

## Activities for Children 48 - 60 Months Old



<p>Play the "who, what, and where" game. Ask your child who works in a school, what is in a school, and where is the school. Expand on your child's answers by asking more questions. Ask about other topics, like the library, bus stop, or post office.</p>	<p>When you are setting the table for a meal, play the "what doesn't belong" game. Add a small toy or other object next to the plate and eating utensils. Ask your child if she can tell you what doesn't belong here. You can try this game any time of the day. For example, while brushing your child's hair, set out a brush, barrette, comb, and a ball.</p>	<p>Let your child help prepare a picnic. Show him what he can use for the picnic (bread, peanut butter, and apples). Lay out sandwich bags and a lunch box, basket, or large paper bag. Then go have fun on the picnic.</p>	<p>On a rainy day, pretend to open a shoe store. Use old shoes, paper, pencils, and a chair to sit down and try on shoes. You can be the customer. Encourage your child to "write" your order down. Then she can take a turn being the customer and practice trying on and buying shoes.</p>	<p>Play the "guess what will happen" game to encourage your child's problem-solving and thinking skills. For example, during bath time, ask your child, "What do you think will happen if I turn on the hot and cold water at the same time?" or "What would happen if I stacked the blocks to the top of the ceiling?"</p>
<p>Play "bucket hoops." Have your child stand about 6 feet away and throw a medium-size ball at a large bucket or trash can. For fun outdoors on a summer day, fill the bucket with water.</p>	<p>Write your child's name often. When your child finishes drawing a picture, be sure to put his name on it and say the letters as you write them. If your child is interested, encourage him to name and/or to copy the letters. Point out the letters in your child's name throughout the day on cereal boxes, sign boards, and books.</p>	<p>Invite your child to play a counting game. Using a large piece of paper, make a simple game board with a straight path. Use dice to determine the count. Count with your child, and encourage her to hop the game piece to each square, counting each time the piece touches down.</p>	<p>Make a person with playdough or clay using sticks, buttons, toothpicks, beads, and any other small items. Start with a playdough (or clay) head and body and use the objects for arms, legs, and eyes. Ask your child questions about his person.</p>	<p>Encourage your child to learn her full name, address, and telephone number. Make it into a singing or rhyming game for fun. Ask your child to repeat it back to you when you are riding in the car or on the bus.</p>
<p>Cut out three small, three medium, and three large circles. Color each set of circles a different color (or use colored paper for each). Your child can sort the circles by color or by size. You can also ask your child about the different sizes. For example, ask your child, "Which one is smallest?" Try this game using buttons removed from an old shirt.</p>	<p>Go on a walk and pick up things you find. Bring the items home and help your child sort them into groups. For example, groups can include rocks, paper, or leaves. Encourage your child to start a collection of special things. Find a box or special place where he can display the collection.</p>	<p>Play a picture guessing game. Cover a picture in a familiar book with a sheet of paper and uncover a little at a time until your child has guessed the picture.</p>	<p>Let your child help you prepare a meal. She can spread peanut butter and jelly, peel a banana, cut with a butter knife, pour cereal, and add milk (using a small container). Never give her a task involving the stove or oven without careful supervision.</p>	<p>"Write" and mail a letter to a friend or relative. Provide your child with paper, crayons or pencil, and an envelope. Let your child draw, scribble, or write; or he can tell you what to write down. When your child is finished, let him fold the letter to fit in the envelope, lick, and seal. You can write the address on the front. Be sure to let him decorate the envelope as well. After he has put the stamp on, help mail the letter.</p>
<p>Play "circus." Find old, colorful clothes and help your child put on a circus show. Provide a rope on the ground for the high wire act, a sturdy box to stand on to announce the acts, fun objects for a magic act, and stuffed animals for the show. Encourage your child's imagination and creativity in planning the show. Don't forget to clap.</p>	<p>Take a pack of playing cards and choose four or five matching sets. Lay the cards out face up, and help your child to find the pairs. Talk about what makes the pairs of cards the "same" and "different."</p>	<p>Make bubbles. Use ¼ cup dishwashing liquid (Dawn or Joy works best) and 2⅔ cups water. Use straws to blow bubbles on a cookie sheet. Or make a wand by stringing two pieces of a drinking straw onto a string or piece of yarn. Tie the ends of the string together to make a circle. Holding onto the straw pieces, dip the string in the bubble mixture. Pull it out and gently move forward or backward. You should see lovely, big bubbles.</p>	<p>Make a bean bag to catch and throw. Fill the toe of an old sock or pantyhose with ¾ cup dry beans. Sew the remaining side or tie off with a rubber band. Play "hot potato" or simply play catch. Encourage your child to throw the ball overhand and underhand.</p>	<p>Pretend to be an animal. Encourage your child to use her imagination and become a kitty. You can ask, "What do kitties like to eat?" or "Where do kitties live?" Play along, and see how far the game can go.</p>

## Activities for Children 60 - 66 Months Old



<p>Make a nature collage. Collect leaves, pebbles, and small sticks from outside and glue them on a piece of cardboard or stiff paper. (Cereal and cracker boxes can be cut up and used as cardboard.)</p>	<p>Practice writing first names of friends, toys, and relatives. Your child may need to trace the letters of these names at first. Be sure to write in large print letters.</p>	<p>Encourage dramatic play. Help your child act out his favorite nursery rhyme, cartoon, or story. Use large, old clothes for costumes.</p>	<p>Play simple ball games such as kickball. Use a large (8"–12") ball, and slowly roll it toward your child. See if your child can kick the ball and run to "first base."</p>	<p>When reading stories to your child, let her make up the ending, or retell favorite stories with "silly" new endings that she makes up.</p>
<p>Let your child help you with simple cooking tasks such as mashing potatoes, making cheese sandwiches, and fixing a bowl of cereal. Afterward, see if he can tell you the order that you followed to cook and mash the potatoes or to get the bread out of the cupboard and put the cheese on it. Supervise carefully when your child is near a hot stove.</p>	<p>Play "20 Questions." Think of an animal. Let your child ask 20 yes/no questions about the animal until she guesses what animal it is. (You may need to help your child to ask yes/no questions at first.) Now let your child choose an animal and you ask the 20 questions. You can also use other categories such as food, toys, and people.</p>	<p>You can play "license plate count-up" in the car or on the bus. Look for a license plate that contains the number 1. Then try to find other plates with 2, 3, 4, and so forth, up to 10. When your child can play "count-up," play "count-down," starting with the number 9, then 8, 7, 6, and so forth, down to 1.</p>	<p>Practice pretend play or pantomime. Here are some things to act out: 1) eating hot pizza with stringy cheese; 2) winning a race; 3) finding a giant spider; 4) walking in thick, sticky mud; and 5) making footprints in wet sand.</p>	<p>Make a simple concentration game with two or three pairs of duplicate playing cards (two king of hearts), or make your own cards out of duplicate pictures or magazine ads. Start with two or three pairs of cards. Turn them face down and mix them up. Let your child turn two cards over to see if they match. If they don't, turn the cards face down again. You can gradually increase to playing with more pairs of cards.</p>
<p>Make an obstacle course either inside or outside your home. You can use cardboard boxes for jumping over or climbing through, broomsticks for laying between chairs for "limbo" (going under), and pillows for walking around. Let your child help lay out the course. After a couple of practice tries, have him complete the obstacle course as quickly as possible. Then try hopping or jumping the course.</p>	<p>After washing hands, practice writing letters and numbers in pudding or thinned mashed potatoes spread on a cookie sheet or cutting board. Licking fingers is allowed!</p>	<p>Play mystery sock. Put a common household item in a sock. Tie off the top of the sock. Have your child feel the sock and guess what is inside. Take turns guessing what's inside.</p>	<p>Make color rhymes. Take turns rhyming a color and a word: <i>blue, shoe; red, bed; yellow, fellow</i>. You can also rhyme with names (<i>Dad, sad; Jack, sack</i>). Take turns with the rhyming.</p>	<p>Make an "I can read" poster. Cut out names your child can read—fast-food restaurant names, names from cereal cartons, and other foods. You can write your child's name, names of relatives, and names of friends on pieces of paper and put them on the poster. Add to the poster as your child learns to read more names.</p>
<p>Play "what doesn't belong?" Let your child find the word that doesn't belong in a list of six or seven spoken words. The one that doesn't belong can be the word that doesn't rhyme or the word that is from a different category. Some examples are 1) fly, try, by, coat, sigh, my; 2) Sam, is, ram, am, spam, ham; 3) red, orange, purple, green, yellow, beetle; 4) spoon, fork, shirt, pan, spatula, knife. Have your child give three to four words with one that doesn't belong.</p>	<p>Play the "memory" game. Put five or six familiar objects on a table. Have your child close her eyes. Remove one object, and rearrange the rest. Ask your child which object is missing. Take turns finding the missing object.</p>	<p>Make puppets out of ice cream sticks, paper bags, socks, or egg carton cups. Decorate the puppets with yarn, pens, buttons, and colored paper. Make a puppet stage by turning a coffee table or card table on its side. Be the audience while your child crouches behind the table and puts on a puppet show.</p>	<p>Play the old shell game. Get four cups or glasses that you cannot see through. Find a small ball, object, or edible item such as a raisin or cracker that fits under the cups. Have your child watch as you place the object under one of the cups and move all of the cups around. Have your child try to remember which cup the object is under. Have your child take a turn moving the objects while you guess.</p>	<p>Play "mystery sound." Select household items that make distinct sounds such as a clock, cereal box, metal lid (placed on a pan), and potato chip bag. Put a blindfold on your child and have him try to guess which object made the sound. Take turns with your child.</p>