

At Home Learning Activities

The following activities can be completed at home with your child to help build the skills, learning, and behaviors needed for school success. There is no one “right” way to do the activities. You can make changes and shorten or lengthen them to suit your child’s attention span. You might want to use them as a starting point for some activities of your own. If you don’t have some of the resources listed for an activity, remember that most public libraries offer free use of books, magazines, videos, computers, and other services.

Age levels for the activities are indicated at the start of each activity: Ages 5-7, Ages 7-9, and Ages 9-11. Please remember children don’t always learn at the same rate. You are the best judge of what your child may be ready to try, so use the age levels as “guides” as your child learns and grows but know it is also acceptable to try things in other age level areas.

As a parent-family, you can help your child develop a desire to learn in a way no one else can. That desire to learn is a key to your child’s later success. Enjoyment in learning is important! The following activities are designed to support learning at home in a fun and engaging way.

Can You Top This?

For children ages 5 to 7

Goal: Learning to take turns and work well with others, building language skills

What to Do:

With your child, make up a story for the two of you to tell together, taking turns saying one sentence at a time.

1. Begin by deciding on a topic of your choice, such as pirates.
2. Say the first sentence: “Once upon a time, a pirate lived in . . .”
3. Continue taking turns with your child, making up and telling parts of the story until you decide to end it.
4. Take turns beginning and finishing a story. Ask other family members and friends to join in.
5. Once this becomes easier, write the story down as it is told.

Listen!

For children ages 5 to 7

Goal: Listening to and giving directions; listening and speaking skills

What You Need:

- Any small object, such as a ball or a photograph
- Objects that can make noise, such as keys, water glasses, spoons, etc.

What to Do:

1. Hide a small object. Give your child step-by-step directions to find it such as, "Take five steps straight ahead. Turn right. Keep the table to your left. Bend down and look to the right." Next, have your child hide the object and give you directions to find it.
2. Have your child close his/her eyes. Use something to make a sound, such as rattling your keys, tapping a spoon against a glass, and so on. Ask your child to guess what's making the sound without looking.
3. Clap your hands to tap out a rhythm. Have your child listen and then clap that same rhythm back to you. Make the rhythms harder as time goes on.
4. Take a walk with your child. Find a place to sit for a few minutes and both close your eyes for 30 seconds. Tell each other what you hear. Maybe a baby crying, an airplane, a bird singing, cars on the street, leaves rustling, etc.

Author! Author!

For children ages 5 to 7

Goal: Reading and writing

What You Need:

- Pencils, crayons or markers
- Writing paper
- Cardboard or heavy paper
- Construction paper
- Safety scissors
- Yarn or ribbon

What to Do:

1. Write a story, poem, or letter with your child. Talk while writing, so that your child begins to understand the many uses of writing.
2. Hang a family message board in the kitchen or office. Offer to write notes there for your child to read.
3. Help your child write notes or e-mails to relatives and friends to thank them for gifts, say hello, or to share thoughts or events. Encourage the relatives and friends to answer your child so return messages can be read.
4. Ask questions that will help your child organize the stories, letters, etc. Answer questions about spelling and word use.
5. Help your child to turn writing into books. Paste drawings and writings on pieces of construction paper. For each book, have your child make a cover out of heavier paper, then add special art, a title, and his/her name as author. Punch holes in the pages and cover and bind the book together with yarn or ribbon.

Now You See It, Now You Don't

For children ages 5 to 7

Goal: Experience simple science experiments; try important science concepts such as predicting, observation, recording, note taking-journaling, comparing, etc.

What You Need:

- 2 ice cube trays
- Clock
- Small bowls
- Paper and pencil
- Water and other liquids, such as fruit juices

What to Do:

1. Give your child a pencil and paper and share that he/she will be acting as a scientist and taking notes about observations in some experiments.
2. Together with your child, fill one ice cube tray to the top with water.
3. Fill the second tray only half full.
4. Put both trays in the freezer.
5. Have your child record the time placed within the freezer. Have your child predict which one will freeze faster.
6. Tell your child to watch the clock and check every 30 minutes to see if the water in each tray has frozen (if not, wait until it has frozen).
7. Ask your child to write down how long it took the water in each tray to freeze.
8. Ask which amount of water froze faster? Tray 1 or tray 2? Check prediction.
9. Invite your child to explain why she/he thinks this happened.
10. Have your child take one ice cube from each tray and put them in separate bowls to melt.
11. Ask your child to write down which cube melts faster, the larger one or the smaller one.
12. Put one ice cube in a window and another in the refrigerator (not the freezer), and have your child write down how long they each take to melt.
13. Freeze samples of liquids such as different kinds of fruit juices. Have your child compare their freezing times to that of the water by repeating the process.

How Much Does It Weigh?

For children ages 5 to 7

Goal: Math and science; Observe, estimate, and weigh objects at home.

What You Need:

- Bathroom scale
- Objects to weigh, such bags of sugar, flour, potatoes or onions, boxes of cereal and cookies, shoes of different sizes, etc.
- Paper and pencil

What to Do:

1. Show your child two objects such as a five-pound bag of sugar and a ten-pound bag of potatoes.
2. Ask your child to guess which weighs the most and explain why.
3. Show your child how to use a scale to weigh the objects.
4. Have him/her record the weights of the two selected objects and compare. Which was heaviest? Lightest? Why? Difference?
5. Next show your child several objects and ask him/her to guess how much each weighs. Have your child write the estimates, then weigh the objects and compare again.
6. If you choose, have your child estimate his/her own weight, as well as that of other family members, and use the scale to check the estimates again.

Making Money**For children ages 7 to 9**

Goal: Learn about money and its value.

What You Need:

- Dice
- Pennies, nickels, dimes

What to Do:

1. Set an amount to reach (goal) in advance. For example, "We will try to get to 15 cents."
2. Have each player roll the dice and say the number.
3. Then give the player the same number of pennies that was rolled with the dice.
4. When a player gets five pennies, replace the pennies with a nickel.
5. When a player gets ten pennies, replace them with a dime.
6. The first player to reach the set amount/goal, 25 or 50 cents, for example, wins.

On the Go!**For children ages 7 to 9**

Goal: Social studies; Geography and navigation.

What You Need:

- Map of your area
- Paper & Pencil

What to Do:

1. Help your child learn to use a map to find a location and mark a route to a special place, such as his/her school, the park, the mall, or grandparents' house.

2. Teach your child about directions...is the route going north, south, east, or west. Trick: Remembering west and east directions=WE (Spells the word 'we')
3. What are the numbers and names of the roads, streets, etc.?
4. What things are being passed along the way?
5. Help your child figure out the distance to the selected place. Point out the key for this on the map.

My Own Time Line

For children ages 7 to 9

Goal: Use events in your own child's life to gain a sense of time and understand the order/sequence in which things happen.

What You Need:

- Shelf paper or roll paper
- Yardstick
- Pencils, markers, or crayons

What to Do:

1. Place a long piece of shelf paper or roll paper on the floor.
2. Have your child use a yardstick to draw a line that is three feet long. As you do so, talk about how to measure using inches and feet. Talk about how many inches = a foot; 12 inches=one foot
3. Talk with your child about the major important dates in her/his life such as the date of birth, first day of kindergarten, and so forth. Tell your child to write the dates on the line with the event in order. Invite her/him to add dates that are important for the whole family such as the day a baby brother or sister was born.

Example:

December 1, 2015	September 9, 2020	March 3, 2021
Born	First day of kindergarten	Baby sister born

Time Flies!

For children ages 9 to 11

Goal: Learn to plan; identify time.

What You Need:

- Paper and pencil
- Clock Calendar

What to Do:

1. Together with your child, write down estimates of how long it takes each of you to do certain tasks (such as getting ready for school or work in the morning, brushing teeth, or making toast).
2. Use a clock to time at least one of these tasks.
3. Determine how long it took. Talk about time.
4. Then take turns timing each other. (Be realistic because it's not a race. Keep it safe.)
5. How much time did it take? Compare.
6. Talk with your child about what part of a job can be done ahead of time, such as deciding at bedtime what to wear to school the next day or what to eat for breakfast.

Help Wanted!**For children ages 9 to 11**

Goal: Develop a sense for career and college readiness.

What You Need:

- Pencil and paper
- Newspaper or online help-wanted ads

What to Do:

1. Talk with your child about what he/she wants to be and do in the future. Ask, for example, "What job do you think you'd like to do when you get out of school? What kind of education or training do you think you'll need to get this job?"
2. Suggest that your child pick two to three well-known adults he or she knows, such as neighbors or relatives, to talk with briefly about their jobs. (Short interviews)
3. Help your child to think of at least three questions to ask of them. Have your child write the questions, leaving space for the answers. Here are some sample questions: What is your job? How long have you had it? Do you like it? Did you need to go to college to get your job? Did you have to have any special training? What kind of classes do I need to take in high school for a job like yours?
4. After the interviews, talk with your child about what he/she learned.
5. Next, show your child the newspaper or online help wanted ads. Have your child find ads for three jobs that he/she might want to have in the future.
6. Have your child read aloud the requirements for those jobs and talk with him/her about the skills, education, and training he/she would need to have to do the work.
7. Talk about how your child might plan on working towards those preferred jobs-careers.

TV Time (BUT with *LEARNING*)

For children ages 9 to 11

Goal: Make watching television educational for your child; Geography, biography, etc.

What You Need:

- TV set
- World map
- Reference books (or online Web news, biography, and geography sites)

What to Do:

1. Place a world map next to the TV set.
2. Arrange to watch appropriate TV news or educational programs with your child.
3. After the programs, have your child use the map to find world news or geographical spots.
4. Have your child then use reference books such encyclopedias or appropriate online websites to find out more information about a story, country, or person in the news or programs you viewed.

Homework Made Easier

For children ages 9 to 11

Goal: Creating a homework chart; Planning

What You Need:

- Poster board or large sheet of sturdy paper
- Marker, pen, or pencil
- Clock

What to Do:

1. Help your child to create a homework chart like the following out of a large piece of sturdy paper:

Subject	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Reading					
Math					
Science					
Social Studies					

2. Depending on how many subjects your child has, she/he may be able to put three or four weeks on each piece of paper.
3. Help him/her to attach a colored marker or pen to the chart so that it is always handy.

4. After school each day, have your child put a circle in each box in which there is a homework assignment.
5. Check off the circle when you have seen that the homework is completed.
6. Tell your child to try to figure out how long it will take her/him to complete each homework assignment so that she/he will be able to schedule the appropriate time.
7. Praise homework completion.