

LANGUAGE AND LITERACY



Can Your Child:	Learning Activity:	Can Your Child:	Learning Activity:
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Hold conversations, listen, ask and answer questions	Engage child in conversations during routine daily activities. Ask open-ended questions. Provide feedback for child's responses.
Listen to and enjoy stories and nursery rhymes	Enjoy "conversations" with books. Relate story events to the child's real life experiences, predict what will happen next. Talk about the settings, characters and their motivations or feelings. Use the story plot for pretend play.
Say or sing familiar songs and rhymes	Say nursery rhymes, sing, and play rhyming games, focusing on words that sound alike. Make up new rhymes.
Name and describe objects, places, pictures and events	Provide realistic pictures and photos of everyday objects and events. Ask open-ended questions, "What is this child doing? What do you think is going to happen next?"
Use imagination to create own stories	Support pretend play by adding props or ideas. Encourage child to dictate or tell a story and illustrate their own books. Don't forget the title page with author.

Use complete sentences	Ask open-ended questions that encourage child to think deeply and express their ideas. <i>Example:</i> "What would we have to do to be able to build the tower higher? Tell me your plan." When child responds, repeat what he/she says, adding more information for longer more complex sentences. Listen with your full attention.
Follow simple one step directions	Play "Simon Says" without anyone getting "out" so a child can stay in the game for more practice. Include words such as over, under, near, far, beside, between, on, next to, behind, inside, edge and in a row.
Recognize words or signs he or she sees often	Collect labels from cereal boxes and familiar logos. Ask, "What do you think this means?" Make picture/word "signs" for places and directions. <i>Example:</i> kitchen, bathroom, bedroom, tables, chair, and wash hands.
Recognize and try to write his or her name	Write child's name, using lowercase letters (except for the first letter) in clothing, on possessions, and on child's drawings. Refer to these labels. Provide art materials such as sand, string, and paint for creative name writing.
Name some familiar letters	Play letter matching games using magnetic letters, blocks, etc. Begin with only uppercase letters and those found in the child's name. Use other high interest words such as: mom, dad, love, or family names. As interest grows, expand to other letters, eventually using lowercase letters.



MATH AND SCIENCE



Can Your Child:

Learning Activity:

Count to 10 or higher

Use rote counting (counting by memory) in games such as “tag,” sing counting songs and poems such as *Five Little Monkeys*.

Count five objects by touching each one in turn

Play “Count and Do” games. Use familiar items from the child’s environment to count such as socks, buttons, Cheerios and M&Ms. Say, “Let’s count out five Cheerios and then, let’s eat them.”

Recognize some numbers

Fill the child’s environment with numbers: toy clocks, timers, phones, thermometers, calculators, measuring cups and rulers. Show number use. *Example:* Set a timer and say, “We set the timer for three minutes. When the timer rings it will be time to read a book.”

Name the colors in a box of eight crayons

Say, “The name of this color is red. Let’s go find some other red things in this room.” Each time a red item is found say, “This is a red ...” Continue with other colors until the child loses interest. Then, try again later. Ask the child, “Is this red?” Later, ask, “What color is this?”

Name the basic shapes: circle, triangle, square and rectangle

Go on a shape scavenger hunt. This is fun to do in the grocery store where there are many different items to observe. Use only one shape for your search, preferably of a color such as white, black or gray (avoid confusing shape names with color names). When one shape is learned, add another. Make shapes with bread dough, tape, and scribbles on paper.

Can Your Child:

Learning Activity:

Match and sort by size, shape and color

Give child tiles or colored paper shapes of different sizes and say, “Let’s put the ones that are alike together.” When finished, talk about the characteristics (size, shape or color) used for sorting and matching. “You put the large ones here!”


Compare and describe objects and sounds in the environment in terms of shape, size, color, texture, material, sound, or rate of movement

Help child collect and explore natural materials such as shells, rocks, fabric and wood scraps. Focus on environmental sounds such as bird calls, crickets, raindrops and wind. Play listening games: *Example:* Hide and play a familiar instrument. Ask child to point to the one that was played.

Explore cause and effect relationships

Plant seeds and draw pictures of seed growth; take ice from the freezer and watch it melt; introduce magnet play; give child experiences with ramps, pulleys and tracks; play “Guess What Will Float/Sink?”; explore mixing colors and gravity. Ask, “What will happen if...?”



PERSONAL AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT			
Can Your Child:	Learning Activity:	Can Your Child:	Learning Activity:
Express wants and needs using words rather than actions	Teach child words needed for solving problems, expressing anger or getting needs met. Let child hear the words you want him/her to use in each situation. <i>Example:</i> “I need to go to the bathroom.” Or, “If you don’t want Sam to color on your paper, you can say, ‘Sam, don’t color on my paper. I don’t like that.’” If you see a child on the verge of losing control, ask, “What words will you use to tell how you are feeling?”	Follow rules and routines	Create a picture calendar showing the sequence of your child’s day. <i>Example:</i> Write down the routine for getting ready to leave home in the morning. Check off what he/she has completed and point to the next activity. Have a few simple rules, positively stated such as, “We put things back when we are finished with them.” Remember to notice and express appreciation when the child remembers the rules.
Seek and accept help when needed	<i>Example:</i> Say, “How can I help you?” Show child that adults are consistently responsive and helpful. Show them that being helpful is enjoyable.	Know first and last name	Tell the child that his/her formal name is ... even though the child may be called by a nickname or special name. <i>Example:</i> Have a puppet say, “My name is ...” and ask the child, “What is your name?” Encourage the child to answer using first and last name.
Adjust to new environments and experiences	Prepare child for change. <i>Example:</i> In advance, read books about going to Kindergarten, to a doctor, or making new friends. Role-play with puppets and discuss what will happen. If possible, visit the new setting and begin to form relationships before leaving a child in a new environment.	Take care of toileting needs and wash hands	Show the child how to use toilet tissue to clean after toileting. Sing a short song such as <i>Row, Row, Row Your Boat</i> as hands are scrubbed with soap and running water. Afterwards, play a hand-smelling game to enjoy the soapy smell and ensure that the hand-washing habit is firmly established.
Take responsibility for personal items and materials at home, school and other places	Give a child special places for storing things. Label the spaces with pictures and words to indicate where items are supposed to be returned. Praise the child for keeping up with their things and for returning them to their “places.”	Know street address	Tell the child that his/her home has a number and street has a name. Use the puppet to ask for the house number and name. Do this periodically and eventually the child will respond correctly.

PHYSICAL AND MOTOR DEVELOPMENT



Can Your Child:	Learning Activity:
Climb, balance on one foot, hop, jump and run	Create running and riding paths, and obstacle courses. Dance with child using music and props.
Throw, bounce and catch a large ball	Play ball with child, beginning with large balls. First try rolling to targets, bouncing and catching, and then, catching a ball bounced by someone else. Graduate to smaller balls as the child is ready.
Fill and empty cups or other containers with sand or water	Provide sand and/or water play with a variety of differently sized cups, sifters, funnels, scoops and bowls.
Create objects with play dough or clay by rolling, patting and squeezing	Provide homemade soft dough for play. Add rolling pins and tools for molding and shaping dough.
Build a tower with five blocks	Provide a variety of differently sized blocks.
Use pencils, crayons, paint brushes and markers for drawing on blank paper	Avoid coloring sheets and begin with fat markers, brushes, crayons and large paper. Celebrate original creations and efforts!
Try to write using pencils, crayons and markers	Immerse child in meaningful print-rich environments. Let them observe you making and using lists and writing notes. Read your notes aloud. Make writing tools and paper available. Suggest child write thank you notes. Accept scribbles as writing. The child will eventually refine marks in imitation of mature writing.

Can Your Child:	Learning Activity:
Cut paper with scissors	Start by using scissors for snipping clay dough logs. Try fringe cuts on a paper bag vest, or on strips of “grass” for a picture. Encourage cutting snips from strips of paper. As children develop finger-thumb independence, try cutting shapes.
Button, snap and zip clothing	Use large buttons and snaps that are easy at first.


DEVELOPMENTAL ALERTS:

Check with a health care provider or early childhood specialist if, by the fifth birthday a child cannot:

- State own full name
- Recognize simple shapes: circle, square, triangle
- Catch a large bounced ball
- Speak as to be understood by strangers
- Hop on one foot
- Appear interested in and responsive to surroundings
- Respond to statements without needing to hear them repeated numerous times
- Dress self with minimal assistance
- Take care of toileting needs, bladder and bowel control with infrequent accidents

Developmental Profiles, Allen, E & Lynn Marotz

For additional information on milestones and alerts, visit www.smartbeginningsshr.org/readiness



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www.smartbeginningsvp.org