

Family Engagement Activities

Parents and teachers serve a vital role in student learning. Working together as partners in areas of reading, writing, mathematics, science, and language development can promote student success. Listed below are a variety of activities* that can be shared with families to provide opportunities for extended literacy and language development at home.

Reading Activities

Promoting reading at an early age is essential for not only literacy development, but vocabulary development as well. Reading to your child on a daily basis can enhance vocabulary and provide students with an understanding of text while building a love for reading. The following activities can foster reading skills.

Alliteration

Alliteration is the repetition of the same initial consonant sound in a group of words. Create sentences containing alliteration, such as *ten tiny tadpoles*, and have your child recite them.

Cereal box letter recognition

Using a cereal box, ask your child to find and point to certain letters. Your child can also find letters in his or her name on the front of the cereal box cover.

Cookie sheet storytelling

Prepare a story by cutting out pictures and sticking pictures to magnetic strips. The cookie sheet becomes the storyboard. Have your child retell the story using the pictures.

Gel bags

Fill sealable plastic baggies with colored hair gel, and secure the zipper area with tape. Older children can spell their name with their fingers or a craft stick by pressing on the gel. Younger children can use the bag for sensory exploration.

Letter recognition

Write letters in play dough, and use cut-up straws to trace the letter. On a beach ball, write your child's name, colors, shapes, or letters of the alphabet. Roll or toss the beach ball, and reinforce what is on the beach ball. Write letters on bottle caps with a marker. Use the bottle caps to spell the child's name or household items.

Paper bag books

Play a game using a small paper bag to tell a story. Place pictures in the bag. Have your child pull a picture from the bag, and ask him or her to tell a story about it.

Baggie books

Create a book with plastic zipper baggies. Tape the non-zipper side of several baggies together with masking tape. Insert pictures into the baggies, and zip them up. Engage in a conversation with your child about the book you just made together.

Sentence segmenting

Sentence segmentation is when words are separated in a sentence. Read the first line of a nursery rhyme or a poem, and stack cubes or blocks to show how many words are in the sentence. For example, “*Twinkle, twinkle, little star*” would be four blocks to represent each word.

Word-building

On small poster boards, use a marker to write large letters—one letter on each poster. Take the letter boards outside to make words together. Children can also walk on the letter boards and say the letter name and the corresponding sound.

**Note: The activities and materials listed are only suggestions and can be modified to fit your classroom needs.*

Writing Activities

Providing opportunities at home for writing can strengthen children's hand muscles and fine motor skills. Having a variety of writing items, such as colors, markers, pencils, and pens, can encourage students to have fun with writing. Parents can also provide a variety of paper, such as chart, construction, notebook, or single sheet paper to promote writing.

Building writing muscles

Use clay to create letters or shapes to build muscles in children's hands. Have children cut paper into small pieces or crumble paper. Children can also scoop beans or use a tweezer to pick up beans and place in a cup.

Journal writing

Use a spiral notebook or a composition book. Personalize the journal, and explain that the child can draw his or her favorite items or anything he or she may want to share. Draw and practice labeling daily activities. Have your child trace letters or write his or her name. Write a shopping list together.

Sensory salt writing

Pour fine salt into a sealable plastic baggie, and add a few drops of liquid or gel food coloring mixed with a few drops of water. Mix by shaking and pressing on the bag until all color is combined. Add glitter and a few drops of essential oil. Shake again. Your child can use a finger to form letters or high-frequency words by pressing on the bag.

**Note: The activities and materials listed are only suggestions and can be modified to fit your classroom needs.*

Mathematics Activities

Mathematics at home can promote various skills such as number recognition, patterns, and counting. Parents can use a variety of materials to promote mathematics skills, such as popsicle sticks, coins, paper shapes, or food items.

Counting

Label each section of an ice tray with numbers. Use beans to count and put in the appropriate number section. Using popsicle sticks and a marker, label one popsicle stick with a number and another popsicle stick with dots representing the number. Repeat with other numbers. Mix the popsicle sticks, find the pairs with your child.

What's in the ocean?

Use blue fabric on a flat surface to represent the ocean. Using ocean animals, seashells, and rocks, practice counting, making patterns, or sorting into groups.

Prediction

Show your child an apple, and have him or her predict how many seeds are in the apple. Cut the apple, count the seeds in the apple, and write the number of seeds counted on a piece of paper.

**Note: The activities and materials listed are only suggestions and can be modified to fit your classroom needs.*

Science Activities:

Science activities at home help spark curiosity, build vocabulary, and encourage problem solving. Children can make predictions and do experiments while enjoying hands-on activities at home.

Bubbles (outdoor activity)

Mix the following ingredients in large bowl.

- ¼ cup baby shampoo
- ¾ cup water
- 3 tablespoons light corn syrup

Use various household items for bubble wands, such as strawberry baskets, plastic combs, etc. Read books related to bubbles.

Popcorn

Have your child use all five senses and record the findings using pictures or simple words. Pop the popcorn in the microwave. What do you hear? What do you smell? Once popcorn is ready, your child can taste it, see it, and touch it. Your child can record the findings and answer questions such as, "What does it taste like?", "If it smelled burnt, would you eat it?", etc.

Vegetables sink & float

Select several vegetables, and cut them in half. Fill a large plastic container with water. Have your child predict which vegetables will sink and which will float. Record the findings.

**Note: The activities and materials listed are only suggestions and can be modified to fit your classroom needs.*

Language Development Activities:

Language activities at home can foster oral language and vocabulary building. Children can use dramatic play to role play and sing familiar songs.

Cardboard tube puppets

Decorate cardboard tubes with construction paper to use them as puppets. Your child can role-play stories or sing familiar songs.

I Spy

Play the “I Spy” game, and incorporate positional words. For example, say, “I spy something on top of the table,” or “I spy something under the chair.” Take turns so your child can generate the “I spy” statement or respond to the “I spy” statement.

Puppetry

Find animal washcloths or small stuffed animals that are no longer being used and can be unstitched at the bottom. Remove all stuffing from the stuffed animal and it becomes an instant puppet. Children can role-play stories or sing familiar songs.

**Note: The activities and materials listed are only suggestions and can be modified to fit your classroom needs.*