**Pre-Kindergarten**

**Suggested Activities**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Link to:</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Day 1</strong></td>
<td><strong>Day 2</strong></td>
<td><strong>Day 3</strong></td>
<td><strong>Day 4</strong></td>
<td><strong>Day 5</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Learning time**
- Create a daily schedule using the template created for you and your child.

**Movement and Music time:**
- Go for a walk & get the wiggles out. Practice hopping on one foot or balance on one leg.
- Practicing deep breathing.*With S.T.A.R. handout Star, Pretzel, Drain, Balloon.

**Body Yoga Poses**

**Creative Time:**
- Draw self-portraits together: "I look like this."
- *Try "Growing Plants from Plants’"

**Helper Job Time:**
- Help put laundry away. Sort and count socks. ‘Laundry’

**Learning time**
- Name shapes & look for them in nature & objects
- Draw big & little shapes with your child to support developing muscles & emergent letter formation.
- ‘Learning to Write My Name’
- Read [Hula Hoop Queen](#)

**Movement and Music time:**
- Self-Regulation and Calming Down Yoga
- Freeze Dance - Play music and then stop: 20 minutes.

**Creative Time:**
- What can I build? (look for items in the house you can stack)

**Helper Job Time:**
- Get soapy: Have your child help do the dishes.
- Doing Household Chores together *see Handout

**Learning time**
- Find My Letters: Look for the letters in your child’s name in grocery items, books, & signs around the neighborhood.
- Repeat read books aloud to your child until they can tell it back to you in their words

**Movement and Music time:**
- Spring Yoga Poses
  - * Sun, Tree, Flying Bird, etc.
- Practicing deep breathing: *With [S.T.A.R. handout](#)

**Creative Time:**
- Color time: Creative coloring: Ask your child to tell you about their picture.

**Helper Job Time:**
- I can clean my room!
- Cooking Together handout

**Learning time**
- Journaling - draw a picture of the weather today.
- Labeling at Home parent letter/activity
- *Try Water and Ice Experiments
- Read [Harry the Dirty Dog](#)

**Movement and Music time:**
- Practicing deep breathing: *With S.T.A.R. handout
- *Try Exploring Outdoors

**Creative Time:**
- Make your favorite dessert.
- *Try Dancing Together.

**Helper Job Time:**
- Bring in the mail together

*Try *Suggested Learning Apps*
# Pre-Kindergarten

## Suggested Activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning time</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Try to Find Environmental Print</em></td>
<td><em>Try Alphabet walk: find letters/words around your home or neighborhood. Write as many letters or words that you can find.</em></td>
<td><em>Read book using reading tips handout</em></td>
<td><em>Patterns and Categorizing Handout</em></td>
<td><em>Recording Observations Handout</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Try Creating a Child’s Monthly Calendar</em></td>
<td><em>Try Measuring Things at Home</em></td>
<td><em>Try Learning about Family Traditions</em></td>
<td><em>Try On the Street: Finding Words Everywhere</em></td>
<td>*Learn Personal Contact Information <em>see handout</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read <em>There’s My Monster</em></td>
<td>Read <em>No Mirrors In My Mama’s House</em></td>
<td>Watch <em>Library Lion</em></td>
<td>Watch <em>Clark the Shark</em></td>
<td>Read <em>The Kissing Hand</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Movement and Music time:
- *Try Superhero yoga poses, try all 5 warrior poses.*
- Practicing deep breathing: *With S.T.A.R. handout*

## Creative Time:
- What’s the weather? Draw a picture of the weather/what it looks like outside today.

## Helper Job Time:
- Pick up toys: start with a small, countable number (5) Make it a game and see who can pick up toys fastest.

## Movement and Music time:
- Nature walk: look for birds, animals, changes in leaves. Take a bag and collect interesting things you find on your walk.
- Practicing deep breathing: *With S.T.A.R. handout*

## Creative Time:
- Make a Family Book *see handout*

## Helper Job Time:
- Help your brother or sister with something.

## Movement and Music time:
- Practice deep breathing: *With S.T.A.R. handout*  
- Ocean Yoga *see handout*

## Creative Time:
- Make your own shapes. Draw shapes on paper and cut them out.

## Helper Job Time:
- Setting the Table *see Handout*

## Helper Job Time:
- *Setting the Table* *see handout*

## Suggested Learning Apps

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Storyline Online</strong></th>
<th><strong>Epic</strong></th>
<th><strong>PBS Kids</strong></th>
<th><strong>Sesame Street in Communities</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Celebrities reading loved story books aloud to children.</td>
<td>Authentic audio e-books &amp; demonstration videos</td>
<td>games &amp; learning with favorite characters</td>
<td>Social supports on staying healthy emotionally &amp; physically</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[Return to Top]
Day One

Learning time
- Create a daily schedule using the template created for you and your child.

Movement and Music time:
- Go for a walk & get the wiggles out. Practice hopping on one foot or balance on one leg.
- Practicing deep breathing.*With S.T.A.R. handout Star, Pretzel, Drain, Balloon.
- Body Yoga Poses

Creative Time:
- Draw self-portraits together: “I look like this.”
- *Try ‘Growing Plants from Plants’

Helper Job Time:
- Help put laundry away. Sort and count socks. ‘Laundry’

*Try Suggested Learning Apps
  - Storyline Online: Celebrities reading books aloud.
  - Epic: Audio e-books
  - PBS Kids: games & learning
  - San Diego Zoo Virtual Field Trip
Daily Schedule

Need some ideas on how to structure your day while your Pre-K children are home from school? Follow this schedule or make one for yourself that meets your family’s needs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8:00 – 9:00</td>
<td>Rise and Shine</td>
<td>Eat breakfast, brush teeth, and get dressed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:00 – 10:00</td>
<td>Move your body</td>
<td>Take a walk, listen to some music and dance, do an exercise routine. Then relax.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:00 – 11:00</td>
<td>Learning Time</td>
<td>Read and Explore Books. Count and Sort Materials in your house (food, clothing, blocks, coins, hair ties). No electronics.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:00 – 12:00</td>
<td>Creative Time</td>
<td>Draw and color, play with Legos, dance, play with playdough, cook.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:00 – 12:30</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>12:30 – 1:00</td>
<td>Family Jobs</td>
<td>Clean up any messes you have made</td>
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<tr>
<td>1:00 – 2:30</td>
<td>Rest Time</td>
<td>Take a nap or rest quietly with a book or puzzle.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2:30 – 3:00</td>
<td>Snack</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3:00 – 4:00</td>
<td>Move your body</td>
<td>Take a walk, listen to some music and dance, do an exercise routine. Then relax.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:00 – 5:00</td>
<td>Learning Time</td>
<td>Read and Explore Books. Okay to use electronics now. Explore learning websites and games.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5:00 – 8:00</td>
<td>Your Evening Routine</td>
<td>Keeping the same bedtime will be important. Have dinner as a family. Read a bedtime book before bed. Children this age need 10 to 12 hours of sleep.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>Activity</td>
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<td>5:00 – 8:00</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Drain</strong></td>
<td><strong>S.T.A.R.</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Extend arms out, pretending your arms are faucets. Tighten arm, shoulder, and face muscles. Exhale slowly making a “ssssshhh” sound and release all your muscles, draining out the stress.</td>
<td><strong>Smile,</strong> <strong>Take a deep breath</strong> <strong>And Relax.</strong> Encourage belly breathing where the tummy goes out when the air goes in, and in when the air goes out. Also help children learn to exhale slower than they inhale.</td>
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<tr>
<th><strong>Pretzel</strong></th>
<th><strong>Balloon</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td>Standing up, cross your ankles. Now cross your right wrist over left, turn your hands so your thumbs are facing the floor, put palms together and interlace fingers. Bend your elbows out and gently turn your hands down and toward your body until they rest on the center of your chest. Put your tongue on the roof of your mouth. Relax and breathe.</td>
<td>Place your hands on top of your head and interlace your fingers. Breathe in through your nose as you raise your arms, inflating an imaginary balloon. Release the air in the balloon by pursing your lips, exhaling slowly, lowering your arms and making a “pbpbpbpbp” sound.</td>
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</table>
Dear families:

One fun take on growing plants with your child is to use vegetables to grow plants. This is a simple way to start your home garden.

When you grow a plant from a vegetable in a clear jar, your child will be able to see the roots and sprouts as they come out. It’s amazing to see how quickly these plants develop, and your child will be filled with awe watching the vegetable sprout.

Try it!

Sincerely,

Your child’s teacher
Day Two

**Learning time**
- Name shapes & look for them in nature & objects
- Draw big & little shapes with your child to support developing muscles & emergent letter formation.
- ‘Learning to Write My Name’
- Read [Hula Hoop Queen](#)

**Movement and Music time:**
- Self-Regulation and Calming Down Yoga
- Freeze Dance - Play music and then stop: 20 minutes.

**Creative Time:**
- What can I build? (look for items in the house you can stack)

**Helper Job Time:**
- Get soapy: Have your child help do the dishes.
- Doing Household Chores together *see Handout

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**CALM DOWN YOGA for kids**

- **I am strong.**
  WARRIOR 2 POSE

- **I am kind.**
  TREE POSE

- **I am brave.**
  CHAIR POSE

- **I am friendly.**
  DOWNWARD-FACING DOG POSE

- **I am wise.**
  HERO POSE

© Kids Yoga Stories.
Everyday Shapes

In our classroom the children learn about shapes in many daily activities. You can help children identify, create, name, and take apart shapes during your regular routines, activities, and discussions at home. Here are some ways to help your preschooler focus on what makes shapes alike and different.

**On the road**
When you see a yield sign, point out that it has three sides. When you see a school crossing sign, invite your child to count the sides (there are five). Look for other shapes, such as rectangular doors and round manhole covers.

**At the store**
Soup cans are cylinders. Oranges are spheres. What holds ice cream? An ice cream cone! You and your child can play a game while grocery shopping. How many different shapes can you find? Have your child help place items on the conveyor belt, then compare the items you're buying. The cheese and the bag of carrots are both orange. Which one is shorter? We got a watermelon and a kiwi. How are they alike? How are they different?

**At home**
The recycling bin is full of things you can use to talk about two-dimensional and three-dimensional shapes. What shape is the paper towel roll? You're right, it's a cylinder. We flattened the cereal box so now it's a 2-D shape. When it was still full of cereal, it was a 3-D shape. How would you describe the oatmeal container?

**Making shapes**
Provide playdough (find a simple recipe online) and tools your child can use to make all kinds of shapes. Your child can turn a long rolled snake into a square or a triangle. Count the sides together. Next your child can make a ball—or in math terms, a sphere.

A message from your child's teacher
Dear families:

Invite your child to join in with you as you do housework! While it might take you a bit longer to complete some of the tasks, it’s a great way to spend time together. As you do simple household tasks, your child will increase his or her vocabulary, learn to follow directions, and increase his or her fine and gross-motor skills.

What could you do together? How about wash dishes, sort and fold laundry, sweep the floor, or pick up and put away toys? As you work, narrate everything that you do so your child understands the steps and learns the correct words to describe the activity. Consider what household chores you can do together easily, and get going!

Sincerely,

Your child’s teacher
DOING HOUSEHOLD CHORES TOGETHER

What I Need

Materials will vary, depending on the task

What to Do

1. Think of some household tasks in which you can cooperatively engage your child. Consider, for example, sweeping the kitchen floor. You and your child can discover rich vocabulary in this simple activity.

2. Ask your child to help you. Show him or her how to hold the broom and how to move it across the floor to gather up the dirt.

3. As you work together, talk about what you are doing. For example, use position words such as under, behind, and over. "Dirt likes to hide under this rug. Let’s sweep under there." "I see some dust bunnies behind this chair. Can you sweep behind the chair?" "We’ve tracked in a lot of dirt this week. Let’s sweep over the floor in the kitchen to get it all up."

4. Be sure to compliment your child on working so hard and helping out around the house.

What My Child Is Learning

With every chore, there are vocabulary words to learn, steps to accomplish the task, and attention to detail. With even the smallest task, your child will learn to work cooperatively. Encourage your child to talk about what you are doing, and have conversations about not only the task but also why it is necessary. Your child will gain increased self-esteem as he or she learns that he or she is a capable and helpful member of the family.

What the Research Says

Multiple studies support the idea that children learn vocabulary in social contexts and interaction with others. Through exposure to oral language, children develop listening comprehension, vocabulary, and language skills.
Dear families:

Preschoolers are just beginning to truly relate to other children and adults and to develop clear preferences about their social interactions with peers. They are learning to take turns, play together, and cooperate with others. They are developing emotional awareness of their own feelings and how they affect others’ feelings.

You play an important role in nurturing your child’s social and emotional development. You can offer support as your child navigates learning all these skills and can teach your child techniques to successfully incorporate acceptable behavior. Tuning into your child’s unique temperament—and remembering that every child develops at his or her own pace—is as important as loving and nurturing your child.

Observe your child and encourage positive behavior with patience and love.

Sincerely,

Your child’s teacher
SELF-REGULATION AND CALMING TECHNIQUES

What I Need
No materials needed

What to Do

1. Spend time observing your child with other children, so you have a realistic understanding of your child’s emotional behavior.

2. When you notice your child showing a strong emotion, name the emotion and how you know that your child has it. For example, “I see you’re frowning. You look mad.” This will help your child recognize and name emotions, an important skill.

3. If a tantrum or argument occurs and your child is visibly upset, sit with him or her away from the incident, and encourage your child to breathe in and out deeply until he or she is calm.

4. Talk with your child about why he or she is having a strong emotion. “Why are you feeling mad?” Listen to your child, then ask, “You’re mad because Robert took your truck. What do you think you could do about that?” Help your child think of positive ways to make the situation better: “Do you think that telling Robert you would like your truck back would help? Could you try that?”

5. Give your child opportunities to make choices about how to handle situations in positive ways. Your child will appreciate having a sense of control and will gain confidence.

What My Child Is Learning

Children need practice in identifying emotions and interacting with others in positive ways. Helping your child learn how to calm down after an upset is key to helping him or her learn to manage strong emotions.

What the Research Says

Research by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation shows that young children with more developed social-competence skills are more likely to live healthier, successful lives as adults—through the education and jobs they attain and in their overall quality of life.
Day Three

Learning time
- Find My Letters: Look for the letters in your child’s name in grocery items, books, & signs around the neighborhood.
- Repeat read books aloud to your child until they can tell it back to you in their words
- Read *Catching the Moon*

Movement and Music time:
- Spring Yoga Poses
  * Sun, Tree, Flying Bird, etc.
- Practicing deep breathing: *With S.T.A.R. handout*

Creative Time:
- Color time: Creative coloring: Ask your child to tell you about their picture.

Helper Job Time:
- I can clean my room!
- Cooking Together handout

![Spring Yoga Poses](image)
Dear families:

Every day you prepare meals for your family, and having a little helper in the kitchen can be a great way to engage your child in a learning activity. Children love to help cook—to measure, to pour, to mix, to taste, to watch as food cooks, and then to eat! No doubt, they'll eat what they prepared with gusto.

Children can learn so much from helping to prepare food—there's math in measuring out the ingredients, language development in new vocabulary words, and science in combining and cooking ingredients. Think of a dish your child enjoys that is easy to prepare with a young child.

You can first try a cold food preparation if you have concerns about the cooking aspect. Be prepared to make a bit of a mess—it's okay! As you prepare the food, talk about the process, and let your child add ingredients and mix.

Discuss what changes are happening in the ingredients. Most of all, enjoy sharing what you have prepared.

Sincerely,

Your child's teacher
What I Need

- Aprons
- Step stool
- Recipe
- Ingredients for the recipe
- Kitchen utensils

What to Do

1. Part of cooking with children is teaching them kitchen safety. Here are some basic safety rules to get you started: An adult should always supervise cooking. Always wash your hands before starting. Keep a safe distance from a hot stovetop or oven. Turn pot and pan handles toward the back of the stove to prevent accidents. Avoid sampling raw eggs or meat. Let your child practice cutting with a butter knife and graduate to a sharper blade only when you both feel comfortable.

2. With your child, choose the recipe you will prepare. Read the recipe aloud. Together, gather the ingredients and utensils needed.

3. As you work, let your child help you measure ingredients and combine them. Talk about how much or how many you need of each ingredient. Help your child use a measuring cup and measuring spoon. Talk about how the ingredients smell and taste.

4. Share your delicious creation with your family.

What My Child Is Learning

Your child will develop skills in the following areas: mathematics—measuring, one-to-one correspondence, numbers, and counting; language—vocabulary words associated with food preparation and cooking and the use of print; science—combining ingredients and changing them by cooking them; social-emotional—pride and confidence in his or her skills and abilities, independence, following directions, using thinking skills to problem solve; physical—chopping, squeezing, spreading, and mixing help develop fine-motor control and eye-hand coordination; and cognitive—curiosity, thinking, problem solving, predicting, and observing.

What the Research Says

Researchers Lauren Finn and Maureen Vandermaas-Peeler found that parents use cooking activities as an opportunity to teach children about literacy as they use recipe cards and as a means of helping children practice basic math such as counting, measuring, and identifying shapes.
Day Four

Learning time
- Journaling - draw a picture of the weather today.
- Labeling at Home parent letter/activity
- *Try Water and Ice Experiments
- Read *Harry the Dirty Dog

Movement and Music time:
- Practicing deep breathing: *With S.T.A.R. handout
- *Try Exploring Outdoors

Creative Time:
- Let’s get messy. Play with bubbles in water or shaving cream on plastic wrap

Helper Job Time:
- Help feed pets.
Dear families:

Words, words, words—everywhere we go, we see words! Children are exposed to lots of different kinds of print in books, newspapers, magazines, on signs, and on the street.

Help your child enrich his or her vocabulary by paying attention to the words in your surroundings. As you walk in your neighborhood or go about your daily business, help your child notice signs, logos, and symbols. Read the signs to your child and talk about what they mean. Point out a letter and make that letter sound.

At home, you can create a print-rich environment for your child by placing labels on objects, such as a chair, a window, and the refrigerator. Point out the labels to your child and read them aloud. Although you shouldn't expect your child to read at this stage, this simple activity will help your child learn to recognize new words, recognize letters, and understand the purpose of printed language—to communicate! Developing this understanding of print will build a foundation as your child begins to understand that words have meaning.

Sincerely,

Your child's teacher
LABELING AT HOME

What I Need

Magic marker
Thick paper, oak tag, or a file folder
Masking tape or painter's tape
Scissors (adult use only)

What to Do

1. Ahead of time, cut a bunch of 4- to 5-inch rectangle cards that you can use for your labels.
2. Start in the kitchen, and ask your child to help you in a labeling game. Your child will be very familiar with labeling, as we do it in our classroom.
3. Ask your child what appliances and items to label. Choose between five and seven items.
4. One at a time, write the word for each item on a card. Say the letters aloud as you write them: "W-I-N-D-O-W. Window starts with W. W makes the /w/ /w/ sound."
5. Ask your child to tape the label on the object. Try to keep the labels at your child's eye level wherever possible. Read the labels aloud.
6. Return to review the labels with your child in a couple of days. Add a few more labels if you wish.
7. Leave the labels up as long as you feel comfortable having them around.

What My Child Is Learning

As you expose your child to labels, he or she is learning to make connections between the object and the word name. Your child's vocabulary increases as a result, and this will support his or her emerging ability to recognize some letters and, later, begin to read.

What the Research Says

Researchers have found that exposure to written language helps children develop an awareness of print, letter naming, and phonemic awareness. Through exposure to oral language, preschool children develop listening comprehension, vocabulary, and language skills.
Dear families:

Nothing is more exciting to children than seeing things change form and shape.

Water play is an experience that helps children learn science properties and have fun all at the same time.

There are many ways to play with water and ice at home. As you explore the similarities and differences of water and ice, ask your child to predict what will happen. Write down any questions and the answers you discover together. Review the results of your experiments. Your child will be thinking like a scientist!

Sincerely,

Your child’s teacher
WATER AND ICE EXPERIMENTS

What I Need

Water
Ice tray or plastic containers
Freezer
Bowl or plate
Paper and pencil
Dishwashing gloves (optional)

What to Do

1. With your child, fill an ice tray or a couple of plastic containers with water. Place the containers in the freezer.
2. Ask your child to predict what will happen to the water. How will it change? How long will it take? Check back every half-hour to see how the water’s properties are changing.
3. Note your child’s questions and answers on paper.
4. When the water is completely frozen (this may be overnight), take the containers out of the freezer and look at the contents with your child. What does your child notice? How has the water changed? Write down any answers you now have to your child’s earlier questions.
5. Handle the ice. What does your child notice? How is the ice different from the warmer water? (Note: If your child’s hands get too cold, he or she can put on dishwashing gloves.)

What My Child Is Learning

You are exploring the scientific properties of water and ice and the stages of freezing. As you explore, your child will be learning new vocabulary, such as freezing, thawing, melting, liquid, frozen, slippery, and cold.

What the Research Says

Author Karen Worth points out that children are natural scientists. Their curiosity and need to make the world a more predictable place drives them to explore and draw conclusions and theories from their experiences. But, they need guidance and structure to turn their natural curiosity and activity into something more scientific. They need to practice science—to engage in rich scientific inquiry.
Dear families,

Every season presents opportunities for exploring the outdoors with your child. Going to the playground or running around the park are activities children may do every day. But opportunities to focus on the natural world right under our feet are waiting to be discovered.

Make a game of searching for insects and small creatures in your backyard, on your patio, and in the park. You and your child can learn a lot about the creatures that are right under our noses every day.

See what interesting insects and creatures you’ll find!

Sincerely,

You child’s teacher
EXPLORING OUTDOORS: INSECTS AND CREATURES SEARCH

What I Need

Outdoor area
Magnifying glass (optional)
Small, clear plastic container
Camera (optional)

What to Do

1. Invite your child to come outside with you to search for insects and other creatures in your immediate surroundings. If you have a magnifying glass, bring it along.
2. Look carefully for insects. They may be hiding under a leaf or rock, in a crack in the sidewalk, on a tree trunk, next to a building, or near a water source.
3. When you and your child spot a creature, take the time to examine it. If your child has a magnifying glass, he or she can look closely at the insect. Remind your child to treat the creature gently.
4. If possible, gently place the insect in the plastic container, just to observe it for a while.
5. Talk about what it looks like: How many legs, wings, pincers, or antennae does it have? What colors does it show? What does your child notice about it?
6. If you have a camera, document the insect with a photo or two. Later, you and your child might search online for the insect and learn more about it.
7. At home, encourage your child to draw pictures of the creatures you found.

What My Child Is Learning

Your child will develop observation skills and begin learning to distinguish same and different features in the creatures you find. Your young ones will be participating in entomology, which is the scientific study of insects.

What the Research Says

The National Research Council (NRC) says that acquiring firsthand experience through observing and/or handling small creatures helps children develop a healthy and curious attitude toward them, rather than one of fear or disgust.
Day Five

**Learning time**
- *Try Making Predictions
- *Try Think Like an Inventor
- *Try I Spy
- Read Rainbow Fish

**Movement and Music time:**
- Play Simon Says or “Do what I do.”
- *Try to Make an Obstacle Course
- Practicing deep breathing: *With S.T.A.R. handout

**Creative Time:**
- Make your favorite dessert.
- *Try Dancing Together.

**Helper Job Time:**
- Bring in the mail together
**Literacy in the Sciences:** Activity No. 4

**Making Predictions**

As a young reader, your child is learning to make predictions while reading. "What do you think will happen next?" "Who do you think drank Sara's lemonade?" These types of questions we ask children as they're reading help them learn to monitor their understanding of the story while thinking ahead to the next part. If your child is able to make good and fairly accurate predictions while reading, chances are she comprehends the story well.

Scientists, just like readers, make predictions all the time. In fact, scientists use predictions as part of their hypothesis, or question they try to answer through their experiments. Help your child begin to see the connection between what she does as a reader and what she can do as a scientist.

Below are two simple ways you can encourage your child to put her prediction skills to work as a scientist:

1. **Play favorites.** What is our family's favorite flavor of ice-cream? What is our favorite movie to watch together? What is our favorite bedtime story? Choose a question, or make up your own, that your child is excited about. First, have your child predict or guess the answer to the question. Help her write down her prediction. "I think chocolate is our family's favorite flavor of ice cream." Then, have your child ask each member of the family for an answer. Have your child record the answers using a special Science Notebook or simply mark tally marks on paper. Finally, ask your child to compare her prediction to the actual answers.

2. **Good guess!** Estimation is often very similar to a prediction. In both cases, your child will be working to make a good guess about an answer. As with our Play Favorites idea, encourage your child to write down (or write together) the questions and answers in a special Science Notebook. Whenever possible, encourage the use of scientific words like estimation, predication, collect data, analyze, and prove. Here are some estimation questions that require your child to make a prediction:

   - How many noodles will it take to fill up this jar? Encourage your child to use scientific language and thinking to answer. "I predict it will take 300 noodles to fill the jar."
   - How many steps is it from our front door to the mailbox?
   - How much does our dog weigh?
   - How many library books fit on one shelf?
   - How long do you think it will take for the ice cubes to freeze (or melt)?

We predict your child will have great fun with these activities! And you can have fun knowing that you're helping your child make important connections between the skills of prediction, reading, and science.

*Reading Rockets, ColorIn Colorado, and LD OnLine* are national education services of WETA, the flagship public broadcasting station in Washington, D.C.
Dear families:

Four-year-olds have boundless energy and often need guided physical activities to release it. Finding ways to be playful and stimulating with your child while giving him or her direction and rules to follow can be challenging.

Help your child get some of that energy out by creating an obstacle course in your home—especially on a day when the weather limits outside play. Make a specific path for your child to follow in the largest room in your home. You and your child will have a lot of laughs and amusement from this activity.

Sincerely,

Your child's teacher
MAKE AN OBSTACLE COURSE

What I Need

- Masking or painters' tape
- Table
- Jump rope or yarn
- Chairs
- Pillows

What to Do

1. Choose a large space in your home where you can easily move a few pieces of furniture to clear an area for the obstacle course.
2. Set up the room with several challenges, such as the following:
   - Tape a line on the floor for your child to walk on.
   - Set up a table for your child to crawl under.
   - Tie a jump rope or piece of yarn low to the ground between two chairs for your child to jump over.
   - Set out several pillows for your child to weave around like a slalom course.
3. Have your child start at the beginning of the course, telling him or her each obstacle as he or she progresses through the course. Make suggestions if your child is struggling, and compliment his or her abilities. Try the course with your child!

What My Child Is Learning

This activity will help your child follow a specific path with directions, concentrate, and listen to guidelines. He or she will learn what his or her body can do and will gain confidence in his or her abilities.

What the Research Says

Researcher Jeffrey Trawick-Smith says that the ability to coordinate different parts of the brain emerges rapidly in the early years for most children. It is easy to see how this connectivity of the brain—its ability to coordinate visual, auditory, tactile, and other stimuli, all at once—is crucial to learning.
Growing readers!

Brought to you by Reading Rockets, Colorín Colorado and LD OnLine

Literacy in the Sciences: Activity No. 17

Think Like an Inventor

Inventors, scientists, and mathematicians are all creative problem solvers. Creativity is an important characteristic to foster in your child. Fostering a creative spirit will give your child experience identifying a problem and coming up with new ideas for solving them. Here are four ways to encourage creativity in your young child.

Be curious

Most inventors are creative people with a wide range of interests. Foster your child’s interests through books and conversations. Is your child interested in stamps? Coins? Bugs? Rocks? Use your public library to check out books and other resources on the topic. Be aware of community events such as bird walks and hand-on activities that will help your child explore their interest. Encourage your child to become a collector.

Let creativity flow

Help your child develop creative fluency and flexible thinking. One fun way to do that is to think of an ordinary household tool, like a paper clip or a clothes hanger. Have your child think of all the possible things that could be made out of that item. Coming up with lots of ideas gives your child practice with exhausting all ideas. For example, a stick could become:

- A magic wand
- A way to prop open a window
- A tool to poke imaginary creatures
- A way to hold hair in a bun
- What else?

Make mistakes

Did you know that Silly Putty was discovered accidentally when the General Electric Company attempted to find a substitute for rubber during World War II? Since then, over 200 million plastic eggs, containing 3,000 tons of Silly Putty, have been sold. Many inventions come from what feels like a mistake. Help your child understand that mistakes provide opportunities to learn. It will help if you share mistakes you’ve made recently too!

Never stop learning

Despite a very busy schedule, try to find a moment to look at an everyday item or event in a new way. Creativity can make common things special and special things more common!

Setting the right tone and atmosphere at home will foster creativity and learning. Ask open-ended questions that have multiple answers. Give your child the freedom to try and to make mistakes, even if things don’t work out as planned. Praise your child’s effort, or process, rather than praising the outcome or product. And most importantly, have fun with the creative young learner in your life!
How Ben Franklin Stole the Lightning
By Rosalyn Schanzer

Benjamin Franklin was amazing. He was a statesman, musician, a printer, a cartoonist, a shopkeeper – and an inventor. He figured out how to solve many problems – including how to steal lightening from the sky to prevent it from starting fires in Colonial towns. (Age level: 6-9)

Neo Leo: The Ageless Ideas of Leonardo da Vinci
By Gene Baretta

Even though Leonardo da Vinci lived a long time ago (born in 15th century Florence), his ideas have intrigued inventors and scientists ever since. In cartoon-like illustrations and brief text, old “Leo” ideas are juxtaposed to newer “Neo” ideas. This playful book is informative and engaging and may inspire further investigation of man and inventions. (Age level: 6-9)

Pop! The Invention of Bubble Gum
By Meghan McCarthy

Though it’s unlikely that anyone has ever heard of Walter Diemer, chances are they’ve used — or at least heard of — his invention: bubblegum. Diemer’s story from accountant to successful inventor is presented in a lively text with cartoon illustrations. (Age level: 6-9)

So You Want to Be an Inventor?
By Judith St. George

Ever wonder who invented the first dishwasher? How about Ben Franklin’s inventions? Need and inspiration seem to be the basis of all inventions, a principle used to organize this fascinating glimpse of myriad inventions and the people who invented them. (Age level: 6-9)
Dear families:

One of our objectives in preparing your children for kindergarten is to build their vocabulary and comprehension of more words to develop their oral language skills.

Every single day you can introduce new vocabulary to your child as you speak with him or her about everyday life. Don’t be afraid to use “big” words—children love them. Consider, for example, how young children seem to know the names of every dinosaur! As their vocabulary increases, so will their confidence and ability to express themselves clearly.

For this week’s activity, we will play a simple and easy word game: I Spy. Be playful and think of amusing ways to play with your child.

Sincerely,

Your child’s teacher
I SPY

What I Need

No materials needed

What to Do

1. With your child, as you ride around town doing errands, head out on a family trip, or simply relax at home, look for interesting items or people in the environment. These could be a billboard, a large tree, a building, the refrigerator, a person in a brightly colored outfit, a person walking a dog—almost anything will work.

2. Notice something in the immediate environment. Then begin the game by saying, "I spy with my little eye something..." and fill in an adjective. For example, if you see a traffic cone, you could say, "I spy with my little eye something orange."

3. Your child can then look around and offer a guess about what you are referring to. If your child becomes frustrated, you can offer more hints, such as "I spy something orange and cone shaped."

4. When the child guesses correctly, he or she becomes the leader for the next round.

What My Child Is Learning

This game encourages your child to develop observation skills and notice details of objects in the world around them. Your child will build vocabulary and oral language as he or she thinks of words to describe what he or she is seeing or listens to the descriptions you offer. Your child will use logic and reasoning to draw conclusions about what you are describing.

What the Research Says

Engaging children in rich conversations about interesting content supports vocabulary development.
**Day Six**

**Learning time**
- *Try to Find Environmental Print
- *Try Creating a Child’s Monthly Calendar
- Read *There’s My Monster*

**Movement and Music time:**
- *Try Superhero yoga poses, try all 5 warrior poses.
- Practicing deep breathing: *With S.T.A.R. handout

**Creative Time:**
- What’s the weather? Draw a picture of the weather/what it looks like outside today.

**Helper Job Time:**
- Pick up toys: start with a small, countable number (5) Make it a game and see who can pick up toys fastest.
Environmental Print

Environmental print is the print of everyday life. It’s the name given to the print that appears in signs, labels, and logos. Street signs, candy wrappers, labels on peanut butter and the K in Kmart are other examples of environmental print. For many emergent readers, environmental print helps bridge the connection between letters and first efforts to read.

Adults can take advantage of all this print by using it in ways to talk about letters, words, and print. Like playing the license plate game during a long car ride, (everyone find an A, now a B) playing with environmental print can be quick and easy. Here are a few ideas:

- Cereal boxes are colorful and interesting to look at. Ask your child to find the first letter of his name somewhere on the box. See if he can find other letters from his name, too.

- Choose a simple sign to focus on during one car trip (example: stop sign, pedestrian crossing, one way). Have your child count the number of signs seen along the way. Have your child read the sign, noticing that the same sign says the same message each time. Talk about the sounds of the letters you can hear (“The S makes the /ssssssss/ sound.”)

- Use a digital camera to take pictures of different signs: speed limit, stop, do not enter, exit. Use these pictures to make a small book for your child to “read.”

- Cut out familiar words from cereal boxes, labels from soup cans and from yogurt containers. Use these individual words (“Cheerios,” “tomato,” “Dannon”) to talk about capital and lower case letters. Talk about the sounds of letters (“The letter T says ‘tuh’”). Encourage your child to read the words you’ve cut out.

After you’ve gathered lots of pictures of signs and words from items within the house, you can sort these items by beginning letter. Identify the sounds made by the letters in logos. Sort logos and words by category (foods, drinks, snacks, signs). A simple alphabet book can be created using all your cutouts by organizing all the A words, B words, C words, etc.

Your child can have fun learning to read even when books are not available. Environmental print provides lots of opportunities for kids to interact with letters, sounds, and words.

For more information, watch “Roots of Reading” online, from our PBS series, Launching Young Readers: www.ReadingRockets.org/shows/launching/roots
Dear families:

Children have difficulty grasping a sense of time and knowing when significant events in their life will occur. It is conceptually hard for them to understand the passage of time when they don't yet have a clear understanding of days, weeks, and months or the language to express these concepts.

Creating a calendar especially for them can begin to bring these concepts from the abstract to the practical. Create a simple calendar on which your child can mark off the days until his or her birthday, when Grandma is visiting, or the next karate class. Post it on your refrigerator or family notice board at your child's eye level. If your child is impatient about when an activity is happening, refer to the calendar and count the days together.

This is an ongoing activity, and it may take many months of using a calendar before your child will truly grasp these concepts. Your child will be exposed to new words and will begin to gain a sense of control in his or her own schedule.

Sincerely,

Your child's teacher
What I Need

Calendar
Markers
Stickers (optional)

What to Do

1. Show your child the calendar, and talk about it. Talk about the words for each month and day, explain how the grid of the week works, and talk about how each square has a number for each day.
2. Show your child today’s date, and mark it in a special way. Say something like, “Today is the day we are starting your calendar.” Consider letting your child put a sticker on that day.
3. Talk about what special events are coming up, such as birthdays, holidays, and family events, and mark them together. Decide with your child how to note them. He or she may want to draw small pictures to post for special days.
4. With your child, count the number of days until the next event. Encourage your child to mark an X on each day as it passes. Let this become part of your daily ritual together.

What My Child Is Learning

Your child is just beginning to develop an understanding of the sequence of time: later, before, after, today, tomorrow, yesterday. He or she is learning new words, such as the days of the week, but he or she doesn’t yet understand what a week is. Your child is learning how a calendar works and how we track and conceptualize the passage of time. These concepts are very abstract, and each child’s readiness to grasp them may vary.

What the Research Says

As authors Sallee Beneke, Michaelene Ostrosky, and Lilian Katz point out, young children are not developmentally ready to fully understand the concept of time. They can, however, understand terms such as later, before, and after.

Simply exposing children to calendars and talking with them about upcoming events in an engaging way—“One, two. Two more days ’til Grandpa gets here!”—is enough at this age.
Day Seven

**Learning time**
- *Try Alphabet walk: find letters/words around your home or neighborhood. Write as many letters or words that you can find.
- *Try Measuring Things at Home
- Read [No Mirrors In My Mama’s House](#)

**Movement and Music time:**
- Listen to favorite music together: Clap your hands to the beat!
- Practicing deep breathing: *With [S.T.A.R. handout](#)*

**Creative Time:**
- Build a fort with sheets & blankets. Flashlight. Read books or play games in the fort.

**Helper Job Time:**
- Set the table for breakfast, lunch, or dinner. “Setting the Table”
Dear families:

Children love to know how big or how small things are. They love to compare sizes, widths, and heights. You can help your child use actual measurement tools to accurately measure things around your home and to compare different objects and people. Encourage your child to notice the differences, and help him or her develop the language to describe these differences.

Measuring is an entertaining way to learn some basic math concepts. Be ready for some giggles in this play activity! Remember to follow these tips for a successful game of measuring:

- Start by measuring your child’s height and then yours.
- Help your child choose things to successfully measure so he or she isn’t frustrated.
- Encourage your child to choose large objects needing two people, and measure those together.
- Use appropriate language introducing new words to help focus your child on the process and result of the activity.

Have fun!

Sincerely,

Your child’s teacher
MEASURING THINGS AT HOME

What I Need

Measuring tape
Paper and pencil

What to Do

1. Show your child the markings on the measuring tape. Point out that these measure inches.
2. Show your child how to measure an object by putting the zero end of the measuring tape at one end of the object, then pulling the tape over the length of the object to the other end. Tell him or her that the number on the tape at the other end is the number of inches in the length, height, or width of the object.
3. Ask your child to stand against a wall in your home. Measure his or her height and mark it in pencil—you might make this a permanent spot where you measure your child over time. Talk about the number of inches in your child’s measurement: “Wow! You’re 40 inches tall!”
4. Lie down on the floor, and let your child measure you. Compare using language to distinguish differences: “I’m 60 inches tall. You’re 40 inches tall. I’m taller than you. You’re shorter than I am.” (Note: At this point, don’t worry about subtracting to find the difference. Just focus on comparing.)
5. Let your child measure different accessible objects around your home. Document the measurements on a piece of paper, which your child might illustrate later. If your child is able, have him or her write down the measurements. Otherwise, you can do it.
6. Repeat this activity over several months. Ask questions such as, “Which one is shorter? How do you know?” You will be amazed at how much your child absorbs over time.

What My Child Is Learning

Your child is developing math concepts: measuring, comparing, and specific vocabulary such as length, height, width, inch, tall, taller, short, shorter, wide, wider, long, and longer.

What the Research Says

According to the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM), number and operations, geometry, and measurement play an especially significant role in building the foundation for mathematics learning.
Dear families:

Involving your child in everyday activities is a great way to support him or her in learning to count, sequence, and sort. Setting the table for a meal is an easy way to incorporate math learning and show your child how math is used in all sorts of ways.

As your child helps you, he or she will be helping you figure out what is needed for the meal on the dining table, how many people will be seated, how many of each item are needed—tasks that take a lot of concentration. Support your child in deciding what’s needed and in organizing the table. Use all the proper words for each item, and help him or her learn where they need to be placed.

Your young one will love helping you and will feel good about him- or herself as he or she realizes how to participate in a daily activity. Over time, your child will be able to do it independently.

Sincerely,

Your child’s teacher
SETTING THE TABLE

What I Need

Dishes
Utensils
Napkins
Place mats
Cups or glasses

What to Do

1. Think of some household tasks in which you can cooperatively engage your child. Consider, for example, setting the table, emptying the dishwasher, or sorting and folding the laundry. Let’s say you’ve chosen setting the table. Ask your child to help you set the table for a meal, and gain his or her cooperation.

2. Count together how many people will be eating the meal: “How many people do we have? Let’s see. There’s you, me, Aunt Barbara, your brother, and your cousin Antwan. How many is that? One, two, three, four, five. Five people for dinner.”

3. Ask how many plates, cups, utensils, place mats, and napkins you will need. Talk through this with your child. Together, collect the correct number of each item and set the table.

4. Narrate what you and your child are doing as you work together. “Let’s put the place mats down first. Now let’s put out the plates. Can you put a plate on top of each place mat?”

What My Child Is Learning

Your child will be learning one-to-one correspondence: the idea that, when counting objects, we count each object only once. With even the smallest task, your child will learn to work cooperatively, understanding the steps to accomplish the task and the need for attention to detail. Encourage your child to talk about what you are doing, and have conversations about not only the task but also why it is necessary. By learning to be a capable and helpful member of the family, your child will gain increased self-esteem.

What the Research Says

Researchers Douglas Clements and Julie Sarama assert, “Mathematical experience for very young children should build largely upon their play and natural relationships between learning and life in their daily activities, interests and questions.”

Kick-Start Kindergarten Readiness
Day Eight

Learning time
- Read book using reading tips handout
- *Try Learning about Family Traditions
- *Try Simple Sorting
- Watch Library Lion

Movement and Music time:
- Nature walk: look for birds, animals, changes in leaves. Take a bag and collect interesting things you find on your walk.
- Practicing deep breathing: *With S.T.A.R. handout

Creative Time:
- Make a Family Book *see handout

Helper Job Time:
- Help your brother or sister with something.
Dear families:

Children love to know how big or how small things are. They love to compare sizes, widths, and heights. You can help your child use actual measurement tools to accurately measure things around your home and to compare different objects and people. Encourage your child to notice the differences, and help him or her develop the language to describe these differences.

Measuring is an entertaining way to learn some basic math concepts. Be ready for some giggles in this play activity! Remember to follow these tips for a successful game of measuring:

- Start by measuring your child's height and then yours.
- Help your child choose things to successfully measure so he or she isn't frustrated.
- Encourage your child to choose large objects needing two people, and measure those together.
- Use appropriate language introducing new words to help focus your child on the process and result of the activity.

Have fun!

Sincerely,

Your child's teacher
SETTING THE TABLE

What I Need

Dishes
Utensils
Napkins
Place mats
Cups or glasses

What to Do

1. Think of some household tasks in which you can cooperatively engage your child. Consider, for example, setting the table, emptying the dishwasher, or sorting and folding the laundry. Let’s say you’ve chosen setting the table. Ask your child to help you set the table for a meal, and gain his or her cooperation.

2. Count together how many people will be eating the meal: “How many people do we have? Let’s see. There’s you, me, Aunt Barbara, your brother, and your cousin Antwan. How many is that? One, two, three, four, five. Five people for dinner.”

3. Ask how many plates, cups, utensils, place mats, and napkins you will need. Talk through this with your child. Together, collect the correct number of each item and set the table.

4. Narrate what you and your child are doing as you work together. “Let’s put the place mats down first. Now let’s put out the plates. Can you put a plate on top of each place mat?”

What My Child Is Learning

Your child will be learning one-to-one correspondence: the idea that, when counting objects, we count each object only once. With even the smallest task, your child will learn to work cooperatively, understanding the steps to accomplish the task and the need for attention to detail. Encourage your child to talk about what you are doing, and have conversations about not only the task but also why it is necessary. By learning to be a capable and helpful member of the family, your child will gain increased self-esteem.

What the Research Says

Researchers Douglas Clements and Julie Sarama assert, “Mathematical experience for very young children should build largely upon their play and natural relationships between learning and life in their daily activities, interests and questions.”
Dear families:

Children are incredibly curious about everyone around them, especially their own families. Each of us has an ancestry—where we come from, what holidays we celebrate, what foods we eat, what languages we speak. Teaching your child about your personal family history and rituals deepens his or her understanding of the world.

For your child, learning about your family is an important way to learn context for where you live and how your ancestors arrived there. A few cultural items will help you map out concretely where your family roots are. Think about the food, clothes, and holidays your family celebrates that are unique to your culture.

Helping your child understand his or her family culture and traditions will enrich him or her, help your child feel confident about him- or herself, and support your child in appreciating his or her friends who may have different traditions.

Sincerely,

Your child’s teacher
LEARNING ABOUT OUR FAMILY TRADITIONS

What I Need

Objects that are unique to your culture, such as clothing
Paper and pen
Globe or map (can be online)

What to Do

1. Together with your child, find a few culturally unique objects. These could be articles of clothing, a photo of a family member in a particular item of clothing, or another object that represents your culture.

2. On a piece of paper, create a list with your child of foods that your family enjoys and that represent your culture. Talk about what makes a food special to your family. Do you prepare it for a holiday or is it part of your cultural upbringing? How is it different from what your child might eat at school or at a friend’s home?

3. Look at the items you have collected, and talk about why they are special to your family tradition. When are they used? Who wears that clothing item and when?

4. Look at a map and point to a location of your family's origin. Talk about how many years ago your family moved to where you live now. If you have photos of these family members, now would be a great time to share them.

5. Take your time as it may be a lot of information, especially if your family is diverse.

What My Child Is Learning

Through understanding your family’s roots and where the family comes from, your child will gain confidence in his or her uniqueness and learn to be considerate of others’ uniqueness.

What the Research Says

A study conducted at Emory University by Robyn Fivush and others involved asking children questions such as whether they knew where their parents met and where their parents grew up and went to school. The authors found that the more children knew about their family history, the higher their self-esteem and the better able they were to deal with the effects of stress.
Day Nine

Learning time
- Patterns and Categorizing Handout
- *Try On the Street: Finding Words Everywhere *see handout
- Watch Clark the Shark

Movement and Music time:
- Practicing deep breathing: *With S.T.A.R. handout
- Ocean Yoga *see handout
- Learning Body Parts through Simon Says *see handout

Creative Time:
- Make your own shapes. Draw shapes on paper and cut them out.

Helper Job Time:
- Self-Help Tasks *see handout

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Ocean Yoga

- I am a jellyfish. STANDING FORWARD BEND
- I am a shark. LOCUST POSE
- I am a dolphin. DOLPHIN POSE
- I am a crab. TABLE TOP POSE
- I am a turtle. TORTOISE POSE

© Kids Yoga Stories
Literracy in the Sciences: Activity No. 8

Patterns and Categorizing

Even our youngest children are able to recognize patterns and use categories to process new information. Almost everything we see, hear, or touch contains details that our brain processes. Without realizing it, our brain is looking for what is new, what is different, and what has changed. New information is matched to a category that already exists in our mind.

This need to find order, to compare and contrast, and to pay attention to what remains the same is an important part of early learning. As your child becomes a reader, he or she will learn to find patterns in letters and words and use this information to read groups of words (for example, sun, fun, bun all contain the “un” letter pattern or family). Your reader will also categorize words by sounds (for example short/long vowel words, rhyming/non rhyming words) or by meaning (for example words that mean the same thing, or words that are opposites).

Parents and caregivers can build pattern recognition and categorization skills in science and math through these simple activities:

- **Sort it:** Provide lots of opportunities to explore many kinds of materials that can be sorted and categorized by size or shape. These include small plastic toys such as animals and vehicles, Unifix cubes (or other “manipulatives”), blocks, or other small objects such as coins, stamps, cups, and bottle caps. Have children explore different ways to sort objects into similar groups. The groups, or categories, could be general concepts such as “hard things,” “soft things” or something personal, such as “things that were gifts,” or “things I found.”

- **Same and different:** Help your child learn about different classifications scientists use to help them organize information. Use children’s books from the library to learn more about different classifications of animals, for example, mammals, and reptiles. Discuss what reptiles and mammals have in common, and what makes each unique.

- **Riddle me this:** Use riddles to help your child gain practice with “rules,” which are part of patterns and categorizing. For example, “I am a shape. I have four sides. Each side is the same length.” Good listening and a growing ability to sort through information will help your child solve the riddle correctly.

- **Make a mini grocery store:** Save your food boxes and juice containers for a few days, then enlist your child to stock the shelves. Designate one area for grains, another for dairy, and another for proteins. Have your child sort the objects into the correct location. This is a great opportunity to talk about healthy food choices.

Patterns, categories, and classifications are a part of everyday life and everyday learning. Use these ideas to help jump-start conversations with your young learner.

*Reading Rockets, Colorín Colorado, and LD OnLine* are national education services of WETA, the flagship public broadcasting station in Washington, D.C.
Dear families:

Wherever we go, we see words popping out at us—on the street as we walk, drive, or ride; as we shop; and as we relax at home. Many words we see over and over again on street signs, store names, traffic signs, subway posters, newspaper stands, and so on. As children start to notice letters and words, they begin to recognize the “picture” of a common word. Most often that starts with the child’s name. Then they start to notice logos and symbols that are prominent in the community. That’s emergent literacy—that’s beginning to read!

Finding words everywhere is exciting for children, especially when you join in the game with them. This is a great way to make early reading fun!

Sincerely,

Your child’s teacher
ON THE STREET—FINDING WORDS EVERYWHERE

What I Need
No materials needed

What to Do

1. Go for a walk or a ride with your child.
2. As you go, talk with your child. Read signs that you see. Pay attention to the words that catch your child’s eye.
3. Point out letters that your child may recognize. “Look! That stop sign has the letter S. Your name starts with S.”
4. Make a game of finding words everywhere. How many stop signs can your child find? What does that sign tell us about that shop? What is that poster advertising?
5. Draw attention to words all around to help accelerate your child’s understanding of the importance of language in both speaking and reading. Your child will gain confidence and joy in the ability to recognize letters and words, and that will ultimately lead to a love of reading!

What My Child Is Learning
Recognizing letters, logos, and words are some of the early stages in learning to read.

What the Research Says
Researchers have found that exposure to written language helps children develop an awareness of print, letter naming, and phonemic awareness. Through exposure to oral language, preschool children develop listening comprehension, vocabulary, and language skills.
Dear families:

Your family is by far the most important social group in your child's life. First and foremost, your child finds love and security at home with family members. Each family has many different people making up its unique configuration. Your child will develop special relationships with all of these people.

Together with your child, create an album of pictures and photos of your family. This personal album will become a treasured book for your child because it's all about his or her family! You can add to this album over time to create a unique family heirloom.

Sincerely,

Your child's teacher
MAKING A FAMILY BOOK

What I Need

Loose-leaf binder or notebook
Loose-leaf paper
Glue stick or glue
Crayons, colored pencils, or markers
Family photos

What to Do

1. Discuss with your child who is in his or her family. Help your child name all the family members, and explain your child’s relationship to them.
2. Suggest making an album to document all the members of the family. Label the front of the album with your child’s name; for example, Jessica’s Family Album.
3. Find or take photos of these family members. If you don’t have a photo of a particular family member, your child can draw a picture of that person.
4. Help your child select which images to put in the album.
5. Create a page for each person’s photo, and together with your child write that person’s name and relationship. Leave an extra page empty if your child wants to draw a picture of that family member.
6. You and your child can work on this book over time, adding family as your child suggests.

What My Child Is Learning

Your child will develop a special sense of his or her family unit—who the members are and how your child is related to them. He or she will have a special sense of belonging—this is my family!

Your child will develop sorting skills as he or she organizes the album and will learn vocabulary for the relations, word names, family names, and nicknames.

What the Research Says

Researcher Esra Dereli has found that the parent-child relationship is a significant factor for children’s emotional understanding and emotion-regulation skills.
Dear families,

Every season presents opportunities for exploring the outdoors with your child. Going to the playground or running around the park are activities children may do every day. But opportunities to focus on the natural world right under our feet are waiting to be discovered.

Make a game of searching for insects and small creatures in your backyard, on your patio, and in the park. You and your child can learn a lot about the creatures that are right under our noses every day.

See what interesting insects and creatures you’ll find!

Sincerely,

You child’s teacher
LEARNING BODY PARTS THROUGH SIMON SAYS

What I Need

Online access or another resource for body-part names

What to Do

1. Start by playing a simple game of Simon Says. In this game, a leader gives directions. The follower has to listen carefully and do the direction only if the leader says, "Simon says." For example:
   - LEADER: Put your hand on your head.
   - FOLLOWER: [doesn't move]
   - LEADER: Simon says, "Put your hand on your head."
   - FOLLOWER: [puts hand on head]

2. Your child may well remember this game from school. Catching someone off guard is fun, and so are lots of body-part names, so be prepared for lots of giggles!

3. Play this game together with the whole family.

4. As your child gains competence in knowledge of basic body parts, you can help develop his or her vocabulary by looking up names of other body parts; for example, instead of head say cranium; or instead of shoulder blade say scapula. Did you know that another name for kneecap is patella? That little groove over your upper lip beneath your nose is called a philtrum. Have fun learning new body-part words!

What My Child Is Learning

Your child will learn anatomically correct names for body parts and a sense of body awareness. He or she will develop memory skills, listening skills, and the ability to follow directions.

What the Research Says

Researchers Jocelyn Bonnes Bowne, Hirokazu Yoshikawa, and Catherine Snow have found that directly teaching young children new words in context increases the children's vocabulary.
Learning time
- Recording Observations Handout
- Learn Personal Contact Information *see handout
- Read The Kissing Hand

Movement and Music time:
- Practicing deep breathing: *With S.T.A.R. handout
- Exercise Together Handout

Creative Time:
- Drawing *see parent letter and handout

Helper Job Time:
- Setting the Table *see Handout
Dear families:

We want children to be safe and secure in school and in their neighborhoods.

When children are given the responsibility for knowing their personal contact information, they are empowered to take care of themselves. Children should have basic information memorized in the event of an emergency. They should know where emergency contact information is posted at home.

Although we don’t normally support memorization as a teaching tool, personal information is one of the exceptions to that rule. While we review this information at school, your support of this effort at home is invaluable to ensure that your child knows his or her personal contact information. Together, we can ensure that your child will learn the necessary information and build important life skills.

Sincerely,

Your child’s teacher
LEARNING PERSONAL CONTACT INFORMATION

What I Need

Child's full name
Birthday
Street address, including the apartment or house number
Your name(s)
Your phone number

What to Do

1. Have a calm conversation with your child about the importance of knowing his or her personal information. Emphasize that your child is now old enough to know these things. Discuss a few scenarios when it might be important to know this information, such as should your child become lost in a store.

2. Ask your child what he or she knows already; for example, she is likely to know her first and last names. Ask for each piece of information so you understand what you need to help your child memorize.

3. Write out on a pad all the information your child needs to know, and read it together with him or her. Practice saying the information out loud. Remember to keep this fun!

4. Let your child practice dialing your phone number.

5. Show your child the places at home or in your car where you keep emergency contact information, such as a relative's or a doctor's phone number.

6. Point out the number of your home and the street sign where you live to help him or her make visual connections to learn the address.

7. If your child is having trouble remembering this information, make up a rhyme or a little song.

What My Child Is Learning

Your child will begin to develop a sense of autonomy and independence, security, and self-confidence.

What the Research Says

Lindsay Hutton, editor at FamilyEducation.com, says, "Life skills are essential for your child to learn how to be independent and become self-sufficient. Appropriate life skills will also help your child feel empowered, help develop his self-esteem, and aid in socialization and reasoning skills."
Literacy in the Sciences: Activity No. 6

Recording Observations

Science and math explorations provide your growing reader with a chance to record all kinds of observations. Young children love to keep a special journal, and fill it with all sorts of drawings, scribbles, sketches, notes, and graphs. Try to date each entry and watch as your child’s observational and recording skills grow along with your child.

Create a special journal

Use any paper for the cover: cardstock, interesting cardboard and pretty greeting cards can all be used as a cover. Then, collect some twigs from the backyard and find a large, thick rubber band. Fold your cover in half. Fold your inside pages, and put them inside the cover. Trim as needed. Punch two holes with a hole punch, measuring down from the top and up from the bottom about 2 inches. Pull one end of the rubber band through the bottom hole and slide twig into the loop. Pull the other end of the rubber band through the top hole and slide the other end of twig through that. You now have a special journal into which your budding scientist can record observations.

A scientist’s field notes

Begin using the science journal by taking your child outside. Encourage your child to write down what she observes about her surroundings, looking at both the big picture and the small, examining plants and rocks and insects up close. Have her make a record in their journal of what they experience with each of their senses. Then have her choose one animal or plant to watch for 10 minutes. Your child can choose anything: a dandelion, a grasshopper, a bird soaring overhead. Ask her to describe it as clearly as they can, as if she is writing for someone who's never seen that before. Have her watch for movements and take note of any sounds made. Ask your child to draw and label a picture of the plant or animal.

Other fun ideas to record in your field journal

A flower tally: Count the flowers in an area in the spring once a week for three weeks. Compare your tallies. Your child will have fun watching the numbers go up as flowers bloom in the spring.

Ant watching: There are ants everywhere! Try following them to their home and see what they’re up to. Where do they live? How many can you count in one place? Record these observations and your ant grand total.

Dig a hole: As parents know, dirt can be pretty interesting to kids. Have your child dig a hole and notice how the dirt changes as he digs deeper. Can he describe the different layers? What creatures did he find as he dug? Record these and other interesting findings in the journal.

Nature scavenger hunt: Use your notebook to make (or draw) a list of some common things and a few rare ones that can be found outside near your home or in a park. Include things like: acorn, pine cone, flat rock, bird feather, weed, flower. Hand your child the notebook and let the scavenger hunt begin!

Special thanks to the Two Writing Teachers (www.twowritingteachers.wordpress.com) for their field journal directions, and Nature Rocks (www.naturerocks.org) for the nature-based ideas for family fun.
Dear families:

Have you ever considered ways to include your child in your exercise routine? Children are able to follow most basic aerobic or yoga routines. Whether you are working out at home, in your backyard, or at a local park, bring your child along to work out together. You'll be surprised by how flexible and agile your child may be and by your little one's innate ability to follow your movements.

Make it fun! When you get children involved in exercise, you'll be teaching them a lifelong healthy habit!

Sincerely,

Your child's teacher
EXERCISE TOGETHER

What I Need

Exercise equipment (optional)
Comfortable clothing

What to Do

1. Think of some easy exercises that you and your child can do together—perhaps yoga moves or stretches. Or consider going for a brisk walk.
2. Plan a time and place you can exercise together for no more than twelve to fifteen minutes.
3. Show your child the movement, and ask him or her to then try it with you watching. Gently guide your child if he or she needs help.
4. Make this a regular part of your routine. Over time, the two of you will develop a healthy habit of exercising together.

What My Child Is Learning

Your child will learn healthy life practices, body strengthening and awareness, and confidence and self-esteem.

What the Research Says

According to researcher Amika Singh and colleagues, physical activity and sports have a positive effect on children's physical health. Regular participation in physical activity in childhood is associated with decreased cardiovascular risk in youth and adulthood.
Dear families:

Do you play music at home and occasionally break out into dancing while you are doing the dishes or cleaning the house? Your child is picking up cues for your musical taste and style every time he or she witnesses you enjoying music. So often we hear stories about how the early influences on musicians began with the music and styles they heard at home.

Dancing gets the heart rate up and makes you feel wonderful. Next time you're feeling the music, invite your child to dance with you and have a blast!

Sincerely,

Your child's teacher
DANCING TOGETHER

What I Need

Music—any style that you love
Room to dance

What to Do

1. Choose some music with a good beat that you love.
2. Play it, and start dancing! Invite your child to join in.
3. Make a movement and encourage your child to copy you. Then let him or her dance a movement and you copy. Have fun!

What My Child Is Learning

According to the National Dance Education Organization:

- Dance involves a greater range of motion, coordination, strength, and endurance than most other physical activities.
- Dancing utilizes the entire body and is an excellent form of exercise for total body fitness.
- Dance fosters social encounter, interaction, and cooperation.
- Children learn to understand themselves in relation to others. Young children will create movement spontaneously when presented with movement ideas.
- Movement provides the connection between the idea and the outcome.

What the Research Says

Author and educator Rae Pica says that a competent mover will gladly keep moving, but a child who feels physically awkward and uncoordinated is going to avoid movement. So give children the time, space, and opportunity to move!
Body Yoga

Body Poetry: Yoga Cards
Exercise, imagine, stretch and create!

Pour instructions en langue française, veuillez visitez notre site web: www.roylco.com/fr
Para instrucciones en español, visite por favor nuestro sitio web: www.roylco.com/es
Für die deutsche Anleitung besuchen Sie bitte unsere Website: www.roylco.com/de

Connect with your emotions and set your spirit free! The word ‘yoga’ is Sanskrit and means ‘unify’ or ‘oneness.’ Yoga is an exercise for the mind, body and spirit. Its main benefits are, when properly practised, to create a balance between the nervous system and endocrine system which produces and secretes hormones into the blood stream and intestinal fluids and organs of the body. Yoga’s goals are to attain mental peace, improved concentration, achieve deep relaxation and support harmonious relationships with others. Yoga has been refined over centuries in India and is now practised all over the world by people of all ages working to develop mental discipline while engaging in healthy exercise!

Our primary goal with Body Poetry: Yoga Cards is to give children an exercise that they can do in the classroom for twenty minutes a day which promotes a healthy lifestyle. Our secondary goal is to relate yoga to other areas of the curriculum including dramatic play and language arts. Start by teaching the entire class all of the poses, starting with the easy ones color-coded in green and proceeding to the more complex poses in yellow and ending with the challenging poses in red. Start out by describing each pose to children while showing them the photograph. Once children are comfortable posing in the various positions, you can simply hold up the card and the children will strike the pose without a verbal description. At this stage be sure to walk through the class and provide further instructions to students who may be struggling. Finally, challenge your students with different routines by arranging the cards in new sequences.

Use our Body Poetry: Yoga Cards as a learning tool for integrating physical activity into the busy day. We’ve strategically designed sixteen yoga poses and organized them in three challenge levels:
• Green Cards: Easy
• Yellow Cards: Intermediate
• Red Cards: Challenging

On the reverse side of each card are illustrated instructions on how to perform the poses and movements. Note: We’ve highlighted the part of the body that moves or stretches in the color of the card. For instance, the easy cards show a manikin with the highlighted part of the body in green. Children can use the cards to recreate the poses working alone, in pairs or in groups by referring to the illustrated instructions on the back of each card. Teachers can read the instructions from this guide for verbal instructions that they can relate to their students. Tip: While becoming familiar with the cards, photocopy and cut out the instructions from this guide and paper clip them to the back of the cards for quick reference.

Note: We’ve made up fun names for traditional poses to make yoga as accessible as possible to young children. The illustrations framing the photographic poses are intended to help the child relate to the pose and can be used in dramatic play and language arts activities.

Yoga Tips:
1. Breathing is essential to yoga! Always start yoga with a few breathing exercises:
   • As a warm up breathing exercise, ask students to stand while placing one hand on their chest and one hand on their abdomen (stomach). Ask them to inhale deeply through the nose while feeling the chest and abdomen rise. Exhale through the mouth but keep the mouth, cheeks and tongue relaxed while breathing out. Ask children to relax while breathing and not raise their shoulders while breathing in.
   • As an Intermediate exercise, ask children to stand while placing one hand on their abdomen and one hand on their chest. This time, ask them to start by filling their belly with air first, then filling the bottom of their chest and finally filling the top of their chest. It will require a deep breath and concentration, but they will develop self discipline through breathing!
   • For a challenging breathing exercise, ask children to take three short breaths through the nose before exhaling through the mouth while moving their arms. Start by standing with the arms to the sides. On the first inhale, lift arms out in front. On the first inhale, lift arms straight to shoulder level in front. On the second inhale, move arms out to either side. On the third inhale, lift arms straight out above head. On the exhale, slowly breathe out through the mouth while arcing the arms down to rest at either side of the body.

2. Begin and end your session with a few warm up/cool down stretches. Young children may not need to warm up before exercise, but it is a wonderful habit to develop. Note: Stretching is a great way to build discipline in your routines, especially if the poses change from day to day. Once a warm up routine is firmly established, ask different students to lead the stretches. Try these simple stretches:
   • Ask students to stand beside their desks with their back straight and their feet planted at shoulder width apart. Spread arms out and hold them perpendicular to the floor and count to twelve. Relax arms and lift head back for a count of twelve. Bend head forward and hold in place for a count of twelve. Return head to an upright position and stand on tippy toes for a count of twelve. Repeat as desired.
   • For Intermediate stretching, perform the previous stretches and add some new ones. Clasp hands over head. Bend the back and shoulders, but not waist to the right. Count to twelve. Return to an upright position and then bend to the left and count to twelve.
   • Hold right arm at shoulder level pointing to the left. Place the left hand above the right elbow and slowly pull the arm
Wooden Bridge
1. Begin by spreading your feet and arms wide apart.
2. Turn your right foot about 90 degrees, (toes pointing outwards) and stand on the ball of your left foot.
3. Inhale as you slightly bend your right knee until you can feel the stretch. Turn your head towards your right arm.
4. Make sure to keep your hips and shoulders parallel.
5. Exhale as you straighten your leg and repeat movement on the other side.
Duration: Hold this pose for 1 minute. Repeat on other side.
Guideline: Those suffering from heart conditions should not perform this pose.
Benefits: Strengthens and tones leg muscles and abdominal organs.

Yellow Cards/Intermediate Level

Tree in the Wind
1. Stand with feet hip-width apart, arms down and relaxed.
2. Inhale as you lock fingers together and lift arms above your head. Proceed by turning hands inside out and pushing them up high to the ceiling.
3. Exhale. Using your hips, bend to the right side allowing your left arm to touch your left ear.
4. Inhale as you reposition back to the center pose, pushing your hands towards the ceiling.
5. Repeat this movement on the other side.
Duration: Hold position for 30 seconds. Repeat twice on both sides.
Guidelines: If you find that swaying becomes a problem during this move, tuck in your tailbone. This will also protect your lower back.
Benefits: Stretches and tones the sides of the upper body.

Scooter
1. Begin this movement by having your feet and arms spread wide apart with your palms down. Turn your right foot about 90 degrees and your left foot slightly inwards.
2. Inhale and then exhale as you go down, bending your upper body to the right and take hold of your right ankle. Extend your left arm pointing your fingertips up to the ceiling.
3. Inhale and exhale as you return to a standing position and repeat movement on the other side.
Duration: Hold once for 30 seconds. Increase holding for up to two minutes. Repeat on opposite side.
Guidelines: For those with hip and lower back problems, do this pose gently.
Benefits: Strengthens the underarm area, loosens the shoulders.

Slide
1. Stand with feet together, arms down and relaxed.
2. Inhale as you go up onto your toes.
3. Exhale as you go down into a squat, placing your fingertips on the floor.
4. Extend your left leg out and hold this position.
5. Repeat on the other side.
Duration: Hold once for 30 seconds. Continue to repeat until you can hold for 2 minutes.
Guidelines: Approach this position gently if you have knee or hip problems.
Benefits: Helps relieve stiffness in the hip, knee and ankle joints.

Grandfather Clock
1. Stand with feet together, arms down and relaxed.
2. Inhale as you extend your right arm over your head.
3. Bend your left arm behind your back. Exhale as you bend your right arm behind your back and aim for both hands to touch each other. Try to interlock your fingers and hold this position for a moment.
4. Repeat on the other side.
Duration: Hold once for 30 seconds. Continue to repeat until you can hold for 2 minutes.
Guidelines: If your hands are unable to reach each other, use a ruler and work your way up.
Benefits: This pose will promote better posture. It opens up the chest, loosening the arms, underarms and chest.

Swaying Sunflower
1. Stand with feet hip width apart.
2. Inhale as you raise your left arm out to the side and up over your head. Follow this movement with your eyes allowing your forearm to bend while its over top of your head. Your right arm should be out to the side.
3. As you exhale, repeat this movement with your right arm by raising it above your head. Follow this movement with your eyes and ensure that your left arm is out to the side.
Duration: Hold once for 30 seconds. Repeat until you can hold for 1 minute.
Guidelines: Keep neck and back as straight as possible with your chin down.
Benefits: Strengthens the underarm area, loosens the shoulders.
Step Ladder
1. Stand with feet hip width apart, arms down and relaxed..While your pelvis is bent inwards.  
2. Inhale as you stretch your left arm up.  
3. Exhale as you slowly slide your right hand straight down towards your knee.  
4. Inhale as you straighten your body and exhale as you lower your right arm down.  
5. Repeat this movement on the other side.  
Duration: Hold once for 60 seconds. Repeat until you can hold for 3 minutes.  
Guidelines: To make this pose less strenuous on your back, bend your knees a little bit more.  
Benefits: Helps promote flexibility. Strengthens waist, hip and abdominal areas.  

Red Cards  
Sprout  
1. Stand with feet hip width apart, arms down and relaxed.  
2. Inhale as you raise your arms out to the side and up above your head. Palms should be together as you elevate yourself onto your toes.  
3. Exhale as you bend your knees and go into a squatting position, standing on the balls of your feet. Your hands should be at chest level, with your palms still together. Hold for a moment then begin to rise!  
4. Inhale as you rise up onto your toes stretching your arms above your head.  
5. Finally exhale as you lower your arms and hands, bringing your heels to the floor.  
Duration: Begin by holding for 30 seconds. Repeat until you can hold for 2 minutes.  
Guidelines: Helps improve coordination, balance and physical stability.  
Benefits: Avoid this pose if you have knee problems.  

Trapeze Rings  
1. Stand with feet hip width apart, arms down and relaxed. Focus on a spot in front of you! This will help improve your balance for the following steps.  
2. Slowly bend your right leg behind you, using your left leg as your support beam. Using your hand, grab hold of your right ankle and bring it close to your buttocks. Try to keep your knees together.  
3. As you inhale swing your left arm up above your head.  
4. Hold this position for a moment and then repeat on the other side.  
Duration: Hold once for 30 seconds. Repeat until you can hold for 2 minutes.  
Guidelines: Tuck in tailbone, keeping back and neck straight.  
Benefits: Helps develop confidence and concentration. Strengthens leg muscles.  

Airplane  
1. Stand with feet hip width apart, arms down and relaxed.  
2. Inhale as you elevate yourself onto your toes; arms lifted up on each side keeping them at shoulder level.  
3. Exhale as you squat down, still remaining on the balls of your feet, keeping your back straight and your knees relaxed.  
4. Inhale as you rise to go back into the starting position.  
Duration: Hold once for 30 seconds. Repeat until you can hold for 1 minute.  
Guidelines: Proceed gently if you have knee and ankle problems.  
Benefits: Helps develop concentration. Strengthens hips, thighs and knees.  

Sprinkler  
1. Stand with feet hip width apart, arms down and relaxed. If you focus on a spot in front of you, this will help improve your balance for the following steps.  
2. Slowly bend your right leg behind you, using your left leg as your support beam. Using your right hand, grab hold of your right ankle. As you inhale swing your left arm up in front of you.  
3. Slightly lean your body forward, while raising your right knee as far as you can go without feeling discomfort.  
4. Hold this position for a moment, exhale and then repeat on the other side.  
Duration: Hold once for 30 seconds. Repeat until you can hold for 2 minutes.  
Guidelines: Perform the 'Trapeze Rings' pose before attempting this one.  
Benefits: Helps improve concentration, physical stability and self-confidence.  

Rocket  
1. Imagine your left leg being rooted into the ground. Focus on a spot on the wall and begin to elevate your right leg. Bend your right leg and place the sole of your foot on your left inner thigh.  
2. Place the palm of your hands together at chest level and then raise them above your head, keeping palms together. Hold this position for a moment and then repeat on the other side.  
Duration: Hold once for 30 seconds. Repeat until you can hold for 2 minutes.  
Guidelines: You may use your hands to put your foot into place. To make this pose slightly easier, place your right foot on your left foot. To make this movement slightly more difficult, place your right foot on your upper left thigh.  
Benefits: Helps improve concentration, stability, posture, and confidence.  

Return to Top