or a glue stick to allow your child to do it while you watch.



Problem-solving

How your child thinks, plays with things and how they solve problems.

Have your child help you set the table. First, have your child place the plates, then cups, and then napkins. Show your child where the utensils should be placed.



Children at this age may be interested in creating art in different ways. Try cutting a potato in half and carving a simple shape or design for your child to dip in paint and then stamp onto paper.

Personal-social

Asks about feeding, dressing, and how they engage with others.

Put an old blanket over a table to make a tent or house. Pack a "picnic" sack for your camper. Have your child take along a pillow on the "camp out" for a nap.



Find More Activities

Give a cup to your child. Use bits of cereal or fruit and place one in your child's cup ("one for you") and one in your cup ("one for me"). Take turns. Dump out your child's cup and help count the pieces. This is good practice for early math skills.