

Developmental Activities

The following are suggested activities for parents to do with their children to help them get ready for kindergarten.

Motor Skills

- I. Imitation activities encourage visual attention and concentration as well as body awareness and control.
 1. Child stands facing mirror to observe his own actions.
 2. Child stands facing mirror to observe his own actions using specific props (such as gloves) to call attention to specific parts of body.
 3. Two children face one another, one child being the mirror and the other child imitating the action, use mat for mirror bases.
 4. Children imitate pictures from magazines of people in different positions.
 5. One child is a magnet, the other is drawn to follow his movements.
 6. Children use finger puppets, following movements of one.
 7. Child imitates one of a group of plastic figures (cowboys, Indians, etc.) for others to identify.
 8. Child play imitation game, using robins song; Simon Says or other words involving imitation but stressing showing the movement to be imitated.
 9. Imitating body positions of movable dolls (Big Jim, Barbie, etc.)
 10. Children play shadows, with one child following another.

- II. Movements to develop large muscle control and coordination.
 1. Masking tape line on floor for walking the line sequences.
 2. Jack Be Nimble rhyme for jumping over candlestick.
 3. Indian dancing: toe-heel pattern; step-hop pattern.
 4. Climbing ladders, ropes, jungle gyms.
 5. Jumping between rungs of ladder flat on ground.
 6. Dancing to folk songs on cassettes: Circle to the left, Bow, Belinda; LaRaspa; Skip to My Lou and square dances.
 7. Balance beam activities.
 8. Rubber tires; hopping in middle of; stepping in between.
 9. Rope games; Hop Scotch; ball games involving movement patterns.

- III. Activities of learning about parts of the body.
 1. Simon says, "Show me your elbow", etc.
 2. Tracing the child's body on large paper, then finding parts.
 3. Puzzles of people.
 4. Models or puzzles with body parts missing for child to identify.
 5. Child lies on mat, eyes closed, identifying parts tickled.

6. Body part collages in art, cut from magazine pictures.
 7. Body model from clay.
 8. Body parts tag in which a specific part must be tagged.
 9. Songs: Hokey Pokey, Bow Belinda.
 10. Twister game.
 11. Mr. Potato head game.
 12. Stick Puppets with parts attached by child
- IV. Knowledge of spatial relationships helps prepare children for following directions in school.
1. Follow the Leader on over, under, etc. Walks saying word each time body does action linked to word.
 2. Cutting pictures from magazines to match word concepts.
 3. Leap Frog game.
 4. Using equipment (Hoola Hoop, scarves) to go over, through, etc.
 5. Paper weaving.
 6. Placing objects to match words (put pencil in front of block).
 7. Over-under ball or bean bag relays.
 8. Large boxes for getting into, out of under, etc.
 9. Hot and cold games for near-far relations.
 10. String web, build from ceiling to go in, out, through.
- V. Right-Left Activities provide experiences that will firmly establish the concepts of left and right.
1. Sorting shoes into left and right piles.
 2. Sorting and tying on gloves.
 3. Bean bag and ball games in which objects move to left or right.
 4. Following directions; right hand on left knee
 5. Folk games; Circle to the left, Bow Belinda, Lobby Loo.
 6. Moving Hot Wheels cars on maze in lid to top left, bottom right.
 7. Left-Right puppets with plots to stress left and right.
 8. Follow the leader; shouting and turning to left, then right, etc.
 9. Tracing left and right hand; making a hands book to read and match.
 10. Sequencing action pictures from left to right.
 11. Book: The Shoe for your Left won't fit on Your Right.

Visual Skills

- I. Activities to strengthen child's ability to focus on and follow moving objects.
 1. Stick with butterfly or object taped on end for child to follow as it moves vertically, horizontally, diagonally about 12-14" in front of him.
 2. Draw shapes in the air for child to recognize.
 3. Ball on a string in the air for child to recognize.

4. Doge ball.
 5. Drawing shapes with fingers in sand tray.
 6. Watching yo-yo: tennis or ping-pong balls.
 7. Catching, throwing, rolling balls (start with large balls).
 8. Play tether ball
 9. Throw a bean bag up toward ceiling to catch.
 10. Use a plastic bat to swing at Clorox bottle hanging from tree.
- II. Activities to help your child recognize similarities and differences in visual forms.
1. Sorting objects (blocks, beads) by colors, shapes, etc.
 2. Matching pictures that are alike.
 3. Matching pictures and objects that are alike.
 4. Puzzles.
 5. Stringing beads to match a pattern.
 6. Lotto games; dominos; cards.
 7. Geoboards and pegboards, matching design cards.
 8. Parquetry designs; tangrams.
 9. Noting similarities/differences between two family members or friends.
- III. Visual Memory games will help your child improve his inner ability to remember what he/she has seen.
1. Show child tray with objects; remove object, ask what's missing.
 2. Name thing seen on way to school
 3. Ask what new thing is in the room today.
 4. Show picture; cover; child recall what they saw.
 5. Show child sequence of blocks, cover; have him build sequence.
 6. Draw a house with parts; erase one part at a time for them to identify.
 7. Draw a simple design. Cover; child draws
 8. Make up picture; number and letter sequences to see, cover and recall.
 9. One person hides; others recall what he/she was wearing.
- IV. Activities to encourage development and control of small muscles and to strengthen eye-hand coordination
1. Playing with manipulative toys (Lincoln Logs, Tinker Toys, etc.).
 2. Stacking blocks.
 3. Hammering large nails into a board
 4. Food preparation; spreading, pouring, mixing, and cutting.
 5. Dialing a telephone.
 6. Tracing; folding; cutting paper.
 7. Copying designs or tracing them
 8. Dressing skills; Zipping, snapping, buttoning, and tying.
 9. Batting balloons to keep them in the air.

10. In a picture with lines overlapping, find and trace all the circles, squares, etc.
11. Paste a picture, design, number, and letter on newspaper page. Have child cut-out.

Listening Skills

- I. Activities to stimulate awareness of sound and sound patterns – important in the development of reading readiness. Sound? No Sound. Fun Sounds!
 1. Identify sounds in room with eyes closed.
 2. Distinguish between sound and no sound; move until drum beat or music stops; Musical Chairs.
 3. Fill glasses with varying amounts of water; Listen to the different sounds.
 4. Match movements to sounds; heavy and light, fast and slow, high and low.
 5. When reading stories, parent matches voice to story character; (Papa Bear – deep voice, Mama Bear –normal voice, Baby bear –high pitch voice).
 6. Rhyming Works; nursery rhymes; rhyming stories; Dr. Seuss.

- II. How Many?
 1. Tap various objects for child to count taps without looking.
 2. With eyes closed, have child point to sound source.
 3. Use bell signals; three rings means one thing; two another.
 4. Tap sounds on one object/instrument; child repeats on another.
 5. Child writes down a number, and then taps out that number.

- III. Copy Cats
 1. Clap rhythm for child to imitate.
 2. Sing a pattern for child to sing back.
 3. Strike a triangle; hit a drum – child repeats sequence.

- IV. Following Directions, Story Telling and Memory.
 1. “Simon Says” using two-part directions: “Put your fingers on your nose and clap your hands.”
 2. Sequence games such as, “I went to the zoo and saw aEach Child repeats and adds another animal.
 3. Give sequenced directions for child to follow.
 4. Sequence pictures to match a story that has been told.
 5. Name 2, 3, 4 objects or pictures of objects; child places them in left to right order.
 6. Tell stories to act out which involve first, second, and third (final) scenes to remember and do.

- V. Putting It All Together

1. Play “Old McDonald”; letting child match sound to animals.
2. Say nursery rhymes, leaving out word for child to say.
3. Play sentence games; “I get up in the morning. I go to bed at_____.”
4. Name three objects; “shoe, telephone, and apple asking child which rings.
5. Categories; Say a short series of words- banana, car, and apple asking child which one does not belong.
6. Tape television theme song for child to identify.

Speech and Language Development

Although this section deals specifically with speech and language skills, all the activities in this booklet provide excellent opportunities for parents to help their child learn through play; new words and new ways to express relationships; to tell about themselves and their experiences.

I. Activities to help child describe objects and events.

1. Play games describing objects in relation to senses- touch, taste, looks, smell, and sound.
2. Meal preparation offers opportunities to learn about the color, size, shape, taste, smell and feel of many food types.
3. Child hides an object in a sack and gives clues about it until others guess.
4. In a sack or box; put objects in a sack and give clues about it until others guess.
5. While looking at a book or magazine, have child describe a scene; making him/her aware of how many things he is finding.
6. Select a new word to learn about each day; have your child experience this new word in many ways.
7. Encourage your child to tell about events at home and on trips, about pets and meal times; help him/her to describe or remember as many details as possible.

II. Activities to help your child understand and talk about categories.

1. Sort objects into groups; socks, silverware, farm animals.
2. Name objects and let child name category; Parent: “green, blue, red and yellow” child: “colors”.
3. Make collections of objects; pictures, materials
4. Group objects or pictures by touch, taste, color and size.
5. Sort things by where they belong; in the bathroom, kitchen, garden, zoo, and school.

III. Go-Together games will help your child learn about word associations through seeing and talking.

1. Assemble objects for child to pair; needle/thread, hammer/nail, pencil/paper, shoe/sock, etc.
2. Using pictures (as above), have child put in pairs
3. Have child respond to questions; “What goes with a toothbrush? With salt?
 - a. Opposites; Talk about things that are hot, hard, big, open; lead child into discussion of things that are “not” (hot, big, hard, etc.), using the opposite name (cold, little, soft, etc.). Then, play work games; “coffee is hot - ice is _____”.

IV. Sound Activities will help your child develop articulation that is appropriate for his/her age. The most commonly misarticulated sounds from children aged 3-7 are (f) (v) (th) (s) (z) (l) ® and blends involving these sounds. For example: (spoon) (please) (tree) (three) (fly). You can help your child to better speech by:

1. Relating speech sounds to familiar noises and by focusing attention to your mouth and then to his/her mouth, using a mirror. “Listen. Watch me. Look in the mirror. You do it.”
2. (l) – the singing sound – la-la-la (tongue tip is up, behind top teeth). Place a bit of peanut butter or honey on the spot; child touches tongue tip to get the peanut butter.
3. (r) – a lion, tiger or dog’s growl; the rooster sound
4. (s) – the hissing snake sound.
5. (z) – the buzzing bee sound
6. For (s) and (z); teeth together; Smile!; Tip of tongue “hides” behind top teeth.
 - a. A child must hear the desired sound many times over before he/she will be able to produce it him/herself.

V. General Suggestions

1. Read stories, rhymes, and poems. Encourage child’s verbal participation; Dr. Seuss and Mother Goose.
2. Show and tell activities.
3. Walky-talky, telephone, tape recorders may be used to motivate a reluctant talker.
4. Role-playing as part of spontaneous play; “You be the Mommy. I’ll be Daddy.”
5. When guests come to visit, child is the host/hostess to “show” the house.
6. Provide opportunities for lots of spontaneous, interactive speech with children and adults of all ages.

And, finally....

We all learn better when we enjoy what we are doing. This booklet was designed to help you help your child through creative play. We hope you, your family, and the child will have fun doing these activities.