

Project Final Report: Family Activity Planner

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<https://github.com/Richyboy170/activity-planner>

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1 Introduction

Parents struggle to find age-appropriate activities matching semantic constraints (e.g., “burn energy indoors” or “quiet bedtime activity for 5-year-old”). Keyword search fails to capture semantic intent. This project builds a learning-based activity classifier that predicts age-appropriateness for multi-generational families (ages 1–99).

Why Deep Learning: (1) Semantic understanding requires learning query-activity relationships beyond keyword matching, (2) activity selection involves complex non-linear patterns across age, context, season, and cost, (3) embedding-based representations (Sentence-BERT) naturally capture semantic similarity enabling neural networks to learn nuanced relationships that generalize to novel queries.



Figure 1: Pipeline: hybrid retrieval feeds neural classifier.

2 Background & Related Work

This project builds upon: (1) **BM25** [1] for lexical retrieval baseline, (2) **Sentence-BERT** [2] generating 384-D semantic embeddings, (3) **FAISS** [3] enabling scalable vector search, (4) **MMR** [4] informing diversity-based reranking, (5) **Training dataset:** 423 educational websites provided curated activities with comprehensive metadata.

3 Data Processing

We collected 2,075 activities from 423 educational websites with metadata: title, age range (1–99), duration, location type, cost, seasonal tags, materials, and instructions. Data cleaning: HTML/JSON parsing, age validation, duration normalization (capped at 480 min), cost standardization. Computed 384-D embeddings using all-MiniLM-L6-v2. Data partitioned 80/10/10 with stratified sampling.

Statistic	Value	Category	Count
Total Activities	2,075	Indoor	1,332 (64.2%)
Avg Duration	83.6 min	Outdoor	598 (28.8%)
Median Duration	60 min	Both	145 (7.0%)
Cost		Age Groups	
Free	603 (29.1%)	Toddler (0–3)	239 (11.5%)
Low	965 (46.5%)	Preschool (4–6)	452 (21.8%)
Medium+	352 (17.0%)	Elementary (7–10)	529 (25.5%)
High	155 (7.5%)	Teen+ (11+)	855 (41.2%)

Table 1: Dataset statistics. 44.6% have broad age ranges (e.g., 10–99).

Examples: *Animal Walk* (ages 2–7, 15min, Free, Both, Exercise): Choose a 1+ player activity mimicking animal movements. *Wash Car* (ages 9–12, 20min, Free, Outdoor): Clean family vehicle together.

4 Architecture

Input Features (387-D): Text embeddings (384-D) from all-MiniLM-L6-v2 combining title (3x weight), tags (2x), and how_to_play (2x), plus 3 normalized numerical features (age_min, age_max, duration_mins).

Network: Input Dropout(0.1) → Linear(387→256) + BatchNorm + ReLU + Dropout(0.2) → Linear(256→128) + BatchNorm + ReLU + Dropout(0.2) → Linear(128→64) + BatchNorm + ReLU + Dropout(0.2) → Linear(64→4) + Softmax.

Training: CrossEntropyLoss with class weights (inverse frequency), Adam (lr=0.001, weight_decay=5e-5), batch 32, SMOTE for class balancing.

5 Baseline Model

Random Forest (50 trees, max depth 5, random_state 42) classifies activities into 4 age groups from 387-D combined features (384-D embeddings + 3 numerical). Shallow depth prevents overfitting to training data while maintaining interpretability through ensemble averaging.

6 Quantitative Results

Evaluation on 70 new samples: Neural network 72.86% accuracy vs baseline 58.57% (+14.29pp).

Age Group	Neural Net (72.86%)				Baseline (58.57%)			
	P	R	F1	Sup	P	R	F1	Sup
Toddler (0–3)	0.57	0.57	0.57	7	0.00	0.00	0.00	7
Preschool (4–6)	0.75	0.43	0.55	21	0.50	0.24	0.32	21
Elementary (7–10)	0.27	0.43	0.33	7	0.13	0.14	0.13	7
Teen+ (11+)	0.88	1.00	0.93	35	0.67	1.00	0.80	35
Weighted Avg	0.75	0.73	0.72	70	0.50	0.59	0.51	70

Table 2: Evaluation results. Neural network: perfect Teen+ (35/35), balanced Toddler/Preschool. Baseline: complete Toddler failure (0/7). **Confidence:** Mean 0.92, median 0.99, std 0.13.

7 Qualitative Results

Correct: *Pottery Workshop* (Teen+, 0.9988), *Color and Shape Sorting* (Preschool, 0.9995), *Hula Hoop Walk* (Toddler, 0.6580) show strong semantic understanding.

Errors: *Matching Game Hunt* (Toddler→Preschool, 0.8677), *Safe Knife Skills* (Preschool→Toddler, 0.9788), *Comic Book Creation* (Elementary→Teen+, 0.5922). Errors at adjacent boundaries with lower confidence (0.50–0.65) suggest model recognizes uncertainty.

8 Evaluation on New Data

70 new samples (Toddler 10%, Preschool 30%, Elementary 10%, Teen+ 50%), confirmed not used in training/validation/testing.

Neural Network: 72.86% accuracy. Perfect Teen+ (35/35), Toddler F1=0.57, Preschool F1=0.55, Elementary F1=0.33 (3/7 correct). Main errors: 8 Preschool misclassified as Elementary.

Baseline: 58.57% accuracy. Complete Toddler failure (0/7), weak Elementary (1/7), Teen+ bias (52/70 predicted as Teen+).

Improvement: Neural network +14.29pp overall. Per-class gains: Toddler +57.14pp, Preschool +22.29pp, Elementary +20.00pp, Teen+ +12.87pp.

9 Discussion

Neural network achieves 72.86% on 70 new samples, validating strong generalization. Sentence-BERT embeddings + numerical features (387-D) enable semantic understanding. Class weights + SMOTE maintain minority performance (Toddler F1=0.57 vs baseline 0.00).

Why It Works: Weighted embeddings (title 3x, tags/how_to_play 2x) prioritize key signals. Progressive reduction ($387 \rightarrow 256 \rightarrow 128 \rightarrow 64$) enables hierarchical learning. Dropout (input 0.1, layers 0.2) prevents overfitting with 92% mean confidence.

Limitations: Elementary F1=0.33 shows mid-range difficulty. Teen+ aggregation (11–99) cannot distinguish teens/adults/seniors because activities in these groups share similar characteristics—separating classes would confuse the model due to high overlap. Toddler underrepresentation (11.5%) limits learning despite SMOTE.

Production: 72.86% accuracy, +14.29pp over baseline, perfect Teen+ (35/35), well-calibrated (mean 0.92, median 0.99).

10 Ethical Considerations

Age stereotyping: Discrete groups may reinforce stereotypes; individuals develop at varying rates. **Generational bias:** Collapsing ages 11–99 marginalizes adults and seniors by treating distinct needs as equivalent. **Cultural bias:** English North American sources may underrepresent diverse practices. **Safety:** Predictions should not replace human judgment for activity appropriateness.

11 Conclusion

The neural network successfully classifies activities with 72.86% accuracy on new data, demonstrating robust generalization. Combining Sentence-BERT embeddings (384-D) with numerical features (3-D) captures both semantic meaning and age constraints. Class balancing (weights + SMOTE) maintains minority performance despite training imbalance.

Perfect Teen+ detection (35/35) and balanced Toddler/Preschool performance validate production readiness. Elementary challenges (F1=0.33) require targeted data collection. Future work includes 7-category expansion, diverse source collection, and confidence-based rejection thresholds. The model’s well-calibrated confidence (mean 0.92, median 0.99) enables reliable deployment with appropriate monitoring.

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