

36-48 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.

Talk about the number 3. Read stories that have 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.

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."



Gross Motor

How your child's moves their arms and legs.

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

Listen and dance to music with your child. You can stop the music for a moment and play the "freeze" game, where everyone "freezes," or stands perfectly still, until you start the music again. Try to "freeze" in unusual positions for fun.



Fine Motor

Your child's hand and finger movement and coordination.

Grow a plant. Choose seeds that sprout quickly (beans or peas), and together with your child place the seeds in a paper cup, filling 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.

Make long scarves out of fabric scraps, old dresses, or old shirts by tearing or cutting long pieces. Use material that is lightweight. Hold on to the edge of the scarf, twirl around, run, and jump.

Problem-solving

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

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.

When your child is getting dressed, encourage them to practice with buttons and zippers. Play a game of Peekaboo to show them how buttons go through the holes. Pretend the zipper is a choo-choo train going “up and down” the track.



Personal-social

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

Encourage your child's “sharing skills” by making a play corner in your home. Include only 2 children to start (a family member or friend) and have a few of the same type of toys so that the children don't have to share all of the time. Puppets or blocks are good because they encourage playing together. If needed, use an egg or oven timer with a bell to allow the children equal time with the toys.



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