

Ready for Kindergarten !

Transition Ideas and Activities

Talk With Your Child...

- ◆ Make time to hold a conversation with your child every day. Oral language development and a rich vocabulary are foundations for reading and writing. Encourage your child to ask questions and display their curiosity.
- ◆ Ask your child questions that require more than one word answers.
- ◆ Repeat and build upon what your child says.
- ◆ Point out words to your child and encourage them to use new words.
- ◆ Use descriptive words to build vocabulary (brown, fuzzy dog; juicy, purple grapes).
- ◆ Make a game out of using descriptive words. Take turns adding words to describe something. (For example: dog; brown dog; brown, furry dog; small, brown, furry dog with big black eyes).
- ◆ Point out shapes and colors.

When Shopping With Your Child...

- ◆ Have your child find a letter from their name on an item in the store.
- ◆ Let your child help make a shopping list.
- ◆ Ask your child to check the milk carton, cereal boxes, tissue, and other items to see if any are almost empty.
- ◆ Allow your child to help make the shopping list and to check items off the list as you shop.
- ◆ Ask your child to make comparisons (smallest, shortest, heaviest, same as, etc.) of cans and bottles.
- ◆ Let your child pick out one vegetable or fruit and identify the beginning sound of its name. What other foods begin with that sound?
- ◆ Cut out coupons, and help your child match the coupon to the food item. Let her/him give them to the cashier.
- ◆ Estimate how many apples you placed in the bag, or how many carrots are in a bunch, and then count the number.
- ◆ Ask your child to help by putting three cans of soup/ five cups of yogurt in the cart.

When Riding in the Car With Your Child...

- ◆ Make a game of looking for items with a certain shape (circle=wheels, traffic sign, manhole).
- ◆ Have your child draw a picture journal of a trip. You can add dictation about each picture.
- ◆ Keep CDs of children's songs and stories in an activity bag or backpack.
- ◆ Drawing materials, large dice, card games, puzzles and books make great gifts.

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When Riding in the Car With Your Child (Cont'd)...

- ◆ Before a long trip, gather information and read about the destination to help your child look forward to the journey. Map out points of interest along the way together.
- ◆ Play games like “I Spy”; searching for animals, letters and numbers; counting colored cars, matching sign shapes or making up words that rhyme with things you see. (For example: “There’s a stop sign. What rhymes with ‘stop’?” Pop, plop, clop, mop)

Imagination, Pretend and Creativity...

- ◆ Children learn by role playing and using their imagination.
- ◆ Provide unstructured play time.
- ◆ Provide dress up clothes and props.
- ◆ Provide art supplies (paper, crayons, markers, paints).
- ◆ Add food coloring to a pie tin of bubbles mixture, blow into the mixture with a straw. Lay a piece of paper on top of the colored bubbles.
- ◆ Press string or crumpled paper into a thin layer of paint, then press it on paper.

When Cooking With Your Child...

- ◆ Point out letters and words on the recipe as you cook.
- ◆ Identify and name initial sounds and letters of the words.
- ◆ Have your child measure.
- ◆ Talk about changes in consistency, color and shape as you pour and stir.
- ◆ Have your child identify numbers from recipes.
- ◆ Allow your child to assist with safe tasks such as stirring.
- ◆ Read books about food such as If You Give a Mouse a Cookie by Laura Numeroff when making cookies; or Tomie De Paola’s Pancakes for Breakfast as pancakes are cooking in the morning.
- ◆ Try food from different cultures by cooking, eating out or sharing with friends. Try Japanese, Italian, Chinese, Cuban, German and other foods. Consider playing traditional music from that country and looking at pictures of the country’s attractions on the internet.
- ◆ Let your child practice listening skills by making a snack according to your verbal directions. Provide the ingredients for a simple snack. Give your child instructions such as, “Spread peanut butter in the groove of the celery. Place 10 raisins on top of the peanut butter. You just made ‘ants on a log’”
- ◆ Make simple snacks together such as yogurt with granola on top.

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When Playing Games With Your Child...

- ◆ Provide simple card games, such as *Fish*, *Concentration* or *Crazy Eights*. These games allow children to identify numerals, match numerals or objects, and practice memory skills. They also develop fine motor skills by picking up and handling cards.
- ◆ Use dominos to play games. Help your child learn to count the dots and to relate those dots to the numerals they represent.
- ◆ Play simple box games with your child and other family members that teach taking turns and sharing such as *Chutes & Ladders* and *Hi Ho Cherrio*.
- ◆ Choose games that are appropriate for the age of the child. With commercial games, look for age recommendations on the game box.
- ◆ Noncompetitive games (such as hand games or jumping rope) are best. Young children hate to lose.
- ◆ Turn walking and counting into a game. Count the number of steps when walking up a set of stairs; count how many small steps it takes to walk across the room then how many giant steps it takes.
- ◆ Estimate then count the number of books or toys on the shelf.
- ◆ Play games that require counting such as *Hide and Seek*.
- ◆ As you play games with your child, extend their mathematical thinking by asking simple questions: Do you have more red cards or more black ones? How do you know? How many matches did you get?

Read Aloud To Your Child Every Day...

- ◆ Set aside 15 to 20 minutes to read to your child every day. Consider reading once in the afternoon and again before bed.

As you read:

- ◆ Let your child hold the book (face up) and turn the page.
- ◆ Point out the book cover, author, and illustrator.
- ◆ Move your finger along under the words.
- ◆ Point to and talk about the pictures that go with the words.
- ◆ Pause while you read, and ask your child to predict what he thinks might happen next.
- ◆ Talk about a word that is new to your child.
- ◆ At the end of the story, talk about your child's favorite parts and why she liked this particular story.
- ◆ Discuss the parts of a story-beginning, middle and end.
- ◆ Identify letters and words that are familiar.
- ◆ Describe the feelings of the characters in the story.

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- ◆ Discuss the conclusion, and create a new ending for it.

Read Aloud To Your Child Every Day (Cont'd)...

- ◆ Visit the library to pick out books to read together. Choose books based on your child's interests.
- ◆ Choose informational books: books about dinosaurs, transportation, etc.
- ◆ Choose nursery books and point out rhyming words.
- ◆ Choose books from the same author. Help your child make comparisons between books.
- ◆ Ask your child to "read" a favorite story to you.
- ◆ Include books, writing and drawing materials as presents for birthdays and other occasions.
- ◆ Ask your child to tell a story for you to write down. Read it back to him/her. Allow them to illustrate their story.
- ◆ Make a book out of your child's writing. Have him/her draw pictures to go with the words or scribbles. Have your child retell the story.
- ◆ Talk about numbers in counting books. Point to and count the items on each page.
- ◆ Have your child read to a younger sibling.
- ◆ Have your child read a favorite book and use pictures for clues to the story.

Outdoor Play...

- ◆ Gross motor (big muscle) development takes place before fine motor (small muscle) development. Gross motor development such as running, skipping, catching a ball can help the fine motor system that is needed for the task of writing develop. Encourage lots of physical play for health and development.
- ◆ Make sure your child gets to play outside every day.
- ◆ Play catch.
- ◆ Teach your child to skip (start slowly by saying and modeling: step-hop, step-hop, step-hop, step-hop)
- ◆ Kick a ball back and forth to each other.
- ◆ Go to the park to play.
- ◆ Practice bouncing a ball.

Plant Seeds...

Recommended seeds/plants for young children:

-Nasturtium, sunflower, radish, carrot and zinnia seeds sprout and grow very quickly.

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-Tomato plants are easy to grow in a container or in the ground. When fertilized and watered regularly they will bear fruit.

-Herbs such as basil, rosemary and mint are very fragrant and can be used in cooking.

Use math skills as you garden:

- ◆ Count the seeds
- ◆ Measure the correct distance between plants
- ◆ Use the calendar to predict when the seeds will sprout
- ◆ Measure the height of the plants as they grow

Measure Items In Fun Ways...

- ◆ Cut a piece of yarn that you think is long as the ball is around its middle.
- ◆ Put out items like paper clips and straws. How many straws long is the coffee table? How many paper clips long is the paper? Would you use a straw or a paperclip to measure the length of the desk? Which would you use to measure the tape dispenser? Which would you use to measure the length of your foot?
- ◆ Here is water in a glass. If we pour it in the measuring cup, which line will it go up to?

Make Homemade Bubbles...

You can make a simple bubble solution at home.

2 Tablespoons Liquid Dish Soap

1 Cup water

Mix the soap and water – your child can help stir. Remind them to stir gently.

Make bubble blowers and wands from materials around your home. Some suggestions:

- ◆ Fly swatters
- ◆ Hula hoops
- ◆ Plastic chicken wire
- ◆ Wire or twist-ties-bent into loops
- ◆ Wire hangers – you will need to bend them for your child
- ◆ Loops that hold six packs of soda together

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Play dough Recipe...

1 ½ cups salt
3 cups of all-purpose flour
3 Tablespoons cream of tartar
3 Tablespoons vegetable oil
3 cups water
Food coloring

Mix the salt and flour together. Add 3 tablespoons of vegetable oil, 3 cups water and a few drops of food coloring (optional). Combine all ingredients in a pan and cook over low heat, stirring constantly until all ingredients are well-mixed and the dough begins to pull away from the sides of the pan. The dough will be lumpy at first, but will become smooth after about ten minutes of cooking. Once the dough is smooth and pulls away from the side of the pan, remove the dough from the pan. Let it cool, then knead it for two to three minutes or until it is thick. Place the dough in a container with a lid to prevent it from drying out. It will keep for three to four weeks.

Use the dough to build a structure, roll into letters to spell their name and just play with. Playing with dough builds strength in the hands.

Collect Rocks...

Take a walk together and collect rocks. Help your child develop descriptive language by describing the rocks to them and allowing them to describe the rocks to you. Here are a few descriptive words to get you started: smooth, rough, hard, bumpy, dirty, sparkly, scratchy, brown, grey.

- ◆ Your child can sort and re-sort the rocks different ways (shiny/dull; smooth/rough; brown/gray)
- ◆ Empty egg cartons are useful for sorting small rocks and other tiny items.

Homemade Ice Cream...

Milk can become ice cream in five minutes and it is fun to make.

What you'll need:

1 Tablespoon sugar
½ cup milk or half & half
¼ teaspoon vanilla

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6 Tablespoons rock salt
1 pint-size Ziploc plastic bag
1 gallon-size Ziploc plastic bag
Ice cubes

How to make it:

Fill the large bag half full of ice and add the rock salt. Seal the bag. Put milk, vanilla, and sugar into the small bag and seal it. Place the small bag inside the large one and seal it again carefully. Shake until the mixture is ice cream, about 5 minutes. Wipe off the top of the small bag, then open carefully and enjoy.

Tips:

To make a larger amount, try doubling the recipe. Anything larger might be too big for kids to pick-up, because the ice is quite heavy.

Make a ZiplocK Omelette...

- ◆ Put out omelette ingredients (chopped ham, cooked bacon pieces, grated cheese, chopped bell pepper and onion).
- ◆ Each person puts their choice of omelette ingredients in their ziplock.
- ◆ Crack one or two eggs into each ziplock and seal. Squeeze the egg so it is scrambled and mixed with the other ingredients.
- ◆ Boil the sealed ziplock mixture for 13 minutes (or until the egg is cooked). An adult should remove the ziplock from the hot water using tongs. An adult should unseal the hot ziplock. The omelet will roll out of the bag.

Paint with Water...

Using water and an old paintbrush, encourage your child to “write” letters and draw pictures on the sidewalk or porch. Be sure to tell your child to ONLY do this with water.

Make Rhyming Words and Have Fun With Nonsense Words...

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Help your child think of words that rhyme. Explain that rhyming words sound the same at the end then provide lots of examples. Make up riddles: "I am thinking of something that rhymes with cook. It has words and pictures." (book) Make up sentences that rhyme: Fred sat on the _____(bed). Ann turned on the _____ (fan). Make up nonsense words that rhyme with real ones, such as "wettuce" and "belephant." See if your child can guess the real word.

Read books that rhyme. Dr. Seuss books are great for teaching and playing with rhyme.

Sing Songs and Make Music...

- ◆ If you are musical, play an instrument and sing with your child.
- ◆ Play with the sounds of common songs. Turn "Twinkle, twinkle little star" into a "Binkle, binkle little bar".
- ◆ Make rhythm instruments out of plastic containers filled with rice and beans. Keep the beat of the music with a wooden spoon, rubber spatula, or two straws or pencils tapped together. Use an empty coffee can as a drum.
- ◆ Move to music. Dance. Jump. Stomp your foot to the beat.
- ◆ As you sing, move your arms up as the notes go up, and down as the notes go down.

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Things To Do The First Two Weeks of Kindergarten...

| Week 1 | | | | | | |
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| Allow your child to help select what they will wear on their first day of kindergarten. | Before school: Talk about what to expect the first day of school. After school: talk about what happened. Ask about school rules. | Talk about things that are the same in Kindergarten as in Pre-K and things that are different. | Tell your child what you remember about kindergarten and what things you liked to do when you were that age. | Have your child draw a picture of something they like about kindergarten for their teacher. | Add special school events to your family calendar with your child. | Go outside at night. Look for the moon and stars. Find the brightest star in the sky. |
| Week 2 | | | | | | |
| Have your child draw a picture and tell about things they see on the way to school each day. | Make a simple snack together, and allow your child to help. | Play a simple board game, practice following the rules and taking turns. Talk about other times you have to follow rules and take turns. | Allow your child to help set the table for dinner. Talk about how many people will be eating and how many plates, forks and napkins you will need. | Allow your child to help sort the laundry by lights/darks. They can help fold and put the clothes away also. Children are especially capable of matching socks. | Talk with your child about friends in their Kindergarten class. Discuss with your child what it is that they like about their friends. | Choose a special place to visit as a family. Enjoy time spent together. |