McHenry Elementary School District 15

Kindergarten Readiness Guidebook

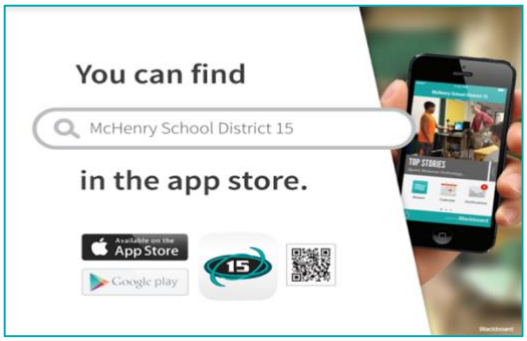
"The more that you read, the more things you will know. The more that you learn, the more places you'll go." – Dr. Seuss

WELCOME TO KINDERGARTEN

The entire District 15 staff extends a warm welcome to you and your child! The kindergarten year is extremely important in providing your child with a solid foundation upon which to build future years in school.

In addition to being an important year, it's a very special year. It marks one of the milestones in a person's life. The first day of school is always remembered by family and friends. There is usually a tear or two "on both sides of the fence." The school staff is very experienced in assisting you and your child on that exciting day.

Stay Informed



McHenry District 15 has an integrated App for mobile devices and is available for FREE download and use! Please take the time today to download the D15 app to your iPhone, Android, or Tablet and explore all of our mobile content. This app features timely notifications, emergency closings, trending news updates, important resource sharing and much more!

District 15 is also heavily involved on many different social media platforms. We have a district Facebook, Twitter and Instagram account. Each school also has their own social media pages. Please "Like" or "Follow" our social media pages by following this link: https://www.d15.org/families/social-media

Be Prepared

How to Prepare for Lunch: At District 15, a parent may place money in a prepaid account for student lunches. In order to prepay for student lunch accounts, a parent MUST enter Family Access and then Revtrak. For more information on how to make a lunch payment please visit: https://www.d15.org/departments/food-services

Lunch and breakfast menus will be sent home monthly with your child. They are also available on our district website, located under the Food Services Department: https://www.d15.org/departments/food-services/menus

For specific information regarding attendance, transportation, grades, health services and more, please refer to the district handbook: https://www.d15.org/families/student-handbook

Supply Lists

School supply lists are available in the school offices and on our district website at: https://www.d15.org/families/school-supply-lists

Regular School Days

Edgebrook: 8:35AM – 3:15PM
Hilltop: 8:35AM – 3:15PM
Riverwood: 9:10AM – 3:50PM
Valley View: 9:10AM – 3:50PM

School Improvement Planning/ Early Release Days

Edgebrook: 8:35AM – 1:35PM
Hilltop: 8:35AM – 1:35PM
Riverwood: 9:10AM – 2:10PM
Valley View: 9:10AM – 2:10PM

Teacher In-service/Half-Days

Edgebrook: 8:35AM – 11:20AM
Hilltop: 8:35AM – 11:20AM
Riverwood: 9:10AM – 11:55AM
Valley View: 9:10AM – 11:55AM

District 15 and School Websites

District: **https://www.d15.org/**
Edgebrook: **https://edgebrook.d15.org/**
Hilltop: **https://hilltop.d15.org/**
Riverwood: **https://riverwood.d15.org/**
Valley View: **https://valleyview.d15.org/**

KINDERGARTEN SCHOOL DIRECTORY

Central Administration Office
420 N. Front St.
McHenry, IL 60050
(779) 244-1000
Email: info@d15.org

Edgebrook School
701 N. Green St
McHenry, IL 60050
(779) 244-1200
Email: officeeb@d15.org

Hilltop School
2615 W. Lincoln Road
McHenry, IL 60051 (779)
244-1300
Email: officeht@d15.org

Riverwood School
300 S. Driftwood Trail
McHenry, IL 60050
(779) 244-1400
Email: officerw@d15.org

Valley View School
6515 W. Route 120
McHenry, IL 60050
(779) 244-1500
Email: officevv@d15.org

Transportation Department
5805 W. Route 120
McHenry, IL 60050
(815) 385-6622
Email: officetr@d15.org

Summer Learning Activities

"Everything you don't know, is something you can learn!"

Investigate Together

How does rain get into the clouds? How do fish breathe under water? Young children love to investigate and find their own answers to their questions about the world. Encouraging your child's exploration and wonder helps build a strong foundation for early learning.

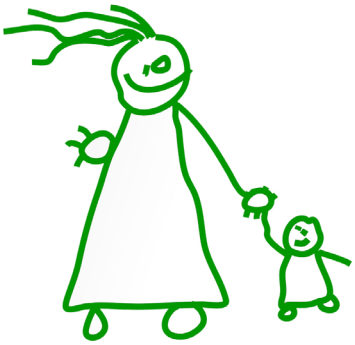
Go explore!

Young children love to explore the world around them. Encourage your child to use his senses to explore. Young children learn best by talking about their first-hand experiences.

Keep the questions coming

Encourage your child's questions. Help her think about where she can find out what she wants to know. Help your child discover there are many ways to find out answers, such as reading books, searching the Internet, asking experts, and observing the world.

Track your discoveries



Write down your child's ideas and observations. Show her that writing and words are tools for sharing information. Encourage your child to draw pictures of what she sees and what she remembers from different experiences and places.

Numbers are tools for discovery

Help your child count, classify, and measure things using numbers. Help him learn that numbers and math are tools for discovering the world. For example, help him sort out different shapes of blocks and count how many of each kind.

KIDS Approaches to Learning: Regulation 1 – Curiosity and Initiative in Learning

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Feelings Are Fantastic

Young children are learning to manage their feelings and behavior. They are learning the words to express their feelings and how to show feelings in appropriate ways. Here are some ways you can help them to be successful as they learn these important skills.

Happy, sad, or mad?

Help children learn their feelings have names. Use words such as *happy, sad, angry, frustrated, jealous, embarrassed*, or *lonely*. For example, say, "You look like you feel sad that you don't have a toy dinosaur like Sarah's. People call the feeling being jealous. Is that how you feel?"

Show how to share feelings

Young children learn appropriate ways to share feelings from those around them. Encourage children to use words to name their feelings. Let them hear you use words to talk about your feelings. "I was so frustrated this morning when I couldn't find my keys."

Describe behavior you want to see

Try to describe things children can do rather than telling them what they cannot do. For example, you can talk about using "gentle hands" when touching pets. Point out appropriate behavior. Say, "I see you are being careful not to knock things off the shelves as we walk through the store."

We all have feelings

Let children know that all feelings are OK to have and talk about. Remind them that it is not OK to hurt others' bodies or feelings or to destroy property. Use what you see in books or videos to teach about emotions. "Look at that little boy's smile! He is so happy to see his new puppy."

KIDS Approaches to Learning: Regulation 2 – Self-Control of Feelings and Behavior

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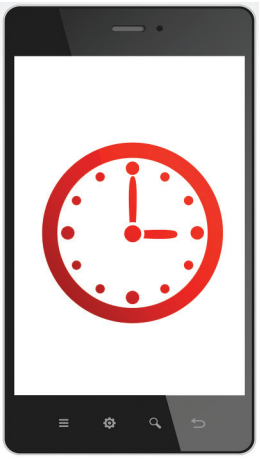
Keep Up the Good Work

Sometimes it is hard to get a job done. Young children are learning to stick with tough jobs and to keep trying even when a task is hard to do. Here are some ways you can help them stay with tasks and try hard to complete them even when the job is tough.

Break it down

Help your child break down a big task into a smaller one. When your child is overwhelmed by a big task, you can say, "We can clean up one thing at a time. Let's clean up the blocks and then we can clean up the toy cars."



Set a timer

Some tasks are overwhelming because your child thinks it will take a long time. Encourage your child to try a difficult task for a short time and then take a break. Say to her, "Let's try putting your clothes away for five minutes. We can go and draw pictures when the timer rings."

Remember successes

Tell stories about times when your child worked hard to accomplish something. Say to her, "Remember when you could not write a letter? You looked carefully at the letters in your name and practiced making those shapes. Now you can write your whole name! Soon you will write a whole sentence."

Try it as a team

Encourage your child to work with others. Teamwork makes tasks easier. Say, "Let's see if we can work with your sister to rake all the leaves in the yard." Or, "Let's put out the spoons while your brother puts out the bowls for our cereal."

KIDS Approaches to Learning: Regulation 3 – Engagement and Persistence

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Talk, Listen, and Learn

Young children are developing their ability to express themselves through language. You can help your child build vocabulary and conversation skills by talking together.

Talk about your daily routine

Say, "Let's think of all the things we will do today. First, we will eat breakfast. Next, we will put on our coats, and then we will walk to the bus stop." Encourage your child to tell you what will happen first, second, and third.

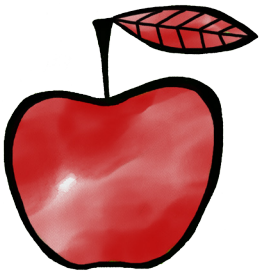
Read together

Encourage your child to describe pictures in books and magazines. Say, "Tell me what you see in the picture." Repeat what your child says and expand on her ideas. Say, "Yes, I see the tiger in the picture, too! That tiger has orange and black stripes on her fur."

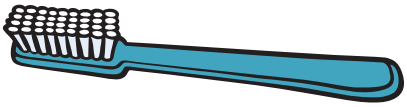
Encourage descriptions

Look around and encourage your child to describe the things he sees. Say, "Tell me about the pictures on that store window," or "Tell me about the sounds of nature you hear. Do you hear the wind rustle or the birds chirping?"

Build vocabulary



Expand your child's knowledge of descriptive words. Say, "This apple is *crunchy* on my teeth and the skin is *shiny*," or "The toothbrush bristles feel *prickly* on my tongue."



KIDS Language and Literacy Development 3 – Communication and Use of Language (Expressive)

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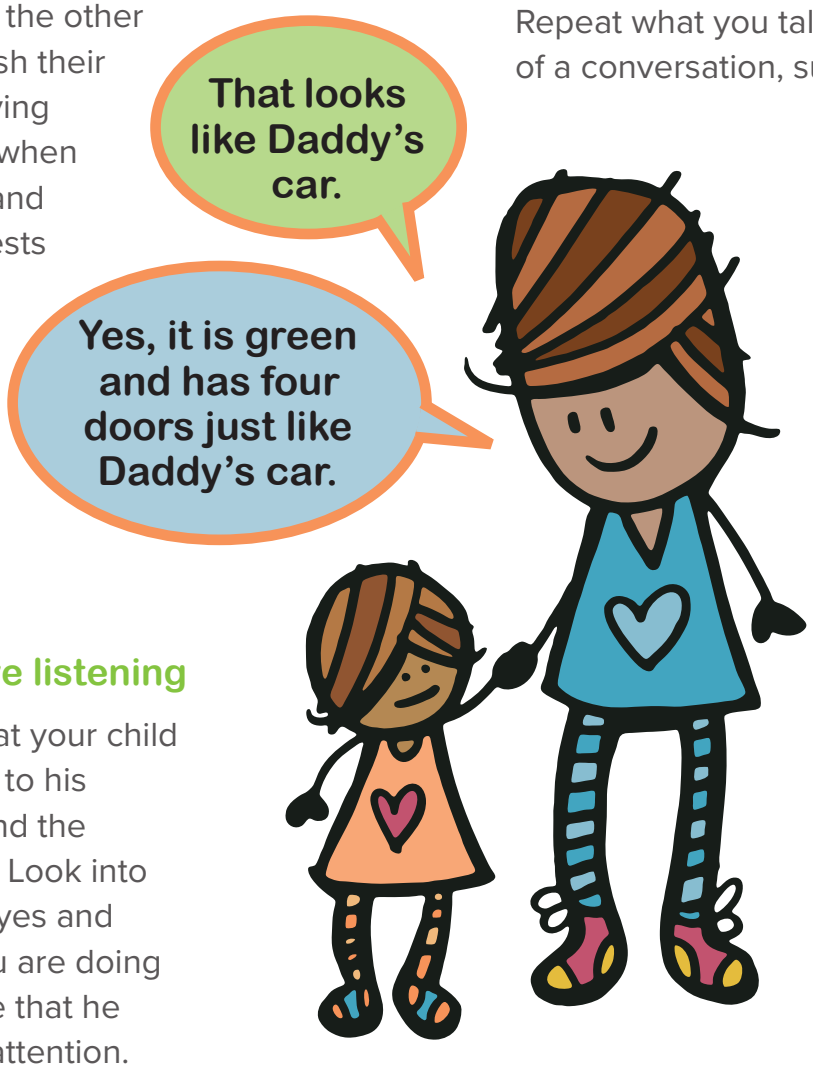
Talk Together

Everyday conversations are opportunities to help your child learn new words. Talking with you each day provides time to practice good manners. Talking together about the world around you builds your child's listening and speaking skills.

Explain the rules for polite conversations

Talk about manners people expect, such as waiting for the other person to finish their sentence, saying "Excuse me" when interrupting, and making requests using the words such as *please* and *thank you*.



Stay on topic

Help your child expand her ideas on a topic by asking follow-up questions. Repeat what you talked about at the end of a conversation, such as "We talked about so many ideas about the zoo during lunch today. You remembered seeing elephants, lions, and penguins at the zoo."

Model active listening

Rephrase what your child says and add to his ideas to extend the conversation. Look into your child's eyes and stop what you are doing so he can see that he has your full attention. Help your child learn to take turns and listen to others' ideas.

Encourage good listening

Encourage your child by pointing out ways to help someone know that they are listening carefully, such as standing or sitting still and making eye contact with the speaker. Encourage her to ask her friends questions and then listen to their ideas.

KIDS Language and Literacy Development 4 – Reciprocal Communication and Conversation

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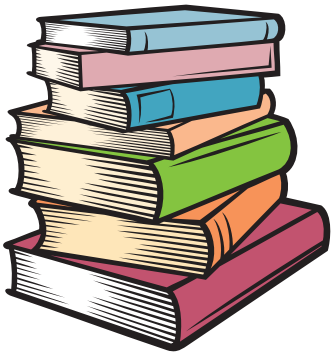
Read and Write Together

Understanding stories and information that is read aloud is an important skill for young children. Make time to read aloud with your child and talk together about the stories and information you read.

Find new books



Travel to your local library and explore the storybooks and informational books. Children can learn from a wide variety of books.

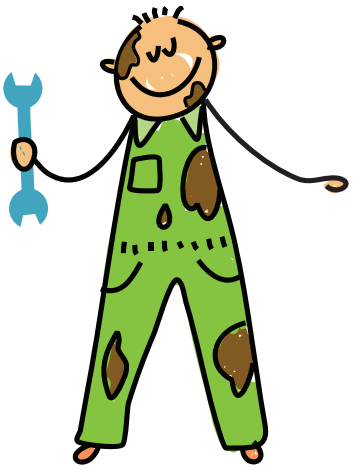
Ask questions as you read

Ask your child what she sees in the pictures. Encourage her predict what might happen next. Ask her why she thinks a character might act in a certain way.

Read stories again and again!

Encourage your child to retell you the story from the pictures. This helps your child recall the important parts of the story and understand the main ideas.

Make your own books



Write down your child's ideas about drawings he has made. Fold and staple those drawings to make a book. By hearing his own words read aloud, he learns that the printed text communicates the meaning of his ideas.

KIDS Language and Literacy Development 6 – Comprehension of Age-Appropriate Text

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Learning by Listening to Language

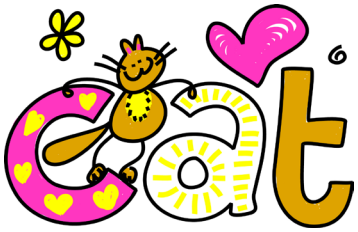
Exploring the sounds of language is an important part of learning how to read and write. Spend time listening, talking, and reading together to build your child's skills and confidence. These games will help your child begin to demonstrate an understanding of spoken words, syllables, and sounds.

Play a game of "I Spy"

Say, "I see something in the room that starts with a b...b...b... letter B." See if your child can guess the object: b...b...b... ball!

Sing favorite songs together

Listen for rhyming words, make up new verses, and write down your favorites. Try singing, "Baa baa black sheep, have you any *wool*. Yes sir, yes sir, three bags *full*." Ask your child to listen for the words that rhyme. *Wool* and *full*! Can you think of another idea? How about, "Meow, meow, kitty cat, have you any *mice*? No ma'am, no ma'am, but a couple would be *nice*!"



Rhyme time!

Say, "Do you see the cat? Help me think of rhymes! He's sitting on a mat and talking to the rat." Then repeat the rhyming words, "Cat, mat, rat!" Make up silly rhymes such as "apple, bapple, zapple, dapple."

Stretch out the sounds of simple words

Say, "I see a dog. D O G. It starts with a 'D' sound and ends with a 'G' sound. The 'O' sound is in the middle. D O G." Try spelling the word together.

Talk about the words you see around you

"I see letters on that sign. Let's figure out what it says. O P E N. Let's put them together." Say the sounds and words slowly: " 'O' ... saying the sound in its name. 'P' popping on my lips. ... 'E' saying 'eh' like elephant. ... 'N' saying the last sound. O P E N. The store is open! We figured it out!"

KIDS Language and Literacy Development 8 – Phonological Awareness

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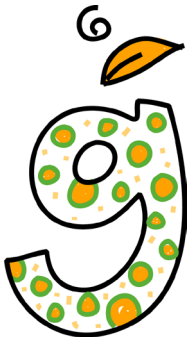
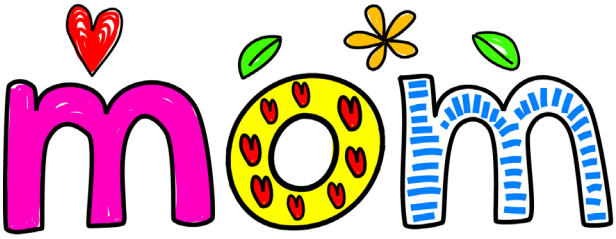
Discover Letters and Words

Letters and words are all around! Explore the world of words with your child as you are out and about. You are helping your child develop early reading skills as you talk to your child about the words you see all around you.

Go on a letter hunt

Choose one letter and find as many as you can of the same letter. Try copying the letters you find on paper.





Play a name game

Names are powerful words because they represent special people in your child's life. Practice writing the names of people who are important to your child.

Talk about letter sounds

Talk about letters as the building blocks of words. Identify the first, middle, and last letters. Figure out simple words together by helping your child make each letter sound individually in sequence.

Point out words in print

Talk about spaces, punctuation, and uppercase/ lowercase letters. Your child will learn about how words are printed.

Find letters in the neighborhood

Point out road signs and the sports and store logos you see as you drive around your town or neighborhood. Help your child see that these icons can provide information.

KIDS Language and Literacy Development 9 – Letter and Word Knowledge

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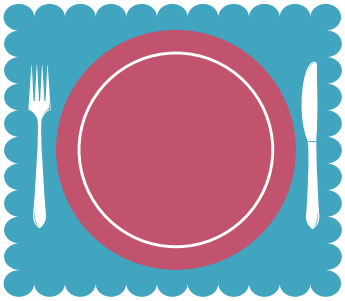
Sorting, Classifying, and Organizing

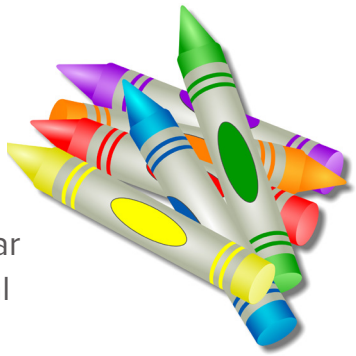
Sorting and organizing things into sets and groups is an important math skill for young children to develop. Have fun exploring your world while you practice these skills. Children can classify objects, ideas, sounds, smells, or flavors into groups of like items.

Sort during cleanup



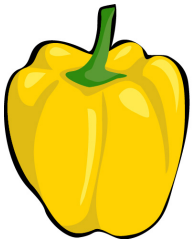
Sort the socks, shirts, and pants during laundry time. Organize spoons, forks, and dull knives in a basket when putting away clean dishes. Decide which drawer, basket, or closet is the right place for each item.

Create collections!

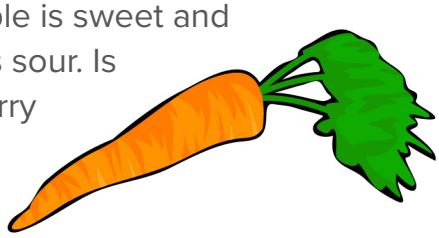


Children can use egg cartons or sheets of paper with two or more sections for grouping similar things. Use natural objects such as rocks, sticks, or pinecones that you find outdoors. Small objects such as coins, crayons, or stickers that you find around the house are also good for sorting.

Group foods



Talk about groups of different kinds of foods during meals. Classify food by type, color, texture, and flavor. For example, say "the corn and bell pepper are both yellow. Is the carrot yellow or a different color?" Or "The apple is sweet and the lemon is sour. Is the strawberry sweet or sour?"



Talk about attributes

Ask about the attributes of people and pets around you. Who is wearing shoes and who is wearing boots? Who has shoes with laces and who has shoes without laces? Who has gloves and who has mittens? Who has fur and who has feathers? Who has a red shirt and who has a different color shirt?

KIDS Cognition: Math 1 – Classification

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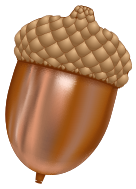
Counting Up, Down, and All Around!

Understanding how much or how many is an important skill for young children to develop. Help your child learn about number quantities by exploring the mathematical world around you! Here are some ideas to get you started.

How many are in my hand?



Find a bucket of small toys, rocks, acorns, or other tiny items. Take a handful and then have her look and guess how many pieces are in your hand. Count and check to see how close her guess is.

Count during everyday routines

Say, "I wonder how long it will take you to put your socks on." Then count aloud to model the number words (1, 2, 3, 4, etc.). Then ask your child to count how long it takes to put your socks on. Try counting numbers up to 20 (1-2-3-4, etc.) or counting down (10-9-8-7, etc.).

Practice counting

Have a real or pretend tea party and make sure each guest gets one napkin, plate, cup, and spoon. Also, if you give everyone a cupcake, how many will you need?

Create collections of items

Count out groups of small objects such as pinecones, pebbles, or pennies. Label your collection with the numeral indicating the quantity. Count items into compartments of an egg carton or containers labeled with numbers.

Notice numbers in nature

Sometimes we find things that have the same number of parts. A certain flower may always have six petals. Leaves may be attached in groups of three on trees. Dogs and cats have four legs. Some fruits, such as watermelon and apples, have many seeds. Other fruits, such as plums and apricots, have just one.

KIDS Cognition: Math 2 – Number Sense of Quantity

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Making Sense of Numbers

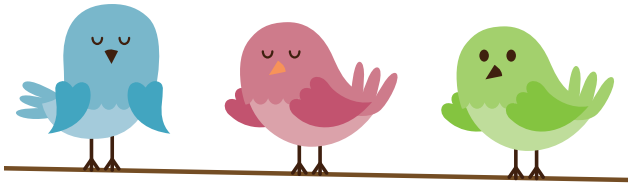
Learning how numbers can be added, subtracted, multiplied, and divided is important for young children. Help your child discover the mathematical world by finding opportunities to bring numbers into conversations and play.

Add them up!

When playing with tiny toys such as marbles or small blocks, have your child take two handfuls. Count how many pieces are in each hand. Have your child hold her hands together and figure out how many she has all together.

Count them down!

How many are in the bowl? Encourage your child to count the number of pieces in her bowl when you are eating foods such as pretzels, grapes, or crackers. Stop and recount after she eats a few pieces. Figure out how many are left in the bowl.



Find number groups

Talk about what you see. Say, "I see three birds on the fence and each bird has two wings—there are six wings. I see two cars and each car has four wheels—that's eight wheels all together."

Divvy them up!

Help your child create equal shares for each person when you are playing with toys or creating with art materials. Give each person one piece at a time. When all the pieces are gone, have each person count to see how many are in his share.

KIDS Cognition: Math 3 – Number Sense of Math Operations

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Discover Shapes in Many Places

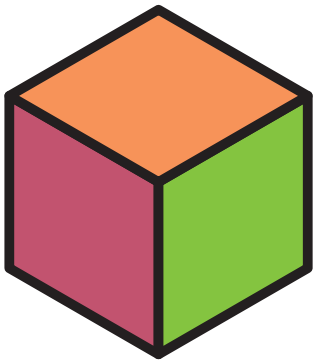
Young children love to find shapes all around them. Understanding shapes is an important mathematical skill for young children to develop. Here are some ways you can help your child learn about shapes and to talk about and work with them in meaningful ways.

Point out familiar shapes

Talk about common two-dimensional shapes such as circles, squares, and triangles and three-dimensional shapes such as balls, cubes, and cones. Name the shapes children often see in nature, their home, and around their neighborhood.

Explore new dimensions

Introduce words for three-dimensional shapes. Talk about how a can has a round flat circle on top but the whole shape is called a cylinder. Show children one side of a block that has the shape of a square and explain that the whole shape is called a cube.



Expand their vocabulary about shapes

Use words that help children describe shapes accurately. Some words to include are *side, solid, surface, point, straight, curve, inside, flat, top,* and *angle*.

Explore the concept of shapes

Playing board games, participating in sports, building with blocks, and creating with recycled materials are all opportunities for children to problem solve with and talk about shapes.

KIDS Cognition: Math 6 – Shapes

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Supporting Adult-Child Relationships

Young children thrive when the adults around them show they care. Young children learn they have value and develop a sense of self-worth through warm interactions with primary caregivers. Your children learn from your words and actions whenever they are with you.

Playtime is practice time

Your child practices social and communication skills during playtime by learning to share ideas, take turns, and express emotions. As you play, demonstrate kindness, thoughtfulness, and working together to solve problems.

Build connections

Encourage your child's connections with relatives, neighbors, child care providers, and teachers. He will turn to these safe adults for help when he has a problem. Say, "This is such a nice drawing. I think Uncle Joe would like it. Let's send it to him."

Set a good example

Your child learns how to treat people kindly by watching you. Show your child cooperative and kind behaviors when you interact with other adults. He notices when you say "Thank you" when a cashier hands you change or when you say "Excuse me" to the stock clerk in the grocery store when you need help finding an item.

Use appropriate language

Explain appropriate ways to talk to adults. Teach your child to use kind words and polite manners. Your child notices your tone of voice and body language. This includes using appropriate ways to address people such as calling the dentist "Dr. Patel" or calling a neighbor "Mrs. Jones" if that is how she prefers to be addressed.

KIDS Social and Emotional Development 3 – Relationships and Social Interactions with Familiar Adults

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Work and Play Together

Children need to be able to work and play with other children who may have different ideas, experiences, or characteristics. Making and keeping friends are important skills for children to learn. Here are some ways you can help your child learn to get along with others.

Set a good example

Your child learns how to treat people kindly by watching you. Show your child cooperative and kind behaviors when you interact with other people.

Talk about what kind friends do

Explain taking turns and sharing. Stay close by to help children with sharing and taking turns. Provide encouragement for these types of behavior.

Provide opportunities to play

Your child can learn friendship skills by playing with cousins, neighbors, classmates, and siblings. Encourage playtime activities in which children work together. Children learn as they pretend, build, and talk together.

Teach them to talk it through

Help your child talk through problems with other children. Encourage her to share her feelings and to listen to other people's feelings. Explain that the way she feels about a problem may be different from the way another person may feel.

KIDS Social and Emotional Development 4 – Relationships and Social Interactions with Peers

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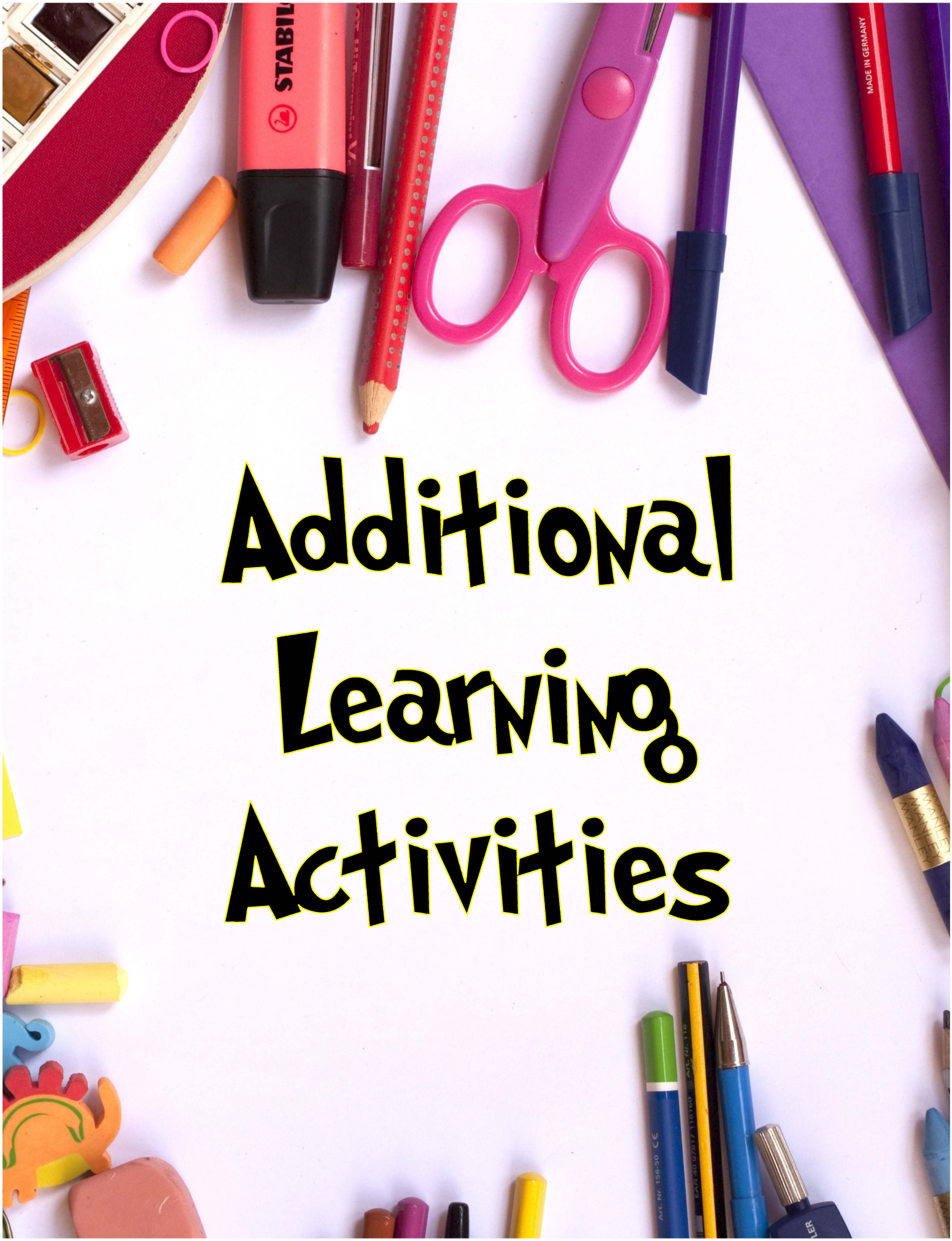

Additional Learning Activities

Activities for Stimulating Language Development

- Let your child talk to a grandparent or a friend on the phone.
- Make a puppet out of socks, fabric, and/or your child's hand. Let your child talk for the puppet and make up stories to tell you or friends.
- Encourage retelling and memorization of some common nursery rhymes, chants or songs, such as
  - Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star
  - I'm a Little Teapot
  - Farmer in the Dell
  - Yankee Doodle
  - Row, Row, Row Your Boat
  - Alphabet Song (make sure the phrase with L-M-N-O-P is clearly divided.)
  - Old Mac Donald Had a Farm
  - Here We Go 'Round the Mulberry Bush
  - Baa, Baa Black Sheep
  - Itsy, Bitsy Spider
- Tell or read stories daily. Encourage your child to tell them back to you. If your child has trouble, use questions to help them remember
- Have your child repeat a short sentence or nonsense verse. Take turns.
- Using a cardboard tube from an empty towel roll, whisper a short phrase or silly saying to you child and see if she can repeat it – take turns or get 3 or 4 people with tubes to "pass it on"
- Gradually try to increase the time you child can pay attention to listening games or stories. By school age, a child should attend for 10 minutes.
- Ask "why" questions while you look at pictures or a catalog. Let your child tell you why a house has doors, windows, etc.
- Ask other "wh" questions – who, what, when, where – as you read, ride or wait.
- While you're reading a favorite story, stop and ask "What happens next?"
- Explore the concepts of opposites with you child such as big and little, up and down, hot and cold, work and play, walk and run, dark and light, soft and hard, happy and sad.
- Sort out old magazines your child can keep in a box or drawer. Let your child describe the pictures or make up stories about them. Include pictures of objects your child has difficulty naming. Take several out at a time, you name all of them first, then take turns helping as needed.
- Pretend you're going to the store. Say "I'm going to the store to buy milk." Have your child repeat that… then add an item, such as "I'm going to the store to by milk and bread." You then repeat and add another item. See how many your child can remember.
- Let your child finish sentences such as: I like to eat … I like to go … I know how to … Birds can … Dogs eat …
- Encourage your child to talk in complete sentences. Don't always accept one and two word responses or phrases.
- On a trip to the store, take a few minutes out from shopping to look at new things and describe how or why they're used. On the way home, let your child tell you about the new things she's discovered. Retell to the family later that day.

- When you are reading to your child and come to a word unfamiliar to them, repeat it and have your child say it. Find other opportunities to repeat and use the new word. Ask your child questions so she can use the new word.
- Be a good speech model. Keep your own speech slow and easy to understand. Let your child hear talking that is easy to copy.
- Pay attention when your child talks to you. Stop for a minute to listen – it won't take long.
- Don't interrupt your child when they talk or complete your child's sentences.
- Work on extending conversation.
- Don't talk about talking – rather demonstrate better speech; when your child says, "I runned" answer "Yes, I saw how you ran."
- Continue to praise and reward speech and language efforts, even if it is not always fluent.

Activities for Stimulating Motor Development

- Sing songs such as "Head, Shoulders, Knees, and Toes" and help your child point to the parts as you sing.
- Trace the child on the sidewalk with sidewalk chalk. Have them tell you the parts as the chalk goes by. Locate and name the parts after you are done tracing.
- Have your child rub different textured materials on their hands, elbows, knees, and other body parts. Vary the material with something soft, hard, smooth, rough, warm, cold, etc. Describe how the texture feels.
- Cut pairs of fabric into squares. Put 3 or 4 pairs in a bag or box and shake it up. Let the child find the matching textures by feel only, without looking.
- Place common objects in a bag and let the child guess what each one is only by touch. Have them try to name it before looking. Have them locate the object you name by feel alone.
- Have your child get onto hands and knees – pretend to be a table – and see if they can stay in position while you try to shake and wiggle the "table". Try this with the child on three "points", one hand and both knees or both hands and one knee. Try to bump your child off balance with a pillow or a teddy bear.
- Have your child crawl or walk on their knees while they balance a beanbag on their head or shoulder or extended arm. Try that while balancing a marble in a spoon.
- Place pieces of paper out in a line or pattern, like stepping stones, and have your child walk, hop, or jump from stepping stone to stone without falling off.
- Have child practice walking on a rope with their shoes off. Then try with eyes closed.
- Try walking forward, backward, or sideways on a taped line.
- Play catch while kneeling on one or both knees.
- Have child crawl by pulling his whole body forward on elbows or using the whole arm, and not bending the elbow. Have you child crab walk. Lie with back on floor. Lift body up on hands and feet and try to walk in any direction.
- Have two children sit on floor, feet together. Hold hands or hold a towel between them and pull back and forth.
- Have your child do a wheelbarrow walk. You lift their feet while the child walks forward on their hands.

- Toss beanbags under hand into empty cans lined up in a straight line at varying distances. If this is too hard use a large wastebasket or box at first.
- Make two rackets from old coat hangers and old nylons. Then play “tennis” with a balloon or Nerf ball.
- Try a kangaroo hop. Have your child crouch with fingers on the floor between their knees. Jump up and forward, stretching the body. Land in a crouch and jump again. Try this following a specific path.
- Try an inchworm walk, where the child has their hands and feet on the floor, knees straight. The child walks with tiny steps until their feet are near their hands. Then they walk their hands forward and repeat with their feet.
- Try the giraffe walk. With arms stretched overhead, clasp hands together to form the giraffe’s head and neck. Walk on tiptoes.
- Play “Simon Says” or “Mother May I” giving directions for large muscle movements, such as “Hop three times” or “Hop on one foot”.
- Place two pieces of string side by side on the floor to form the banks of a river. Have your child jump back and forth, and then move the strings to form a wider river.
- Let the child place spring clothespins around the edge of a box.
- Mold non-hardening clay or play-dough into a variety of shapes, roll it out and use cookie cutters. Cover the table with a plastic cloth for easy cleanup.
- Have the child unscrew and replace the lids on various old plastic bottles, jars, and lids. Make it a game by hiding favorite small toys in them.
- Save a variety of nuts and bolts. Let your child screw and unscrew these.
- Punch holes in a large plastic lid, cardboard, or stiff paper. Let your child sew a design on it with a long shoe lace. Let your child sew on burlap or loosely woven material using yarn and blunt needle.
- Let your child copy a simple design you make. Then you can draw more complex designs with a thick highlighter and have your child trace the design.
- Finger paint in the bathtub for easy cleanup. Finger paint with colored soap at bath time.
- Make hand puppets from a lunch bag or sock.
- Let the child rip colored paper into small shapes and paste them onto larger paper to create a picture. Or cut the squares with scissors.
- Use old newspapers to cut out comic strips and your child can create their own stories. Practice snipping along the edges of the newspaper.
- Have your child pretend to be an animal and move appropriately to different kinds of music.
- Set up an obstacle course in the house and have your child follow you or another child behind the couch, under the table, between two chairs, around the lamp, etc.
- Have the child imitate your movements. Try swinging arms, stretching arms or legs, wiggle fingers or toes, stand on tiptoe lean right or left, or forward or backward. Change the speed of the movements, going very rapidly or in slow motion.
- Have your child log roll with arms and legs extended. Try to roll the length of the room without going crooked. Roll in the grass on a hill. Roll up in a blanket and back out again.
- After big exercises, try a relaxation exercise to calm down. Have your child pretend to be a rag doll lying on the floor, and test the arms to make sure they are ‘floppy”. Practice slow breathing by having your child make their tummy like a balloon and fill or empty the balloon slowly. Pretend to be melting slowly like an ice cream cone – first the toes, then the legs, torso, hands, etc. Slow rocking in a rocking chair with Mom or Dad is a great relaxing exercise for both you and your child.

Activities for Pre-Academic Skill Development

- Choose a shape, such as a circle. Draw it on paper and put it on the refrigerator or tape it up on a wall. Talk about its name and have your child name it when they walk by. Locate things in your house, outside, or when running errands that are the same shape, such as a ball, plate, button, etc. Choose a second and third shape and repeat the same steps above.
- Use more than three sizes of balls or cans and help your child arrange them from smallest to biggest, shortest to tallest, lightest to heaviest, roughest to smoothest, most in a group to least in a group, etc.
- Count items you run across, such as fingers, stairs, cookies, blocks, silverware, etc. Talk about how many "one more" would be. Divide items into two groups. Discuss with your child, "which group is more? What if I add more to this group? Now which is more? What if I take some away?"
- Have your child find numerals on signs or in magazines and newspapers and then match the name "three" with the symbol "3".
- Practice counting one number for one item. Once that is mastered up to 10, make cards with a symbol such as "3" on one side and three dots on the other side. Let your child practice reading the symbol and dot side.
- Let your child sort a mixed assortment of various colors or into piles. Start with one variable first, such as all of the forks or all of the yellow things. Add a second variable when appropriate, such as the yellow circles from the yellow squares.
- Discuss categorizing by identifying a couch, a chair, a bed, etc. as "furniture" and a shirt, pants, socks etc. as "clothes". Then turn the job around and have the child bring you three or four food items or toys.
- Let your child choose a favorite toy, and then hide it. When you find it, use terms such as "it was under (on, behind, in front of, next to, between) the chairs". Reverse jobs and let your child find and tell you where the toy is.
- Use spatial terms when directing your child where to place an item. "Put the book <u>under</u> the pillow. Put the plate <u>in front of</u> the glass."
- Read a favorite story to your child and let them retell it to you. When reading a new story, ask your child questions about what she heard after the story is finished.
- Let your child follow a two or three step direction such as "Get me the book. Then put it on your bed." Be creative and have fun doing silly things such as "Put your shoes on your hands, jump backwards, and then give me a hug!"
- If your child shows interest in writing and has the fine motor control to be successful, allow them to trace over the letters in their name on a model you write. Make you example large with letters at least 2-3 inches high. Use the name your child will use in school, beginning with one capital letter and the rest of the letters should be lower case. When your child can trace over letters with fair accuracy, let her practice writing on their own from a model you write on their paper to copy. Do not require your child to place the letters on a line yet. Use unlined paper.
- Have your child look for the letters of their name in newspaper headlines, in books, on cereal boxes, etc. Once they have mastered the letters in their name, move on to other letters.

Activities for Stimulating Social and Personal Development

By age five, most children:

- Stay in prescribed bounds – generally
- Refrain from arguing
- Prefer group play
- Refrain from bossing and criticizing
- Spread with a knife, with partial success
- Refrain from showing off
- Wash and dry face – well
- Dress self, except tying shoes, without supervision
- Replace toys, after playing
- Button small buttons
- Tie shoes – with supervision
- Use knife, fork, and spoon – well

To help develop these skills, try these activities:

- Place a chart on the bathroom door. Include a few tasks to be practice, such as washing face and hands or brushing teeth. Reward with a smiley face on the chart when jobs are done satisfactorily.
- Practice dressing skills by playing "dress up" with a collection of old clothes, hats, shoes, etc. When your child is decked out in an outfit, take a few minutes to role play or pretend.
- Practice washing skills with an old doll or scrub a toy used for outside play that is dirty.
- Furnish a stool near the sink and mirror so your child can see to practice washing face or brushing teeth.
- Organize the child's room so your child can reach drawers, shelves, and toy box. Explain where things go and work with your child a few minutes daily to keep clothes and toys in their place.
- As you're cooking, let your child bring you items you've set out on the counter. Help the "little cook" measure and add ingredients – and be the official taster of completed projects.
- Give your child their own garbage bag to help pick weeds, or a rake their size to help you rake leaves.
- Ask your child to sort laundry by color or texture. "All white things go here. All the towels go there. Put all the socks in the basket for me."
- Let your child practice sweeping the sidewalk or shoveling the snow from a play area. Make sure the child's tools fit their age and size.
- Practice saying the child's name and address. This gives them personal satisfaction and is very helpful if they become lost. It takes lots of time to learn, but is worth the peace of mind.
- Draw a house and write the address on it. Draw a telephone and write the phone number on it.
- Pretend you're lost and let you child take you home or tell you where to turn to find the way as you drive home from a familiar place.