



Fun Learning Activities To Do At Home...

Parents often ask me how they can help their child at home. Here are some fun ideas to try. Enjoy!

Reading Activities:

Hidden Letters--Build reading observation skills with this activity. Ask your child to look for letters of the alphabet on boxes and cans of food and household supplies. For example, find five A's or three C's, or any number of letters or combinations on cereal boxes, soup cans, bars of soap. Start with easy-to-find letters and build up to harder-to-find ones. Then have your children write the letters on paper or point out the letters on the boxes and cans.

Alphabet Tag- Have the person who is "it" pick a letter. When he/she tags someone, they are frozen and need to say 3 words that begin with that letter to be free.

And That's the End of the Story--Improve listening skills and imagination. Read a story aloud to your child and stop before the end. Ask the child how the story will turn out. Then finish the story and discuss the ending with the child. Did it turn out the way you thought?

Listen to Stories on Tape

Read a Chapter Book- read a chapter to your child each night. Before reading, talk about what happened in the last chapter and predict what might happen next, based on the chapter title.

Repetitive Books- Find some books with predictable, repetitive sentences at the library. Read them aloud to your child while you move your finger along the text. If your child is comfortable, he/she can read it to you or to a favorite stuffed animal!

A few good ones:: Brown Bear Brown Bear, I Went Walking, Rosie's Walk,

Magnetic Letters:- Have magnetic letters available to use on the refrigerator or cookie sheet. Each day put up about 5 consonants and a couple of vowels and work together to see how many words you can build with the letters. Focus on some easy word patterns, such as: -at, op, ig.

Reading in The Car- have your child look for environmental print that he/she can read, such as stop signs, store signs, road signs, etc.

Writing Activities:

***Have plenty of fun pens, markers, paper and stapled blank books available to motivate your child to write at home.**

Disappearing Letters--Promote creativity and build muscle control with a pail of water and a brush. On a warm day, take your children outside to the driveway or sidewalk and encourage them to write anything they wish. Talk about what they've written.

Comic Strip Writing--Use comic strips to help with writing. Cut apart the segments of a comic strip and ask your child to arrange them in order. Then ask your child to fill in the words of the characters (orally or in writing). Also, your child could make up his/her own comic book and he could add speech bubbles for each character.

Conversation Notebook- Have a conversation with your child with writing. Keep a small notebook that will travel back and forth from you to your child. Perhaps you could leave it on his/her pillow each night with a message, then your child could write back and put it on your pillow.

Salt Writing:- Have your child practice letter formations in pan or plate of salt. Letters can easily be "erased" by shifting the dish! Playdough letters are fun too!

Lists- Have your child make useful lists or notes for you whenever possible. He/she can write reminders, grocery lists, etc.. Kids especially love writing on sticky notes!

Math Activities

Laundry Math--Sharpen skills by doing a necessary household job. Ask your youngster to sort laundry--before or after washing. How many socks? How many sheets? And you may find a lost sock as well.

Number Games:

\$Chutes and Ladders

\$Top It (same as "war"- take out face cards)- here's a challenge: on your turn, put out two number cards instead of one and create the biggest number possible. Who has the biggest double digit number?

\$Go Fish

\$Slap Jack (instead of slapping the Jack, make a set of cards with numbers 1-20 and you slap a designated number instead)

Sorting and Stacking--Teach classification skills with dinnerware. Ask your child to match and stack dishes of similar sizes and shapes. Also have your child sort

flatware--forks with forks, spoons with spoons. **Sort Groceries-** Ask your child to help you unload the groceries and sort into categories. Have him/her describe the groupings (see what interesting groupings he/she comes up with!)

Calendar- Hang a calendar in a spot where your child can see it every day. Have your child help you find special dates to fill in with upcoming events. Ask him/her to tell you the date/day each day, and what is happening that day. Your child could be the designated calendar watcher for the family!

On The Move- Your child could practice counting how many times he/she can: hop, jump, skip, dribble a ball, etc.

Count my coins- You could empty your change purse or pockets and have your child sort the coins by types. How many of each are there? Can you count the dimes by tens? How many pennies? Etc..Please don't expect your child to be able to combine and count mixed change.

Cooking- Cooking is a great way to practice measuring, counting, and following directions!

Science Activities:

Ice Is Nice--Improve observation and questioning skills by freezing and melting ice. Add water to an ice cube tray and set it in the freezer. Ask your child how long it will take to freeze. For variety, use different levels of water in different sections of the tray. Set ice cubes on a table. Ask your child how long they will take to melt. Why do they melt? Place the ice cubes in different areas of the room. Do they melt faster in some places than in others? Why?

Float and Sink--Encourage hypothesizing. Use several objects--soap, a dry sock, a bottle of shampoo, a wet sponge, an empty bottle. Ask your child which objects will float when dropped into water in a sink or bathtub. Then drop the objects in the water, one by one, to see what happens.

Animal Guessing Game- The person who is "It" thinks of 3 clues about an animal. The clues include these categories: body, color, and habitat. The other person tries to guess the animal.

What Does It Take to Grow?--Teach cause-and-effect relationships. Use two similar, healthy plants. Ask your child to water one plant and ignore the other for a week or two, keeping both plants in the same place.

At the end of that time, ask your child to water the drooping plant. Then talk about what happened and why. Plants usually perk up with water just as children perk up with good words and smiles from parents.

**Think of these as starter activities to get your ideas going.
There are opportunities everywhere for teaching and learning-
just keep it light and fun!**

Julie