

Learning at Home

Families are so busy - it's hard to find extra time, but little changes add up.

Children Begin Learning at Home You count! You and your family are the first people in a child's life to:

- * appreciate who they are and what they do
- * to encourage curiosity
- * communicate family values
- * establish a strong foundation for learning that lasts a lifetime

Young children are more likely to thrive in school when...

- * they know lots of words
- * are able to express their ideas and needs

Spending time talking and playing with your child helps...

- * increase their vocabulary
- * makes them feel good about themselves
- * helps them begin school eager and ready to learn

Play to Help Your Child Learn These activities have no-cost, no calories and require no batteries!

Just 20 minutes a day makes a big difference.

TALK

Talk often to your child!

Listen carefully to what he/she says. **Tell stories and jokes.**

Activity: "Once Upon a Time"

- * Tell a story about yourself.
- * Tell about your grandparents.
- * When your child hears you talk they learn new words.
- * Your stories help them love stories!
- * Ask him/her to tell you a story.

PLAY

Let your child have plenty of playtime.

Playing encourages the use of imagination, practicing language and having fun.

When you play with your child, it's a great time for the whole family to share words and ideas.

GO PLACES

When you go places, there are lots of new things to talk about.

Remember what is routine for you is probably new to your child.

Activity: Driving in the Car

- * Turn off the radio and have a conversation with your child.
- * Describe what you see out the window.
- * Sing songs.
- * Ask questions about what your child can see.
- * Be sure to listen.

Learning at Home *continued*

Activity: Let's Pretend

- * Play pretend with your child.
- * Act out events that interest them.
- * Pretend to have a birthday party, go to a restaurant, fly in a plane, go swimming or sledding.
- * Remember, it is just pretend.

DRAW OR "WRITE"

Drawing and scribbling are the beginning stages of writing. This helps develop fine motor skills and their imagination.

- * Have your child "write" their own shopping list, even if it is just scribbles. Use anything you have, plain or recycled paper and crayons or washable markers.
- * Make pictures and pretend to write.

Activity: "I Spy"

You can play this anywhere, while shopping, driving or reading the newspaper.

- * Pick a letter from your child's name and see if you can find it.
- * Pick a color and see if they can find an object in that same color.
- * Pick a number and have your child find that many items.

READ

The more books your child reads, the more successful they'll be in school. Set the example for lifelong reading.

- * Books don't have to be new to be great.
- * Ask relatives and friends to give books as presents.
- * Pick up books at a yard sale.
- * Go to the library.
- * Talk about the pictures in the books.
- * Show children how to use books by showing them how to turn pages gently and handle them with care.

Make a commitment to read to your child every day! Anytime of the day works. It WILL be the most important 20 minutes in your day.

Activity: "My Favorite Part"

After reading a book, talk with your child about each of your favorite parts of the story. Ask them about their favorite part.