



# Problem Solving

Activities to Help Your Child Grow and Learn



Your busy learner is gaining many skills. She can put puzzles together (six pieces or maybe more), draw some shapes, such as circles and squares, and identify a few colors. She can match an object to a picture of that object and notices many similarities and differences. She is very curious about how things work, and your answers really help her understand and learn.

**Box o' Blocks** Collect blocks and small boxes for your child to use for building. Make something and let him copy what you build. Add pieces of cardboard for a roof and some paint stirring sticks for bridges. Make a town. Add some toy cars and toy people; the town will come to life!

**Memory Magic** Play this game to help your child develop her memory. In a car or on a bus, tell your child, "We're going on a picnic, and we're bringing a..." Name an object that you would bring on a picnic, such as an apple. Encourage your child to think of another object to bring on a picnic and repeat "We're going on a picnic, and we're bringing..." then name your object (apple) followed by hers (balloon). Take turns thinking of what to bring on a picnic, each time repeating what has already been named. Try to name things alphabetically.

**Mr. Sticks** Ask your child to draw a stick figure about 5 inches tall on a paper plate or piece of cardboard. Say, "This is Mr. Sticks." Now, hide Mr. Sticks. Give your child clues to lead him to Mr. Sticks: "He's in a room with water, but not the bathroom." "He's in a drawer near a door." Finding Mr. Sticks earns a big hug. Now it's your child's turn to give you clues.

**Money Management** Make some play dollar bills from green paper. Put them in an old purse or wallet for your child. Pretend to be the storekeeper. Say, "Those socks cost \$2.00." "This lunch costs \$3.00." Help your child count the right amount of money. Now change places. Let your child be the storekeeper. Add to the fun by collecting cereal boxes, empty milk cartons, and plastic juice cans to make a store.

**Picture Shopping List** From newspaper ads, cut pictures of three or four foods you'll be shopping for. Place them in an empty envelope and take them to the supermarket. Let your child pull out the pictures and remind you of what you need. If your child is holding a picture of apples, buy a few apples. If he is holding a picture of eggs, say, "Yes, we need eggs today."

**Quick Picture Puzzle** Remove the front of your breakfast cereal box. Trim the edges and cut the picture into six or seven pieces. Your child will enjoy putting the pieces together. You can help her by pointing out ways to match part of a picture on one piece to another part of the picture on another piece. Good thinking!

 Ages & Stages

36-42 months