



Pre-K and Kindergarten

Learning at Home

Packet Instructions:

Attached you will find a Choice Board for each week.

Each column is labeled with a subject, for example, Reading and Writing, Math, Science and Social Studies, and Fine Arts and Physical Fitness.

Below each subject, you will find activities appropriate for your child.

FOR THE WEEK, choose **at least one activity** in each column for your child to complete. This would mean that at the end of the week, your child would have completed four activities.

You may choose which activity and/or subject that you want to complete in any order or on any day. You may also choose to do more than four activities, but the expectation for the week is four activities.

If you need directions/instructions for an activity, you will find step-by-step instructions included in the packet. The instructions are titled exactly as they appear on the Choice Board and are in alphabetical order. These instructions are provided as a guideline, please feel free to modify and adjust for materials and objects that you have around your home.

Additional Resource:

It is imperative that your child read or be read to daily. You will also find some questions included in the back of the packet that you can ask your child before, during, and after reading a story.

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**Pre-K and Kindergarten
Learning at Home Choice Board**

Week 1: March 23rd - March 27th

Reading/Writing	Math	Science and Social Studies	Fine Arts and Physical Fitness
Finger Plays	Stir, Scoop, and Bake	Take a Walk Outside What do you see, hear, feel?	Hop once for each letter in your name
Jump a Sentence or Word	Snack Time Counting	Draw a picture of your community. Label things that you think are important.	Dance to your Favorite Song
Read or Listen to a Story	Shape Hunt	Toy Sort You can use colors, texture, size, etc.	Draw a picture of your favorite animal. Can you write words or sentences about your animal?

Week 2: March 30th – April 3rd

Reading/Writing	Math	Science and Social Studies	Fine Arts and Physical Fitness
Write Your Name	Number Cups	Flashlight Fun	Clean Up with Simon Says
Read or Listen to a Story	Calendar Count	Head in the Clouds	Feeling Faces Masks
Words, Words, Words	Jump to Number	Pet Care	Picture Placemat

Many activities have been taken from and/or modified from CLI Engage.



**Pre-K and Kindergarten
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Week 3: April 6th – April 10th

Reading/Writing	Math	Science and Social Studies	Fine Arts and Physical Fitness
Secret Word Game	Let's Tap and Count	What's the Weather?	Bean Bag Balance
Write a Story	Pattern Play	Sensory Popcorn	Parachute Play
Read or Listen to a Story	Pick Up and Count	Sink or Float	Dance Party

Week 4: April 13th – April 17th

Reading/Writing	Math	Science and Social Studies	Fine Arts and Physical Fitness
Read or Listen to a Story	Take it Away	Snack Sorting	Family Fitness
Hey Diddle Diddle	Who Has More?	Sponge Play	Paint a Pie
Be a Storyteller	Shape Hunt	Water and Ice	Playdough and Pasta

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**Pre-K and Kindergarten
Learning at Home Choice Board**

Week 5: April 20th – April 24th

Reading/Writing	Math	Science and Social Studies	Fine Arts and Physical Fitness
Letters in My Name	Pattern Play	Who's job is it?	Sound Bottles
Read or Listen to a Story	Snack Time Counting	What's the Weather?	Clean Up with Simon Says
Guessing Game	Number Cups	When I grow up...	Feeling Faces Masks

Week 6: April 27th – May 1st

Reading/Writing	Math	Science and Social Studies	Fine Arts and Physical Fitness
I Spy Letters	Stir, Scoop, and Bake	Which Weighs More?	Hop once for each letter in your name
Meaningful Memories	Shape Hunt	Make a Thank You card for someone	Dance to your Favorite Song
Read or Listen to a Story	Who Has More?	Toy Sort You can use colors, texture, size, etc.	Family Fitness

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**Pre-K and Kindergarten
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Week 7: May 4th – May 8th

Reading/Writing	Math	Science and Social Studies	Fine Arts and Physical Fitness
Nature Names	Let's Tap and Count	Take a Walk Outside What do you see, hear, feel?	Family Fitness
Read or Listen to a Story	Pattern Play	Flashlight Fun	Dance Party
Pass a Story	Find the Number	Take a Walk Outside What do you see, hear, feel?	Draw a picture of your favorite place.

Week 8: May 11th – May 15th

Reading/Writing	Math	Science and Social Studies	Fine Arts and Physical Fitness
Read or Listen to a Story	Pick Up and Count	Draw a picture and label a picture of people in the community.	Parachute Play
I Spy Letters	Calendar Count	Where do you live? Draw and label your community.	Family Fitness
Rhyme Time	Jump to Number	Shadows and Light	Bean Bag Balance

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Instructions for Choice Board Activities

Be a Storyteller

Begin by sitting with your child and saying, "Let's pretend to be storytellers. When we retell a story, we want to say all the important things that happened in the book. We can talk about the people or animals in our story. They are called characters. We can also talk about the setting of our story, or where the story takes place."

Read the book aloud. Next, have your child sit in the storyteller chair or on your lap and retell the events in the story.

Help your child remember as much as possible about the characters, setting, and major events by asking questions such as, "Who are the characters in our story? Where did this take place? Do you remember what happened first?"

Your child can also look at and show you the pictures in the book to help her retell the story. If your child isn't sure where to begin, look at the first page of the book together and ask what happened at the beginning of the story. Let her use the book as much as she needs to help her retell the story.

Bean Bag Balance

Begin by making two lines (a "start" line and a "finish" line) on the ground with string or masking tape. For younger children, make the distance between the two lines shorter (5 to 6 feet), and for older children make it longer (10 to 12 feet), as they can run longer distances.

Stand with your child at the starting line. Explain that the goal is to get to the finish line without dropping the bean bag. Show your child how to walk slowly and balance the bean bag on your head. Narrate what you are doing in a playful way, such as "Whoa! I want to keep the bean bag on my head... Oh no, it's almost falling off! I have to walk slowly and keep my head very still."

With your child at the starting line, say "Ready, set, go!" Your child can walk while balancing a bean bag on his head, going as slowly as he needs to in order to get to the finish line without dropping the bean bag. After playing this game over and over, encourage the child to walk faster or even run.

Next, your child can try crawling with a bean bag on his back or walking with the bean bag between the knees, under their chin, on the shoulder, etc. Emphasize the names of the different body parts being used to balance the bean bag as well as "position" words and phrases, such as *on top of*, *between*, *under*, etc.

Calendar Count

Show your child the calendar and explain what month it is. Show your child the current day of the month. Use a small drawing, sticker, or symbol to mark the date of an interesting activity for that month (e.g., a family birthday, Valentine's Day, Halloween, or trip to the zoo). Have your child place her finger on today's date and then count the days until the anticipated event.

Next, encourage your child to try doing this on her own, using the same month but counting to another anticipated event. Have her count from the current day.

You can also do a countdown from the current day to an anticipated day by placing an X on each day as it passes. This helps children understand the passing of time. Children love to cross out days on a calendar and count how many days are left until a special event!



Clean Up with Simon Says

Make clean up time fun! Say to your child, “Let’s play a game as we put away your things today. If I say the special words *Simon says*, you must do all the things I ask. If I forget to say *Simon says*, then I will do all the things I said.”

“Let’s practice.” Example: “*Simon says*, first, put one toy car away and then put your shoes in your closet.” (Use directions that work for your home.)

“Did I say *Simon says*?” Say the instructions again to help your child remember which thing to do first and which thing to do next.

Practice again without saying *Simon says*. Example: “Please put your t-shirt in the hamper. Next, put your cup in the sink.” (Use directions that work for your home.) Ask your child, “Did I say *Simon says*?” If your child is not sure, repeat the instructions. If needed, remind your child that you have to follow the directions when you do not say the special *Simon says* words. If the task falls to you, ask your child to help you remember which steps to do first.

Continue the game by saying different instructions with and without the *Simon says* phrase. Some instructions may have two steps and some may have three steps if your child is ready for that challenge. *If your child is having a hard time remembering two steps, try using just one-step instructions at first.*

Create a Journal

Adults often keep a journal to record their thoughts or remember important experiences. You can make a simple journal for your child by folding a piece of 9” x 12” construction paper in half and adding several sheets of unlined notebook paper. It can then be stapled together in a book format. Your child can decorate the cover with stickers, photos, or drawings, and he can write his name on it (with help from you, if needed).

Explain to your child that a journal is a special book with blank pages on which to write or draw. Tell him that he might choose to write or draw about things he knows about, things he is interested in, or people and animals that he cares about.

Younger children can begin to make journal entries by drawing pictures and dictating sentences that you write down for them. Older children can begin to write letters or try to spell words in addition to their drawings.

Dance Party

Tell your child that today you are going to have a dance party! Pick a favorite song together. Hit play and jump around, twirl, shake your hips, and have fun dancing to the music.

When the song is over, tell your child that you’re going to make it into a game. You will take turns copying each other’s dance moves. Show your child how to play the game by going first. Start the music and pick a dance movement to do. Tell your child to try to copy your move. Once he does, tell him that it’s his turn to show off one of his dance moves. Let him pick a dance move that you have to copy. Take turns back and forth seeing who can come up with the coolest dance moves.

Family Fitness

Prepare two sets of cards before playing this game with your child. Print and cut out the number cards, mix them up, and turn the stack of cards face down. Then print and cut out the exercise cards, turn this stack of cards face down, and place it next to the first stack. If you wish, you can create your own exercise cards using exercises that feel good and are popular with your family. Now you are ready to play!

Talk to your child about the importance of keeping our bodies moving and active. Good exercise helps build strong muscles and bones. It’s important for everyone to exercise several times a week. Tell your child that today you are going

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to play a game called Family Fitness! You are going to have two stacks of cards. One stack will have the numbers 1-10 in mixed up order. The other stack will have names of exercises on them.

Let each member of the family have a turn taking one card from the number stack and one card from the exercise stack. Allow your child to identify the number. If they don't know the number, help them or have an older sibling help them. Then read the number and the exercise cards to find out how many and what exercise to do. For example, if you get the number "4" card and the jumping jacks card, then everyone in the family needs to do four jumping jacks! Play at least three or four rounds.

Feeling Faces Masks

Begin this activity by seeing how many different feelings your child can name. You can start by giving the example of "happy." If your child can't think of any feelings, try making a mad face and asking your child what feeling he thinks that is. Do the same for sad and scared. See if your child can also imitate those faces.

Once you have identified at least four basic emotions—happy, sad, mad, scared—talk with your child about a time when both of you felt each of them. You might say, "This is my happy face. I remember that I felt happy yesterday when you made me a picture at school! Can you think of a time when you felt happy?" Or you could say, "It makes me feel sad when [describe something that makes you sad]. What makes you feel sad?"

Next, tell your child, "We are going to make masks for each feeling using paper plates." Encourage your child to draw a face showing that feeling on each plate; you can help if needed. Your child can decorate the plates with yarn or paper scraps for hair and ears. A craft stick can also be taped to the bottom of the plate to make a handle to hold up the mask.

Fingerplays

Fingerplays combine hand movements with a rhyming song or chant. Fingerplays, like nursery rhymes and singing, encourage young children to tune in to sound patterns in ways that prepare their brains for later reading and spelling. This group of fingerplays helps children learn about location and position words, action words, and adjectives such as quiet, loud, fast, and slow.

Start by telling your child the name of the fingerplay, and then use an animated voice to say the words while performing the actions. Try to emphasize the rhyming words and other key words in each fingerplay. Once your child has seen the fingerplay at least once, encourage him to put up his fingers or hands and try to do it with you.

"Two Little Blackbirds"

Two little blackbirds sitting on a hill

One named Jack, the other named Jill.

Fly away, Jack! Fly away, Jill!

Come back, Jack! Come back, Jill!

Two little blackbirds sitting on a cup

One named Down, the other named Up.

Fly away, Down! Fly away, Up!

Come back, Down! Come back, Up!

Two little blackbirds sitting on a cloud

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One named Quiet, the other named Loud.

Fly away, Quiet! Fly away, Loud!

Come back, Quiet! Come back, Loud!

Two little blackbirds sitting in a row

One named Fast, the other named Slow.

Fly away, Fast! Fly away, Slow!

Come back, Fast! Come back, Slow!

“Flitter, Flutter, Butterfly”

Flitter, flutter, butterfly

Flying in the big blue sky!

Flutter high and flutter low,

Flutter fast and flutter slow.

Flitter, flutter, butterfly

Flying in the big blue sky!

“Open Shut Them”

Open, shut them

Open, shut them

Give a little clap, clap, clap!

Open, shut them

Open, shut them

Put them in your lap, lap, lap!

Creep them, crawl them

Creep them, crawl them

Right up to your chin, chin, chin!

Open wide...

your little mouth...

But do not let them in!

Flashlight Fun

First go to a dark room or turn off the lights so that you can explore how flashlights work with your child. Turn the flashlight on and off several times. Shine the light onto the wall or sheet, and talk about where the light is going as you take turns moving it across the walls and over the ceiling. For example, “Watch the light. See how it’s moving across the wall? Oh, look! I made the light jump to the ceiling! I can make it move really fast. Watch!”

Next, take turns placing your hands or other body parts in front of the flashlight so that a shadow is projected onto the wall or sheet. Explain to your child that a shadow is formed when something blocks the light. Experiment by making fun shapes with your hands to see what the shadow looks like. You could even see if you can create some shadow puppets. Ask your child to make more shadows using his favorite toys. As your child investigates light and shadows,



use words such as *light, dark, shine, bright, dim, shake, high, low, look, flashlight, shadow, on, off*, etc. so that he relates these vocabulary words to what he is doing.

Guessing Game

Explain to your child that you are going to play a game called “Guessing Game.” Tell him that you will think of an object and give three clues for him to figure out what the item is.

You can say, “I am thinking of a vegetable. It is crunchy. It is orange. Can you guess what it is?” Your child may suggest some vegetables he is thinking of. If he forgets some of the clues you gave, you can repeat them. If he is unable to guess correctly, you can give more clues, one at a time.

After your child has played this guessing game a few times, give your child a turn to think of an object and give you clues for you to guess.

Head in the Clouds

Walk outside with your child and lie down on your back on a blanket. Ask her if she sees any clouds. If she does not know what a cloud is, point to one and explain to her that clouds are the white fluffy things that we see in the sky. Then talk about clouds: “Look at the clouds! Sometimes we see white fluffy clouds in the sky, but at other times we see dark clouds. Clouds are very important. We need clouds to bring us water to drink. Dark clouds bring rain. Sometimes when clouds block the sun, they help cool us off so that we’re not so hot. Clouds are also really fun. Sometimes when looking at clouds, you can see shapes. They can even look like animals or people! Let’s look and see if we can see any shapes in the clouds.”

Give your child time to watch the clouds. See what shapes or figures she can find, and point out what you see too. Even if you don’t see the figure your child is describing, encourage her observation and show interest in her ideas. Once you’ve both had a chance to describe a few shapes or figures that you’ve seen, you can record them. Tell her that good scientists always write down or draw what they see so they can remember it.

After making your observations, go back inside to recreate them. Give your child paper and paint, colored pencils, or crayons. Allow her time to creatively draw or make a picture of what she saw in the clouds. Talk about clouds and how they come in different shapes, sizes, and colors while you both work. You can use descriptive words like *fluffy, thin, feathery, layered, big, small, white, gray, black*, etc.

While you observe or draw, ask her questions such as:

“What do you think makes the clouds move?”

“If a cloud keeps getting darker, what do you think will happen next?”

“Are there clouds at night?”

“You can see clouds and the sun during the day. What do you see in the sky at night?”

Hey Diddle Diddle

Start by introducing each item or picture to your child, asking him if he knows what it is or telling him what it is if he does not know. Talk about how the moon is up high in the sky at night when it’s dark outside. Then tell your child you are going to tell him a funny rhyme called “Hey Diddle Diddle.” See if he can repeat the name of the rhyme with you.

Recite the nursery rhyme and use the props to demonstrate the actions as you chant them.

Hey, diddle diddle,



The cat and the fiddle,

The cow jumped over the moon.

The little dog laughed,

to see such sport,

and the dish ran away with the spoon.

Ask your child questions to familiarize him with the nursery rhyme and expand his understanding of the vocabulary words, such as *cow, jump, moon, over, under, next to, behind, on top, cat, fiddle, dog, laugh, ran, dish, and spoon*. Hold up each item or picture card when discussing the word. For example:

“Have you ever seen a moon at night?”

“What does a cow say?”

“How high can you jump?”

“Can you show me how you laugh?”

“A dish running—isn’t that silly?”

And so on.

Remember that it takes many repetitions for children to learn new rhymes and songs. You can expect that the first several times you do this activity, you may be the only one reciting the rhyme. If you encourage your child to say it with you, eventually he will learn it. Another way to help toddlers participate in the rhyme is to pause at the end of each line and encourage them to fill in the last word (e.g., “The cow jumped over the _____” or “The dish ran away with the _____”).

I Spy Letters

While in the house, in the car, out doing errands, or in the community (somewhere with printed material displayed), introduce the activity: “We are going to play I Spy Letters. To spy something means to see something. As we play this game, we will look all around and find letters. I will go first to show you. I spy the letter ‘S.’ Do you see the letter ‘S’ anywhere?” Have your child look around until he locates the letter. If he needs help, you can give clues about where to look for it.

Then say to the child, “Now it’s your turn to pick a letter that you see.” If your child is hesitant, give him the words to say to start (“Say, ‘I spy the letter . . .’”)

Jump to the Number

Say to the child: “Let’s play a game. I am going to say a number and I want you to jump to the number on floor. Let’s practice. ‘7—we both will jump to number 7” (both parent and child should jump to the paper with number 7).

Continue the game by calling out other numbers in random order and having your child jump on that number. If the numbers are placed close to each other, the child may be able to leap from one to the other. If you spread them out more, the child may jump or hop all the way to the number you say. Either arrangement is fine.



Jump a Sentence

For an outdoor game, chalk can be used to draw a simple hopscotch pattern with numbers on the sidewalk. If indoors, write the numbers on sheets of paper and secure them to the floor with masking tape. Make the pattern below:

Then ask your child to take a turn by saying, "Can you jump one space for each word I say?" If he is unsure, repeat the sentence and put up one finger for each word that is spoken. Here are some sample sentences, but you can make up your own!

"Birds fly."

"You like trucks."

"We drink juice."

"Dad comes home soon."

"Our dog is black."

Let's Tap and Count

First, introduce the game by saying "Let's play a tapping game with numbers!" Show your child how to count from one to ten tapping the table once for each number you say (for example, "1" [tap], "2" [tap], "3" [tap]). Next, your child will tap the table once for each number you say as you count together. Your child can repeat after you or count with you.

Finally, your child will tap once for each number as she counts on her own, but this time using a wooden spoon to tap on a bowl or bucket like a drum. You can experiment with different rhythms of tapping, as long as your child is counting in the correct order and tapping only once for each number.

You can begin by asking your child to recall a recent experience or memory, for example, something that happened over the weekend, a family trip, or a community outing. If he is having trouble, you might suggest one: "Remember when we went fishing at the lake and you caught two fish?"

Let's Write a Story

Start by explaining the activity to your child: "Today we are going to think of a pretend story together. We can use our imagination to make up a story about anything we want. It can be silly, funny, scary, or whatever you would like!"

Ask your child what she wants the story to be about. If she struggles to come up with an idea, help her by giving her some suggestions about things she enjoys. For example, "I know you love playing soccer and talking about princesses. Would you like to make up a story about one of those things?" Allow your child freedom and creativity as she is imagining her own story. The story doesn't have to make sense for it to be good writing practice.

Some children may prefer to draw a picture first and make up a story about their picture. You can let your child choose whether to start by drawing or by creating a story. As your child tells her story, write down a few sentences on a piece of paper to capture the story. Encourage her to help with the writing as much as she is able. For example, your child might say, "And the princess had dark, curly hair!" You can ask her about the beginning sounds of the key words by saying, "What sound does the word *princess* start with? /P/, /P/, /P/... princess. Yes, *princess* begins with /p/. Do you know which letter says /p/?" If your child knows how to write some letters, ask her to write the letters she knows in some of the words.

Once several sentences have been written, they can be reread and reviewed with your child. When the story is finished, encourage your child to draw some pictures with you to go along with your story if she has not already done so.



Meaningful Memories

You can begin to draw the scene together (artistic talent does not matter) and ask your child to think about what words he would like you to write about the picture. Then invite your child to work with you to make a story about that memory. He can continue to suggest words or sentences about what is being drawn and recalled about the event. If needed, your child can be prompted with some questions such as:

“Do you remember who came with us?”

“Where did we go?”

“How did we get there?”

“What happened first?”

“What was your favorite part?”

“What happened next?”

“Then what did we do?” and so on.

Record the sentences as he dictates them. Once complete, you can read back what was dictated.

Nature Names

As a family, go on a nature walk around your neighborhood or at a nearby park. As you walk, help your child collect some items to use to form his name, such as sticks, leaves, grass, flowers, etc. Talk about each item when he finds it and why he chose it. When you get back home, help your child write his name in large letters on a piece of paper. Then allow him to glue the nature items on top of the lines and curves of the letters of his name. While he works, talk about each letter in his name and whether it has straight lines, curved lines, or both. As he works, help your child name the letters in his name. When he finishes forming his name, point to each letter and name it together. Explain to him that when these letters are put together, it spells his name.

Number Cups

Introduce the game to your child:

“Let’s play a game. We have 11 cups with numbers on them and lots of Cheerios (or other small food or item of your choice). I am going to say a number and we are going to count that many Cheerios to put in the cup.”

Then say a number from 0–10 and see if your child can find the cup with that number and count out that many Cheerios to put into that cup. Help your child count correctly if needed. Continue this game until you have done all the numbers.

Allow your child to eat or play with the items as you play the game!

Paint a Pie

Talk about what a pie is. Ask your child questions like: “What shape is a pie? Do you remember eating a pie, like an apple, blueberry, or pumpkin pie? Which pie is your favorite pie?” Talk about how a pie smells, taste, and looks.

Demonstrate and explain to your child how to create a whole pretend pie by painting paper plates with a mix of paint and white school glue (orange for pumpkin, brown or beige for apple, dark brown for chocolate, yellow for lemon, etc.). Next, explain that s/he can add spices, which will stick to the glue, to create a pretend pie that will smell delicious. Let your child smell each of the spices as you name them so they can begin to identify and describe them.



Have your child complete a pie using paint brushes and the paint/glue mixture, and then help sprinkle some spices on top. Continue to reflect on past experiences of eating pies as your child finishes creating his/her pie. If your family eats meat or vegetable pies, talk about those foods with your child.

Parachute Play

Lay the parachute (blanket/sheet) flat on the floor, and have your child sit around the edge of it, but not on top of it. Have your child hold the edges of the parachute in front of him and stand up. You will do the same. If possible, have other family members join the fun.

Encourage your child to follow the directions you give (a few examples are listed below):

- Walk around in a circle holding the parachute.
- Raise the parachute high over everyone's head and look underneath at each other.
- Raise the parachute together to make waves.

After you understand how you can make the parachute move, place a lightweight ball in the middle of it and make the ball bounce by shaking the parachute. Explain that everyone has to cooperate and work together in order to keep the ball on top of the parachute.

Have everyone holding the parachute walk forward several steps toward each other in the center. Then walk back out again and stretch out the parachute. Use the parachute to pop the ball up in the air and catch it again. Work together so that the ball does not fall to the ground.

Pass a Story

Explain the activity to your child by saying, "Today we are going to tell a story together. I will tell the beginning of our story, then you will get to tell what happens next. Then I'll tell some of it again. We can go back and forth until we want the story to end. This story can be about whatever you want it to be about. What would you like our story to be about today?"

Allow your child time to decide what she wants the story to be about. Then hold up the toy or object you have chosen to use as a "Story Wand" (something to pass back and forth to show whose turn it is to talk). "This is called a Story Wand. Whoever is holding the Story Wand gets to say what they want to happen in our story. When you're not holding the Story Wand, it's the other person's turn to talk and your job is to listen."

Start telling the story first to model how it works. It's great to start stories with "Once upon a time." Don't talk too long before passing the Story Wand to your child. When it is your child's turn, really encourage her creativity, even if what she says is silly or doesn't follow a plot that makes sense. This activity presents a great opportunity to be silly and laugh together!

Pattern Play

Explain to your child that a "pattern" is when something happens over and over or repeats itself, and that you will be making patterns using toys and other things found around the house. Start by creating a pattern for your child to follow. For example, create a pattern using toy cars in two different colors: red toy car, yellow car, red car, yellow car. Show him how to say the names of the items and their colors, and discuss how they make a pattern (e.g., red, yellow, red, yellow). Then help him figure out what color comes next.

Alternatively, a pattern can be created using different types of toy vehicles. Each vehicle can be driven or flown into "parking spots" to create a pattern, such as car, truck, plane, car, truck, plane. Start with simple patterns before introducing more complex patterns. After demonstrating a couple of patterns and helping your child to continue the pattern by adding on to it, invite your child to make his own pattern for YOU to identify and follow. As he creates a

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pattern, it is helpful to ask him questions such as: “What comes next?” or “How do you know that yellow comes after red?” This helps him practice explaining what he knows.

Pet Care

Begin by reading a book about pets or about a child who is learning to take care of pets. After reading, remind your child that all pets need food, water, and a place where they can stay dry and warm (*shelter*). Pets also need exercise and love. Some pets need to be brushed and taken on walks.

Ask your child if she wants to pretend to take care of her own pet, and help her pick out a stuffed animal to pretend with. Encourage her to name her pet, and talk to her about what her pet needs in order to be well taken care of. Show her and name each of the pet care items she might need for her pet (bowls, blankets, brush, etc.) Describe how each pet care item is used. Once she understands what the pet care items are used for, allow her to play with the items. While your child is playing, ask her questions about her pretend pet and how she is taking care of it. Remind her that pets need food, water, shelter, and someone to play with them.

Pick Up and Count

Say to the child, “We are going to play a game. Let’s see how many items we can move with these tongs from the bowl to a space in the egg carton without dropping any.”

Demonstrate for your child by picking up an item with the tongs and moving it to a space in the egg carton tray. Then encourage your child to try.

After she places a few items into the egg carton spaces, ask her, “How many do we have in the egg carton now?” If your child counts each item and then stops (e.g., “One, two, three”), you can model for her that the *last* number she counts is the *total* number of items. For example, “Yes, you counted three blocks. That means there are three blocks in the egg carton! So how many are there?” Encourage your child to repeat just the total number rather than counting from one again.

If your child counts incorrectly, help her to count the items in the egg carton one by one with you. Then encourage your child to continue moving the rest of the items with the tongs into the carton, and have her count them again and identify the total number when she has done them all.

Picture Placemats

Show your child photos of family and friends or familiar places. Let your child choose which ones to arrange on the paper to make a placemat. You can use photos printed on photo paper or regular paper, as available. Using glue sticks, attach the photos to the paper. Laminate the paper or cover with clear contact paper to make it waterproof. At mealtimes, your child can use his placemat and name the people in the photos and talk about

Playdough and Pasta

Invite your child to build or make something using playdough and dry pasta shapes. Give your child a mat, tray, or plate to work on. Pieces of the playdough can be used as “glue” to hold pieces of pasta together, or your child can flatten or squish the playdough and stick the pasta into it. Talk to your child about what she is doing and learning so that she learns words that go with her experiences. For example, you might say, “You are pushing all the pasta pieces into your playdough” or “I see how you’re using pieces of playdough to connect your pasta pieces together!”

This activity is open-ended: children can create what they want. Children may not have a goal in mind as they work with the materials, and that’s okay. They are exploring and discovering what they can make. They may also undo their work many times, for example by pushing pasta pieces into the playdough and then taking them out, or flattening their playdough and then squishing it together again.



Learning to squish, pat, pound, and roll the dough into funny shapes and making pretend structures can absorb young children's attention for a long time while reinforcing fine motor skills and hand-eye coordination.

Rhyme Time

Begin by telling your child that you have a basket full of items (or pictures of items). Say, "See all of these objects in my basket? Together, we're going to figure out which two objects belong together because they rhyme, or have the same ending sound." Hold up a cat and a rat. Say each word slowly and deliberately as you say, "Cat and rat are rhyming words because they both have the -at sound at the end." Ask your child to repeat the words. Next, find some words that do not rhyme. Hold up a dog and fish. Say each word slowly and deliberately as you say, "Dog and fish do not rhyme. Those words do not sound the same at the end."

Now hold up two objects that rhyme. Say each word slowly and have your child repeat the words. Ask your child if they rhyme. Continue, holding pairs of objects/pictures that rhyme or don't rhyme, and help your child as needed.

Secret Word Game

Choose objects around the home or pictures in a magazine that each represent a short, three-letter word (for example: cat, mop, pig, bug, net). Do not show your child the item or picture. Tell your child, "I'll tell you the sounds of a secret word. Then, you will put the sounds together and say the secret word."

Ask, "Can you say the secret word for these sounds: /c/ - /a/ - /t/?" Say the individual sounds with a short pause between each one.

If your child can say the word, show or point to the item in the home or in a book that represents the word. Say the sounds again if your child says the wrong word or cannot figure out the word. If your child still cannot figure out the word, you can say, "Say the sounds with me, /c/ - /a/ - /t/. The word is *cat*. Can you say the word?" Allow your child time to respond.

Try this with several words.

Sensory Popcorn

Explain to your child that you are going to use popcorn to practice using all five senses. Remind your child of what the five senses are (seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, and touching), or introduce them if the idea of "five senses" is new to your child. You can explain the five senses by saying something like: "There are five different ways that we learn about what's around us. We can see with our eyes. We can hear with our ears. We can smell with our nose. We can taste with our mouth. And we can touch with our hands. These are called our five senses: seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, and touching."

See what ideas your child has about her senses. For example, you might ask: "What do you like to taste? What can you hear when you're outside? What do you smell when I'm cooking dinner?"

Next, on a piece of paper, draw an eye, an ear, a hand, a nose, and a tongue to represent the five senses. Alternatively, you could draw a person with these features.

Next, you can pop the popcorn in the way your family prefers, for example using an air popper, microwave, or stovetop. As the popcorn is popping, encourage your child to use all five senses to tell you about what is happening. What does she hear? What does she see? What does she smell? When the popcorn is ready, put it into a bowl and eat it together. What does the popcorn feel like when you touch it? How does it taste?

As you talk about her observations, record them on the paper by writing the words by the body part that goes with that sense. Your child might like to add to the picture by drawing popcorn. After you finish the picture and your popcorn snack, see if your child can remember all the five senses without looking at the picture!

Many activities have been taken from and/or modified from CLI Engage.



Shadows and Light

Glue or tape each shape to a craft stick.

Place the light or flashlight behind your child and point it toward the blank wall. Turn off the lights and tell him that he will be making shadows. Say to your child, "Look at how I have created a shadow by placing my hand in front of the light. You can try it, too!"

Using the cut-out shapes glued to the craft sticks, place one in front of the light. You can move the light closer to or farther away from the cut-out shapes. Have the child explore making shadows using the shapes. Discuss why shadows change during the day. Discuss how shadows get bigger or smaller.

Shape Hunt

Gather your items of different shapes. Introduce the game to your child, for example, "Let's play a shapes game and see what kinds of shapes can we find in our house?" Hold up one item and ask your child, "What is this?" (Dorito or chip) and "What shape does it have?" (triangle) If your child doesn't know, show how to look at the sides (and other features) to identify the shape of the object. For example, say, "This Dorito chip is a triangle shape. See, there are one..., two..., three sides. Triangles always have three sides." Do this for each item to see what your child already knows.

Next, put the shape matching cards in a bag or box. Have the child pull out a card and identify the shape. Then encourage your child to find the objects that are the same shape as the shape on the card. Continue playing as long as your child is interested.

After your child masters this game, go on a "shape hunt" to look for additional items in your house that are a specific shape (e.g., "Let's walk around and see what else in our house is shaped like a circle!")

Sink or Float

Begin by introducing the activity, saying something like, "Do you know what it means to *float*?" Relate this concept to swimming or bathing in a bathtub. You can explain that "When something falls to the bottom of the water, we say it sinks. If it stays at the top of the water, we say it *floats*." You can also introduce the term experiment and explain that when we try things out to see if our ideas are correct, this is called an experiment. You can tell your child that you will be doing an experiment together to see which items float in the water and which ones sink.

Fill a tub with water. To demonstrate the activity, you can first ask your child to predict if a rock will sink or float. Say, "A prediction is a guess. It is what someone thinks will happen. Do you think this rock will sink or float?" You can then carefully put the rock on the top of the water. Confirm if she was correct or incorrect in her prediction and discuss conclusions. Discuss real world connections, for example, a past experience when your child saw rocks sink when thrown in a pond or puddle, or how rocks rest at the bottom of rivers and streams.

Next, introduce your child to the household objects one at a time. For example, "This is a cork. Do you predict that this will sink or float?" Place the object on top of the water and observe what happens.

You can discuss with your child how her predictions matched her observations, emphasizing the words *float*, *sink*, *predict*, and *experiment*.

Snacktime Counting

Demonstrate for your child how to place one piece of cereal or snack food into one section of the muffin tin or egg carton. Give the cereal to your child and count with him as he places one piece of cereal in each cup for the remaining cups. Be sure to note the number of cereal pieces that your child places in each cup (otherwise children may count out loud but forget to put any cereal into a cup). Then count the cereal one more time as the child puts them into his mouth! Repeat this



game if your child is interested in playing again. Remember to keep this activity fun, and do not be discouraged if your toddler gives up or tries to change the activity. Simply reintroduce it at another time.

The quantity of six is a large number for toddlers, so they may skip numbers when counting or just not remember the next number. As you play this game with your toddler repeatedly over time, he will learn to drop and count the cereal on his own.

Snack Sorting

Give your child a bowl of colored Goldfish crackers or colored circular cereal (such as Fruit Loops) and explain that she will put each piece of cereal on the paper circle that matches its color. It is helpful to begin by naming each color and demonstrating how to place some of the cereal on the correct colored circles. Then say, "Your turn! Can you find a green piece? That's right, let's put it in the green circle." Expect your child to want to eat some of the cereal as she is sorting.

Sound Bottles

Fill each bottle with one of the various sound makers. Tightly close the lids and cover with duct tape to secure (or glue and let dry) to make sure the contents stay inside and do not become choking hazards. One at a time, present a bottle and shake it for your baby or toddler to hear before giving her a turn to try. Encourage her to listen carefully to the sound the shaken bottle makes. Talk with your child about what you are hearing (e.g., "Do you hear it? This is loud.") You can also tell your baby the name of what is inside the bottle and talk about how it moves (e.g., sliding, shaking, going up and down).

Repeat with each bottle and talk about the differences in sound each bottle makes, for example, "This one sounds very noisy! That one makes a quiet, soft sound."

Sponge Play

Put a towel down in the play area or take the water play outside. Fill a bowl with warm water (adding food dye, if desired). A cookie sheet or plastic tray can also be used to catch any drips. Demonstrate to your toddler how to place the sponge in the full bowl and let it soak up the water. Next, squeeze the sponge over the empty bowl, transferring the water. Have your child try to continue transferring back and forth.

Stir, Scoop, and Bake

Before beginning this activity, show your child each kitchen tool, name it, and show him how to use it. For example: "This is a whisk. We use it to stir. Watch me as I stir with my whisk in this bowl." Then give your child a chance to practice using each of the kitchen tools.

Then explain the activity to your child: "Today we are going to pretend to cook some yummy food! You can cook whatever you want. What do you want to make today?" Give your child a chance to share what he would like to make. Go along with his suggestion.

Encourage your child to explore the kitchen tools and pretend to measure, stir, and bake using the water as the ingredients. He can scoop, stir, and pour the water in and out of bowls and pans. While he is exploring, continue to show him how to use the kitchen tools and pretend with him. You can act out the steps of cooking and describe what you're doing. For example, you can say, "You said you wanted to make chocolate cupcakes today. First, we need to measure the ingredients with our measuring cups... one cup of milk, one cup of flour, one cup of sugar, and one cup of chocolate! Then, you will stir them up with a spoon in the mixing bowl. Next, let's carefully pour the batter into the muffin tins. Now, we need to put them in the oven to bake!"

Give your child space and time to be creative and explore. Talk about what you see him doing, and ask him questions as he plays.



Take It Away

Pick up a number card and show the card to your child. Together, count out the number of items and place them on the table. For example, show her the number “5” card and count out five toy cars. You can say, “Let’s count five cars as we park them here in a parking lot.” Remove one car by driving it away and say, “Now how many cars are there?” Count together to see if she was correct. You can place the number “4” card next to the remaining cars to show that there are four cars left. Review the ‘take away’ process by saying, “We started with 5 cars. We took 1 away. Now we have 4 left.” Continue to remove objects, one at a time, and place the appropriate number cards next to the objects.

Next, encourage your child to take a turn picking a number card and counting out the correct number of objects. She can practice taking one item away or even adding one item to the set and matching it to the correct number card.

Water and Ice

Begin this activity by talking to your child about ice—describe to her how it feels, and remind her where she may have seen ice. Talk with your child about what ice is made of and how it needs to be kept in a very cold place to stay frozen.

Now fill the bowl with a tray of ice cubes. Using a clear glass bowl can help your child see through the sides as well as the top. Encourage your child to reach in and talk about how the ice feels.

Ask your child to think of what will happen to the ice when warm water is poured over the ice cubes. You can write down your child’s predictions.

Slowly add warm water to the bowl. Ask, “What is happening to the ice? What do you see?” If your child isn’t sure, explain that the warm water is causing the ice to melt. Let your child reach in and feel that the ice cubes are getting smaller and are not all frozen anymore. Keep watching or adding warmer water until all the ice cubes melt. Talk about whether your child’s predictions were accurate. Together, observe what is happening to the ice as time passes.

Key words to reinforce are *freeze* and *melt*.

When I Grow Up

Together, read a book about what kids want to be when they grow up (see materials list for suggestions).

Afterward, talk about the ideas in the book and ask your child open-ended questions, such as, “What would you like to be when you grow up? Why would you like to do that? Do you know anyone who does that?” If your child does not know anyone in a career she is interested in, talk about how you might be able to introduce her to someone who does that job, or plan to do some research to learn more about that career.

Next, play a game in which you act out one of the jobs you read about in the book, and your child has to guess what that job is. Once you have done a few, your child can have a turn acting out a job. You and your child might find props in your house that can also be used in this game.

Which Weighs More?

Gather the household items on a table and explain to your child that he will compare the weight (heaviness) of objects by holding the water bottle in one hand and the household item in the other. Begin with the first item, for example, a pencil. Your child will hold the water bottle in one hand and the pencil in the other and determine which weighs more (which is heavier). He should decide that the water is heavier and therefore weighs more.

A simple chart can be constructed on paper with two columns, one for objects that are heavier (weigh more) and one for objects that are lighter (weigh less) than a water bottle. After your child holds and compares the weight of each object to the water bottle, place each object in the appropriate column of the chart.



Who Has More?

Give your child three snack items (for example, goldfish) and put one snack item in front of yourself. Ask her, “How many goldfish do I have?” (Gently correct your child if she says the incorrect answer.) “How many goldfish do you have?” (Gently correct your child if she says the incorrect answer. Then ask, “Who has more goldfish?”

If your child doesn’t understand the word ‘more,’ she may not answer you. If that happens, say, “Yes, you have more goldfish!” Count the goldfish for her: “You have 1, 2, 3 goldfish. I only have 1.” Play a few more times with different variations of sets (1, 2, or 3 goldfish in a set).

After she has mastered the concept of “*more*,” play the same game and ask who has “*less*.” Your child can eat each set of snacks after deciding who has more and who has less!

Words, Words, Words

Begin by explaining the activity to the child by saying: “Let’s think about some words that begin with the same letter as your name. Your name is Ben and begins with the letter b and the /b/ sound.”

Continue: “I am thinking of the word, banana.” You can write the word *banana* down on a piece of paper. Ask your child to draw a picture next to the word, for example: “Can you try to draw a picture of a banana next to the word?”

Now say: “Now it’s your turn to think of a word that begins with the letter b and starts with the /b/ sound.”

Again, write the word the child says and have your child draw a picture of it.

Questions to Ask Before, During, and After Reading

Reading With Your Child- Before and During!

- What story clues are in the title and in the pictures?
- Is this selection fiction or nonfiction?
- *How do you know?
- * Why do you want to read this story?

- * What do you think will happen next?
- * How do you feel about the main character?
- *Would you do things differently if you were the main character?
- *Does the story text make sense to you?
- *How do you think the story will end?
- *Is the author trying to teach you something?



After Reading With Your Child



When You Think You're Done, You've Just Begun!

After enjoying a book with your child,
(whether he reads to you, or you read to him)
continue the experience by asking:

- * How did the story make you feel?
- * What did you like or dislike about the story?
- Does the story remind you of any other story?
- * What were you wondering as you read?
- * Does this book make you think of anything else you've read?
- * What was your favorite part?
- * Were there any parts that surprised you?
- * What are you going to read next?

*Adapted from Johnson and Keier,
"Catching Readers Before They Fall"

<http://firstgradewow.blogspot.com/2013/06/reading-schoolhome-connection.html>