

When Talking With Your Child...

- ◆ Ask questions that require more than one word answers.
- ◆ Repeat and build upon what your child says.
- ◆ Ask them how and why questions.
- ◆ Use new words with your child and encourage them to use new words.
- ◆ Have fun and encourage them to be curious.

When Shopping With Your Child...

- ◆ Have your child find a letter from their name on a product label.
- ◆ Try simple activities such as reading logos of favorite foods and stores.
- ◆ Before you go to the store, involve your child in making a shopping list. You can ask your child to check the cereal boxes to see if any are almost empty. A four or five year old can check on the supply of milk, extra rolls of toilet tissue and other items. You can consult this list together as you shop. Let your child mark off the items on the list.
- ◆ 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 give them to the cashier.
- ◆ Estimate how many carrots (grapes, etc.) are in a bunch and then count the number.

When Riding in the Car With Your Child...

- ◆ Play "I Spy" using words found on billboards and signs.
- ◆ Have your child draw a pictorial journal of trip events. You can add dictation about each picture if necessary.
- ◆ Keep sing-along or storybook tapes in an activity bag or backpack. Drawing materials, large dice, card games, puzzles and books also make great additions.
- ◆ 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.
- ◆ Look at a clock. Have your child tell what time the trip begins and when they think they will arrive at their destination. Check the time when you arrive.
- ◆ Games like "I Spy;" searching for animals, letters and numbers; counting colored cars, matching sign shapes, finding silly-named streets, looking for out-of-state license plates or inventing rhymes amuse away the miles.
- ◆ When your child's attention begins to wander, switch to another game or take a break. Plan frequent stretch-and-bend stops to satisfy wiggles. And don't forget that favorite pillow or stuffed animal!

When Cooking With Your Child...

- ♦ Point out key words on the recipe as you go along. Identify and name initial sounds and letters of the words. Have your child measure. Talk about changes in consistency, color and shape then pour and stir.
- ♦ Have your child identify numbers and words from recipes.
- ♦ Prepare simple recipes together:
 - Mix margarine with green food coloring to cook green eggs and ham.
 - Melt cheese and add chopped tomatoes for queso to eat with tortilla chips.
 - Dice apples, celery and pecans for a healthy snack mix.
 - Heat chicken broth and cook rice for chicken soup.
 - Boil chopped vegetables in beef broth or tomato soup for vegetable soup.
- ♦ Consider referring to Eric Carle's Pancakes, Pancakes or Tomie De Paola's Pancakes for Breakfast as pancakes are cooking in the morning.
- ♦ Experiment with food from different cultures by cooking, eating out or sharing with friends. Try Asian, Hispanic, Japanese, Chinese, Cuban, etc.
- ♦ 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, "Put the bread on a plate. Spread peanut butter on top of the bread. Place 10 raisins on top of the peanut butter."
- ♦ Help your child put bread in the toaster. Count together to see how long it takes before the toast pops up.
- ♦ Sample foods that taste sweet, sour, salty and bitter (ex: sugar, pickles, salt) and describe and help your child determine to which category they belong.
- ♦ Create a hot and cold snack.

When Playing Games With Your Child...

Provide simple card games, such as *Go 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 the cards. For young children, incomplete decks of cards are just as much fun as complete decks—just be sure that every card has a match.

- ♦ Use dominoes to 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 Cheerio*.
- ♦ Choose games that are appropriate for the age of the child. With commercial games, look for the age recommendations on the game box. Remember, noncompetitive games (such as hand games or jumping rope) are best. Young children hate to lose.
- ♦ You and your child can count the number of steps when walking up a set of stairs, count the number of apples in a bag or count the number of toys on the shelf.
- ♦ Play games that require counting: *Hide and Seek*; *Mother, May I?*; *Red Light, Green Light*, and *Hop Scotch*.
- ♦ 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 many matches did you get? How many cards do you want to deal us?

Read Aloud to Your Child Every Day...

- ◆ Set aside time before or after dinner and time before bed.

As you read:

- ◆ Let your child hold the book and turn the page.
- ◆ 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 what he thinks might happen next.
- ◆ Encourage her to ask questions about what is being read.
- ◆ Can he predict what will 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.
- ◆ Visit the library monthly, and pick out books with your child. Ask your child to "read" a favorite story to you.
- ◆ Think about giving books or writing & drawing materials to your child as presents for birthdays and other occasions.
- ◆ Ask your child to tell a story for you to write down. Read it back to her.
- ◆ Make a book out of your child's writing. Have him draw pictures to go with the words or scribbles.
- ◆ Read and talk about numbers in counting books, pointing and counting the objects on each page.
- ◆ Share stories about your child's life as a baby and a toddler, as well as stories about when you were a child. Share photo albums of when your child was little, and discuss how much she has changed.
- ◆ Choose books based on your child's interests.
- ◆ Choose informational books: books about dinosaurs, transportation, etc.
- ◆ Choose nursery books and point out rhyming words.
- ◆ Discuss the parts of a story - beginning, middle and end.
- ◆ Identify letters and words that are familiar.
- ◆ Have your child read to a younger sibling.
- ◆ Have your child read a favorite book and use pictures for clues to the story.
- ◆ Describe the feelings of the characters in the story.
- ◆ Choose books from the same author. Help your child make comparisons between books.
- ◆ Discuss the conclusion, and create a new ending for it.

Spotlight on Summer Activities

Week 1 – Play “I Spy”

Two or more people can play “I Spy.” This is a way to discuss objects in nature that are living and non-living. For example, someone says “I spy something that is living.” The other person makes a guess. If wrong, another clue is given, and a new guess is made. The game continues until the object is identified or the players give up.

Week 2 – Planting Seeds

Recommended seeds/plants for young children:

- ~ Nasturtium, sunflower and zinnia seeds sprout and grow very quickly.
- ~ A cherry tomato plant will bear fruit if watered and fertilized regularly. Try planting in a container if you don’t have a garden.
- ~ Herbs such as basil, rosemary and mint are very fragrant and can be used in cooking.

Math skills are apparent throughout the gardening process: counting the seeds

- ◆ measuring the correct distance between plants
- ◆ determining on the calendar when the seed will sprout
- ◆ measuring the height of the plants as they grow

Week 2 – Father’s Day Activities

These activities can be done with or about any adult male.

Week 2 – “With My Family”

(Tune of “The Muffin Man”)

Tell me what you like to do

Like to do, like to do.

Tell me what you like to do

With your family.

(Your Child) likes to rake the leaves

Rake the leaves, rake the leaves.

(Your Child) likes to rake the leaves

With our family.

Sing a verse for every person in your family—you can include people who live in your home, as well as people who live in other places.

Week 3 - 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. If the mixture gets too foamy let it sit for an hour.

You can also make bubble blowers and wands from materials around your home. Some suggestions:

- ♦ Fly swatters
- ♦ Twist-ties—bend them into loops

Week 3 – Play dough Recipe

1 ½ cups salt

3 cups all purpose flour

3 Tablespoons cream of tartar

3 Tablespoons vegetable oil

3 cups water

Food coloring

Mix the salt and flour together then add 3 tablespoons of vegetable oil, 3 cups water and a few drops of food coloring or extract for scent. 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 look very lumpy but will mix smoothly after about ten minutes of cooking. Remove the dough from the pan and knead it for two minutes or until it is thick. This play dough will keep for three to four weeks in an airtight container.

Week 3 – Play “Red Light, Green Light”

Talk with your child about traffic lights and when driving the red light means to stop and the green light means to go. Your child pretends to be the car and you are the traffic light. When you say, “green light” they move and when you say, “red light” they stop. Take turns being the car and the light. Come up with different ways to move (i.e., walk, run, skip, hop, gallop, tip toe, etc.)

Week 4 – Play dough Math

Talking about numbers and quantity as a part of doing activities with your child is a natural way to develop mathematical skills. Meaningful math activities can help your child develop mathematical vocabulary and concepts. Divide clay or dough into different amounts. Help your child distinguish between *all* and *some*, *whole* and *part*. Introduce the following concepts: *more*, *less*, *bigger* and *smaller*.

Week 4 – Rock Collecting

Bumpy, shiny, smooth or tiny - rocks make for some interesting explorations! Help your child develop descriptive language with rocks. In the beginning, your child may need help finding the descriptive words, but with practice and guidance the language will build. Here are a few to get you started: smooth, rough, hard, bumpy, dirty, sparkly, scratchy.

Week 5: Homemade Ice Cream

Milk can become ice cream in five minutes!

This homemade ice cream, which is made in a bag, is a summertime delight for kids and adults alike.

What you'll need:

- 1 tablespoon sugar
- 1/2 cup milk or half & half
- 1/4 teaspoon vanilla
- 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.

Week 5 - Be Water Wise - How can your child help conserve water? Simple ideas include:

- ◆ Turn off the tap while brushing teeth
- ◆ Check for leaking or dripping faucets
- ◆ Help wash dishes by hand

- ◆ Plastic rings from milk jugs
- ◆ Cookie cutters
- ◆ Wire coat hangers—you will need to bend and shape it for your child

Week 5 – Painting with Water

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

Make mud paint by mixing water with dirt until you have a paint-like consistency. Give your child an old paintbrush or have her use her finger to draw pictures or write letters on the sidewalk or driveway. Give her some water to rinse it away when she finishes. You and your child can also use old toothbrushes, sponges or rags to paint. Explore the different textures and patterns you can make.

Week 6 – Rhyming Words

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.

Week 6 – “Buckle Up”

(Tune of “A Hunting We Will Go”)

The wheels go round and round

We drive the car in town

We buckle up

In case we stop

So we'll be safe and sound.

Week 1							
Go outside and walk barefoot in the grass. How does it feel?	Discuss with your child how he feels about Pre-K ending. Talk about Kindergarten.	Look at pictures in a book and then predict what will happen next. Read the story together.	Let your child count the number of coins in your wallet. Let the separate the coins and count each type.	Measure and record your child's height and weight. Save to compare later in the summer. Play "I Spy." (see notes)	Talk about jobs, discuss where you work, how your job helps the family, and other kinds of jobs. What jobs can your child do?	Listen to a new radio station today. Discuss how the music is different. Choose some old toys to donate to charity.	
Week 2							
Plant seeds for flowers or vegetables. (see notes)	Draw a picture of dad or grandfather. Include hair, eye color, etc.	Have your child create a story about dad or grandfather. Write it and read it together.	Discuss with Dad what his favorite food was when he was a child. Draw a picture of your dad eating his food.	Discuss with Dad what he liked to play with as a child. Draw a picture of dad playing with his favorite toy.	During bath time, give measuring cups. How many small cups does it take to fill up a cup? Talk about more and less.	Make a special snack for Dad. Learn and sing "With My Family" (see notes)	
Week 3							
Discuss the importance of protection from the sun. (wearing sunscreen, hats) Go outside and blow bubbles	Create family rules, and discuss the importance of rules. Make a chart with both words and pictures to help remember the rules.	Make a simple musical instrument with kitchen items. (utensils, pots, bowls) Now play them.	Discuss tall and short. Name the family members from shortest to tallest. Observe seeds and talk about observations.	Keep real "dress-up" clothes handy for your child to play with. Create a special spot to dress-up.	Shop for playdough recipe ingredients. (see attached recipe) Play "Red Light-Green Light" with your child. (see notes)	Make playdough together. Dance with your child to music. Find a scarf or piece of material to dance with.	
Week 4							
Take a walk. Find a puddles and things to jump over. Count how many jumps it takes to get to certain objects.	Divide playdough into different amounts, sizes, lengths. Have your child draw a self-portrait.	Make a playdough structure. Add items to enhance sculpting. Ask your child how they created their sculpture.	Look at the seeds you planted. Draw a picture of what you see. Measure how tall it has grown. Discuss the changes from before.	Have your child put away toys so no one will trip over them. Talk about other chores they can do. Continue to practice putting things away.	Find 5 things in your home that are shaped like a circle, square, triangle, and rectangle.	Play a simple board or card game. Discuss rules, taking turns, and following directions. Go outside and collect rocks.	

Week 5

Have your child help make a meal by tossing a salad, spreading peanut butter on a sandwich, or washing fruit.	Count the number of stars and stripes on the American flag. Draw and color a picture of the flag.	Have your child practice writing her name using upper and lower case letters.	Let your child help load the dishwasher or wash and dry the dishes. Use old paint brush and water to “paint” on the drive way or side walk.	Brainstorm ways to conserve water. Where can your family help? (see notes) Go outside and blow bubbles (see notes)	Make homemade ice cream in a bag. (see notes) Use adult clothes and let your child dress like a teacher. Play school together.	Talk about what you did on the 4 th of July. Have your child draw a picture and describe what they drew.
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Week 6

Have your child practice buttoning, zipping, and snapping own clothes, plus buckling belt and tying shoes.	Find 10 things in your home shaped like a circle, square, triangle, and rectangle. Talk about other shapes you see.	Look at the plant you planted. Draw a picture of what you see. Measure how tall it has grown. Compare and discuss the changes from before.	Have your child help fold, sort, and put away clothes. Go outside and look at objects that are near or far. What other things are near or far?	Play rhyming word games together. (see notes) Learn the words to the song “Buckle Up” (see notes)	Use a ruler, tape measure, or another object to measure items in your home. What is longer? Shorter? The same length? Discuss findings with your child.	Play a simple board or card game. Discuss rules, taking turns, and following directions.
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Week 7

Discuss with your child how he feels about starting kindergarten. Ask questions to keep the conversation going.	Find out what school supplies your child will need for school. Let your child help you shop for those supplies.	Practicing tossing a ball back and forth. Count how many times you can toss and catch without dropping it.	Have your child count the number of shoes in her closet. Talk about the differences and similarities of the shoes. Find out when Open house is and plan to visit the school.	Draw a self-portrait. Talk with your child about special things that make her special.	Plan a back-to-school party with your family or friends. Make a list of people to attend and foods you will serve.	Go to the public library and check out books about kindergarten and going to school.
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Week 8

Talk about your community with your child. Draw a map together. Include places such as home, school, and familiar stores.	Talk about starting school with your child. Establish a morning routine and begin practicing it.	Have your child retell one of the books checked out from the library. Draw pictures of their favorite part of the story.	In a pool or bath tub, add items that will sink or float. Talk with your child about what makes the items sink/float.	Measure your child's height and weight. Compare this measurement with last month's measurement.	Talk about your home rules again and remind your child that every place has its own rules. Ask your child what they think the kindergarten rules will be?	Make a family photo album for your child. Talk about each person and where they live.
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Weeks 9 and 10 are designed to do with your child once they begin kindergarten. Making connections between home and school is an important element in your child's school success. Talk with them daily about their feelings about school and their school day. Continue to ask how and why questions.

Week 9						
Plan what you will wear on your first day of kindergarten. Allow your child to have input on what she wears.	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.	Talk about things that are different in Kindergarten than in Pre-K.	Draw pictures and talk about what you liked most about Kindergarten.	Add special school events to your family calendar. Plan a time to volunteer or do something special in your child's class.	Go outside tonight. Discuss the differences between night and day. (How things look, what do you hear?)
Week 10						
Have your child draw a map from home to school. Talk about familiar places along the way.	Develop a personal list of words that your child can recognize on sight. Read books and discover new words daily.	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 with the laundry. Sort clothes by lights/darks or by whom it belongs. They can help fold and put clothes away.	Talk with your child about friends in their Kindergarten class. Discuss with your child what it is that they like about their friends.	Visit a special place together. Talk with your child about how much they have grown and why they are special.