



Australian Government  
Department of Education,  
Science and Training

## Activities to do with pre-schoolers



These activities may be done at home to help stimulate your child's exploratory and problem

solving skills, as well as allowing children to choose their own play activities.

The best way to help your child is to ask lots of questions — why, what, how, when? Ask your child to tell you what they think will happen, then try it out!

Children benefit most from playtime when you are there to observe, encourage and ask lots of questions.

Even when you're not actively doing an activity, ask them what they think about things or point out things to observe, such as whether they notice the Sun rising earlier or later in the morning as the weeks and months pass by.

Social and artistic activities are also great for sharing knowledge and building confidence. The activities below help kids to explore the natural and physical world around them.

### Activities to show how living things grow and change

1. As you are driving around the city, ask your child to watch out the window to see if they can see babies, children, young adults and older adults. Do they know how to tell the difference between these age groups? How many people can they see in their own age group?

2. Ask your child do you think that bush/tree looks the same as last week? In different seasons, the tree may grow, lose its leaves or grow larger.
3. Will a seed grow on moist cotton wool if the seed is turned sideways or upside down instead of sitting up normally?

### Activities to explore the Earth and sky

1. As you drive around the city, ask your child to point out things that have been built by people such as buildings and things that are natural such as trees. Is a wooden building made from trees built by people or natural?! Sometimes it's difficult to label things, isn't it?
2. Collect different small rocks from your backyard. Place each rock in a separate glass of water and check on the rock each day. Do some rocks make the water dirtier than others? What does this mean? Do the rocks look different? Do some rocks become smaller as they are left in the water? What happens if you add table salt to the water?
3. Experiment with making shadows either in the sunlight, or using a torch indoors. How can you make the largest shadow? How can you make a shadow move?



## Activities to explore the human body

1. How can you use your body to keep time or rhythm to a piece of music? Clapping your hands and tapping your foot are common methods, but what are some other ways? Maybe blinking in time to a piece of music?
2. Breathe out onto the outside of a plastic or glass cup. What is that white fog that came from your mouth? Where does the fog disappear? If the cup is warm or cold, does the fog stay longer?
3. Keep a record of your child's height, head circumference, arm length, etc. Over time, do some measurements change more than others?

## Activities to explore physical phenomena

1. How can you get a marble to roll down a tilted hard cover book faster?  
What happens if you tilt the book too far up or down? What happens if you change the surface of the book? Does the ball roll faster?
2. Take a small, empty soft drink bottle and fill it to one third with water, then freeze the bottle. Take out the bottle and roll it along the ground. How does the bottle behave? Try and freeze different levels of water in the bottle (even try lying the bottle down in the freezer so ice forms along one side of the bottle). Does the bottle roll differently depending on where the ice forms? Can you freeze water so the bottle rolls around in a circle?
3. Collect and wash a squeezable plastic bottle (such as an empty sauce or shampoo bottle). Place a feather or lightweight ball of fluff on a table. See how far you can push the feather by squeezing air out of the bottle. Are there ways of making the feather go faster or further?