

Parents Make the Difference!



Keep learning alive for your child over the summer months

Fun, educational activities can keep your preschooler's mind engaged over the break. Here are a few to try this summer:

- Read rhyming books and encourage your child to rhyme one-syllable words such as cat or man.
- Play age-appropriate board games and card games. "War," in which you each compare cards and the highest card wins, is easy and fun and a great way to work on number skills.
- Look at pictures together on billboards, in books and magazines. Ask your child to tell you what is happening in the picture.
- Have your child be a "pen pal" to a grandparent or other relative. Your child can draw a weekly picture of something she has been doing. You can write a caption under it and send it off.
- Use the five senses. Each week, spotlight a different sense. See a new picture, listen to a new song, touch a new fabric, smell a new spice or taste a new fruit.
- Classify. Say to your child, "A car is something people can ride in. Can you think of anything else people ride in?"
- Take advantage of the warm weather to practice writing in different ways. Use sidewalk chalk on the sidewalk. Give your child a squirt bottle full of water, and ask her to draw or write her name on the side of the house. Gather a small amount of sand and have her use her finger to write in it.

Fun activities can strengthen writing skills

Reading and writing are closely related, so practicing one helps with the other. To enjoy writing with your child, start with a relaxed attitude. Kindergartners need plenty of time to develop skills and confidence! Then plan a variety of fun activities. You might:

- Go shopping. Show your child a grocery list you've made, and let him add some items. Don't worry if he misspells words or draws pictures. He'll still benefit from the experience.
- Make cards. Look at the calendar for upcoming events, such as a relative's birthday. Then make cards together. Your child can add words and pictures--or dictate a note that you write.
- Leave messages. Put a message center in the kitchen. It can be as simple as a shoe box or as fancy as a white board. Use it to exchange messages, such as "Hi Dad!" or "I love you!"
- Write stories. While your child tells a story, write it down. Ask questions such as, "Then what happened?" or "What letter do you think that starts with?" Enjoy reading the story aloud.
- Create books. Suggest that your child write and illustrate a story. Each page should have a drawing and caption. Help your child with writing and attaching the pages. Include a cover that shows he is the author!

Be sure to keep your preschooler safe over the summer months

Safety comes first when keeping your child well this summer. It's a wonderful season, but it's also a season when many children get hurt.

To keep your child safe and happy this summer:

- Protect him from the sun. Avoid the sun in the middle of the day. Use hats and sunscreen at other times.
- Exercise wisely. Outdoor play is great for your child, except in extreme weather. Keep your child in on the hottest days of the year. At all times, drink plenty of water and watch your child for signs of fatigue.
- Supervise your child, especially around water. Sadly, young children drown each summer. Drowning and injuries can happen in shallow water as well as deep water. Never let your child near water unless you are within reach.
- Be careful with food. Eating outdoors is fun, but be sure your food is at the correct temperature. That is especially important for foods containing meat, fish or dairy. Before your child eats anything, know its ingredients and how it has been stored.