

## LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

CIRCLE

### FACTOID!

Preschoolers who spend more time talking in play have larger vocabularies in kindergarten.

ONE

1

BLUE

## SPATIAL AWARENESS

TRIANGLE

### PLAY!

Make an obstacle course today! Line up a few pillows for a jump or use the table as a tunnel. Lines on the floor could even become a tightrope. Try one or two of these and then add on some of your own! Talk to your child about what he/she is doing as he/she does it! As your child moves around the obstacle course, he/she is learning concepts like over, under, into, along, up, and down—all through his/her senses. Your child is also gaining control of how and when he/she moves, which is an important step in building self-control.

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Brain building moments

TWO

2

BLUE

## NUMBER KNOWLEDGE

HEART

### PLAY!

Give your child safe containers of different sizes to play with, like measuring cups, bowls, and pots. Encourage him/her to try placing one of the containers inside another. Talk about what he/she is doing like, "Two cups fit inside the big pot." Which ones fit? Which ones don't? When you describe what your child is doing, you help him/her build vocabulary and motivate him/her to keep exploring and learning. Your child learns about important ideas like numbers, size, and shape by experimenting with them in fun ways during everyday situations.

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Brain building moments

FIVE

5

RED

## CONCEPTUAL THINKING

RAINDROP

### PLAY!

Pick a color or letter with your child and, together, go on a scavenger hunt to find as many things as you can in three minutes. How many things in the house are blue? Count out loud together as you find each item. You can also play with letters: How many things do you see that start with T? "I Spy" games like this one are great brain builders. They make your child aware of his/her environment and teach him/her to make connections between similar things. You can try this game with letters, colors, shapes—anything really!

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Brain building moments

SIX

6

RED

## SOCIAL SKILLS

PENTAGON

### FACTOID!

The amount and complexity of imaginary play predicts role taking, popularity, and teacher rating of social skills with peers.

THREE

3

BLUE

## CREATIVE & FLEXIBLE THINKING

SQUARE

### PLAY!

Pretend you and your child are packing for a trip. It can be for a visit to a family member's house or an imaginary trip, like to outer space. Take turns naming things to bring. As he/she gets older, you can try coming up with things in alphabetical order. When you take turns, you help your child practice his/her self-control. As your child thinks of items to bring on your trip, he/she must use what he/she already knows to imagine the future. This involves thinking critically to plan and thinking flexibly to come up with new and creative ideas.

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Brain building moments

FOUR

4

BLUE

## HEALTHY BODIES

ARROW

### PLAY!

Turn on music or sing with your child and dance with different parts of your body! "Let's dance with our fingers" as you move your fingers across the table. "Now, let's dance with our arms" as you move them over your head. "Can you make your feet dance?" Can your child make his/her face dance? Have fun coming up with different moves and take turns copying one another. It takes focus and self-control for your child to concentrate on moving only one part of his/her body. Switching among movements also takes flexible thinking. Children learn these skills best by being active and having fun.

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Brain building moments

SEVEN

7

RED

## SELF-CONTROL

STAR

### PLAY!

Ask your child to listen to your words and do what you say, instead of following what you do. Say, "Stomp your feet" while you clap your hands. Your child should stomp his/her feet and try not to focus on the clapping. Try new words and new actions when your child learns to do this. Take turns! Your child has to focus carefully on what you say and use self-control to not be distracted by what you do. It's hard, but playing this game helps children develop life skills that they will use now and in the future, and will help them thrive.

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Brain building moments

EIGHT

8

RED

## LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

CIRCLE

### FACTOID!

Placing an object in a consistent location helps children learn its name.

NINE

9

ORANGE

## SPATIAL AWARENESS

TRIANGLE

### PLAY!

Play with your child by using your voice and/or household items that make a sound. Bang a pan or hum as you move around the house and change locations. Watch your child move his/her head to follow the sound. Smile and talk with him/her when he/she figures out where the sound is coming from. When your child is learning to follow where sounds are coming from, his/her brain is activated and is making connections between his/her body and his/her environment. These connections prepare your child for future learning.

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Brain building moments

TEN

10

ORANGE

## NUMBER KNOWLEDGE

HEART

### FACTOID!

Compared to color games, number board games like "Chutes and Ladders" help children perform better on mathematical tasks like counting and estimation.

THIRTEEN

13

PURPLE

## CONCEPTUAL THINKING

RAINDROP

### PLAY!

Everyday items make great toys. Give your child an empty tissue box and a spoon. Let him/her see you put the spoon into the box. Does he/she watch? Shake the box. Reach in and take the spoon out. Giggle. Now it's your child's turn. Give him/her the spoon. What does he/she do? It's a simple game, yet your child is exploring a big idea: Objects and people still exist even when they are out of sight. Although it will take until your child is around two to really learn this, the practice is fun! Play this game often.

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Brain building moments

FOURTEEN

14

PURPLE

## SOCIAL SKILLS

PENTAGON

### FACTOID!

Acting helps children put themselves in someone else's shoes. This can help children learn to take other people's perspective.

ELEVEN

11

ORANGE

## CREATIVE & FLEXIBLE THINKING

SQUARE

### PLAY!

Make picking up toys a game with your child. Who can pick up the toys first or the fastest? Change the rules as you go along. Who can find something red or blue? Pickup time turns a cleanup time into brain building time. Your child is learning the skill of paying attention, of following directions, and of thinking flexibly as you change the rules. Your child is also learning to become responsible for taking care of his/her toys.

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Brain building moments

TWELVE

12

ORANGE

## HEALTHY BODIES

ARROW

### FACTOID!

Children who play vigorously have good self-control abilities, which are linked to good reading and math

FIFTEEN

15

PURPLE

## SELF-CONTROL

STAR

### FACTOID!

Children who engage in pretend play learn to control their own behaviors because imaginary situations always have rules of some form.

SIXTEEN

16

PURPLE

## LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

CIRCLE

**PLAY!**  
Make category lists together, such as vegetables, vehicles, and animals.

SEVENTEEN

17

YELLOW

## SPATIAL AWARENESS

TRIANGLE

**FACTOID!**  
Preschool-aged children who hear more spatial terms like "above" and "below" produce more of those words. Later, these children have better spatial skills and are more successful in math and science.

EIGHTEEN

18

YELLOW

## NUMBER KNOWLEDGE

HEART

**PLAY!**  
Invite your child to play freely with blocks. This helps them use more words about space and math.

TWENTY-ONE

21

GREEN

## CONCEPTUAL THINKING

RAINDROP

**PLAY!**  
Play a game where your child has to guess what you are. Make different facial expressions and body movements and see if he/she can get it. Sound effects are allowed too! Then ask your child to be something and you try to guess. You can pretend to be animals, objects, or people you both know. When your child is guessing what or who you are, he/she is using observational skills and memories of past experiences. When your child is acting and pretending to be someone or something else, his/her perspective taking and communicating skills are promoted.

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Brain building moments

TWENTY-TWO

22

GREEN

## SOCIAL SKILLS

PENTAGON

**PLAY!**  
Playing helps children learn to cooperate with other people. Outdoor activities are great tools to learn cooperation. Choose an outdoor activity with your child, such as gardening or building a snowman. Let your child share their ideas, share yours, and work together to get the job done!

NINETEEN

19

YELLOW

## CREATIVE & FLEXIBLE THINKING

SQUARE

**PLAY!**  
When children pretend, they follow rules that require them to do what doctors do and to do what patients do. Encourage your child to take on roles and challenge them to switch roles. This helps them imagine and think flexibly.

TWENTY

20

YELLOW

## HEALTHY BODIES

ARROW

**FACTOID!**  
Physical play can help children learn to control their muscles and acquire balance, hand-eye-foot coordination, and navigation skills.

TWENTY-THREE

23

GREEN

## SELF-CONTROL

STAR

**FACTOID!**  
Children who learn to cope with excitement and stress during play show grace under pressure later in life. They can think, act, and interact more effectively in tense situations.

TWENTY-FOUR

24

GREEN

## LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

CIRCLE

**PLAY!**  
Help your child think of as many adjectives as you can for foods, animals, and vehicles.

TWENTY-FIVE

25

MAGENTA

## SPATIAL AWARENESS

TRIANGLE

**PLAY!**  
Build LEGO structures with your child. Use play time to build with blocks. These activities expose children to spatial terms like "above" and "below" and can even help build math skills.

TWENTY-SIX

26

MAGENTA

## NUMBER KNOWLEDGE

HEART

**PLAY!**  
When you are home, at the store, or on a family outing, look for quantities with your child and use math language to describe them. Use "large" and "small" to refer to size. Use numbers such as "3" and "4" to emphasize how many.

TWENTY-NINE

29

CYAN

## CONCEPTUAL THINKING

RAINDROP

**PLAY!**  
Help your child think like a scientist! Go outside with your child, ask a question, and look for the answer. Talk about each step with your child. For example, where do worms hide? Maybe under a leaf, on a tree, or under a log. Now go look and see where you find worms. What did you find? Why do worms live where they do?

THIRTY

30

CYAN

## SOCIAL SKILLS

PENTAGON

**FACTOID!**  
Play with others helps children learn to take turns.

TWENTY-SEVEN

27

MAGENTA

## CREATIVE & FLEXIBLE THINKING

SQUARE

**PLAY!**  
Find an object with your child and ask them to describe it in different ways. For example, an apple is red, round, and sweet. Now find two objects and ask your child to describe how they are similar and different. For example, an apple and an orange or both round but one is red and one is green. This helps children think flexibly about objects and make creative connections.

TWENTY-EIGHT

28

MAGENTA

## HEALTHY BODIES

ARROW

**PLAY!**  
Help your child find some objects outside, such as sticks, leaves, and rocks and set up an obstacle course. Run or crawl through the obstacle course with your child. Make the course more challenging by adding more objects or pushing them closer together. This fun activity helps get your child's body moving, helps them practice hand-eye-foot coordination and navigate space!

THIRTY-ONE

31

CYAN

## SELF-CONTROL

STAR

**PLAY!**  
Make today art day! Set your child up with coloring supplies and let them choose who they would like to draw a picture of and what they would like to draw. Doing art helps children learn to focus their attention.

THIRTY-TWO

32

CYAN





**Playing**  
**IS LEARNING**



**Playing**  
**IS LEARNING**



**Playing**  
**IS LEARNING**



**Playing**  
**IS LEARNING**



**Playing**  
**IS LEARNING**



**Playing**  
**IS LEARNING**



**Playing**  
**IS LEARNING**



**Playing**  
**IS LEARNING**

## PLAYING IS LEARNING CARDS

This deck of cards is designed to promote awareness about the power of play in promoting children's development. The deck includes 32 cards with Factoids and Play tips for 8 categories of learning that play fosters.

Number Knowledge  
Spatial Awareness  
Healthy Bodies  
Self-control  
Social Skills  
Conceptual Knowledge  
Creativity & Flexible Thinking  
Language Development.

This deck of cards also includes 7 Game cards. Each game card describes a game that you and your child can play together using the cards. These games are designed to be fun for children and families and highlight how learning games can foster thinking in children. Remember to remove the instruction cards before playing. Enjoy!

## MEMORY MATCHING GAME

Play the color game. Mix up the cards and spread them out face up. Look at each card and then flip them over. Take turns with your child flipping over cards to look for matches. If you find a match, remove the pair. Otherwise, flip the pair back over and continue. The person who finds the most matches wins! When you are done, play the same game, but this time, look for matching shapes!

This game uses attention and memory for location. It also requires focus and can help children think flexibly about colors and shapes.

## SCAVENGER HUNT

Mix up the cards and stack them face down. Take the top card and flip it over. Talk about the shape with your child and then look around the house and outdoors for an object that is a similar shape. Try the same game for color, or make the game a race by finding any object that matches in shape or color as fast as you can!

This game gives children the opportunity to see the similarities and differences among objects. Increase spatial awareness by using spatial terms such as "above" and "below" on your scavenger hunt!

## PLAYING WITH NUMBERS

Mix up the cards and stack them face down. Take the top card and flip it over. Look at the number on the card and ask your child what number comes next? What number comes before? Make it more challenging and ask your child what two numbers come next.

Find all the numbered cards from 1 to 10. Mix up the 10 cards and stack them face down. Take the top two cards and flip them over. Using counting on to add the numbers together. For example, if you flipped over 4 and 5, make the equation  $4 + 5$ . Start with the larger number, 5, and count up 4 - 6, 7, 8, and 9.

Find all the numbered cards from 1 to 10. Mix up the 10 cards and stack them face down. Take the top card and flip it over. Look around the house or outdoors for similar objects, such as stuffed animals, sticks, or rocks that add up to the number on the card.

You can make up your own number games, too!

These games can help your child build number knowledge, exposes your child to math language, and exposes your child to quantities.

## GO FISH

Teach your child this classic game! Mix up the cards. Give your child 5 cards, and you take 5 cards. Place the remaining cards in a stack face down. Play Go Fish for color. Each person should look at their cards and remove any pairs of matching colors. Now take turns asking each other person if they have a card that matches one of yours. If they do, they hand it over and draw a card. You place your matching pair on the table. If they don't, they say "Go Fish" and you draw a card.. The first person out of cards wins! Now play Go Fish for shape.

This game requires focus, attention, and provides children experience taking turns with another person.

## RACE TO THE FINISH

Mix up all the cards, including the "Game" cards. Give half of the cards to your child, and keep half for yourself. Place your cards in a stack face down. Draw 5 cards from your deck. Next, one player sets the target card by placing one of their cards face up in between both players. Get ready, set, race!

Each player looks for one of their cards that matches the target card on the table in either color or shape. If you have a match, place it on top of the target card. This becomes the new target card. Draw another card from your deck. You can always have 5 cards in your hand. If you don't have a match, you can wait for the other player to place a card down and see if you have a match. You can also use the "Game" cards as wild cards. Place the game card down and then place any other card you would like on top. This become the new target card. If no player has a match, one player can take a card from their deck and make a new target card.

This game requires flexible thinking, attention, and rule following.

## GET MOVING

Find all the cards numbered 5 to 15. Mix up the 10 cards and stack them face down. Before flipping over a card, choose a physical activity with your child. Take the top card and flip it over. Now do the activity for the number of times or seconds on the card. For example, do 10 jumping jacks or run in place for 10 seconds!

Here are some example activities to try: jumping jacks, forward arm circles, backwards arm circles, running in place, running in circles, hopping on one foot, hopping on two feet, toe touches.

This game gets your child's body moving!

## PATTERNS, PATTERNS, PATTERNS

Mix up all the cards and spread them out face up. Use the cards to make a pattern. For example, make a circle with all the warm colors in the deck and surrounded that with a circle of cool colors. Pretend the cards are blocks and make a building or a bridge. The patterns you and your child can make are limitless! Have fun and create!

This game promotes creativity and helps children see similarities and differences among objects. It can expose children to spatial terms, such as "above", "below", "left", and "right." It can expose children to math concepts, such as patterns and number.