LOWELL SCHOOL
Educational Excellence Redesigned

Summer Learning: Rising Two- and Three-Year-Olds

Opportunities for Reinforcement

- Social-Emotional
    - **Encourage your child to try new things:** Try sensory activities like cooking together, making slime/play dough, playing in the sand, making mud, or digging in the dirt/gardening.
    - **Give your child opportunities to play with other children their age:** Have play dates with neighborhood children and/or future classmates at a local park or in your backyard. Go to the library for weekly story time or to check out books.
    - **Establish daily routines:** Take pictures of daily activities (e.g., outside time, snack time, play time, potty breaks, lunch, rest time, etc.) and ask your child to put them in order every morning on a Morning Schedule Board.
    - **Paint, draw, and write:** Use extra-large paper to foster motor skills—these are great ways to manage and express big emotions like disappointment or sadness.
    - **Play music:** Freeze Dance and Achy Breaky Bottom are favorites. Jump around and "act out" the music. Create music with materials around the house.
- Cognitive (learning, thinking, problem-solving)
    - **Science:** Do experiments and make predictions.
    - **Math:** Count and add. Recognize shapes and patterns.
    - **Literacy:** Pre-literacy skills are critical to your child's reading performance in the future. Early literacy development includes awareness of books and print, hearing and playing with sounds in words, relationships between letters and sounds, vocabulary development, story comprehension, and more.
        - Read, read, read!
        - Visit your local library
        - Storytelling: Picture books are great to use for storytelling. Encourage children to describe what they see.
        - Blocks: Build castles, houses, or farms. Once your masterpiece is built, create stories out of your play with animals and people.

        - Act out stories: Read a story/rhyme together and discuss which characters you each want to be. Consider the props you may want to bring the story alive.
        - Treasure hunt: Use a tray, toy box, or sandbox and throw a bunch of toys in it. Close your eyes and go on a "treasure hunt." As you and the child take turns pulling out toys, encourage them to create a story from what they find.
        - Crocodile Circle: Create a bin with a crocodile face on top, filled with letters and surprise cards. Pass the crocodile around a circle, singing, "Crocodile, crocodile down by the lake; I'm going to reach right in and see what (letter) you ate." The person holding the crocodile pulls a letter and calls it out. Start with the letters in your child's name. Emphasize the sound of each letter.
    - **Hold something in one hand while using the other hand** (e.g., hold a container and take the lid off).
    - **Try to use switches, knobs, or buttons on a toy.**
    - **Play with more than one toy at the same time** (e.g., putting toy food on a toy plate).
    - **Puzzles with 25–50 pieces:** This work fosters concentration, spatial awareness, shape recognition, fine motor ability, hand-eye coordination, problem-solving skills, and language.
    - **Visit a local museum's website:** Plan a day trip or participate in their scavenger hunt.
- Physical/Core strength building (movement, fine motor, gross motor)
    - Swimming
    - Jumping on a trampoline
    - Climbing on playground equipment
    - Walking/moving like a bear, crab, or other animals
    - Practicing yoga
    - Riding a bike
- Sensory
    - Providing opportunities for children to use their senses through sensory play is extremely beneficial for brain development. Sensory play builds nerve connections, promotes problem-solving and creativity, and enhances children's scientific minds.
    - Create chalk paint, honey slime, cloud dough, or play dough together.

Spontaneous and Structured Play

Summertime is filled with many great opportunities for play, both spontaneous and structured. Continue to implement a consistent structure and routine for your child. This will allow them time to foster independence and autonomy.

You will be your child's primary playmate during these months—practice turn-taking and flexibility. For example, your child can choose what they would like to use, and then you can choose what will be next. We want children to continue hearing and accepting other people's perspectives while implementing empathy and responsiveness.

Explore the Outdoors

- Have fun with bubbles.
- Play with water and sponges.
- Play hide and seek.
- Collect rocks, wash, and paint them.
- Toss water balloons.
- Decorate a bike or scooter.
- Paint a cardboard house outdoors.
- Paint a mural outdoors.
- Go on a bug hunt.
- Plant seeds in a garden.
- Play with a water table.
- Have a toy car wash.
- Make a nature collage.

Recipes

- **DIY chalk paint:** Let their imaginations go wild with this vibrant and easy recipe. Provide them with paintbrushes and have a blast painting sidewalks and driveways.
    - 1 cup cornstarch
    - 1-½ cups water
    - Food coloring or washable paint
- **Honey slime**
    - 1 cup cornstarch
    - ½ cup honey
    - 3–5 Tbsp oil
    - Heat the cornstarch and honey in the microwave for a few seconds then add oil.

- **Cloud dough**
    - 1 cup cornstarch
    - ½ cup hair conditioner (any kind will do)
    - Gradually mix hair conditioner into cornstarch in a large bowl and continue to stir until mixture is soft and fluffy. Turn out the mixture on a clean, flat surface and knead for about one minute or until soft. Use cloud dough immediately and store in airtight container.
- **Play dough**
    - 2-½ cups water
    - 1-¼ cup salt
    - 1-½ Tbsp cream of tartar
    - 5 Tbsp vegetable oil
    - 2 ½ cups flour
    - Food coloring or watercolors
    - Place all ingredients except food coloring in a large pot and stir until somewhat smooth. Place the pot on the stove and cook over low heat, stirring frequently until edges of the dough along the side and bottom of the pan appear dry. Pinch a piece of dough to test. Knead the warm dough on a large surface that can withstand food coloring. When smooth, divide and knead in food coloring. Use dough immediately or store in sealed container for up to several months.