



Home Start

FAMILY LEARNING Activities to Enjoy Together



Inventing the Future Together.

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Introduction

Your home can be a place for your child to learn. Families are the child's first and most important teachers. Children learn best through their own senses and experiences. They relate best to the world they see around them and develop language, skills, and knowledge based on these experiences.

This booklet suggests way in which you can use everyday objects and activities in the home and neighborhood to develop children's language and knowledge which will prepare them for academic learning. We have included experiences that will enrich the development of the whole child, please feel free to use and share your own ideas to expand on these:

PHYSICAL ACTIVITIES:

- To develop large and small muscle control
- To develop eye-hand coordination
- To release energy
- To provide a balance of active and quiet experiences
- To develop environmental awareness, using all the senses

SOCIAL/EMOTIONAL ACTIVITIES:

- To develop a sense of competence
- To promote self-help skills
- To increase awareness of themselves, other family members and the wider community in which they live

COGNITIVE ACTIVITIES:

- To develop meaningful relationship with adults
- To develop math and science concepts, pre-reading and pre-writing skills, cultural awareness, problem-solving, decision-making, and higher-level thinking.

LANGUAGE ACTIVITIES:

- To expand child's own language, learn new words, discover new meanings, connect spoken word with print, and enjoy literature.
- To understand different uses of language: for enjoyment, for communication, for expressing feelings, for following directions, and for relating personal experiences.

Where We Clean Our Bodies

Things To Talk About

1. Use a mirror for your child to name their body parts, head, shoulder, left foot, right wrist.
2. Talk about opposites in the bathtub, compare things that are hot or cold, hard or soft, full or empty, that float or sink.
3. Compare differences in textures in cotton ball, a bar of soap, liquid soap, a sponge. How is it different when it is wet or dry?
4. Describe smells found in bathroom, such as shampoo, toothpaste, soap, and hand lotion using lots of descriptive words.
5. Describe sounds in and out of the bathroom - dripping water, running water, toilet flushing, door opening/closing, using descriptive words.
6. Discuss and demonstrate good health habits like hand washing, brushing teeth, combing hair. Ask child to tell what to do in order, what comes first, next...
7. Show your child how to use a bathroom scale and how numbers represent pounds and ounces.
8. Read or talk to your child while they are bathing.

Things To Do

1. Let your child use non-toxic tempera or whipped soap colored with food coloring to body paint or paint in shower or tub.
2. Give your child items such as sponges, measuring cups, squirt bottles, soap and other water toys with which to experiment and describe what they are doing.
3. Ask your child to close their eyes and identify objects by smell, such as perfume, baby powder, or toothpaste.
4. Ask your child to close their eyes and identify sounds such as running water, toilet flushing, cabinet opening, paper tearing.
5. Help your child learn to wash hands before eating and after using toilet, to brush teeth after eating and before bedtime.
6. Have reading material available in the bathroom. Maintain a relaxed and enjoyable atmosphere so child associates bath time with pleasure.
7. Help your child start a chart to record their weight once a month, using a scale. Compare to other children and talk about more and less, heavier and lighter.

Where We Cook & Eat

Things To Talk About

1. Take turns naming grocery items as you and your child put them away, describe how they look, feel or smell.
2. Name fruits and vegetables. Talk about the why and how of washing and storing fruits and vegetables.
3. Help child describe the color, size, texture, smell and taste of foods at meal time.
4. Talk about healthy snacks that help their body grow and those that just taste good, then ask them to name 5 favorite healthy foods.
5. Introduce the idea of opposites and ask them to name and describe foods that are hot or cold, crispy or soft, sweet or sour, rough or smooth, etc.
6. Talk about the colors of common objects in the kitchen – dishes, food, curtains, appliances. Ask your child to find something red in the kitchen or something blue. Ask them to count to see whether they see more red or more blue objects.

Things To Do

1. Help child learn to sort and store groceries– dairy in refrigerator, canned goods on shelves, all cleaning items below sink, etc.
2. Help child arrange cans and boxes on shelves according to size or type of food – largest to smallest or all canned fruit, all canned vegetables, all cereal boxes.
3. Find fruits or vegetables with smooth texture and compare to those with rough textures, using descriptive words.
4. Help child clean and store fresh fruit and vegetables.
5. Help child learn to prepare a healthy snack, such as celery stalk spread with peanut butter, fruit kabobs, quesadillas.
6. Ask your child to find out how many items of a color they can find throughout the house.
7. Ask your child to find out how many items of a shape they can find throughout the house.

Where We Fix Things

Things To Talk About

1. Help your child learn to handle tools like a small hammer, pliers, screw drivers, wrench. Talk about the names of the tools and how they are used.

2. Discuss the size, smell, texture and weight of various tools in the garage. Help your child use lots of descriptive words.

3. Help your child use language to describe how you have sorted a set of tools by same or different, largest to smallest, heaviest to lightest. Then let them sort and you tell how they were sorted.

4. Show and talk about measurement tools - a tape measure, yard stick, or scale; show the marks and numbers on them. Estimate the size, weight, or length of an object, then confirm with appropriate tools.

5. Talk about the difference between a slotted screwdriver and a Phillips screwdriver and let them find screw of both types, either in your tool box or around the house.

Things To Do

1. Collect odds and ends of screws, nuts, bolts, hooks, etc. and help your child sort them into jars, muffin tins or egg cartons by type of objects and write names on containers.

2. Help your child measure the length of objects using a ruler, yard stick, or tape measure. Teach them to read the numbers or show them a number and ask them to find something that length.

3. Help child measure their height, describing feet and inches, and mark it on a wall or door in garage. Measure other family members. Make a new mark every birthday.

4. Let your child choose a screwdriver to tighten screws around the house, with supervision.

5. Help your child learn to use a small hammer: start with golf tees pounded into Styrofoam block, then large nails in corrugated cardboard, then galvanized nails in a log or stump of wood, with supervision.



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