

# Self-Directed, Engaged Learning

## Vroom Tip™ Collection

### **GAB & GO (0-12 MONTHS)**

Vroom Tip: When you're getting ready to go out, talk about what you're doing and how your child might be feeling. Maybe you could say, "We're getting ready to go to the store. You're wriggling and have a smile on your face. You seem excited. Let's go and see what we find there." How do they respond? Follow their lead!

Brainy Background: When you talk about their world, your child learns to connect what they're doing with words. When you talk about their feelings, it helps them understand their emotions and who they are. Following their lead helps them learn best.

### **WHO WE SEE (6 MONTHS – 18 MONTHS)**

Vroom Tip: Notice how your child looks at different people. Do they react differently with men or women? People who are tall or short? Different skin tones? Do they respond to people differently when they look like you?

Brainy Background: By 9 months old, children begin to follow faces that look like their primary caregiver. They are also learning from you and how you respond to others. When you include different people in your life, you build your child's brain for inclusion.

### **WINDOW WATCHERS (6 MONTHS – 2 YEARS)**

Vroom Tip: Ask your child if they want to be a window watcher. Follow their gaze as you point out a window and chat about what you both see. Share where you're looking. Create names for what's out there and talk about what each thing does.

Brainy Background: Chatting back and forth about what each of you sees makes this a fun learning moment. Naming things also helps your child increase their vocabulary.

### **WHAT ARE YOU THINKING? (12 MONTHS-2 YEARS)**

Vroom Tip: What is your child looking at? Follow their lead and chat about what they see. "Yes, those are my shoes. And that is my hat. Do you want to try on my shoes and hat? I'll help you!" Take turns! "Can you put my hat on my head? Now try your head. Look it is too big!"

Brainy Background: Your child is learning about which clothes belong to you, and which belong to them, and they're learning the concepts of small and big. When you laugh about putting your hat on their head, you're also promoting their sense of humor.

### **ROLE PLAY (2-4 YEARS)**

Vroom Tip: Ask your child who they would like to pretend to be. Would they like to be someone they know? Or, a character from a book or TV show? Invite them to look around the house for a costume or other things they can use for pretending. Ask them questions like, "Where are you going now?"

Brainy Background: When you encourage your child to create new ideas, you're supporting their creativity. This builds a love of learning. Pretending also helps children understand their experiences better.

### **PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT (2-4 YEARS)**

Vroom Tip: Do you and your child have a daily challenge, like getting ready for school? Have them practice that challenge during playtime. You can say: "Let's pretend we're getting ready to go to school. What should we do first?" Talk about the steps if they need help remembering. "We eat our breakfast, pack our lunch, brush our teeth, and then get on the bus."

Brainy Background: When children have the chance to practice something, they begin to feel a sense of control in challenging situations. They're practicing critical thinking and problem-solving skills as they break the task down into steps and apply what they already know to solve it.

### **BELLY BREATHING (4 – 5 YEARS)**

Vroom Tip: Help your child learn to breathe deeply when feeling upset. Have them close their eyes and put their hand on their belly to feel it go out when they breathe in. When breathing out, their belly moves in. Remind them to use Belly Breathing to help them calm down.

Brainy Background: When you ask your child to focus on their breathing when they feel upset, you help them practice self-control. They also learn to manage emotions in hard situations. This ability continues to develop throughout life and supports your child in solving problems on their own.

### **WAITING STRATEGIES (4-5 YEARS)**

Vroom Tip: Waiting for a parent to finish a meeting or task can be hard. Help your child come up with strategies for waiting. Say something like, "Think of as many red things as you can." Or, "How many words can you come up with that start with the letter G?"

Brainy Background: When you help your child learn to manage feelings on their own, you support their ability to problem solve. They can also better control their behavior according to the situation. These skills are important for learning in school and life.

### **HERE TO THERE (4-5 YEARS)**

Vroom Tip: Ask your child to create a path to get from one side of a room to the other without touching the ground. Use pillows, newspaper, or whatever is handy. Make it harder by seeing how far or fast they can go. Or limit what they can use to make the path to make it more interesting. Don't forget to take turns!

Brainy Background: Your child is making a plan and testing it out. They'll need to think flexibly to come up with different solutions to solve this problem. This is a great activity to do with friends too. It helps them practice solving problems with others.