

50

things to do

before you're
five

Take a look at
all the things
I've done...

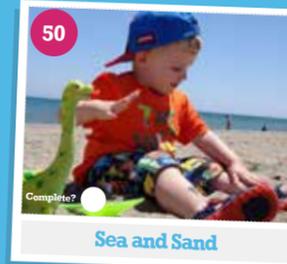
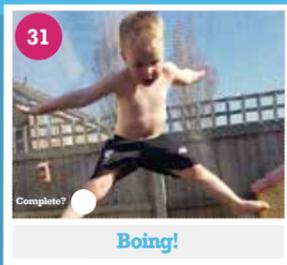
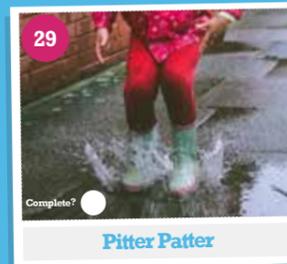
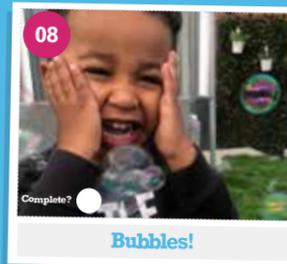
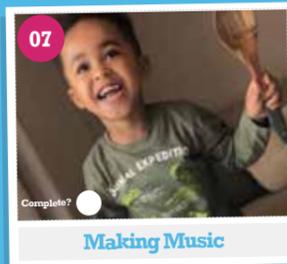
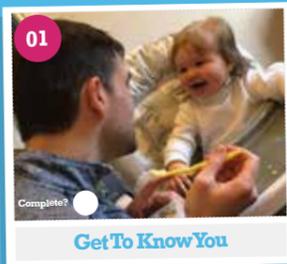


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1. Get To Know You

Your baby will benefit from having close, loving relationships with the grown-ups in their life. Use lots of eye contact. Babies are 'wired' to respond to your face, developing their communication and practising early sounds with you.

2. Where Am I?

Help baby understand their world, talk about mummy and daddy. Talk about the things around you. Your baby learns all their early words from you, help them by introducing words, tell baby "That's your nose / mouth / cheek", and name things and people baby sees.

3. Treasure Time

Babies love to explore with their hands and mouth so a treasure basket with things that are interesting and 'safe' to touch and dribble over would be perfect. Toddlers and older children love things that look exciting, feel and smell interesting.

4. Make Your Mark

Children love to be able to make their mark. Skill with paint, pens, crayons and chalk supports them to be strong writers and makers of art! Mark making allows children to explore, be curious and get creative in a fun and positive way. Use your fingers, hands and feet to make your own special prints.

5. Squidgy Sand

Use sand to squidge, squadge, squish, and perhaps make a sandcastle fish. Or empty, fill and pour. With bottles, cups and lots more. Use everyday objects to help children explore, build and discover the wonderful world of sand play!

6. Rhyme Time

All children, from the very youngest babies enjoy singing and rhymes. They love to hear the sound of their parent's voice. Traditional nursery rhymes include Twinkle Twinkle Little Star, finger-rhymes, such as Round and Round the Garden and Incy Wincy Spider and whole-body action rhymes, such as Heads, Shoulders, Knees and Toes.

7. Making Music

Young children show a great deal of curiosity. They love to make a noise and see the reaction it gets. Help everyone from babies upwards to channel their musical genius with everyday household items, or even make some 'musical instruments' of your own.

8. Bubbles!

Bubble play is a brilliant all round activity. Your child will enjoy watching them float in the air and without realising your child will be developing all kinds of physical skills. Try catching bubbles, or make a giant bubble or sock bubbles or try bubble painting for preschoolers.

9. Mini Beasts and Bug Hunting

Let's go on a minibeast hunt and find out about these fascinating creatures which live all around us. These creatures offers many opportunities to learn about their lives, their habitat and habits, their lifestyles and life cycles.

10. Sharing Books

Sharing books is a wonderful and fun thing to do with young children. They can hear about people, places and creatures they may never know about and you are feeding their imagination.

11. Making Connections

Connections are often fascinating for children, they love to fasten up the buggy reins, spending ages mastering this task. And the task of fastening is very often part of a child's everyday playing - if you think of jigsaws, train tracks, lego, children who often like to wrap up presents etc.

12. Brrr... Explore the Cold!

Snow, ice and cold weather are experiences that children can find really exciting; they need to discover our world using all their senses to properly understand it, make footprints, push toys through. When it's not cold outside, let their senses explore ice cubes!

13. Shout and Shhh

Your little one will delight in trying out the noises they can make themselves, exploring how the places they are in can change that sound. A loud sound in the garden sounds different in the pedestrian subway in town. A whisper close to their ear might 'feel' as well as 'sound'.

14. See the Stars

Night time is a fascinating adventure for children and the opportunity to see the moon and the stars. Play with glow in the dark objects, look at shapes of moons and stars or take a torch and play in the dark. Talk about space and all the imagination that comes with it.

15. Dressing Up

Capture children's imagination with everyday 'dress up' play. Use clothes and objects you have at home to pretend to be someone or something else and inspire children to make up their own pretend play. You can even do some face painting or role play, are you a shop keeper today?

16. Whee, Bang, Whizz

Fireworks are colourful, noisy and exciting. Spot fireworks at bonfires, or a wedding or at new year. Can you see them from a window at home, or listen for them? Talk about the colours, shapes, and what words you can use to describe the sounds. Can you do an explosive painting?

17. Hocus Pocus Potions

Fancy making some super-power potion, some magic medicine or a spell or two? Try some mud, leaves, petals and mix away. Take a look at some science mixed in with lots of fun, but be careful... It could get messy!

18. Dance!

Dancing is fun as well as being a great way to encourage your child to be active and healthy. Your child will enjoy moving their body to the rhythm and beat of different types of music. Try fast or slow songs, encourage clapping, using all body parts, use scarves to swirl around.

19. Growing, Little People, Plants and Things

You're never too young to start a healthy habit! Sow the seeds, prepare the ground and develop healthy food choices by teaching children where food comes from, get them excited by growing fruit and vegetables they will love to eat. Plant a sunflower seed and see how high it will grow.

20. Mini Artists

Painting and drawing allow children the freedom to choose what, where, when, how and why. You can use water to pretend to paint the fence, or can you use safe paints or chalk to let you child express their selves and learn about cause and effect.

21. Gigglebox

From laughing as a baby at the simplest noises you make, to giggling at a nonsense rhyme and tickles, or roaring with laughter while splashing water in the bath, your child and you can be the funniest pair in the world!

22. My Secret Treasures

Toddlers and older children can make a collection of anything that excites them and will love storing them in a special box or basket that belongs just to them. The special things may be quite random e.g. old keys, a toy dinosaur, ribbons, a bouncy ball or whatever takes their fancy.

23. See it Live!

Children and grown ups enjoy seeing a show, whether it's a free street performer who juggles, sings or walks on stilts, a puppet show or story teller at nursery, your child singing, dancing for you or a visit to the Wakefield Theatre.

24. Hop, Skip and Jump

All children love to be active, so give them the opportunity to crawl, walk, run, jump, hop, play throw and catch, kick, create an obstacle course and don't forget to dance! Building confidence in physical ability is a great thing for them to do and helps with healthy development.

25. Creative Junk

Your child's imagination can be fired by using large and smaller boxes to create a car, a fire engine, a house or a ship! A box large enough for your child to climb into might need nothing more than imagination to be anything in the world!

26. Splish, Splash, Splosh

Children love to play with water, inside and outside, splashing, pouring, and paddling! Explore and enjoy water in the bath or using a washing up bowl. You can use plastic and metal cups, funnels, spoons or old yogurt pots. Bubble mixes or washing up liquid, plastic animals or whisks!

27. Little People Park Keeper

Have an adventure in the park. Time to get the children out for some real life fun and enjoy the open spaces of your local park. Do a scavenger hunt, find creatures, what shape are the leaves, can you collect twigs and acorns! Is there anywhere for you to climb and explore!

28. The Wheels on the Bus

Travelling on different forms of transport is really exciting for young children, riding on the top deck of a bus, catching a train and watching the scenery as you pass through. Talk about what you can see, are you going under or over a bridge? Extend this learning into toys and activities at home.

29. Pitter Patter

How much fun can we have in the rain? Splash or make ripples in a chocolate brown puddle, giggle as you puddle dance, watch raindrops racing down the side of your den.... dare you put your toes in the mud? Talk about things that float and sink, how does the water move when you touch it?

30. Yummy Picnic

Why not spend this afternoon having a picnic in the park? Head to your local market or shop and you'll find everything you need. You could even take your teddy along too or invite some friends.

31. Boing!

Children need to be physically active if they're going to be healthy, jumping, bouncing and hopping skills take some learning and lots of practice. Playing simple action and turn taking games in the garden, jumping up and down, bouncing, rolling and dancing all count as getting physical.

32. Where Have I Gone?

Babies love to play peepo from being very young, and older children love to explore the excitement of hiding. Hide and seek, peek-a-boo, sardines and other hiding games are a great way to have fun and to reaffirm attachments between you and your child.

33. Home from Home

Making dens is a favourite childhood pastime. Children love to create a special cosy place where they can feel safe and secure, or a secret place where they can watch for bears and birds, or a base camp for their next adventure.

34. Woodland Wandering

Visit your local wood. Do a scavenger hunt. Collect conkers, spot mushrooms and toadstools. Stand still. Listen. Look. What can you see? What can you hear? What's that over there? Did something move? Explore and discover exciting nature, wildlife and adventure in lovely, local woodland areas.

35. Trip Trap, Trip Trap

Somewhere, not too far away from you there is a bridge over water. You can walk across and sometimes under bridges, talk about the water that flows under the bridge, drop a leaf or a stick from one side and watch for it to flow out at the other side (Pooh Sticks!).

36. Ready, Steady, Blow

Children love to blow candles out. You don't have to wait until a birthday to let your child experience the magic of candle light. You could also try blowing through a straw into liquid to make bubbles.

37. Show and Tell

Visit your child's nursery, playgroup or childminder and let them show you how they spend their day. Encourage your child to show you all the different activities they spend their time doing. Not in a setting, then share with a friend or family member what you do at home together.

38. Posty

Pretend to be a Posty! You can write, draw, paint, print or stick to create a masterpiece picture, letter or postcard. Send it to someone special, or yourself! Put it in an envelope and post it in the post box.

39. Talking Signs

Communication begins with crying, eye contact, facial expression (a smile) and social interaction. It develops with vocalising, gestures such as pointing, imitation, play and turn-taking. Using gesture and sign through familiar, repetitive songs and rhymes is a good way to start making a link between spoken language and sign. Mr Tumble is a great help!

40. Happy History

The Wakefield District has lots of great museums and heritage venues for families to explore. Have you ever wondered what you can see from the top of a castle? Walk up the steps and look out when you visit Pontefract or Sandal Castle to find out.

41. Water Feature

Walk alongside the bank of rivers, ponds or lagoons, looking and listening. Venture into shallow streams while holding an adults hand, then splash away. Take a bucket or a fishing net and see what you can catch, BUT always make sure that you return everything to the stream.

42. The Rough and the Smooth

As well as being huge fun, playing with dough, clay and gloop helps your child to strengthen muscle tone, develop fine motor skills and helps their pre-writing skills. Doughs can be easily made at home with everyday ingredients.

43. High Five

Pre-schoolers are really interested in people and the world around them and they are particularly fascinated by people in uniform such as Police, firefighters, paramedics, doctors and nurses, the list could go on. High five or thumbs up someone who works in uniform and helps us, say thank you for everything they do to help us.

44. Animals Nearby

Most children love animals whether they are real or toys. Can your child engage with an animal, stroke it if safe to do so? Watch their movements and copy the sounds they make, talk about how the animals feel to touch and how they look. Visit a pet shop!

45. Wonderful Waiting Games

Waiting for a bus or a train, at the doctors or even for your meal at a restaurant can be boring for children. Play some simple games to pass the time and extend your child's vocabulary while doing so.

46. Fantastic Folding

Adults, can you help your little one to make a chatterbox, paper hat, boat or 'dolly chain'?

47. Great Wakefield Baking

Make some tasty food for all the family. Children love to help with cooking and baking, and they can chop and mix the ingredients while you chat about what you are doing. Cooking is fun and provides quality time together making an end result you can eat.

48. Natural Art

Explore and examine, and find fantastic treasures! You can use your imagination to create whatever you fancy... Scary mud monsters, twig towers or decorations for your garden or home. Your child's imagination is your creativity!

49. Grass Gazing

Grass grows all year round and young children love it. They also love aeroplanes and helicopters and are very good at hearing them when they are flying in the sky. Lie down and look up, what can you see?

50. Sea and Sand

Experience the sheer joy of playing in the sand, splashing in the water, clambering over the dunes or searching for creatures in the rock pools. A family trip to the seaside is an experience which can provide life long memories. Or visit Hemsworth Water Park for a similar experience.



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