<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities for Children 30–36 Months Old</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tell or read a familiar story and pause frequently to leave out a word, asking your child to “fill it in.” For example, Little Red Riding Hood said, “Grandmother, what big ________ you have.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teach somersaults by doing one yourself first. Then help your child do one. Let her try it alone. Make sure furniture is out of the way. You may want to put some pillows on the floor for safety.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Give a cup to your child. Use bits of cereal or fruit and place one in your child’s cup (“one for you”) and one in your cup (“one for me”). Take turns. Dump out your child’s cup and help count the pieces. This is good practice for early math skills.</td>
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<td>Put an old blanket over a table to make a tent or house. Pack a “picnic” sack for your camper. Have your child take along a pillow on the “camp out” for a nap. Flashlights are especially fun.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Get a piece of butcher paper large enough for your child to lie on. Draw around your child’s body to make an outline. Don’t forget fingers and toes. Talk about body parts and print the words on the paper. Let your child color the poster. Hang the poster on a wall in your child’s room.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Children at this age may be interested in creating art in different ways. Try cutting a potato in half and carving a simple shape or design for your child to dip in paint and then stamp onto paper.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Add water to tempera paint to make it runny. Drop some paint on a paper and blow through a straw to move the paint around the paper, or fill an old roll-on deodorant bottle with watered-down paint. Your child can roll color onto the paper.</td>
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<tr>
<td>A good activity to learn location words is to build roads and bridges with blocks. Use toy cars to go on the road, under or over a bridge, between the houses, and so forth.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Trace around simple objects with your child. Use cups of different sizes, blocks, or your child’s and your hands. Using felt-tip markers or crayons of different colors makes it even more fun.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Have your child help you set the table. First, have your child place the plates, then cups, and then napkins. By placing one at each place, he will learn one-to-one correspondence. Show your child where the utensils should be placed.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Collect empty boxes (cereal, TV dinners, egg cartons) and help your child set up her own grocery store.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Help your child learn new words to describe objects in everyday conversations. Describe by color, size, and shape (the blue cup, the big ball). Also, describe how things move (a car goes fast, a turtle moves slowly) and how they feel (ice cream is cold, soup is hot).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Make your own puzzles by cutting out magazine pictures of whole people. Have your child help glue pictures onto cardboard. Cut pictures into three pieces by cutting curvy lines. Head, trunk, and legs make good pieces for your child to put together.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dribble different colors of paint in the middle or on one side of a paper. Fold the paper in half. Let your child open the paper to see the design it makes.</td>
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<tr>
<td>A good game for trips in the car is to play a matching game with a set of Old Maid cards. Place a few different cards in front of your child. Give him a card that matches one displayed and ask him to find the card like the one you gave him.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cut pictures out of magazines to make two groups such as dogs, food, toys, or clothes. Have two boxes ready and put a picture of a dog in one and of food in the other. Have your child put additional pictures in the right box, helping her learn about categories.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cut a stiff paper plate to make a hand paddle and show your child how to use it to hit a balloon. See how long your child can keep the balloon in the air or how many times he can hit it back to you. This activity helps develop large body and eye-hand coordination. Always carefully supervise when playing with balloons.</td>
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<tr>
<td>To improve coordination and balance, show your child the “bear walk” by walking on hands and feet, keeping the legs and arms straight. Try the “rabbit hop” by crouching down and then jumping forward.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Encourage your child to try the “elephant walk,” bending forward at the waist and letting your arms (hands clasped together) swing freely while taking slow and heavy steps. This is great to do with music.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make a poster of your child’s favorite things using pictures from old magazines. Use safety scissors and paste or a glue stick to allow your child to do it independently, yet safely.</td>
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**Communication**

Activities to Help Your Child Grow and Learn

Your child can talk about many things and can follow simple directions. She will make mistakes with her grammar, such as saying “foots” instead of feet. Your child can tell you what’s happening. She is using longer sentences now. Talk about what happened during the day. Read to your child every day. She might even pretend to read favorite books by herself, using the words you have read to her.

- **Reading Magazines**
  Talk about the pictures in magazines. Find pictures that your child will recognize, such as toothpaste, soap, diapers, pets, or cars. Point to the picture and ask, “What is this? Do we have this at home? What do we do with this?”

- **Silly Me**
  Your child will have fun when you act silly. Pretend you don’t know what things really are. Point to the toothpaste and ask your child, “Is that the soap?” Let him tell you what it really is. Act surprised. Your child will enjoy “teaching” you the right name of things.

- **Bandage Game**
  Make pretend bandages using tape or stickers. Ask your child, “Where is your cut?” See how many body parts your child can name. Give her some help for the tricky ones, “Oh, you hurt your wrist.” Put a bandage on each part. You can wash the bandage off during bath time. This game can also be played with a doll or stuffed animal.

- **Let’s Put Things Away**
  Have your child help you put away things like food or folded laundry. Use words such as up, down, over, or through: “Please put the can on the shelf” or “Please put your socks in the drawer.” Thanks for the help! You can give silly directions, too: “Put the lemons under the chair.”

- **What’s Going On?**
  Ask your child to tell you what is happening in a picture in a book or magazine: “What is the baby doing? What is the dog doing?” Then, listen carefully to your child’s interesting story.

- **What’s Your Name?**
  Play this silly name game. When you greet your child, act as if you don’t know who he is. Say, “Hello, little boy. What’s your name?” When he tells you, greet him with happy surprise: “Oh, you’re my little boy! I’m so happy to see you!”

**Notes:**

- **Don’t Forget!** Activities should be supervised at all times by an adult. Any material, food, or toy given to a young child should be reviewed for safety.
Fine Motor
Activities to Help Your Child Grow and Learn

Your child is learning to hold pens, crayons, and markers with her thumb and two fingers just like adults do. She has learned to make scissors open and close and can make snips in paper when you hold it. She can use her two hands together with small toys, such as interlocking blocks or stringing beads. She can put together puzzles with five or more pieces.

Yummy Puzzles
Cut off the front part of a cereal box. Now cut this into four or five puzzle pieces. Your child will have fun putting this simple puzzle together. He may need a little help at first.

Little Writer
Show your child how to make lines and circles or even simple shapes. Circles and straight lines will be easiest for your child to copy. Your child may want to learn to write the first letter of her name. Keep it fun! It is okay if your child's marks don't look much like real letters. Encourage her attempts: “You're a good writer!”

Tong Time
Give your child a pair of small kitchen tongs, children's chopsticks, or tweezers. See if he can move cotton balls or dry macaroni from one container into another. Then try something heavier such as walnuts, spools, or small stones.

Junior Mechanic
Collect large bolts, matching nuts, and even washers. Your child will enjoy matching the bolt to the nut and twisting them together.

Little Flicker
Make little balls of newspaper about the size of marbles and show your child how to “flick” a ball across a tabletop or space on the floor into an open box or at a target. Use thumb and index finger to “flick.” See how far your child can flick the paper balls or hit the target. This game can bring lots of laughs!

Bubbles!
Let your child use washable crayons or markers to draw bubbles on paper. Let him draw as many as he wants and color them in. Show him how to draw big bubbles and little bubbles, purple bubbles and green bubbles. Now that he has drawn so many bubbles, maybe it's time to blow some real bubbles!

Notes:

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Gross Motor
Activities to Help Your Child Grow and Learn

Your child is improving skills using his leg and arm muscles. He is working on making these muscles stronger, more flexible, and more coordinated. He can catch an 8-inch ball, jump about 2 feet, make sharp turns around a corner while running, and avoid obstacles in his path.

Over the River

When playing outside, place a towel or piece of cloth about 2 feet wide on the grass. This is the “river.” Have your child run and jump over the river without “getting wet.” At first, you can fold the towel so that the river is not so wide. Then, you can make it bigger. Watch out for alligators!

Balloon Kick

Let your child kick a balloon from one end of the room to the other. Lay a box on its side for a goal. See if she can kick the balloon into the box.

Animal Walk

Show your child how to move like different animals. Can he waddle like a duck or walk on all fours like a dog? Encourage him to pretend to be these animals and make noises like them. Play along. Call the cat: “Here, kitty, kitty.” Balance on one foot like a pink flamingo.

Heel-to-Toe Walk

Show your child how to walk heel to toe along a line on the sidewalk or a short length of clothesline on the ground. She can stretch her arms to keep her balance. She can hold an umbrella and pretend she is walking a tightrope in a circus!

Basketball

Place an empty laundry basket on the floor against a wall. Give your child a soft ball about 4 inches in size. Place a string or piece of tape on the floor for a throw line. Show your child how to throw overhand to get the ball in the basket. Start about 4 feet back from the basket. Move back as your child gets better.

Chasing Bubbles

Go outside on a nice day to blow bubbles. Ask your child to clap his hands together and pop them. Blow some bubbles high so that your child needs to jump to pop them. Blow some far away so that your child will need to run to pop them. Clap big ones and then clap little ones. When you’re done, go wash those soapy hands!

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Personal-Social
Activities to Help Your Child Grow and Learn

Your child is able to take care of some of her personal needs, but she still needs your hugs and support. With a little help, she can usually separate from you in familiar settings. She can obey simple rules. She enjoys simple games with other children and is proud of her accomplishments. She will respond with pride when you notice positive behavior, such as being helpful, following a rule, or doing something for herself.

### Activities

**Cooking Helper**
Let your child help with cooking by measuring, pouring, stirring, washing, and tearing greens. With your help and a plastic knife, he can even cut soft foods, such as bananas. These are real activities that help the family. Tell him, “Thank you for helping with our meal!” Ask him to tell the family what is in the salad. Yum!

**Super Picker-Upper**
Show your child how to put trash in the trash can. If your child drops paper, ask her to pick it up and put it into the trash can. She may enjoy helping you put trash outside for the garbage truck to pick up. Show your child how important it is to keep the world clean. Talk about what would happen if people didn’t pick up trash.

**Bathing Beauty**
Your child will enjoy trying to wash himself in the bathtub. Show him how to use a washcloth and soap. Be sure to let your child know that he is doing a good job. Then, give your child a towel to dry himself: “Whose clean little boy is this?” Have fun!

**Naming Feelings**
Help your child understand feelings by noticing them and naming them. Children need to learn that other people have feelings, too: “When you take the toy, it makes your sister sad.” Don’t be afraid to use big words: “I can tell you’re excited because it’s your birthday!”

**Super Driver**
Make an obstacle course in your home or outside. Let your little driver push a cart or pull a wagon, steering around boxes, rocks, or over a hose. There’s a big hug at the finish line!

**Look at You!**
Start a dress-up bin for your child. Go through your closet and gather old clothes. Gather men’s items as well. Old purses, wallets, hats, ties, shoes, belts, and necklaces are fun. Let your child dress up and look in the mirror. Be prepared to play for a while. Have your camera ready!

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**Notes:**

*Don’t Forget!* Activities should be supervised at all times by an adult. Any material, food, or toy given to a young child should be reviewed for safety. Always watch your child during mealtime and bath time.
Your child can notice how things are the same and how they are different. He knows about colors, long and short, a little and a lot, and which one of your kitchen spoons is the biggest. With your help, he can put three things of different sizes in order from small to large. Pretend play is still very important and fun for both of you!

### What Is This?
After giving your child a bath, stand or seat your child in front of a mirror. With a towel, dry different parts of her body. While drying her hair, be silly and ask, “What is this stuff?” While drying her shoulder, ask, “What is this thing?” While drying ribs, ask, “What are these bony things?” Have fun being together while tickling, cuddling, and teaching the names of body parts.

### Making Trains
Line up four to five small cars or other objects in a row to make a “train.” Make sure your child sees what you did. Now give your child some objects to line up and make a train. You can line up different things, such as blocks, spoons, or shells. Say, “Wow, look at your train. Where is it going?”

### Big and Little
Show your child two items of different sizes, such as shoes, cups, or spoons. Talk about the big one and the little one. Talk about the size of things in your house, at the park, or at the supermarket: “Wow. Look at that pumpkin. It's really big!” Add a medium-size item and try playing Big, Little, and One in the Middle.

### Tell Me Your Story
Give your child plain paper and a few washable crayons or markers for drawing. Ask her to tell you about what she drew. Write the story on your child’s paper. Print her name. Tell her, “This is your story, and this is your name.” Read the story to someone important.

### Reading the Neighborhood
Show your child signs in your neighborhood, such as a stop sign. Tell him what it means. Point out the railroad sign and tell him it’s where the trains go. In a restaurant, show your child the different pictures on rest room doors, one for girls and one for boys. Look at the painted crosswalk on the street. Next time you go out, ask him to read signs with you.

### Silly Sounds
Play a silly copy game with your child in the car or on the bus. For example, tell her a silly phrase like, “Bee, zim, zop.” See if your child can copy you. Let your child make up a silly phrase and copy her. Now make up a silly song to sing!

### Notes:

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