

Home Activities

Making Your Home a Place For Readers

Several tips to help parents of young children promote literacy at home.

- Choose a quiet time for reading to your child, as in before a nap, bedtime, or after dinner.
- Choose a special place for family reading, like a comfortable chair or pillows piled on the floor.
- Let your child select the book for you to read aloud.
- Hold the book so that she or he can see the pictures. If possible, also let her or him turn the pages.
- Take time to look at and talk about the pictures. **Don't** just read the story: talk about it. Let your child point out letters, shapes, colors, and animals.
- Understand that reading begins at home. Children read their environments, so make your home a print rich environment.
- Read! Don't expect reading to be important to your children if they see that it's not important to you.
- Invite your child to read to you. If he or she is a pre reader, he'll often interpret his own story using illustrations and his imagination.
- Make lists, lots of them. Make them for grocery shopping, books to buy and things to take on trips.
- Read aloud to your child every day.

*adapted from **My First Week of School** by Derrick Gantt.

Art and Craft: Personal Placemats

Materials: Clear contact paper (many, many uses for this so buy a big roll).
Large sheet of art paper about 12 X 14 inches, paint or crayons.

Description: Let your child draw a picture on both sides of the paper or if you are using sloppy paints use 2 sheets and secure them back to back with tape. "Laminate" them with the clear contact paper! They can be used over and over for months or until your child decides to make a new one. You can let them make one for holidays and older children can use Wrapping paper to make Holiday placemats for everyone at dinner!

No Heat Recipe: Crunchy Vegetable Burritos

Try these easy to make, healthy burritos for lunch. Parents or older children can do the shredding and chopping. Then preschoolers can do the mixing and wrapping. Serves 4

Ingredients:

½ cup shredded carrots

½ cup chopped broccoli

½ cup chopped cauliflower
2 green onions, thinly sliced
4 ounces shredded low fat cheddar cheese
¼ cup nonfat ranch salad dressing
½ teaspoon chili powder
4 (7 inch) flour tortillas
1 cup torn iceberg lettuce, bite size pieces

Method:

1. In a mixing bowl, combine carrots, broccoli, cauliflower and onions with cheese, dressing and chili powder.
2. Lay tortillas flat on the counter and spoon about ½ cup vegetable mixture and ¼ cup of lettuce down the center. Wrap each tortilla around the vegetable mixture. Enjoy with your children!

Recipe: Create a "Broccoli Forest"

Instead of a sweet treat; try serving young children this picture perfect forest.
Serves 4

Ingredients:

Dipping Sauce

¼ cup plain nonfat yogurt
¼ cup light sour cream
2 teaspoons honey
2 teaspoons spicy brown mustard

Broccoli Trees

2 carrots, peeled
3 cups broccoli florets
4 cherry tomatoes
3 tablespoons parsley leaves

Method:

1. To prepare dipping sauce; combine all sauce ingredients in a small bowl (children can do this). Set bowl aside.
2. The Forest: Parent or older children do this. Hold carrots against a cutting board and trim off ends. Cut each carrot in half, crosswise. Then cut each piece lengthwise, to make 4 pieces.
3. Next, arrange each plate by putting two carrot pieces side-by-side in the center. Arrange broccoli florets around the carrots forming a cluster. Arrange the tomato at the top of the plate. Now, spoon the dipping sauce around the base of the carrots and sprinkle with the parsley leaves.

Talk with preschoolers about the different colors and tastes as they enjoy this vegetable snack!

Vegetable Riddle

What looks like a tree?
Is high in Vitamin C
And is good for you and me?

Homemade Ice Cream

Ingredients:

ice
salt
milk
measuring spoons and cup
small ziplock bags
large plastic bags, (shopping bag fine)
towel
cups
spoons

Procedure: Tell your child that you and he / she are going to make ice cream. First, one cup of milk is measured and poured into a small Ziploc bag. Two tablespoons of sugar are added to the milk. The recipe can be doubled in each Ziploc as needed. The bag is zipped up, and put into another Ziploc. The bag is put in to a large plastic bag, grocery bags work fine. This bag is put into a second large bag.

Now, ice is added into the bag, covering the smaller bags containing the milk and sugar mix. Salt is added to the ice. This makes it colder and keeps it cold. Use a generous amount of salt. The bag is tied tightly closed. Wrap a towel around the bag and hold closed. Your child can help to shake the towel with the bags inside. It must be shaken for about 15 minutes. The more helpers the better.

As the ice and mixture are shaken, the ice cream starts to form. The milk and sugar thicken and harden. It comes out tasting like ice milk and is thick. The bags with the ice cream are removed once hardened, and the salt must be washed off the bag right away. The treat can be scooped out and enjoyed.

Comments: It really works! Make sure the bags are tightly closed because they can open while being shaken and the salt will get in to the ice cream.

Sing and Move

Sing a few familiar songs together with your child. As you sing march, clap your hands, or stamp your feet in time to the music. Then, Take turns saying

favorite nursery rhymes aloud. Agree on one rhyme that both of you can repeat together. Add some hand and body actions as you say the words.

The Calendar

Parents, explain to your preschool child that days, like people, have names. Say, "Today's name is (Monday). Tomorrow's name is (Tuesday)." Show him or her the day's names at the top of the calendar. Help your youngster understand the passage of time and how we measure time by the month, day, hour etc.

Circle special days on the calendar and count how many days until each special day arrives. The special days can be any day that you and your child will be doing something that your child likes, for example, a visit to grandparents, trip to the zoo, or the day he or she will help wash the dog etc.

Holidays

Sit with your preschool child and explain what the holiday is all about. Look for TV programs about the holiday that he or she might enjoy and watch with your child.

Tracing Shapes

Parents cut out a circle, square and triangle from a large piece of cardboard. Give your preschool child a large sheet of paper on which to make a picture or design by tracing the shapes. Encourage your child to color the picture or design. Write your preschooler's name at the top of his or her picture, spelling their name letter by letter as you write. Later take your child to the library. Find some books on shapes, colors or sizes to enjoy with your child.

Looking for Animals

Parents, gather several old magazines and ask your youngster to look for and cut out pictures of animals. Help him or her glue or paste the pictures on a large sheet of paper. Then ask your preschool child to name as many of the animals as he or she can. Write each name under (or near) the picture and spell out the letters as you write. Also, write your child's name at the top of the paper, spelling as you write.